



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**THE PETERBOROUGH SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## The Peterborough School

Full Name of School	<b>The Peterborough School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>874/6000</b>		
EYFS Number	<b>EY239807</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>269667</b>		
Address	<b>The Peterborough School Thorpe Road Peterborough Cambridgeshire PE3 6AP</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01733 343357</b>		
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Email Address	<b>admin@thepeterboroughschool.co.uk</b>		
Head	<b>Mr Adrian Meadows</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Ms Lynne Ayres</b>		
Age Range	<b>0 to 18</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>432</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (158 boys; 274 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>14</b>	5-11: <b>137</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>94</b>	11-18: <b>187</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>424</b>	Capacity for flexi-boarding: <b>8</b>
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>8</b>	
	Full:	<b>2</b>	Weekly: <b>6</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Ann-Marie Elding</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection dates	<b>4 October to 5 October 2011 2 November to 4 November 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 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 2010 and can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 Peterborough High School was founded in 1895 as a school for girls. The school remained in the centre of Peterborough until 1936, when it moved to the present ten-acre site in Thorpe Road and later became a charitable trust. Following a period of expansion, during which the sixth form and boarding education were developed, the school was incorporated into the Woodard Corporation in 1974. The school is managed by its own governing body, some of whose members are Woodard Fellows. In 2010 the school became fully co-educational and changed its name to The Peterborough School. The extension of co-education is developing progressively through the senior school.
- 1.2 The school supports the tenets of the Woodard Corporation. It welcomes children of all faiths and no faith at all, and offers an experience of Anglican worship. All children, whatever their race, nationality, gender or creed, are valued and encouraged to develop their individual talents and interests in a stimulating and caring environment. The school aims to promote high academic standards and to help pupils develop confidence to lead a successful life after school. The importance of kindness and courtesy are fostered for all pupils, and children in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), to help them become responsible, articulate young people with questioning minds and eager to acquire knowledge and skills.
- 1.3 The school currently educates 432 pupils, including 158 boys and 274 girls. Of these, 137 are in the preparatory department and 108 children aged five or younger are in the EYFS. All year groups, with the exception of Years 9 to 11, are co-educational. There are 187 pupils in the senior school. Most children who enter the EYFS in Nursery proceed to the preparatory department and then on to senior school at age eleven. The school maintains a small boarding provision for eight girls, which will cease in September 2013. Boarders are accommodated from Years 8 to 13 and include two full time boarders from overseas. The majority of pupils come from a broad range of backgrounds, including professional and business families in Peterborough and surrounding areas, with eight pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and who receive support.
- 1.4 Since the previous inspection the school has undertaken a number of building and refurbishment projects including a new refectory, centre for the creative arts, and music technology room. Work has started on a new sports facility to provide additional facilities such as four badminton courts and a fitness suite. The curriculum has been extended in the senior school by the inclusion of economics, psychology, media studies, personal learning and thinking skills and the AQA Baccalaureate has been introduced. In the preparatory department, food technology and French are recent additions to the curriculum.
- 1.5 Pupils take a variety of different school based aptitude and ability tests depending on their age on entry. These show that pupils' ability is above the national average at all stages. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs and the school has identified 24 pupils who receive varying degrees of learning support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. Nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

***Preparatory Department***

School	NC name
Infant	Year 1 and Year 2

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

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

- 2.1 The Peterborough School is very successful in meeting its principal aims. This is apparent in the pupils' good academic achievement and in their successes in a range of sporting and creative activities, in their contribution to the community and in their excellent personal development. Pupils make good progress and benefit from the good teaching they receive, which enables them to achieve good results at GCSE and A level. Teachers plan interesting well-paced lessons but there is some variation in the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) skills in lessons and in the effective use of evaluative marking. The pupils' progress is closely monitored but there is some inconsistency between classes in the use of this information to plan challenging tasks for all groups of pupils. Pupils follow a challenging curriculum and have an extremely wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and strive to do their best.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent and they show extremely strong social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness. They are well-rounded and balanced, secure in the extremely supportive framework provided in school which enables them to be happy and contented. Pupils of all backgrounds and faiths relate well to one another and relationships at every level are excellent. Arrangements to promote the pupils' welfare, health and safety are excellent and relevant policies are implemented extremely efficiently throughout the school.
- 2.3 Governors provide excellent support for the school. They are well-informed about financial, educational and welfare matters, and through their well-developed committee structure they monitor carefully all areas of the school's work. Governors are committed to phase the extension of co-education through the school and to the continued improvement of school facilities. Leadership and management are good. The new senior leadership structure, with defined areas of responsibility for the three assistant headteachers, is now securely in place and senior leaders are working in close partnership to drive improvements in the school. The school has responded to the recommendations in the previous report by reviewing the curriculum, encouraging independent learning and research skills for pupils, and improving the quality of library provision. The school maintains excellent relationships with parents, who value the school's fostering of their children's academic and personal development.

## **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 met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

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

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that the existing good practice in assessment is consistent throughout, including marking, and the use of assessment data in lesson planning to meet the needs of all pupils.
  2. Improve the use of ICT across the school to ensure that pupils develop their skills across the full range of curriculum subjects.

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

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievement is good and this has been sustained since the previous inspection. They make good progress, reflecting the school's aim of helping all pupils to develop their individual talents and interests and promote high academic standards. Pupils of all ages approach their work with commitment, showing a desire to do as well as they can, and this contributes to their good achievement.
- 3.2 Pupils are articulate, listen carefully to their teachers and each other, and express themselves clearly, both orally and in writing. They apply their language and mathematical skills and scientific knowledge with confidence and show good levels of understanding in both curricular and extra-curricular activities. Pupils develop high levels of creative and physical skills through the many opportunities provided. The ICT suite is a valuable addition to the school and laptops for preparatory pupils enhance learning well. In the senior school there are new computers for the music technology room. However, ICT is not yet fully integrated into curricular subjects throughout the school. Expertise is well developed in ICT lessons but in other subjects opportunities to enable pupils to refine ICT skills are inconsistent.
- 3.3 Groups and individuals show excellent achievements in a range of sporting, music and drama events. Some have gained distinctions in the National Association of Teachers of Dancing examinations. There have been notable successes with Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music examinations and involvement in the Peterborough Music Festival. Pupils have achieved successes in the English-Speaking Union Public Speaking Competition, Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, Indoor Rowing National Championships and other sporting competitions. Other notable successes for pupils include the Corpus Christi Essay writing competition, Mathematics Olympiad awards, Biology Olympiad competition gold and bronze awards, and finalists in the John Clare Trust Poetry competition, including a gold medal winner. The pupils' London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art awards include a high number of pupils gaining distinction at all levels including gold, silver and bronze medals.
- 3.4 The following analysis of test and examination attainment uses the national data for the years 2008 to 2010. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. Attainment in the national tests at the ages of seven and eleven has been far above the national average for maintained primary schools. Results at GCSE have been above the national average for maintained secondary schools and similar to the average for maintained selective schools. Pupils achieve A-Level results which are in line with their ability and have been similar to the national average for maintained schools. In 2011 two-fifths of the grades were awarded at A\* or A, with all pupils gaining A\* to D grades at A Level. These results and standardised measures of progress indicate that pupils make good progress relative to other pupils of similar ability and are attributable to good teaching and the exceptionally positive attitudes of pupils. Gifted and talented pupils, pupils with SEND and those with EAL make the same good progress as their peers because their needs are carefully assessed and they receive good support. Most pupils go to their chosen course at their selected universities.

3.5 Pupils have high expectations of themselves and work diligently in lessons. They show pride in the written presentation of their work and a very positive approach to their learning. They work well independently and contribute well to paired, group and class discussions. Respect for each other and for their teachers underpins the good learning ethos in lessons.

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

3.6 The curriculum is good and provides a broad and challenging learning experience, reflecting the school's aims to promote high standards of learning in a stimulating and creative environment. The academic curriculum is enriched by an extremely varied programme of extra-curricular activities and, together, both aspects of provision create a good base for pupils of all abilities to flourish in their academic, physical and personal development.

3.7 In the preparatory department, the curriculum is enhanced by contributions from specialist subject teachers. This reflects the effective links between the preparatory department and the senior school whereby subject co-ordinators in the preparatory department discuss continuity of curriculum with heads of department in the senior school. A themed approach combines geography, history and science which are merged into English and mathematics in interesting topics that give an excitement and purpose to the pupils' learning. In the senior school good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their language skills. The study of two languages is compulsory in Years 7 to 9 and nearly all pupils study either French or German to GCSE. The science curriculum is good and the three sciences are taught separately and from Year 8 pupils of higher ability take three separate sciences at GCSE. There is a wide choice of options at GCSE including drama, music, art and textiles, which extends the opportunities for pupils to develop their creative experiences well through the curriculum. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their creative and aesthetic skills through the arts. The personal, health and social education programme covers a good range of relevant topics which provide a secure foundation for pupils' personal development. The sixth-form curriculum provides good choice for pupils with twenty subjects offered. It is flexibly adapted to suit the needs of individual pupils and almost all current sixth-form students are following the A levels of their choice.

3.8 Effective careers education is developed sequentially through the senior school. The school has focused well on improving opportunities for independent learning projects through their independent learning strategy. Pupils in Years 1 to 9 work on independent learning projects which are undertaken by each year group at different stages during the year. This is working well in helping to develop pupils' research skills. Projects for preparatory pupils have been based on environmental issues and older pupils have considered design and construction issues as well as elements of town planning. For Year 7 pupils, a weekly programme focuses on personal learning and thinking skills. These projects extend experiences beyond the school site and develop effective teamwork skills. The senior and junior learning resource centres have been improved and offer an environment conducive to research and reading.

3.9 Learning opportunities are being suitably extended for all pupils. Food technology is taught in Year 6 and French is an option in pre-school and is now taught from Reception. In the senior school, Latin is offered at GCSE for a group of gifted and talented pupils and psychology is offered in the sixth form. The Extended Project

Qualification, has recently been made available to pupils. The majority of Year 12 students do an AS course in critical thinking or general studies. Taken together, A levels, critical thinking or general studies, the Extended Project Qualification and extra-curricular responsibilities can lead to the challenging AQA Baccalaureate. There has been a strong impetus to increase the quality of the provision for those who find learning more difficult and for the gifted and talented pupils. Their learning needs are carefully assessed and close liaison with teachers is at the heart of the provision, which is beginning to be monitored to ensure it is consistently effective. Pupils with EAL are supported in lessons and with other sessions where necessary. The new sports facility is under construction to enhance sports provision.

- 3.10 Pupils grow in confidence and maturity through their participation in a full range of exciting and valuable activities. Visits and visitors continue to be a valuable part of the enrichment programme including an author, a preparatory science day and a German exchange for seventeen pupils. A balanced programme of visits has been established for the current year. The extensive and well-organised extra-curricular activities offer a broad choice of interests. The senior school offers sixteen lunchtime and thirteen after-school clubs. Attendance is monitored, as participation in at least three clubs per term is strongly encouraged. Pupils' own ideas are welcomed, such as the creation of the young journalists club for preparatory pupils. A considerable number of pupils benefit significantly from their involvement in the wide variety of musical activities. There is very good practice in the targeting of every sixth-form student to take on responsibilities suitable to their skills and career aspirations.

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

- 3.11 The quality of teaching is good and makes a strong contribution to the achievement of pupils and their enjoyment of learning in all year groups. In most cases teachers' subject knowledge, careful planning of tasks and high expectations ensure that pupils are deeply engaged and make rapid progress. Nearly all teaching is effective in promoting pupils' progress in a supportive environment. An ethos of productive learning was maintained in all the lessons observed. In the best lessons, work is carefully structured and well-planned tasks provide strong challenge to stretch groups of different ability. For example in a senior English lesson, the challenging concept of a character's status in *Of Mice and Men* was analysed by the whole class enthusiastically with each pupil set a homework task appropriate to their own ability and interest. Less successful teaching was characterised by a lack of pace or insufficient challenge to stretch all of the pupils fully.
- 3.12 The school has developed an efficient academic tracking system for all pupils that uses standardised data with internal assessments and is used in termly reports sent to parents, to set pupils their personal targets. Progress is tracked accurately across the whole school, although the use of this assessment information is still developing and is not yet used effectively in all classes to plan tasks that are well matched to the needs of pupils of different ability. Teachers know their pupils very well and relationships between pupils and teachers are very positive. Teachers are friendly but firm and pupils respond with excellent behaviour and diligence in their approach to learning. Lessons, in consequence, are well organised and purposeful. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and they fully understand the demands of the relevant examination syllabi. At its best, marking is very effective and follows the school's policy, with detailed diagnostic comments providing valuable feedback to pupils. However, some marking does not identify clearly how and where a piece a particular piece of work can be improved.

- 3.13 Departmental handbooks are comprehensive and include detailed schemes of work that enable teachers to plan interesting lessons. Classrooms are well resourced and equipped and teachers use the resources well, although pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to use and extend their ICT skills. Pupils with SEND and EAL are identified well. Pupils identified as gifted and talented are well supported by a mentoring system. However, work in class for both groups of pupils is often not specifically directed to them. The school has moved rapidly in its response to the previous report's recommendation concerning independent learning through the introduction of an extensive and very successful individual project scheme, but is not extended to include independent learning as a key part of all lessons.

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

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent. The school successfully meets its aims to inculcate high moral standards, tolerance of others and an understanding of the wider community within the context of a Christian school. The spiritual development of the pupils is excellent and they have a conscientious and respectful appreciation of their own and other faiths. They are aware of the elements of their own and other religions and show an insightful appreciation of the deeper meaning of faith. Chapel and assemblies play a significant part in promoting the Christian ethos of the school. There are strong links with Peterborough Cathedral and important services and the end-of-year prize giving are held there. The Canon Precentor is a governor of the school. In a Eucharist for Years 11 to 13 he gave a homily on false idols which was listened to with thoughtful attention. Pupils are encouraged in lessons to consider current topical issues, especially in the local area, and reflect on their impact and importance to society and to individuals. The school's behaviour code is strongly underpinned by a similar encouragement to consider carefully one's own conduct and how what you do may affect others around you, especially for younger pupils.
- 4.2 The moral development of the pupils is excellent. They have a clear understanding of what constitutes good behaviour. They are considerate to their peers and relationships between staff and pupils are exemplary. In assemblies pupils discuss a wide range of moral and social issues well, ranging from cyber bullying to the strong moral and humanitarian lessons to be learnt from Auschwitz. Such vivid examples have a deep impact on pupils, enhancing their moral awareness. Pupils show courtesy and kindness and support each other well. In a netball lesson, Year 10 pupils showed excellent teamwork, helping each other to develop tactics and encouraging those for whom this exercise did not come easily. Pupils are confident and clear about the ethos of their school and aware of their responsibilities to each other. The senior prefects set an excellent example to the rest of the school in the efficient and dignified manner in which they carry out their responsibilities.
- 4.3 Pupils show excellent social development. They are given many opportunities to take responsibility such as form captains, chapel servers, house captains and senior prefects. They carry out their duties with pride and dignity. One prefect has organised an assessment of the behaviour policy through meetings with pupils throughout the senior school. The student council, led by the senior prefects, meets weekly. Its findings are fed back to the headmaster who listens carefully and responds appropriately. Pupils feel that their views are listened to and acted upon and a newspaper, written and edited by pupils, is an example of one such initiative. Their collections for charities focus pupils' minds on those less fortunate than themselves. The most recent charity appeal has raised money for the building of a secondary school in Kenya.
- 4.4 The pupils have excellent cultural awareness. The school encourages an exploration of all faiths and different cultures in a number of ways, for example, pupils were introduced to the Maori culture in a recent assembly. Pupils show great tolerance and respect for the beliefs and opinions of others. They show sensitivity to world events and environmental issues. An effective A-level geography lesson focused on commercial agriculture in tropical rainforests and pupils presented their analysis of the sensitive, rural, cultural and agricultural issues facing countries in developing areas cogently. Themed lunches encourage pupils to explore different

cultures through culinary experience. There are many opportunities for pupils to visit galleries and theatres. This enhances their awareness and enjoyment of creative aspects of culture.

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

- 4.5 Arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils throughout the school, including those for boarders, are excellent. Staff provide extremely good-quality guidance to all pupils in keeping with the school aims of providing the highest academic standards within an effective and supportive environment. At the heart of the excellent pastoral provision is the extremely effective form tutor system. There is rapid and efficient exchange of information between staff. The good leadership provided by the deputy head and three assistant headteachers for their tutor teams ensures that concerns are shared quickly and sensitively. Based on class groups, tutors know pupils very well and work with dedication to provide them with excellent support.
- 4.6 Relationships between pupils and with their teachers are excellent. Mutual respect and trust is deeply embedded in the school and as a result pupils feel safe and confident to confide their concerns and approach staff if they have any worries. Pupils' views are valued and responses to the pupils' questionnaire indicate that they feel strongly that they can seek help and support when they need it. Bullying and unacceptable behaviour are very rare but pupils are confident that any incidents would be dealt with quickly by staff. Sixth-form prefects and school councillors play a very valuable role in identifying and bringing forward for discussion pupils' ideas and concerns. Pupils have been consulted on the school behaviour policy and additional features for the school's website. The integration of boys from Year 7 to the sixth form has been planned with care to ensure their sensitive integration into the school.
- 4.7 There are comprehensive policies to safeguard the pupils, to promote their welfare and good behaviour, and to prevent bullying. These meet all the regulatory requirements and are extremely well integrated in the school and supported by appropriate training for staff. Efficient procedures are followed to ensure the health and safety of pupils, including minimising the risk from fire. Provision for sick pupils is good. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and are very aware of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. The new refectory provides a good choice of food at lunchtimes and a wide range of opportunities are provided at lunchtimes and after school for clubs, sports teams and a wide range of activities. Admission and attendance registers are properly maintained. The school has an effective plan for improving access for pupils and others with particular learning needs or disabilities.

#### **4.(c) The quality of boarding education**

- 4.8 The school makes excellent provision for the two full-time and eight part-time boarders remaining. Relationships between boarders and the house parents are friendly, courteous and relaxed. The boarding environment significantly enhances boarders' personal development and education. They benefit from spacious, light airy accommodation and extremely good recreational facilities. A wide range of weekend activities is available in school to cater for sporting or other recreational pursuits, as well as trips into Peterborough to visit cinemas and shops. In addition there are a range of planned trips such as excursions to London for added interest or relaxation.

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

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

- 5.1 The governance of the school is excellent and supports the aims of the school and of the Woodard Corporation. All governors have regular involvement in the school and have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They receive regular, detailed information about all aspects of the school's work from the headmaster. There is a close working partnership with the new expanded senior leadership team and stronger links are now systematically forged with all staff in the school. Clearly identified priorities and targets are driving the school forward, and careful monitoring, as well as challenging debate, ensures that senior management is held to full account. Governors are aware of their responsibilities to ensure the health and safety of the pupils, including those with SEND, conscientiously and very efficiently.
- 5.2 A range of pertinent and valuable expertise amongst governors enables them to provide excellent support and guidance through the work of their committees to sustain the school's continuing success. Their oversight of all matters relating to the achievement of pupils, and the quality of the learning environment is excellent. Prudent oversight of finances has been effective in facilitating important rebuilding and refurbishment programmes. Careful evaluation, and a sensitive consultation process, has led to a well-structured plan to move to the phased expansion of co-education through the school. This has been efficiently timed to coincide with the reduction of boarding places, thus releasing accommodation for academic use.

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

- 5.3 Leadership and management are good and are strongly focused on the needs of the pupils. The structure of the new leadership team is strong and has been successfully established in the school. Senior leaders and managers share a determination to bring about continued improvement and are increasingly effective in monitoring new initiatives, developments and policies. All members have both pastoral and academic responsibility, ensuring high levels of care and progress for the pupils in their care. This all-round responsibility is supported and informed by teachers through a comprehensive pattern of meetings and careful record keeping.
- 5.4 Clear and ambitious leadership unites and motivates staff through a very clear and perceptive understanding of the strengths and areas for further development in the school. A close and complementary partnership between the headmaster, the deputy headmistress and assistant headteachers has brought a valuable dimension to the leadership of the school and a strong ambition to drive the school forward. Full safeguarding procedures are in place for child protection, and all staff have received the appropriate level of training in safeguarding and in welfare, health and safety procedures. The school has thorough arrangements for checking the suitability of staff, volunteers, supply staff and governors.

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

- 5.5 The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent. The school regularly canvasses parents' views, using the results to adapt practice and policy where relevant. An overwhelming majority of parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire were highly supportive of the school. There was a very high level of satisfaction with the educational and pastoral care provided and the quality and quantity of information provided for them.
- 5.6 A comprehensive and attractive set of documents which cover all sections of the school is available to parents on a regular basis. Prospective parents visit the school throughout the year and on open days where they meet the headmaster and staff and are shown the school by senior pupils. Current parents receive a comprehensive weekly bulletin that contains news of recent events and dates of forthcoming ones. The headmaster has initiated valuable regular informal afternoon teas where parents can raise any issue in a relaxed setting.
- 5.7 Parents welcome the many opportunities they have to be involved in the school and attendance at school functions is high. The parents association is an active and valued support to the school. The quiz night is a popular event and one of the many organised for parents and staff to raise money for the school. Parents also run the uniform shop, help with school productions and accompany pupils on school trips. Some parents have also added to the educational experiences of the pupils by talking to preparatory pupils about their jobs. A parent who is a psychologist addressed a sixth-form personal, social and health education session.
- 5.8 Parents are given frequent information regarding their children's progress. They receive helpful and detailed written reports on their children's current attainment and future targets. These are dispatched at times during the school year when they can be most useful for shaping future development. Form tutors write to parents at the beginning of the academic year and maintain excellent links with parents throughout. Regular meetings enable parents to discuss their child's progress with the form tutor and other relevant staff. Complaints are dealt with efficiently and correctly following the school's own clear policy. Parents confirmed that their concerns were dealt with promptly and sensitively, normally by the form tutor, but also by senior staff following the school's established procedures.

**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 effectiveness of the EYFS is outstanding. The needs of all children are met exceedingly well and so they make rapid progress in their learning and development. All staff know the children very well and each child is valued highly within the stimulating learning environment. Since the previous inspection, many improvements to procedures and facilities have been made, including more structured observation and recording of progress made by children, and closer involvement of parents in their child's education. Staff are alert to areas where further improvements can be made to sustain existing excellent standards.

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

6.2 Leadership and management are outstanding. Highly effective policies to safeguard children and eliminate discrimination are implemented rigorously by all staff. Exceptionally strong links are built up with parents from the outset with regular newsletters, detailed reports and social events and they are highly supportive of the school. They appreciate particularly the detailed profiles produced as a result of careful assessment, parents evenings and the daily contact with staff. Contacts with other settings are used effectively to contribute significantly to children's welfare and development. A clear vision of the way forward is shared by all staff who form a close, co-operative team. They meet regularly to reflect upon current practice and plan for further improvement. Each child has an equal opportunity to develop their skills and confidence through the well-resourced and well-planned range of activities.

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

6.3 The quality of the provision is outstanding. Bright spacious settings, run most effectively by well-qualified and caring staff, enable children to settle and learn extremely well. Children develop their imagination and problem-solving skills through role-play, learning to choose their activity. The 'Nature Garden' in the Nursery provides outstanding opportunities for learning about the growing and harvesting of vegetables, as does the 'Garden Centre' that is one of the role-play areas in Reception. Both pre-school and Reception benefit from imaginative, well-equipped outdoor areas that enhance children's development of physical skills as well as imagination and problem-solving. A balance is struck between child-initiated and adult-led activities and an accurate profile of each child helps plan the next steps in their learning. Children are cared for extremely well. They learn about keeping safe in many contexts, including how to use stairs and climbing equipment safely. Regular checks of all equipment create a safe environment. Risk assessments are carried out thoroughly.

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

- 6.4 Outcomes for the children are outstanding. From different initial starting points, children make substantial progress towards the achievement of the Early Learning Goals. Children are enthusiastic learners who enjoy participating in all their activities and work industriously both individually and co-operatively. Children care for and respect each other, take turns, share willingly and offer to help. By the end of pre-school most children can order number up to ten, recognize the sound made by a tabor and name it and are able to use a computer mouse. By the end of Reception, most children achieve high standards in all six areas of learning. Children are able to add and subtract simple numbers and are becoming increasingly confident when using a computer. Although most write sentences independently using a wide vocabulary and exceed the expectations for early writing, there is weakness in writing for a variety of purposes. Children develop a strong sense of personal safety, as shown by the way they use cycles and scooters outside. They understand that healthy eating, personal hygiene and physical exercise are prerequisites of a healthy lifestyle. All children behave very well, are articulate, and try to do their best so they are developing considerable skills for the future.

**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 and a governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and 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**

Dr Norma Ball	Reporting Inspector
Mr Francie Healy	Head, SHMIS school
Mrs Irene Robson	Former Senior Teacher, SHMIS school
Mrs Janet Cooper	Former Head of Juniors, ISA school
Mr Richard Walker	Former Head, SHMIS school
Mr Andrew Dobbin	Former Head, IAPS school
Mr Richard Balding	Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector