



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**HAMPSHIRE COLLEGIATE SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Hampshire Collegiate School

Full Name of School	<b>Hampshire Collegiate School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>850/6035</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>1016538</b>		
Address	<b>Hampshire Collegiate School Park House Embley Park Romsey Hampshire SO51 6ZE</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01794 512206</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01794 518737</b>		
Email Address	<b>info@hampshirecs.org.uk</b>		
Principal	<b>Mr Hector MacDonald</b>		
Proprietor	<b>United Church Schools Trust</b>		
Chairman of Local Governors	<b>Mr David d’Arcy Hughes</b>		
Age Range	<b>3 to 19</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>675</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (373 boys; 302 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>0</b>	5-11: <b>142</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>40</b>	11-18: <b>493</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>603</b>	Capacity for flexi-boarding: <b>4</b>
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>72</b>	
	Full:	<b>54</b>	Weekly: <b>18</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Mary Bower</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection dates	<b>04 Oct 2011 to 05 Oct 2011</b>		
	<b>02 Nov 2011 to 04 Nov 2011</b>		

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in October 2007.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010\*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

\*These Standards Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31<sup>st</sup> August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of boarding was not carried out in conjunction with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills, and the report does not contain specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education and development in general. The full Ofsted report refers to an inspection in November 2010 and can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) under Children's social care/Boarding school.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features

- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Hampshire Collegiate School is a co-educational day and boarding school situated in an extensive parkland site on the outskirts of Romsey, providing for pupils whose academic and other abilities appear to match the school's ethos and standards. The school was established in 2006 by the amalgamation of The Atherley School and Embley Park School. The school's main building, in which the boarding accommodation is located, was once the home of Florence Nightingale. The junior school, which is being renamed as the preparatory school, houses the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and has its own purpose-built accommodation in the grounds. The school is owned by the United Church Schools Trust (UCST), which has overall responsibility for management and governance; the local board of governors operates mainly in an advisory capacity. The current principal has been in post since 2008. Since the previous inspection, the school has revised its aims. Boarding accommodation has been refurbished and the EYFS provision is now available all year round.
- 1.2 The school aims to ensure a close focus on each individual, and seeks to define and refine each pupil's unique qualities while encouraging an aspiration for excellence in pupils and teachers alike. It aims to create an energetic approach to all aspects of life, and a strong, inclusive sense of community within a Christian ethos that welcomes pupils of all faiths and none.
- 1.3 Currently, there are 675 pupils enrolled at the school, with slightly more boys than girls. An extensive bus network brings pupils from within a 20-mile radius of the school. The 72 boarders come mainly from the UK and Europe. There are 98 pupils in the sixth form and 182 pupils in the junior school, including 40 in the EYFS. The ability range of the pupils is above the national average, a significant number being far above average. There are two pupils with statements of special educational needs. The school identifies a further 98 pupils as having mild special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); of these, 54 opt for specialist support within the school while others are closely monitored. There are 45 pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) and of these 30 elect to receive support for their English.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

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

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

- 2.1 Pupils are well educated in line with the school's aims. They benefit from the school's commitment to discovering and developing each individual's talents whilst encouraging an aspiration for excellence. From an early age, pupils are articulate, manipulate numbers skilfully and show a good understanding of scientific concepts. Their creativity is evident in their work. Pupils throughout the school make good progress. They are generally well-motivated and curious learners; in the best lessons they work with absorbed interest. When teaching lacks stimulation a lack of attention can impede learning and on occasions the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Sixth-form pupils are mature, organise their work well independently and are ambitious for their futures. Pupils enjoy the range of activities available, enthusiastically competing successfully in sports and academic contests.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent. The school is highly successful in creating an energetic, inclusive community in which all are helped to grow into mature, responsible young adults. Pupils are notably supportive of each other, aware of others' needs and feelings; new boarders from overseas settle quickly and appreciate the value the school places on their contribution to its multi-cultural atmosphere. The historic buildings help to nurture the pupils' sense of timeless values and of service; pupils throughout the school live up to these in their behaviour. Pupils learn tolerance and personal responsibility in an atmosphere that encourages them to aspire to the best within themselves.
- 2.3 Good governance from the UCST and the local governors is enabling the school to make continued progress in meeting its ambitious development plans. Governors' oversight of regulatory matters is now good. Good school leadership is emphasising measures to improve further the standards of education, with many monitoring procedures now in place. These do not yet consistently have an impact on practice. The school now ensures that appropriate recruitment checks are thorough. In pre-inspection questionnaires, boarders expressed some dissatisfaction with facilities and activities provided in the evenings and at weekends. Inspectors agree that there is some justice in these concerns. Parents' responses to pre-inspection questionnaires showed that they are almost unanimous in their satisfaction with the education and facilities offered to their children, and with the values the school promotes. Inspectors' findings confirm their views.

## **2.(b) Action points**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school did not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it was required to:
- ensure that the admission register contains all the required information for every pupil [Part 3, paragraph 17, under Welfare, health and safety];
  - ensure that the identity of a person offered for supply work at the school has been checked by the school before the person begins work [Part 4, paragraph 20.(2)(c), under Suitability of staff and proprietors].
- 2.5 At the time of the final team visit, the school had rectified all of the above shortcomings, as noted in the text of the report.
- 2.6 In addition, it was found that the school does not meet the following requirement, and therefore it must:
- ensure that all statutory checks are completed before or as soon as possible after an appointment [Part 4, paragraph 19.(2)(c), under Suitability of staff and proprietors].

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

- 2.7 In addition to the above regulatory action point, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that all teaching emulates the practice of the best so as to provide all pupils with appropriate challenge and opportunities to think independently.
  2. Strengthen the role of middle managers by further devolving responsibilities for areas of school development.
  3. Ensure that the school's vision of a united community is more clearly understood and implemented.
  4. In the EYFS, monitor closely and regularly the provision and implementation of policies to ensure that changing requirements are met.

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

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

- 3.1 The overall achievement of the pupils is good and the school is successful in promoting a broad vision of excellence. The literacy and numeracy skills of junior school pupils are strong. In the senior school pupils are able to employ sophisticated vocabulary confidently, both in written work and in discussion. Pupils in both sections of the school manage numbers well, show a good understanding of scientific concepts and use common computer programs effectively. Younger junior school pupils used information and communication technology (ICT) successfully to chart the growth of the beans they had planted in science lessons. When given the opportunity pupils enjoy thinking for themselves and display good logic. They are creative and imaginative; artwork on display is original and skilfully executed. Older junior school pupils wrote striking poetry using extended metaphors, and younger senior school pupils quickly learnt to play in 7/8 time and sung with good awareness of tuning.
- 3.2 Pupils in the junior and senior schools enter national mathematics challenges, achieving a number of silver and gold awards; in 2011, some senior school pupils progressed to the international stages of the competition. There are good levels of success in music, speech and drama examinations, and the artwork of sixth formers has been displayed at the Royal Academy of Arts, a business design centre in London and an international exhibition in Tokyo. Over half of pupils in Year 10 succeed at bronze level in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, and a small number continue to complete the silver and gold levels while at school. School teams have been finalists in regional netball, hockey, cricket and rugby contests; many individuals go on to compete at county, national and international level in a range of sports.
- 3.3 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2008 to 2010. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. In the junior school, results in national tests at the age of 11 have been good in relation to the average for maintained primary schools. Results at GCSE have been good in relation to the national average for maintained senior schools, with all pupils achieving at least five GCSEs at grades A\* to C. A-level results have been similar to the national average for those of similar abilities in maintained senior schools; results in 2011 showed an improvement on previous years, being above the average for maintained senior schools. These results indicate that pupils make good progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability. The school's commitment to adapting academic programmes and its encouragement of aspiration ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND and the most able pupils, make good progress, as demonstrated by their test scores and when undertaking independent research. Each year a number of pupils in the junior school go on to win scholarships to the senior school or other independent schools. The majority of sixth-form leavers go on to higher education, most achieving places at the university of their choice.
- 3.4 Pupils have a very positive approach to learning. They enjoy most lessons and are eager to participate whenever given the opportunity, able to ask perceptive questions. They work well individually as well as in groups. They listen to each other attentively but at the same time are ready to take the risk of offering their own

ideas and opinions in an environment that encourages them to know that making mistakes is part of learning.

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

- 3.5 The school's curricular and extra-curricular provision is good, and meets its aim of ensuring that the particular talents of each individual are identified and developed. The junior school curriculum, with a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy, extends beyond the required areas, and well-planned schemes of work ensure good progress for all pupils, regardless of ability. The senior school curriculum offers a wide and balanced range of subjects, especially in the sixth form. Option choices, including languages and dual or triple award science at GCSE, and sixth-form subjects such as government and politics, law, psychology and economics, very effectively allow pupils to pursue individual interests and strengths. The overall activities programme and academic provision for the sixth form have both been extended since the previous inspection.
- 3.6 The curriculum is suited to all ages and includes an effective personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. The learning support department has very good systems for identifying pupils with SEND and providing them with supporting strategies. The school identifies pupils of particularly strong ability and often provides opportunities beyond the classroom to extend them. For example, junior school pupils are challenged to develop projects reflecting their own interests.
- 3.7 The school's annual Summer Festival provides the opportunity for pupils to work creatively across the curriculum; for example, some senior school pupils wrote very effective short stories drawing inspiration from Hopper's paintings. Pupils enjoy the opportunities offered by the Learning Outside the Classroom programme, introduced since the previous inspection; the junior school makes especially extensive use of the grounds to give the pupils direct experience of the natural world. Further valuable opportunities for such learning are provided by trips and overseas visits linked to the curriculum, such as the recent senior school trip to Honduras and the annual trip to France for Year 6.
- 3.8 The extra-curricular provision is good overall, and excellent in the junior school. It offers pupils the chance to develop a wide variety of skills and interests, from orchestra to drama, pottery to engineering and cookery to art. Provision for sports is given a particular emphasis in evening clubs for senior pupils, with fewer opportunities at this time for academic or creative clubs. At the time of the inspection, junior school pupils were rehearsing a pantomime based on Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, and senior school pupils were beginning work on a dance and gym performance with a global theme, to include a version of a New Zealand haka. These varied activities are thoroughly enjoyed by those who participate, and are spoken of enthusiastically by the pupils.
- 3.9 Good links exist with a local abbey and sixth formers benefit from opportunities to work with the junior school. The connection with an international school in Bangalore has given the prefects inspiration for developing inter-school links and the offer of Gap Year placements.

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

- 3.10 The overall quality of teaching is good, with some that is excellent, and supports the school's aim to ensure a close focus on each individual. Most teaching shows a good understanding of the pupils' needs although those of the most able pupils are not always taken into account. Lessons are well planned and, especially in the junior school, they cater for the pupils' own preferred learning styles so that all are enabled to make good progress. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and an enthusiasm for their subjects, which promotes the pupils' interest and confidence. Teachers show a willingness to step beyond expected levels of study for particular age groups. For example, in a lesson on circulation, younger senior school pupils were stimulated by a demonstration of dissection and responded with fascinated questions.
- 3.11 The best lessons are well paced and imaginative. They encourage dialogue and active participation whilst challenging the pupils to explore ideas for themselves and to deepen their understanding and knowledge. In an A-level psychology class about learned behaviour and ethical issues of animal experiments, there was lively interchange between teacher and pupils, and in a junior school design and technology class, pupils were absorbed in making their own steering chassis. In some teaching, excessive direction and reliance on undemanding worksheets impede independent learning, resulting in inattentive behaviour from pupils. Most teachers show skill in controlling lively classes and containing inappropriate chatter.
- 3.12 Regular reviews of the pupils' work ensure that those whose work is slipping are identified and interventions quickly put in place to support them. This also enables those achieving above expectations to be recognised and rewarded. The introduction of individual learning plans and target setting for all pupils is having a positive impact on the pupils' awareness of what they need to do to improve the standard of their work. While there are good systems for identifying pupils with SEND and more able pupils, teaching, especially in the senior school, does not always provide sufficiently varied tasks to challenge all pupils appropriately. The standard of marking is good overall but is variable across different subject areas, with some work receiving a cursory review from the teacher. The best marking provides pupils with helpful, encouraging comments and precise targets for improvement.
- 3.13 Teachers are provided with high quality resources and many make good use of interactive whiteboards, showing films to deepen the pupils' understanding or encouraging pupils to highlight or annotate on the board for themselves. In the senior school some teaching makes imaginative use of 'voting pods' that add an extra dimension of pupil involvement and stimulate great enjoyment.

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

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent and a great strength of the school, evidence of its success in encouraging individuals to grow into well-balanced and thoughtful young adults. Pupils reflect willingly on spiritual matters and ask questions that probe ideas of faith. The recent developments in staffing in this area have sharpened the spiritual focus and provided excellent opportunities for listening, sharing and challenge, which the pupils relish. The pupils' understanding of and respect for other faiths are very clear. Behaviour in assemblies, which encourage thought on personal values and often draw on Christian traditions, is attentive; pupils reflect thoughtfully on what they hear. Pupils enjoy and respond sensitively to the beauty of their surroundings, and their awareness of the beauty of the non-material is demonstrated in their creative writing, drama and artwork.
- 4.2 Pupils develop a strong sense of values from an early age. They are notably sensitive to others, instinctively supporting those who are experiencing difficulties, and their dealings with each other are characterised by mutual respect and tolerance. They have strong senses of right and wrong and of justice, and readily explore themes such as social inequality, war crimes, animal experimentation and overseas aid. They discuss ethical issues astutely in class and respond to cross-curricular opportunities, such as a talk in religious studies on the philosophy of physics, with a sense of intellectual excitement.
- 4.3 Pupils have excellent social skills; they are at ease with each other and with adults. Behaviour throughout the school is very good and there is an atmosphere of calm and self-discipline. Pupils are welcoming and courteous to visitors, demonstrating excellent manners. They have a well-developed sense of social responsibility and engage actively in fund raising for a range of local, national and international charities, raising significant amounts of money each year. They appreciate the school's encouragement to develop their own initiatives in this respect and willingly take on posts of responsibility, which they discharge efficiently. The authority of sixth-form prefects is respected by those younger than them, who aspire to such roles in the future. Pupils of different ages co-operate easily. The school council meets regularly, and older pupils routinely help younger ones in their work and extra-curricular activities. In conversation and written work, pupils show a good awareness of the wider world and current events.
- 4.4 Pupils show a ready appreciation of Western and other cultures, enhanced by the school's links with schools in India and Madagascar. At the time of the inspection, some older pupils had just returned from a visit to India and their awareness both of the beauty and inequalities of that country was evident. In their excellent artwork, pupils take inspiration from a wide range of cultural traditions: GCSE work shows the influence of French impressionists and African tribal art. School life is enhanced by its cultural diversity, pupils learning, for example, about Japanese culture in an extra-curricular activity. Different nationalities are extremely well integrated into boarding and school life.

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

- 4.5 Pastoral care is excellent, strongly underpinning the school's aim of providing a caring environment in which all are treated with respect and understanding as individuals. The pupils commented that the school is a happy community where they feel safe and where staff care about their well-being. This atmosphere helps pupils to develop into self-confident, mature and articulate young adults.
- 4.6 Relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst pupils themselves, are open and friendly. Pupils are relaxed and respectful in speaking with teachers; it is clear that they trust and like them. The pastoral structure is clear and supportive. Pupils understand how this works and, if they do experience difficulties, they know who to speak to and they feel confident that their concerns will be addressed. The school has effective procedures for promoting good behaviour and for guarding against harassment. The pupils report that bullying is rare and that should it occur it would be dealt with effectively.
- 4.7 The school's policies and procedures for safeguarding children are thorough and are implemented appropriately. Staff are checked for their suitability to work with children and staff appointments are correctly recorded on the central register. A small number of historic errors in carrying out and recording checks have been corrected. All staff receive regular training on child protection. The school has taken all the necessary measures to minimise risk from fire. Risk assessments are carried out with due care and diligence.
- 4.8 Other arrangements to ensure the pupils' health and safety are effective and contribute well to their personal development. These include excellent provision for those who are ill or injured. Qualified nursing staff are on duty throughout the day and there are strong procedures to ensure good communication with boarding staff regarding the pupils' health. The school has a good plan to continue the development of educational access for pupils with SEND and takes great care to ensure that it provides sensitively for pupils with specific physical needs. The admission register is now correctly completed; it is appropriately stored for the previous three years, as are attendance registers, all of which are suitably maintained.
- 4.9 The school cafeteria serves freshly cooked and appetising food, about which the pupils speak very positively. Menus are varied and imaginative, and there is a wide choice of healthy options, including salads and fresh fruit. Regular spot checks are carried out to ensure that all are attending meals. The pupils are well informed about eating healthily through the PSHE programme, and all are involved in regular exercise through physical education lessons and extra-curricular activities.

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

- 4.10 Overall, the quality of the boarding education is good, and the school meets its aim of providing an environment wherein pupils can find support, nurture and consideration in a relaxed, caring atmosphere. Boarding pupils say that they are happy in this home from home and feel well supported by the house staff who care for them. As a result, pupils are very positive about their boarding experience. The strong sense of community has a clear effect on their self-confidence, maturity, good study habits and self-discipline.
- 4.11 The palpably warm, friendly atmosphere is created by the pupils themselves and also by the level of care shown by the boarding staff. Older pupils routinely look after younger ones without needing to be asked to do so, and new boarders are similarly helped by those with more experience. Pupils speak very positively of how well peers and older pupils had helped them to settle in and deal with initial homesickness. The boarding house caters for pupils from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds, and they live together harmoniously. They show notable respect for each other and clearly enjoy one another's company.
- 4.12 There is a well-respected system of boarding prefects; they carry out their duties responsibly and are excellent ambassadors for the school's boarding house. Pupils are given opportunities to contribute to the running of the house at regular house meetings and they feel that their views are important to staff. House staff organise a range of activities at weekends, such as shopping, cinema trips and visits to cultural sites. Boarders much appreciate being able to use the sports hall when it is available in the evening. However, they feel strongly that they have limited access to facilities in the later evening and a narrow range of weekend activities; inspection findings support these views. The school recognises a need to develop this aspect of boarding life and plans are in train to do so.
- 4.13 The standard of the boarding accommodation is generally good. Improvements have been made since the previous inspection, undertaken by Ofsted, which meet the recommendation of the subsequent report. Furniture is mostly of a good standard. Rooms are a good size, with facilities for study as well as relaxation, and common areas are comfortable, with homely touches.

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

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

- 5.1 The governance of the school is good overall. The UCST provides the school with good access to professional advice while the local governing body contributes valuable community knowledge. The central council of the UCST, which includes the chairman and vice chairman of the local board, has addressed a recommendation of the previous report and there is now a clear and consistent expression of the school's aims in all documentation. The trust has invested substantially in the school, ensuring that it is very well resourced. Plans are underway for the creation of a new boarding house to accommodate girls.
- 5.2 Governors at both levels work together effectively to realise ambitious plans for the future development of the school. The trust's rigorous monitoring procedures provide the school with considerable information on educational standards; this is discussed regularly with the trust's executive, providing support and challenge. The executive of the UCST recognises importance in ensuring a good balance between appropriate levels of oversight and of local responsibility. There are occasions, however, when the school feels that the timings of initiatives or requests for information from the centre can create difficulties or frustrations.
- 5.3 Policies, including those for child protection and health and safety, are overseen by the trust and responsibility for their implementation is devolved to the local governors. Policies all meet legal requirements but their implementation, although largely successful, has historically not always been fully effective in checking staff. Procedures are now in place to ensure that all such checks are carried out promptly and current practice is strong. Some local governors are well known to staff. The school provides governors with detailed information and is taking steps to encourage local governors to become more involved in and aware of its daily life. It is also encouraging local governors to attend appropriate training for the areas for which they have specific responsibility so as to increase their effectiveness in their roles.

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

- 5.4 The leadership and management of the school are good, with areas of excellence. The school takes good care of pupils, balancing a concern for safety and inculcating good study habits with encouraging personal responsibility and growing independence. All staff are well trained and conscientious in carrying out their responsibilities for the safety and well-being of pupils. The school now has good arrangements for checking the suitability of staff.
- 5.5 The senior leadership team has formulated a thorough and ambitious development plan. The team reviews progress regularly and the academic results in the senior school are improving as a result. There is now a clear sense of a school that has embraced a new identity since the merger in 2006 and is moving forward. The creation of a sense of a single school community, however, given the distance between the junior and senior school buildings, is not yet fully achieved as not all staff fully understand and implement the whole-school vision of the school's aims.
- 5.6 The rigorous procedures for monitoring standards of teaching and learning at several points in the year provide the school with a wealth of data. Data is not always fully utilised by middle managers in the senior school and sometimes this is

reflected in teaching which does not sufficiently challenge all pupils. The excellent opportunities for staff development offered by the UCST are highly appreciated and staff are encouraged by senior leaders to be ambitious for themselves as well as for their pupils. Planning for the development of the school has until recently been chiefly in the hands of the most senior staff, so that middle managers have not been able to exercise their managerial responsibilities fully. The school is now beginning to establish strategies to involve them more in contributing to its future development.

- 5.7 A clearly expressed vision of an education that values and inspires each pupil is evident amongst senior leaders and underpins the school's happy atmosphere. School leadership is highly successful in its focus on individual pupils and in encouraging them to mature into confident and responsible young adults.

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

- 5.8 The school is highly successful in establishing excellent relationships with parents. Parents are warmly welcomed into the school during the day by friendly and helpful office staff. They are invited regularly to school events such as fixtures, concerts and plays. Parents of those in the junior school join the pupils to watch their form assemblies, enjoying too the opportunity to chat informally with teachers over coffee beforehand. The junior school makes especially good use of the potential for parents to enrich their children's education; for example, parents have spoken to the pupils about their experiences in Arctic exploration or in dentistry.
- 5.9 The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed satisfaction with the school. They showed particularly high levels of satisfaction with the progress made by their children, the range of subjects and experiences offered, and the worthwhile attitudes and views promoted. Parents also greatly appreciate the high standard of pastoral care throughout, and enjoy the readily available information and easy communication with the school. Inspectors' findings confirm these opinions.
- 5.10 The school makes great efforts to respond to any parental concerns or complaints quickly. On the rare occasions when these cannot be resolved informally, the school is meticulous in following its complaints policy.
- 5.11 Parents have direct electronic communication with staff and the school office. Information booklets are helpful and well presented. The school's website has much useful information, including access to all the required policies, for parents of existing and prospective pupils. An attractive weekly bulletin, covering activities throughout the school, ensures that parents are kept well informed of all that is going on. A detailed junior school annual review covering all aspects of school life and achievement is produced and distributed to parents. Parents receive regular, thorough and useful reports, although some of these are a little reliant on standardised comments, losing the sense of the pupil's individuality. In some cases, but not all, reports note personal achievements and give precise targets for improvement.
- 5.12 The lively parents' association, Friends of HCS, actively supports the school. It raises funds for charity and to provide extra facilities, such as equipment for the junior school design and technology room. School prefects involve their parents in the organisation of the annual Leavers Ball. At the time of the inspection, parents were busy preparing for Bonfire Night celebrations.

**What the school should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.**

## **6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

### **6.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

6.1 The overall effectiveness of the EYFS is outstanding. Effective teaching from a highly skilled staff team recognises the uniqueness of each child and ensures that all children, whatever their background or abilities, make rapid progress within a safe and secure learning environment. Welfare is given the highest priority, with effective procedures to ensure the safeguarding of children. Highly successful links with local agencies promote outstanding practice. All EYFS practitioners evaluate their practice in the classroom effectively. As a result, consistently high standards are maintained and the setting has developed an effective improvement plan that is monitored annually.

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

6.2 Leadership and management of the setting are good, with many outstanding features. The staff have an ambitious vision, driven by their understanding of inclusive practice, ensuring the elimination of discrimination. Some policies, however, have not always been subject to sufficiently regular review to ensure that they consistently reflect awareness of current requirements. There have been many positive improvements to provision in recent years as a result of consultation between parents and staff, for example the change to the format of parents' evenings. 'WOW' stickers enable parents to inform the school about special moments that have taken place at home. Staff work together well to promote effective and safe use of high quality, imaginative resources.

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

6.3 The provision of the setting is outstanding. All staff are appropriately qualified and the high ratio of adults to children ensures much individual support and attention. Adults are vigilant in promoting safe practice and risk assessments are updated regularly. Detailed planning successfully balances teacher-led and child-initiated activities. EYFS staff quickly identify children with EAL or SEND and put supporting strategies in place. Stimulating indoor and outdoor environments provide safe learning areas for wide-ranging, purposeful and enjoyable activities. Excellent ongoing assessments ensure that all children are suitably challenged, and that each child's progress is tracked and appropriate next steps are established, providing a seamless transition from Nursery to Reception. Children benefit from high quality, and at times, inspirational lessons in music, physical education and French, led by specialist teachers. The strong relationships between practitioners, parents and children ensure that children are safe, secure and extremely well cared for.

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

- 6.4 Outcomes for children are outstanding. All make substantial progress, the majority exceeding expectations. The children develop literacy and numeracy skills, and learn to use ICT with confidence. For example, Nursery children were absorbed in an activity using programmable ducks. In the Reception class, children enjoyed role play in a cafe area, chatting animatedly with friends and writing menus for others to read. Children develop creativity, and their growing understanding of the world is evident in their imaginative play, artwork and language. Children participate enthusiastically and are articulate, observant and inquisitive learners. Class rules are produced in discussion with the children, ensuring their understanding of appropriate behaviour. Children care for and respect others, taking turns and sharing willingly. They understand that healthy eating, personal hygiene and physical exercise all contribute to a healthy lifestyle.

**Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.**

## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the boarding house and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mrs Colette Culligan	Reporting Inspector
Mr Graham Best	Headmaster, SHMIS school
Mrs Angela Culley	Headmistress, ISA school
Mrs Brenda Marshall	Head of Department, IAPS school
Mr Nigel West	Housemaster, HMC school
Dr Charles Runacres	Headmaster, SHMIS school
Mrs Sally Dibb-Holland	Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector