

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## INSPECTION REPORT ON

### St James' School

Full Name of the School	<b>St James' School</b>
DCSF Number	<b>812/6000</b>
Early Years Number	<b>EY291034</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>1099060</b>
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Age Range (of the whole school)	<b>2 to 18</b>
Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>28<sup>th</sup> September to 1<sup>st</sup> October 2009</b>
Head of Early Years Setting	<b>Mrs Christine Fillingham</b>
Early Years Age Range	<b>2 to 5</b>
Early Years Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Early Years Foundation Stage Inspection Dates	<b>28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> September 2009</b>

This inspection report follows the framework laid down by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The inspection was carried out under the arrangements of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. It was also carried out under Section 162A(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002 as amended by the Education Act 2005, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31<sup>st</sup> August following their fifth birthday. The inspection was carried out by ISI, a body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting EYFS provision in schools belonging to the ISC Associations. Section 7 of this report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the EYFS 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 registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the Statutory Framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The inspection was not carried out in conjunction with Ofsted, Children's Directorate, and the report does not contain specific judgements on the National Minimum Boarding Standards. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education and development in general. The full Ofsted report can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) under Inspection reports/Boarding schools.

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

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 St James' School was founded in 1880 as a choir school for the local parish church and is unique in being the only choir school attached to a parish church rather than a cathedral. Pupils still receive bursaries as choristers. In the 1950s boarding was introduced, in the 1970s the school became mixed, at the end of the 1970s a sixth form was started and in 2004 the age range was extended to include two-year-olds. St James' is now a small non-selective independent mixed school for two to eighteen-year-olds. At the time of the inspection, it had 20 full-time and 27 part-time pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and 183 pupils in the main school, of whom 37 were boarders. Most of its pupils attend daily, but the school also has two small boarding houses, one for girls and one for boys. The governing body of the school is known as the School Council and has various sub-committees reporting to the Main Council. The school is owned by the Woodard Corporation, whose creed is faith, unity and vision, built on a Christian ethos. The Corporation appoints a member of the Council. Many other members of the Council have connections to the school, either because they attended the school, or their children and/or their grandchildren did or do attend.
- 1.2 The school recruits pupils from families living in Grimsby and small towns and villages in Lincolnshire and South Yorkshire, as well as a small but significant number of pupils from overseas, particularly South China, most of whom join the school after Year 9.
- 1.3 The ability range of the pupils varies considerably. In the preparatory (prep) school many pupils are of average or above average ability and so, if they achieve in line with their abilities, their achievement will be above the national average for maintained primary schools. A considerable number of pupils leave the school at eleven years old, many going to local state grammar schools, a feature which has accelerated in the last few years. The ability range in the senior school, therefore, is rather different, with a considerable number of pupils of below average to average ability and relatively few of above average ability. These pupils will achieve results that are in line with those of maintained secondary schools at GCSE, if pupils' achievements reflect their abilities. Most pupils leave at sixteen to go to local grammar schools or further education colleges. The school has 36 pupils for whom English is not their first language and of these, 21 receive extra support to develop their skills in using English. The school has also identified 27 pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in need of extra learning support, of whom four have statements of special educational need, with two funded by local authorities and two by parents.
- 1.4 The aims of the school are to provide an effective and supportive learning environment where every individual is encouraged to give of their best and develop lively, imaginative and enquiring minds in the context of the moral principles and values of a Christian education. The school aims to help pupils develop good literacy and numeracy skills and other knowledge and skills, so that they can become well-informed, confident and responsible citizens, with a good understanding of the world in which they live and an appreciation of human achievements and aspirations and respect for other views, cultures and religions.
- 1.5 Since the last inspection in 2003, the school has become smaller and the ability of its intake has become more varied, with a decrease in more able pupils in the senior school. The accommodation has been enhanced by the addition of a new information and communication technology (ICT) suite and sixth-form building, whilst other accommodation on the site has been re-furnished for educational use to accommodate increasing numbers of two to five-year-olds.

- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## 2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

### The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 The school provides pupils with a good educational experience that is consistent with its aims and philosophy. The shortcomings noted at the time of the last inspection have very largely been addressed. The curriculum in the prep school has been thoroughly revised and all subjects now have appropriate amounts of time.
- 2.2 In the senior school, the curriculum has also been revised significantly, with GCSE courses in English, mathematics and science being introduced in Year 9, but technological experience, whilst satisfactory overall, continues to have limitations, as resistant materials is not part of the design and technology curricular provision.

#### *Prep School*

- 2.3 In the prep school, good opportunities are provided for the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy, listening and speaking skills. French, and Spanish introduced this year between Years 3 and 6, help to extend and further develop pupils' linguistic experience. The curriculum also ensures that pupils' scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative development is addressed well. The increased time for science and the new science laboratory helps to ensure that more practical and investigative work takes place than at the time of the last inspection. Design and technology provision has also been enhanced through the all day 'challenge' activities that have been introduced, such as designing a model car to travel as far as possible. In addition, the introduction of time-tabled ICT lessons has increased the technological experiences available for pupils.
- 2.4 A wide range of extra-curricular activities, visits and trips greatly enhance the educational experience of pupils. Many are involved in music, but activities as different as chess, cookery and fun fitness flourish in lunch-time and after-school clubs, whilst regular drama productions are put on, the latest of which was *Toad of Toad Hall*. Sport of various kinds also features strongly.
- 2.5 The planning for personal, social, health and education (PSHE) is excellent. It draws on a nationally developed PSHE programme, founded on the *Every Child Matters* agenda, which strongly informs the provision in assemblies, lessons and the general ethos of the school, providing coherence and cohesion to PSHE. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, partly through the wide range of responsibilities available for particular pupils, such as acting as monitors, prefects, house captains and head boy and girl, and partly through the high expectations of responsible behaviour and the strong moral code that is inculcated in pupils. The very close liaison between the prep and senior school over the personal well-being and academic progress of pupils who transfer into the senior school, reflects the great attention that the school pays to the individual needs of its pupils.
- 2.6 The curriculum is planned thoroughly and provides good support and guidance to teaching. In the planning, there is a strong emphasis on the development of knowledge and subject skills, but not sufficient emphasis upon broader problem-solving and investigative skills, for instance in mathematics. Planning to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), including those with statements of special educational need, and those with English as an additional language (EAL), is good. Clear and helpful guidance is provided through individual education plans, which teachers use well. Support for the most able pupils is more varied. Whilst overall it is good, there are occasions where the work planned for pupils is not tailored sufficiently to challenge them fully.

### *Senior School*

- 2.7 The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 provides an educational experience for pupils that is broad and allows good opportunities for their linguistic, mathematical, scientific, human and social, aesthetic and creative and physical development. Opportunities for their technological development are hindered by the lack of resistant materials in design and technology, but the overall experience is satisfactory. The curriculum offers good opportunities for the development of pupils' speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills.
- 2.8 Recent changes to the curricular provision for Years 9 to 11 means that pupils begin some GCSEs in Year 9 and can complete the course in Year 10 or Year 11. BTEC courses have also been introduced for lower ability pupils. These arrangements have increased choice for small year groups and allow pupils to combine a compulsory core of experiences in English, ICT, mathematics and science with a reasonable range of choices, so that pupils can also pursue their own interests. In the sixth form, the curriculum is tailored to individual needs and science and mathematics are the most popular subjects.
- 2.9 The school has a well-organised and comprehensive programme of PSHE for Years 7 to 9, which is supplemented by assemblies and organised half-day or full-day activities. In the later years, school assemblies and inputs from outside speakers on such matters as sex and drugs education and careers education, provide broad and appropriate PSHE experiences for pupils.
- 2.10 Extra-curricular activities, visits and trips, as in the prep school, extend and develop pupils' educational experiences in a powerful manner. Many pupils are involved in musical activities through the choirs and school orchestra, others are involved in drama and art and sport is very popular, particularly with boys. House competitions in music, public speaking, art and various sports provide many pupils with opportunities to develop a diverse range of skills.
- 2.11 Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, from Year 10 onwards through a careers education and guidance programme that helps pupils to identify their strengths, weaknesses and occupational preferences and possibilities, together with the support of careers interviews conducted by a careers officer. Close personal guidance is provided for the small number of sixth-form pupils about possible university courses and other options.
- 2.12 Planning to meet the needs of pupils with LDD, statements of special educational need and EAL is good. Appropriate diagnostic testing is administered expeditiously to identify the relevant issues, and detailed and helpful individual education plans are prepared to guide teachers' preparation and other support. The relevant support staff liaise closely with subject teachers about progress and the well-established procedures for regular review ensure a close tracking of this progress. Planning to meet the needs of the most able pupils is more varied and lacks the systematic and detailed procedures for pupils with LDD and EAL needs. The curricular arrangements in Years 9 to 11 and the moving of a few pupils into higher year groups have helped to address their learning needs well, but some planning does not recognise their needs clearly enough.
- 2.13 All subjects have detailed planning documentation to support their teaching, but sometimes the planning for older pupils, in particular, is over-reliant upon examination syllabuses, and does not pay sufficient attention to identifying ways of pursuing broader learning goals such as encouraging investigative work and independent thinking.

### ***Whole School***

- 2.14 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

### **Pupils' Learning and Achievements**

- 2.15 Pupils achieve good standards of knowledge and understanding in the subjects that they study and the activities in which they take part. They make consistent progress in their learning across the school, and that of pupils with LDD and statements of special educational need is often particularly impressive. Standards and progress in science have improved considerably in the prep school since the last inspection, and are now good. The school is clearly successful in helping pupils to become good learners and achieve well in all that they do.

### ***Prep School***

- 2.16 Pupils achieve well in the prep school. They are articulate and develop excellent skills in literacy. Creative and critical thinking are strong features of some of the best lessons, for instance Year 6 pupils learning about characterisation and how good writers can influence the perceptions and understanding of their readers. Numeracy skills, related to the four rules of number, are generally very secure. Attainment levels are good, but skills in problem-solving and investigation are less well developed. Core ICT skills are well developed through ICT lessons, but the application of these skills in other subjects is not a strength, through lack of opportunity. Since the last inspection, pupils' levels of knowledge in science have improved considerably, and are now good overall, but enquiry skills amongst younger pupils are not as advanced as their knowledge and understanding.
- 2.17 Standardised scores indicate that, overall, pupils are achieving well, at a level which is well above standards achieved in maintained primary schools in England. Attainment in English is particularly high. The technical skills of reading and writing are developed very well and pupils also make good progress in their critical thinking and capacity to work independently. The school caters particularly well for the average and less able pupils.
- 2.18 Pupils achieve well in activities outside classroom, particularly in the areas of sport and music. Last year the prep school won the Independent Schools Association National Junior seven-a-side football competition and a local junior swimming gala. Choirs perform regularly in the local community, where their performances are greatly enjoyed and much praised. A considerable number of pupils achieve success in national music examinations, including those related to playing musical instruments, and pupils regularly perform in theatrical productions, the latest of which, *Toad of Toad Hall*, was much appreciated by parents.
- 2.19 Pupils develop very good study skills and positive approaches to their work as they progress through the school. Older pupils can take notes or draft work and show good organisational skills. Presentation is consistently of a good standard and pupils show sustained levels of concentration, perseverance and application in their work. Where opportunities are provided, they also work harmoniously and effectively in groups.

### ***Senior School***

- 2.20 Pupils achieve generally good standards in the subjects that they study, demonstrating secure knowledge and understanding, together with the skills to apply these effectively, when opportunities are provided. In lessons, pupils are articulate, listen carefully, read with understanding, write clearly and demonstrate the capacity to think critically and logically about questions that are posed, often showing good factual recall. Mathematical competence

is generally developed well, but as in other areas, pupils are less confident in applying their knowledge to problem-solving and thinking creatively than they are in the knowledge and understanding that they have acquired. Where more regular opportunities to do this occur, for instance in English, music, geography and history, particularly through homework tasks, some good work has resulted. Similarly, pupils develop a strong sense of competence in ICT through their regular ICT lessons and personal learning, but are less confident in applying these skills across other subjects, because of limited opportunities.

- 2.21 Standards of achievement, reflected in examination results, are good. GCSE results are close to above the national average for maintained secondary schools nationally for the years 2006-2008, where comparative data is available, and are similar to those achieved at the time of the last inspection, although standardised test scores indicate that the academic ability of the relevant age cohort has declined. The very small numbers of pupils taking A-level examinations means that no secure judgements can be reached about their performance.
- 2.22 Evidence from lessons, pupils' work and the individual education plans for pupils with LDD and statements of special educational need, indicate that all pupils make consistent progress, which is always sound, often good and sometimes excellent, particularly for some of those pupils with LDD and EAL needs. Some of the most able pupils have benefited from being moved into older age groups, where work matches their ability more closely and their level of achievement is good. For other more able pupils, levels of achievement are more inconsistent. In some subjects, the skilful use of questioning and the provision of open-ended or more challenging tasks for them cater well for their needs, and their achievement is good in relation to their ability. Sometimes these pupils complete extra work which is no more demanding than done by the rest of the class, and occasionally no particular provision is made for them, and in this situation their progress and achievement are only satisfactory.
- 2.23 In activities outside the classroom, pupils achieve well. Many pupils achieve good results in public speaking and music examinations. In music, pupils also demonstrate high standards of achievement in choirs, the orchestra and in playing musical instruments individually. Theatrical productions, such as *Grease*, are highly praised by parents and in the local press. Pupils also do well in sporting activities, for instance, in swimming, where Year 7 boys came first in the local swimming gala and won the local cross-country championship for younger pupils.
- 2.24 Pupils organise their work well; the quality of presentation is often high and always good. They take competent notes, are very diligent in all that they do, often showing considerable perseverance, and enjoy much of the work, especially younger pupils. They work purposefully individually and in groups, where they quickly organise themselves to focus effectively on tasks set.

### **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils**

- 2.25 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils was a strong feature of the last inspection and continues to be good with outstanding features, thus meeting a key aim of the school and maintaining the Christian values of Woodard Corporation schools. The development of moral values and social responsibility are outstanding features, so that, by the time pupils leave the school, they have developed a strong set of values to guide them through adult life.

### *Prep School*

- 2.26 Pupils' spiritual development is secured mainly through assemblies, music, religious education, PSHE and a local community project which encourages pupils to be involved in the planting and growing of flowers and vegetables and so enjoy the wonderful cycle of life and re-generation. Pupils attend services at the local church on a regular basis, learn about other religions through visiting speakers in assemblies and religious education, and visit the local Sikh Gurdwara. Pupils gain much spiritually from their participation in musical activities, from singing in assembly to listening and participating in the various choirs in the school.
- 2.27 Pupils develop a great respect for and trust of each other and staff. They establish a strong sense of right and wrong as they proceed up the school, combined with a natural courtesy and helpfulness. They work and play well together and enjoy team games, where cooperation is very good. The courtesy and kindness of teachers and other staff provide excellent examples for pupils to emulate. Their moral development is also supported by particular class activities, such as the exploration of different aspects of character in English.
- 2.28 Pupils are well mannered, polite and unfailingly helpful. They understand and agree with school rules and the reasons behind them, and greatly value belonging to a caring and cooperative community. Pupils develop a good awareness of local institutions and services, together with the role and purpose of laws and regulations. Charitable work is well established and pupils enjoy taking part in many of the fund-raising activities. They demonstrate an excellent awareness of others and their feelings, across age groups and the different cultures and traditions from which pupils come. Their developing social maturity contributes much to a cooperative and happy learning community.
- 2.29 Pupils respect different cultures and show interest and respect for the different traditions and values that they encounter. They learn much from each other through the informal interaction between the many different nationalities and cultures represented by pupils and staff. This rich learning resource is not yet exploited fully across the curriculum.

### *Senior School*

- 2.30 The unobtrusive Christian ethos of the school encourages pupils to develop a sense of self-worth and under-pinning spiritual values to guide their spiritual development. Daily whole school assemblies, activities such as the pilgrimage by Years 7 and 8 to Lincoln Cathedral, regular attendance at the local church, and activities in art, music and religious education, both in the curriculum and extra-curricular, contribute much to pupils' spiritual development, as do the attitudes and values of staff. Through this rich array of experiences, pupils develop a sense of self and meaning and purpose to life beyond the merely material.
- 2.31 Pupils develop a very strong sense of what is right and articulate this clearly in PSHE lessons, for instance. Moral and ethical dilemmas are tackled in various subjects, such as biology, English, geography, PSHE and science. Outside speakers, the debating society and public speaking competitions also require pupils to think through issues that aid their moral development. Pupils show great respect for each other and their teachers. Parents also recognised how successful the school is in promoting good attitudes and behaviour in the questionnaires that they completed before the inspection. Pupils work very well together and are supportive of each other's interests and achievements. They demonstrate their support and understanding of those who are less fortunate than themselves through a variety of projects, such as service in the community, and various fund-raising activities.

- 2.32 A key role in pupils' social development is recognition of responsibility for their own behaviour. They also increasingly take on social responsibilities commensurate with their own maturity and status in the school through the school council, as prefects and house captains, learning important leadership skills in the process. Pupils have a sound knowledge of public institutions in the United Kingdom. By the time that pupils are ready to leave the school they have developed a well-balanced social awareness and understanding of personal responsibility for their own actions.
- 2.33 Pupils show a great appreciation of and respect for each other's cultural and religious traditions and learn much from celebrations of other cultures. The Chinese New Year and the United States Independence Day are examples of festivals that are regularly celebrated. The school also runs a number of International Days to promote awareness of other cultures and in recent years a considerable number of pupils have taken part in visits to Austria, France and Germany, all of which broaden pupils' understanding of different cultures and traditions.

#### ***Whole School***

- 2.34 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

#### **The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)**

- 2.35 The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are well prepared, experienced and knowledgeable. Lessons are purposeful, tightly structured and well organised, so that pupils make consistent progress in their learning, particularly those with LDD, EAL and statements of special educational need. ICT is often used effectively to support teaching, but relatively limited opportunities are created for pupils to use ICT, particularly in school, and much of the teaching does not provide sufficient opportunities for independent investigation by pupils.
- 2.36 Teaching has improved since the last inspection, with none seen that was unsatisfactory or lacking in purpose. In the prep school, arrangements for the teaching of Year 4 are now satisfactory and the teaching of science has improved, with more practical activities. Across the school, teachers make more effective use of ICT in their teaching, but not yet sufficiently in pupils' learning. Assessment has become more effectively diagnostic and the tracking of pupils' progress is good, with some excellent learning support. Able pupils are better challenged, but some inconsistency remains in ensuring that all such pupils are always well catered for by the teaching.

#### ***Prep School***

- 2.37 Teachers plan their teaching carefully to ensure that all pupils make progress in their learning. Lessons have clear and appropriate aims that are pursued through a range of well-organised activities, and some effective cross-curricular planning is developing for younger pupils, such as work in science on the melting of ice being linked to the writing of ice poems in English.
- 2.38 The teaching is often highly structured and ICT is used effectively to support it. Teachers are enthusiastic, their explanations and instructions are clear, and questioning is well focused and encouraging. They have a good understanding of the prior attitudes and needs of their pupils, relationships with pupils are always good and often excellent and the teaching takes place in a purposeful and calm learning environment. These factors encourage pupils to apply themselves diligently and thoughtfully to tasks set, take pride in their work and make good to excellent progress in developing their subject knowledge and understanding, in particular.

- 2.39 Most of the teaching allows relatively few opportunities for pupils to explore and develop ideas of their own or engage in independent problem-solving, but where this happens, as witnessed in some English and art lessons, pupils show themselves adept at developing these learning skills.
- 2.40 Resources are generally good and used effectively in most lessons. Interactive whiteboards are used well to structure lesson content and sometimes to provide stimulating material, but seldom to encourage creative and independent thinking in pupils.
- 2.41 The assessment of pupils is a strong feature of the teaching. Pupils have academic and personal targets, which are reviewed regularly with teachers. Pupils know what their targets are and can explain how they are performing in relation to them. Teachers regularly assess pupils against their targets and National Curriculum levels to track their progress. Assessment is also used to inform future planning and help to promote good progress by pupils. Diagnostic tests are used effectively to plan teaching and identify learning support. The progress of pupils is evaluated at the end of each academic year, using national standardised tests, which are also compared with National Curriculum levels.

### *Senior School*

- 2.42 Teachers are experienced, well versed in their subjects and very conscientious. Lessons are well planned, with clear and appropriate aims that generally show a good understanding of the attitudes, needs and prior knowledge of pupils. Teachers have a good command of the teaching methods that they deploy and use them confidently, comfortably and occasionally with flair. The range of teaching methods used is relatively narrow, and structures learning in such a way that pupils generally have limited opportunities to carry out open-ended investigative work or to develop independent learning.
- 2.43 The teaching enables pupils of all abilities across subjects to make progress in their learning. Pupils with LDD and EAL needs are particularly well catered for and teachers benefit from the well-focused specialist support provided for pupils. In many lessons, the learning needs of more able pupils are met well through tasks that are flexible enough, or clearly differentiated, to meet the particular needs of pupils of differing abilities. Where tasks are set that require a limited range of responses, able pupils are not being fully challenged.
- 2.44 Relationships between pupils and teachers are always good and often excellent. This, combined with well-structured and purposeful lessons, create an ethos that is highly conducive to learning and good behaviour. Teachers are also adept at managing minor infractions in an unobtrusive but firm manner, so that learning is not disrupted. In this environment pupils recognise the importance of the learning and are quite often enthused about it.
- 2.45 The teaching draws on a satisfactory range of resources, which are generally used effectively to enhance learning. Some examples of the effective use of ICT were observed during the inspection, but it is generally under-utilised, particularly to enhance pupils' learning.
- 2.46 The assessment of pupils' work is often good and sometimes excellent. Books are marked regularly, comments are personally encouraging and often helpfully diagnostic, whilst the setting of well-focused targets for improvement is a developing feature. Very occasionally marking is perfunctory, but the great majority of staff devote considerable time and effort to this important activity. Regular more formal assessments are used to track pupils' progress in relation to predicted National Curriculum levels, GCSE grades and standardised national cognitive test scores. This process ensures that pupils' performance is carefully evaluated against national norms and assessments of their own academic ability.

***Whole School***

2.47 The school meets the regulatory requirements for teaching [Standard 1].

### 3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS

#### **The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils**

- 3.1 The quality of care, support and guidance for all pupils is outstanding, as it was at the time of the last inspection, and supports the school's Christian values as a lived in experience, and its aim to produce well-informed, confident and responsible citizens. The policies and procedures to safeguard the welfare, health and safety of pupils are very thorough and are well-implemented.

##### *Prep School*

- 3.2 The staff provide very effective support and guidance for all pupils. They know their pupils extremely well and offer continuing support and guidance. Pupils spoke warmly about how friendly and approachable their teachers are. Pupils are set personal targets from the *Every Child Matters* framework for each term and they collect house points for good behaviour or making a special effort to reach their personal target. In addition to the above, all new pupils have a mentor to help them to settle in to the school, as do pupils requiring extra support and guidance pastorally or to help academic progress.
- 3.3 High quality relationships between pupils and staff and amongst pupils are a key element in creating and maintaining the caring, family ethos of the school. Whether in lessons, activities or at meal times, pupils happily engage in conversation with each other and with members of staff and there is a caring and nurturing atmosphere which encompasses the oldest to the youngest pupils.
- 3.4 Measures to promote good behaviour and discipline work very well. Responsible behaviour is encouraged within the framework of well understood rules, rewards and sanctions. High expectations of pupils' behaviour are made explicit through the personal targets set, PSHE and end of week 'review and evaluation' lessons. Positive behaviour is strongly encouraged in all aspects of school activities through the use of praise and the awarding of house points. The anti-bullying policy is well thought out and ensures that appropriate procedures are in place to deal with bullying, although no incidents of bullying have been recorded in recent years. Both parents and pupils reported that bullying hardly ever took place, and when it did it was dealt with very promptly and effectively.

##### *Senior School*

- 3.5 The system for pastoral care is well structured and encourages staff to provide high-quality support and guidance for pupils. Form tutors and subject teachers know their pupils very well and monitor their academic progress and personal well-being very closely. Staff in the various houses to which pupils are allocated, also get to know them well and benefit from seeing pupils in a rather different light as they take part in social and competitive activities. Senior managers provide very helpful support and know individual pupils and their histories in some detail. In addition to the above, all new pupils have a mentor to help them to settle in to the school, as do pupils requiring extra support and guidance pastorally or to help academic progress. The school also has a 'buddy' system, where new pupils are put in touch with another pupil with similar interests before they come to the school, so that all pupils know someone before they start at the school. These detailed and over-lapping arrangements work well because communication between staff is good and they all have a great concern for the personal welfare and academic progress of pupils.

- 3.6 Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils are warm, friendly and mutually respectful, which reflects the strong community spirit in the school. The informative PSHE programme encourages discussion of relevant issues and provides pupils with helpful advice. The involvement of the school matron in the programme is much appreciated by pupils. She also provides valuable advice and support for individual pupils and is a key member of the pastoral team.
- 3.7 Measures to promote good behaviour and discipline work very well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and provide excellent models for them to emulate through their own courteous behaviour. Good behaviour is strongly encouraged in all aspects of school life, through praise and rewards, such as the awarding of house points for acts of kindness and social responsibility. Pupils know, understand and accept the fairness of school rules. The anti-bullying policy is clearly linked to the wider behaviour policy of the school and bullying, and its corrosive effect on individuals' lives, is discussed in PSHE. Records indicate that bullying is a rare occurrence and is dealt with swiftly and appropriately where it arises. Parental responses in the questionnaires and pupils' own responses support this.

### ***Whole School***

- 3.8 The school has well-developed procedures and policies to safeguard the welfare, health and safety of its pupils. All staff have had appropriate training in the various facets of child protection, which is up-dated regularly. The child protection officer, the matron, has undertaken the necessary advanced training and routinely works across the whole school and in the boarding houses, regularly meeting staff and pupils. The school has effective procedures for identifying and dealing swiftly with any suspected cases of child abuse. All staff, volunteers and governors have had the appropriate Criminal Records Bureau and other checks to screen their suitability to work with children. Pupils say that they feel very safe and secure at the school.
- 3.9 All the necessary measures have been taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. A local fire service has carried out an audit of risk and the school has been given a fire safety certificate. The school holds regular fire drills, and keeps suitable records.
- 3.10 Appropriate procedures are in place to assess risk for all the relevant activities in and out of school. The risk assessments completed by staff are usually rigorous and thorough, but occasionally the level of risk is not made sufficiently clear.
- 3.11 Facilities to care for pupils who are ill are good, the school has a clear and helpful first aid policy and more than sufficient staff with appropriate training, whilst established links with staff at the nearby hospital ensure that pupils will receive speedy treatment for more serious illnesses or injuries. Appropriate records are also kept of any accidents or sickness and staff know about pupils' particular medical conditions and how to deal with them.
- 3.12 School meals are healthy and of a good quality, they are prepared in hygienic conditions and eaten in pleasant surroundings. Prep school staff eat with their pupils and encourage good manners and social conversation. The encouragement of healthy eating is an important part of school life and school meals provide pupils with a practical example of how healthy eating can be achieved.
- 3.13 Admission and attendance registers contain all the necessary information and are in good order.
- 3.14 The school's health and safety committee monitors health and safety closely across the school and necessary repairs are carried out swiftly, whilst the relevant regulations are kept under continuing review to ensure that the school meets them all fully.

- 3.15 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3].

### **The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community**

- 3.16 The school has excellent links with parents and the community, fulfilling its aim to work closely with parents. It has worked hard on improving communication with parents since the last inspection through an updated website, weekly email bulletins and termly newsletters. The great majority of parents in the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that they are very happy with the education provided for their children. Parents are very pleased with the quality of the curriculum, the information they receive, homework, and the help and guidance provided for their children. They are also very positive about the progress their children make at school, the worthwhile attitudes and values they develop and the range of extra-curricular activities available.
- 3.17 Parents have good opportunities to be involved in activities and are encouraged to visit the school and support their children in many ways. The parent teachers association is an active and flourishing organisation, very supportive of the school and a valuable source of funds. It works closely with the senior management team and governors and is consulted regularly about strategies and policies relating to the school's development. Concerts, plays, sports fixtures and parents' evenings are well publicised and listed in the school calendar, which is sent to every family.
- 3.18 Prospectuses are informative and well presented, and information for new pupils and their parents offers helpful advice and guidance. Parents of prospective pupils, with their children, are welcomed to the school and are given helpful documentation and information, as well as a tour of the school. Reports on pupils' progress are informative, summarising academic progress, effort, pastoral welfare and offering well-focused targets for improvement. They are written each term. Half-term grades are sent to parents of boarders, and parents' evenings for all parents are held for each year group annually. Information evenings for pupils making option choices in Years 9 and 11 are held each year. The school also makes provision for Cantonese parents in China to discuss the progress of their children in Cantonese, which is much appreciated. Termly newsletters, which include articles and pictures taken by pupils, communicate information well to parents about individual and collective achievements and weekly email bulletins keep parents well informed of upcoming events.
- 3.19 Parents are encouraged to contact staff if they have any concerns, and procedures for this are clearly stated in the parents' and staff handbooks. The school has established an Out of School Care Unit in response to parental requests in the prep school and an extra parents' meeting has been added to further improve parents' knowledge about their children's progress. Prep school parents are actively encouraged to assist with after-school clubs and recently a parent led a workshop on how to write a comic strip, using 'Super Heroes' as the subject. A grandparents' day was organised last year which proved successful and helped improve relationships with parents. A Grammar School 11+ Centre was also opened last year to provide support for St James' pupils and others preparing for the entrance examinations for local grammar schools.

- 3.20 The school works hard to develop and maintain strong community links, enriching the pupils' experiences and the school curriculum. Good links are made with the local community through, for example, regular music performances in local venues, work in a home for the elderly, and with the NSPCC and the Lifestyle project, in conjunction with Humberside Police. Other opportunities available to pupils to carry out service in the community have been extended and encouraged through The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and the work experience programme for pupils in Year 11 and above. Pupils' involvement in these activities is carefully monitored by the director of community outreach. Past pupils are keen to visit the school and links are being developed to help improve communication with them. A holiday club offers a range of activities to local children during each holiday period. A number of local organisations use school facilities on a regular basis.
- 3.21 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the provision of information and the manner in which complaints are to be handled [Standards 6 and 7].

### **The Quality of Boarding Education**

- 3.22 At the time of the last Ofsted inspection of boarding provision in 2006, its quality was judged to be outstanding. The small areas for improvement identified in the last report have all been attended to appropriately and the boarding provision continues to be of a high standard.
- 3.23 Relationships between boarders and boarders and boarding staff are very positive and supportive. Boarders are very well cared for and a good range of activities are offered after school and at week-ends. The accommodation is comfortable and the food provided is nutritious.

## **4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

### **The Quality of Governance**

- 4.1 The governance of the school is good. Governors help to shape long-term strategy and provide good oversight of day-to-day management, particularly the chair, who is in frequent consultation with the headteacher. The School Council has become more effective in carrying out its roles and responsibilities since the last inspection, particularly in the area of financial management. The structure of the School Council, with its various sub-committees reporting to the Main Council, is clearly laid out and helps to ensure effective oversight of the school.
- 4.2 Governors bring to the School Council a broad range of expertise in management, business, finance and education, together with a strong commitment to the school, its ethos and aims. The chair and vice-chair are particularly active in supporting and guiding the school, working in close collaboration with the senior management team. The School Council also benefits from the guidance and support of the Woodard Corporation, one of whose appointees is a Council member.
- 4.3 The School Council is closely involved in educational development and particularly financial planning to support educational development. Governors receive regular reports from senior managers about the achievements and progress of pupils, together with issues and concerns. Individual governors have particular roles and responsibilities, such as links with the prep school and aspects such as child protection and health and safety.
- 4.4 A considerable number of governors visit the school regularly and meet staff, for example during the induction day for new staff, and attend and help to organise various social and fund-raising events run by the parent teacher association, with whom they collaborate closely. They also carry out their responsibilities for welfare, health and safety, including safeguarding and staff recruitment, very diligently.

### **The Quality of Leadership and Management**

- 4.5 The quality of leadership and management is good, reflecting the qualities identified at the time of the last inspection. Senior managers provide clear educational direction and work very well together, which is very much reflected in the good quality of education and educational achievement, the high quality of care and the success that the school achieves in fulfilling its aims.
- 4.6 Careful attention is paid to analysing the changing needs of the school and how best to respond to those needs. Staff at all levels contribute to identifying the school's needs through staff meetings, more informal discussions with senior managers and the performance management process. Having identified these needs, the planning to meet appropriate priorities also involves staff in the process. It is done well and implemented effectively.
- 4.7 Senior managers have developed detailed policies and procedures that provide good guidance and support for staff, including a detailed staff handbook. Some monitoring of teaching and learning is done by senior managers, particularly in relation to performance management, but this is not always effective in ensuring that policies are fully implemented. Middle management roles are not yet developed fully to support senior managers in the implementation of policies.

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- 4.8 The school has recruited good, well-motivated staff. Induction procedures are now good, which was not so at the time of the last inspection, and new staff feel very well supported and fully integrated into the school community. They and other staff spoke very appreciatively about the approachability and helpfulness of senior managers. Induction arrangements for newly qualified teachers are well organised and comprehensive, so that they are very well supported through their first year of teaching.
- 4.9 All the necessary procedures and documentation to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children are in place.
- 4.10 Financial resources are managed well to secure sound accommodation and appropriate resourcing to support pupils' learning and achievement. Some parts of the accommodation are shabby and the school does not have the facilities to offer the full range of design and technology subjects in the senior school. This is an improvement on the situation at the time the last inspection, where no design and technology could be offered. The administration of the school is efficient and effective and makes a valuable contribution to the quality of school provision.
- 4.11 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].
- 4.12 The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers and meets its requirements.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

### Overall Conclusions

- 5.1 St James' School achieves its diverse aims well. Pupils are very well cared for in a school community with a strong ethos of collaborative support, where relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and staff are generally excellent and always good. The curriculum generally provides a broad and appropriate range of experiences and is greatly enhanced by the wide variety of extra-curricular activities on offer. The teaching is of good quality, with some examples of outstanding practice, especially lower down the school. It is often particularly good at developing pupils' subject knowledge and skills, but provides limited opportunities for pupils to develop their investigative and independent learning skills, particularly in the classroom. It also does not make sufficient use of ICT to enhance pupils' learning. Pupils make good progress in their learning and notably so in the case of pupils with LDD, EAL and statements of special educational need, where high quality learning support makes a valuable contribution. The progress of able pupils is more inconsistent. There are examples of curricular arrangements ensuring that they make good progress, and some teaching, through careful differentiation, challenges them fully, but on occasion the teaching does not take full account of their needs.
- 5.2 Since the last inspection, the curriculum in the prep school has been revised, so that it now provides appropriate time allocations for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, as well as ICT. The quality of the science provision has improved significantly in the prep school. The school continues to achieve well in national standardised tests and examinations. Examination results at GCSE have remained a similar level to the last inspection, despite a decline in the academic ability of the relevant year groups, and achievement continues to be good across a broad range of extra-curricular activities, whilst the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils remains a strength. Teaching has improved in overall quality, but still does not generally develop pupils' broader learning skills as well as it does their subject knowledge, and ICT is still an under-utilised learning resource. Teaching arrangements for Year 4 are now fully appropriate and the quality of assessment and diagnostic marking across the school has improved. All teaching in the senior school is now purposeful. Pastoral care continues to be a great strength and links with parents and the community, identified as strong at the time of the last inspection, have continued to develop. The arrangements to safeguard the welfare, health and safety of pupils are well-organised and effective. Governance of the school continues to be good and financial management is now a particular strength. Senior managers continue to provide very effective leadership and management and the prep department now has the same strong and vigorous leadership and management as the senior school, but middle management roles are under-developed.
- 5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

## **Next Steps**

- 5.4 In order to improve further, the school should:
1. develop middle management roles, particularly with regard to monitoring teaching and learning;
  2. build on the good practice already in the school, to ensure that able pupils always achieve their full potential;
  3. develop further the use of ICT in teaching and learning and provide more opportunities for pupils to engage in independent investigative work.
- 5.5 No action is required in respect of regulatory requirements.
- 5.6 Any failures to meet EYFS requirements are detailed in Section 7.

## 6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 28<sup>th</sup> September to 1<sup>st</sup> October 2009. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the sanatorium. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.
- 6.2 The Early Years Foundation Stage was inspected on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> September 2009 by two inspectors. The inspectors observed sessions, talked to the children, examined samples of work, and held discussions with staff and governors. Comments from parents and carers were considered, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.

### List of Inspectors

Mr Ted Cohn	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Caroline Birtwell	Head, ISA school
Mr Andrew Cleary	Director of Music, HMC school
Mr David Holland	Head, ISA school
Mrs Rosamund Walwyn	Head Pre-Prep, IAPS school
Mr David Watkinson	Director of Studies, HMC school
Miss Valerie Craven	Early Years Lead Inspector
Mrs Sally Gray	Early Years Team Inspector

## **7. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS)**

- 7.1 The setting admits children between the ages of two and five years old. Children who attend the Fledglings are two years old, whilst the Nursery children are three years old and may attend either part-time or full-time. The Reception children are between four up to five years old, and attend full-time. Twenty-one children attend the Fledglings, twenty attend Nursery, and ten attend Reception. Before and after-school care is provided from 8.00am to 6.00pm.
- 7.2 The overall effectiveness of the EYFS is good. Suitable safeguarding procedures are implemented, and there are clear practices in place to ensure that children are safe. The children's welfare is promoted well, and they are encouraged to develop good personal hygiene habits. A more manageable assessment system has been introduced although there are some inconsistencies in the way in which it is used. Overall, a varied range of resources is made available to the children and the use of multicultural resources has improved since the previous inspection. Children celebrate Eid, Divali and Chinese New Year, for example. The outdoor learning environment is not fully utilised by all areas of the setting. Staff foster positive behaviour very effectively, making good use of 'carpet time' to praise and reward.
- 7.3 Good leadership and management ensure a safe and settled environment, in which children learn within a friendly atmosphere, carefully nurtured by suitably qualified staff. There have been some recent improvements, notably in documentation and policies. A staff appraisal system has been introduced and all EYFS staff have had their initial interviews. Risk assessments are effective and regularly reviewed, for example, when planning an outdoor visit. Adults adopt a positive and enthusiastic approach, work well together, and are deployed purposefully. They know the children well, resulting in the children striving to meet high expectations. The use of the EYFS profile enables the setting's leadership to monitor provision, especially relating to how well children are progressing in their learning.
- 7.4 The overall quality of provision is good. Children's personal, social and emotional development is promoted well, such as through 'carpet time' and lunchtime routines. Induction procedures are effective. The indoor learning environment helps children to develop good learning habits. Speaking and listening skills are fostered well, particularly through teacher-led early phonics work, including good one-to-one support to ensure that particular needs are met as is children's use of mathematical language. They are developing their fine motor and gross motor skills, although their creative development is sometimes limited through insufficient role play and child-led imaginative opportunities.
- 7.5 Though children's starting points are varied and typical of their ages, their outcomes are good. Informative assessments on entry are made, in partnership with parents. Generally, staff track children's progress well and make sound use of assessments to ensure that children make good progress, whatever their individual needs. Children enjoy their time in the EYFS, are effective learners, and develop a good understanding of healthy eating, particularly during snack time. Children are generally confident to make choices, are able to work independently and confide in adults. They share well, co-operate and show respect to others. Children are learning about the wider world and are developing their ICT skills through, for example, the use of computers, electronic cash tills and a child friendly telephone.

### **What the setting should do to improve**

- 7.6 To improve further the good quality of its provision, particularly to ensure consistency within the whole of the EYFS, the setting should:
1. continue to develop a robust assessment system for the youngest children, involving regular observations and assessments, thereby informing the next steps for children;
  2. continue to develop the appraisal system to help support staff and identify their individual training needs;
  3. improve the consistency of the generally good provision through sharing best practice more effectively.
- 7.7 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Childcare Act 2006.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

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