



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Newcastle-under-Lyme School

Full Name of School	Newcastle-under-Lyme School		
DfE Number	860/6015		
Registered Charity Number	1124463		
Address	Newcastle-under-Lyme School Mount Pleasant Newcastle under Lyme Staffordshire ST5 1DB		
Telephone Number	01782 631 197		
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Email Address	info@nuls.org.uk		
Head	Mr Nicholas Rugg		
Chair of Governors	Mr Patrick Wenger		
Age Range	3 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	980		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (513 boys; 467 girls)		
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	64	5-11: 252
	11-18:	664	
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	980	
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection dates	12 Jan 2011 to 13 Jan 2011		
	07 Feb 2011 to 09 Feb 2011		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in March 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 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 Newcastle-under-Lyme School is located close to the centre of Newcastle-under-Lyme with buildings set in 30 acres of grounds. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision is part of the junior school. The school was formed from the amalgamation in 1981 of Newcastle High School for boys, which was founded in 1874, and the Orme Girls' School, founded in 1876. In 1981 the school, still operating with separate boys and girls sections, came under one head whilst the prep school, formally known as Orme House, was opened in 1983. In 2004 the School opened a purpose-built pre-preparatory and nursery department.
- 1.2 The school aims to enable all its pupils to: achieve their full academic and personal potential; become articulate and confident; access a broad education with a wide variety of curricular, extra-curricular and leadership opportunities; develop a positive work ethic; develop the skills and values they require to be responsible citizens; develop a clear sense of self-motivation, self-discipline and personal integrity; develop into the whole person who lives life to the full and shows courtesy, care and consideration to others; and identify the most appropriate direction for the next stages of their lives.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, changes have occurred among the senior staff with a new headmaster, junior school headmaster, and bursar, together with a restructuring of the senior management team in the senior school to create one overall deputy and three assistant heads. The governing body is now an incorporated body.
- 1.4 The total roll is 980, 513 boys and 467 girls, with 316 pupils in the junior school, of whom 64 are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Of the 664 pupils in the senior school, 182 are in the sixth form. The ability profile of the school is above average. One pupil has a local authority statement of special needs (SEN) and the school regards another 76 as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) and provides direct support for six. No pupil has English as an additional language. Almost one tenth of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly Asian.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 From the EYFS onwards, the school is largely successful in achieving its aims for all its pupils. Pupils show achievement that is always good and frequently excellent. They achieve well in their academic subjects and make good progress in their learning, with good examination results. Outcomes in the EYFS are outstanding. A very notable feature is how much the school has improved since the previous inspection report. The teaching is good and frequently excellent. Teachers know their pupils well as individuals. The marking of work, usually most helpful to pupils, is on some occasions less so and does not show pupils clearly how to improve. The curriculum throughout is broad and balanced and is well planned to support the aims of the school.
- 2.2 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good. The school is a safe, well-disciplined and moral community. The pupils are good, keen learners who fully participate in their own learning; in their behaviour and manners they show high standards. The school has an ordered, happy and well-disciplined air. Pupils collaborate very well with each other in the classroom and outside. The student council encourages them to contribute to their school community in a positive way. Their relationships with each other and their teachers are outstanding with well organised and very effective pastoral care. The school is a safe environment where the pupils have a sense of belonging and know they are cared for very well. All the regulatory requirements are met.
- 2.3 This is all achieved by the outstanding leadership and management of the school by the head and the leadership team, strongly supported by an excellent and self-aware governing body. The governors have good oversight of the school, well informed by reports from senior staff and by their own visits. The school has made all the improvements suggested at the previous inspection in the junior and senior schools. The school is a large school and a united one, clear in what it is doing, with firm and sensitive leadership. Relatively few parents and pupils chose to complete the questionnaires given for their views, but those that did were very positive.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

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

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Make better use of the data collected about the performance of the pupils so that their progress may be better monitored, and learning modified as a result.
 2. Improve the marking of work so that it provides pupils with details of what they have done well, and how they can improve.

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. From the EYFS onwards, pupils are well educated in accordance with the school's aims, particularly in the junior school. They demonstrate good, and frequently excellent, levels of knowledge, understanding and skills in curricular and extra-curricular activities. For example, in the sixth form, a chemistry research group preparing a project on pheromones in association with Keele University showed depth of insight and an ability to think and to learn independently. In the junior school, pupils quickly build a firm foundation in the basics of reading, writing and mathematics. Throughout the school, the pupils develop well in listening; reading; writing; logical and independent thought; creativity, as seen in music and drama; the application of mathematics; and physical activity. Pupils are articulate and courteous; they listen well to their teachers and to each other in lessons and speak confidently and politely. They make good and appropriate use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum, though not all have developed a system of keyboard mastery that enables them to be efficient, fast and accurate.
- 3.2 Pupils achieve well in their various extra-curricular activities, especially in sport where local, area and national honours are won, for example in swimming. Very good attainment is also found in music and drama, where results in examinations are good, sometimes excellent. Pupils also do well in external competitions; for example, the Mathematics Challenges run in both junior and senior schools, as does the Physics Olympiad. Membership of Scouts, Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (D of E) scheme also show pupils readily taking opportunities to excel.
- 3.3 Since the previous inspection, the school has given pupils more opportunities for individual learning and provided greater challenge for more able pupils, while the introduction of the International General Certificate of Examination (IGCSE) has increased rigour and challenge.
- 3.4 The following analysis for the senior school uses the national data for the years 2007 to 2009. These are the most recent three years for which comparative data are currently available. Results in GCSE and A-level examinations are above the national average for maintained schools, and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. In some recent years, GCSE results were far above the national average for maintained schools. Performance in IGCSE examinations has been higher than international norms, and similar to UK levels (where the benchmark is higher). The results in public examinations and the work seen around the school show that their progress is good in relation to pupils of similar ability. For some pupils, progress is excellent. For example, in mathematics the ablest pupils complete the IGCSE course in sufficient time to allow them to take an additional mathematics qualification. Pupils in the junior school do not take any national tests or examinations but the attainment observed by inspectors in lessons and in work scrutinised is above national age-related expectations, and their progress is good.
- 3.5 Pupils throughout the school are very able learners, and have the confidence to participate in lessons and to ask for help when they need it. They apply themselves quickly and sustain their concentration; they are very well behaved. Their

relationships with teachers are excellent and they are very supportive of one another. They read around their subjects. In a sixth form English lesson, pupils reading Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* made comparisons with Orwell's *1984* and *Animal Farm*, and Huxley's *Brave New World*, none of them set books. One pupil, relatively new to the school said: "it's cool to learn here".

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

- 3.6 The curriculum is good and is very effective in its coverage of different areas of learning. It is well-planned to be suitable for all ages, abilities and needs, and it supports the aims of the school. From the earliest years to the sixth form, a broad and deep curriculum is provided with a wide choice at appropriate ages.
- 3.7 The previous inspection report found fault with the breadth and balance of the curriculum in the junior school. This has now been rectified. In the earliest years of the junior school, pupils receive due attention to reading, writing and mathematics without compromising other subjects. As in the senior school, the junior school curriculum has elements of the spiritual and religious (and even explicit coverage of philosophy); the linguistic; the mathematical; the scientific; technological; the human and social; the physical; and the aesthetic and creative. In the senior school, pupils benefit from a broad core of subjects up to the end of Year 9, and then a central band of compulsory subjects with a wide choice of optional subjects for GCSE and A level. For instance, at GCSE, pupils can make a choice between doing the sciences as a combined subject or taking the three sciences separately. As well as offering three modern languages, even in the junior school, the school has Latin as a core subject in Years 7 and 8, and can offer Greek to individual pupils. At all levels, the pupils' option preferences are considered prior to timetable decisions. Across the school, the libraries provide a further good resource for study and for the reading of books for enjoyment. In the senior school library, a section drawing attention to books written by past pupils helps to give a sense of the history and tradition of the school as well as inspiration to high achievement.
- 3.8 The curriculum is well supported by a suitable and developing range of extra-curricular activities and links with the local community. The pupils' physical development is strongly supported by the many opportunities they have to participate. Pupils make good use of the opportunities for drama and music, as well as for such activities as debating. Pupils take part in the D of E scheme and such activities as World Challenge, CCF, Young Enterprise and Model United Nations. In the junior and senior schools, pupils have the benefit of residential courses away from school. Both schools have many links with the community, from which pupils benefit as does the community: for example, the senior school is an independent operating authority for the D of E scheme and, in the junior school, Stoke City Football Club brings football coaches. Also, the Normandy Veterans Association has developed links with the school over the years, and pupils benefit from the historical knowledge and inspiration of these men.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.9 The quality of teaching is good overall throughout the school; some is outstanding, especially in the junior school. Teaching enables all pupils to make appropriate progress and supports the aims of the school, especially the aim for pupils to achieve their full academic and personal potential. Since the previous inspection, teaching has given pupils greater responsibility for their own work, and more opportunities to think and reason for themselves.
- 3.10 In the best lessons teachers employ methods appropriate to the subject and to the age of the pupils, use a range of resources where they are helpful and encourage pupils to think for themselves and, where appropriate, to work collaboratively. Overall, pupils benefit from teaching that is characterised by strong subject knowledge with a good atmosphere in the lessons, and excellent relationships. Teachers regularly question pupils in class, providing opportunities for them to discuss what they have learned. For example, in a junior school science lesson, pupils were asked to reflect on what they had seen and to decide whether their hypothesis had been verified. Teachers also frequently use a subtle range of questioning to differentiate between pupils of varying abilities in order to help them to achieve their potential. The sympathetic rapport between teachers and pupils creates a positive classroom atmosphere and encourages pupils to express their views and to offer answers to questions with confidence.
- 3.11 The teachers' expectations of what the pupils can do are usually high, and pupils respond well and work hard. All pupils can participate freely in lessons because teachers maintain an excellent class atmosphere where good discipline can be taken for granted and where pupils are supported by the teacher and the other pupils. Generally, teaching across the school uses a variety of suitable methods. Teaching does not shy away from giving pupils difficult work. Classroom assistants make a strong contribution in the junior school, supporting the younger children.
- 3.12 Resources are plentiful and of excellent quality but they are not always used well in lessons. A Year 11 lesson made good use of data logging in physics in a lesson on generating voltage. The use of ICT to promote learning is good in the junior school and, with the recent installation of interactive whiteboards, is developing further across the senior school. Attractive, vibrant displays around the school, in the classrooms and the corridors, such as the art in the junior school, help to consolidate learning. In the senior school, attractive photographs of past school drama productions in English classrooms offer inspiration to current pupils as well as illustrating the range of characters, especially in Shakespeare.
- 3.13 Teachers know each pupil very well and so this makes it easier to see each pupil as an individual and to establish a rapport. The school also produces and collects a great deal of potentially useful formal data about the abilities of the pupils at different levels. However, these data are not always effectively disseminated to help to monitor the progress of the pupils. This means that the planning of lessons, though generally good, is sometimes lacking the dimension of plotting the progress for each pupil. Especially in the junior school, the pupils' work is marked regularly and returned to the pupils soon after they have done it. Such marking is diagnostic and offers careful suggestions on how to improve. However, sometimes, particularly in the senior school, the marking of work is cursory and less helpful to pupils.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The pupils' personal qualities are good. They are well developed and in accordance with the aims of the school, especially the aim to develop a clear sense of self-motivation, self-discipline, self control and personal integrity. Pupils are confident, without being pretentious or arrogant. They are very good with people, and are comfortable speaking in front of their peers and adults.
- 4.2 The spirituality of the pupils is well developed. Pupils explore the sense of the spiritual formally and informally: for example, sixth-formers discussing *Othello* considered philosophical as well as literary aspects, and in the senior school astronomy club pupils experienced the awe and wonder associated with aspects of the universe. Pupils appreciate and actively take part in a weekly school assembly, for different sections of the senior school, held in the local church adjacent to the school. Pupils value the presence of the vicar in the school as the chaplain to the CCF. At all levels they take part with enthusiasm in seasonal spiritual festivals such as carol services and harvest festivals.
- 4.3 Pupils display a sense of right and wrong, respect for norms of good conduct, and hold moral and ethical values. The mutual respect between staff and pupils creates an environment where rules are respected. The CCF not only gives pupils opportunities to learn how to lead and how to follow, but it also enables them to learn something about the value of order and discipline. Pupils become aware of moral and ethical issues directly in some subjects: for example, in Year 9 religious studies pupils grapple with such topics as decision making, right versus wrong, and "is it necessary to be religious to be moral?" and in biology pupils consider such topics as cloning and evolution. Year 1 pupils discussed earnestly and with enjoyment "what is a promise?" and "what is the value of a promise?"
- 4.4 The pupils progress well socially. In line with the school's aim to provide pupils with a wide range of leadership opportunities, at every level, pupils accept responsibility, for example as prefects, in junior and senior schools, in sports teams or in the CCF. They contribute to the society of the school and the world beyond, especially through the student council where they say that they are pleased to see their ideas bearing fruit in schemes adopted by the school, such as in the junior school's new playground equipment and a better choice of food. Year 11 pupils successfully proposed the expansion of the lower school monitors system to enable older pupils in the senior school to work more with younger senior school pupils. Pupils help those less fortunate than themselves through community service – for example by helping in charity shops as part of the D of E scheme – or general fund-raising.
- 4.5 Pupils develop very well culturally and are aware of the variety of British culture and cultures throughout the world. They enjoy the many different opportunities they have to participate in sporting, aesthetic and cultural performances. The study of comparative religions in Year 9 allows pupils to understand, and to develop a respect for, other faiths and cultures. Pupils demonstrate and reinforce that understanding in, for instance, their participation of India Day in the junior school and looking at the Judaism and Chinese Dragon displays.

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

- 4.6 As at the previous inspection, relationships between the pupils and between staff and pupils are outstanding; the staff provide good support and guidance for the pupils in accordance with the school's aims, and especially in line with the school's vision that this should be "a school in which every child feels supported, valued and appreciated".
- 4.7 A well-constructed pastoral framework has form tutors as the first point of contact. Junior school pupils have the reassurance of having a tutor who knows them very well since that form teacher teaches the class for a considerable part of the week. In the senior school, heads of year and the head of sixth form are the lynch-pins of the pastoral care system. They are accessible. Regular informal and formal meetings between all members of the pastoral staff help to ensure that all who need to know are in a position to provide the appropriate welfare for individual pupils. In the senior school the system of assemblies means that pupils spend some time each week in form periods. This time is sometimes used most effectively but on other occasions little takes place other than the calling of the register and pupils chatting with each other.
- 4.8 Relationships are excellent between staff and pupils, and between pupils themselves, both in and out of lessons, and constitute a strength of the school. Junior school pupils are already confident in approaching teachers and confiding in them, and at all levels pupils report that they could turn to a number of staff if they had a problem, and that they feel safe at school. Relationships among the pupils themselves are also outstanding. In the junior school, the buddy system (whereby older pupils get to know and help younger ones) works successfully and is much appreciated. In the senior school a subject-based buddy scheme enables older pupils to support younger pupils' work in mathematics and science. A further example of good relationships across the years is the fact that senior school pupil musicians visit the junior school to introduce their instruments.
- 4.9 The school has effective procedures for promoting good behaviour and guarding against harassment and bullying and dealing constructively with any unacceptable behaviour. Pupils report that they feel very safe and have confidence that concerns will be dealt with quickly; they express their appreciation of the "Bully-Alert" system whereby they can post anonymous comments or concerns on the school intranet, so that they can be followed up.
- 4.10 The safeguarding policy meets requirements and is implemented successfully. All staff and others concerned receive suitable training. All necessary measures are taken to reduce risks from fire and other hazards. Arrangements to ensure health and safety are effective and include good provision for pupils who are ill. The school has a suitable plan to improve access for those with disabilities. The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained. Pupils are encouraged to be healthy through science lessons, and especially by taking regular physical exercise in the curriculum and in extra-curricular sports and games. School lunches offer choices based on the latest ideas of what is nutritious.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 Governance is excellent. The governing body provides very effective oversight of the school in line with its aims and discharges very well its responsibilities for educational standards, financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. The school is well provided especially in its sporting facilities, such as the swimming pool and the all-weather pitches. The governing body has consciously and successfully made changes in its structure since the previous inspection, and has responded well to all that was in the report in its planning, oversight and training. It is now a very self-aware body that commissioned an outside report on its structures and their effectiveness. It has become an incorporated body consisting of 20 governors with representative governors from the Old Boys, the Old Girls, the senior and junior school parent associations and two local universities. Its committees have important functions and report to the full governing body. The governing body has taken steps to ensure that among them are governors with relevant expertise. Working with the staff, the governors have produced development plans for both the senior and junior schools.
- 5.2 The governing body has a good insight into the working of the school, and is very effective in exercising its monitoring role, and providing support, challenge and stimulus for growth and improvement. The chairman of the governors, who meets with the headmaster each week, is very much aware of the difference between his role, non-executive, and the executive role of the headmaster. Together, and working with others, they provide a strong unifying factor in what is a big school. Governors and members of the leadership of the school have whole days together away from school to consider matters of importance.
- 5.3 The governing body is effective in discharging its responsibilities for child protection, welfare, health and safety throughout the school. All the necessary checks are done and carefully recorded. All the required policies and procedures are in place, implemented and their effectiveness regularly reviewed. One committee has the remit to monitor safeguarding, health and safety and staffing matters, so ensuring that any shortcomings are brought to the notice of the full governing body.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.4 At all high levels of responsibility, including the EYFS, the leadership and management are excellent, in accordance with the aims of the school and in the discharge of their delegated responsibilities, particularly those for policy implementation and the safeguarding of pupils; but the management of departments and subjects is more varied. By restructuring and by internal review, the impact of leadership and management has improved since the previous inspection. The report of that inspection in particular found fault with the leadership of the junior school but that is now outstanding. The head of the junior school and the deputy, working with the head of pre-prep and the nursery manager, provide excellent leadership. They co-ordinate well with the overall headmaster who is a unifying influence on the whole school; he provides outstanding leadership and successfully integrates the various strands of school life and, together with his deputy and other senior staff, has effected changes for the whole school. Communications are much improved since the previous inspection and are now good. However, the large site

and the relatively short lessons of thirty-five minutes lead to some senior school lessons starting late and being truncated. The school leadership is very much aware of this and is considering possibilities to effect improvement.

- 5.5 Leadership and management provide clear educational direction, as reflected in the quality of the pupils' education and the standard of their personal development. They are effective in self-evaluation, setting priorities and ensuring that they are achieved. The bursar and his team work harmoniously and effectively with the academic staff. They ensure that all the grounds and buildings are cared for well. The support staff make an important contribution to the school by their loyal and cheerful hard work. The school helps to keep past members interested and to enlist their help through an association called The Ambassadors – a group of past senior teachers and governors which meets regularly with the school's leadership.
- 5.6 Management at all levels is successful in securing, supporting, developing and motivating sufficient high quality staff and ensuring they are suitably trained for their roles in meeting the needs of all children, safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. The school has thorough arrangements for checking the suitability of staff (including volunteers), supply staff and governors. Compliance with all the regulatory requirements shows that the school has taken full action to fulfil the recommendations from the previous inspection concerned with health and safety and child protection training.

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

- 5.7 Links between school and parents are good, from the EYFS upwards, and support the education of the pupils. Parents of pupils and prospective pupils are provided with all the required information about the school, and receive regular clear and useful reports about their children's work, progress and effort. Parents of junior school pupils are involved in the curriculum outline. They receive a copy of the work for each term which enables them to provide the necessary support to their child at home.
- 5.8 Regular parents' evenings are held for all years. The school magazine and website are of a very high quality – very informative and useful. The website provides easy access to school policies, developments, news and other useful and relevant information. Parents of prospective pupils in the junior school found the guided tours provided particularly helpful.
- 5.9 Parents have good opportunities to be actively involved in the work and progress of their children. Parents participate in extra-curricular activities such as performances and help children learn about other cultures. An active parents association raises funds for the school. Parents are also involved in raising funds to support major school trips such as the Australian netball tour.
- 5.10 The school handles the concerns of parents with care and follows its published procedures. In recent years, no complaints have been carried further than the early informal stages of the complaints procedure. The school is, in fact, close to its parents and families and listens to them. Of those parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire, the vast majority of responses were positive. The same is true of the pupils' responses.

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 setting is outstanding. The children respond to this carefully planned and nurturing environment with a growing awareness of their own individual talents and interests. Personal confidence and respect for others are promoted at all times. The staff show excellent understanding of the children's needs and promote an environment where academic progress and pastoral care are well balanced. Regular and rigorous self-evaluation ensures the capacity to sustain the high standards. As a result, children make excellent progress in their learning. Exemplary partnerships between providers, parents and other agencies ensure that children's needs are met and their protection assured.

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

6.2 Leadership and management of the EYFS are outstanding. Leaders have high aspirations for quality through ongoing improvement, establishing and communicating clear and relevant priorities. All records, policies and procedures for the efficient management of the setting and safety of the children are implemented well, and risk assessments are secure. Staff are well qualified and effectively deployed. Their professional development is encouraged through both external and internal training to ensure excellent outcomes for the children. Resources are well deployed and accessible to children. Strong home-school links are swiftly established and the parents show very strong support; their views are considered and, where appropriate, acted upon. Helpful links with local agencies have been established and a pro-active and sensitive approach to early intervention ensures that all children are fully supported and integrated. The consistency of policy implementation promotes equality very well.

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

6.3 Provision is good overall. Children learn and develop exceptionally well through stimulating play and valuable first-hand experiences. Activities are planned based on the interests and needs of the children. An excellent balance between adult-led and child-led activities means that children enjoy a wide variety of experiences. Thorough assessment identifies what children can do, and the next steps they need to take in order to progress. In Nursery, free flow between inside and outside is made possible by excellent levels of staffing as well as by the effective design of the building, offering children freedom to explore, use their senses, and be physically active and exuberant. At present, pupils in Reception have fewer such opportunities, although the school is seeking to improve facilities. Children are extremely well supported by their key person, who promotes their welfare and guides them towards self-sufficiency, which enables their personal skills to develop very well.

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

6.4 Outcomes for the children are outstanding. They make rapid progress and show high levels of independence and achievement in their learning. Most make particularly rapid progress in literacy and numeracy. From an early age, children show keen phonic awareness and a love of reading. Their pencil skills are excellent and they are beginning to write independently. They recognise and use numbers up to ten and beyond and integrate this knowledge into their play. Role-play demonstrates strong social skills, co-operation and a high level of linguistic competence. Children develop excellent observational and investigative skills and make significant progress in knowledge and understanding of the world. They enjoy their learning both indoors and out and show enthusiasm. Their independence shines through and they diligently take responsibility for tidying away their activities and for various tasks asked of them. Behaviour is exemplary and is effectively managed through gentle reminders and underlying rules and expectations. Children understand about eating healthily and enjoy their food. They are aware of the need to maintain good hygiene and understand the importance of being safe.

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chairman 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

Mr Eric Hester	Reporting Inspector
Mr Edward Halse	Headmaster, HMC school
Miss Christine Lane	Former Director of Studies, HMC prep school
Mr Colin Haddon	Deputy Head, ISA school
Ms Alison Horton	Deputy Head, GSA school
Miss Linda Hunter	Deputy Head, GSA school
Mr Rodney Smith	Head of Department, IAPS prep school
Rabbi Dr Chanan Tomlin	Former Headmaster
Mrs Brigid Tullie	Head, HMC school
Mrs Linda Donowho	Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector