



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**THE KING'S SCHOOL, WORCESTER**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## The King's School, Worcester

Full Name of School	<b>The King's School, Worcester</b>		
DfE Number	<b>885/6027</b>		
EYFS Number	<b>EY309503</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>1098236</b>		
Address	<b>The King's School 5 College Green Worcester Worcestershire WR1 2LH</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01905 721700</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01905 721710</b>		
Email Address	<b>admin@ksw.org.uk</b>		
Headmaster	<b>Mr Timothy Keyes</b>		
Head of King's St Alban's	<b>Mr Richard Bellfield</b>		
Head of King's Hawford	<b>Mr James Turner</b>		
Chairman of Governors	<b>Mr Hugh Carslake</b>		
Age Range	<b>2 to 18</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>1452</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (790 boys; 662 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>30</b>	5-11: <b>405</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>77</b>	11-18: <b>940</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Jill Willis (Hawford) Miss Alexandra Roberts (St Alban's)</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection dates	<b>18 Oct 2011 to 19 Oct 2011 16 Nov 2011 to 18 Nov 2011</b>		

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in October 2005.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010\*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

\*These Standards Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31<sup>st</sup> August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The King's School, with the two junior schools, King's St Alban's (St Alban's) and King's Hawford (Hawford), form the King's School Foundation. The foundation aims for all pupils to have a rewarding experience and reach their potential at school, in preparation for leading a confident, fulfilled and unselfish adult life. The schools seek to promote good relationships, academic achievement, and the development of life skills enriched by a range of interests and activities. They strive to provide responsive pastoral care within an ethos of spiritual awareness, tolerance and mutual respect, rooted in the Christian faith and in service to others. Although the schools share the same governing body and have common aims, each is distinct. The Dean and Chapter of Worcester Cathedral nominate a proportion of the governors.
- 1.2 The schools are academically selective and co-educational, catering for day pupils from a wide area around Worcester. Founded in 1541, the King's School occupies buildings alongside the cathedral, in the centre of the city, on the site of the Benedictine monastery, in the refectory of which it began its life. The school has close links with the cathedral, whose choristers begin their education in St Alban's, which is adjacent to the main school. Hawford, the other junior school, is four miles north of the city, with its own buildings and 23 acres of grounds, including a recently extended Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting for children from the age of two.
- 1.3 Since the last inspection, St Alban's has established an EYFS setting for children from the age of four, a new head of Hawford was appointed in 2006, and the senior school has a new library and art school, and is building a new boathouse.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection, the senior school had 940 pupils, 509 boys and 431 girls, of whom 279 were in Years 12 and 13. St Alban's had 197 pupils, 109 boys and 88 girls, with 7 children in the EYFS. Hawford had 315 pupils, 172 boys and 143 girls, with 100 children in the EYFS, of whom 30 were under the age of 3.
- 1.5 Standardised tests show that the ability profile of pupils in all three schools is above the national average. A quarter of the pupils at St Alban's, a fifth at Hawford, and a third in Years 7 to 11 in the senior school have ability that is far above the national average. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. At St Alban's, 30 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), with 33 pupils identified at Hawford and 107 in the senior school. Specialist additional teaching is available for those who need it. Two pupils at Hawford and one in the senior school have English as an additional language. Both of these pupils are provided with additional teaching. The overwhelming majority of the pupils are of white British ethnicity.

- 1.6 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used from Reception to Year 6 at St Alban's and Hawford, and throughout this report to refer to year groups in the schools. The year group nomenclature used for the Nursery at Hawford and in the senior school, and its NC equivalence, are shown in the tables below.

***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting (Hawford)***

School	NC name
Kindergarten 1	Nursery (ages two to three)
Kindergarten 2	Nursery (ages three to four)

***Senior School***

School	NC name
Lower Fourth (L4)	Year 7
Upper Fourth (U4)	Year 8
Lower Remove (LR)	Year 9
Upper Remove (UR)	Year 10
Fifth Form (FF)	Year 11
Lower Sixth (L6)	Year 12
Upper Sixth (U6)	Year 13

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 All three schools in the foundation are highly successful in achieving their aim of promoting pupils' academic achievement, enriched by a range of interests and activities. The pupils' achievements in their work and extra-curricular activities are good and often excellent. In each of the schools, the pupils enjoy an excellent, well-balanced curriculum and an outstandingly wide range of activities. Teaching is strong and often excellent across the schools, enabling all pupils to make good progress in relation to their abilities, although at times excessive support for the most able inhibits independent inquiry. The pupils' willingness and perseverance as learners are exemplary.
- 2.2 Pupils in all the schools demonstrate excellent personal development, revealing high levels of confidence and self-esteem, together with a considered appreciation of the spiritual dimension of human beings. From an early age, they understand the difference between right and wrong, and older pupils have a highly developed sense of morality. Their excellent behaviour, courtesy and consideration towards others are notably features of the schools, as is their readiness to offer themselves for positions of responsibility or service to the community. Both pupils and parents recognise the very high quality of pastoral care in the schools. Pupils are well known and understood by the teachers, who treat them with respect and tolerance. Relationships throughout the schools are excellent.
- 2.3 The successful creation of a common ethos and shared attitudes and values across the three schools owes much to the excellent quality and effectiveness of the governance, leadership and management of the schools. Policies and procedures to promote safeguarding and the welfare, health and safety of the pupils are well considered and effectively implemented. A shortfall in the required number of hand basins in the washrooms at Hawford, identified during the first inspection visit, was rectified as soon as the matter was brought to the school's notice. The schools have established highly effective links with parents. Parents and pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaires were very positive about the schools, recognising the high quality of the curricular and extra-curricular programmes, the excellent attitudes and values promoted and the exemplary nature of the schools' communications with them. Pupils are proud to belong to one of the King's schools and enjoy being at their school. The recommendations of the previous inspection reports have all been addressed, resulting in significant improvement in the education provided in each of the three schools, and particularly at Hawford.

## **2.(b) Action points**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school did not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it was required to:
- increase the number of hand basins in the washrooms at Hawford to at least match the number of WCs [Part 5, paragraph 23.(j), under Premises and accommodation].
- 2.5 At the time of the final team visit, the school had rectified the above shortcoming, as noted in the text of the report.

### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. In each of the schools, and in line with their current development plans, encourage teaching strategies that allow the most able pupils to pursue their curiosity and develop their independence as learners.
  2. Encourage the two EYFS settings to establish a formal programme for sharing best practice to complement existing informal contact.



### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

#### **3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills**

- 3.1 Pupils are well educated and both their academic and other achievements in each of the schools are good overall, and often excellent. The schools are highly successful in meeting their aims of providing a fulfilling educational experience and enabling pupils to enjoy academic achievement enriched by a wide range of interests and activities.
- 3.2 In all three schools, pupils achieve well in relation to their abilities, as apparent in their lessons and books. Pupils in the two junior schools acquire a good foundation across the range of the curriculum, including strong skills in literacy and numeracy. They are highly articulate, become proficient in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and develop a range of interests, particularly in music, art, drama and sport, which enables them to achieve well in the senior school. Almost all junior school pupils move on to the senior school, having successfully passed the entrance test. Pupils in the senior school acquire high levels of knowledge, skill and understanding across the curriculum. They present their arguments lucidly both on paper and orally. They apply their knowledge well, revealing good ability to reason and to make connections. Virtually all of them are successful in qualifying to move on to higher education courses of their choice. The high quality of pupils' achievements in the expressive arts is apparent from the art and photographs on display in all the schools.
- 3.3 Achievement in extra-curricular activities is strong. At Hawford, pupils' achievements are evident in the achievement badges they wear, which indicate the wide range of individual successes. All Hawford pupils perform annually in stage productions and many have been individual or group winners in the Worcester Competitive Arts Festival. A sporting highlight for Hawford was winning a regional under-eleven rugby competition. At St Alban's, the annual Creative ConneXions event displays pupils' prowess in music, art and drama, whilst victory in the Warwick under-eleven rugby sevens competition and reaching the national final in the Independent Association of Prep Schools netball competition underlined their achievements in sport. Pupils' participation in and enthusiasm for the wide range of activities in the senior school are high, and achievement in some elements of the programme are of outstanding quality, including music, drama and art. School teams have enjoyed success at county, regional or national level in netball, hockey, basketball, rugby and cricket, and at the National Combined Cadet Force (CCF) Orienteering Championships and the National Schools Rowing Championships. Many pupils enjoy success in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, and a good number achieve gold awards each year.
- 3.4 The pupils' attainment at St Alban's and Hawford cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but, on the evidence seen in lessons and books, is judged to be high relative to national age-related expectations. The pupils follow a demanding course of study, enabling them to take the senior school entrance tests. This level of attainment indicates that pupils in both schools make good progress relative to pupils of similar ability, and evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of work and discussions confirms this judgement.
- 3.5 In the senior school, the standards achieved by pupils in both GCSE and A-level examinations have improved markedly since the previous inspection. The following

analysis uses national data for the years 2008 to 2010, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results at GCSE have been far above the national average for maintained schools, and similar to the average for maintained selective schools. Results in International GCSE mathematics have been above the average for schools worldwide, and similar to the average for schools in the United Kingdom. Results at A level have been far above the national average for maintained schools, and above the national average for maintained selective schools. This level of attainment indicates that pupils in the senior school make good progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability, and to GCSE this is supported by standardised measures of progress.

- 3.6 The pupils' attitude to learning in all three schools is excellent and plays an important part in their academic success and their overall development. In lessons pupils are focused and attentive, and settle quickly to their tasks. They work effectively on their own or co-operatively in groups. Pupils are keen to succeed and their achievement is underpinned by the excellent relationships they enjoy with each other and with their teachers. Pupils' written work shows evident pride. They demonstrate significant creativity, particularly in art. Pupils have good skills in the use of ICT for research, word processing and the preparation of presentations. Pupils throughout the schools, but particularly in the sixth form, make excellent use of the libraries.

### **3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)**

- 3.7 The curriculum in all three schools is excellent. The balance of subjects available at Hawford has improved significantly since the previous inspection. The curriculum covers all the required areas of learning at each stage and is richly enhanced by the wide range of extra-curricular activities available. Both parents and pupils are highly satisfied with the range of the curricular and extra-curricular programmes.
- 3.8 In each school, the curriculum provided is broad, well balanced and appropriate for all ages, abilities and needs. It nurtures the physical and emotional well-being of pupils and provides them with exciting creative opportunities. In the junior schools, it ensures strong focus on the development of literacy and numeracy, and at every stage it promotes good knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes, in preparation for the next phase of education and in line with the schools' aims.
- 3.9 At Hawford, a strong emphasis is placed on outdoor activities and camping, taking full advantage of the school's extensive grounds. Many of the pupils at St Alban's are musically gifted and a significant majority of them take individual instrumental lessons. In the senior school, sixth-form pupils enrich their examined programme by following a formalised general studies programme, embracing a range of skills, which are further developed by the 'King's Certificate'. Pupils have many creative opportunities in music, drama and dance within all three schools.
- 3.10 The curriculum is supported by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities and well-established links with the community, in accordance with the schools' aim of enabling pupils to develop their interests and activities. Pupils' participation in activities is high. The senior school, for example, has notably high numbers involved in Young Enterprise initiatives, and has been designated a centre of excellence. The CCF and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme are both well supported, as are the large number of sporting activities available. The senior school's situation on the River Severn means that rowing is a significant part of many pupils' experience.

- 3.11 In all three schools, the strong links with the community, both local and international, are of considerable benefit to the pupils. The senior school charity committee, for example, involves pupils in organising a Christmas party for senior citizens, widening their understanding of the needs of others. A wide array of educational trips and visiting speakers in all three schools enriches pupils' experience. A senior school trip to Morocco entailed pupils acting as guides to blind or visually impaired students. The Himalayan Club is one way in which pupils' understanding of other countries is cultivated through links with Nepal, India and Tanzania. Pupils in Year 6 at St Alban's benefit from an exciting annual carousel of activities and excursions at the end of the summer term, including trips to France and to an activity centre, whilst at Hawford the emphasis on residential trips and camping in the school's grounds promotes independence. Pupils in all three schools gain from the regular use made of the school's own outdoor activity base in the Black Mountains in Wales.
- 3.12 The strong links with the cathedral provide very real benefit to the schools, both in terms of enhancing the education of the pupils and of enabling the Chapter to make a significant contribution to the governance of the schools.

### **3.(c) The contribution of teaching**

- 3.13 Across the three schools, the quality of the teaching is good overall, and frequently it is excellent. In a significant proportion of the sample of lessons observed during the inspection, at both St Alban's and in the senior school, the teaching was judged to be excellent. In all three schools, teaching is highly effective in promoting pupils' progress and achievement.
- 3.14 Teachers in all the schools are particularly skilful in adapting teaching to match the needs of individual pupils, in line with the schools' aims. They know the pupils and their needs well and provide good encouragement and suitable stimulus in lessons. Pupils with SEND are well supported and enabled to make good progress, in line with their abilities. Lessons are meticulously prepared and planned, although at times teachers provide excessive information and support for the most able, limiting their curiosity and independence as learners. Aware of this, the schools have incorporated strategies to promote independent learning in their development plans. Pupils enjoy the lessons, maintain their concentration and achieve well. In the best lessons, the teaching is inspiring and imaginative, and the pupils are enthusiastic, responsive and encouraged to do their very best.
- 3.15 Very effective questioning techniques observed at St Alban's challenged pupils to think and allowed them to demonstrate good understanding of the topics being covered. An example of this was during a Year 5 geography lesson on rainforests, exploring the effects of deforestation on global warming. At Hawford, teachers use regular target setting to provide pupils with a focus for improvement. The targets are clear and understandable for the pupils, so that they feel well supported and know what they need to do to improve.
- 3.16 Teachers manage their lessons well. Teaching typically follows a brisk pace, uses a variety of approaches and makes excellent use of resources. It engages the pupils well in the learning process, generating interest and enthusiasm. Throughout the schools, the teachers are confident and knowledgeable, and have high expectations of the pupils.
- 3.17 Marking across all three schools is thorough and regular. It is conscientiously undertaken and comments are constructive, providing high quality feedback and

encouragement to pupils. The quality of marking is regularly monitored by department heads, subject leaders and senior staff in all three schools. The assessment schemes are effective and pupils report that they understand when they have made progress. All three schools have established good systems for tracking pupils' progress and identifying underachievement. Marking, assessment, monitoring and tracking have all improved since the previous inspection and are now strong features of teaching.

- 3.18 Relationships between teachers and pupils are positive. Behaviour in lessons is excellent and well managed, enabling a purposeful and productive classroom ethos, highly conducive to effective and enjoyable learning.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils**

- 4.1 The personal development of pupils in all three schools is excellent, in accordance with the schools' aims. The ethos and values of the foundation are felt as keenly at Hawford as they are in the schools that benefit from their close proximity to, and frequent use of, the cathedral.
- 4.2 The pupils' spiritual awareness is excellent. They are confident and self-aware, and demonstrate high levels of emotional maturity. Pupils in Year 5 at Hawford, for example, talked confidently about their experiences on a recent residential trip, revealing a profound appreciation of the natural world. Pupils of all ages develop high levels of self-esteem, are comfortable with themselves and feel valued as individuals. In a lesson on the Third Pillar of Islam, pupils in Year 5 at St Alban's articulated the joy of giving and receiving a smile.
- 4.3 Moral development in the schools is exceptionally strong. Pupils have a very well-developed sense of right and wrong from an early age. Pupils in a Year 8 class debated issues surrounding cyber-bullying with clarity, showing empathy with the hypothetical victims. Pupils' behaviour around the schools is exemplary. They are respectful, considerate, unpretentious and helpful towards both their peers and the adults they encounter. Pupils demonstrate their awareness of ethical issues through their commitment to service activities and their involvement in charitable fund raising. Over the past two years, for example, senior school pupils have raised over £50,000 for charities selected by the charity committee. The senior school community service programme sees large numbers of pupils giving their time to help pupils at St Alban's and in local primary schools, and all members of Year 12 help to organise a party for pupils from a local special school.
- 4.4 Pupils' social development and sense of responsibility are excellent. They readily embrace the opportunity to act as monitors in all parts of the school, and frequently participate in a leadership capacity in activities such as sports teams, the CCF, the pupil-led Keys Choir and the Christian Union. In a Year 8 form, whilst one pupil assisted the tutor taking the register, another presented the form with a general knowledge quiz. Representatives on the house, library, food and school councils take their roles very seriously. Many members of Year 13 provide valuable support as mentors to younger pupils. Social and political awareness is apparent in pupils' support for such clubs as the debating society and the Amnesty International group. Pupils in Years 9 and 10 come into contact with representatives from the police, the prison service, Relate and local businesses through their personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, developing their knowledge and understanding of public services and institutions. Pupils in a Year 6 PSHE lesson at St Alban's revealed good understanding of the work of Parliament.
- 4.5 At St Alban's and Hawford, pupils develop good understanding of and respect for other faiths and cultures through their study of world religions. Although this exposure is less apparent in the senior school, older pupils encounter and come to appreciate aspects of other cultures and of Western cultural tradition through their work in literature, art and music. They enjoy listening to many inspirational speakers from a variety of backgrounds, and trips to such places as India, China and South Africa enhance their understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity.

#### **4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety**

- 4.6 The arrangements for promoting the welfare, health and safety of pupils in the three schools are excellent. The schools successfully fulfil their aims for all pupils to have a rewarding experience and reach their potential at school, in preparation for leading a confident, fulfilled and unselfish adult life. The high quality of the pastoral care, support and guidance provided by the staff in all three schools is recognised by both the pupils and their parents.
- 4.7 Relationships between the staff and pupils in all three schools are excellent. Teachers are good role models; they know their pupils well and make a considerable contribution to creating a caring and nurturing family environment in each of the schools. Younger pupils confidently approach their form teachers and other members of staff of their school. In the senior school, the house system and the tutor groups that function within each house ensure that each pupil is well known and closely supported as they move up through the school.
- 4.8 The procedures for promoting good behaviour established in the three schools are highly effective. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, who know and understand what is expected of them. Pupils say that they understand the need for school rules and sanctions, and consider them fair. Parents rate the attitudes and values promoted by the schools very highly. The anti-bullying policy sets out clear procedures to deal effectively with any incidents and there are good levels of supervision on the playgrounds and around the schools. Pupils in all the schools believe that bullying is rare and that any instances are swiftly and appropriately dealt with by the staff.
- 4.9 Measures to ensure the safeguarding of pupils are thorough and regularly reviewed. All members of staff are appropriately trained in child protection procedures. Each school has suitably designated and trained members of staff to oversee child protection. Procedures for the safe recruitment of staff are rigorously applied.
- 4.10 Measures taken to minimise the risk of fire are comprehensive. Fire safety equipment is regularly checked. Fire evacuation drills are carried out at appropriate intervals and carefully recorded. Health and safety policies and procedures are good. Thorough risk assessments are carried out for all areas of the school, for trips and visits, and for any activity involving pupils. A health and safety committee, chaired by one of the governors, monitors potential hazards and the response of the school to any matters of concern. An appropriate accessibility plan is in place for pupils and adults with disabilities. Suitable medical facilities on all sites ensure that pupils' needs are catered for sensitively and effectively.
- 4.11 Healthy eating is encouraged. The menu at lunchtime is appetising and varied, and pupils in all the schools say that they enjoy school meals. The outdoor spaces for play and physical activity are ample, and the provision for some sports is outstanding. From an early age pupils learn about the importance of exercise in a healthy lifestyle.
- 4.12 At the time of the initial inspection visit, the number of hand basins in the washrooms at Hawford was insufficient. By the time of the final visit, this shortcoming had been rectified. The admission and attendance registers are conscientiously maintained and correctly stored.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) The quality of governance**

- 5.1 The school benefits from excellent governance, which contributes effectively to the successful achievement of its aims. Since the previous inspection, the establishment of the education committee has strengthened the governors' oversight of educational standards and the resources needed to support them and increased the governors' opportunity to monitor and support the work of senior teachers in the three schools. Financial planning and the management of budgets are carefully and effectively monitored by the finance and general purposes committee, providing strong oversight and support of the bursar and his team. Full meetings of the governing body occur each term, when half of each meeting is dedicated to focusing on one of the three schools, ensuring that the progress and needs of each receive due attention and oversight. The governors are fully involved in financial and strategic planning and have been able to invest substantially in enhancing the schools' accommodation and facilities.
- 5.2 The 'Governor of the Month' scheme ensures that governors regularly visit the three schools to observe them at work, providing an excellent insight into the schools' daily life. Following their turn in this role, governors write a report for discussion at the next governors' meeting, presenting excellent opportunity for the provision of support, encouragement, challenge and stimulus to the schools.
- 5.3 The governors are assiduous in discharging their responsibilities for child protection, welfare, health and safety in all three of the schools. One governor chairs the health and safety committee. Each year, all school policies are assigned to individual governors who read, review and sign them on behalf of the board. The whole governing body conducts an annual review of the safeguarding policy and its effectiveness. The quality of the school's governance has recently been appraised by external assessors, demonstrating the governors' commitment to supporting the school and the excellent manner in which they perform their own role. Staff in all three schools recognise and value governors' commitment.

### **5.(b) The quality of leadership and management**

- 5.4 Leadership and management are excellent and highly effective in ensuring that the ethos of the school is applied consistently across the schools. The three heads have an exceptionally strong common purpose and, at a time of transition, effective steps have been taken to ensure good succession and monitoring in the senior teams. School policies are well constructed and consistently implemented at all levels. The arrangements made to ensure the protection, safety and well-being of the pupils are of a high standard, and well implemented. The leadership of the senior school is characterised by clear vision and a high quality of strategic planning. At St Alban's, the strong quality of relationships throughout the school stems from the thoughtful and sensitive nature of senior leadership. At Hawford, despite a time of change for the leadership team, there has been enthusiasm, prioritisation and reflection in charting a strategic direction.
- 5.5 The leadership and management overall are reflective; self-evaluation is increasingly a significant factor in this, and is led from the most senior level, with confidence in the use of external support in aiding the process. This has led to an exceptionally self-aware culture of leadership and is a significant factor in the high quality of the

pupils' education and personal development in all three schools. The senior management team in the senior school is a new team; its membership is highly competent, and recognised as such by colleagues and pupils for its readiness to offer both challenge and support.

- 5.6 The management, scrutiny and support provided by heads of departments or subject co-ordinators in all the schools are strong and have improved considerably since the previous inspections. The systems for appraisal in all three schools are clear, and line management throughout is clearly delineated and appropriate. The revised appraisal system in the senior school is strengthening the leadership and management of middle managers, and the inclusion of responsibilities other than academic teaching is very helpful. Staff are appropriately trained and supported for their roles, including in safeguarding the welfare of pupils. The safe recruitment of staff is treated as a priority, and procedures are rigorous.

### **5.(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians**

- 5.7 The quality of the schools' links with parents is excellent. Regular formal and informal communication helps the schools to maintain a constructive and mutually supportive relationship with parents.
- 5.8 Analysis of the responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires for all three schools indicates that parents are highly satisfied with all aspects of their children's education and that they have no significant concerns. Aspects about which the parents responded particularly positively were the attitudes and values promoted in all three schools, the range of the curricular and extra-curricular provision, and the ease and swiftness of communications with the schools. Inspection evidence supports the parents' views.
- 5.9 Parents take full advantage of the good opportunities that they have to be involved in many aspects of the life of the schools. They are enthusiastic supporters of music and drama events, and of sporting fixtures. All the schools have a strong and active parents' group that organises social events and fund raising, and promotes links with the schools and amongst parents. Former pupils and groups of parents participate in trips abroad, for example, to support the link formed with a school in Nepal. Senior school parents provide valuable help with careers events, organising work experience, offering interview practice and participating in day conferences for pupils about careers in medicine, law and business.
- 5.10 Parents are well satisfied with the information that they receive, which includes all that the schools are required to provide. The high quality of school publications and an informative website enhance links with the parents. A helpful weekly email bulletin to inform parents of recent achievements and forthcoming events has been introduced in the senior school, in line with existing practice in the two junior schools. Comprehensive and informative reports are sent home at least twice a year and these are complemented by half-term progress grades and regular parents' meetings, ensuring that parents are kept fully up-to-date about their children's progress.
- 5.11 Scrutiny of school records shows that any concerns raised by parents are sensitively and diligently handled by the schools, and are usually resolved at an early stage. The schools have appropriate procedures for dealing with any complaints.

**What the school should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.**



## **6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

### **6.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

6.1 The overall EYFS provision at both Hawford and St Alban's is outstanding. These happy, family settings provide an exceptionally high quality of education and care, where children's needs are met and their protection assured. Experienced and committed staff support all aspects of children's learning effectively. The most significant changes since the previous inspection have been the creation of a Reception class at St Alban's and a building extension at Hawford for children from the age of two. The capacity of the settings to make continuous improvement through self-evaluation is exceptionally good.

### **6.(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

6.2 Leadership and management are exemplary, especially in safeguarding, risk assessment and planning for continuous improvement. Robust recruitment procedures in both settings ensure that adults are suitable to work with children. All children's needs are exceptionally well met through highly effective partnerships between staff, parents, children and external agencies. Supportive parents participate in all areas of the EYFS and they provided highly positive responses to questionnaires. Staff are suitably deployed and well trained for their first-aid responsibilities. They have high aspirations for quality through continuous sustained improvement and effective evaluation systems, and a clear vision for the future in both settings. Comprehensive policies and procedures are consistently implemented, which promote equality and diversity. The extensive range of high quality resources, including ICT, is effectively used, and both settings have good practice, although this is not sufficiently shared at present.

### **6.(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

6.3 The quality of provision is outstanding due to the high quality of teaching and learning. Teachers provide a rich and stimulating learning environment where children are active participants in the planning of their learning and make choices. Nursery and Reception classes in both settings enjoy an excellent range of thoughtfully planned activities, based on the interests of the children. The exceptionally well-resourced environment enables children to become confident, inquisitive learners. The adults create an atmosphere of warmth and security in both settings, which encourages children to develop and learn at their own pace. Comprehensive assessment, leading to clear next steps, enables children under the age of three to develop good social skills and a rich vocabulary within the stimulating environment. Those over the age of three may readily access resources to develop skills in reading, writing, counting and problem solving. Children make healthy choices for snacks and at lunchtime, and share their understanding of healthy eating habits. They practise high standards of hygiene, consistently follow rules, and feel safe and secure due to well-established routines. Outstanding relationships are evident throughout both settings, and staff are compassionate and supportive to all children. They positively promote understanding of diversity, for example by celebrating festivals from around the world.

### **6.(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

- 6.4 Outcomes for children are outstanding. The children are confident, polite, well mannered and articulate, and they initiate discussion and have exemplary behaviour. Children make rapid progress in reading, writing and spelling. They identify two- and three-dimensional shapes and number patterns, and explore mathematical concepts, both inside and outside. Information and communication technology is used effectively in lessons in both settings to enhance learning. Children work individually and in groups with computers and light boxes to produce art. In the Nursery, children demonstrate understanding of control and programming. They respond to challenges with enthusiasm and show high levels of independence, curiosity, imagination and concentration. Children respect each other's differences and help one another. They know how to keep themselves safe and healthy, and share any concerns with their key person.

#### **Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three**

- 6.5 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

#### **Complaints since the last inspection**

- 6.6 Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required any action to meet national requirements.

**Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.**

## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chairman of governors and other governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mr Rodney Fox	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Valerie Clark	Assistant Reporting Inspector
Mrs Elizabeth Cairncross	Head, HMC school
Mrs Anne Camm	Headteacher, IAPS school
Mr Paul Cozens	Deputy Head, IAPS school
Mrs Susan Dilley	Deputy Head, IAPS school
Mrs Pamela Evans	Senior Teacher, GSA school
Mrs Susan Freestone	Head, HMC school
Mr Bill Rogers	Deputy Head (academic), HMC school
Mr Roger Shaw	Director of Administration, HMC school
Mr Craig Watson	Headmaster, IAPS school
Ms Anne McConway	Early Years Lead Inspector
Mrs Felicity Taylor	Early Years Team Inspector Head of Lower School, GSA school