



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

CENTRAL NEWCASTLE HIGH SCHOOL GDST

INTERIM INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Central Newcastle High School GDST

Full Name of School	Central Newcastle High School GDST		
DfE Number	391/6034		
EYFS Number	EY245565		
Registered Charity Number	306983		
Address	Central Newcastle High School GDST Eskdale Terrace Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear NE2 4DS		
Telephone Number	0191 2811768		
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Email Address	g.lord@cnh.gdst.net		
Headmistress	Mrs Hilary French		
Chair of Governors	Mrs Michaela Martin		
Age Range	3 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	832		
Gender of Pupils	Girls		
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	47	5-11: 206
	11-18:	579	
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	832	
Head of EYFS Setting	Miss Linda Hunter		
EYFS Gender	Girls		
Inspection dates	22 Mar 2011 to 23 Mar 2011		

PREFACE

This report is according to the *Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) schedule for INTERIM inspections*. The inspection is a two-day visit with a focus on compliance with regulatory requirements. ISI inspections occur every three years and have two formats, interim and standard, which usually occur in an alternating pattern. The school's next inspection will therefore follow the standard schedule, which includes two visits totalling five days and places greater emphasis on the quality of education and care in addition to reporting on regulatory compliance. The school's previous inspection was in February 2007.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to 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 Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

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

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

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

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

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

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

CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL	2
The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills	2
The quality of the pupils' personal development	3
The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management	4
3 ACTION POINTS	6
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	6
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	6
4 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE	7
(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	7
(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	7
(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	7
(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	8
INSPECTION EVIDENCE	9

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Founded in 1895, Central Newcastle High School is a selective independent day-school for girls aged between 3 and 18. It occupies three urban sites close to the centre of Newcastle and close to each other. Two are for the junior school and its Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), currently with 253 pupils including 47 in the EYFS. The senior school occupies the site of the original school and has 579 pupils aged from 11 to 18.
- 1.2 The school is one of 26 within the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST), which has as its overriding aim to provide an all-round education of high quality for girls of intellectual promise. It seeks to achieve this by promoting enthusiastic and independent learning, by encouraging qualities of tolerance and compassion and by developing a sense of zest, enthusiasm and joy of life. Governance is provided by the Trust, informed by a local governing board. The school reflects closely the ethnic and cultural mix of the professional and commercial community of Newcastle and Tyneside.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection in February 2007 the school has clarified and developed its leadership and management structures and secured closer ties between the junior and senior sections. It has enabled all teaching of Years 3 to 6 to take place on one site. It has upgraded throughout the school its provision of information and communication technology (ICT) resources.
- 1.4 The junior school admits pupils of a wide range of abilities. Standardised national assessment results indicate that the overall ability profile is above the national average. This continues in the senior school, with almost all pupils having an ability that is at least above the national average. The school identifies 57 pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), of whom ten receive specialist support within the school, four in the junior school and six in the senior. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs (SEN). Eighty-eight pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) to that normally spoken at home, of whom three receive support within the school.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills

- 2.1 The quality of the pupils' overall achievements and of their learning, attitudes and skills is outstanding throughout the school. It meets very well the school's aims to enable girls of all abilities to develop their intellectual curiosity, to become skilled and independent learners and to achieve their full potential. The pupils are keen on their studies, trust their teachers and learn quickly. They are articulate, they reason carefully, and they are well informed. They are highly competent in applying mathematical skills, in logical and independent thought, in creative skills and in a wide range of physical activity. Throughout the school, they improve their skills strongly, including their use of ICT and library resources. Written work is completed to a high standard, well developed and also very neat.
- 2.2 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2007 to 2009. These are the three most recent years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national tests at the age of 11 are high in relation to pupils' abilities and they are far above the national average for maintained primary schools. This indicates exceptional progress when compared with the norm for pupils of similar abilities. Progress continues strongly in the senior school, with progress from Year 7 to Year 11 again exceptional when compared with the norm for pupils of similar abilities. This is sustained in the sixth form. Results in both GCSE and A-level examinations are far above the national average for girls in maintained schools and above the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. A significant majority of pupils gain admission to their universities of first preference.
- 2.3 The school provides a broad range of subjects both to challenge the most able and also to meet the diverse interests of each. All pupils in the junior school study French. To this is added Spanish in Year 5, which is then replaced by German in Year 6 to provide early exposure to three major European languages. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 spend half a day each week in the senior school with the teachers there, exploring science, art and physical education to higher levels and undergoing superior challenge. The senior school's curriculum is similarly wide, covering the linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative fields. It offers separate study of the sciences as well as a range of modern foreign languages, dance, drama, religious studies, physical education and philosophy. In such ways all pupils are challenged well and their experience is widened significantly.
- 2.4 The pupils' access to extra-curricular activities is also broad. It includes participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (D of E) scheme and access to the Combined Cadet Force. Engagement in a wide range of sports, both individual and team, is keen and success is high, including cross-country running, netball, hockey and swimming. Skills of debating, public speaking and language Olympics are developed well and demonstrated keenly.
- 2.5 The pupils benefit from much excellent teaching which contributes well to their successful learning and to their joy of success. In the best lessons teachers show a good subject knowledge to which they add the excitement of discovery and a clear knowledge of the needs of each pupil. Support for pupils with LDD or EAL is clear and effective. In a small proportion of lessons, teaching is more routine and the

pupils' interest is challenged less. Overall, expectations are high and achievement is outstanding. Marking is to a high standard. It is clear, constructive and understood by the pupils. It is also frequently reinforced by verbal explanation and expansion. Pupils listen to this advice carefully and successfully include it in their learning and progress.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 2.6 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent. Each is a confident and articulate young person. Each also cares for the other and for their school community. The school succeeds well in its aim to ensure that pupils respect themselves and others, within the school and beyond it. It fosters well qualities of friendship, tolerance and compassion.
- 2.7 The pupils' awareness of spiritual aspects is well developed. Their understanding of different faiths and beliefs is good. It is developed within lessons, for example in history, English and art, and in daily contact with pupils of other faiths and beliefs. They show this both in discussions within their lessons and in their regular dealings with others. Prayer and hymn-singing are contained within the school's regular assemblies.
- 2.8 The moral awareness of the pupils is strong. They show clear understanding of right and wrong behaviour. Their own conduct is exemplary, including a clear avoidance of bullying, both verbal and physical. Pupils also show a marked concern to help. They engage enthusiastically in raising funds for the needy and accept service roles, in the school and through the D of E scheme.
- 2.9 Social development too is strong. The pupils accept positions of responsibility eagerly and discharge these sensitively. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 already seek to ensure that younger and newer pupils are contented and able to form their own friendship groups. The school council, with its constituent forums, is a powerful force throughout the school and acts purposefully, for example in promoting healthy eating and an adequate variety of offering.
- 2.10 Pupils are well aware of the variety of cultures and practices within their own number and within the wider community. They respect each profoundly and sincerely, so that harmony within their number is strong. Pupils engage in well-planned trips beyond England and beyond Europe, and they enjoy visits from outside speakers. Music, art and language skills are highly developed and inform pupils of the variety of cultures and traditions.
- 2.11 The quality of pastoral care is outstanding. Pupils flourish in the environment of care and respect provided for them. They also participate keenly to spread this. Throughout the school older pupils take every opportunity to help younger ones. Junior pupils recognise the senior school as a friendly place in which they feel secure. Throughout, pupils feel safe, respected and valued. Consequently, they also contribute keenly to the group and to each other. Rewards and sanctions are well understood and pupils appreciate the house point system which formally recognises effort and success.
- 2.12 The school's arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of all its pupils are excellent. All policies are clear, detailed and comprehensive. They are also readily available so that practice too is excellent, and it is monitored well by the school's leaders. Risk assessments, including those for school trips and for protection from

fire, are thorough and complete. All staff receive regular and appropriate training in safeguarding. Registers of admission and attendance are complete and readily available. The quality of medical care is to a high standard and pupils use the centre well, including seeking counsel and advice there. The school monitors healthy and regular eating carefully.

The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management

- 2.13 The quality of governance is excellent. The Trust ensures that provision, both in facilities and in staffing, provides well for an academically challenging day school and enables a standard of pastoral care that secures pupils' personal development as well as their safety and well-being. The governors keep themselves well informed by regular reports and by their annual formal appraisal of the head.
- 2.14 The governors meet all legal requirements and expectations made of them. They review policies and practice to ensure the safeguarding, welfare, health and safety of all pupils. They authorise adequate expenditure so that the development of the school is well provided for. The Trust has recently approved significant material improvement of part of its junior school to enable the eventual transfer there of the entire junior division.
- 2.15 Since the previous inspection, the board of local governors have substantially increased their direct knowledge of the junior school and provide well for its needs, including closer links with the senior school and better accommodation and facilities. Their promotion of the school and their discharge of care are outstanding.
- 2.16 The quality of leadership and management is excellent. Leadership and management are vigorous and committed, comprehensive and careful. The head of the junior school is a member of the senior leadership team and junior school matters are settled well. Both academic and pastoral leaders meet regularly, determine issues well and communicate these promptly to teachers and support staff. Committed academic leadership ensures a wide and relevant curriculum, successful teaching and high standards of learning, including by those identified as gifted and talented or with LDD or EAL. The quality of pastoral leadership ensures appropriate care at every level, a comprehensive programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE), excellent careers advice which includes opportunity for work experience, and strong encouragement for pupils to engage in the wider community. The school maintains a high standard of medical attention, advice and care.
- 2.17 Recruitment arrangements include all required checks on all governors, staff and visitors. These are made efficiently and promptly, and recorded correctly. The school works hard to ensure safety on its urban sites. The quality of premises and accommodation is high, with much that is outstanding. Rooms are spacious and very well maintained. New building is to high standards. So too has been the improvement of old so that the school in all areas is well provided for and enabled to work well. Playing areas and surfaces are excellent and they are used intensively.
- 2.18 The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is outstanding. Reports on academic progress and growth of personal responsibility are full and regular. They include a learning journal which records progress throughout the EYFS and which is updated for parents several times each year. Thereby information and progress is communicated well, supplemented by a formal parents' meeting each term in the junior school and at least once a year in the senior.

- 2.19 Parents in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire showed a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the school's provision. School publications are to a high standard and include a fortnightly newsletter from each of the schools. Concerns are dealt with promptly and effectively. Formal complaint is very rare but it follows appropriate and published channels.

3. ACTION POINTS

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

- 3.1 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 3.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Actively extend its best practice in teaching across all curriculum areas and all Years.
 2. In the EYFS, fully implement its plans to extend and improve its outdoor provision.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

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

4.1 The effectiveness of the setting is outstanding. It meets the needs of all children extremely well. The stimulating and well-organised environment provides rich learning opportunities for all children to engage in skills and experiences which match carefully their different levels of understanding and stages of development. Consequently all make impressive progress. Provision for their physical and emotional well-being is excellent. Constant self-review ensures that the setting sustains improvement and meets its own exacting standards of care and provision. The staff benefit from a strong partnership with the local authority EYFS consultant and they draw on effective support from other agencies whenever necessary.

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

4.2 The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. The leaders and managers aspire strongly for the highest quality through continuous improvement. They establish and communicate clear and relevant priorities, and they achieve these very well. All records, policies and procedures necessary for the safe and efficient management of the setting are in place and they are implemented rigorously. Leaders and managers ensure that excellent and imaginative use is made of a wide range of appropriate resources. All staff are suitably qualified and deployed, and all required checks are carried out to ensure the safeguarding of the pupils. Risk assessments are comprehensive and thorough. The school swiftly establishes strong links with home; it incorporates parents' views and observations into each child's learning profile. The sensitive approach to early intervention ensures that all children are equally and fully supported and integrated. Consistent implementation of policies promotes equality well.

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

4.3 The quality of provision is outstanding. Adults support learning and development extremely well. They challenge the children effectively through skilful questioning and they encourage them constantly by respecting their ideas. Bright, spacious and exceptionally well-organised classrooms promote learning across all areas. A careful balance of adult-led and child-initiated experiences gives all children many opportunities to develop their critical thinking and independence. Planning is detailed at all levels and identifies clearly what the children need to learn next. The children's own suggestions and ideas are incorporated into short-term plans and the adults fully appreciate the rich diversions which flow from bright and lively minds. Regular use is made of the outside environment, but the school recognises that this is not yet fully utilised. The school makes good provision for children with additional needs. All children are supported well by their key person, who promotes their welfare and safety at all times and guides them towards self-sufficiency.

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

- 4.4 The outcomes are outstanding. Most children learn and develop extremely well in relation to their starting points and capabilities. They bring a sense of fun and energy to their activities and fully embrace new experiences and skills. All children learn to communicate fluently, to enjoy books and to express their thoughts and feelings confidently. Nursery children recognise their names and initial sounds well, and Reception children accurately use phonic skills to spell words within simple sentences. All work co-operatively in groups, showing respect for each other. They demonstrate also an equal ability to work independently. They are confident with computer programmes and all enjoy demonstrating their ability to use numbers in everyday problem-solving activities. They have an excellent understanding of the benefits of healthy eating and exercise and they make a positive contribution to the community, being involved fully in rule-making for everyone's safety and well-being. Their behaviour is exemplary.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

- 4.5 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

Complaints since the last inspection

- 4.6 Since the last inspection, no complaints have been made to Ofsted that required any action to meet national requirements.

Section 3 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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

Dr Anthony Dachs

Mr Geoff Lee-Gallon

Mr Peter Cook

Miss Jane Corlett

Miss Louise Savage

Reporting Inspector

Assistant Reporting Inspector

Headmaster, IAPS School

Vice-Principal, HMC School

Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector