



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE CHURCH HIGH SCHOOL STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Newcastle upon Tyne Church High School

Full Name of School	Newcastle upon Tyne Church High School			
DfE Number	391/6001			
Registered Charity Number	528151			
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Email Address	jgatenby@churchhigh.com			
Headmistress	Mrs Joy Gatenby			
Chairman of Governors	Mr Peter Buchan			
Age Range	3 to 18			
Total Number of Pupils	446			
Gender of Pupils	Girls			
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	21	5-11:	139
	11-18:	286		
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	446		
EYFS Gender	Girls			
Inspection dates	05 Oct 2010 to 06 Oct 2010 01 Nov 2010 to 03 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 September 2004.

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 The Newcastle upon Tyne Church High School was founded by the Church Schools Company (CSC) in 1885, the first school for girls in the city. It seceded from the CSC in the 1920s and has since then been independent. It maintains a Christian ethos through strong links with the Diocese of Newcastle, which is represented on the governing body, and St Nicholas Cathedral. It is situated in a residential suburb of Newcastle upon Tyne, less than a mile from the centre. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and the junior and senior schools are on adjacent sites, allowing for a high level of interaction between the phases. One board of governors is responsible for the whole school.
- 1.2 The school aims to produce balanced individuals with high self-esteem and strong moral values; to enable girls to reach their individual potential and to develop a broad range of skills; and to ensure that they work within a secure, ordered and respectful environment, which offers clear boundaries of acceptable behaviour.
- 1.3 Academic scholarships made available at 11+ and for sixth-form entry and, since the last inspection, bursaries of up to one hundred per cent have been introduced. Church High has also established a strong link with a local boys' school, with some boys following A-Level courses at the school.
- 1.4 The school has 446 girls on roll. Of these, 160 are in the junior school, and 286 are in the senior school, of whom 94 are in the sixth form. For virtually all pupils, English is the first language at home. Approximately one tenth of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school draws from a wide catchment area and has pupils from a range of backgrounds.
- 1.5 The ability profile of the junior school, and senior school to GCSE, is above the national average. In the sixth form it falls in line with the national average and a wider range of abilities is represented. The school has no pupil with a statement of special educational needs, but has identified thirty pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) and provides specific learning support for seventeen of these.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the junior school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

Junior School

School	NC name
Kindergarten	Reception
Transition	Year 1
Preparatory	Year 2
Junior One	Year 3
Lower Two	Year 4
Upper Two	Year 5
Lower Three	Year 6

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 From the EYFS onwards, Newcastle upon Tyne Church High School successfully strives to achieve its high aims for all its pupils. Girls achieve well in their academic subjects and make good progress in their learning, with examination results even better than their ability would suggest.
- 2.2 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Girls have a well-developed sense of right and wrong and think of others, as shown in their behaviour and politeness within the school and their concern for others in the wider communities where they raise large sums for charities. The teaching is good overall, and frequently excellent. Teachers know their pupils extremely well as individuals. The marking of work is usually most helpful to pupils. On a few occasions it is less helpful when it does not clearly explain to pupils how to improve. The pupils are excellent learners, keen and fully participating in their own learning. Their behaviour and manners are exemplary and their relationships with each other and their teachers outstanding. The school has a calm, ordered, happy and well-disciplined air. Girls collaborate very well with each other in the classroom and outside. The school council encourages them to contribute to their school community in a positive way. The pastoral care is outstanding. The staff, through good arrangements, look after the pupils effectively and provide a safe environment. The girls have a sense of belonging and know that they are cared for very well.
- 2.3 The parents' support for the school, as expressed in the questionnaires as part of the inspection, is exceptional. The school involves parents to a high degree. The vast majority of pupils also stated how much they appreciated the school. All the regulatory requirements are met. All of this is achieved by the outstanding leadership and management of the school by the headmistress and the leadership team, strongly supported by excellent governance. The governors have very good oversight of the school, well informed by reports from senior staff and by their own frequent visits. The school has made all of the improvements suggested at the last inspection, and thus a strong school has been improved by the creation of new effective middle management posts in the junior and senior schools.

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. Ensure that all work is marked in a way most helpful to girls, using existing good practice.
 2. In the EYFS setting, further exploit the potential of the recently developed outdoor areas by extending their use in activities throughout the curriculum.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 From the EYFS onwards, pupils are very well educated in accordance with the school's aims. The pupils demonstrate good, and sometimes excellent, levels of knowledge, understanding and skills in curricular and extra-curricular activities. In the junior school, pupils quickly build a very 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 and the artwork displayed on the walls; the application of mathematics; and physical activity. They especially excel in speaking, where they show confidence without affectation and articulate well. The pupils make good and appropriate use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum, though not all have developed keyboard skills that enable them to be efficient, fast and accurate. Pupils achieve well in their various extra-curricular activities, especially in sport where local, area and national honours are won. Young Enterprise teams have been very successful in area competitions, and recently the school team represented the north-east of England at the national finals.
- 3.2 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2007 to 2009. These are the most recent three years for which nationally comparative statistics are currently available. Results in GCSE and A Level have been above the national average for girls in maintained schools and in line with the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. In both sets of examinations, results have demonstrated improvement from 2007 to 2009. Results at GCSE and A level are therefore good in relation to pupils' abilities, indicating that their progress is above the average for pupils of similar ability, as confirmed by nationally standardised measures of progress. In the junior school, no nationally comparative examinations are taken, but the inspection found that the progress of the pupils is good. The progress in examinations is reflected in the good, often excellent, progress made over the time that the pupils of all levels are at the school and this can be clearly seen in their work.
- 3.3 Pupils of all ages have outstanding attitudes to their learning; their classroom behaviour is one of the strengths of the school, as at the time of the previous inspection. They are excellent learners who can discuss issues confidently and express their ideas clearly while listening and responding well to teachers and to each other. They apply themselves quickly and sustain their concentration. Their relationships with teachers are excellent and they are very supportive of one another. For example, a Year 12 politics group successfully worked together to produce a presentation on the first-past-the-post electoral system. Throughout the school, the presentation of work is of high quality, demonstrating the concentration and effort girls put into it. Pupils' excellent attitudes to learning are supported by this hard work and an ethos of respect for each other and their teachers. Girls willingly attend voluntary extra revision or study skills sessions. Throughout the school, pupils are hard working, happy learners. They are courteous and display good manners in the classroom and outside. The school has a cheerful, well-disciplined atmosphere.

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

- 3.4 The curriculum is good, with some excellent features, and supports well the aims of the school to enable girls to reach their individual potential and to develop a broad range of skills. The curriculum is well planned and suited for all ages, abilities and needs and is effective in covering different areas of learning. From the earliest years to the sixth form, a broad and deep curriculum is provided with a wide choice at appropriate ages.
- 3.5 In the earliest years of the junior school, pupils receive due attention to reading, writing and mathematics without at all neglecting other subjects. In the senior school, the 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. A strength of the curriculum is how well it can be tailored to the needs of the individual girl. The pupils' linguistic skills are strongly supported by the range of modern languages available, starting with French and Spanish in the junior school; the senior school offers a choice of French, Spanish and German. Religious studies (RS) is part of the core right through to the end of Year 11. At the sixth form level, as well as the usual academic subjects, the school offers additional subjects such as dance, psychology and film studies. Sixth-form study skills are enhanced by the opportunity to undertake a number of Young Applicants in Schools Scheme courses of the Open University. Junior school pupils' personal reading is supported by the suitable and accessible library. Senior pupils have a library and resource centre which is centrally appointed and well equipped with computers, which they use well. However, its provision of books and periodicals is limited, and very few senior school pupils borrow books or have books with them for their personal reading.
- 3.6 The curriculum is well supported by a good range of extra-curricular activities and links with the local community. The girls' physical development is strongly supported by the many opportunities they have to participate. A large number of girls participate in sport, which is especially strong, and for several age groups the school has A and B teams. Pupils make good use of the opportunities for drama and music, as well as for such activities as debating. Girls take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, where awards are gained at all levels including gold. The school has itself developed a version of this scheme, the Church High Challenge Award, for younger pupils in the senior school, and many take part.

