



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE



ST GABRIEL'S SCHOOL STANDARD INSPECTION

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St Gabriel's School

Full Name of School	St Gabriel's School
DfE Number	869/6004
Registered Charity Number	1062748
Address	St Gabriel's School Sandleford Priory Newbury Berkshire RG20 9BD
Telephone Number	01635 555680
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Email Address	Info@stgabriels.co.uk
Principal	Mr Alun Jones
Chair of Governors	Mr Nigel Garland
Age Range	3 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	477
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (5 boys; 472 girls;)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 27 11-18: 306 5-11: 144
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	19 Oct 2010 to 20 Oct 2010 8 Nov 2010 to 10 Nov 2010

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 November 2006.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Established in 1929 as a day school for girls, St Gabriel's School is situated in 57 acres of historic parkland on the edge of Newbury and is a registered charity, managed by a board of governors. The school buildings are centred on the eighteenth-century Sandleford Priory, with considerable new development taking place in recent years. St Gabriel's caters for pupils aged from three to eighteen and aims to be a forward thinking school, combining traditional Christian values with strong pastoral care, where pupils can achieve the best results of which they are capable in a happy environment in which they feel cared for, and where they can develop self-confidence and self-esteem.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection, there were 477 pupils attending the school, of whom 306 were in the senior school, 114 were in the junior department, and 57 in the pre-prep department, including 27 in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Scores in standardised tests indicate that the ability profile of pupils in the junior department is above the national average, with most pupils being of above average or average ability. In the senior school, the ability profile to GCSE is above the national average, with the main spread of ability being between average to far above average ability. In the sixth form, the ability profile remains above the national average, however with a much wider range of abilities than represented in Years 7 to 11.
- 1.3 For Years 3 to 6, entry is based on the successful outcome of an assessment day visit, and a satisfactory progress report from the current school. In Years 7 to 11, entry is based on successful outcomes in the school's own entrance examinations, an informal interview and a satisfactory progress report from the current school. Entry to the sixth form is dependent on the candidate's having grade B in five subjects at GCSE, or a specific talent or interest for which the school can offer the appropriate curriculum, and a satisfactory progress report from the current school. Pupils join the school from both independent and maintained sector schools, within a radius of over twenty miles. The school has identified 57 pupils as having a recognised learning difficulty and/or disability (LDD). Of these, 29 are categorised as being "school action" and 28 as "school action plus" using the national code of practice. Fifty-one pupils receive specialist additional tuition. Two pupils have statements of special educational need.
- 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 The school fully meets its aims. The pupils achieve at a high level both academically and in their activities. They make good progress in their learning as a result of the good teaching they receive and the excellent curricular and extra-curricular provision which provides an extensive range of subjects and activities. The pupils' achievements are further supported by their excellent attitudes to their studies and the excellent skills they develop to support their learning.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent. Their spiritual development is excellent and they have a high degree of moral, social and cultural awareness. Their behaviour is exemplary and they demonstrate a high level of mutual respect and support for each other and for all members of the school community. Many pupils make a valuable contribution to the school and to the wider community, both in leadership roles and in service to others. Pupils are keenly aware of the needs of others and give considerably of their time and money.
- 2.3 The governors are highly committed to the school and take seriously their role in overseeing the work of the school, including their responsibility to check regulatory matters. The executive and senior leadership team give clear and highly supportive leadership to all parts of the school. Those with responsibility for managing the pastoral care of pupils' and their personal development do so highly effectively. Systems in place for health and safety are effective although, occasionally, they are not always scrupulously adhered to. Since the last inspection, progress has been made in the leadership and management of teaching and learning: roles in this area have been reviewed and are now clearly defined. The school has responded to all of the recommendations of the last ISI inspection report. Parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated a high level of support for all aspects of the work of the school. Of the pupils responding to the questionnaire, almost all say that they are making good progress in their work, that they find their work interesting and that teachers help them to learn. A number say that teachers do not monitor their workload and that teachers do not always treat pupils equally. However, pupils spoken with during the inspection suggest a far higher level of satisfaction in these areas.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

1. Ensure that the new staff appraisal system is established and becomes an integral part of the on-going development of teaching and learning.
2. Ensure consistency of approach in teachers' adherence to the marking policy so that all marking fully supports the pupils' learning and progress.
3. Ensure that the good practice set out in the health and safety procedures is scrupulously adhered to at all times.
4. Monitor carefully the consequences of the classroom arrangements in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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 pupils' all-round achievements are excellent and they are well educated, in accordance with the school's aims. Their progress is good and often rapid. They demonstrate good, often excellent levels of knowledge, understanding and skills in all their activities. They are articulate, listen well, read fluently and write cogently. They think logically and independently can place theories in context and construct testing, well-articulated questions. They show high levels of creativity, for example in their work in art, technology, music, dance and drama. They are able to apply their mathematical understanding to other areas of the curriculum and are competent users of information and communication technology (ICT). In the Intermediate Maths Challenge, two pupils came in the top five percent nationally. In science, pupils regularly gain awards, with a sixth-form pupil receiving a bronze award at the Chemistry Olympiad. In modern foreign languages, music, art and drama, individual pupils and groups of pupils also achieve high levels of success and are regular prize winners in a number of competitions. In 2009, Chameleon, a Young Enterprise company, gained two awards: Best Trade Stand and the Award for Innovation. The pupils are equally successful in sport. Pupils have been national finalists in netball, and many pupils take part individually and in teams at county, regional and national level in a wide variety of sports.
- 3.2 Over the last three years for which there are comparative data available, the pupils' results in GCSE examinations have been above the national average for girls in maintained schools and similar to the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. Over the same period, results at A level have been above the national average for girls in maintained schools and above the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. Results at A level have shown improvement since 2007. Results in national tests at age eleven in 2007, the last year in which they were taken, were far above the national average for maintained primary schools. In the senior school, results at GCSE and A level are good, indicating that pupils' progress is above the average for pupils of similar ability, as supported by standardised measures of progress.
- 3.3 In lessons, pupils settle to their tasks well and the often studious atmosphere in the classroom, particularly in the sixth form, promotes learning. The pupils work well individually and in groups, showing a high level of mutual support for each other's work. They are good, often rapid learners who have the confidence to articulate their ideas and difficulties clearly. They are aware of when they need help and are not afraid to ask teachers for support. The vast majority of pupils, throughout the school, keep their books carefully, and consider their worksheets as important records. Their written work is almost always neat and well-organised and the pupils value their work. In the sixth form, many pupils are spontaneous note-takers. The pupils feel positive about their work and achievements and are successful in that they are learning how to learn.

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

- 3.4 The curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent across the whole school and supports the aim to be a forward-thinking school where pupils can achieve the best results of which they are capable. Broad and well balanced, the curriculum covers all the required areas of learning and is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs. The curriculum in the junior and pre-prep departments is enhanced by an extensive languages programme, including French, Mandarin, Italian and Spanish, and a programme of lessons in thinking skills has been introduced in the junior department. The pupils in the junior department also benefit from specialist teaching in a number of subjects. Pupils in the senior school are able to select their GCSE options from a good range of subjects, including the Classics and a wide range of creative subjects. The introduction of separate sciences at GCSE is now well established, with many pupils choosing to study science at A level and then at university. The school offers 30 A-level subjects, together with the AQA Baccalaureate which includes general studies, critical thinking and the extended project qualification. An excellent careers programme is provided that includes practice in interview techniques, and which is enhanced by activities such as Enterprise Week when the pupils in Years 7 to 11 follow a programme of activities and hear outside speakers with the aim of increasing their knowledge of the world of work and industry.
- 3.5 The school responds well to the individual needs of the pupils. Excellent arrangements are in place to monitor those pupils with LLD. Subject teachers and class teachers are aware of, and take account of, their needs in their lesson planning. In response to the recommendation of the previous inspection report, there are now clear procedures to identify gifted and talented pupils and provision is made to meet their needs through, for example, the Challenge and Extension Programme and the Junior Challenge Award.
- 3.6 The pupils' wider educational experience is greatly enhanced by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities including Young Enterprise, business club, cine club, creative writing club and judo. The pupils in the junior department are given regular opportunities to try something new, such as gardening, tag rugby and Bridge, during their weekly general activity programme sessions. The pupils are encouraged to take part in extra-curricular drama, music and sport and have opportunities to organise their own activities and, by doing so, to learn leadership skills. An excellent range of visits to galleries, theatres, outdoor activity centres, museums, and overseas trips, including participation in the successful World Challenge expedition to Namibia, further enriches the curriculum.
- 3.7 Community links are strong and pupils throughout the school benefit from many opportunities to contribute and to serve, for example through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and through participation in the local Community Links Project. Visiting speakers regularly come in to school, along with trainers from Learning through Action. Pupils from local maintained schools regularly attend workshops and activities (each year). Links are also fostered with schools further afield in Africa and Afghanistan.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.8 The quality of teaching throughout the school is good and is effective in promoting the pupils' progress, in line with the aims of the school. The best lessons are of high quality and are inspirational, well constructed, well paced, and delivered by teachers who are totally secure and confident in their subject, and who are able to handle the twists and turns of challenging questions posed by pupils. However, a small minority of lessons merely present pupils with a task to complete, and even the correct outcome, with no opportunities for open-ended questioning, nor for pupils to think for themselves. In a number of subjects, worksheets are used frequently, often to good effect.
- 3.9 Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent. The atmosphere in lessons is positive and conducive to learning. Teachers, who are well qualified, know their pupils well as individuals, and by ability, and are able to foster interest in their pupils by closely matching their teaching to needs of the pupils, changing both style and lesson content where necessary. Pupils interviewed say that the volume of work is appropriate and that they experience little difficulty in completing set homework. In lessons, teachers regularly use open-ended questioning carefully, teach imaginatively and foster independent learning. Extension tasks to stretch the knowledge and understanding of the most able are almost always planned for lessons and appropriate support is planned for those pupils with LDD. Pupils regularly review their own work, and one-to-one discussions with staff during this review help pupils take responsibility for their own learning and progress. A caring, positive and encouraging approach is the norm and the pupils appreciate the commitment of their teachers who are readily available to provide additional clarification and help when needed. Teaching assistants are well used and provide pupils with good support in lessons.
- 3.10 In response to the school's previous inspection report, a revised marking and assessment policy has been adopted, but there remains variation in its implementation and in the quality of marking throughout the school. The best marking gives pupils a clear indication of what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Written and verbal comments, when they are made, are always positive and encouraging. Although it is school policy not to put grades on to pupils' work, pupils following examination courses know how the quality of their work relates to externally awarded grades.
- 3.11 The newly introduced management information system is beginning to be a useful tool for teachers but does not yet produce all the information they require. The data available are being expanded after careful and appropriate testing and the academic data manager is able to supply tailored responses to queries. In line with the recommendations of the previous inspection report, the school has continued to improve and monitor whole-school ICT facilities. Some subjects make good use of ICT as a source of teaching material, with on-line resources being used carefully and positively to enhance the presentation and content of lessons. The school's virtual learning environment is being developed and houses some useful material although some areas are not yet developed and some pupils have yet not used it.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and is fully in line with the school's aims. The pupils' spiritual development is excellent. As they go up through the school, their self-awareness and self-confidence develop well within a strong school ethos which reflects its Christian foundation. They take part willingly in assemblies and take full advantage of the opportunities offered in assemblies, in church services and in lessons to reflect on the non-material aspects of life.
- 4.2 The pupils develop a high degree of moral awareness and a clear sense of right and wrong, imbibed through their involvement in a school where these are given the highest priority. Assemblies, lessons and opportunities for team work all endorse this, for example in a religious studies lesson where the pupils were keenly debating the nature of goodness. The pupils' behaviour is exemplary at all times, in lessons, in activities and around the school, and demonstrates their high levels of consideration for each other. This is reinforced in the pupils from an early age with pupils in pre-prep having their names put in to the Golden Book for good behaviour and, in the junior department, the pupils receiving house points for being good or helpful. The comprehensive programme for personal, social and health education contributes substantially to moral development.
- 4.3 Social development is excellent. Relationships between pupils are harmonious and characterised by a genuine sense of interest and tolerance for each other. The house system helps to reinforce this as the pupils learn to work together and to compete fairly. Positive values and attitudes are instilled as they are put continuously into practice, and treating others as you wish to be treated leads to a sense of well being for all. There are many opportunities throughout the school for pupils to take on positions of responsibility, such as school council representatives and form captains. Sixth-form pupils undertake valued roles of responsibility within the school community, such as being peer mentors, supported by training from outside the school. The pupils throughout the school work hard in the Charity Term to raise money for a variety of charities, for example, the local branch of Mencap, the national Jeans for Genes event and, internationally, for a school in South Africa with which the junior department has links.
- 4.4 The pupils show a good knowledge and understanding of their own culture and the culture of others. Displays of pupils' work and art around the school, and numerous trips and organised visits to theatres, galleries and museums, add significantly to their aesthetic appreciation. Their cultural experience is enhanced and developed in many subjects, among others, in modern foreign languages, history, English, art, music and drama, and through the opportunities offered for trips abroad. The pupils learn from each other and fully accept each other's cultures and traditions. Their understanding of other faiths is strengthened through the religious education curriculum and through the inclusive nature of the school where tolerance for others is inherent and actively promoted by staff and pupils alike.

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

- 4.5 The arrangements for welfare, health and safety are good overall, with several excellent features, and are fully in line with the schools aim to educate pupils in a caring community where they will be happy. The quality of the pastoral care is excellent and is a hallmark of the caring and nurturing community, led by the principal and his staff. The pro-active approach of the highly committed pastoral team, who work effectively, together with other staff, ensures that any concerns are picked up and dealt with before they escalate. Frequent meetings between pastoral staff and regular staff briefings provide more formal channels by which any concerns about individual pupils can be raised and appropriate support put in place.
- 4.6 The pupils enjoy highly positive and supportive relationships with staff, in which individuals feel valued and cared for and where the pupils' achievements are celebrated. Pupils throughout the school feel there is always someone to talk to. In pre-prep and in the junior department, pupils enjoy a supportive relationship with their class teachers, and in the senior school a well-structured tutor-group system is in place with two tutors allocated to each form group for Years 7 to 11. Sixth-form pupils also have highly positive relationships with staff, including considerable support to guide them through examinations, university entrance and careers choices. A small number of pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that teachers do not monitor their workload and do not always treat pupils equally but this was not borne out in the inspection findings.
- 4.7 The pupils care for each other in a remarkable way and, time and again, the pupils' relationships demonstrate a high degree of mutual trust and respect for each other. The school has in place well-thought through procedures to promote good behaviour and to guard against harassment and bullying. The pupils say that bullying is rare and that, should an instance occur, they are confident that it would be dealt with swiftly and effectively. The school's system of restorative justice gives the opportunity to put right any wrong and promotes good behaviour and mutual respect.
- 4.8 A robust policy for the safeguarding of children is in place and is implemented with due care. All required pre-appointment checks on new staff are carried out and recorded correctly in the centralised register of staff appointments. All staff receive the required training in the safeguarding of children at appropriate intervals. All necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. Detailed and thorough risk assessments are undertaken both for activities within the school and for external visits. However, although arrangements for health and safety are good, and effective systems are in place, occasionally they are not always scrupulously adhered to. Arrangements for provision for ill or injured pupils are excellent and the school has a suitable educational disability access policy for pupils with special needs and LDD. The pupils are encouraged and want to take part in the many opportunities for regular exercise provided, both within and out with the curriculum. They are encouraged to eat healthily and are given a wide choice of nutritious food at lunch times, although some pupils would like to have larger portions. Admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and are kept for the required length of time.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent. The governors are highly committed to the success of the school and to supporting it in achieving its aims. They provide highly effective oversight of the work of the school and, with due care, they discharge their responsibilities for educational standards, financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. Governors' committees have a clear remit and provide an efficient and effective focus for both the review of current practice and for future and strategic thinking.
- 5.2 The governors have an excellent understanding of the needs and work of the school. They work closely with the principal and other senior staff, receiving frequent and detailed reports on its life and work, and provide support and stimulus for its future development and direction. Since the previous inspection report, a regular programme of governors undertaking lesson observations has been put in place, providing the opportunity for governors and teachers to share professional dialogue on the development of teaching and learning. The governors also visit the school frequently to attend events and to meet with staff socially.
- 5.3 The governors take seriously their responsibilities for regulatory compliance, including an annual audit of the procedures and practice of the school's work in the safeguarding of children. They bring a wide range of experience and expertise to the board and undertake appropriate training for the various aspects of their role. They are alert to the need for succession planning to ensure there is continued support for the school's future work and development.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management throughout the school is good with some excellent features. The executive, comprising the principal, the vice-principal and the bursar, along with members of the senior leadership team, gives strong and supportive leadership, in particular, in promoting its ethos, which, in line with its aims, is embedded in every aspect of the life of the school. This high-quality leadership is also seen in the excellent pastoral care provided by the school and in the excellent personal development of pupils. The executive and senior leadership team are also highly effective in evaluating the needs of the school and, working with the governors, in setting priorities for its future direction and development. They are successful in securing high-quality staff and in supporting them in their work. Following the previous inspection, a well thought-through and wide-ranging staff appraisal system has been designed, but has yet to be implemented fully. In line with the recommendations of the previous report, new staff consultation processes have been put in place and staff now feel included in whole school development planning.
- 5.5 Staff charged with the leadership and management of pastoral care and pupils' personal development are highly effective and contribute significantly to their overall well-being and development. In line with the recommendations of the previous inspection report, progress has been made in the leadership and management of teaching and learning, with a number of roles in this area being revised to provide more focused leadership and, as a result, much good practice is now in place, particularly with regard to the use of assessment data to inform curriculum planning.

Since the previous inspection, progress has also been made in the quality of marking throughout the school. A comprehensive marking policy is now in place although there is more to be done in ensuring that all teachers adhere to the policy, and in ensuring that the quality of all marking matches the high quality of the best. Also in line with the recommendations of the previous report, school policies have been revised so that they now cover the whole school, including the EYFS. Support staff are well deployed and make a valuable contribution to the overall success of the school and to the pupils' personal and academic development through their roles within the school community. All staff receive appropriate and regular training for their role in the safeguarding of children, welfare, health and safety. The school has in place detailed and well-thought through policies and procedures which successfully underpin its work, including a suitable procedure for appointing new staff, carrying out all the required pre-appointment checks and recording them correctly.

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

- 5.6 The school maintains an excellent relationship with parents who are made to feel welcome. Almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the work of the school, including the ease with which they can communicate with the school and the easy accessibility of information about the school and its policies.
- 5.7 The parents are given many opportunities to be involved in the life and work of the school. Events such as concerts, plays and sporting events are publicised and listed in the school calendar, which is sent to all families, and which is entered on the school's website, and many parents take the opportunity to attend. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the work of the school in many ways, such as giving talks to pupils of all ages, from pre-prep to the sixth form. Parents run clubs, for example, the successful equestrian club, and several come into school to assist with giving interview practice to Year 11. A parents' liaison group meets each term with the principal to discuss general school matters such as school uniform and catering. An active and supportive parents' association organises social and fund-raising events.
- 5.8 The parents of current and prospective pupils are provided with excellent information about the school, including all the required information, such as the policy for the safeguarding of children, via the website, parent handbooks and the prospectus. They are kept well informed of news and events via regular newsletters and, again, via the website. In addition to the programme of parents' evenings for each year group, information evenings for parents are held at key points: new parents' evenings, at the point of pupils' options choices and in advance of trips. Homework diaries provide a further useful channel of communication between home and school. Reports on pupils' achievements and progress are detailed and informative, with parents having the opportunity to respond. An appropriate complaints procedure is in place and a high percentage of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said they are happy that the school handles well any concerns they might have.

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 Overall the effectiveness of the EYFS is good. The teaching is good: lessons are well prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Statutory Framework for the EYFS. Children make good progress in their learning in all areas of the curriculum with individual children progressing well throughout the academic year so they move to Year 1 with a solid foundation on which to build. In September 2008, the EYFS moved its location to the main pre-prep area. This change has generated discussion amongst teachers and management and initiated detailed analysis of current and future requirements and targets. The capacity for further development is being exploited by the school.

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

- 6.2 Those in charge of the EYFS are well informed and have a genuine desire to help all children make good progress in their learning and development and to promote their welfare. Safeguarding procedures are secure and all the required checks have been carried out. The staff are well trained and know what action to take in the event of a safeguarding issue. Policies to promote equality and eliminate discrimination are implemented consistently and effectively. The school works well with parents/carers: the introduction of a parents' questionnaire and the 'homelink' books have done much to foster effective communication between parents and the school. In the pre-inspection questionnaire all parents give a high opinion of the EYFS and take a keen interest in their children's education. The classes are well equipped and effective use is made of the resources at the teachers' disposal to promote effective teaching and learning. Those in charge of the EYFS have a clear vision for its future development. Appropriate systems are in place to monitor performance and set priorities for improvement, including an annual EYFS strategic plan.

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

- 6.3 A good knowledge of the learning, development and welfare requirements promote children's learning and their social and physical well-being. Appropriate resources encourage effective learning, although the consequences of the current EYFS classroom arrangement do not ensure an appropriate learning environment for every child. Greater opportunity for children's independent choice of learning activities is a key target of the management and staff of the setting. Policies and procedures now in place ensure that children are protected and well supported. Risk assessments are carefully drawn up and implemented. Sound planning, efficient organisation and constructive assessment ensure that every child is encouraged to give of their best. Relationships between adults and children and between the pupils themselves are strong, cheerful and supportive. There are also good relationships with parents/carers which promote effective communication between home and school to further the children's education and welfare.

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

- 6.4 All children make steady, positive progress towards the Early Learning Goals. The majority of children achieve levels above the national average in the six learning areas. By the end of the EYFS, they are beginning to speak confidently and listen attentively, and to read and write simple sentences. They are developing mathematical ideas and the understanding of fundamental concepts of quantity, size and shape. They enjoy their lessons and their experience of the school as a whole. They particularly enjoy and benefit from the congenial atmosphere which adds to their security and sense of well-being. They make very good progress in developing the personal qualities which will take them forward through the rest of the school and beyond. Children have very secure relationships with adults, with the older girls in the school and with each other. They are interested in a broad range of activities and take some responsibility for choosing what they do. They demonstrate a willingness to keep themselves and others safe through their good behaviour. Above all they are well looked after and consequently feel safe and secure as they prepare for their own future development.

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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

Inspectors

Mrs Jean Marsland	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Flora Bean	Former Head of Year, HMC school
Mrs Marilyn Cass	Headmistress, GSA school
Mr Peter Rushforth	Headmaster, IAPS school
Mrs Judy Scotcher	Former Head of Junior School, GSA school
Mr Mark Twells	Head of Department, HMC school
Mr James Macpherson	Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector



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