



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

WAKEFIELD GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Wakefield Girls' High School

The junior school was inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School	Wakefield Girls' High School
DfE Number	384/6114
Registered Charity Number	1088415
Address	Wakefield Girls' High School Wentworth Street Wakefield West Yorkshire WF1 2QS
Telephone Number	01924 372490
Fax Number	01924 231601
Email Address	lmaddick@wghsss.org.uk
Headmistress	Mrs Gill Wallwork
Chair of Governors	Mr. Dennis Wheatley
Age Range	11 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	716
Gender of Pupils	Girls
Numbers by Age	11-18: 716
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 716
Inspection dates	18 Oct 2011 to 19 Oct 2011 16 Nov 2011 to 18 Nov 2011

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in November 2005.

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.

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 Wakefield Girls' High School was founded in 1878. It retains its original guiding principles of enabling girls to achieve the qualifications necessary to fulfil their ambitions and potential at the same time as nurturing their sense of self-worth, responsibility towards others and mutual respect. To this end, the school aims to instil intellectual curiosity and a love of learning, to prepare girls for the world beyond school, and to support their personal well-being and welfare. The school is part of the Wakefield Grammar School Foundation which comprises two single-sex senior schools as well as junior and pre-prep schools and a co-educational nursery. The Foundation's single governing body has nineteen members.
- 1.2 The school became independent in 1982 following the removal of its Direct Grant status. It occupies its original, extensive campus site in a conservation area near the centre of Wakefield. Some teaching in Years 12 and 13 takes place jointly with Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, the boys' school in the Foundation.
- 1.3 The headmistress was appointed in 2009. Since the last inspection there have been changes to the roles of the heads of year, and among senior staff and heads of department. New subjects offered at A level include information and communication technology (ICT), product design, textiles and theatre studies.
- 1.4 There are currently 716 pupils aged between 11 and 18, of whom approximately a quarter are in Years 12 and 13. Fifty-eight pupils identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive specialist learning support from the school and twelve other pupils receive extra support on an occasional basis. No pupils have statements of special educational needs or require support in English as an additional language. The ability profile of the school to Year 11 is above the national average. The ability profile of the sixth form is also above the national average, though with a much wider spread of abilities.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Pupils are very well educated in line with the school's aims. They achieve academic excellence and reach standards that are far above the average for maintained schools nationally. Their achievements in sport, music and art are excellent. Pupils make rapid progress relative to their ability. This includes pupils with SEND, who receive outstanding support. Pupils are articulate and imaginative, and have excellent skills in numeracy. They perform strongly in national academic and sporting competitions. The extensive curriculum is suitable for the ages and needs of all pupils, although provision for the most able does not always offer appropriately demanding challenges. The wide-ranging extra-curricular programme is outstanding. Careers guidance has developed strongly since the last inspection. Pupils show a purposeful approach to their studies, and benefit from teaching of good quality.
- 2.2 Pupils enjoy a happy school environment in which their personal development is outstanding. They show genuine concern for each other, reflecting the excellent relationships that characterise the whole school community. Opportunities for debate are enthusiastically taken up. Pupils show high levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, an awareness of religious backgrounds other than their own, and a strongly developed aesthetic sense. They are also well-informed about current affairs. Pupils show maturity and sensitivity. They are supported by excellent pastoral care. They feel safe and well prepared for the next stage of their lives. Their behaviour is excellent. Older pupils offer support to younger pupils and all value the mentoring provided by members of the sixth form. A healthy lifestyle is encouraged.
- 2.3 Governance is good and supports the aims of the school well. The school's facilities are impressive and well maintained. The school has a planned programme of development, although the library has remained almost unchanged since the last inspection and does not offer sufficient encouragement to learning throughout the school. Governors have not always placed adequate priority on recruitment procedures in the past, as a result of which some weaknesses were identified at the time of the initial visit. However, the school had remedied these as far as possible by the time of the main visit. In all other respects, leadership and management show many excellent features. Teaching and pupils' progress are carefully monitored. New management structures introduced since the last inspection have considerably enhanced the quality of pastoral care and departmental accountability. A clear educational direction is well communicated by the senior leadership team. The school has excellent links with parents. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents expressed great satisfaction with the education provided and the values promoted by the school and inspectors agreed with these views.

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 did not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it was required to:
- Implement all appropriate safeguarding arrangements [Part 3, paragraph 7(a) and (b) under Welfare, health and safety of pupils];
 - Carry out all appropriate checks on any employee starting work before receipt of a CRB certificate, as well as checks on identity and qualifications, and ensure that an enhanced CRB certificate is obtained before or as soon as possible after the appointment [Part 4, paragraphs 19.(2)(a),(b), and (c), and 19.(3) under Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors];
 - Ensure that the central register of appointments is correctly maintained [Part 4, paragraph 22.(3)(a),(b),(c) and (d) and 22.(4), under Single Central Register of Appointments].
- 2.5 At the time of the final team visit, the school had rectified all of the above shortcomings, as far as it was possible to do so, as noted in the text of the report.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Develop further its provision for able, gifted and talented pupils by ensuring consistent and appropriate levels of challenge across the curriculum;
 2. Develop the existing libraries into resource centres that can more appropriately support the pupils' learning throughout the school.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The pupils are extremely well educated in accordance with the aims of the school. They develop intellectual curiosity, aspiration and a love of learning, and take responsibility for their own progress. Their overall level of achievement is excellent, reflecting competence at a high level in academic work and in sport, music and art.
- 3.2 Pupils have highly developed levels of knowledge, skills and understanding in both curricular and extra-curricular activities. Their literacy, numeracy and oral skills are excellent. They articulate their ideas and opinions with maturity, as shown in a Year 12 psychology lesson where pupils passionately discussed scientific ethics. All groups make excellent progress although the most able, gifted and talented do not always have sufficiently demanding challenges to which to respond. Pupils use ICT well to produce computer-generated documents and to make presentations. The libraries are limited in scope and do not fully support pupils' learning throughout the school. Pupils develop their knowledge and understanding in a stimulating environment and display particularly high levels of imagination in the fine arts and performance. They have high levels of skills in physical education.
- 3.3 Pupils perform strongly in national competitions, achieving considerable success in biology and chemistry Olympiads, and in the UK Mathematical Challenges. Many pupils take part in musical performances of high quality in addition to enjoying considerable success in Associated Board instrumental examinations. Pupils excel in team and individual sports, leading to regular success at both regional and national levels in hockey and netball. Many pupils gain awards in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme with a significant number regularly achieving gold awards.
- 3.4 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2008 to 2010. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Attainment at GCSE has been far above the national average for girls in maintained schools and similar to the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. In 2009, results were above the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. A level results have been far above the national average for girls in maintained schools and above the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. At A level in 2008-2010, over four-fifths of grades were A* to B and at GCSE well over two-thirds of grades were A* or A. Around three-quarters of sixth form pupils regularly secure places at their first choice of university, including highly selective universities, where they study a wide range of academic and artistic subjects. The GCSE and A level results show that pupils, including those with SEND, consistently make rapid progress compared with pupils of similar ability, as confirmed by nationally standardised measures of progress and as seen in their work in lessons and over time.
- 3.5 Pupils are purposeful and extremely enthusiastic and show high levels of concentration and self-motivation. They are articulate and keen to discuss their views. They use lesson time well, developing good habits of work and enjoying their learning. They respond with engagement to the challenges they are offered. They contribute actively in lessons, readily answering questions and expressing their views, as seen in a Year 10 religious studies lesson on the sanctity of life. Pupils show an interest in their education beyond the syllabus and take full advantage of all

the opportunities available, both during lessons and after school. The relationships between teachers and pupils are outstanding and help to promote excellent attitudes to learning and achievement.

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

- 3.6 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision to pupils' development is excellent. It enables the school to fulfil its aims of encouraging pupils to discover their talents and to prepare them for the world beyond school.
- 3.7 The well-planned curriculum meets the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities. Pupils have an appropriate choice of subjects including a choice of three languages at GCSE. The school provides a wide range of subjects at A level and, since the previous inspection, has added ICT, theatre studies, product design and textiles to the curriculum. Pupils make confident use of information and communication technology (ICT) but its potential benefits are not fully realised across all subjects. The learning support department is outstanding in providing strategies and advice for both teachers and pupils in order to help pupils who need support have full access to the curriculum. The limited library facilities do not at present fully support the learning of pupils of all ages and abilities, though some imaginative approaches to teaching encourage independent research and learning.
- 3.8 The well-structured personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is both coherent and comprehensive and it covers all topics relevant to pupils' ages. It is provided by form tutors, subject specialists and outside speakers, and its appropriateness and effectiveness are monitored through pupil questionnaires and in discussion with tutors and heads of year. The school responds positively to feedback from pupils in this regard. Year 11 pupils speak highly of the "Futures Thinking" programme which provides support for their academic work and a range of outside speakers drawn from new areas of experience.
- 3.9 The imaginative careers department is outstanding and a real strength of the school. Pupils in the sixth form are led through the university application process by highly trained staff. During the inspection, an informative and challenging talk on careers in medicine was well attended by pupils of several year groups. External careers guidance is adapted for the individual needs of all pupils who much appreciate this support.
- 3.10 The outstanding extra-curricular programme has a strong impact on the girls' personal development. Pre-inspection questionnaires completed by both pupils and parents reflect great satisfaction with the range of activities available. All girls interviewed felt that there was an extremely wide selection on offer at the school. The school is proud of its strong sporting tradition. In addition to its high profile successes, there is a focus on sport for life and on participation by all pupils. Lunchtime and after-school activities such as art, ICT and mathematics clubs allow pupils of different ages to mix and enjoy challenging tasks either to supplement their academic work or for pure enjoyment.
- 3.11 There are extensive links with the local community, including maintained schools, that offer considerable benefits for the pupils. Regular meetings are held with the local Wakefield PSHE co-ordinators; peer mentors are trained by the Samaritans; and pupils from local primary and secondary schools join a weekly chamber music

group at the school. Formal partnerships exist with the local business community who sell goods to support the school's annual charities fair.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.12 The overall quality of teaching is good. It is highly effective in promoting pupils' progress and in supporting the aims of the school. In the vast majority of lessons seen, teaching was good and much was excellent. It provides a secure foundation for the pupils to develop their understanding and skills. Teachers display very good subject knowledge and have high expectations of their pupils. Relationships are excellent, which helps pupils rise to the challenges set for them and to behave at all times in an exemplary manner.
- 3.13 Teaching in the best lessons was characterised by careful planning, an energetic pace, a sharp focus on developing pupils' analytical and critical skills, and a determination to respond to the needs of all pupils including those with SEND. In these lessons, pupils had the opportunity for independent learning; in turn, teachers incorporated intellectual rigour and a variety of teaching methods into the planned activities, using open-ended questions to engage and challenge pupils, whose progress was outstanding as a result. For instance, a year 8 music lesson was characterised by exceptional energy and attention to individual pupils as they explored the process of composition using specialist software. In less successful lessons, able, gifted and talented pupils were not given sufficient opportunity to extend their learning or achievement through appropriately demanding challenges. Teaching in the sixth form is particularly imaginative.
- 3.14 Teachers are very enthusiastic about their subject. This generates a strong and positive approach from the pupils who in turn show high levels of commitment and concentration, and respond well to the regular praise and encouragement they receive. Teachers use resources well including ICT in some areas; for example, foetal ultrasound scans were shown in a year 10 physics lesson. In general teachers show an unremitting determination to constantly enhance the standards achieved by the pupils.
- 3.15 The quality of marking is generally good and at times excellent. In the best examples, pupils were regularly given constructive advice and direction, particularly in the lower years and when they were preparing for modules and public examinations. Precise feedback on homework often relates to targets set to facilitate higher levels of achievement.
- 3.16 The school has effective systems in place for monitoring pupils' progress. Teachers successfully implement the school's tracking policy for individual pupils, and detailed records are centrally held and accessible to staff as appropriate. Teachers make effective use of attainment data in their planning.
- 3.17 Curriculum areas are well resourced and the teachers and pupils work collaboratively to ensure that classrooms are stimulating teaching and learning environments.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The development of the pupils' personal qualities is outstanding and in line with the aims and ethos of the school. Pupils feel happy in the school environment. They are self-aware, confident and articulate, and ready to express their opinions freely. They are fiercely loyal to their school and all that it gives them. The quality of relationships is excellent between girls of all age groups and between pupils and staff. There is a wonderful sense of togetherness yet the community is not inward-looking.
- 4.2 Pupils make excellent use of the opportunities to develop a system of spiritual beliefs and a moral code. Through the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were overwhelmingly sure that the school promotes worthwhile attitudes and views. Year 11 pupils talked enthusiastically of their enjoyment of the personal studies programme in which they discuss ethics. Debating is a strong and integral part of the extra-curricular programme and contributes greatly to pupils' confidence and readiness to express their ideas. Outside speakers are invited for all year groups. Pupils in the sixth form appreciate the role of general studies in giving them a broader awareness of matters outside their chosen subjects. Pupils develop very well creatively, socially and culturally. A year 11 geography class showed an appreciation of the local area and its urbanisation. Pupils' sense of the aesthetic and their powers of observation were fostered in a lunchtime art club. Pupil librarians update a daily news board and appeared fully informed about the underlying issues dealt with in the articles.
- 4.3 Ethical issues are raised in lessons with pupils of all ages. In a Year 10 religious studies lesson, pupils showed a high level of reasoning skills and were aware of the political dimension of care for the elderly provided by the state. In a Year 8 ICT lesson pupils discussed the manipulation of photographs for political purposes. The curriculum offers an understanding of and respect for others' faiths through religious education, and the school facilitates prayer arrangements for a number of pupils. Assemblies contain a spiritual dimension with formal hymns and prayers, and Christian links are maintained through performances and acts of worship at Wakefield Cathedral. During the inspection, a complex presentation by Year 11 pupils in assembly focused on memory, passing fads and the worth of the elderly in society, revealing a remarkable maturity of approach and sensitivity of understanding.
- 4.4 The girls feel that the school listens to their views and that the school council is a valuable forum to implement change and for the expression of their ideas. Pupils recognise that individual teachers and particularly heads of year respond quickly and effectively to their concerns and suggestions. Pupils enjoy presenting form assemblies to the whole school on topics they have chosen. They feel that they have good opportunities to exercise leadership and responsibility. The prefects show compassion and initiative, and work in a sensitive manner.
- 4.5 The wide range of extra-curricular activities allows pupils to develop a sense of self-worth and is consistent with the aims of preparing girls for life. Pupils take full advantage of the many trips and expeditions on offer to broaden their understanding of their subject areas and of the world. The school's work for charitable causes is outstanding, ranging from a formal link with a school in Tanzania and an annual 150-mile cycle ride, to support by individual forms of many local charities.

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

- 4.6 The school's arrangements for welfare, health and safety make a good contribution to pupils' personal development in line with the school's aim of supporting their well-being. At the time of the initial visit, pupils' welfare was not adequately supported by recruitment procedures for staff, though these had been rectified by the time of the main visit. The many excellent features of the school's provision include the high quality of pastoral care, recently strengthened through the introduction of permanent heads of year.
- 4.7 Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent. Pupils feel safe and regard themselves as being part of a family within the school. They express loyalty towards their teachers, appreciating the constant support, guidance and encouragement they receive. They readily acknowledge that the demands teachers place on them reflect both their care for the pupils and their wish for them to succeed in life. Pupils show great maturity, are thoughtful and reflective in discussion, and demonstrate affection and support for one another. They are passionate about the positive influence the school has on them and commented very positively on the care they receive.
- 4.8 In the pre-inspection questionnaire, pupils indicated high levels of satisfaction. They feel that they make good progress in their studies supported by teachers who help them to learn effectively, and that they benefit greatly by being encouraged to work independently. A number of pupils did not feel that the school listened to their views or that teachers treated pupils equally, but no evidence was found during the inspection to support this.
- 4.9 Pastoral systems ensure that any issues are dealt with promptly and effectively through regular communication between staff and with pupils. Pupils feel secure, and well prepared for the life choices ahead.
- 4.10 Year 7 pupils joining the school have a Year 8 buddy allocated to them. They value the sixth form peer mentor initiative which supports pupils in all year groups. Strong friendships exist among the pupils, who feel they have many different people to whom they can confidently turn whenever necessary.
- 4.11 Pupils' behaviour is excellent. The school's measures to promote good behaviour and counter any bullying are clear and are well understood by both staff and pupils. Most pupils' responses to the inspection questionnaire indicated that any issues with regard to bullying are handled effectively by the school. The anti-bullying policy is regularly discussed by form groups to ensure general understanding. It is also reviewed by the school council.
- 4.12 The school has taken all necessary measures to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. Detailed risk assessments are undertaken and monitored for appropriate activities in and out of school. All staff receive regular safeguarding training.
- 4.13 The school makes good provision for pupils who are unwell or injured and maintains accurate records of the care provided. A suitable plan is in place to improve educational access for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities. Pupils identified as having learning difficulties receive outstanding support. Individual learning plans are agreed including positive strategies for teaching staff as well as personal targets for pupils. Both pupils and their parents appreciate the significant impact this has on progress and confidence.

- 4.14 Pupils are encouraged to develop a healthy lifestyle by establishing healthy eating habits and by taking regular exercise. The school's commitment to this is further demonstrated through its accreditation by national benchmarking schemes.
- 4.15 The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and stored for the appropriate period in accordance with the regulatory requirements.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good and helps to ensure that the school's aims and ethos remain central to its work and to supporting the consistent success of the pupils in both their academic work and their personal development. The members of the governing body bring a wide range of experience to their work including education, finance, law, medicine, building and construction. The five committees, fewer than at the time of the last inspection, now have broader responsibilities. The general purposes committee has the closest contact with the school and dedicates time to educational issues. Training for governors has increased and one governor has specific responsibility for child protection matters.
- 5.2 In most areas, governors' oversight is well supported by this structure, including in matters of welfare, health and safety. Governors review and adopt key policies and are closely involved in setting strategy for the school. In the past, governors have placed insufficient priority on their role in monitoring staff recruitment checks and the single central register of appointments, but significant steps have recently been taken to ensure that procedures and monitoring to safeguard the pupils are rigorous and consistently implemented.
- 5.3 Governors are directly involved in financial planning to support continuing investment in the school's impressive facilities and resources. They recognise the need to continue working ever more closely with the head and to reflect their very strong commitment to the school through regular visits and discussions.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management is good, with many excellent features. It ensures the very effective realisation of the aims of the school, instilling a love of learning in the pupils and encouraging the discovery of their talents. It promotes an environment where the pupils are genuinely happy, delighting in each other's achievements, and well prepared for the next stage of their lives.
- 5.5 The senior leadership team, consisting of the head and three deputy heads, operate as a close and mutually supportive unit, setting high standards for themselves and also for all in the community. In overseeing a structure that enables management at all levels to be creative, efficient and effective, the leadership of the head is outstanding. A clear educational vision and direction are provided and widely communicated so that they are strongly shared. The leadership team has a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and of areas that require further development. Sometimes these overlap, as in the extensive and well-used tracking of pupils' progress throughout the school which also underpins the development of a more effective policy for challenging the more able, gifted and talented pupils.
- 5.6 Since the last inspection, when middle management was judged generally good, the school has made significant progress in implementing clear lines of responsibility and accountability in the leadership and management of both academic and pastoral areas. Monitoring of teaching takes place in particular through the performance management scheme introduced since the previous inspection. This enables both heads of department and the senior leadership team to ensure consistency of approaches across the curriculum, and to encourage the spread of good practice.

New posts, including permanent heads of year, enable more rigorous monitoring to take place which ensures consistently high standards of provision in pastoral care. This helps to support the exceptional standard of pupils' personal development. In order to gain more from the experience and insight of teaching staff, the heads of departments' discussion groups now contribute valuably and formally to the school's own self-evaluation, which reflects in addition the equal value the school places on each subject.

- 5.7 There has been little, if any, change to library facilities since the last inspection. Both the main library and the sixth form library continue to present a rather tired image and limited resource which do not adequately encourage independent learning throughout the school.
- 5.8 At the time of the last inspection, the school had a great deal of data about pupils' abilities and progress which was not effectively used. This has changed markedly, so that data is now not only widely shared and understood, but used regularly to inform planning and to set targets for pupils.
- 5.9 The school's leadership and management are particularly effective in their critical self-evaluation, readily recognising both strengths and areas perceived as requiring further development.
- 5.10 The quality of the staff is high, and they are fully trained in safeguarding, welfare and health and safety. Effective leadership within departments ensures that they benefit from appropriate professional development which is linked to a recently introduced scheme of performance management. At all levels, performance is monitored, clear records are kept and the sharing of good practice is encouraged.
- 5.11 Although in the past the administration of recruitment checks was not carried out rigorously enough and the single central register was not fully maintained, all measures have now been put in place as far as possible to rectify this, and new procedures have been reliably implemented.

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

- 5.12 The quality of links between the school and parents is excellent, strongly reflecting the aims of the school. The school values its partnership with parents and is committed to developing this further.
- 5.13 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents expressed very high levels of satisfaction with the school. They felt pleased with the range of the curriculum and the progress their children make, and with the pastoral help and guidance provided by the school. In particular, they praised the timely responses received to questions, the ease of communication with the school, the range of extra-curricular activities and, above all, the school's promotion of worthwhile attitudes and values. Inspectors agreed with all these views. A small number expressed dissatisfaction with the help provided for special educational needs, though it was not clear whether this referred to support for pupils with dyslexia or other learning difficulties, which was found during the inspection to be of a very high quality, or for especially gifted and talented pupils, for whom the school is currently developing its provision further. In all other areas of the pre-inspection questionnaire, responses were positive.
- 5.14 The school web site is an excellent source of information, including school policies and details of forthcoming events. The newsletter, issued three times a term, is

attractively presented and enhances further the school's efficient communication with parents. The school handles the concerns of parents with care, as appreciated by most parents, and follows its published procedures.

- 5.15 The school reports regularly to parents on their children's progress. These reports are constructive and detailed accounts of work covered and progress made and the best examples provide valuable advice to pupils for achieving further progress.
- 5.16 Through a parental initiative, careers provision has been enhanced by a link with the local Independent Schools Business Partnership. Parents regularly and enthusiastically support school events, including sports matches, drama, cabaret and musical productions. The school has re-established the former pupils' organisation now known as "WGHS in touch". Recent events such as class reunions and a former head girls' dinner have successfully launched this venture.

What the school should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2

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 chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr John Dunston

Mrs Carole Evans

Mrs Liz Green

Mr Karl McCloskey

Mr David Williams

Reporting Inspector

Former Head, GSA school

Former Head, ISA school

Head, GSA school

Senior Deputy Head, HMC school