3 (c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.7 Teaching is good overall, and is frequently outstanding. It is very successful in promoting the pupils' progress and helps the school to fulfil its aims. In the parental and pupil questionnaires, strong support for the teaching was shown and many comments praised the teaching; the inspection findings agree with this support.
- 3.8 Pupils benefit from teaching characterised by strong subject knowledge with a good atmosphere in the lessons, and excellent relationships. For example, in a Year 9 German lesson, girls were encouraged to take risks in their use of language and so the girls were stimulated to experiment with different words, grammar and syntax. 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. Planning of lessons is good, and material is presented in a variety of ways with good use of resources.

- 3.9 Teachers' expectations are usually high and pupils respond well and work hard. The best lessons are characterised by pace and challenging intellectual material, suitable questions – often open-ended – and by opportunities for pupils to participate and to develop their interests, to which pupils respond. Less successful teaching occurred in those lessons where pupils were not provided with appropriate challenge, or where the pace set was too slow. Teachers frequently use a subtle range of questioning to differentiate between pupils of varying abilities in order to help them to achieve their potential. On a few occasions in the senior school an over-reliance on notes and worksheets occurred, which limited the opportunities to provide the right level of work for each pupil. However, in the junior school, worksheets are used sparingly and effectively, for example, with homework sheets in mathematics, in order to give pupils different work to match their abilities. Pupils appreciate the best marking, which is characterised by diagnostic and constructive comments as seen, for example, in some English and biology work in the senior school and in continuous prose writing in the junior school. However, occasionally, especially in the senior school, the marking is cursory and does not indicate to pupils how they could improve. The school is aware of this and is taking steps to effect improvements.
- 3.10 Throughout the whole school, the girls' progress is carefully monitored by regular assessments. Teachers know each girl very well, and this makes it easier to see each girl as an individual and to establish a rapport. Girls speak warmly and gratefully of the willingness of staff to give extra help whenever it is requested. As a result of a recommendation specifically for the senior school in the last inspection report, a thorough and most effective system of monitoring each girl's progress has been developed. This is a clear improvement and has turned what was a weakness into a strength. Each department carries out a self-appraisal.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding in the junior and the senior schools, including the EYFS, and helps the school to meet most successfully the aim to produce balanced individuals with high self-esteem and strong moral values. As at the last inspection, the personal development of the pupils is a strength. The girls are confident, articulate and well-adjusted young people who display a sense of responsibility, and are evidently happy and secure within the school environment.
- 4.2 The spirituality of the girls is well developed. From the earliest years, they display a sense of their own personal worth and that of others, and so their self control is well developed as shown in the way they behave in the classroom and elsewhere. As a core subject up to the end of Year 11, RS is a focus for the pupils' spiritual development, but the whole ethos of the school contributes. Girls are enabled to develop an appreciation and understanding of aspects of the major non-Christian religions. They willingly take part in assemblies, especially in the junior school where they sing hymns with gusto and pray devoutly.
- 4.3 As at the last inspection, pupils' moral development is well advanced. They know and respect the school rules, and understand that they are there to help them. Pupils are courteous and respectful towards each other and to adults. The good manners of the girls are an outstanding feature of the school. Pupils have a strongly developed sense of right and wrong, which is developed explicitly in activities such as debating, and in Year 11 pupils take part in an Ethics Club where they discuss films focusing on moral dilemmas.
- 4.4 Social development is a great strength of the school, as it was at the last inspection. Pupils treat each other, staff and visitors with warmth. Pupils take advantage of good opportunities to take on responsibility as house and sports captains or as school council representatives. These are valued and respected roles and allow pupils to contribute to the school community. Pupils willingly accept responsibility, as seen at a senior school orchestra rehearsal conducted and led by a sixth-former. The school councils in the junior and senior schools are effective. They have an impact on policies within the school, such as the development of a courtyard area. The pupils are also very well aware of the life that exists beyond the confines of the school, and of their responsibilities, as is especially shown in the significant support offered in fundraising for a number of charities, and each year two senior pupils visit Auschwitz and report back to the pupils at the school.
- 4.5 The pupils' cultural development is excellent, and they are aware of the variety of British culture and cultures throughout the world. Creative arts contribute to pupils' spiritual development across the school. Pupils take advantage of opportunities to participate in dramatic productions. The walls of the school display a variety of interesting artwork by pupils and by great artists of the world. The choir and orchestra have performed at locations in Britain and abroad, including Notre Dame in Paris, Cologne Cathedral, the Vatican, St Mark's Basilica in Venice and Prague Cathedral.
- 4.6 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, pupils showed massive support for what the school does and for the way in which they are treated. A very small number had some criticism of some details of teaching. However, the

inspection found no evidence to support this criticism, and the vast majority of pupils report that they are happy at the school and are making excellent progress.

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

- 4.7 With effective arrangements for welfare, health and safety, the staff provide outstanding support and guidance for the pupils in accordance with the school's aims. The pastoral care is excellent throughout the school, since it is focused on the needs of each single pupil. Pupils benefit from groups that are based on a particular year, but girls are also in other pastoral groups containing pupils of different years. In the junior school and in the senior school, form tutors see their tutees twice daily, which gives them ample opportunity to develop good relationships. A Year 9 form, working closely with the form tutor, used this time to prepare an excellent assembly on the importance of maintaining and respecting individuality in the face of peer pressure. Junior school pupils have the reassurance of having a tutor who knows them very well since the form teacher teaches the class for a considerable part of the week. In the senior school, the system is especially helpful to the individual girl and enables her to benefit from the personal attention of a teacher as well as the support of other pupils. Each girl has a personal tutor, for matters of academic progress and general welfare, with whom she meets once a week, as part of a group of pupils from different years based on their house. Girls feel that they have a number of staff to whom they can turn if they have a concern. The pastoral strand of the school is led by an excellent and committed team of senior staff who liaise closely with others and also raise matters for all the staff in a weekly pastoral briefing.
- 4.8 As at the last inspection, relationships are consistently excellent between staff and pupils both in lessons and around the school. Pupils also have excellent relationships amongst themselves. The sixth-form 'buddy system', by which a senior girl meets with and supports a younger girl, is much appreciated by the Year 7 girls. They expressed particular enthusiasm for the weekly lunch opportunity to meet their buddy. Some sixth-form girls show further commitment towards younger pupils by acting as mentors for Year 8 and Year 9 pupils who have particular learning needs, and they meet them weekly to help them with their academic work. Offering mutual support prevails throughout the school as the accepted norm. In the junior school, the 'Flag of Friendship' scheme aims to provide pupils with the opportunity to make new friends and to support to each other. The school has effective procedures for promoting good behaviour and guarding against harassment and bullying, and for dealing constructively with any unacceptable behaviour. Pupils report that they feel very safe and have confidence that concerns will be dealt with quickly.
- 4.9 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 lunch offers nutritious choices, and pupils are given gentle encouragement to choose and eat balanced options.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The governing body provides excellent oversight of the school in line with its aims, and discharges well its responsibilities for educational standards, financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. Effective, detailed planning for the short-, medium- and long-term development of the school is now a feature, thus implementing a recommendation of the report of the last inspection. A business plan has contributions from staff across the whole school, and a governors' strategy group meets regularly with the headmistress and bursar. A sensible pattern of committees enables governors to make decisions, and to monitor carefully and support the workings of the school. The governors have a variety of professional expertise.
- 5.2 The governing body has a very good insight into the working of the school and provides support and stimulus for growth and improvement. The governors are informed by regular and comprehensive reports from different parts of the school including the junior school. Two governors, attached to the junior and senior schools respectively, regularly observe lessons and meet with staff to discuss their roles. Governors attend special courses for governors as well as attending some in-service training sessions for teachers. Staff appreciate the governors' support for the school. They welcome the opportunity to make presentations to the board on such matters as pastoral care and academic achievement.
- 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 carried out and carefully recorded. All the required policies are in place, implemented and regularly reviewed.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.4 At all levels of responsibility, including the EYFS, the leadership and management of the school are excellent. The headmistress and the senior leadership – consisting of her deputy, the head of the junior school, the bursar and the marketing director – enable the school to achieve its aims. Leadership and management provide clear educational direction, as reflected in the quality of the pupils' education and the excellent standard of their personal development. They are also effective in self-evaluation, setting priorities and ensuring that they are achieved. In particular, they are successful in creating the intended ethos. The headmistress and senior leadership team are approachable and accessible, and they make every effort to know personally each girl in the school. The junior school has a great deal of autonomy and works harmoniously with the whole school.
- 5.5 The last inspection recommended that the senior school should review the senior and middle management structures, in order to improve consultation and communication. They were advised to develop a coherent system for monitoring individual pupils' overall academic performance and the work of subject departments. The school leadership, working with the governing body, has most effectively implemented these changes. In the senior school, the new senior management posts of senior teacher and director of studies have been created, and the role of head of pastoral care has been strengthened. Teachers are supported and monitored by senior staff and middle management, with lesson observation and departmental audits being integral parts of this. In the junior school, Key Stage

Co-ordinators have been appointed and, together with the head and deputy, form a new senior management team. This team has enabled the school to develop a coherent system for monitoring individual pupils' overall academic performance and to monitor more closely the work of subject departments.

- 5.6 The bursary most effectively looks after the school's finances, supervises the non-teaching staff and is responsible for the buildings and grounds, which are in excellent condition. It meets not just with staff and governors but also with the sixth-form pupils. This reflects the school's determination to consider everyone and to involve everyone. The school is very well served by dedicated non-teaching staff who make a vital contribution to school life.
- 5.7 Management at all levels is successful in securing, supporting, developing and motivating high-quality staff and ensuring that they are suitably trained for their roles in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. The school has thorough arrangements for recruitment and checking the suitability of staff, including supply staff, volunteers and governors, and monitors and supports the staff very well.

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

- 5.8 Links between school and parents are excellent and strongly support the education of the pupils. Responses to the pre-inspection parental questionnaires indicated exceptionally strong support for the school, with very high degrees of satisfaction with all aspects of the school's provision. To some of the questions, all responses were positive. Parents appreciate the help and guidance afforded their children and the attitudes and views promoted by the school, and comment on the high standards of behaviour of the pupils. No items of concern were raised by a significant number of parents.
- 5.9 Parents greatly value the high quality of communication, and the education and support provided for their children. Parents of pupils, and of prospective pupils, are provided with all the required information. An informative website provides easy access to school policies, developments, news and other useful and relevant information. The school can contact almost all parents electronically, immediately and efficiently through the electronic 'parentmail' system. Parents have frequent and regular opportunities to meet staff in order to discuss their children's achievement and progress. The school's clear open-door policy ensures that parents have prompt access to a member of staff. Parents are provided with regular helpful written reports about their children's progress. The individual subject reports are detailed, outlining targets for pupils. Homework diaries are used effectively as a means of communication between home and school.
- 5.10 Parents are provided with many opportunities to be involved in the school. The school keeps a record of parents willing to volunteer in a range of activities and of those with professions that might be of interest to the pupils. Thus, parents help with work experience in the senior school. One outstanding opportunity for parents to become involved in the life of the school is in focus groups, one for the senior and one for the junior school. These provide a useful opportunity for parents to meet with members of staff to discuss topics and to share information. Each year group has a parent representative and accounts of the meetings are disseminated to all parents. The school handles the concerns of parents with care and follows its published procedures. The school has the required policy for dealing with parental concerns, but in recent years no complaint has gone beyond the initial stage.

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 setting is outstanding. An enthusiastic, highly committed and very cohesive staff team clearly recognises the uniqueness of each child. Individual interests and needs are consistently well met through the continuity of staffing in the setting and the staff's experience, together with detailed record-keeping. A particularly close focus on safeguarding and promoting personal and social skills underpins development in all areas. Consequently, children make excellent progress in their learning. The setting has excellent capacity for continuous improvement; staff are highly motivated to engage in training, and share best practice. They are confident to try new ideas and are rigorous in their evaluation. Since the previous inspection, transferring the nursery into the junior school building has successfully created a cohesive EYFS unit, which benefits strongly from interaction with the rest of the school.

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

6.2 Leadership and management are outstanding, enabling children to develop in a very secure environment. Staff know the children well and take great care over their welfare. Measures to deal with illnesses, accidents and medication, overseen by a qualified nurse, are extremely thorough. Staff are well qualified and suitable to work with children. Thorough risk assessments are very closely monitored. Parents are very supportive. A welcoming atmosphere engages them closely, enabling them to share in their children's education. An extensive range of resources is extremely well used to promote learning and development. The setting benefits from a good relationship with the local authority and works closely with a neighbouring nursery. Clear vision for development draws on the experience of staff, close consultation with parents and the strong engagement of the main school and governors. Appraisal and self-assessment ensure the identification of priorities and an effective commitment to improvement. Policies and procedures are of a consistently high standard. Equality is strongly promoted and differences in heritage are widely celebrated.

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

6.3 Provision is outstanding. Staff, with a warm and enabling approach and a thorough understanding of the EYFS framework, provide children with a stimulating experience in all areas, with appropriate balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities. Planning takes good account of individual preferences and needs. Assessment is thorough. Spacious, well-designed indoor and outdoor learning environments are well used to promote independence in most areas of school life. Recently refurbished outdoor areas offer scope for enhanced outdoor provision, for which clear plans have been made. Children's understanding of health and hygiene is strongly fostered by well-established routines and a focus on healthy eating. Rigorous daily checks of the learning environment ensure the children's safety.

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

- 6.4 The outcomes for children are outstanding. By the end of the EYFS they make significant progress in relation to their starting points and abilities across all six areas of learning. They are independent, confident, co-operative and curious learners. For their age, they have a good understanding of their school environment and the world beyond. They are highly motivated and engaged, and respond well to the high expectations of the staff. Personal development is particularly strong; children are happy and enjoy coming to school. Feeling safe, and trusting and respecting the staff, they readily share news and ask for help when needed. They develop a good understanding of the importance of regular exercise, eating healthily and washing their hands. Emerging skills for the future are clear in the children's very positive attitudes towards their learning, their ability to concentrate, make choices and share, and their excellent progress in literacy, numeracy, problem solving, reasoning and ICT. They interact well together and are articulate communicators with both adults and each other.

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 a governors' representative, 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
Mrs Roberta Giorghiou	Headmistress, GSA school
Mr Andrew Green-Howard	Deputy Head, GSA school
Ms Alison Horton	Deputy Head, GSA school
Ms Claudia Neuse	Head of Department, COBIS school
Mrs Susan Ratcliffe	Head, HMC Junior School
Mr Christopher Sanderson	Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector
Mrs Susan Cookson	Early Years Team Inspector (Former Headmistress, GSA School)