

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS COUNCIL  
(ISC)**

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**INSPECTION OF  
WAKEFIELD GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR SCHOOL**

**By the**

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE  
(ISI)**

**on**

**November 14<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> ,2005**

**MAIN REPORT**

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# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

## **INSPECTION REPORT ON**

### **Wakefield Girls' High School Junior School**

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

Full Name of the School	<b>Wakefield Girls' High School Junior School</b>		
DfES Number	<b>384/6121</b>		
Address	<b>2 St John's Square Wakefield WF1 2QX</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01924 374577</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01924 231602</b>		
E-mail Address	<b>headmistress@wghsjs.org.uk</b>		
Name of Headmistress	<b>Mrs Daphne St C Cawthorne</b>		
Chairman of Governors	<b>Mrs Megan Waugh</b>		
Age Range	<b>3-11</b>	Gender	<b>Boys 3-7</b>
			<b>Girls 3-11</b>
Number of Pupils	<b>480</b>		
Inspection Dates	<b>November 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> 2005</b>		

This inspection report follows the framework laid down by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The inspection was carried out under the arrangements of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. It was also carried out under Section 163(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills has accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003.

The inspection does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

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## **1. MAIN FINDINGS**

### **Overall Summary**

- 1.1 Wakefield Girls' High School Junior School is a flourishing community striving for and attaining very good academic standards and very high standards in teaching, pupils' behaviour, personal development, sport, extra-curricular activities, links with the community and pastoral care.

### **What the School Does Well**

- 1.2 The school has many strengths, amongst which the following are the most significant:
- The welcoming environment with the high standards of display, which extends throughout the school, introduces those who enter to a vibrant and well-equipped learning environment.
  - Strong leadership from governors and the headmistress ensures that many aspects of professional practice such as assessment and professional development are of a high quality and that pastoral care for pupils is of a very high standard.
  - Hard working, enthusiastic and committed teaching and non-teaching staff contribute much to pupils' learning and development, through very good teaching and very good provision for pupils' personal development and broader education.
  - Pupils make a very good start to their education in the Foundation Stage.
  - Very effective pastoral care and very good relationships are major contributory factors towards the very good learning and behaviour.
  - The very good curriculum contributes strongly to the very good standards achieved by pupils of all abilities.

### **What the School Should Do Better**

- 1.3 The school has no major weaknesses, however, the following areas could be improved:
- The accommodation for science and that for music limit the opportunities for these departments to build upon their present good work

### **Standards of Attainment and Progress in Subjects**

- 1.4 The standards reached and the progress made, by all pupils, are very good for their ages, abilities and aptitudes. Standards are high in the foundation stage and by the time the pupils are 7. Pupils aged 11 reach standards well above the national average.
- 1.5 Attainment in lessons and pupils' work is high in all subjects and in all year groups. Pupils have confident speaking and listening skills and show considerable creative skills in their writing, in art and design and music. They make excellent use of their ICT skills.

### **The Quality of Pupils' Learning, Attitudes and their Behaviour**

- 1.6 The overall quality of pupils' learning and of their attitudes and behaviour is very good for the ages, abilities and aptitudes of the pupils concerned and conducive to the learning process. These qualities make a significant contribution to the very good standards pupils achieve. Parents identify the high standards of behaviour as strength throughout the school.

## **The Quality of Teaching**

- 1.7 The quality of teaching is very good. It meets the needs for all pupils, including those who require special provision and contributes very effectively to the quality of pupils' attainment and progress at all ages.
- 1.8 Teachers are very well informed and have a secure understanding of the subjects they teach. They plan lessons well and use a variety of methods and resources. They have a very good rapport with their pupils and create a supportive, calm and effective working atmosphere in lessons.
- 1.9 Teaching in four out of every five lessons observed was very good or excellent; in very few was it satisfactory, in none unsatisfactory.

## **Other Aspects of the School**

### **Attendance**

- 1.10 The level of pupils' attendance is excellent and enables them to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the school. There are no unauthorised absences.
- 1.11 Pupils arrive punctually to lessons and move around the school quietly and purposefully. Lessons and activities start and finish to time and all learning time is fully utilised.

### **Assessment and Recording**

- 1.12 The quality of assessment and recording is very good. Assessment is carefully undertaken throughout the school. The various methods of recording are accurate, consistent and effectively used to take account of pupils' progress and needs. The methods used for assessing pupils' achievements and progress are efficient, thorough and appropriate for the age, needs and stage of development of all pupils. Assessment, including the marking of pupils' work is accurate, consistent and effective and is used well to help pupils improve their performance.

### **Curriculum**

- 1.13 The quality of the curriculum is very good. It offers a broad and well-balanced education suited to the needs of all pupils across the full ability range. The curriculum contributes effectively to the pupils' intellectual, personal and physical development and prepares them well for the next stage of their education.
- 1.14 The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is very good. It has appropriate breadth with activities carefully balanced between the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum. In Years 1 to 6 the curriculum is also very good; it not only covers the full range of national curriculum subjects but is enriched in Year 5 and Year 6 by the introduction of French, taught by a specialist.

### **Teaching and Non-teaching Staff**

- 1.15 The quality of the school's provision for teaching and non-teaching staff is excellent. They are well qualified and experienced for the roles they are required to undertake and they are effectively deployed. The favourable ratio of pupils to teachers ensures small classes and enables excellent individual attention to be given to all pupils. Teaching and non-teaching staff who have contact with children have been appropriately checked in accordance with statutory requirements. The school follows the DFES guidelines for newly qualified teachers.

- 1.16 The staff have created a happy, vibrant community. Staff morale is high and is reflected in the happiness, progress and general demeanour of the pupils. The school clearly values all its staff, teaching and non-teaching. They respond with considerable pride. Teachers and non-teaching staff are loyal, hard working and good role models for the pupils. They give freely of their time to the benefit of the education and care of the pupils throughout the school.

### **Resources for Learning**

- 1.17 The provision of resources for learning is very good. The range, availability, quality and accessibility of ICT are very good, very well managed and effectively used to support pupils' attainment, progress and quality of learning. The very good use of the two ICT suites, classroom computers and of the increasing number of interactive whiteboards available in the classrooms, contributes positively to pupils' learning by deepening their understanding of topics covered and by enriching and extending their experiences.

### **Libraries**

- 1.18 The library facilities are good and offer appropriate support for the curriculum and are effectively used, contributing to the education provided by the school. The range, availability, quality and accessibility of the library stock and facilities are sufficient and effectively support pupils' attainment, progress and quality of learning.

### **Premises and Accommodation**

- 1.19 The quality of the buildings, accommodation and other facilities is very good; they are appropriate for the numbers, abilities, ages and gender of the pupils. The premises and accommodation are used well and enable the curriculum to be taught effectively. The superb, newly built Mulberry House, for the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, provides a high quality, attractive, purpose built learning environment, while Years 3 and 4 are housed in the elegant Georgian St John's House and years 5 and 6 are in the practical, spacious science and technology centre. The grouping of the classes in years allows equipment and materials to be shared and for pupils and staff to work together enabling the curriculum to be taught very effectively.

### **Links with Parents and the Community**

- 1.20 The school has developed an excellent and very effective partnership with parents and very worthwhile links with the community.
- 1.21 Prior to the inspection, parents were invited to submit responses to a questionnaire relating to all aspects of school life. Well over two thirds replied. The positive response to all questions showed that parents were overwhelmingly delighted with the school.

### **Pupils' Personal Development**

- 1.22 The excellent provision for pupils' personal development is a major strength of the school. The school offers a wide range of excellent opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually, morally and culturally. Pupils' social and personal development is also of a high quality.
- 1.23 The provision for spiritual development is excellent. The school values each member of its community and it successfully encourages pupils to be sensitive to the needs and views of others.

### **Pastoral Care**

- 1.24 The provision of pastoral care and arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent. The school cares very effectively for the well-being, development and safety of all its pupils through its arrangements for pastoral support, for guidance and for welfare, health and safety.
- 1.25 The pastoral systems are excellent and make a positive and very effective contribution to the educational standards and personal growth achieved by the pupils, leading to an environment in which pupils feel settled and happy. The measures to promote good discipline and behaviour, to guard against bullying and to deal constructively with unacceptable behaviour are very effective. Child protection procedures are well documented and give good guidance.

### **Governance and Management**

- 1.26 The governance and management of the school are very good and ensure that the school's aims are met, a very good quality of education is provided and that efficient planning secures adequate resources for teaching and learning. The governors and headmistress give strong leadership to the school, and, as a result, it has a positive ethos, which supports pupils very well.

### **Achievement and Quality in Activities**

- 1.27 Achievement and quality in the activities provided are very good for the ages, aptitudes and abilities of the pupils concerned. The quality of provision results in excellent personal development of the pupils.

### **Progress Made by the School since its Last Inspection**

- 1.28 An ISI team visited the school in October 1999. The inspection team made five recommendations, all of which have been dealt with.

### **Compliance with the Regulations for Registration**

<b>DfES Standard</b>		<b>Does the school meet the regulatory requirements?</b>
1. Quality of education:	1.(2) Curriculum	Yes
	1.(3)-(5) Teaching	Yes
2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils		Yes
3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils		Yes
4. Suitability of proprietors and staff		Yes
5. Premises and accommodation		Yes
6. Provision of information		Yes
7. Manner in which complaints are to be handled		Yes

### **Actions required for Compliance with the Regulatory Requirements**

- 1.29 No action is required.

## **2. MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 The school has no major weaknesses but it has one area in which it could make improvement. The number in brackets refers to the relevant paragraphs in the body of the report.

R1 The school should investigate ways in which it could make the accommodation for science and music more satisfactory (5.39, 5.40).

### 3. INTRODUCTION

#### Characteristics of the School

- 3.1 Wakefield Girls' High School was founded in 1878. The Junior School opened three years later. Wakefield Girls' High School Junior School consists of a co-educational pre-prep (ages 3 to 7) and a girl's only junior department (ages 7 to 11). The school is part of the Wakefield Grammar School Foundation, a family of schools which also includes the Queen Elizabeth Grammar Senior and Junior Schools. All the schools, while maintaining individuality and autonomy, have the same governing body and, though finances are dealt with centrally, each school controls its own budget. The Junior School now has a total of 481 pupils. Of these 50 pupils are in the nursery and 66 pupils are in reception; together these make up the foundation stage. 144 are in years 1 and 2 and a further 221 in years 3 to 6.
- 3.2 Pupils come from home, day care nurseries, from local primary schools and from other independent schools. They are accepted into nursery without selection. The school is selective from age 7. For entry after the age of 7 pupils are tested in English, Mathematics and a verbal and non-verbal intelligence test. Whilst transfer is not automatic, it is usual that pupils transfer to the next stage of their education within the Foundation. The head of the next school following consultation and continuous assessments makes decisions.
- 3.3 Standardised tests show that pupils' average ability is above that of the national average, with some of high ability and others below average. No pupil has a statement of educational need, but 37 pupils, 13 boys and 24 girls, have been identified as needing learning support. There are no pupils for whom English is a second language.
- 3.4 The headmistress has been at the school since January 1998. Since then there has been major building development and this has resulted in much improved accommodation and increase in roll from 320 to 480 pupils. The school aims to offer the maximum opportunity for each child to develop intellectually, emotionally physically and socially within an environment that is both stimulating and caring. It encourages all pupils to achieve the best possible standards academically and in personal and social development in order to equip them with an excellent primary educational foundation.
- 3.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used in the school, and throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. Occasionally, the term pre-prep is used for year N to year 2.

#### Key Indicators

- 3.6 Attendance for First Half of Autumn Term 2005

	Authorised	Unauthorised
Percentage absence	0%	0%

- 3.7 Exclusions Over the Previous 12 Months

Temporary exclusions	Permanent exclusions
None	None

## **4. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

### **Attainment and Progress**

- 4.1 The standards reached and the progress made, by all pupils, are very good for their ages, abilities and aptitudes. Standards are high in the Foundation Stage and by the time the pupils are 7. Pupils aged 11 reach standards well above the national average.
- 4.2 Attainment in lessons and pupils' work is high in all subjects and in all year groups. Pupils have confident speaking and listening skills and show considerable creative skills in their writing, in art and design and music. They make excellent use of their ICT skills.
- 4.3 At the end of the Foundation Stage children listen carefully, speak clearly, recognise sounds and write in sentences using a word bank. By the end of year 2, pupils have developed a good understanding of numbers, time, measuring and weighing. Year 6 pupils develop calculation abilities and mathematical skills well above those expected for their age and aptitude.
- 4.4 In science attainment is high at all stages. By the end of Year 2 pupils show an increasing understanding of fair tests and increasing observational skills. Year 6 work displays good interpretation of experimental results and the use of scientific language and pupils make reasoned predictions.
- 4.5 Pupils of all levels of ability make rapid progress throughout the school. Pupils needing special help are well supported by learning support groups, teachers and classroom assistants enabling them to make rapid progress. High expectations from teachers and well-chosen, structured lessons matched to pupils' abilities contribute effectively to pupils' progress.

### **Quality of Pupils' Learning, Attitudes and Behaviour**

- 4.6 The overall quality of pupils' learning and of their attitudes is very good for the ages, abilities and aptitudes of the pupils concerned and conducive to the learning process. These qualities make a significant contribution to the very good standards pupils achieve. The very good standards of behaviour are a strength throughout the school.
- 4.7 Pupils are well motivated, competent and interested learners, who listen attentively with sustained concentration and engage positively in lessons. They are able to work collaboratively, articulating and expressing their views confidently and drawing effectively on previous and cross-curricular learning. Their capacity for independent learning evolves from an early age, with the use of paired, group and investigative tasks, enhanced further by opportunities for self-correction. They possess increasingly developed ICT skills, tackling and solving problems and presenting their results with creativity. They also have the opportunity to be agents of change through the School Council.
- 4.8 Pupils form genuine and constructive relationships with each other, with teachers and members of the wider school community. They show respect for staff and concern for the feelings, well-being and beliefs of their peers. New children and those from minority faiths are accepted and integrated naturally. A quilted 'global village' in the nursery to Y2, and a mural of figures with joined hands near the junior hall both engender a sense of togetherness, which is lived out. Whilst pupils are polite and exemplary in the considerate and courteous attitudes shown, this stems in no small part from the example and care given by the adults around them, with whom they are at ease. They talk happily and sensibly in queues, play enthusiastically in small friendship groups and openly

support one-another, encouraged by an orderly environment and well-established routines (e.g. break and lunch arrangements). Older children actively look out for the needs of juniors and visitors, with friendliness being a hallmark of the school. Expectations are set in school documentation (e.g. behaviour policy) and classroom displays, through assemblies, by teacher reinforcement and rewards, such as the house star system and pre-prep 'certificate' assembly.

- 4.9 Positions of responsibility, head girl, leaders, form and games captains, class helpers are held with pride and shared over each term and year, with specific jobs being undertaken. Local initiatives such as a monthly Year 6 shop, or fundraising and singing at the Wakefield Hospice concert enable pupils to look beyond themselves. Opportunities to represent the school off-site are frequent, from walking to the games field to spending time away on well-planned residential trips. Regular charity support, such as Children in Need and the Tsunami appeal, creates a sense of belonging to a wider world and sharing with those in need, which the children enter into with enthusiasm. The Tanzanian link and collections for Issenye School similarly encourage a broader awareness of global issues and cultural differences.

### **Attendance**

- 4.10 The level of pupils' attendance is excellent and enables them to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the school.
- 4.11 Pupils arrive punctually to lessons and move around the school quietly and purposefully. Lessons and activities start and finish promptly and all learning time is fully utilised.
- 4.12 Teachers follow the clear procedures for registration and registers are up to date. They are marked correctly at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions and are kept centrally. The school secretary promptly follows up any absence for an unknown reason. There are no unauthorised absences.
- 4.13 The school's admission register and attendance registers comply with statutory requirements.

## 5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

### Teaching

- 5.1 The quality of teaching is very good. It meets the needs of all pupils, including those who require special provision and contributes very effectively to the quality of pupils' attainment and progress at all ages.
- 5.2 In the Foundation Stage, the very clear and thorough planning supports children's development. The varied lessons provide a very good mixture of structured activity and free choice. Teachers have very good relationships with children, and are very sensitive to their individual needs.
- 5.3 In Years 1 to 6 teachers are very well informed and have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. They plan lessons well and use a variety of methods and resources. They have a very good rapport with their pupils and create a supportive, calm and effective working atmosphere in lessons.
- 5.4 Teaching in 4 out of every 5 of lessons observed was very good or excellent, fewer than 5% were satisfactory, and none was unsatisfactory. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and present them with stimulating and often challenging work. For instance in an English lesson Year 1 pupils rose to the challenge of writing a list of words ending in 'ck' unaided and many thought of 10 or more. Year 3 wrote about feelings in terms of metaphor.
- 5.5 Teachers' discipline is relaxed yet effective. It encourages pupils to behave very well and it promotes the very good relationships between staff and pupils. Teachers use praise and encouragement effectively to boost pupils' confidence. They have high expectations and set tasks appropriate to pupils' differing abilities. Pupils are very well motivated and enthusiastic about their lessons and good humour adds to the enjoyment of many lessons.
- 5.6 Teachers choose and use resources very well. Where ICT is used in lessons, teachers make very effective use of the interactive whiteboards to promote pupils' confidence and learning.

### *Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for teaching?*

- 5.7 Yes.

### Assessment and Recording

- 5.8 The quality of assessment and recording is very good. Assessment is carefully undertaken throughout the school. The various methods of recording are accurate, consistent and effectively used to take account of pupils' progress and needs. The methods used for assessing pupils' achievements and progress are efficient, thorough and appropriate for the age, needs and stage of development of all pupils. Assessment, including the marking of pupils' work is accurate, consistent and effective and is used well to help pupils improve their performance.
- 5.9 Assessment is successful in assisting pupils to make progress and is well used by teachers as a contribution to curriculum development and planning. For each pupil, sets of standardised assessment data are available for staff and parents, as well as the results of internal subject examinations and continuous assessment course work.
- 5.10 Informal assessment and classroom observation plus the evaluation of lessons is well recorded. Transfer of recorded information from year to year is very good. Foundation

stage keep very detailed records for each child, years 1 to 6 form teachers keep comprehensive assessment folders with exemplars of work, test results and copies of reports sent to parents.

- 5.11 Assessment of special educational needs is excellent. The comprehensive general assessment procedures, together with concerns expressed by teachers or parents, are used well to identify pupils with special educational needs. Further specialised diagnostic assessment by the educational needs co-ordinator identifies pupils' needs in more detail. Where necessary, professional assessment from outside agencies is sought. These assessments are used to good effect in deciding the degree of assistance required, in the planning of regularly updated pupils' individual education plans and in the planning of appropriate support lessons.
- 5.12 The marking of pupils' work is very good, regular and accurate, assisting pupils to make progress. Marking conforms to the school's marking policy; written comments in exercise books are constructive and help pupils to improve their work.

### **Curriculum**

- 5.13 The quality of the curriculum is very good. It offers a broad and well-balanced education suited to the needs of all pupils across the full ability range. The curriculum contributes effectively to the pupils' intellectual, personal and physical development and prepares them well for the next stage of their education.
- 5.14 The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is very good. It has appropriate breadth with activities carefully balanced between the six areas of learning. In years 1 to 6, the curriculum covers not only the full range of national curriculum subjects but is also enriched in year 5 by the introduction of French, taught by a specialist. Appropriate emphasis is placed on literacy and numeracy. Pupils have very good opportunities for extra music lessons to learn to play a wide range of instruments. Excellent emphasis is placed on pupils' personal development through personal, social and health and citizenship education (PSHCE). All pupils have very good opportunities to develop their skills in ICT and these skills are put to use in a wide range of subjects across the curriculum. In addition to the weekly ICT lessons taken by the ICT co-ordinator, each class has a second timetabled lesson in one of the ICT suites, taken by the form teacher. However, the breadth of the curriculum leads to some imbalance with the humanities being given only limited time.
- 5.15 Thorough schemes of work and very good documentation underpin the curriculum. Planned progression between years in individual subjects is very good. The management of the curriculum is very good, and all teachers have good access to programmes of study and schemes of work via the shared area on the school network. Regular meetings are held to agree approaches to learning or to review new initiatives for the teaching of the curriculum. Curriculum co-ordinators contribute effectively to curriculum development and year group teachers also meet on a regular, planned basis to review the pupils' work. Careful attention is paid to the monitoring of the curriculum, and to the sharing of good practice. There are effective links to ensure curriculum continuity with the senior school.
- 5.16 All pupils have good access to the curriculum enabling them to learn and to make good progress. The school meets very well the curricular requirements of those pupils who need special provision, including both those who require support for their learning, and those very able pupils who need greater challenge. The learning support department provides a personal profile for every pupil in their care and this is of great assistance to the class and subject teachers in providing work, which meets the needs of all the pupils. Teaching assistants play a very valuable role.

5.17 Music is a strength of the curriculum, and a high proportion of the junior pupils are learning to play an instrument. Careful provision is made to ensure that no pupil misses English, mathematics or science teaching for individual music lessons. Sport is also a strength of the school where voluntary attendance at after school games practices has a very high take up rate and in the wide range of team and individual sports results are outstanding. A very good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum and regular visits to places of interest, for instance Eureka! and a local synagogue. In addition, visitors to the school, for example the Animal Lady and representatives of a variety of different faiths, add a valuable extra dimension to the curriculum. Regular residential visits, to York, an educational centre at Hawes and another in Norfolk and Blencathra in the Lake District, add significant breadth to the pupils' experience.

***Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the curriculum?***

5.18 Yes.

**Teaching and Non-teaching Staff**

5.19 The quality of the school's provision of teaching and non-teaching staff is excellent. Teachers are well qualified and experienced for the roles they are required to undertake and they are effectively deployed. The favourable ratio of pupils to teachers ensures small classes and enables excellent individual attention to be given to all pupils. Teaching and non-teaching staff who have contact with children have been appropriately checked in accordance with statutory requirements. The school follows the DfES guidelines for newly qualified teachers, although there are not newly qualified teachers on the staff at present.

5.20 The number, qualifications and experience of teaching and non-teaching staff are excellent. They are deployed effectively and make a major contribution to the high quality of the education provided, the pupils' personal development and the standards achieved. Staffing ratios are favourable throughout the school and enable small classes. For children under five, adult to child ratios are in line with current legislation.

5.21 The staff have created a happy, vibrant community. Staff morale is high and is reflected in the happiness, progress and general demeanour of the pupils. The school clearly values all its staff, teaching and non-teaching. They respond with considerable pride. Teaching and non-teaching staff are loyal, hard working and good role models for the pupils. They are positively involved in their care, welfare and personal development. The teaching and non-teaching staff take considerable pride in their work. They work hard and give freely of their time.

5.22 Excellent provision is made for the professional development of staff through courses and INSET. Knowledge gained on attendance at courses held outside school is effectively disseminated and the experience evaluated after they have taken place.

5.23 The school has an excellent, highly effective appraisal system and all staff have clear job descriptions and contracts of employment. The process of appraisal is widely acknowledged to be a valuable experience.

5.24 The management of both teaching and non-teaching staff is very good. Clear, comprehensive handbooks give pertinent information with policies readily available on different aspects of school life. Excellent communication exists between senior management and all staff. A culture of openness exists, where colleagues are welcome to observe lessons and learn from each other.

***Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff?***

5.25 Yes.

**Resources for Learning**

5.26 The provision of resources for learning is very good. The range, availability, quality and accessibility of ICT resources are very good, very well managed and effectively used to support the pupils' attainment, progress and quality of learning. The very good use of the two ICT suites, classroom computers and of the increasing number of interactive whiteboards available in classrooms, contributes positively to pupils' learning by deepening their understanding of topics covered and by enriching and extending their experiences. ICT resources are used well for cross-curricular work in many subjects, such as science and mathematics, history and art. In the library, ICT is used effectively to catalogue books and to manage the loans system. Resources for the use of music in ICT are developing. However, in the foundation stage the more limited numbers of computers available place some restrictions on the children's opportunities to learn how to use them.

5.27 The range, availability, quantity and accessibility of other resources for learning are appropriate for the age and range of pupils including those who are under five and those with special needs. They are used very effectively to support pupils' attainment, progress and quality of learning. The outdoor resources for the foundation stage are excellent, very well managed and imaginatively used, for example during the inspection week one of the play areas was converted into Hogwarts School. There is excellent provision for PE and very good provision for many other subjects, for example the humanities. The provision of textbooks is very good and most subjects also have a range of artefacts to support learning. The music department has a comprehensive range of instruments giving pupils access to a rich repertoire of playing and listening opportunities. Very good resources are available for pupils requiring learning support. Resources for mechanical technology work are developing, and the school is planning to create a new mathematics resource centre, which will be very beneficial.

5.28 The resource budgeting arrangements are generous throughout the school and ensure the provision of very good resources for the effective teaching of the curriculum.

**Libraries**

5.29 The library facilities are good and offer appropriate support for the curriculum and are effectively used, contributing to the education provided by the school. The range, availability, quality and accessibility of the library stock and facilities are sufficient and effectively support pupils' attainment, progress and quality of learning.

5.30 The junior library is centrally situated off the entrance hall of St John's House, the hub of the school, and, although slightly small, is in an elegant carpeted room furnished with low bookshelves and, with the adjacent reading garden outside, provides an inviting environment to encourage the enjoyment of reading for study, or for pleasure, although the tables and chairs are inadequate for a whole class of children and there is little provision for private study.

5.31 Nursery to Year 2 library is conveniently placed within the new Mulberry House. It is a light, modern, room, attractively furnished with purpose built infant library furniture and bright bean bags, creating an exciting ambiance to foster an interest in books.

5.32 Both libraries are well managed by their library co-ordinators. The junior library is organised using computer software to issue, identify returns and keep a record of books

borrowed and a catalogue of the library stock. There are a number of year 6 librarians who help. The pre-prep library uses a borrowing card system which the pupils take with the book as a bookmark. The libraries are available for classes to use all day, and are staffed during the lunch breaks.

- 5.33 The stock is well-managed and in good condition. The junior library contains 3500 books, with 2000 in the prep-prep – an average of about 10 per child, rather less than the 13 per child recommended by the Library Association. However, there are classroom libraries which contain books suitable for the age groups. Books are purchased by the co-ordinators in consultation with other members of staff.
- 5.34 The libraries are well used. Each class is timetabled for a weekly session with their teachers who introduce library skills and encourage good reading habits, and the lunch times are popular with individual pupils. The reading trail folders made by the pupils to record and write about the books they have read indicate extensive and rich reading patterns.

### **Premises and Accommodation**

- 5.35 The quality of the buildings, accommodation and other facilities is very good; these facilities are appropriate for the numbers, abilities, ages and gender of the pupils. The premises and accommodation are used well and enable the curriculum to be taught effectively.
- 5.36 The superb, newly built Mulberry House, for the foundation stage and years 1 and 2, provides a high quality, attractive, purpose-built learning environment, while years 3 and 4 are housed in the elegant Georgian St John's House and years 5 and 6 in the practical, spacious science and technology centre. The grouping of classes in years allows equipment and materials to be shared and for pupils and staff to work together enabling the curriculum to be taught very effectively.
- 5.37 In Mulberry House the younger pupils enjoy pleasant, spacious, air-conditioned classrooms opening onto wide, light glazed corridors which enable freedom of movement. The well designed, bright classrooms with their display boards and differentiated areas, and the open-plan nursery, provide opportunities for a wide range of activities, stimulating children's learning and their personal development, while maintaining a high standard of care. The accommodation also includes the pre –prep library, a music room, a role play room, a large well-equipped hall designed to be used for assembly, physical education, dining and other activities where a big space is needed, further enhancing opportunities for learning. A kitchen, medical room, staff room and offices complete the accommodation. Storage space is plentiful and the toilets and washbasins are suitably situated on each floor, with the reception and nursery having their own facilities. In the listed St John's House the accommodation has been sensitively adapted to provide light, stylish classrooms with generous storage, a modern ICT suite, a maths room, library, offices, medical room and cloakrooms, with the music room, assembly/dining hall and kitchen in the basement. Outside steps from the hall give an additional entrance to the hall, facilitating access. The main staircase up to the classrooms, which the children use very sensibly, is monitored vigilantly by the staff, and provides an extensive display space for art work. The building forms a secure environment to foster teaching and learning.
- 5.38 The upper juniors are housed in the Science and Technology Centre building with its large, light classrooms, a new air-conditioned ICT suite and access to the senior science laboratories and lecture theatre to enhance their education.

- 5.39 Science for most of the junior school is taught in a science cabin, a temporary building in the playground, which is cramped, and although well-used is not adequate for the further development of the science department.
- 5.40 Although the standard of music achieved is high, the basement music room in St John's House is somewhat inadequate, inhibiting class, choir and ensemble work through poor acoustics and lack of space.
- 5.41 The quality of displays throughout the school is excellent, supporting teaching and learning most effectively. The premises are clean and well maintained fostering an ordered atmosphere conducive to very good education.
- 5.42 The playgrounds are safely fenced and have differentiated areas, some with soft impact surface and climbing equipment, offering a variety of play and recreation opportunities including seating in the shade under the trees such as that in the reading garden. The nursery has easy access to a large well-equipped outside area, imaginatively used for a range of creative and play activities.
- 5.43 Sports facilities are particularly strong with the games field, all surface weather pitch, use of Queen Elizabeth Grammar School swimming pool, the well-equipped hall in Mulberry House and the new Hartley pavilion, shared with the senior school and used by the whole school including the nursery. These are well used and very much enhance the high standards achieved in sport.

***Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for premises and accommodation?***

- 5.44 Yes.

**Links with Parents and the Community**

- 5.45 The school has developed an excellent and very effective partnership with parents and very worthwhile links with the community.
- 5.46 Prior to the inspection, parents were invited to submit responses to a questionnaire relating to all aspects of school life. Well over two thirds replied. The positive response to all questions showed that parents were overwhelmingly delighted with the school.
- 5.47 Parents are provided with very good information about the school. The variety of pictures in the school prospectus and the accessible web site give a good snapshot of the many facets of life at Wakefield Girls' High School Junior School. Informative welcoming booklets for each year group, the parents' handbook and specialist subject booklets pinpoints salient features allowing pupils and parents to be prepared for the excitements and challenges ahead. Parents are also given information about events within the Foundation, through the Performing Arts Calendar and the Foundation Information Morning, keeping them in touch with wider aspects of the school. A glossy and colourful magazine, 'The Mulberry Bush', gives prospective parents a clear idea of the varied activities at the school and for present pupils and parents acts as a fitting culmination to the school year, alongside speech day. The regular and informative newsletters allow parents to keep abreast of current news and activities.
- 5.48 The written and oral reporting back to parents is effective, clear and very useful in enabling them to understand their child's work and progress in all areas of school life. Two parents' evenings are held for the junior school and report cards, sent home in the spring term, enable early discussions to be focused and relevant. For Mulberry House parents there are meetings each term. Written reports are sent home for all pupils before the end of the summer term to allow specific parental concerns to be addressed. Work covered is shown on all reports and worthwhile comments relate directly to the

objectives: targets set are pertinent and helpful. In addition frequent informal opportunities enable staff and parents to keep in regular touch. Through daily pro-active contact with the staff in Mulberry House, parents of younger children are kept fully informed about their child's daily activities.

- 5.49 Many opportunities are provided for parents to be involved in activities of the school and with their children's work and these contribute significantly to pupils' learning and progress. Many interested and enthusiastic parents support the school by helping in the classrooms, especially in Mulberry House. Parents are also warmly welcomed to the many plays, concerts and sporting events. The lively programme of social events arranged by the Friends of St John's House for both parent and children adds to the corporate spirit of the school.
- 5.50 The school has an appropriate complaints procedure and handles the very few parental concerns with due care and attention.
- 5.51 The school's work and curriculum and pupils' experience are greatly enriched by links with the community. The Hartley Pavilion is well used by outside clubs and the Mulberry House hall also provides a venue for events such as a fashion show in aid of the local hospice and rehearsals for the Wakefield Philharmonic choir. The positive partnership the school has instigated with nearby primary schools enables the games skills of a large number of local year 5 children to be tested. The children may then attend local sports clubs to refine and advance their skills. Through a generous grant, this link is to be extended to musical activities. Many visits are made within the local area and the nearby resources are very well used. Residential trips for the junior classes enhance the humanities and the personal development of the children. The school's commitment to helping other people is shown through their excellent work for charity. £8000 was raised last year and local charities are supported, as well as national ones. The involvement of the children is very important and exemplified by the shoe box collection of toys at Christmas. Very close links have been made with a sister school, Issenye, in Tanzania. The school support Issenye financially and members of the staff have visited the school.

***Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the provision of information?***

- 5.52 Yes.

***Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the manner in which complaints are to be handled?***

- 5.53 Yes.

## **6. PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PASTORAL CARE**

### **Pupils' Personal Development**

- 6.1 The excellent provision for pupils' personal development is a major strength of the school. The school offers a wide range of excellent opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually, morally and culturally. Pupils' social and personal development is also of an excellent quality.
- 6.2 The provision for spiritual development is excellent. The school values each member of its community and it successfully encourages pupils to be sensitive to the needs and views of others. Religious education lessons, assemblies, the celebration of all major faith festivals as well as the Chinese New Year contribute very well to pupils' spiritual development.
- 6.3 The excellent provision for pupils' moral development is partly brought about through the strong example of the staff who all treat pupils in a firm, fair, open and sensitive manner. Pupils respond well to the school rules and the effective system of rewards. They learn to distinguish between right and wrong, and they are polite and considerate to others. Pupils respect others' interests and feelings and care for people, property and the environment.
- 6.4 The provision for pupils' social development is excellent. Pupils' show a sense of responsibility towards each other in classrooms and around the school during break times. The school provides very good opportunities for all pupils to take responsibility or to make a contribution to the school community. The very friendly atmosphere positively influences the productive relationships that exist throughout the school.
- 6.5 Provision for cultural awareness is very good. Pupils are helped to broaden their experience and understanding of other cultures; outside visits serve to enrich the pupils' experience of their own and other cultural traditions.
- 6.6 The clear aims of the PSHCE policy provide very well for reflection on the relevant issues, including moral questions. Pupils are interested in the topics and discuss them enthusiastically.

### ***Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils?***

- 6.7 Yes.

### **Pastoral Care, including Welfare and Health & Safety**

- 6.8 The provision of pastoral care and arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent. The school cares very effectively for the well-being, development and safety of all its pupils through its arrangements for pastoral support, for guidance and for welfare health and safety.
- 6.9 The pastoral systems are excellent and make a positive and very effective contribution to the educational standards and personal growth achieved by the pupils, leading to an environment in which pupils feel settled and happy. The measures to promote good discipline and behaviour, to guard against bullying and to deal constructively with unacceptable behaviour are very effective. Child protection procedures are well documented and give very good guidance.
- 6.10 The system for the pastoral care of pupils is excellent. The form teachers have primary responsibility for the care of their pupils and know them well, pupils report they would

readily turn to their teachers in times of difficulty. The school provides effective support, advice and guidance for all its pupils based on monitoring their academic progress and personal development. Outside the Headmistress's office is a 'confidential box', which offers an opportunity for pupils to ask for help anonymously.

- 6.11 Measures to promote good discipline and behaviour are very effective, including procedures to guard against harassment and bullying and to deal constructively with unacceptable behaviour. All staff put a strong emphasis on praise and positive encouragement for good behaviour and courtesy. When incidents do occur, the form teacher is the main point of contact then, if necessary, the Headmistress, who keeps appropriate records, is informed.
- 6.12 Measures to safeguard and promote all pupils' health and wellbeing are successful and effective. The school complies with health and safety regulations. All necessary measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards have been taken. Fire drills are held regularly and records kept of them. The assistant estates manager is the overall health and safety officer. Staff responsibilities are clear; particular hazards are risk assessed. Policies and systems are effectively implemented to monitor the health and safety of the pupils who are able to move freely around the school without undue risk of fire or other hazards. Health and safety issues are given due consideration in the arrangements for visits, both in this country and for the skiing trip to Italy.
- 6.13 The school complies fully with health and safety regulations and places great importance on pupils' health and safety and welfare. Child protection procedures are fully in place. The staff works as a team to ensure pupils' well being. As a result pupils enjoy a good, happy and secure environment.

***Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils?***

- 6.14 Yes.

## **7. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### **Governance and Management**

- 7.1 The governance and management of the school are very good and ensure that the school's aims are met, a very good quality of education is provided and that efficient planning secures adequate resources for teaching and learning. The school benefit from strong leadership too, and, as a result, it has a positive ethos, which supports pupils very well.
- 7.2 Governors give very good leadership to the school. They have a clear understanding of their roles and have good experience and expertise. The headmistress has full access to governors, and attends all meetings. Over the past six years governors, with the headmistress, have shown a clear vision for the growth and future of the junior school and their commitment has provided it with very good facilities and management. They show a very good understanding of its needs and play an appropriate role in the management of issues such as health and safety and child protection.
- 7.3 The junior school has very good links with the rest of the Foundation in many areas, for example over the transfer of pupils. There are very good curricular links with junior and senior staffs liaising on a regular basis in their subject areas.
- 7.4 The headmistress and senior management team together provide very good leadership to all aspects of school life and a good forum for discussion of school issues. Subject and curriculum co-ordinators give very good leadership to their colleagues, offering effective support and monitoring the work they do. Provision for pupils with special needs is very well managed.
- 7.5 The school has created a positive ethos within which pupils develop well and enjoy their time at school. The atmosphere of care and concern for them, which pervades all that the school does, provides very well for pupils' personal development and pastoral care. This ethos is supported by an excellent range of policies and practices covering all areas of school life, which enables the school to fulfil its aims of providing a grounding of basic skills in a happy and caring atmosphere, taking into account pupils' all round development.
- 7.6 Staff very much value the role of performance management in supporting their teaching and identifying their personal needs. Development planning is thorough and covers all areas of school life. It identifies a number of issues for staff to take forward through a range of working groups with a sharper focus provided by each year's key objectives which all can share.
- 7.7 Communication and routine administration are both excellent; the school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis as a result of the considerable efforts of both teaching and non-teaching staff.

## **8. ACHIEVEMENT AND QUALITY IN SUBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES**

### **Achievement and Quality in Subjects**

#### **The Foundation Stage**

- 8.1 Children in the Foundation stage achieve high standards in relation to their abilities. Many exceed the skills and competencies set out in the early learning goals by the end of reception. Children make rapid progress in many areas of learning.

#### ***Personal, Social and Emotional Development***

- 8.2 Children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent. By the end of the foundation stage children have achieved the early learning goals for this area. The children have confidence and high self-esteem. This is strongly reinforced by the care and encouragement shown to them by the staff. They play thoughtfully in groups, respond to each other's needs and show respect for each other. For example a boy in reception said, "Thank you young lady!" when given a crayon. By taking turns and sharing the children demonstrate independence. Nursery children, having only been in school for a short time, move confidently from one activity to another without any adult intervention. Children take responsibility for tidying carefully and use of the well-organised resources increases their independence. Excellent levels of concentration and motivation enable children to participate fully in all activities.

#### ***Communication, Language and Literacy***

- 8.3 Children's attainment in communication, language and literacy is very good. They progress rapidly in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Some children are working at levels beyond those expected for this age. Children speak confidently and articulately because their opinions are valued and their developing ideas acknowledged. Children listen very well and sustain concentration. Reception children are increasing the quantity of their work and gaining confidence to write unaided. Relevant reading skills are developed and extended, as each child is ready. Nursery children are learning to form letters correctly and many already know the sounds from 'a' to 'h'. Group reading sessions in reception enable children to study texts carefully. Children can identify speech marks and recognise that bold text needs to be emphasised when reading aloud. Opportunities for role-play such as in the dark den in reception or Hogwart's school in the playground enhance the development of language and communication.

#### ***Mathematical Development***

- 8.4 Mathematical development across the Foundation Stage is good. Children make good progress. In the nursery many opportunities for practical activities and play are provided to reinforce children's knowledge and understanding of number and mathematical concepts. This is balanced by more formal teacher led small group or individual teaching sessions. Mathematics is frequently incorporated into other learning situations such as in PE, registration and snack time. In nursery, a group of children confidently recognised numbers to 10 and put the cards in order. The correct use of mathematical language develops understanding and informative displays reinforce children's awareness of mathematical ideas. Children gain confidence in using numbers and reception children can count small blocks, with one to one correspondence to 15. One competent reception boy demonstrated his grasp of mental addition with numbers to 10 and knowledge of half past the hour.

### ***Knowledge and Understanding of the World***

- 8.5 Children's development in knowledge and understanding of the world is very good and they attain high standards, reaching the early learning goals. By the end of the Foundation Stage they can draw and label an object using the correct vocabulary and give a simple explanation for an experiment. For instance one child had written about a candle in a jar, 'it ran out of air'. Pupils make very good progress. They are encouraged to explore objects and to investigate for themselves. Children learn about other cultures. In one reception class they looked at a world map and then chose a language in which to answer the register. Children confidently use information and communication technology. By using the classroom computers they are gaining mouse control. In both nursery and reception children use the listening centres independently. Visits within the local area make a positive contribution to this area of learning.

### ***Physical Development***

- 8.6 Children's physical development is very good. Cutting and sticking exercises show that children can handle tools and materials with precision. Reception Owl and Pussycat collages are neatly coloured and some are very carefully cut out. Many opportunities are provided to improve and develop fine motor skills. In nursery children paint with care, as their shiny house paintings demonstrate. They manipulate small objects, such as building a tower with very small blocks, with control. Children handle clay with confidence and generous staffing ensures they are given plenty of help and encouragement. Children's gross motor skills develop very well. Nursery children use small equipment showing a range of basic throwing, catching and kicking skills. Some nursery children can skip. They are very responsive to instructions and use space with awareness. The outside play area is large and very well resourced giving children a wide range of activities from which to choose. Nursery children have free access to it and the reception classes, despite being upstairs, use the area well.

### ***Creative Development***

- 8.7 Children's creative development is very good. Rapid progress is made in developing skills including painting, modelling, cutting and pasting. The classrooms provide stimulating environments with examples of high quality displays. In nursery children take pride in their work and were especially pleased with the effects of their glittery stars and in reception paper plate faces show the children's increasing knowledge of the proportions of a face. Children's awareness of music is developed formally and informally. Singing is used frequently in nursery to help children remember numbers and the days of the week. The nursery children experiment with sounds and rhythms in their well-resourced music corner. In reception children are establishing a stronger sense of rhythm and the majority can keep to a simple beat.

### ***Other Aspects of the Foundation Stage***

- 8.8 The quality of teaching is very good and sometimes excellent. The teachers are very hard working, well qualified and secure in their curriculum knowledge. Attendance of high quality in-service training enables teachers to keep up-to-date with new initiatives. Teachers, nursery nurses and assistants work very closely together and this, alongside much parental help, enhances the classroom experience for all pupils. Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent and between the pupils themselves. Staff pupil ratios are in line with current guidelines. Through careful planning, detailed assessment and shrewd questioning the differing needs of the children are met. Regular and thorough assessment informs all planning. Pupil profiles and records of significant meetings or events ensure that vital knowledge is passed on each year. These systems raise the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided for the children.

- 8.9 Children are very well cared for. The teachers know each child very well and are aware of their individual needs. The warm and welcoming approach allows parents to leave their children at the start of a day and children are quickly absorbed in an engaging activity. Children trust their teachers and other helpers, readily looking for help and guidance. The caring, positive, happy approach makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning in the foundation stage.
- 8.10 Leadership, management and development within the foundation stage are very good. Effective systems have evolved and very good co-operation and communication exists.

### **English**

- 8.11 Pupils of all ages achieve very good standards in English. Pupils' attainment in lessons observed and work scrutinised is very good in all year groups and shows very good progression through the school. Results in recognised standardised tests indicate that attainment is well above the national average in all years.
- 8.12 In Year 1 pupils were writing invitations to a teddies' party and then creating the menu using adjectives to describe the food. In their written work their handwriting is clear and well-formed in a variety of tasks and also shows the benefit of careful work in phonics, many children writing independently.
- 8.13 In Year 2 pupils are able to express themselves confidently in writing in a variety of tasks including recount, giving instructions, factual accounts, stories, autobiographical pieces and poetry.
- 8.14 In Year 4 children were confidently using the Dewey system in the library to find books and showed their ability to write competently in a wide range of tasks.
- 8.15 In Year 5 pupils are able to write confidently in a wide range of genre including diary form, play-script, ghost story, fantasy narrative and poetry, and are beginning to analyse more complex texts in their comprehension work, such as appreciating the subtle changes of time in "Tom's Midnight Garden", and enjoying the nuances of character in Berlie Doherty's "Street Child".
- 8.16 Year 6 demonstrate their ability to distinguish the different features of a newspaper report, and their appreciation of the humour and pointed references in headlines. They read confidently and are able to discuss the features of character, setting and plot.
- 8.17 Pupils from WGHSJS were judged best overall in the national creative writing competition published in the "All Write Anthology".
- 8.18 Drama is not timetabled as a separate subject but is incorporated into the English, PSHE and humanities work.
- 8.19 Pupils' progress is rapid in lessons and over time. Children make progress in their acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding across a wide range of activities from text work in narratives and poetry to non-chronological writing, postcards and book blurbs, grammar details in vocabulary work. Year 1 pupils were beginning to appreciate the value of adjectives, year 2 showed good progress in their rhyming vocabulary and knowledge of homophones and their spelling, while year 3 showed their use of metaphor in their poems about feelings. Year 4 demonstrated their ability to use paragraphs in their writing and years 5 and 6 showed an increasing skill in interpreting the nuances of language.
- 8.20 Learning and behaviour are very good. Pupils are willing to learn, they are well-motivated and will ask questions to further their understanding. Most pupils can work

independently or in pairs or groups co-operating well, and work with good concentration. They are keen to do well and they take pride in their work.

- 8.21 Teaching is, in the main, very good and never less than good. A variety of teaching styles is used effectively to enhance learning for every pupil and teachers were clearly aware of the needs of each individual. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and communicate very well. The lessons are well planned and expectations are high.
- 8.22 Very effective support is provided for individuals and groups, particularly those with special needs by teaching assistants and the well-organised learning support unit. More able children are encouraged to work through extension tasks.
- 8.23 Assessment of children's work is thorough with marking often meticulous, offering encouragement, constructive comments and setting targets. Spelling is tested regularly, and particular tasks, such as creative writing, are used as assessment pieces to check on pupils' progress. Reading is tested at the beginning of every year. Records and samples of work are filed and centrally stored for easy access. The information is used to assist in future planning.
- 8.24 Leadership and management of the subject by the English co-ordinators are very good. Planning is in year groups with the co-ordinators, and continuity is ensured by meeting with other year groups and the senior school.
- 8.25 English is promoted throughout the school in its text rich environment, the lively displays, through various competitions including handwriting, verse speaking and creative writing for inclusion in the school magazine "The Mulberry Bush" and in the national publication "Young Writers". There are visiting speakers and theatre companies, sessions of sharing favourite books, and book fairs. Pupils also enjoy stage productions from the different sections of the school.

### **Mathematics**

- 8.26 Pupils of all ages achieve high standards for their ages and abilities. Attainment observed during lessons and in pupils' work is high. Year 2 pupils understand addition and subtraction with numbers up to 3 digits. When sequencing numbers up to hundreds they use correct mathematical language such as more than/less than/before/after/greater/smaller. Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of numbers up to 7 digits, negative numbers, fractions including decimals and many geometric concepts. Across all ages pupils work effectively with computation skills. They make accurate and advanced calculations both mentally and formally.
- 8.27 Progress in lessons and over time is rapid. Pupils develop confidence and accuracy and gain in mathematical knowledge and skills. An informal approach in years 1 and 2, with much oral and practical work, and simple methods of recording encourages pupils' natural enthusiasm for new concepts and enables them to make rapid progress. For example in a year 1 lesson, pupils identified and sequenced numbers up to 20, accurately counted back to subtract and by the end of the lesson they were writing their own subtraction sums and working them out correctly. In a year 5 lesson pupils had a good understanding of various types of fractions and were using mathematical language such as equivalent, numerator and denominator correctly. By the end of the lesson they were multiplying or dividing fractions accurately to find equivalent fractions.
- 8.28 The quality of learning is very good. Pupils are highly motivated, concentrate well and try hard to understand the topic being taught. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and particularly enjoy oral work. This was evident at the start of lessons when mental calculations and different strategies were investigated.

- 8.29 Pupils work well individually, in pairs and in small groups and formal work is well presented. Good learning habits are developing, pupils listen carefully, frequently checking their answers if unsure. The learning process is helped by the very good support given by teachers and classroom assistants.
- 8.30 The quality of teaching is very good. It is occasionally excellent. All teachers are well aware of pupils' abilities. Their lessons are very well planned to meet all pupils' needs through clear learning objectives. Using a range of questioning styles, teachers enable pupils of all ages to contribute thoughtful answers and confidently share any difficulties.
- 8.31 An appropriate pace to lessons ensures pupils remain motivated. Resources are used effectively and work is well organised to meet the needs of all pupils. For example 3 levels of worksheet were used in a lesson in order to extend every pupil's understanding.
- 8.32 Very good supplementary provision is made for the most able pupils. This is furthered by teaching pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 in sets, according to their ability. Good use is made of ICT for re-enforcing mathematical concepts, particularly in years 3 to 6.
- 8.33 Work is marked regularly and accurately, frequently with encouraging stars, stickers and comments. Where necessary teachers include helpful suggestions for improving the next piece of work. In Years 1 and 2 work is usually marked and discussed with pupils during lessons.
- 8.34 Assessment is regular and thorough. Pupils test marks are recorded in the database, making it easy to track individual pupils' progress and effectively plan pupils' future development of the subject. Leadership of the subject is relatively new but sound and continues to develop. Management is good, especially on a day-to-day basis by class teachers. Documentation is thorough and the co-ordinators liaise effectively with each other and, as appropriate, with other departments including the senior school and Queen Elizabeth Grammar School's Junior School.
- 8.35 Resources are very good. They are managed effectively and support the teaching and learning very well.

### **Science**

- 8.36 Pupils' attainment in science is very good. Attainment is high at times, for example Year 1 pupils showed very good understanding of how musical instruments make sounds by identifying if they are shaken, banged, blown, plucked or scraped. Year 2 pupils were able to sort electrical devices into two groups, battery powered or requiring mains electricity. Year 3 pupils used their knowledge of magnetism to predict if materials would be magnetic and to hypothesise why some materials are magnetic and some are not. In Year 5 pupils show a good understanding of the properties of solids, liquids and gases. In lessons observed and work seen in folders and exercise books, pupils showed a very good understanding of the concepts taught.
- 8.37 Pupils' progress in science is very good. They build and expand on their previous knowledge. Pupils make good progress in their ability to record data and to produce clearly labelled and accurately drawn diagrams. Pupils' scientific thinking is well developed and by Year 6 show an ability to formulate a fair test and to predict the outcome of an experiment, for example they were given the challenge of producing a clear sample of water from a mixture of water, leaves and soil introducing the concept of separating and filtering. They were able to work as a team and to successfully formulate ideas as to how the challenge might be met.
- 8.38 The quality of learning and behaviour is very good. Pupils listen carefully and readily answer questions. Pupils work collaboratively in pairs or groups and also work well

independently. Pupils of all ages and abilities concentrate on the investigation in hand and take turns sensibly. They listen to each other and talk purposefully when working in a group or in pairs. Pupils visit places of interest and this greatly enhances their learning, for example Year 2 visit Fairburn Ings to study animals and plants in the local environment. Year 6 visit Blencathra Field Study Centre for a weeks residential course with work on science and geography and outdoor pursuits.

- 8.39 The quality of teaching is very good; occasionally it is excellent. All the teachers are very well prepared and all use resources well, enabling pupils to experiment and discover facts for themselves. Teachers monitor work in progress and employ good questioning techniques. Where teaching is excellent, teachers vary the work, communicate their own enthusiasm, ask questions appropriately and use their very good relations with pupils to encourage outstanding learning and behaviour. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of science, are aware of pupils' differing needs and provide very good support and encouragement.
- 8.40 The good assessment procedures are used effectively to inform curriculum planning. Marking of work in all years is very good, regular and consistent. Comments are constructive, positive and show pupils how they might improve their work, for example individual targets are set. End of topic tests are given, internally set examinations and standardised tests.
- 8.41 The quality of leadership and management is good, providing effective monitoring of teaching and learning and resources.

#### **Information and Communication Technology**

- 8.42 Pupils achieve excellent standards in ICT. By Year 2, pupils have begun to use word processing successfully. They can use a variety of techniques to create pictures that communicate ideas. They can use CD-ROM's to search for information. They can control a simple roaming device by using the appropriate keys. Year 5 pupils successfully use ICT to organise and present information in a variety of ways. They can effectively import images into text, for example, when they prepare a magazine to support the Children in Need appeal. In Year 6 they make good use of multimedia as they create computer-based presentations, adding interest through the use of imaginative animations. Pupils use spreadsheets effectively. They also use their ICT skills to assist their learning in other subjects across the curriculum; for example in art they use computers to create designs in the style of William Morris, and in science they make independently-researched presentations on topics such as forces.
- 8.43 Pupils make rapid progress, including those who are more able and those who have learning difficulties. Progress in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6 is very good, reflecting the consistently high standard of teaching. The specialist teacher finds it necessary to revise her teaching plans on an annual basis to take into account the increasingly early acquisition by the pupils of more advanced ICT skills. Pupils' progress in using their developing skills of ICT in other subjects such as history and French is also good.
- 8.44 Pupils enjoy using ICT, "I absolutely love this"! a Year 3 child observed as she settled down to a lesson. The quality of their learning is never less than very good, and on occasions excellent. They pay careful attention to the teacher's explanations and instructions, and are excited by what they are learning. They concentrate fully and are keen to show their teachers and friends what they have achieved. They have the confidence to experiment, laugh at their own mistakes, learn how to correct them, and then make progress. Pupils co-operate very well both to complete challenging tasks, and also to share their ideas. They readily apply skills learnt earlier when tackling something new.

- 8.45 The quality of teaching ranges from very good to excellent. Lessons are very well planned and move at a brisk pace. Very good use is made of the ICT assistant who collaborates very well with the teacher during lessons. The teacher is very skilled at judging when to encourage a child to try to solve a problem on their own, and when to offer guidance. ICT skills are taught by the specialist teacher, but class teachers also teach their pupils in one of the ICT suites at least once a week, both to extend their skills, and to use them to enhance their learning experiences in other subjects. Non-specialist ICT teachers' expertise is good, in no small measure due to the very good training provided by the subject co-ordinator, which has enabled most staff to develop their own ICT skills effectively. Her 'ICT surgeries' are very helpful to her colleagues.
- 8.46 Leadership and management are excellent. The day-to-day management of ICT is very efficient. Technical support from within the Foundation Schools is very good and ensures that equipment is ready for pupils to use. The curriculum is very well planned. The arrangements for assessment are very good, and plans are in hand to develop these further. The resources for ICT are very good; the air-conditioned ICT suite in the STC is a particularly valuable asset both to the ICT department and to the school as a whole.

### **Physical Education (PE)**

- 8.47 Excellent provision is made for the teaching and learning of physical education at every stage and very high standards are achieved. A wide range of activities both within the curriculum and extra-curricular activities support teaching and learning, all of which add to the physical and personal development of the pupils and the opportunity to attain excellence. The department is very well led and organised. It is a cohesive unit and the teachers work together as a team. Policies and related paperwork are very good.
- 8.48 The standards of attainment achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 are above those expected of pupils at this age and by the end of Year 6 well above the national average. In lessons observed standards of attainment were high and in some cases excellent. Year 5 worked well to improve and learn hitting and dribbling techniques in hockey. Throughout the school, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress in the development and use of skills and techniques, with a high proportion making rapid or excellent progress.
- 8.49 Year 1 and 2 pupils work well in gymnastics and dance and are keen to try out their ideas, responding enthusiastically to music. Year 1 pupils enjoyed developing their sense of dynamic, expressive and rhythmic movements to the sound of various musical instruments. Pupils move freely and expressively, they learn to evaluate their work and that of fellow pupils. By the end of year 6 pupils have developed very good games skills. They are aware of rules and tactics and learn to work co-operatively with the other members of the team. Hand-eye co-ordination, footwork, passing and catching techniques are all used to good effect. Skills are improved through sustained effort, and are successfully transferred both on an individual level and as a member of a team. Years 2 to 4 pupils learn to swim and all make appropriate progress, many becoming very competent and representing their school in swimming competitions.
- 8.50 In all years pupils show increasing confidence and independence in their work, following instructions well, working either individually in pairs or teams, taking turns, evaluating their work and contributing constructively to the team effort. They clearly enjoy their lessons and respond well to their teachers, being enthusiastic and well motivated to achieve. Behaviour in lessons is very good, the pupils' interest is sustained and they remain focused on activities throughout lessons showing a very good level of concentration. Pupils are conscious of safety and act responsibly and sensibly when handling apparatus.

- 8.51 Teaching throughout the school is at least good and often excellent. Lessons are very well structured to maintain interest and are planned to include a series of progressive and carefully sequenced activities. Teachers have a good understanding of pupils' abilities and ensure that tasks extend and develop skills and lead to success.
- 8.52 All pupils are continuously assessed. In years 3 to 6 more formal assessment of effort and ability is linked to the criteria used by the senior school, to promote continuity.
- 8.53 The co-ordinator organises all the curricular and the extensive extra-curricular sporting activities and coaching. Weekly meetings with the senior school facilitate planning. The contribution of physical education to the curriculum as a whole, particularly through extra-curricular sport, combines to bond the strong sense of community within the school.

### **French**

- 8.54 Pupils achieve very good standards in French. Pupils' attainment is very good in years 5 and 6, in relation to the amount of time available for this subject in the curriculum. Pupils have appropriate command of the vocabulary and the language structure to respond to the teacher's instructions given in the target language. Pupils are developing a very good French accent. The pupils' exercise books, show good standards of attainment in written French.
- 8.55 Pupils' progress in lessons and over longer periods is rapid across all abilities. Oral and written work by pupils in years 5 and 6 shows rapid progress over the school year, and from one year to the next. They readily assimilate new vocabulary, and grasp new linguistic structures.
- 8.56 The quality of teaching is very good. The main aim of the teaching is to stimulate an interest in and an enthusiasm for learning a foreign language, and this aim is achieved very successfully. The teacher communicates a lively enthusiasm for the task in hand, which clearly strikes sparks in her pupils. Planning of lessons is careful and informed by assessment. The teacher knows her pupils very well as individuals, and directs appropriate questions to pupils of varying levels of ability, to develop understanding and stimulate a lively response. Teaching strategies are varied and retain the interest of the children, as well as clearly conveying the teaching points, which are the focus of the lesson. Pupils of all levels of ability are able to take part in the lessons. The tasks set by the teacher are effectively differentiated to meet the varying needs of pupils of different levels of ability. More able pupils are being extended and are encouraged to undertake more challenging work. Written work completed by the pupils is regularly marked; the teacher's comments are positive and helpful. Progress is assessed on a regular and on-going basis.
- 8.57 This one-person department is well managed. Liaison with the modern foreign language teachers in the senior school is close and effective. The departmental policy documents are up-to-date, clear and detailed. French is taught in pleasant classroom surroundings, with very good displays of pupils' work on the walls. The use of ICT is well embedded within departmental teaching strategy. The departmental development plan has been thoughtfully compiled.

### **Music**

- 8.58 Pupils' achieve very good standards in music. Attainment is very good, and sometimes excellent, by the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6. A breadth of themes is explored, such as traditional rounds, building up knowledge, developing vocabulary and providing extensive opportunities for listening, appraising and performing at progressively complex levels.

- 8.59 In Years 1 and 2 pupils develop their singing and learn percussion techniques, musical expression and movement are encouraged and moods created and recorded with excitement, for example year 2 project on 'outer space'. Skills are extended through Years 3 to 6, with the recorder learnt by all and increasing confidence and understanding shown in the core musical elements of structure and duration. Historic, contemporary and cross-cultural styles and instruments are introduced like medieval and African drums and shakers in Year 1 and renaissance and hurdy-gurdy in Year 6. Music is taken further through extensive opportunities to perform in regular productions and musicals such as last summers major music and drama production of 'Ocean Commotion'. Pupils also have the opportunity to play in assembly in their choir and music groups; they also take part in festivals.
- 8.60 Pupils' progress is rapid in relation to their ability. They draw well on past knowledge, learn new techniques, appreciate the music of a variety of composers and perform with increasing technical skill and feeling.
- 8.61 The quality of learning and attitudes to behaviour is very good. Pupils bubble with enthusiasm, and show sustained concentration at all ages. A Year 6 pupil contributed thoughtfully to the discussion on the Da Vinci code link to renaissance music. They engage fully in lessons, working well co-operatively and enjoying the tasks presented.
- 8.62 Teaching is very good and sometimes excellent. Lessons are very well planned and organised, supported by a very detailed scheme of work. A wide range of extra-curricular activities supports the subject. Curricular continuity is ensured through liaison with the Director of Foundation music.
- 8.63 The subject is very well led and managed with very good support from other members of staff. Resources are very good with pianos, extensive tuned and untuned percussion, cd's and scores. Pupils have access to a wide range of string, brass, and woodwind instruments through taster groups offered by the peripatetic staff. The team of peripatetic staff give individual lessons that greatly enhance the curriculum. Many of these pupils are entered for Associated Board examinations and have achieved very good results in recent years.

### **Art and Design**

- 8.64 Pupils achieve very good standards in art and design throughout the school. Attainment in art and design is never less than good and often high. By the end of the Foundation Stage children show very good fine motor control and are able to observe and record in detail many features on a face. By age 7 pupils are able to use a variety of mediums. They can weave, make animal shapes out of clay, paint with confidence and use various methods to join materials. By age 11 they are able to follow through the design process to produce a freestanding pencil holder, create nature pictures in relief or paint skilfully in the style of ancient Egyptians and the Impressionists.
- 8.65 Progress is good as pupils follow instructions conscientiously and they are attentive. They watch demonstrations of new techniques and practise diligently. For example, Year 5 pupils, working from real life, sketched a tree, enlarged it as a pencil drawing and shaded it with charcoal. This exercise helped them to build their skills and understanding quickly. Pupils persevere with their work and this aids progress. The provision of quality resources has a beneficial effect on pupils' progress. In Year 6 pupils' work is enhanced by the use of the senior school design and technology room and computer suite.
- 8.66 The quality of learning and behaviour is very good. Pupils are attentive and sustain their concentration over long periods. They move about the classrooms responsibly showing care not to damage the work of others. They ask for advice readily and give logical accounts of the processes involved in their work. Following a lesson in the computer

network room year 6 were able to consider the benefits and disadvantages of computer aided design and manufacture.

- 8.67 Teaching is good. It is sometimes very good and on occasions excellent. In a Year 2 lesson four well-planned activities gave the children excellent opportunities to build upon their art, design and technological techniques. Teachers' planning is detailed and their effective preparation of materials and resources enables pupils to make the best use of time available. All teachers give support and encouragement which is appropriate to the needs of the pupils and they know them well. A calm and orderly atmosphere permeates all art and design lessons and aids the establishment of safe and hygienic practices. At times the tightly structured approach can inhibit the self-exploratory opportunities in the subject.
- 8.68 The many vibrant displays throughout the school, such as the junior art gallery and the excellent cross-curricular displays in the classrooms, mean that pupils have the opportunity to appreciate and learn from the work of others. These displays are testament to the hard work of both the pupils and staff.
- 8.69 Resources are good and include a suitable range of equipment and materials. Assessment opportunities and new schemes of work continue to be developed to include mechanical technology and build upon the present good practice in food technology.
- 8.70 The subject is very well led and managed.

### **Short Subject Reports**

Short subject reports contain concise evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning and of provision in the school.

### ***Humanities***

- 8.71 Six lessons were observed, a full range of pupils work was scrutinised and discussions held with the co-ordinators.
- 8.72 The teaching of humanities was good and sometimes excellent. Teaching showed a very good grasp of the subject and appropriately challenged pupils of all abilities. Very good attention was paid to developing pupils' religious vocabulary. Teaching made good use of a range of methods and resources and cross-curricular links to good effect and was enhanced by a comprehensive local and residential fieldwork programme. Clear objectives, varied stimuli and tasks and the effective use of ICT, for example in the topic on ancient Egypt with Year 6 added to pupils learning.
- 8.73 The quality of learning, attitudes and behaviour was very good. Pupils listened carefully to their teachers and were willing to answer questions and offer comments. They worked well co-operatively and independently from an early age. Pupils' written work was well presented and good use made of ICT, which included Internet research, producing projects on major faiths in our country.
- 8.74 History, geography and religious education (the humanities) are very well led and supported by comprehensive schemes of work that includes excellent sections on ethical issues. There is also a very good range of artefacts is available for the subject.

### ***Personal, Social and Health Education(PSHCE)***

- 8.75 Two lessons were observed, three assemblies were attended and a short meeting was held with the subject co-ordinator.

- 8.76 The quality of teaching observed was very good. Lessons were well planned. Appropriate tasks were chosen and these had clear objectives, as for example in the Year 6 lessons using role-play to look at compromise in relationships with parents, and peer groups. Teachers were very secure in their knowledge of the topics and had developed very good relationships with the pupils.
- 8.77 Pupils showed great interest in the subject and were very well motivated. They were attentive and responded well to given tasks. They were very sensibly behaved, particularly when working in small groups. They listened to each other's opinions and shared ideas confidently.
- 8.78 The programme of study is very well planned and visiting speakers are also used to support the subject well.

### **Achievement and Quality in Activities**

- 8.79 Achievement and quality in the activities provided are very good for the ages, aptitudes and abilities of the pupils concerned. The quality of provision results in excellent personal development of the pupils.
- 8.80 Levels achieved in activities and in awards and competitions are very good and sometimes excellent, particularly in chess, creative writing, mathematics, music and sport. The activities programme offers a suitable range of activities that are appropriate for the ages and abilities of the pupils concerned. Years 1 and 2 have the opportunity to participate in language, word detective, dance and ball skills clubs. Years 3 to 6 are offered many activities including sport, music, chess and dance.
- 8.81 More than 9 out of every 10 parents replying to the questionnaire, indicated that they were appreciative of the range of activities offered.
- 8.82 The opportunities for sport are many, both selective and non-selective and enable pupils to achieve a healthy and active life style, improve techniques and skills or just play for enjoyment. A wide range of musical activities and the drama club, give pupils opportunities to perform regularly in front of school and public audiences. All pupils take part in the school productions. A very high proportion of pupils take part in individual music lessons or clubs, including a taster group where pupils may try an instrument for half a term before committing themselves to studying it. A large number of older pupils compete in national chess, creative writing, mathematics and sporting competitions, with excellent results.
- 8.83 The activities take place most days, at lunchtime and after school. An extremely high proportion of the teaching and non-teaching staff contribute to the activities programme and the activities are very well managed. The full and varied programme of activities is thorough and used effectively as a vehicle for teaching and learning. The school organises a good range of educational and recreational visits and residential trips, both in this country and abroad. For instance, to mention just a few from a very long list; Year 1 go to Dewsbury museum to study toys from times past, Year 4 stays in the Yorkshire Dales for some geography fieldwork, Year 6 spend a week in the Lake District and skiers go to Italy.
- 8.84 Pupils' participation in activities is commented on in their school reports. Systems for recording pupils' attendance are varied and effective. All noteworthy achievements and efforts are acknowledged in school letters, magazines and assemblies.

## 9. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 9.1 The inspection was carried out from 14th November to 18th November 2005. All subjects of the curriculum were inspected and all members of the teaching staff were observed teaching. However, the size of the team did not permit all subjects to be reported on in full. The following subjects do not have full reports in Section 8: Humanities and PSHCE. The inspectors visited 110 lessons or parts of lessons, examined extensive samples of work by pupils of different abilities in each Year and held formal discussions with these pupils as well as informal discussions with other pupils. They attended three assemblies and five registration sessions. They observed nine extra-curricular and sporting activities. They held discussions with 25 teaching and non-teaching staff at various levels in the school. They analysed the responses of 291 parents to a questionnaire distributed in advance of the inspection. They examined a wide range of documentation made available by the school.

### List of Inspectors

Mrs KJ Kelly	Reporting Inspector, Headmistress GSA Junior School
Mrs J Bridle	Deputy Headteacher ISA school
Mrs K Darby	Retired Headmistress ISA school
Mrs P Forsyth	Retired Headmistress IAPS school
Mrs V Woolford	Head of Department ISA school
Mrs I Smith	Retired Headmistress IAPS school
Mr T Johns	Headmaster IAPS school