



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**GREAT WALSTEAD SCHOOL**

**INTERIM INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Great Walstead School

Full Name of School/College **Great Walstead School**

DCSF Number **938/6203**

Registered Charity Number **307002**

Address **Great Walstead School**  
**East Mascalls Lane**  
**Lindfield**  
**Haywards Heath**  
**West Sussex**  
**RH16 2QL**

Telephone Number **01444 483528**

Fax Number **01444 482122**

Email Address **admin@greatwalstead.co.uk**

Headmaster **The Reverend J J N Sykes**

Chair of Governors **Michael John Olliff-Lee**

Age Range **2 to 13**

Total Number of Pupils **352**

Gender of Pupils **Mixed 213 boys; 139 girls;**

Numbers by Age

0-2 (EYFS):	<b>8</b>	5-11:	<b>216</b>
3-5 (EYFS):	<b>75</b>	11-18:	<b>53</b>

Number of Day Pupils **352** Capacity for flexi-boarding: **32**

Number of Boarders

Total:	<b>60</b>
Full:	<b>0</b>
Weekly:	<b>0</b>

EYFS Gender **Mixed**

Inspection Dates **24<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> November 2009**

## 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 March 2006.

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 2003 as subsequently amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) The quality of education provided (Curriculum)
- (b) The quality of education provided (Teaching)
- (c) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) The welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) The suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) The premises and accommodation
- (g) The provision of information
- (h) The manner in which complaints are to be handled

Legislation additional to the welfare, health and safety Standard is as follows.

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

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

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

A specific inspection of boarding was not carried out and the report does not contain judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. Any comments on boarding arising from this inspection are in the context of the school as a whole. The existing report on boarding was produced by the Children's Directorate of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) under Inspection reports/Boarding schools.

The inspection does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Great Walstead School is a day and boarding school for boys and girls from two-and-a-half to thirteen years of age governed by a board of ten members to whom the headmaster reports. It is registered as a school of religious character. The school, founded in 1927, is surrounded by extensive playing fields and woodlands, and occupies a Victorian country house with additional purpose-built accommodation. The school endeavours to remain firm to the founder's original vision for a Christian school in the country where children would enjoy the beauty of their surroundings. It aims to provide a first class education in a caring Christian environment, so that all pupils are inspired to reach their full potential in mind, body and soul. Since the last inspection in March 2006 a new head has been appointed and the management structure has changed, a middle school has been created for Years 5 and 6 and a new school uniform has been introduced.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection the total number of pupils was 352 children; 213 boys and 139 girls. The school makes provision for up to 32 pupils to board on an occasional basis. Extended day care is provided from 8.00 in the morning until 6.00 in the evening for Nursery children upwards. Pupils come from predominantly business and professional families within approximately ten miles drive from the school. The ability of the pupils, as indicated by standardised tests taken in Years 5 to 8 is above average with a wide spread. Eighty pupils require some degree of learning support. All pupils are proficient in English; two pupils come from families that do not have English as their first language.
- 1.3 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 Pupils are provided with a good quality of education. They achieve well, with high standards gained in literacy, mathematical competence and scientific enquiry. Pupils have competent information and communication technology skills which they use effectively in research and independent study. Pupils of all ages demonstrate good attitudes to learning; they are imaginative and creative and are able to reason and think for themselves. They are well motivated and behave responsibly. They make good and sometimes rapid progress in relation to their above average capabilities. This is supported by information from standardised tests and the results of Common Entrance and scholarship examinations. Pupils often enjoy considerable success, not only in their academic work, but also in a range of activities achieving highly in areas such as the performing arts, sport, and chess.
- 2.2 Teaching is notably effective in promoting the pupils' learning and achievements. Lessons are well planned; tasks and activities are interesting and engage the pupils. Regular and supportive feedback to pupils, both in their books and during lessons, helps them improve their work. Effective use of questioning and thorough subject knowledge ensure all pupils make good progress. Pupils enjoy a broad and stimulating curriculum. Their experience of personal social and health education is enhanced by an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and visits.

### **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

- 2.3 The personal development of the pupils is excellent, and a particularly strong feature of the school's work. Pupils acquire clear values and beliefs. They show self-confidence and self-esteem and are able to reflect upon significant questions, and to express their views. The school engenders a strong moral code through its ethos, its curriculum and through staff acting as good role models. Pupils show initiative, and understand how they can contribute to community life. Pupils develop well culturally. They appreciate and enjoy their own and other cultural traditions.
- 2.4 The school gives a high priority to the well-being of the pupils. Staff provide good support for individuals in a friendly and relaxed manner. Pupils feel secure and valued; they were confident that staff would take due notice of their suggestions or concerns. Relationships between all in the school community are strong. Pupils are kind and helpful to each other and readily appreciate other people's efforts and achievements. The anti-bullying policy and the school's arrangements for promoting good behaviour are clear. In most respects, good attention is given to safeguarding and a helpful policy covers the necessary procedures. All staff receive appropriate training. However, there have been shortcomings in some recruitment procedures. Fire precautions, medical procedures, and health and safety matters are well managed. Risk assessments are completed for all relevant areas of school life, including educational visits. An appropriate access plan is in place for those with learning or physical difficulties. Admissions and attendance registers are properly maintained. Pupils enjoy a healthy lifestyle.
- 2.5 Boarding plays a highly significant role in promoting the pupils' personal development and the boarders enjoy a fine range of activities during the week.

Pupils praised the boarding provision and the school has successfully addressed each of the recommendations of the last OFSTED care inspection report.

### **The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management**

- 2.6 The school is suitably governed, supported and guided by a governing body that sets appropriate school aims. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities with regard to welfare, health and safety in most respects. Governors promote regular training in these areas, ensure provision is reviewed annually and that school documentation is updated as required. However, they have not ensured that procedures are followed correctly in the making and recording of staff appointments. Governors are effective in contributing to investment in human and material resources and the school's educational well-being. They are involved in strategic planning and have been instrumental in helping to set priorities linked to careful financial scrutiny.
- 2.7 Effective leadership and good management underpin the aims and values of the school. A positive ethos is evident and characterised by the good quality provision for the pupils' education and their excellent personal development. The recent upgrading of whole school policies and procedures by senior managers has significantly improved documentation. These fully comply with requirements. Strategies for monitoring and evaluating implementation of these policies are not yet sufficiently strong. Appropriate policies exist for ensuring that suitable staff are appointed to the various roles within the school. However, the correct appointment procedures are not always followed. The planning process effectively identifies areas for improvement and strategies by which objectives can be achieved. Arrangements for providing appropriate resources to meet pupils' needs are managed efficiently. Pupils are provided with high-quality facilities. The extensive and attractive grounds are used creatively to enhance pupils' experiences in all aspects of school life.
- 2.8 Parents are supportive of the school. They are particularly positive about the values the school promotes, the boarding provision, pastoral care systems and the broad curriculum. A small minority of parents of pupils in the pre-preparatory department would like to have better opportunities to discuss their child's progress. The inspection findings support these views for pupils of this age. A few parents also raised concerns about the inconsistent application of rewards and sanctions but inspectors found no evidence to support this. Parents are supplied with comprehensive information about many aspects of school life. Written reports are well-considered and include information on pupils' attitudes, progress and achievements. Parents are made aware of the written complaints procedure, which allows them to make a complaint both informally and formally. Concerns are dealt with promptly, and with professional expertise.

### **3. MAIN SCHOOL: ACTION POINTS**

#### **(a) 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 2003 as subsequently amended, with the exception of those indicated below.

Under Standard 3 (Welfare, health and safety) it must:

- implement effectively the policy to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school, in compliance with the DCSF Guidance Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education; [Regulation 3.(2)(b)]; and for the same reason

Under Standard 4 (The suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors) it must:

- ensure that appropriate recruitment checks are carried out on all staff before their appointment [Regulations 4.(2)(a) and (e)];
- for each appointment, enter on the central register the date of completion of all required recruitment checks [Regulations 4C.(2)(a),(b), (g), and 4C.(3)].

#### **(b) Recommended action**

- 3.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure that all policies are implemented consistently throughout the school.
2. Put in place effective procedures for governors to ensure continued regulatory compliance.

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

- 4.1 The EYFS provides for forty-five children aged two-and-a-half to three years who attend full or part-time and thirty-eight four to five year olds who attend full time. Sixty-five children receive Early Years funding. Five children require support for medical problems. No children have English as an additional language. Before and after school care is provided daily. Leadership of the Reception unit has changed this term. Provision for pupils aged two-and-a-half was not inspected, as this was awaiting registration at the time of the inspection. Nevertheless, the observation of provision including the ratio of adults to children indicated that provision met requirements.
- 4.2 This is a good setting with outstanding aspects. Adults recognise, respect and account for diversity and difference. Every child is supported and their individual needs met. Effective leadership and management are advancing the setting swiftly. Children make good progress in all areas and outstanding progress in their personal and social development. Children's welfare is a high priority and promoted effectively. Children are now suitably safeguarded. Strong partnerships exist between key workers and parents, who are very supportive of the provision.
- 4.3 Shared leadership and management is good overall and outstanding in the Nursery. The EYFS runs efficiently because adults implement policies effectively. The imaginative use made of high-quality resources and regular training by experienced, well-qualified staff enhances children's experiences. The methodical review of risks ensures environments are safe. Managers' aspirations are communicated well to staff and their clear vision impacts positively upon high-quality inclusive practices that ensure all children achieve. The new management team is unifying previously separate provision into a strong unit with consistent practice throughout. Detailed self-evaluation and newly introduced monitoring systems show a perceptive view of provision, the identification of future targets and capacity for sustained improvement. The developing links with outside agencies and other Nursery providers add to the excellent quality of care and enhance adults' knowledge of the children in their care.
- 4.4 The provision is outstanding. Vibrant environments reflect children's interests, stimulate their desire to learn, challenge them constantly and encourage a love of knowledge through purposeful play, both indoors and out. Adults' extensive knowledge is evident in inspirational teaching that motivates children through a wide range of varied, imaginative teacher-led activities and many challenging, creative tasks chosen by the children. Excellent planning ensures that, irrespective of ability or need, children achieve. Children's welfare is guided extremely well, their behaviour is exemplary and their understanding of safety and attitudes to health are nurtured effectively. Children follow clear routines established by adults, with whom they have excellent relationships. Well-informed staff give high priority to children's safety at all times. The information from excellent Nursery observations is used to identify the next steps in learning and to produce exceptionally detailed learning profiles that link well to individual interests and needs. The helpful information from regular Reception assessment is used well by staff to plan future learning but is not linked to the Early Years Profile. Few opportunities exist for children to comment on records of their learning.
- 4.5 Children make good and in many cases outstanding progress in relation to their starting points, especially in personal and social development. The children are

confident, happy and eager learners who demonstrate high levels of concentration and communicate effectively with staff and each other. They work happily on their own, are keen to contribute to groups and their excellent behaviour has a positive impact upon learning. Children use information technology confidently; they are articulate, count efficiently and solve problems convincingly, acquiring skills that are a valuable foundation for future learning. Children explain how to stay out of danger; they have good personal hygiene and understand the need to be fit and to eat healthily. Children know about the world outside through visits by local services and fund-raising for various charities.

## **5. EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE: ACTION POINTS**

### **(a) Compliance with the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements**

- 5.1 The school's provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and no action is required.

### **(b) Recommended action**

- 5.2 The Early Years Foundation Stage setting should take the following action to improve.
1. Link Reception assessments to the Early Years profile and enable children throughout the setting to comment to records of their learning.

## **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**

Mrs Gail Purt	Reporting inspector
Mr Andrew Nott	Junior Team Inspector (Head, IAPS)
Mrs Sandra Gordon	Early Years Lead Inspector
Mrs Julie Lowe	Early Years Team Inspector (Head of Pre-prep, IAPS)