



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

HALSTEAD SCHOOL

INTERIM INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Halstead School

Full Name of School	Halstead School		
DCSF Number	936/6402		
Registered Charity Number	270525		
Address	Halstead School Woodham Rise Woking Surrey GU21 4EE		
Telephone Number	01483 772682		
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Email Address	sabine.fellows@halstead-school.org.uk		
Head	Mrs S Fellows		
Chair of Governors	Mr J Olsen		
Age Range	3 to 11		
Total Number of Pupils	176		
Gender of Pupils	Girls		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	5-11:	126
	3-5 (EYFS): 50	11-18:	
Number of Day Pupils	176	Capacity for flexi-boarding:	
Number of Boarders	Total: 0		
	Full:	Weekly:	
EYFS Gender	Girls		
Inspection Dates	18th to 19th January 2010		

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 ISI inspection was in June 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 31st August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection 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 Halstead Preparatory School aims to give a balanced education to each individual child in a homely, caring environment. It seeks to provide every girl with the opportunity to realise her full potential academically, emotionally, spiritually, physically and creatively, thus enabling her to progress confidently to a secondary school which is appropriate for her. It aims to provide a programme of study incorporating the main principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the current National Curriculum, together with the additional demands of secondary school entrance requirements, balanced with aesthetic, cultural and physical pursuits. Each pupil is encouraged to be self-disciplined, to have independence of thought, to produce her best possible work and develop a caring attitude to all members of the community.
- 1.2 The school is a non-selective day school for girls aged 3 to 11. It is set in a three acre site in a residential area approximately a mile from Woking town centre. The school was founded in Kent in 1927 and in 1947 it moved to its current site. It is a charitable trust overseen by a governing body.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection in 2006, several changes have been made. The school day has been extended to allow for more sports for Year 3 to 6 girls. Improvements have been made to the netball courts, including the addition of floodlights and the science laboratory has been refurbished. Optional prep is provided for Years 3 and 4 and the Nursery sessions are more flexible.
- 1.4 The EYFS is attended by 50 children. The preparatory school for pupils in Years 1 to 6 has 126 pupils. Standardised tests indicate that the ability of the pupils covers a wide range; however, most of the pupils are of above average ability. The school reflects the diversity of ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the area. Most of the pupils come from professional or business backgrounds.
- 1.5 The school has identified seventeen pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD); ten of these receive learning support. Three pupils have statements of special educational need (SEN). Fourteen pupils have English as an additional language (EAL); the school provides language support for two pupils. Most pupils proceed to selective independent schools when they leave at the end of Year 6.
- 1.6 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 make rapid progress and achieve high standards at each stage. They have positive attitudes and apply themselves conscientiously to their work and are more independent in their learning than in the previous inspection. Most pupils are highly literate, by Year 6 they write well for a wide range of purposes and their extended writing is particularly impressive and is much improved from the previous inspection. Presentation is of a high standard and spelling, grammar and structure are usually accurate. They are articulate and confident speakers who listen attentively. They read well and make extensive use of the libraries for research and to read for pleasure. Pupils use their well developed skills with number and information and communication technology (ICT) confidently. Recent results in national tests at age 7 have been high, and results at age 11 have been excellent when compared with all maintained primary schools. Almost all pupils are successful in passing entrance examinations for selective senior schools and some win scholarships.
- 2.2 Pupils achieve high standards in sport, particularly netball, hockey, swimming and rounders and are often successful in competitions against other schools. Music is strong with many pupils actively participating in school choirs, orchestras and learning musical instruments. They achieve well in school drama productions and public speaking competitions.
- 2.3 The school achieves its aim to provide a high quality education. The curriculum provides a balanced range of subjects that meets all pupils' needs. Two modern languages are taught in Years 5 and 6 which provides a good basis for subsequent study. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) provides pupils with insight into moral and ethical matters as well as supporting health education. Pupils with LDD are well catered for; their learning needs are thoroughly assessed and individual education plans are drafted in order to provide useful guidance to class teachers. Support is provided in class, in small groups or individually and as a result, most make considerable progress. The requirements of the statements of special educational needs are met. The school has identified several pupils as being either gifted or talented and is beginning to provide additional challenges for them. The range of extra curricular activities available is wide and extends the range of opportunities available to pupils. They are well attended. A wide range of educational visits enrich the pupils' experience in the UK and beyond. Most of the pupils with EAL are fluent English speakers, some support is provided for pupils who are at the early stages of learning English. After school care is well organised and is a beneficial provision.
- 2.4 Most teaching is of high quality, lessons are thoroughly planned with clear objectives and a sequence of activities, which secure and maintain the pupils' interest well. Lessons proceed at a lively pace with all pupils taking an active part in practical work and concentrating well when they required to. Teachers are supportive and encouraging and often use praise well. Marking is usually helpful and informative. The pupils' performance is closely monitored and additional support or challenge is provided where necessary.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 2.5 The personal development of the pupils is well developed. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident. They are self confident and appreciate the non-material aspects of life through, for example, aesthetic appreciation in the arts. They relate very positively to each other and to adults and show a keen awareness of moral issues, such as a concern for earthquake victims in Haiti. Pupils support many charities through fundraising initiatives. Many pupils have responsibilities as class representatives, monitors, prefects, and as house or sports captains. They exercise their duties conscientiously and with pride. The school council provides a good channel for pupils to participate in democratic decision making and for their views to be conveyed to senior management. Visits to places such as the Houses of Parliament or local government offices enable pupils to demonstrate a secure knowledge of public institutions. A high level of cultural understanding is evident in the pupils' participation in the arts. Pupils are familiar with a wide range of cultures from around the world.
- 2.6 Pastoral care is of the highest quality. Relationships are positive and a strong emphasis is placed on rewarding achievement, effort and contribution to the school community and as a result pupils have very positive attitudes. Sanctions are rarely needed. The school takes effective measures against bullying and pupils report no significant incidents. They are confident, should any arise, that they will be effectively dealt with. Healthy living is effectively encouraged through PSHE and science, school meals are nutritious and popular, and catering is of a very high standard.
- 2.7 The pupils' welfare, health and safety are assured. Health and safety arrangements and fire precautions are applied assiduously; attendance and admissions registers are maintained efficiently and are properly backed up. Safeguarding arrangements are robust. The medical room provides fully for pupils who are unwell, and medicines are stored and administered properly.

The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management

- 2.8 The school benefits from good quality governance. Governor recruitment and training have been effective; the governing body contains a wide range of useful expertise and governors are fully aware of their legal responsibilities. A good range of subcommittees guides the full governing body well. The governors approve all aspects of school development planning and are undertaking strategic planning to guide the school in the future. They review the child protection policy annually and ensure that the school promotes health and safety effectively.
- 2.9 Strong leadership and highly effective management ensure the school achieves its objectives. A positive ethos permeates the school at all levels and morale is high. A strong sense of teamwork is evident. Policies are drafted following consultation; they are ratified by the governing body and are effectively implemented and reflected in practice. Suitable staff have been recruited and deployed. Staff appraisal successfully links staff professional development with school development needs. Self assessment, review, lesson observation and training needs assessment have been effective in securing positive outcomes at every level. The backgrounds of staff have been suitably checked but the school had not secured medical declarations from staff at the time of the inspection. The school has acted swiftly to rectify this. Resources for learning are good and are used well. Accommodation is of a very high standard and enhanced with excellent display throughout the school.

- 2.10 The school works in close and effective partnership with parents. It has developed very positive relationships with the parent body. Reports are very informative and constructive in tone, but provide only limited points for improvement. High quality information is available, and several channels enable parents to express their views or learn about aspects of the work of the school, such as the ways and means committee which meets termly to share views. Several links exist with the community which benefit the pupils' learning considerably.
- 2.11 The response to the parents' questionnaire was positive. There were no significant concerns. The school has not had any complaints; concerns are usually minor and few in number and are dealt with sensitively and effectively. Similarly, the response to the pupils' questionnaire was positive.

3. ACTION POINTS

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

- 3.1 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2003 as subsequently amended, and therefore must:
- under [Regulation 4.(c)]; of the requirements in force from 1st September 2003, the school must carry out checks on staff appointed before 1st May 2007 to confirm medical fitness. [Regulation 4.(2)(a)]
- 3.2 The school's provision for childcare met the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Childcare Act 2006 and no action was required.

(ii) Recommended action

- 3.3 In addition to rectifying the weaknesses in meeting regulatory requirements, the school is advised to make the following improvements:
1. provide targets for pupils and include them in reports to parents;
 2. continue to share and strengthen good practice in EYFS;
 3. develop consistent strategies in EYFS to monitor what works well and what could be done better.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

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

4.1 The overall effectiveness of the EYFS is good. The Pre-prep head is supported by an experienced Early-Years co-ordinator. The school has actively worked to improve flexibility for parents by providing early drop off times and an after school provision. Partnership with the local authority is good and an application has been made to provide funding to improve the outside play areas. Regular staff meetings support the process of reflective practice but lack clear links as to how the team shares continuity of practice and planning for the future.

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

4.2 Leadership and management of the EYFS are good. Caring and dedicated staff work well together to provide an environment that motivates and nurtures the children. A variety of resources are deployed effectively in each class. Relationships are good and the children's behaviour is managed well. Safeguarding policies and procedures are secure and reviewed periodically. Communication with parents is good and strategies are in place for welcoming parents and providing ongoing information but opportunities are missed initially to promote parental awareness of the underlying principles of the EYFS. Parents responded positively to the questionnaire stating that they were happy with the standards of behaviour and the progress their children make.

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

4.3 The quality of the provision is good and children's needs are met well. High adult to child ratios enable children to have good individual attention, enabling staff to build positive relationships. They are highly effective in supporting the children's communication skills and especially the element of language for thinking. Staff regularly question, relate and support children to make connections in their learning. Activities are well planned and good use is made of the outdoor area. Support for children with LDD is good. Good use is made of informal observations and assessments to document children's progress. In the Kindergarten class, a range of high quality teaching methods are employed which leads to a purposeful balance of adult-led and child-initiated active, independent learning. Children actively support, respect and help each other.

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

4.4 Outcomes for children are good across all six areas of the curriculum. Children are happy, motivated and content to come into school right from the beginning. Highly effective practice in the Kindergarten consistently provides children with activities that inter-link and promote independence at all times. Children's understanding of keeping healthy and staying safe is demonstrated through their confidence, responsibility for their choice of activity and understanding of the rules and boundaries in place. Children are aware of the risks around them and confidently

communicate their needs to the adults who care for them. They actively support, respect and help each other.

What the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve is given in section 3.

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/the proprietor/a governors' representative/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 King
Mrs Judith Marles
Mrs Dawn Nasser

Reporting inspector
Team Inspector (Teacher, IAPS)
Early Years Lead Inspector