



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

THE LICENSED VICTUALLERS' SCHOOL, ASCOT

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

The Licensed Victuallers' School, Ascot

Full Name of School	The Licensed Victuallers' School		
DfE Number	867/6005		
Registered Charity Number	230011		
Address	The Licensed Victuallers' School London Road Ascot Berkshire SL5 8DR		
Telephone Number	01344 882 770		
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Email Address	office@lvs.ascot.sch.uk		
Head of Senior School	Mrs Christine Cunniffe		
Head of Junior School	Mrs Helen Donnelly		
Chair of Governors	Mrs Anita Adams		
Age Range	4 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	959		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (568 boys; 391 girls)		
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	14	11-16: 590
	5-11:	199	16-18: 156
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	776	Capacity for flexi-boarding: 0
Number of Boarders	Total:	183	
	Full:	150	Weekly: 33
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection dates	8th to 9th February 2011		
	9th to 11th March 2011		

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 January 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 31st 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 boarding was not carried out in conjunction with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills, and the report does not contain specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education and development in general. The full Ofsted report refers to an inspection in March 2009 and can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Children's social care/Boarding school.

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 Licensed Victuallers' School aims to develop caring, confident citizens for the future, ensuring that every child is encouraged to achieve their potential by offering them the widest variety of opportunities in a safe and supportive environment. It is governed by the Education Committee of the Licensed Trade Charity (LTC), and answerable to the professional executive officers of the charity, who are based at the school.
- 1.2 Founded in Lambeth in 1803 for children of those in the licensed drinks trade, today it is a co-educational day and boarding school for almost a thousand pupils aged between four and eighteen. Although support for those in the licensed trade, and the Christian principles that underlie the charity, are still central to its ethos, the school welcomes children of all backgrounds and beliefs, and a wide range of ability. It has occupied its purpose-built premises at Ascot, twenty-five miles west of London, since 1989. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the majority of whose pupils will be five or over within the school year, has its own teaching staff and classrooms as part of the junior school, and its own secure covered play area.
- 1.3 The junior school head was appointed in 2005 and the senior school head in 2010. Since 2008, the school has not participated in national tests at age eleven. Approximately 60 pupils joined the school in September 2010, following closure of The Elvian School, which had also been run by the LTC.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection, 117 boys and 96 girls aged between 4 and 11 attended the junior school; 451 boys and 295 girls aged from 11 to 18 attended the senior school. The backgrounds of day pupils reflect the school's Ascot location; boarders come from a wide range of locations in Britain and abroad.
- 1.5 Entrance tests are not part of the admissions procedure. Admission is usually into Reception, Years 3, 7 or 12 following meeting one of the heads and a satisfactory school report. Standardised tests indicate that the ability profile of pupils in the junior school and in Years 7 to 11 is in line with the national average. Standardised tests taken by sixth-form pupils indicate a wide spread of abilities for A-level pupils.
- 1.6 Three senior school pupils have statements of special educational need. Eighty-eight senior school and 46 junior school pupils are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), 71 of whom receive specialist support. One hundred and eleven pupils do not have English as their first language, 42 of whom receive additional tuition in English.
- 1.7 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school is highly successful in achieving its aim to provide caring, confident citizens for the future. In both the senior and junior schools, pupils achieve well in relation to their widely diverse abilities, both in public examinations and in their acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills across a wide-ranging and flexible curriculum. Pupils are diligent learners, whose behaviour is usually exemplary. Strong teaching, based on very good understanding of individual needs, enables pupils of all abilities to make progress and succeed, although the promotion of independent learning and intellectual inquiry among the most able is insufficiently developed.
- 2.2 Relationships in the school are outstanding, and contribute to the strong personal development of the pupils and to a highly conducive learning environment. The pastoral care provided is excellent, as is the provision for boarding, although the different tutorial arrangements for day and boarding pupils in the senior school lead to some anomalies in teaching personal, social and health education (PSHE). Pupils are happy and proud to belong to the school.
- 2.3 Governance is of sound and often good quality. Leadership and management are highly effective in the junior school and, although the senior management team is only recently established in the senior school, it already provides strong leadership and direction. Senior managers in both schools demonstrate good awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development, work well in support of one another, and have clear vision for future development. Departmental management in the senior school is developing but practice is still inconsistent. The buildings and grounds are of excellent quality. Parents and pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaires are highly supportive of the school and its standards, with parents being particularly satisfied with the range of the curricular and extra-curricular provision, the attitudes and values promoted and the provision for boarding. At the time of the initial inspection visit the governors had not conducted the necessary reviews of the child protection and health and safety policies. When this was drawn to their attention, they responded urgently, and by the time of the final inspection visit this deficiency had been rectified and safeguarding arrangements had been fully and properly reviewed. The recommendations of the 2005 inspection report have been satisfactorily addressed.

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:

- ensure that the Education Committee of the trustees conducts an annual review of the child protection policy and the effectiveness of its operation and regular reviews of health and safety in compliance with school policies [Part 3, paragraphs 7(a), 7(b) and 11, under Welfare, health and safety].

2.5 At the time of the final team visit, the school had rectified all of the above shortcomings, as noted in the text of the report.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Across the whole school, develop strategies to stimulate more independent learning and intellectual inquiry amongst the most able pupils.
2. In the senior school, ensure greater consistency of management practice across departments.
3. In the senior school, rationalise the tutorial structure between day and boarding pupils.
4. Encourage more child-initiated learning in the EYFS to enhance assessment and further challenge the most able.
5. Extend opportunities in the EYFS to work with larger apparatus for both physical development and problem solving.

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 at the Licensed Victuallers' School are well educated and the school is highly successful in achieving its aim of providing caring, confident citizens for the future, as was so at the time of the previous report. In both the senior and junior schools, pupils with a wide range of abilities are enabled to achieve well in relation to their abilities. The school is particularly skilled at recognising and supporting the needs of individual pupils, so that all can be successful in acquiring good levels of knowledge, understanding and skill across the curriculum, including those with LDD and EAL. In the junior school, strong emphasis is placed on developing literacy and numeracy and, as a consequence, pupils throughout the school demonstrate good competence in both areas. Individual pupils achieve notable successes in both curricular and extra-curricular activities, including sport, music, drama and art, as well as in charity fund-raising. Particularly notable is the development of qualities of mutual consideration and compassion, together with self-confidence, identified in the school's aims, which find their expression in many of the extra-curricular activities in which pupils participate.
- 3.2 The junior school has chosen not to enter pupils for national tests at age eleven since 2008, but pupils' attainment in the work seen in lessons and books in the junior school is judged to be high in relation to national expectations for pupils of their ages, and indicates that pupils in the junior school make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. The following analysis uses national data for the years 2007 to 2009, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results at GCSE level have been above, and at A level have been similar to, the national average for maintained schools. These results indicate that pupils make good progress to GCSE level relative to pupils of similar ability. Bearing in mind the wide range of ability of pupils in the sixth form, the A-level results indicate that sixth-form pupils also make progress that is good in relation to pupils of similar ability.
- 3.3 In both the junior and the senior schools, pupils have highly positive attitudes towards their learning and activities. They respond well to their teachers, work well on their own, and co-operate very well with one another. Pupils are diligent, putting much effort into their work and wanting to succeed. They use information and communication technology (ICT) well as a resource for investigation, although, even in the work of the most able, the pursuit of an independent line of inquiry is not often evident. They have good listening skills, particularly in listening to one another's ideas with respect. They maintain concentration well in lessons and in activities. Work set for homework is generally completed well. Behaviour in class is often excellent, founded on the very positive relationships that exist throughout both schools, between pupils and teachers, and between the pupils themselves.

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

- 3.4 The curricular and extra-curricular provision is good, and is highly appreciated by the parents. The broad, balanced and flexible curriculum provides effectively for pupils at all stages and across the range of abilities, in line with the school's aims.
- 3.5 The junior school curriculum is carefully balanced and includes the full range of National Curriculum subjects. It is enriched by drama, modern foreign languages and religious education, although the quality of provision in this subject is uneven. Senior school pupils continue this broad range of subjects, with the additional option of German for able linguists and the opportunity for some pupils to study Mandarin. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 may study up to ten GCSE subjects, but the programme is sufficiently flexible to be adapted to match individual needs. Sixth-form pupils have a very wide choice of subjects and courses. PSHE is taught throughout the school, although in the senior school the programme sometimes lacks consistency and direction, partly because the complexity of the tutorial structure determines the nature of the groups in which it is taught, and partly because of inconsistent monitoring of the content.
- 3.6 The school makes good provision for its pupils, with their wide range of abilities. In both junior and senior schools, subjects are increasingly taught in groups selected by ability to enable teaching to be matched closely to the needs of individual pupils. Pupils of high ability are able to take some GCSE examinations in Year 10, enabling them to pursue a further subject in Year 11. A number of after-school classes enable other pupils to sit specialised GCSE subjects in Year 9. Pupils with LDD or for whom English is an additional language (EAL) in the junior and senior schools are identified and receive appropriate support, and detailed individual education plans (IEPs) are written for those pupils who receive specialised individual tuition. Similar plans are written for gifted and talented pupils, although provision for stimulating and nurturing the most able is uneven across the school.
- 3.7 The school successfully prepares pupils for the next stages of life. Effective arrangements are established for managing the transition from the junior to the senior school and, in turn, to the sixth form. A cogent careers programme assists pupils to consider their future options, and Year 12 pupils undertake a closely monitored week of work experience. Sixth-form pupils appreciate the detailed guidance provided in choosing and applying for higher education courses.
- 3.8 A very good array of stimulating extra-curricular activities, appreciated by pupils and parents, complements the taught curriculum. All pupils in the junior school undertake some form of physical extra-curricular activity, and many opt to belong to a range of other clubs. Sporting fixtures are an important feature of both junior and senior school extra-curricular life, and pupils' participation in sport, as well as in activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, plays a significant part in developing their teamwork and leadership skills. Regular drama productions enrich the cultural life of the school, as do the school's diverse musical ensembles and choirs. Art and debating flourish. Pupils' personal development is furthered by opportunities to participate in exchanges to Australia and Japan and a good number of overseas trips. The school's strong links with the community enrich pupils' experience.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.9 The quality of teaching throughout the school is consistently good and promotes pupils' progress across the ability range effectively, supporting the aims of the school and meeting the needs of all pupils. ICT is used extensively throughout the school to enhance teaching, in line with a recommendation of the previous inspection report.
- 3.10 At all stages, lessons are well planned and paced, with a good variety of tasks. Imaginative activities are often used to enthuse the pupils in all parts of the school, such as when pupils in Year 7 discussed how best to attack a castle. Teachers know their pupils well, offering support, guidance and praise to create a purposeful atmosphere conducive to learning. They are skilful at matching teaching and tasks to the abilities of individuals, so that all can experience success and make progress, including those with LDD or EAL. Gifted and talented pupils in both junior and senior schools are identified and given extension tasks, but strategies for promoting independent work and intellectual curiosity among the most able are inconsistent across the school. The teachers' commitment to helping them with their work is recognised and highly valued by the pupils. The respectful atmosphere in lessons at all stages enables pupils to focus well on their work, both in groups, sharing ideas and helping each other, or individually. Expectations of behaviour and courtesy are high throughout the school.
- 3.11 The use of assessment for planning is good. Throughout the school, regular testing informs planning and enables good tracking of progress. Information about pupils' progress and attainment is helpfully transferred with them when they move into the senior school to ensure the continuity of their learning. Marking is good in the junior school, where 'assessment for learning' strategies, which identify what has been achieved and the next steps, are being introduced. Although these strategies have been implemented in only some subjects so far, they have strengthened pupils' awareness of their own achievements and enabled them to articulate coherently and accurately how they could improve in those subjects. Pupils' work, and the marking of it, is monitored regularly by senior staff. In the senior school, pupils know how well they are achieving through their test results, and they understand the grades that they are awarded. However, the quality and frequency of marking are variable, with inconsistent departmental monitoring of marking. At best the marking is clear, informative and constructive, but in some cases it is perfunctory and infrequent. Target grades are used effectively to promote achievement by older pupils.
- 3.12 Teachers make good use of the plentiful resources available to enrich their lessons and throughout the school they make effective use of ICT. The excellent quality of the buildings and campus provides a rich and stimulating environment, which teaching staff exploit to full advantage, from well-equipped and spacious classrooms to the well-kept grounds, which are used creatively for lessons such as biology and history. A recommendation of the previous report concerning the accommodation for some classes has been resolved.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 Pupils' overall personal development is good and in many respects excellent, in line with the aims of the school. The strong ethos of care, community and personal responsibility, together with happy and respectful relationships, confirms that the school has maintained the high quality of pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development evident at the previous inspection.
- 4.2 The spiritual development of pupils is good. Pupils of all ages display confidence and maturity. They have high self-esteem and are at ease with themselves, each other and their environment. Weekly assemblies, led by the chaplain, successfully raise pupils' spiritual and moral awareness, as was clear in the response of Year 8 and 9 pupils to an assembly on good and evil. Pupils' good spiritual development is apparent in lessons as, for instance, when pupils in Year 9 responded empathetically to the message of a song from the musical 'Blood Brothers'.
- 4.3 Pupils' moral development is excellent. Pupils of all ages distinguish clearly between right and wrong. The moral values and attitudes promoted by the school, and nurtured through the strong pastoral care systems provided, are strongly apparent in the way in which pupils behave towards one another and are highly valued by the parents. Pupils of all ages can discuss moral issues and dilemmas with insight. Year 12 pupils discussing euthanasia and abortion showed a high level of awareness of the value of human life, the vulnerability of emotional ties and the potential for damage to others as the consequence of the decisions that each of us make.
- 4.4 Pupils' social development is also excellent. Pupils accept responsibility for their own behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute to the well-being of the community. Older pupils in the junior school, for example, demonstrate high levels of social awareness and maturity when talking about their roles in the school, speaking thoughtfully about caring for younger children through the 'buddy' system and the responsibilities of being on the school council. Pupils in Year 1 talking in 'circle time' showed clear understanding of the concept that 'a worry shared is a worry halved'. Senior school pupils demonstrate a well-developed sense of responsibility, particularly when discussing their role mentoring younger pupils. They help to run after-school activities in the junior school. Pupils reveal keen awareness of their role in the wider community through their excellent commitment to charity fund-raising and their concern for environmental issues. Junior school pupils visit a local nursing home and invite the residents to school concerts and plays. Pupils are actively involved in the Eco-Schools programme.
- 4.5 Pupils' cultural awareness is good. Pupils of all backgrounds and cultures are well integrated into the school community, heightening awareness, understanding and tolerance of cultural diversity. Assemblies, PSHE and religious studies lessons enable pupils to discuss a variety of cultures and beliefs, resulting in a community in which pupils understand and appreciate cultures other than their own. Pupils in Year 6 were able to relate religious leaders to their cultural contexts and showed good understanding of different belief systems. Pupils acquire an appropriate knowledge of the public services and institutions of England through their PSHE courses. Their strong awareness of their own culture is enhanced through visits to museums, theatres and other places of cultural interest and heritage.

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

- 4.6 The school's arrangements for promoting the welfare, health and safety of the pupils are good, based on the excellent quality of individual care that all members of staff devote to the well-being of the pupils, in line with the school's aim that every child should be seen as a unique individual. Relationships are extremely positive between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves.
- 4.7 Pupils feel very well supported and cared for. Class teachers and assistants in the junior school, tutors and boarding and day house staff in the senior school, all play important roles in providing effective care and guidance for pupils and ensuring their welfare. In the senior school, the discrete tutor groups as between day and boarding pupils do lead to some anomalies; for example, teaching PSHE to some boarding groups in single-sex groups. The school is aware of this and has been seeking a way to address the issue without disturbing the high quality of the care and the excellent relationships for either group. The pastoral deputies in both schools play a key role in ensuring that pastoral systems are robust and applied consistently. Pupils in Year 4 stated that the best thing about the school is that 'everyone has friends and is happy', whilst older pupils spoke enthusiastically about the supportive community ethos.
- 4.8 The school has effective policies and procedures for promoting good behaviour and guarding against harassment and bullying. Pupils at all stages are adamant that bullying is rare and that when it occurs it is well handled by the school. In both the senior and junior schools, procedures are in place to record incidences of unacceptable behaviour and an appropriate range of rewards and sanctions is published and well understood by pupils.
- 4.9 Appropriate safeguarding procedures have been established that are in accordance with locally agreed practice and are well known and understood by staff. All members of staff have regular training in this area. The school's staff recruitment procedures are rigorous and properly applied.
- 4.10 All necessary measures are in place to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. Regular fire drills are held and members of staff receive appropriate training. Arrangements to ensure health and safety are good, including when pupils are away from school on trips. Accidents are properly recorded and facilities for those who become ill during the day, or after school for boarders, are good. An accessibility plan has been devised with the aim of improving educational provision for those with special educational needs or disabilities. Pupils are appropriately made aware, through the curriculum and by the provision made, of the needs to take regular exercise and to develop healthy eating habits. Lunch is rated as good by pupils, with plenty of healthy choices, and younger pupils are encouraged to choose a balanced meal. The admission and attendance registers are carefully maintained and properly stored for three years.
- 4.11 Pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire were highly supportive of the school, being particularly positive about the help that teachers provide to assist their learning, the fact that they like being at the school and the school's good provision for boarding.

4.(c) The quality of boarding education

- 4.12 The quality of boarding is excellent and plays a significant part in fulfilling the school's aim to develop caring, confident citizens for the future. Boarding pupils take much pride in their houses and feel that the boarding experience strongly promotes their personal growth, independence, and sense of well-being. As a result, they emerge as confident, well-adjusted and tolerant young men and women. The warm, purposeful and mutually respectful relationships between house staff and boarding pupils provide for a secure and happy environment in the houses, and pupils keenly appreciate the care and support that they receive.
- 4.13 Relationships between boarders are excellent. A sense of community exists in each house, and pupils across the age range co-operate well with one another. Any problems, when they do occur, are resolved quickly and efficiently by house staff, who are supportive, approachable and dedicated to their charges. Pupils feel consulted and empowered through the boarding council, which is chaired by a sixth-form pupil and includes representatives from each year group. This provides a valuable forum for discussion with staff of possible improvements to boarding life, for instance relating to the quantity and quality of the food in the evenings. Communication within the houses is excellent, and the daily roll calls provide not only an efficient means for transmitting notices but also an opportunity for the pupils regularly to come together as a family unit.
- 4.14 A broad range of appropriate activities is available in the evenings and weekends, organised principally by the house staff and boarding activities tutors. These include sporting activities, shopping trips, visits to the cinema, and occasional trips farther afield, for instance to sports matches. Within the houses, pupils have access to a good range of recreational resources and, in the senior boarding houses, to netbook computers enabled with wireless internet access. Public telephones provide opportunities for overseas pupils to receive calls from abroad. Pupils attend chapel on Sunday morning, and at other times they may study in the learning resource centre, music practice rooms, and, by arrangement, specialist teaching rooms.
- 4.15 The accommodation is of a high standard. The houses are clean, well maintained, mostly in excellent decorative order and equipped with appropriate amenities. The communal areas are welcoming and comfortable. Pupils' rooms are generally spacious and well resourced, although some in the sixth-form boarding house are significantly less so, this house being the last one due for refurbishment. The school has responded appropriately to the recommendations of the most recent Ofsted boarding report.
- 4.16 Both parents and pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaires were highly appreciative of the quality of the provision for boarding.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 Most aspects of the school's governance are good, but the oversight in the past by the trustees of their obligation to conduct regular reviews of their safeguarding and health and safety policies results in it being sound overall. Although the trustees of the LTC are ultimately responsible for the school, most of the responsibilities of governance are delegated to the Education Committee. Members of this committee are highly committed to, and enthusiastic about, the school's ethos and aims. The committee also governs the charity's other school (until summer 2010, two schools) and draws upon the services and expertise of the charity's professional executive, including directors of education, finance and human resources. This structure enables effective monitoring of educational standards, rigorous financial planning and appropriate investment in staff, accommodation and resources.
- 5.2 Members of the Education Committee have good insight into the workings of the school. They are carefully inducted, including training in safeguarding. Individual members of the committee take on specific responsibilities and are trained for those roles, which include child protection, health and safety, special educational needs and the EYFS. The committee members understand the school and its needs through their portfolio responsibilities, through the regular reports that they receive and through visiting the school. The committee meets four times a year, usually, but not always, at the school, and has no sub-committees. Inevitably the members are viewed as remote by some staff. However, the charity's executive team is based at the school and has the professional expertise to provide the guidance, support and stimulus to the school that are usually expected from governors.
- 5.3 Although they have established robust policies for the protection of children and the promotion of health and safety, the members of the Education Committee have not adhered sufficiently closely to the requirements in those policies that they will formally review the child protection policy and its effectiveness annually, and that health and safety policy and procedures will be subject to regular review. As a result, the trustees had not, at the time of the initial inspection visit, met all their responsibilities in these two areas. By the time of the final inspection visit, however, both policies had been fully and properly reviewed.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.4 The leadership and management of the school as a whole are good. The heads of the senior and junior schools, with their senior teams, work very well together, supported by the charity's director of education, to ensure that the school successfully achieves its aims. The ethos, attitudes and values promoted are the result of coherent direction and leadership, which are reflected in the good quality of the pupils' education and personal development. Day-to-day management of the school is efficient. Parents and pupils think that the school is well run.
- 5.5 Leadership and management in the junior school are highly effective. Thorough procedures have been established for self-evaluation, setting priorities and ensuring that they are achieved. Policies are well devised and well implemented. Standards are closely monitored by senior managers. Subject co-ordinators accept responsibility for planning and supporting the work of their colleagues.

- 5.6 In the senior school, the newly restructured senior management team already provides strong leadership, is aware of areas for improvement and has clear vision and resolve, although many ideas have only recently been initiated or have yet to be implemented. For example, a new performance review system was introduced in September 2010 and a programme of monitoring teaching and marking has recently started. The school has moved in recent years from a faculty system to one with heads of individual departments, but inconsistency of practice indicates that until now the monitoring of departmental management has not been fully effective, nor has a culture been established within all departments of evaluating the work of colleagues and setting standards. Similar inconsistency applies to departmental development planning and the way in which it contributes to whole-school planning. Nonetheless, examples of good practice within particular departments are apparent and are starting to be shared.
- 5.7 The high level of satisfaction among both parents and pupils with the boarding provision indicates that heads of houses are highly effective in leading and managing their houses and in creating a distinctive ethos in each house, which is appropriate to the different age groups in the houses.
- 5.8 Procedures for checking the suitability of persons working on the school site are rigorous and carefully recorded in the central recruitment register. The school has a comprehensive programme for the induction of new staff, who confirm its value. All staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding policies and procedures.
- 5.9 The school benefits from its team of loyal, hardworking and friendly non-teaching staff.

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

- 5.10 Good links have been established with the parents in both junior and senior schools. Relationships with parents are constructive and supportive, as they were at the time of the previous inspection, and contribute positively to the school's success in achieving its aims.
- 5.11 The overwhelming majority of parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire, in both schools, are satisfied or very satisfied with the education and care that their children receive. Aspects rated particularly highly were the range of the curriculum, the attitudes and values promoted, the variety of extra-curricular activities, the high quality of boarding, the good progress that children make and the pastoral care. Most parents report that it is easy to communicate with the school and responses from the school are timely. A small number commented on the need to improve communication further. Although inspectors found little to support this concern, the school is aware of it and is developing the 'virtual learning environment' further to improve the information provided to parents about children's work and progress. Email is increasingly used to communicate rapidly with parents. One in ten of the parents responding to the questionnaire added a written comment about how well their child is faring, and how pleased they are with the school.
- 5.12 Opportunities for parents to be involved in the life of the school are plentiful, through the activities of the parent teachers' association, by attending school events or by taking advantage of the good opportunities to meet or communicate with teachers. A number of parents with children in the junior school are involved in running after-school clubs. Inspection evidence did not support the view of a small number of parents that these opportunities were too few.

- 5.13 The information available to parents of current and prospective pupils about the school is comprehensive. The website and regular newsletters are helpful and clear. Published material about the school is of high quality. Reports to parents about their children's progress are informative and constructive. Parents of pupils in the junior school are invited to parents' meetings each term and receive written reports twice a year. In the senior school, in addition to parents' meetings and reports, interim reports indicating levels of attainment and effort are issued each half term. Reports provide clear guidance to assist further progress.
- 5.14 Complaints are dealt with sensitively and effectively, and a successful policy has been established for handling parental concerns.

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 effectiveness of the setting in meeting the children's needs is good. The high adult-child ratio for children, most of whom will be five within the school year, enables each child to be recognised as a unique individual and to progress well. Policies and procedures to promote children's welfare are good. Effective review systems ensure the children's continuing safety and well-being. Good partnerships exist with local nurseries and with the parents. Parents collaborate closely with the school, sharing information and supporting its work. This contributes importantly to the successful outcomes and good progress achieved. Teachers are aware of the importance of continuous improvement. The need to develop child-initiated learning further, so as to enhance insight for assessment and enable further challenge to the children, is appreciated.

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

6.2 Leadership and management are highly effective. Safeguarding procedures are thorough. Regular risk assessments are conducted. The designated child protection officer and staff have all received appropriate training. The school works well in partnership with parents and others. Parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire are strongly supportive. The management has clear vision and well-established priorities for improvement. Self-evaluation, review and awareness are strong. The development plan is well devised and comprehensive. Expectations are high for both education and care. Good assessment systems, and staff who work extremely well together, enable outcomes to be reviewed and continuity of learning ensured. Cultural diversity is suitably celebrated to promote equality and prevent discrimination. Good resources are effectively deployed to enhance outcomes.

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

6.3 Provision is good in all aspects. The classrooms and outside areas are of good quality and well resourced. The educational programme is thoroughly planned, providing a wide variety of experiences in support of good all-round education. The adults have outstanding relationships with the children and work well as a team supporting children's development and enabling each child to progress in all areas of his or her learning. Assessment systems are thorough, under-pinning good records of each child's development. Children of all abilities are suitably guided to independence. All safeguarding systems are in place. The children demonstrate understanding of the need for healthy eating by bringing in fruit for break. They recognise the need to take exercise regularly and enjoy games activities. They are aware of the importance of hygiene. Staff check all equipment regularly.

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

- 6.4 Outcomes for the children are good. All children progress well, with many exceeding the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Children like their school, feel safe within it and enjoy learning. Progress is good in all areas of the curriculum. Children have excellent relationships with adults and very positive relationships with each other. They display independence in the dining room, and move confidently around their area making sensible choices, given the opportunity. They enjoy drawing and being creative, and relish the variety of opportunities that they have to be active in physical education, games, dancing and swimming, which encourages the development of a healthy lifestyle.

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 chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses, the learning resources centre and the medical centre. 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
Mr Nicholas Beesley	Headmaster, SHMIS school
Mrs Clare Margetts	Director of studies, ISA school
Dr Millan Sachania	Deputy head, HMC school
Mrs Francesca Southern	Director of studies, IAPS and HMC school
Mrs Susan Watts	Headmistress, ISA school
Mrs Kirsten Jackson	Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector