



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

SURBITON HIGH SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Surbiton High School

Full Name of School	Surbiton High School
DfE Number	314/6003
Registered Charity Number	1016538
Address	Surbiton High School 13-15 Surbiton Crescent Kingston Upon Thames Surrey KT1 2JT
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Principal	Ms Ann Haydon
Chairman of Governors	The Rt Revd and Rt Hon The Lord Carey of Clifton
Acting Chairman of Local Governing Body	Mr Ruairidh Hogg
Age Range	4 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	1309
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (136 boys; 1173 girls;)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 0 5-11: 339 3-5 (EYFS): 44 11-18: 926
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 1304 Capacity for flexi-boarding: 5
Number of Boarders	Total: 5 Full: 5 Weekly: 0
Head of EYFS Setting	Miss Catherine Bufton
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	29 Mar 2011 to 30 Mar 2011 04 May 2011 to 06 May 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 inspections were in March 2005 for the Boys' Preparatory School and in April 2007 for the Senior School and the Junior Girls' School.

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.

1. The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
2. Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
3. 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 evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education and development in general.

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 Founded in 1884, Surbiton High School is a member of the United Church Schools Trust (USCT), the council of which constitutes the main board of governors. The trust appoints members of the local governing body (LGB), who provide guidance and support to the trustees and to the senior leadership team (SLT). The school aims to bring out the best in everyone, to discover and expect the best, and to support all pupils as they endeavour to achieve their personal best. "May love always lead us," the school motto, encourages respect for, and service to, others.
- 1.2 The school, which has 1309 pupils, occupies five sites in Surbiton and owns a 33-acre sports field four miles away. There are 926 girls, aged from eleven to eighteen, in the Senior School. The Junior Girls' School (JGS) has 247 pupils, of whom 24 are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The Boys' Preparatory School (BPS) has 136 pupils, including 20 in the EYFS. Boys leave Surbiton High School after Year 6, whereas junior girls usually proceed into the Senior School. The five boarders are senior girls for whom special provision is made to nurture their gymnastic talents.
- 1.3 The ability profile of the JGS and Senior School girls is above the national average, most pupils being of at least above average ability. The boys in the BPS are of average or above average ability. Pupils come mainly from professional and business families, and about a fifth are from ethnic minorities. The school has identified 189 pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), of whom 112 receive specialist learning support from the school. For 50 pupils, English is an additional language (EAL), and of these 20 receive support for their English. While the school has an Anglican foundation, it welcomes pupils of other denominations and faiths and of none.
- 1.4 Since the last inspections, the school has made a number of major additions to its facilities. The present principal took up her position in January 2008, and the head for the BPS and the JGS in September 2009.
- 1.5 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 meeting its aim to support all pupils as they endeavour to achieve their personal best, providing a broad-based education which enables pupils to discover their strengths and develop their individual talents. The overall quality of the pupils' learning and achievement from the EYFS to the Sixth Form is excellent. Their positive attitudes to study lead to purposeful and productive learning. The pupils' rapid academic progress and high attainment, with excellent results in public examinations, are promoted by teaching which is good overall and frequently excellent. In most, but not all, areas of the school, data is used efficiently to monitor progress and set targets. A broad curriculum enriches the pupils' educational experience and enables them to achieve personal fulfilment. Many pupils who participate in a wide range of activities reach good, and in some cases exceptionally distinguished standards. However, a few pupils do not make the most of their opportunities.
- 2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent. Outstanding pastoral care at all levels, effective welfare arrangements and robust safeguarding, health and safety procedures contribute significantly to the personal development and well-being of the pupils. Relationships amongst pupils and between staff and pupils constitute a strength of the school. Pupils develop social maturity and benefit from the many opportunities to lead and to serve. A notable feature of this large, high-achieving school, based on five sites, is that it is nonetheless a warm, friendly community in which pupils are well known as individuals and display confidence, consideration and courtesy. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of pupils said that they enjoyed being at the school.
- 2.3 The success of this vibrant school owes much to the excellence of governance, leadership and management. The LGB exercises effective oversight and provides valued support. Leadership is energetic, clear-sighted and sensitive, accommodating both the big picture and the needs of the individual. Management is efficient and effective, with sophisticated and comprehensive systems of communication. The school enjoys extremely good relations with the parents, whose views are highly favourable across the full range of the school's current provision and arrangements. Where the previous inspection reports recommended remedial action, the school has responded positively and effectively.

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. In the Senior School, ensure that best practice regarding use of data for target-setting is shared across the curriculum.
2. Systematically monitor pupil participation in extra-curricular activities throughout the Senior School.
3. In the EYFS, improve the sharing of best practice across the Reception classes.

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 overall quality of pupils' achievement is excellent, and reflects the school's aims. Pupils achieve extremely well in all aspects of the academic curriculum. At every stage the overall standard of numeracy, literacy, reading and speaking is high, and pupils are proficient in their use of information and communication technology (ICT). The pupils display secure knowledge, skills and understanding of the material being covered in their syllabuses. Year 13 pupils achieve an excellent record of success in entry to the universities of their choice, and every year about a quarter of the Year 6 boys win scholarships to their senior schools.
- 3.2 The following analysis uses the national data for 2007 to 2009. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national curriculum tests at ages 7 and 11 have been far above the national average for maintained primary schools. Results at GCSE have been far above the national average for girls in maintained schools, and similar to the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. Results in IGCSE mathematics have been higher than worldwide norms and in line with UK norms, where the benchmark is higher. A-level performance has been far above the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. Results have shown improvement between 2007 and 2009. Statistics for 2010 showed further improvement: at GCSE, 36% of the grades were A*, the highest percentage of these top grades ever achieved by the school; furthermore, in the first year of its award, 22% of the A-level grades were A*, an outstanding achievement.
- 3.3 GCSE and A-level results indicate that academic progress throughout the Senior School is exceptional when compared with the average for pupils of similar abilities, as confirmed by nationally standardised measures of progress. Comparative data for the junior school pupils, together with evidence from observed lessons and their written work, suggests that their progress is consistently at least good during their time in the JGS or the BPS. Pupils with LDD make strong progress at all stages.
- 3.4 Pupils achieve high and in some cases exceptionally distinguished standards in a wide range of pursuits, which include mathematics and science challenges, the very well supported Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, Young Enterprise, art, speech, drama and music. Gymnastics is a real strength in all three sections of the school, and pupils have won many awards at the highest level not only in Britain, but also internationally. The school ski team has also achieved international successes. National honours have been won in rowing. Volleyball, hockey and cross country teams have won district competitions. Several pupils' artwork has been exhibited at the Royal College of Art. During the inspection, notable achievement was observed in gymnastics, art, choral singing, instrumental music, drama and pupils work on display in all three sections of the school was excellent.
- 3.5 At all levels the pupils' work ethic is extremely good. They have a very positive attitude to their learning, and participate with energy and commitment in their extra-curricular activities. In class, the pupils are enthusiastic students, keen to do well and eager to be challenged. Some good examples of self-evaluation were observed. Pupils co-operate very well in group assignments. Work is smartly presented in the JGS and the BPS and in most of the Senior School. The previous inspection report suggested that the Senior School should improve pupil use of ICT

in lessons: throughout the school pupils now make excellent use of ICT as a resource for learning, in class and in their own time.

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

- 3.6 The excellent academic curriculum enables pupils to achieve high standards and personal fulfilment. Well balanced, it covers all of the required areas of learning and is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs. It is regularly reviewed, so that it continues to support the aims of the school. Good academic continuity exists between the JGS and the Senior School, which allows pupils to make continuous progress. Pupils' linguistic skills are strongly developed as Spanish and French are studied in the BPS and the JGS, and linguistic breadth is developed with the introduction of German and Latin in Year 7. Pupils benefit from a wide range of subject choices at GCSE and A-level, and philosophy, classical civilisation and history of art have lately been added to the list of A-level options. All of the programmes of personal, social and health education (PSHE) are wide-ranging and well structured. On occasions such as the science and languages weeks, particular aspects of the curriculum are strongly promoted. Pupils benefit from the use of the attractive JGS library and the Senior School library, which is imaginatively stocked and well used for recreation and research.
- 3.7 Systems for identifying pupils with LDD work well and support for them is very good. They are given appropriate specialist help and the clear, concise individual learning profiles give teachers excellent guidance so that they can support individuals appropriately in class. The ablest pupils in all sections of the school are given additional assignments which are intellectually stimulating and challenging. The quality of careers education in the Senior School is thorough and helpful; in the later stages of the process, pupils receive excellent guidance regarding choices of subjects and applications to higher education.
- 3.8 In response to the last Senior School inspection recommendation the school has greatly increased the pupils' extra-curricular opportunities, with much increased provision of, and participation in, sport, music, drama, challenges and trips, as well as more clubs and the introduction of themed weeks. Choral music is now excellent. There is a relatively modest number of advanced instrumentalists for a school of this size, but very promising foundations are being laid in the junior schools. In its range of extra-curricular provision, the school seeks "to bring out the best in everyone", but as yet some pupils do not make much of these opportunities, and participation is not systematically monitored throughout the Senior School. The BPS has a good range of extra-curricular activities which includes a full programme of sports fixtures. The various clubs in the JGS are more focused on creative and cultural pursuits. All three sections of the school enrich the pupils' educational experience with a range of trips and residential visits, as well as presentations by outside bodies.
- 3.9 Pupils benefit from the opportunity to contribute and to serve in a number of flourishing links with the local community. 'Friendship Hour' sees pupils working with the elderly; in the 'community challenge' pupils help in local schools; some of the many fund-raising projects benefit charities in the neighbourhood. Pupils gain social awareness and wider horizons from other fund-raising links with people and institutions abroad, and foreign expeditions which include development work.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.10 The quality of teaching throughout the school is good overall, and a large proportion is excellent. It makes a central contribution to the pupils' progress and attainment, and to the fulfilment of the school's academic aims. Teachers are well qualified; the level of their knowledge and expertise is high. In the JGS and the BPS the mixture of form and subject teaching is effective and very suitable for the various age groups. Classroom discipline is managed outstandingly well, and in a relaxed manner, to the benefit of effective learning. The teachers' rapport with their students is excellent. Teachers pay close attention to the needs of individual pupils, and tailor their demands accordingly, taking due account both of the most able, and of those who find the work hard. Pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that they found their teachers helpful. They appreciate their willingness to help them with their work outside the timetabled lessons.
- 3.11 Throughout the school, lessons are very well planned and time is skilfully managed. Most lessons are taken at a brisk pace, with suitably varied and often imaginative approaches to the tasks provided for pupils. Teaching makes very good use of up-to-date technology, with effective application of interactive handsets adding to pupils' enjoyment and enabling efficient teaching. Pupils say that they find the work interesting, and on the whole, what they were studying during the inspection fully engaged their attention. The best teaching is challenging, stimulating and enthusiastic, characterised by high expectations of all pupils' performances, and by friendly but firm encouragement of all pupils to give of their best. In their questionnaire responses, the pupils acknowledged that they were encouraged to work and think independently, and this was confirmed many times during the inspection. The last inspection report criticised some aspects of teaching in the JGS. The quality of teaching is greatly improved so that it is now good, and frequently excellent, with effective support for pupils with LDD.
- 3.12 Much of the marking of books and files is good. The best examples are meticulous, regular and constructive. In some cases in the Senior School, marking is sketchy, with insufficient attention paid to showing pupils how to improve. In the three sections of the school, with some exceptions in parts of the Senior School, data on ability is systematically used to monitor and evaluate progress and set targets. Teaching deficiencies identified in the last inspection of the BPS have been rectified.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 Throughout the school, the pupils' personal qualities are developing excellently in accordance with its aims. Pupils' self-assurance and self-esteem are excellent and strongly supported by the many opportunities for personal fulfilment. They spoke confidently in class, displayed assurance in the performing arts, conversed articulately, and conducted tours of the school personably and with evident pride.
- 4.2 A strong sense of friendly co-operation permeates school life in this Christian foundation. Pupils have a secure sense of right and wrong, which is reflected in their considerate behaviour towards one another. Their social conduct is exceptionally good. Whether in small or large groups, the pupils enjoy their free time in a pleasant and civilised manner. The parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school promotes worthwhile attitudes and views. Assembly themes point pupils towards the values which matter and which strengthen their moral development.
- 4.3 Pupils benefit from the many opportunities to take responsibility and to develop their social awareness. In all three sections there are, as the pupils themselves acknowledge, many opportunities for leadership and service, ranging from prefectship and captaincy of houses, forms and teams to being a "buddy" or "peer mentor" and membership of the five school councils. The "buddy" and "peer mentor" systems are highly regarded as beneficial to all pupils involved. These duties, which pupils take seriously, help them to grow into mature, responsible members of the community. House loyalty and pride are strong, and the house is the focus of many of the charitable initiatives: pupils undertake a great deal of fund-raising, for causes in this country and abroad, often related to children or medical science. Although a number of Senior School pupils felt that the school was better at listening to pupils' views than acting upon them, the Senior School councils, like those in the junior schools, are worthwhile forums whose proposals do indeed produce results. In the JGS and the BPS, themed weeks on aspects of PSHE such as friendship, anti-bullying and personal safety increase pupils' social understanding.
- 4.4 About a fifth of the pupils come from ethnic minorities, giving the school some racial and cultural diversity: the pupils co-exist in complete harmony and respect each other's cultures and traditions. Pupils gain insights into the wider world through initiatives such as European exchange visits, expeditions as far afield as Iceland and Mongolia, and the various fund-raising ventures with international themes. Pupils' appreciation of Western cultural traditions is strengthened not only in lessons, but also in activities such as music and drama and the many visits to places and events of cultural interest.

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

- 4.5 The pupils' well-being and all-round development owe much to the excellent quality of pastoral care. The staff support and guide the pupils conscientiously and sympathetically. Relationships throughout the school, between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves, are outstanding. Appropriate pastoral structures are in place and are monitored by senior management. The well-being of individual pupils is regularly discussed, both informally and at staff meetings. From the intimacy of the BPS to the large Senior School, staff know their charges extremely well, benefiting from the management information system which is an invaluable

source of pastoral information and conduit for communication. The school demonstrates great thoughtfulness and sensitivity when placing Year 7 pupils in forms according to where they live, so that they may have friends in the vicinity and in order to help with travel arrangements.

- 4.6 The parents who responded to the questionnaire wholeheartedly agreed that the school achieved high standards of behaviour and this view was fully borne out during the period of the inspection. Courteous, friendly and considerate, pupils conduct themselves in an exemplary fashion, in accordance with the school's ethos of expecting the best in everyone. Pupils say that instances of bullying are extremely rare and that differences are resolved promptly and effectively.
- 4.7 The safeguarding policy is robust and implemented successfully. All staff receive appropriate regular training and an increasing number are trained in first aid. The effective arrangements for health and safety are kept under constant review. The road crossing is conscientiously and distinctively managed. Appropriate measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards, and thorough risk assessments are carried out before all school trips. The PSHE programme places due emphasis on personal safety, for instance regarding internet dangers and cyber bullying. The welfare centre is very well equipped to provide for pupils who are ill, who want a quiet space or who wish to consult the school counsellor. The school has a detailed plan to improve educational access for pupils with disabilities.
- 4.8 Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits and to take regular exercise. Lunches are civilised occasions; despite reservations expressed by some pupils and parents, the food during the inspection was nutritious and there was sufficient choice on the menus. The JGS has a very good arrangement whereby pupils pre-order their chosen courses, thereby eliminating waste. The curriculum incorporates a full programme of sport and exercise.
- 4.9 The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and correctly stored.

4.(c) The quality of boarding education

- 4.10 The quality of boarding education is excellent. Accommodation is provided for five élite gymnasts in a small house adjacent to the school. Pupils benefit from the high-quality care and supervision provided by resident and non-resident members of staff. Well decorated, equipped and maintained, the boarding house has a homely and welcoming atmosphere. The quality of care bestowed on this little 'family' is excellent. The pupils say that they are very happy with all of the boarding arrangements, which give them many of the freedoms of home, as well as setting appropriate boundaries.
- 4.11 The comprehensive boarding handbook is informative. Parents are regularly kept up to date about their daughters' well-being and overall progress and performance.
- 4.12 Boarding makes a highly beneficial contribution to the pupils' overall personal development and the school's aim of bringing out the best in everyone.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The governance of the school is excellent. The school benefits in many ways from its membership of the UCST, which is ultimately responsible for the well-being and proper operation of the school. The UCST oversees and advises on finance, human resources, marketing and policies. Strategic planning is carried out by the UCST in conjunction with the LGB and the school: the present development plans for the three sections of the school are realistic and straightforward, with a clear focus on the enhancement of learning, opportunities for leadership and strengthened application of its stated values. The strategic planning for the BPS was under-developed at the time of the last inspection, but it is now thorough and appropriate.
- 5.2 The LGB takes a lively, supportive interest in the school's life and work. The members of the board provide a wide range of experience and expertise. They maintain an effective oversight of high-quality educational standards, staffing and resources, and take an active role in planning and developments. Fully aware of its responsibilities, the LGB is committed to the welfare of the pupils: at its regular meetings, it receives and reviews welfare, child protection, safeguarding, health and safety reports, and examines the school's compliance with regulatory requirements. All of these aspects are reported to the UCST. There is an induction programme for new LGB members and a continuing programme of governance training. The systematic annual plan of the LGB meetings' agendas ensures coverage of all important topics.
- 5.3 Members with areas of specific responsibility, such as safeguarding or a particular age group, exercise conscientious and effective oversight. Members of the LGB also keep themselves informed about the day-to-day life of the school through meetings with staff, sitting in on lessons, attending school functions and informal visits. The LGB gives valued support and advice to the senior leadership team, with whom its relationship is one of mutual trust and openness.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.4 At all levels of responsibility, leadership and management are excellent and highly effective in furthering the aims of the school in terms of character and achievement. The clarity of educational direction provided by leadership and management is reflected in the high quality of the pupils' education and personal development in this cohesive trinity of three schools in one. The ethos created by the senior leadership team is well supported by staff and pupils alike in all sections of the school.
- 5.5 The vibrancy of the school owes much to its imaginative and energetic leadership. In recent years, many aspects of the school have been looked at afresh, with consequent changes and improvements, which advance the pupils' education and personal development. Most important has been a broadening of the school's vision for its pupils, complementing academic fulfilment with a holistic ideal and consequent extensive development of the extra-curricular provision. The management of change has been careful and consultative, and its implementation has been efficient and effective.
- 5.6 All sections of the school are extremely well run. A sense of friendly, sensible purposefulness characterises school life. All of those in senior positions operate an

'open door' policy and are easily accessible and approachable. A comprehensive programme of regular minuted meetings ensures that all aspects of the education provided are constantly examined in a constructive, self-critical way, to the benefit of the pupils' all-round development. Day-to-day administration and organisation are excellent, with the management information system an outstanding asset in helping to fulfil management's assertion that "care for the individual is paramount."

- 5.7 The school ensures that rigorous procedures are followed concerning the recruitment of all staff and governors, and a centralised register of appointments is kept accurately. New staff are given appropriate induction and support. All staff are suitably trained and are aware of the importance of their roles in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Systems which help staff to attain and maintain high standards of professional performance include a programme of appraisal, based on whole-school targets, observation of lessons by colleagues and 'learning walks', whereby senior management briefly inspect staff in action and provide constructive feedback.
- 5.8 The previous inspection on the BPS commented on the inadequacy of its accommodation and facilities. These criticisms have been addressed as far as reasonably possible. The overall accommodation remains the same, but the facilities now range from satisfactory to excellent, and substantial improvements have recently been made to the outdoor play area. A small but significant minority of parents who responded to the questionnaire expressed the wish that the BPS should have a separate head, but the inspection found that the educational provision for the present system of management works extremely well. On the whole, however, parents of pupils in all three sections expressed great satisfaction with the governance and management of the school.

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

- 5.9 At all levels, the school enjoys an excellent relationship with the parents, carers and guardians who are very pleased with the progress made by their children and are generally satisfied with the information which they receive. Parents of Senior School pupils receive progress reports every half-term and detailed, constructive annual reports, as well as the opportunity to attend annual parents' evenings. JGS and BPS parents are kept closely informed of and involved in their children's academic and general progress, through the termly parents' evenings and the opportunities provided by 'parent sharing' occasions, as well as thorough and helpful end-of-year reports. It is made clear to parents that they are welcome to discuss matters of concern, academic or otherwise, at any time. Senior staff make it their business to be available when parents come to the school at the beginning and the end of the day.
- 5.10 Prospective parents and their children receive detailed information about the school and opportunities to become personally acquainted with it. Formal communications from the school to current parents, such as the printed handbooks, are exceptional in quantity and quality, as are the many brochures and programmes which accompany school events. The termly newsletter reflects a school which is brimming with energy and joy of life. The school website is wide-ranging, easy to navigate and highly informative.
- 5.11 A significant minority of the parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that the school did not encourage them to be involved in its life and work, but this was not borne out by inspection evidence in any part of the school. They have plenty of

opportunities to be involved. They are actively encouraged to join the Parents' Association (PA) and to come to plays, concerts, matches and other school functions. The PA supports the school in many ways, for instance running social and fund-raising events, a second-hand uniform shop and parenting workshops. Furthermore, some BPS and JGS parents take the opportunity to help with trips, productions and pupils' reading. Representatives of the parents' association meet the principal every term and minutes of these meetings are sent to all parents. The school regularly surveys parental opinion, and responds positively to their views. Measures taken for the convenience of parents include the provision of a junior breakfast club, after-school care, and a crèche for very young pupils whose siblings have a longer school day.

- 5.12 Parents feel that they can communicate easily with the school, that concerns are handled well and that they receive timely responses to questions. The formal complaints procedure is clearly set out and is implemented appropriately. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the education that their children receive.

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 provision is good. The setting offers a warm, welcoming environment where children learn and develop well. Overall it is successful in meeting its aims of offering a broad, balanced, challenging and enriching education and of discovering the best and expecting the best in everyone. The staff demonstrate a good capacity to sustain and improve the current high standards. Following recommendations in the last inspection, the school has introduced staggered arrival and departure times, and parental workshops for reading and maths. Staff use well-developed assessment systems to plan each child's learning and monitor their progress towards the Early Learning Goals.

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

6.2 The leadership and management are good, with some outstanding features. A clear vision and appropriate development plans identify priorities for planning continuous improvement, which are supported by efficient systems for self-evaluation. Teaching is sometimes monitored, but best practice is not shared throughout. The necessary policies and procedures are properly implemented, so that all children have equal opportunities to succeed. Systems for safe recruitment of staff are robust and all staff are trained in child protection; children are safeguarded efficiently. Staff are well deployed to make effective use of excellent resources. They attend cluster groups of local schools to share ideas and to strive for improvement. Relationships with parents are outstanding. Parents say they are well informed about their child's progress through excellent communication systems. Parents value the successful breakfast club, early morning crèche, and after-school club.

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

6.3 The overall quality of the provision is outstanding. The broad, balanced curriculum is enriched by the teaching of Spanish to the girls and French to the boys, alongside swimming and music. Teaching is always good and at times outstanding, enabling children to learn and develop well. Varied teaching approaches include the use of a giant blackboard on which children compose their own sums and matching pairs hunt in the sand. The staff's detailed observations of the children's activities help in the planning of further activities and next steps for each child. The girls' Reception class has particularly good access to an outdoor area with many opportunities for child-initiated and adult-led activities, although the covered area for all-weather activities is small. The boys' outdoor area has been greatly improved recently. However, an imbalance between adult-led and child-initiated activities restricts children's independent learning. The system whereby Year 6 "buddies" are linked to individual Reception children is excellent, and staff promote the children's welfare effectively at all times. All staff have attended first aid courses; some hold current paediatric first aid certificates.

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

- 6.4 The overall outcomes for the children are good and in many cases outstanding. Children demonstrate well-developed skills in reading, writing, numeracy and ICT, tackling tasks with enthusiasm and enjoyment. They display confidence when using the interactive whiteboard to test and improve their spelling, use basic Spanish vocabulary with assurance, and they become increasingly adept at working with materials. The children talk confidently about their activities, displaying communication skills which are above expected level for this age. Attractive displays illustrate a variety of their creative skills. By the end of the EYFS, most children attain all or most of the Early Learning Goals. Most children are developing the capacity to become inquisitive, independent learners. Children share, take turns and have good social skills. Children respond positively to adults and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. They understand about being safe, the importance of healthy eating and good hygiene. The children all enjoy coming to school.

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 acting chairman of the LGB, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the boarding house 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

Mr Paul Spillane	Reporting Inspector
Mr Geoff Lee-Gallon	Assistant Reporting Inspector
Mrs Judith Gregory	Deputy Head of IAPS school
Mrs Loraine Guest	Head of IAPS school
Miss Pamela Maynard	Former Principal of GSA school
Mrs Gwendoline Randall	Former Head of HMC school
Mrs Lesley Taylor	Former Deputy Head of GSA school
Mr Jonathan Ullmer	Principal of ISA school
Mrs Margaret Viles	Head of GSA school
Mrs Val Weakley	Deputy Head of ISA school
Mrs Deborah Buckenham	Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector