



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**ARNOLD SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Arnold School

Full Name of School	<b>Arnold School</b>
DfE Number	<b>890/6004</b>
EYFS Number	<b>EY310029</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>1016538</b>
Address	<b>Arnold School Lytham Road Blackpool Lancashire FY4 1JG</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01253 346391</b>
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Email Address	<b>admin.arnold@church-schools.com</b>
Head	<b>Mr Jim Keefe</b>
Chairman of Governors	<b>Mr Jerry Wooding</b>
Age Range	<b>2 to 18</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>714</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (378 boys; 336 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	0-3 (EYFS): <b>17</b> 5-11: <b>135</b> 3-5 (EYFS): <b>41</b> 11-18: <b>521</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total: <b>714</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Miss J Allen</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection dates	<b>9 Nov 2010 to 10 Nov 2010</b> <b>6 Dec 2010 to 8 Dec 2010</b>

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in November 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 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.

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 Arnold School is an independent school for boys and girls aged from two to eighteen. It comprises a senior school and a junior school with a Nursery, and is situated in Blackpool on the Lancashire coast. The school was founded by Frank Truswell Pennington in 1896 as a boys' boarding school and was known initially as South Shore Collegiate School. It moved to its present site in Lytham Road when Pennington took over and developed the buildings of an earlier Victorian School, later changing its name to Arnold School.
- 1.2 The school aims to welcome and value each pupil, parent and member of staff as a full member of the Arnold community. Pupils are encouraged to be responsible, articulate, courteous, compassionate young people of integrity, able and willing to contribute to and lead in society. The school's intention is to guide and support all pupils throughout their time in school through the highest standards of pastoral care, and to inspire them, with consistently high quality teaching, to have a personal love of learning and to achieve their full academic potential.
- 1.3 The curriculum is intended to be a balanced academic curriculum supported by a rich extra-curricular programme, which together promote spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development, thereby preparing pupils for the responsibilities of adult life. The school aims for clear leadership and governance, where successful achievements are acknowledged and rewarded, and where actions are accountable.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection, there were 714 pupils on the roll: 378 boys and 336 girls. The junior school had 135 pupils, as well as 58 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The senior school had 521 pupils, including 134 in the sixth form.
- 1.5 About half the pupils come from the immediate locality, bounded by Lytham and St Annes to the south and Thornton Cleveleys to the north. The remainder are from inland areas, some commuting from as far as Preston and Lancaster. Pupils are selected for entry to the senior school, but not for the junior school. This means that the ability profile in the senior school is above the national average. Results from standardised tests indicate that pupils in Year 7 have an average score of around 113, that few are below average and that four in five are above average, with one in five being well above average. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs, but 54 have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities and receive some form of support for their learning. There is one pupil whose first language is not English.
- 1.6 In June 2008, Arnold School merged with the United Church Schools Trust (UCST). The trust, an Anglican foundation that manages a group of schools, is an educational charity founded in 1883 with the specific purpose of providing an education based on Christian principles. The board of UCST controls the finances of the school and provides central direction, but the school also has its own local governing body, with its chairman also being a member of the UCST board.
- 1.7 The head, a former deputy head of the school, took up his post only days before the final visit of the inspection.
- 1.8 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 Arnold School offers its pupils outstanding pastoral care and has established excellent links with parents. Outstanding governance and good management have ensured that practices in all other aspects of the school's provision are at least good. The provision for the EYFS is outstanding. The school is successful in achieving its principal aims. In both the senior and junior schools, pupils' achievement is good relative to their ability. They make good progress in their learning because of effective teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported; they make good progress in the junior school and satisfactory progress in the senior school. A thorough system of assessment allows teachers to report and monitor pupils' progress, although the quality of the marking of work is variable. Pupils' achievements are enhanced because of their good attitude to work, and their co-operation, commitment and enthusiasm. The broad curriculum and outstanding provision of extra-curricular activities help pupils to achieve well in a broad field of study and across a wide range of interests.
- 2.2 Provision for pupils' social and moral education is outstanding, allowing them to develop into well-rounded and confident adults who take responsibility for their own behaviour. The school's strong sense of community is built on excellent relationships. Pupils are very well looked after and they appreciate the care given. They show a good understanding and appreciation of their own heritage and that of others.
- 2.3 The school has benefited from its association with the UCST, mainly from good advice, and through the provision of extra resources and training in information and communication technology (ICT). The local governing body is very supportive and works well in partnership with UCST; together they have secured the arrangements for the safeguarding and health and safety of pupils. Statutory requirements are dealt with effectively and very good support is given to the EYFS. The school is very well led and there is a strong will to improve. Management by heads of department is good but some policies and practices lack consistency. Parents and pupils are very pleased with the school. Some parents think that the provision for gifted and talented pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities could be improved. Inspectors agree, although the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the senior school has improved in the last year. Good management has meant that both sections of the school have made progress in a number of areas since the last inspection. Amongst other things, the taught curriculum in the senior school has been reviewed and given a firmer footing. In the junior school, improvements have been made in the role and effectiveness of co-ordinators.

## **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. Improve the consistency of teaching in the senior school by building on the excellent practice currently available.
2. Ensure greater consistency of managerial practice with departments in the senior school and further develop the role of the subject co-ordinators in the junior school.
3. Enhance the provision in the senior school library, and encourage teachers and pupils to make greater use of books.
4. Provide opportunities for pupils to acquire the skills involved in the processes of design and production.
5. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, explore ways to maintain the outstanding provision.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

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

##### ***Junior School***

- 3.1 Pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards in both English and mathematics which are higher than the national average. Pupils make good progress in lessons because of consistently good teaching.
- 3.2 Pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are good, and they are competent in the use of ICT. In mathematics lessons, pupils in Year 6 could explain their thoughts whilst working on area and perimeter, and pupils in Year 5 coped well with work on fractions. In English they were articulate in their explanation and used appropriate language, for example the use of powerful verbs in creating a headline. They demonstrated a good understanding of electrical circuits and the need for a fair test in science.
- 3.3 Pupils are articulate, enthusiastic and hard working; they genuinely have a love of learning, which was evident during the interviews with them. They listen attentively, as in a Year 5 religious studies lesson where they responded positively to a story about kind, unselfish acts.
- 3.4 Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and are well supported. More able pupils also make good progress in English, mathematics and science, especially in Years 3 to 6 where teachers provide for pupils' individual needs. All pupils work co-operatively or independently with commitment and enthusiasm.
- 3.5 Outside the classroom, pupils achieve success in a good range of extra-curricular activities. Recent examples are high levels of performance in music, both through individual instrumental work and that of the junior mixed choir. Sporting achievements and individual success are regularly highlighted in assemblies and newsletters, for example the swimming team's recent victory at championships in Liverpool.

##### ***Senior School***

- 3.6 Pupils' achievement is good. Results in public examinations at both GCSE and A level have been above the national average for maintained schools, and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. This means that pupils' attainment is good in relation to their abilities, indicating that they make good progress.
- 3.7 Results at GCSE in 2010 were similar to those of the last few years, although at A\*/A they dipped slightly. Similarly, in 2010, 89% of pupils gained grades A\* to C at A level, a similar figure to previous years.
- 3.8 Pupils' academic achievements are based on good levels of knowledge and the ability to apply this within the classroom, and upon high levels of skill. Pupils are articulate and take part in debate with confidence, such as in a Year 12 history lesson. They are attentive listeners who concentrate throughout. In interviews, they spoke articulately and positively about school life. They write extended essays in English and history, and show fluency, good vocabulary and accurate spelling,

punctuation and grammar. However, an occasional over-reliance on worksheets in lessons limits their opportunities for writing at length. Notable features of pupils' written work are the quantity and the good standard of presentation. Their ability to take notes develops as they progress through the school. Interesting examples of a personal approach were seen in English language at A level, but some senior pupils have not yet learned to summarise information in their own words.

- 3.9 When given the opportunity, pupils are confident users of ICT over a range of applications, but in the lessons seen there was not much direct use of ICT by pupils as a learning tool, except within English and chemistry lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities use spelling programmes to support their work.
- 3.10 Pupils show good standards of numeracy, not only in mathematics lessons but also in their written work in A-level physics and Year 9 geography. They show creativity in art and within their composition work in GCSE music. Drama and music clearly act as a focal point for whole-school co-operation. Pupils have ample opportunity to develop physical attributes, both within the carefully structured physical education (PE) and games programmes, and within a host of extra-curricular activities.
- 3.11 Attitudes to learning are very positive. Pupils settle quickly within class, show good humour and have a committed approach to their studies, asking probing questions, both to check understanding and to further their interest in the topic. They show enthusiasm and determination, and collaborate well with one another, for example within modern foreign languages. They adjust rapidly to working in pairs or groups, in a mutually supportive way.
- 3.12 Pupils attain high levels of achievement in an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. In 2009 to 2010, awards were gained in mathematical challenges, the biology Olympiad, an international art competition and through the Open University. Furthermore, pupils received awards in speech, through music examinations and through The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Pupils are also active within Young Enterprise and the vibrant Combined Cadet Force (CCF), which serves as a forum for enabling sixth formers to take leadership roles and gain BTEC diplomas. Competitive sport is another key and successful area of school life, with significant team successes in girls' hockey, netball, rugby and athletics.

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

#### ***Junior School***

- 3.13 The curriculum is broad and creative, and allows pupils to achieve in a good range of subjects. It is enriched by teaching from senior school specialist teachers in science and modern foreign languages, and the recent introduction of a speech programme, which has proved popular with pupils. The taught curriculum offers opportunities for pupils to develop confidently, whilst ensuring they are challenged mentally, physically and creatively. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is taught as a timetabled subject from Years 1 to 6, and is also interwoven into the daily fabric of the school through assemblies and the interaction between the staff and pupils.
- 3.14 Pupils benefit from an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, ranging from science to judo. Sports such as hockey, netball, football, cricket, rugby and athletics are very strongly promoted, with pupils participating in local tournaments and

fixtures. The annual whole-school theatre visit offers further cultural enrichment for pupils and the annual residential trip to Glaramara in the Lake District enhances their social experience. Work in classes is aided by visits from external speakers, for example the former soldiers who talked to Year 6 pupils during their study on World War Two. The choir of older pupils performs in the local community and the school welcomes teams from local primary schools for a football tournament.

### **Senior School**

- 3.15 The curriculum is good and has benefited from several improvements in recent years. It meets the school's aims in providing a balanced academic curriculum that is supported by very rich and varied extra-curricular provision. The education provided is suitable for pupils of all ages and abilities, covering most of the requisite areas of learning, although the lack of design technology as a discrete subject and lessons in ICT that do not continue after Year 8 mean that opportunities for pupils' technological development are limited. This was noted by some parents in their responses to the parental pre-inspection questionnaire.
- 3.16 Since the last inspection, the school has successfully addressed concerns about time allocations to particular subjects and liaison between the junior and senior schools. A careful and considered review of the curriculum has meant that more efficient use is made of the school day to maximise the effectiveness of teaching and learning.
- 3.17 The curriculum includes subjects that give pupils of all abilities appropriate choices at GCSE and A level. These include a choice of three modern foreign languages and the options of either three separate sciences, or science and additional science awards. A flexible system for choosing GCSE options in Year 9 and AS-level options in Year 11 accommodates individual needs and choices well. Further academic opportunities are available to pupils through extra-curricular business studies and Greek at GCSE, and geology and Greek at AS level, as well as further development of ICT skills through a European qualification. The school responded to previous inspection comments in introducing timetabled PSHE lessons in Years 7 to 11. These cover citizenship, lifestyle, relationships, responsibility and respect. This is valued by the pupils and allows them to develop understanding and to reflect on their own development. Careers guidance, taught within PSHE, helps pupils to plan effectively for their future, as seen in a Year 9 lesson where they used the internet to research different career requirements ahead of choosing their GCSE subjects.
- 3.18 Pupils who are identified as gifted and talented have opportunities to participate in external competitions, such as Olympiads, and through the introduction of Open University modules for sixth formers. However, very few academically related extension activities were evident in the lessons observed.
- 3.19 The curriculum is complemented by an excellent programme of extra-curricular activities and community links. Parents welcome the rich variety of activities, including drama, music, the CCF, business education opportunities and the numerous sports for pupils of all ages. The vast majority of pupils take up these opportunities, which provide valuable experience of teamwork and the exercise of responsibility. In the week of the inspection, the school's production of *Calamity Jane*, which involved a large number of staff and pupils, was well received.
- 3.20 Sixth-form pupils gain valuable experience of social care through the local community service activities and junior school pupils annually collect gifts for local

under-privileged families. Continued support for a village project in Tanzania is the main focus for charitable giving and provides excellent opportunities for developing an understanding of citizenship in a global context.

### **3.(c) The contribution of teaching**

#### ***Junior School***

- 3.21 The teaching is consistently good, and in line with the school's aims. The most effective lessons are well paced, with clear direction and highly effective questioning, resulting in positive learning. Classrooms are well resourced and teachers are confident and knowledgeable. They know their pupils well; they respond to their needs by providing appropriate work. Lesson objectives and expectations are clearly indicated at the start of lessons. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good; there is a clear behaviour and sanctions policy and a good reward system in the form of house points.
- 3.22 The school uses a comprehensive system of assessment. Good use is made of national assessment data which validates teacher assessment from Reception to Year 6. The data is used to track the performance of individuals, groups and whole-year cohorts. Subject co-ordinators use the data to inform their planning, which helps to enable effective teaching. The marking system is thorough, with targets set for pupils' improvement.

#### ***Senior School***

- 3.23 The quality of teaching is good and helps pupils make good progress. Three out of four lessons seen were good or better, with one in six being outstanding. A few unsatisfactory lessons were seen. The outstanding lessons were characterised by imaginative and resourceful teaching, fast pace and well-planned activities that were strongly tailored to individuals. Some used technology well. However, in the small number of less satisfactory lessons, teaching was didactic and slowly paced, and there was little interaction with the pupils.
- 3.24 The teaching of supported pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory and fosters progress, but is sometimes insufficiently focused on pupils' prime needs. Some pupils are not given a generous provision of time. Classroom teaching showed a good awareness of their needs as a result of the use of informative, individual learning profiles. Gifted and talented pupils are not often provided with specifically tailored extension tasks, but teachers expect them to respond to whole-class tasks at a more detailed or sophisticated level.
- 3.25 Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent. Many pupils appreciate the widespread goodwill of teachers who give generously of their time and expertise outside the classroom.
- 3.26 The senior school library is inadequately stocked. Despite the enthusiastic work of the dedicated librarian, it is under-used by both pupils and teachers as a resource for learning.
- 3.27 There has been a significant drive to improve the quality of teaching alongside considerable investment in developing teaching methods, particularly using ICT resources. These initiatives are beginning to bear fruit. Use of interactive whiteboards and thorough lesson planning are features of some of the successful teaching in both the junior and senior schools. Senior managers and heads of

department monitor teaching quality regularly using 'learning walks', where they pay short, unannounced visits to carry out lesson observations, but some are over-generous in their assessments.

- 3.28 The assessment of pupils is thorough and applied consistently throughout the school. Pupils' performance is measured four times each year and the results are converted into standardised scores before being reported to parents. Both parents and pupils understand the system. Data from assessment is used to track the performance of individuals and procedures are in place in the event of any concern. The data on pupils' progress is helpfully used to inform planning decisions for groups and individuals.
- 3.29 The best marking of work is informative, particularly with regard to giving advice to pupils on how to improve. Some very thorough marking takes place, for example in English and history. However, much is too variable, lacking consistency across subjects and age groups, with some marking being too perfunctory. Few examples of pupils being set targets for improvement were seen.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

- 4.1 The personal development of the pupils is good, so meeting the aims of the school to develop responsible, articulate, courteous and compassionate pupils. A real strength of the school is the pupils' social development, producing young people who contribute to and lead in society. Pupils and parents are highly appreciative of the wide range of opportunities for success that are offered.
- 4.2 Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Religious studies and PSHE lessons allow pupils to explore values and beliefs but this is not extended to a whole-school context on a regular basis. Pupils are able to reflect upon events being commemorated through attendance at services and the school's links with local churches, although there are some under-developed opportunities for reflection in both lessons and assemblies. The individual care which pupils receive does encourage them to develop their sense of well-being, and they are confident and out-going.
- 4.3 Pupils' moral development is outstanding. They have a well-developed moral sense which is evident in their behaviour and in their excellent relationships with staff and fellow pupils. The code of conduct for both sections of the school promotes mutual respect, as do the school rules and the system of rewards and sanctions. Sixth-form prefects and Year 6 prefects play a very positive role in helping staff to uphold the values of the school. Behaviour throughout the school is excellent, with pupils having a clear sense of right and wrong. The school is active in addressing new issues, and takes a lead in educating parents and pupils on the use and misuse of the internet, including the dangers of cyber bullying. In an anti-bullying week, all pupils in the junior school took part in an activity to demonstrate their understanding of the principles of mutual respect.
- 4.4 Pupils' social development is outstanding. They develop into well-rounded and confident adults, willing to take responsibility for their own behaviour. There is a strong community spirit and the pupils are able to show skills of leadership, so that they are well prepared for future personal and professional challenges. In the junior school, grandparents are hosted for an afternoon, allowing pupils to understand the place of family in society. Assemblies are used to celebrate pupils' achievement within the school community, and pupils also develop an understanding of their role in the wider society. The school council in both sections of the school provides a useful body that gives the pupils a say in school life, as well as providing a forum for developing greater social responsibility. Pupils develop a broad knowledge of public institutions and services through the PSHE programme, which has included a mock election.
- 4.5 Pupils' cultural development is good and enables them to secure a strong understanding and appreciation of their own heritage and that of others. They develop a keen awareness of their own culture through theatre, gallery and museum visits. Pupils in the junior school experience visits from local authors. Pupils broaden their understanding of the world at large through a wide range of trips abroad that have included an art and Spanish visit to Barcelona and a tour of battlefields for Year 11, in addition to the highly regarded sports tours.

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

- 4.6 The standard of pastoral care is outstanding. The school undoubtedly succeeds in its aims of ensuring that every pupil is welcomed and valued as a member of the Arnold community, and that pupils are guided by the highest standards of pastoral care.
- 4.7 Form tutors know their pupils well and are led ably by a very committed group of heads of section. Pupils know that their well-being is of prime importance and this is reflected in the approach of the head and his deputy. The section teams work effectively together, for example in developing the programme of PSHE. Pupils' needs are successfully targeted at each specific stage of their education. This includes first class careers advice which ensures that every pupil receives tailored support, including the opportunity for work experience in Year 11. The main focus for the guidance within the sixth form is upon university choices and applications.
- 4.8 Pupils value the obvious interest that teachers show in them, and the encouragement and guidance they receive. Staff are unstinting in their efforts to provide additional academic or emotional support. The work of the matron is also critical in this latter regard, and her knowledge of the individual pupil and her communication with parents reinforce the school's commitment towards providing excellent standards of care. This was confirmed by parental views in the questionnaire.
- 4.9 The school has highly effective procedures in place for promoting good behaviour. Expectations of pupils are high and they conduct themselves in a mature and responsible way throughout the school. Sanctions are well understood and appear fair to pupils.
- 4.10 Both sections of the school share a well-formulated and clearly understood anti-bullying policy; the school strongly promotes the discouragement of harassment and bullying. Should these occur, members of staff, or pupils, intervene and the issue is dealt with promptly. Particular emphasis has recently been placed on measures to prevent cyber bullying. Staff are suitably trained in this area and associated events are held for parents.
- 4.11 The school is thorough in all aspects of its safeguarding policy and practice, including appropriate training, as required by the regulations, in child protection. The policy is reviewed annually by the local governing body and the head is a member of the local safeguarding board. Ten members of staff have undergone the safer recruitment training. Measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards are in place and are clearly understood, with compliance with all statutory requirements.
- 4.12 Arrangements to ensure pupils' health and safety are effective. There have been significant developments in this area since the previous inspection. These include the establishment of a health and safety committee, the appointment of an educational visits co-ordinator, an increase in the number of staff who are trained in first aid and greater attention to risk assessments. There are excellent provision and care for pupils who are unwell or injured; communication between the matron and physical education staff is very good. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities feel well supported both within class and through specialist provision. The school monitors its provision for such pupils and has a staged access plan in place to enable further improvements relating to both educational and physical needs.

- 4.13 Throughout, pupils are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits, for example through the PSHE programme in Year 8. School meals include a very good range of options that include salad, vegetables and fresh fruit. Pupils themselves speak favourably about this provision. Regular exercise is strongly encouraged and the PE department is active in promoting this, both for the athletically minded pupils and for those who are less so.
- 4.14 The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and have been correctly stored, in line with regulations.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) The quality of governance**

- 5.1 School governance is outstanding. The school benefits from its association with the UCST in a number of ways. There is central advice on matters such as marketing, human resources, finance, the use of data and the oversight of school policies. Hardware and software have been provided to improve the quality of teaching and learning, together with training that has been well received by the school. The head has also benefited through access to a forum of headteachers who give advice and support to others.
- 5.2 The local governing body is seen as very supportive of the school. Governors are visible to the teaching staff through their attendance at sporting, musical and dramatic events. A good range of committees is used well to oversee the school's work, including the arrangements for the safeguarding and health and safety of pupils. Statutory requirements are dealt with effectively. One governor has specific responsibility for the EYFS and has offered thorough support and advice.
- 5.3 Good measures for the financial management of the school are in place. UCST board members are trustees of the school and oversee the school's finances, and do so in close co-operation with the school bursar. Budgets are set and monitored in a partnership, with the finance committee of the local governing body, which meets bi-monthly, receiving good and timely information on financial matters.
- 5.4 Although the number of teachers has fallen in recent times, the governors have ensured that good new teachers have been recruited. With the exception of the senior school library, the school's accommodation and facilities are sufficient for current needs, although there are plans to redevelop the site.

### **5.(b) The quality of leadership and management**

- 5.5 Good leadership and management are effective in meeting the aims of the school and in establishing a range of procedures and policies to ensure good or better educational provision for pupils. The policies are regularly reviewed by the UCST. A good range of committees meets to promote and discuss all aspects of the school, including the welfare of pupils and their academic and curricular provision.
- 5.6 The very recent appointment of the former deputy head as the new head means that the present management structure is currently not sustainable because it places too much responsibility on too few individuals. The school recognises this and intends to review the arrangements.
- 5.7 The energetic leadership style in the senior school is characterised by a sense of openness, a willingness to consult and a keen desire for school improvement. There is a clear view of the current provision and the future direction needed to secure further school improvement.
- 5.8 The junior school has made good progress in recent years. Roles have been clarified and teachers have been encouraged to take more managerial responsibility. The curriculum has been reviewed, adjustments made to the timetable and a new and helpful system of assessment introduced. The management of the transfer of pupils from the junior to the senior school is good. Parents and pupils are given

appropriate information and events are organised to support a smooth transfer. Pupils in Year 6 are taught by some senior school staff and are invited to assemblies, open days and science lessons.

- 5.9 Monitoring of the school's provision is achieved through a variety of methods. Examination results are discussed and reviewed with heads of department and individual staff. Senior teachers observe and record lessons to inform management of the quality of teaching, but records suggest that their view of teaching might be over-optimistic. The appraisal system makes a useful contribution to a view of teaching quality.
- 5.10 Planning for development is good. The school's five-year development plan is linked to its aims and addresses relevant issues for both the senior and junior schools. Subject areas in both sections of the school have development plans, although in the senior school these vary considerably in their quality.
- 5.11 Management by heads of department in the senior school is effective in maintaining standards. Departmental handbooks are generally good but, as with the development plans, vary in quality and content. Not all contain useful references to cross-curricular issues. Some policies, such as those on marking, are not always implemented and there are variations between the policies of different departments. In the junior school, the roles of subject and key stage co-ordinators are developing. The management of the teaching of English has been improved in recent times and now mathematics is the focus of attention.
- 5.12 Teachers who are new to the school are well supported. An appraisal system is seen as helpful in monitoring the teaching and in encouraging the professional development of teachers, some of whom are supported by the USCT in studying for Masters degrees. The arrangements for checking the suitability of staff are secure.

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

- 5.13 The quality of links with parents is outstanding. This reflects the school's determination to keep parents well informed and involved in their children's education. Parents are valued as members of the school community, as stated in the school's aims. High quality information is available to parents of current and prospective pupils at every stage of their children's education, in the form of literature or personal contact. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that a very high proportion of parents are happy with the information and access to policies provided by the school. They feel that they can communicate easily with the school, that they are encouraged to be involved and that any concerns are dealt with efficiently. They are less satisfied with the provision for the gifted and talented.
- 5.14 Regular publications include newsletters and an annual magazine. Parents can communicate through the pupil planners, where they can follow their children's progress and are invited to comment. In the senior school, reports are sent home twice a year, and they are sent more regularly in the junior school. They give informative standardised results and provide parents with a clear indication of their children's attainment and effort. This is a considerable improvement on the reporting format used at the time of the last inspection.
- 5.15 The school has a well-developed website from which parents can readily access all policies. It is committed to strengthening established forms of electronic

communication and this has been well received by parents. The senior management and other teachers are seen by parents as being very approachable.

- 5.16 The highly active Parents and Friends Association provides strong support for the school and allows parents to become involved. Many members are Old Arnoldians, as are members of the Ladies' Luncheon Club, where around a third of the membership is made up of mothers of current pupils. These organisations raise money for the school and charities, and arrange social events. Within the wider community, there are significant links with local organisations. Many pupils volunteer for work within the community and a number of them play or coach for local teams.
- 5.17 A well-publicised complaints procedure is available to parents on the website. The four stages are clearly set out within a framework of outcomes and responsibilities. The procedure is implemented effectively.

## **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 is outstanding. All children's needs are met very well, including those with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and children who are learning English as an additional language. Activities are suitably adapted to take account of children's individual needs, which are highlighted thoroughly in planning. There is a well-embedded commitment to sustain and improve standards through robust monitoring of the overall provision. This is highlighted in the comprehensive development and improvement plans, and through self-evaluation. Since the last EYFS inspection many improvements have been made.

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

6.2 Leadership and management are outstanding. Safeguarding procedures are implemented well throughout the setting, and children's welfare is promoted very well. An outstanding partnership with children's parents and carers has been fostered. Parents are kept well informed of their children's learning and development. The implementation of a suitable staff appraisal system ensures that staff training needs are identified and met. Staff are deployed efficiently and work well together. The use of an EYFS profile enables the setting's leadership to monitor provision well, especially relating to a child's progress. There are comprehensive whole-school policies and procedures in place which are consistently implemented to promote equality of opportunity and to eliminate discrimination. A wide range of high quality resources is accessible, both indoors and outdoors, and they are used well to foster children's ability to make decisions and to work independently.

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

6.3 The overall quality of provision is outstanding. Adults adopt a very calm and encouraging approach, and know the children very well. This encourages children to strive to meet high expectations. The indoor and outdoor learning environments are used effectively to promote many aspects of children's learning and to foster positive learning habits. Planning is flexible and takes account of children's interests, abilities and needs. This helps to ensure that learning for each child is enjoyable and challenging. Children's skills in speaking and listening are well developed, and their ability to solve problems is encouraged frequently. Children are learning about the world around them and are skilful at handling a wide variety of ICT resources. They are able to manipulate small tools well, and show confidence during dance, movement and play activities. Children express themselves creatively. Their personal, social and emotional development is promoted effectively, and behaviour is good.

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

- 6.4 The children's starting points in the Nursery are varied, and their outcomes at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage are very good. Informative assessments are made on entry, in close partnership with children's parents. Staff monitor children's progress regularly and make good use of assessments, helping to ensure that children make very good progress whatever their individual needs. Children clearly enjoy their time in the Nursery and Reception, and are becoming effective learners. They are learning about how to stay safe and will confide in adults. Children are developing a good understanding of healthy eating, particularly through snack time and lunch time routines. They are confident about making choices and can work independently. Children share well, co-operate and show a high respect for others. They are developing their skills for the future, particularly through operating a wide range of ICT resources in their learning.

#### **Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three**

- 6.5 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**

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

**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. 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 Joe Tierney	Reporting Inspector
Mr George Fisher	Former Head, HMC school
Dr Stephanie Thomas	Head of Department, HMC school
Mr Simon Mozley	Deputy Head, GSA school
Mr Chris Lumb	Head, SHMIS school
Mrs Kate Carey	Deputy Head, GSA school
Mrs Gill Wilson	Head, ISA school
Miss Valerie Craven	Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector
Mrs Pamela Pollock	Early Years Team Inspector, GSA school