



Independent Schools Inspectorate
Inspection Report

Wakefield Girls' High School
Junior School
January 2012

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Wakefield Girls' High School Junior School

The senior school was inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School/College **Wakefield Girls' High School Junior School**

DfE Number **384/6121**

Registered Charity Number **1088415**

Address **2 St John's Square
Wakefield
WF1 2QX**

Telephone Number **01924 374577**

Fax Number **01924 231602**

Email Address **bmilne@wghsjs.org.uk**

Head teacher **Mrs Daphne Cawthorne**

Chair of Governors **Mr Dennis Wheatley**

Age Range **3 - 11**

Total Number of Pupils **423**

Gender of Pupils **Mixed**

Numbers by Age 0-2 (EYFS): **0** 5-11: **345**

3-5 (EYFS): **78** 11-18: **0**

Number of Day Pupils Total: **423**

Heads of EYFS Setting **Mrs Linda Cholewa and Mrs Helen Stainsby**

EYFS Gender **Mixed**

Inspection dates **18 October 2011 to 19 October 2011**

16 November 2011 to 18 November 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 February 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 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.

CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL	2
(a) Main findings	2
(b) Action points	3
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
(ii) Recommendation(s) for further improvement	3
3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	4
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills	4
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c) The contribution of teaching	6
4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	7
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	7
(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	8
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	9
(a) The quality of governance	9
(b) The quality of leadership and management	9
(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians	10
6 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE	11
(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	11
(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	11
(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	11
(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	12
INSPECTION EVIDENCE	12

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Wakefield Girls' High School Junior School is part of the Wakefield Foundation, which incorporates the Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Senior School (founded in 1591), Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Junior School and Wakefield Girls' High School Senior School. The Foundation offers education to girls and boys ages 3 to 18. All the schools have the same governing body, whilst maintaining individuality and autonomy, including controlling their own budgets. At the time of the previous inspection, the school was co-educational for pupils from the age of three to the age of seven, and girls only between the ages of seven and eleven. From September 2011, the school has taken girls but not boys between the ages of four and seven, retaining coeducation only in the nursery. Boys aged 4 to 7 are now educated at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Junior School. Transfer to the Senior School is not automatic.
- 1.2 The school's aim is to give a good all round education to each pupil, encouraging academic excellence, nurturing talents, developing an individual's potential and maintaining traditional values in a modern context.
- 1.3 Currently, the number of pupils on roll is 423. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) consists of 78 children in the nursery and reception classes, all of whom are full-time. In addition, 82 pupils are in Years 1 and 2 (ages 5 to 7) and 263 are in Years 3 to 6 (ages 7 to 11).
- 1.4 There are 37 pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), 14 of whom receive support for their English. Thirty-five pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and a total of 41 pupils receive specialist learning support from the school. One pupil has a statement of special educational need. Pupils come from a wide catchment area and are predominantly from professional and business backgrounds. A range of nationalities is represented in the school reflecting the ethnic mix of the catchment area.
- 1.5 Pupils are accepted into the nursery without academic selection. However, the school is selective from age four. Nationally standardised tests indicate that the ability profile of the school is above the national average.
- 1.6 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 effective in meeting its aim of giving a good all round education to each pupil, encouraging academic excellence, nurturing talents, developing an individual's potential and maintaining traditional values in a modern context. From the EYFS upwards, pupils are highly successful in their learning and development. Their overall achievement is excellent. Standards are high, being well above the average for those in maintained schools. As a result, progress is excellent. High quality teaching provides challenge for the full range of abilities. Although pupils' progress is carefully assessed over time, both by teachers as well as at whole school level, effective use and analysis of this data lacks edge. This is particularly in relation to establishing how well the able, gifted and talented (AGT) pupils fulfil their potential and how this then informs future strategies to improve even further their outcomes.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent. They relish the many opportunities to take responsibility and to participate in the wealth of extra-curricular clubs and activities available throughout the school day and beyond. Their behaviour and relationships are exemplary. High quality pastoral care is the norm. Pupils appreciate very much how the school supports them as individuals and intervenes to deal with even the smallest difficulties. They are all particularly well prepared for the next stage of their education. Arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils are good.
- 2.3 Governance is good. The governors are committed to sustaining the ethos of the establishment and its core aims and values. At the time of the initial visit, some regulatory checks in relation to non-teaching staff recruitment had been overlooked. By the time of the final team visit, the governing body had rectified this as far as it was possible to do so. The issues raised at the previous inspection have been resolved. Leadership and management of the school are good with many outstanding features. Parents are very supportive of the school, particularly as regards their children's progress and how well the school promotes worthwhile attitudes and views. Inspection evidence supports these views. A few parents felt the school did not always handle well any concerns they had. Inspectors found no compelling evidence to support these views. Overall, the school maintains excellent links with parents, providing them with much helpful information.

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:
- Implement all appropriate safeguarding arrangements [Part 3, paragraph 7(a) and (b) under Welfare, health and safety of pupils];
 - Carry out all appropriate checks on any employee starting work before receipt of a CRB certificate, as well as checks on identity and qualifications, and ensure that an enhanced CRB certificate is obtained before or as soon as possible after the appointment [Part 4, paragraphs 19.(2)(a),(b) and (c), and 19.(3) under Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors];
 - Ensure that the central register of appointments is correctly maintained [Part 4, paragraph 22.(3)(a),(b),(c) and (d) and 22.(4), under Single Central Register of Appointments].
- 2.5 At the time of the final team visit, the school had rectified all of the above shortcomings, as far as it was possible to do so, as noted in the text of the report.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action point, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Sharpen the analysis and use of whole school assessment data so as to plan strategies to improve the progress of AGT pupils even further.
 2. In the EYFS, refine further the use of evaluations and observations by staff to ensure that activities are tailored to the needs and abilities of individual children.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 Throughout the school the quality of the pupils' achievement is excellent. It has been further improved since the previous inspection. During their time at the school, pupils grow in confidence, recognise where they can improve their individual performance further and make great strides in their academic progress, reflecting the school's focus on encouraging academic excellence, nurturing talents and developing an individual pupil's potential.
- 3.2 Pupils of all ages have outstanding attitudes to learning and strive to succeed in all that they do, both in and out of the classroom. This is clearly evident in their enthusiastic participation in extra-curricular clubs and activities, annual musical productions, different musical ensembles and a broad range of both competitive and recreational sporting activities. In music, a large majority of girls entered for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music has achieved merits and distinctions. Some have achieved well in national mathematics competitions. In sport, individuals and teams have been successful in local, regional and national finals for hockey and netball.
- 3.3 Pupils are articulate and confident, expressing themselves clearly, both orally and in written tasks. They listen carefully to their teachers and to one another, respecting each other's views and opinions. Their creative writing is of a high standard, being imaginative and reflective. They apply their excellent language and mathematical skills with confidence across the curriculum. Pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are equally strong, as is their scientific knowledge and understanding. They use the former imaginatively to help with the presentation of their work, as a research tool to deepen their knowledge and understanding as well as, for younger pupils, using specialist programmes to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. In art, they develop a strong understanding of different genres by looking at the work of various artists and traditional arts such as stained glass work and working on papyrus.
- 3.4 The following analysis uses nationally standardised tests for pupils in primary schools for the last two years. This shows that standards in mathematics and reading are significantly above the national average in maintained schools and are improving. The school's data for each year group indicates attainment and progress to be excellent with no significant differences in terms of different groups of pupils in relation to their starting points. High quality standards and excellent progress were also confirmed by inspectors when looking at samples of pupils' work from Years 2 to 6 across the subjects. However, although pupils' progress is carefully assessed over time effectively for SEND and EAL pupils, it is not sufficiently honed for AGT pupils. Leadership recognises that the tracking of the progress of these pupils over time is not sharp enough in identifying whether they are reaching their full potential. Last year, upon leaving at the end of Year 6, all pupils continued on to the Wakefield Girls' High School Senior School, some achieving scholarships.

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

- 3.5 The school has built well on the strengths identified at the previous inspection and the curriculum and extra-curricular provision are now excellent. The curriculum covers all the required areas of learning and is appropriately flexible to accommodate the needs of pupils of different abilities. All are now taught aspects of design and technology, at times using senior school facilities. Broad and balanced, the curriculum encourages academic excellence and nurtures talents to encourage each pupil to fulfil their potential in line with the school's aims. Parents unanimously support this belief.
- 3.6 Lesson allocation for each subject is appropriate in all age groups. The curriculum is well balanced, with specialist teachers delivering lessons in music, Spanish (from Reception to Year 2), French (in Years 3 to 6) and physical education throughout the school. Monitoring of the curriculum is carried out highly effectively by subject co-ordinators, who then prepare development plans for each area. Highly effective learning support is provided in literacy and numeracy and is much appreciated by the pupils concerned. Setting in mathematics and English comprehension lessons, as well as organising small groups for EAL and SEND pupils, ensures that pupils of all abilities are catered for exceptionally well. Personal, social, health education (PSHE) and citizenship enhance the curriculum further and support pupils' personal and social development particularly well. The school is rightly proud of its extension policy programme with clearly identified strategies for planning work to meet the individual needs of all pupils.
- 3.7 Further enrichment of the curriculum is provided through visitors into the school and visits out. In addition, there are a multitude of clubs which take place mainly in the extended lunch period, as well as some after school. These are run by teachers and other experienced adults and are often supported by older pupils from the junior or senior schools. Careful records of attendance are kept and show that most pupils join at least one activity and many take part in more than three. Pupils' experience is further broadened by their participation in music festivals and local community projects. Almost all of those responding to the pupil pre-inspection questionnaire believe that there are plenty of activities on offer both at lunchtime and after school.
- 3.8 Sports teams, including 'A' and 'B' squads are entered in a variety of regional and national competitions, helping to add more trophies to the school's already extensive collection. Aspiring team players are provided with 'open' clubs where they can train and improve. In addition there are also many other recreational opportunities for less competitively-minded pupils. Musicians are nurtured from early ages through a wide range of instrumental and singing opportunities. Many regularly go on to achieve success in the school orchestra, choirs and the Wakefield Cathedral choir. The Year 2 choir sang at the opening of the Hepworth at Wakefield earlier this year in June.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.9 The quality of teaching is excellent and has improved since the previous inspection. Teaching is highly effective in promoting girls' progress and intellectual development, and supports the school's aim of promoting academic excellence. Teachers ensure that learning is a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone. Consequently, pupils' confidence in their abilities improves considerably as they move through the school, which then prepares them successfully for the next stage of their education. There is highly effective support for pupils with SEND or EAL which helps them make progress comparable to their peers.
- 3.10 Staff know pupils exceptionally well and this enables them to cater for their individual needs. Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent and they are adept at conveying their love of subjects to the pupils. This is much appreciated by them; the overwhelming majority of those responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire said they learned well because of the teachers and, without exception, all said teachers encouraged them to do things for themselves and to work independently. In an example of excellent practice, in Year 6 library lessons, pupils not only returned and chose new books to borrow but were directed to choose contemporary poetry books related to a specific theme and read poems of their choice to the whole group, explaining their rationale for the choice. These lessons were highly effective in encouraging and developing pupils' love for reading and indicative of their excellent attitudes to learning.
- 3.11 A particular strength in teaching is the contribution it makes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The teachers' provision and use of a wide variety of historical as well as contemporary resources underpin this. This was particularly evident in a Year 5 comprehension lesson where pupils were discussing language and meaning in the text portraying the role of the Victorian 'lamplighter' and comparing this to contemporary life. ICT resources, including interactive whiteboards, have been much improved since the previous inspection. Teachers across the school are adept at using these, which supports even further the quality of their teaching and enlivens learning. A particularly good example of this was in a science lesson where the teacher logged on to a school's website in Australia showing live pictures to emphasise and deepen pupils' understanding of different time zones and daylight hours across the world.
- 3.12 At the start of lessons, learning intentions are made clear so that pupils understand exactly what is expected of them. At the end, teachers recap what has been learned through highly effective questioning. Questions are also used very effectively throughout lessons to help teachers gauge how well pupils are learning. In addition, staff's use of praise and constructive criticism helps pupils know what they need to do to improve further, as do the comments teachers write when marking pupils' work. This ongoing assessment then helps teachers plan future lessons and activities to ensure smooth progression.

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, pupils' personal development continues to be a major strength. It is given a high priority by staff and underpinned by excellent relationships with pupils. The school's aims to maintain traditional values in the modern context and to prepare pupils for the next stage in their education are fulfilled very effectively. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire believed the school promotes worthwhile attitudes and views.
- 4.2 Pupils' spiritual awareness is highly developed. They explore the tenets and beliefs of major faiths in religious education lessons as well as in assemblies. In the latter, pupils also learn specifically about the Christian foundation of the school. Pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding of religions from different religious leaders who visit the school to explain their beliefs and through opportunities to visit different places of worship. Their spiritual awareness is enhanced further in Years 3 to 6 by Wakefield Cathedral's provision of a structured programme which explores areas such as Christian stories, music making and '*living faith*'.
- 4.3 Pupils demonstrate a vivid awareness of moral issues; they are unfailingly well mannered and treat each other and their teachers with respect and courtesy. They have great pride, respect and loyalty for the school. Pupils' sense of justice and empowerment is well developed through PSHE, the eco-committee and the school council. They are keen to improve the lives of those less fortunate than themselves through numerous charitable events such as the 'Harvest Giving', where donations are shared between the local community awareness project, Riding for the Disabled, and for a school in Gambia for which furniture, books and equipment are also collected.
- 4.4 Pupils' social development is outstanding and improves considerably as they get older. They appreciate the many opportunities to take responsibility, including as monitors, form captains, deputies, eco-committee members and school council members. Pupils are positive about how well the school listens to their views and, in conversations with the inspectors, spoke highly of the workings of this body. School council members instigate projects and suggest charities to support. In Year 6, all pupils are enabled to take on positions of responsibility, ranging from ICT monitors or form captains, to head girl. Older juniors enjoy their supporting roles for their younger peers in Years 1 and 2. Pupils are also positive about the house system further developed since the previous inspection. They are keen to win house 'stars' for their behaviour and to take part in house events, including sporting fixtures and the annual dance competition.
- 4.5 Pupils exhibit a high level of cultural awareness as a result of the taught curriculum, including history and art, plus a broad range of enrichment activities, including visits to museums. The community's cultural diversity is recognised and celebrated; for example, girls take part in activities such as National Interfaith Week and the celebration of the Chinese New Year. Girls' cultural awareness is enhanced further by the frequently changing display of religious artefacts, situated in a prominent position in the school, the multi-cultural reading scheme and the recent introduction of language portfolios.

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

- 4.6 Arrangements to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety throughout the school are good overall. Provision for pastoral care is excellent, in accordance with the school's aims to provide a happy, caring and stimulating environment where pupils have a chance to develop self-motivation and a spirit of enquiry.
- 4.7 Staff know the pupils very well and provide highly effective support and guidance. Pupils feel secure, valued and happy within this nurturing environment, greatly enjoying their time at school. Form teachers are key figures in providing essential links between home and school. The head girl and her deputy, supported by friendship buddies elected from each form, are very proactive in supporting pupils of all ages within the school. Pupils are extremely courteous and considerate towards the needs of their peers and warmly welcome newcomers into the school community.
- 4.8 Procedures for promoting positive behaviour have a strong focus and result in a highly positive community ethos. Pupils told inspectors that incidences of bullying are extremely rare, and staff deal with inappropriate behaviour quickly and effectively. Almost all pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire emphasised the kindness and helpfulness of staff. This was confirmed further by those groups of pupils who spoke with the inspectors, who said staff are readily available to talk to about any personal difficulties.
- 4.9 Systems for the safeguarding and welfare of the pupils are particularly thorough, with staff, including the designated child protection officers, receiving appropriate training in child protection issues. All adults have an excellent understanding of their responsibilities. Policies are clear, regularly reviewed and updated to reflect current best practice. All newly appointed teaching staff are checked for their suitability to work with children, although there were shortcomings with some recruitment checks of non-teaching staff at the initial visit.
- 4.10 Measures to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards are robust. These too are regularly reviewed and updated. The school has correct procedures for admission and attendance registers. All are electronically recorded, efficiently maintained and stored. The school fulfils its duties under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act and other duties through race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation. Arrangements to ensure health and safety are thorough, with all staff trained in first aid; those who work with younger children have paediatric first aid qualifications. Provision for pupils who are ill or injured during the school day is very well organised, with specific medical needs being attended to by experienced staff.
- 4.11 Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and their individual dietary needs are extremely well provided for. Meals are varied, nutritionally well-balanced and enjoyable. Pupils understand the importance of regular exercise and are provided with a wealth of opportunities through the physical education curriculum, participation in sports teams and a broad range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. Transition of pupils to the Senior School is a well managed operation in which they and their parents are all involved.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

5.1 Governance of the school is good. The governing body is effective in overseeing the work of all four schools within the Foundation. It supports and sustains the ethos of the establishment and its core aims and values, including the specific aims and values of the junior school. Governors are experienced and have a breadth of expertise, which supports the work of the governing body's special committees. Governors have a clear vision for the development of the Foundation as a caring community in which all individuals are greatly valued. Whole Foundation policies and procedures have been established and the junior school follows and adapts these to reflect its own specific aims and ethos. Through the Foundation, the school benefits from sharing resources, including staffing. This enables additional breadth to be added to the taught curriculum and to extra-curricular activities. Financial control is secure. The governing body keeps abreast of its responsibilities and takes remedial action where appropriate. After the initial visit, it responded quickly and effectively to a shortcoming with recruitment checks of non-teaching staff, ensuring these had been resolved by the time of the final visit.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

5.2 Leadership and management are good, with many excellent features; they fulfil the school's aims through a focus on continuing improvement. Consequently, the school is one where every pupil is valued. High academic standards have been sustained as a result of the drive and vision of the head and the developing strengths of her revised senior leadership team. Clear roles and lines of accountability across the school have been established. The school's highly effective self-evaluation informs its strategic planning particularly well. This has ensured continuing improvement since the previous inspection. Access to the senior school science laboratories has resolved the issue raised at the previous inspection of making science accommodation more satisfactory, and music accommodation, though cramped, is adequate. Staff professional development and training opportunities have been beneficial in improving pupils' education. Although their individual progress is tracked over time, this is not done so effectively for the most able pupils, as the school is aware.

5.3 Policies and procedures are appropriate and monitored regularly and, as a result, the school is a safe environment in which to teach and learn. All staff have been checked for their suitability to work with children through the Criminal Records Bureau. However, some other recruitment checks on non-teaching staff were found to have been overlooked at the time of the initial visit, though this had been put right, as far as it was possible to do so, by the time of the final visit. Staff have been trained in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety and this training is updated regularly.

5.4 Excellent use is made of the compact accommodation, enhanced by shared use of some senior school facilities. Throughout the school, pupils benefit from the strong sense of community, which includes teaching, support and administrative staff, as well as the pupils themselves.

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

- 5.5 The school has excellent links with parents and carers, which are fully consistent with its ethos and aims. In their responses to the questionnaires prior to the final visit, parents expressed very high levels of satisfaction with the vast majority of school's provision. Specific strengths identified included the range of educational experiences, pupils' progress and personal development, and the channels of communication. Inspectors concur with these extremely positive views. A very small minority of parents raised concerns over the support given to pupils with specific learning needs. Inspectors found no evidence to support this view.
- 5.6 There is a comprehensive range of communication and information sharing with parents. E-mail and text messaging systems are used to great effect in communicating with parents over day-to-day changes to routines. The school magazine, *The Mulberry Bush* and fortnightly newsletters provide excellent information about school life and events. The annual speech day programme celebrates the school's successes in academic endeavour, sport and music as well as recognising the significant contributions made by the pupils to the school community. High quality and detailed information packs are provided for parents and prospective parents, who receive all the information they require. The school's website is highly informative about all aspects of the school's life, containing a broad range of policies, including those related to safeguarding.
- 5.7 Parents have a rich vein of opportunities to be involved in the life of the school. They are welcomed warmly to school events, such as concerts, plays, sporting fixtures and information mornings. In addition, parents support aspects of the curriculum through sharing their cultural experiences and professional knowledge; for example, one talked about Judaism and another about animal welfare. Parents help out on educational visits and support preparations for special school occasions, such as wrapping prizes for the 'Christmas afternoon'. The Parents' Association organises fundraising quiz evenings, summer balls and other social events for the throughout the year. Proceeds from the events help to purchase resources for the school, such as the recent soft surfaces on the Years 1 and 2 play areas, friendship benches and adventure play apparatus for the junior school.
- 5.8 Parents receive highly comprehensive reports for pupils once yearly in Years 1 and 2, and twice a year in the junior school. These provide parents with thorough information about their children's work and attainment, along with future targets for improvement. In addition, parents' evenings are held each term for progress updates. Pupils' homework diaries are used particularly effectively and provide an excellent method of daily communication between home and school. Form teachers are always available for direct dialogue with parents over any concerns or issues.
- 5.9 The school handles parents' complaints and concerns promptly, and with care. The school operates an effective and published complaints policy. A small minority of parents expressed concerns about the handling of issues they had raised, but inspectors were satisfied that the school acts in accordance with the policy.

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 EYFS is good, with some outstanding features. The school's aim of providing an education in a spacious and highly stimulating environment, which promotes children's learning and their social, physical and economic wellbeing, is successfully met. Children make rapid progress in all areas of learning from their different starting points. The school's excellent partnerships with external agencies, strong relationships with parents, and links to the wider community, underpin the high quality of education and care provided. The school has built on the strengths identified at the previous inspection. Since the previous inspection there has been the change to having girls only in the Reception class, for pupils aged from four to five. Boys still remain but following their Nursery year transfer to Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Junior School. The splitting of EYFS between the Nursery and the Pre-Preparatory department has resulted in joint leadership which is not yet firmly established.

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

6.2 Leadership and management are good overall. Policies, procedures and risk assessments are reviewed regularly to ensure that children are always safeguarded. Good relationships have been established with the local authority. Parents are very positive about the provision, particularly about communication with the school. Staff promote equality so that, irrespective of background or ability, all children achieve exceptionally well. Leadership is establishing clear links between Nursery and Reception to ensure that children are working towards the Early Learning Goals. There is a strong commitment to ensure continued improvement. A wide range of excellent resources, both indoors and out, are deployed effectively to achieve high quality outcomes.

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

6.3 The quality of provision is outstanding. All learning areas are welcoming and stimulating, enabling children to learn and make excellent progress. Planned and purposeful play ensures children are suitably challenged. Additional learning needs are accurately identified, ensuring children receive appropriate support. Comprehensive planning provides a wide range of learning opportunities for children. However, leadership recognises that further refinement is needed in the use of observations and evaluations to plan activities that are individually tailored to the needs and abilities of each child. Careful risk assessments ensure that all areas are checked for hazards on a regular basis. All staff guide and support children well, establishing clear routines that assist their understanding of safety and development of good attitudes to health and personal hygiene.

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

6.4 Outcomes for the children are outstanding. Their rapid progress means they frequently exceed the Early Learning Goals in all areas. ICT skills are excellent; for example, they use the interactive whiteboards to order numbers very competently. Childrens' creative skills are evident in the various styles of artwork on display and in their music making. They are enthusiastic and show excellent levels of concentration and motivation, both individually and in co-operative activities, for example in role play and when making bread with a local bakery. Children demonstrate excellent levels of behaviour, showing respect and care for each other by taking turns and sharing willingly. They approach adults confidently and share with staff any concerns they may have. Children understand about eating healthily, the need for personal hygiene and being safe.

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 the Wakefield Grammar School Foundation Governing Body, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr James Bowden

Mrs Sue Bennett

Ms Teresa Dunbar

Mrs Sally Gray

Reporting Inspector

Retired Headmistress, IAPS school

Headmistress, IAPS school

Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector

WGHS Junior School

2 St. John's Square

Wakefield WF1 2QX

t: 01924 374577

e: admissions@wghsjs.org.uk

www.wgsf.org.uk