# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## WOODHOUSE GROVE SCHOOL

## INTERIM INSPECTION

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# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Woodhouse Grove School

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| Full Name of School/College | **Woodhouse Grove School** | | | |
| DfE Number | **383/6113** | | | |
| Registered Charity Number | **529205** | | | |
| Address | **Woodhouse Grove School**<br>**Apperley Bridge**<br>**Bradford**<br>**West Yorkshire**<br>**BD10 0NR** | | | |
| Telephone Number | **0113 250 2477** | | | |
| Fax Number | **0113 250 5290** | | | |
| Email Address | **enquiries@woodhousegrove.co.uk** | | | |
| Head | **Mr David Humphreys** | | | |
| Chair of Governors | **Mr Alan Wintersgill** | | | |
| Age Range | **3 to 18** | | | |
| Total Number of Pupils | **1052** | | | |
| Gender of Pupils | **Mixed (615 boys; 437 girls)** | | | |
| Numbers by Age | 0-2 (EYFS) | **0** | 5-11: | **205** |
| | 3-5 (EYFS): | **92** | 11-18: | **755** |
| Number of Day Pupils | Total: | **937** | | |
| Number of Boarders | Total: | **115** | | |
| | Full: | **105** | Weekly: | **10** |
| Head of EYFS Setting | **Mr Simon Dunn** | | | |
| EYFS Gender | **Mixed** | | | |
| Inspection dates | **29 Mar 2011 to 30 Mar 2011** | | | |

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# PREFACE

This report is according to the *Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) schedule* for INTERIM inspections. The inspection is a two-day visit with a focus on compliance with regulatory requirements. ISI inspections occur every three years and have two formats, interim and standard, which usually occur in an alternating pattern. The school's next inspection will therefore follow the standard schedule, which includes two visits totalling five days and places greater emphasis on the quality of education and care in addition to reporting on regulatory compliance. The school's previous inspection was in March 2007.

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 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 Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

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

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

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 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.

A specific inspection of boarding was not carried out and the report does not contain judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. Any comments on boarding arising from this inspection are in the context of the school as a whole. The existing report on boarding was produced in February 2008 by the Children's Directorate of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Children's social care/Boarding school.

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

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(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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# CONTENTS


| | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | **THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL** | **1** |
| **2** | **THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL** | **2** |
| | The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills | 2 |
| | The quality of the pupils' personal development | 3 |
| | The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management | 5 |
| **3** | **ACTION POINTS** | **7** |
| (i) | Compliance with regulatory requirements | 7 |
| (ii) | Recommendation(s) for further improvement | 7 |
| **4** | **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE** | **8** |
| (a) | The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 8 |
| (b) | The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 8 |
| (c) | The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 8 |
| (d) | Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 9 |
| | **INSPECTION EVIDENCE** | **10** |


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# 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

1.1 Woodhouse Grove School is a co-educational school for day and boarding pupils aged three to eighteen years old. It is situated in extensive grounds on the outskirts of Bradford. The school was founded in 1812 by the Methodist Conference as a boarding school for the boys of Methodist ministers, became a school for sons of laymen in the late nineteenth century and now is open to those of all faiths and none, who wish their children to be educated in the context of Christian values. The school became co-educational in 1979 and today most pupils attend on a daily basis. The junior section of the school, known as Bronte House, was founded in 1934 as a preparatory school for boys and became co-educational in 1985. Ashdown Lodge was built as a pre-prep department in 1993. It became part of Bronte House in 1999, and is now its Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) department for three to five year olds. The school is one of nine belonging to the Methodist Independent Education Trust, which has ultimate responsibility for governance; this has been devolved to the school's board of governors.

1.2 The great majority of pupils come from families living in Bradford, Leeds and surrounding villages and small towns, whose parents are mainly in business and professional occupations. The families of boarders come from a considerable number of countries. The ability profile of the school is above the national average for maintained schools overall up to the sixth form, but includes a wide range of abilities. The ability profile of the sixth form is in line with the national average, reflecting the selective pupil intake in maintained school sixth forms studying on A Level courses nationally. The school has 1052 pupils, of whom 115 are boarders and 92 are in EYFS. Sixty five pupils speak English as an additional language, of whom 30 receive extra support. One hundred and eighty-two pupils are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). No pupil has a statement of special educational needs.

1.3 Since the last inspection there have been improvements in accommodation, notably with regard to the performing arts. The school has also undertaken a continuing programme of general refurbishment and upgrading of facilities, including those for information and communications technology (ICT).

1.4 The aims of the school are, in a context of Christian values, to: develop the academic potential of each pupil, successfully and enjoyably; foster mature, caring behaviour and high standards of social responsibility; encourage sound judgement, discipline and integrity; develop talents and skills whether physical, cultural, technical or social; and prepare pupils for the world they will encounter when they leave school.

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

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# 2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

## The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills

2.1 Pupils are well educated and the quality of their achievements, learning, attitudes and basic skills is good. The school is clearly successful in meeting its aims of developing the academic potential of its pupils, encouraging them to enjoy their work and developing their talents and skills. It has made good progress since its last inspection.

2.2 As pupils progress through the junior school, literacy and numeracy skills become increasingly secure and pupils communicate with increasing confidence and sophistication about their work. They develop excellent investigative skills through mathematics and science and learn how to write fluently and with technical accuracy, generally with presentation of high quality. Pupils also develop their creative abilities rapidly through involvement in art, music and drama.

2.3 Pupils in the senior school learn to write well in different genres and work becomes increasingly sophisticated, sometimes exhibiting considerable flair. Pupils continue to communicate well and sixth formers express and support their views with confidence in academic debate. Creative ability continues to develop well through subjects such as art, English, music and technology whilst science makes a particularly strong contribution to the development of investigative skills, as do the humanities subjects to reasoning skills. Many pupils develop good study habits and enjoy open-ended investigative research, using ICT and book resources.

2.4 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2007 to 2009. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national tests at the age of eleven have been excellent in relation to the national average for maintained primary schools. Results at GCSE and A-level are good in relation to the national average for maintained schools. This level of attainment indicates that junior pupils make exceptional, and senior pupils good, progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability, as shown by standardised measures of progress. Progress observed in the small sample of lessons seen, and through the scrutiny of work, supports the judgement that pupils of all abilities make consistently good, and sometimes excellent, progress throughout the school.

2.5 High levels of achievement are achieved across a wide range of individual, group and team activities. Regional and sometimes national success is achieved in sports such as badminton, cricket, cross-country, netball and rugby at junior and senior school levels. Individual pupils achieve national and regional success in a wide range of other sporting activities, such as ice-skating, judo and swimming. High standards are reached in the performing arts across the school in art, music, drama and dance, including exhibitions, concerts, dancing and drama productions. Pupils also achieved considerable success in academic activity such as national mathematics competitions, and many gain bronze, silver and gold awards in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

2.6 From an early age, pupils develop positive attitudes to work in class, and private study. The trust and confidence that pupils have in their teachers is an important factor in generating these strong attitudes and progress.

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2.7 The academic curriculum meets pupils' needs and aspirations, whilst covering all the required areas of learning, although technological development in the senior school does not include food technology, which the school has plans to address in its next stage of development. Curriculum planning provides satisfactory to good coverage of the subject matter to be taught, but sometimes includes very little about teaching strategies to be used or ways in which achievement will be assessed. The academic curriculum is considerably enhanced by a wide range of educational visits, residential courses and trips, including overseas trips for some older pupils. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities; sport, drama and music activities make notable contributions and very large numbers of pupils are engaged in these.

2.8 The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was nearly always good and some excellent practice was observed. Teachers are knowledgeable and, in GCSE and A-level classes, pay close attention to the needs of the examination criteria as a part of their teaching. Lessons are well planned and make effective use of resources, such as interactive whiteboards and ICT more generally. Many lessons contain a variety of activities which are well-managed, facilitating a brisk pace of learning. Much of the teaching is lively and imaginative and, with very few exceptions, behaviour is well-managed. The progress of pupils with LDD is supported very effectively through the school's systematic provision for learning support. Pupils who are gifted and talented are well supported by departments in the senior school and by class teachers in the junior school. In the junior school and many areas of the senior school lively and stimulating displays create attractive and vibrant learning environments.

2.9 The marking of pupils' work is generally conscientious and regular. The best practice offers a careful analysis of strength and weakness, with targets for improvement that support progress in learning very effectively. This good practice is not universally evident and occasionally marking does little more than grade pupils' work. National and internal assessment criteria are used to track pupils' progress and inform teachers' planning. The school uses national test and examination results very effectively to measure success and identify strengths and areas for development in teaching and learning.

## The quality of the pupils' personal development

2.10 The personal development of pupils is good and reflects the successful achievement of the school's aims: to foster mature and caring behaviour and high standards of social responsibility, in a context of Christian values. Pupils develop strong self-confidence and self-esteem as they progress through the junior school, which is fostered by the close relationships with staff and the strong emphasis on positive achievement. This continues to be a strong feature in the senior school and pupils become increasingly self-critical as they grow older. They also gain much in relation to wider spiritual development from the high quality of art and music, including public performances, exhibitions and displays around the school, and assemblies.

2.11 From an early age, pupils understand the difference between right and wrong, which is reflected in the good standards of behaviour, courtesy and respect of pupils, with few exceptions. At the same time, pupils develop an increasingly sophisticated understanding of moral and ethical issues through assemblies, the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme and various subjects. Pupils develop good leadership skills through sport, house activities and various other responsibilities that they take on.

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2.12 Pupils gain a broad knowledge of public institutions and services of England through the PSHE programme, assemblies, visits from local services such as the police and fire service, mock elections and various subjects. Pupils' cultural development is good and is fostered through various subjects, visits and trips. They have a deep awareness and understanding of other religious and cultural traditions by having peers from those different groups within the school, and they live and work in tolerance and harmony. In the junior school, the focus on fund-raising for local community charities alerts pupils to the issues and concerns of those less fortunate than themselves locally, whilst fund-raising for national and international charities in the senior school does the same in a wider context.

2.13 The school provides excellent pastoral care for its pupils. Class teachers and tutors are key figures in pastoral care, but the house system is also very important, with the many activities organised within houses engendering a sense of belonging for pupils, particularly in the senior school. This is well supported by the strong commitment to personal well-being that house staff demonstrate, as do boarding staff with boarders. Pupils are well prepared for adult life through PSHE, careers education and guidance programmes, advice from staff, particularly sixth-form tutors, and various topics of future interest covered in assemblies, such as student loans.

2.14 Training with regard to safeguarding and child protection is comprehensive and up-dated regularly. Thorough risk assessments are carried out for activities in school and those related to school visits and trips. Fire protection measures are reviewed regularly by the health and safety committee. Fire drills are conducted regularly and routine and emergency health needs are catered for effectively through a well-equipped and staffed medical centre in the senior school, supported by satisfactory arrangements in the junior school. The school has a clear and helpful first aid policy and a large number of staff have appropriate first aid qualifications. Healthy lifestyles are promoted strongly through the PSHE programme, subjects such as physical education and science, high rates of participation in a wide range of sporting activities and by the healthy, well cooked, nutritious meals provided.

2.15 The school has an accessibility plan for those pupils who may have disabilities. Admissions and attendance registers are maintained in good order and data stored appropriately.

2.16 Boarders who responded to the pupil questionnaire and those interviewed were all positive about boarding, stating that they appreciated the strong community spirit in boarding houses and the facilities and activities available to them. They considered that boarding made a valuable contribution to their personal development through encouraging independence and the ability to get on with other people socially.

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## The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management

2.17 The quality of governance is excellent and makes a valuable contribution towards meeting the school's aims. The structure of the governing body, with its various committees responsible for particular aspects of the school's provision, reporting to the whole governing body, works well.

2.18 The governing body has been recruited carefully, so that it can call upon a wide range of expertise in pursuit of its duties. Governors receive detailed and informative reports about the work of the school. They spend a week in the junior and senior schools going into lessons and talking to pupils and staff and meet groups of staff at lunches after governors' meetings and at school events. Governors undertake relevant training and work closely with the senior management team. These factors help to ensure that the governing body maintains an informed and effective oversight of the school, including child protection, health and safety and the recruitment of suitable staff.

2.19 Governors work closely with the senior management team of the school on strategic planning and the school has benefited considerably from the high quality of financial planning expertise in the governing body, which has allowed the school to carry out a continuing programme of refurbishment and improvement since the last inspection.

2.20 The leadership and management of the school are good and make a key contribution to the school achieving its aims. The collegiate style of the senior management teams encourages consultation and involvement of staff in the running of the school and its future. At the same time, senior managers provide purposeful leadership and clear educational direction in a culture of continuing improvement. The restructuring of the senior management teams since the last inspection has strengthened them. Middle managers provide valuable professional leadership but their monitoring is less consistent, so that it has not yet ensured that curriculum planning and the quality of marking are consistently good.

2.21 The procedures for checking the suitability of staff, volunteers and governors ensure that high quality staff are recruited who are suitable to work with children. They are strongly committed to the academic progress and personal well-being of pupils in the school, as part of a successful, caring teaching and learning community.

2.22 The school benefits greatly from the high quality of its administration, which helps to ensure that the school runs smoothly. Similarly, the buildings are well maintained and the attractive grounds are kept in immaculate condition, all of which contributes to a pleasant and welcoming environment.

2.23 Links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent. Parents were very positive about the education their children receive in the pre-inspection questionnaires. Parents are kept well informed about the progress of their children. They receive informative reports each term, as well has grades each half-term, together with an annual parents' meeting in the senior school and termly meetings in the junior school.

2.24 Parents have easy access to necessary information and are kept well informed about school activities through the school web-site, letters to parents and regular newsletters. Many parents attend sports fixtures, concerts and the various school productions. A number of parents expressed a great appreciation of the sensitive

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and very helpful manner in which staff addressed the variety of problems their children faced. Parental concerns are handled well.

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# 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 meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

## (ii) Recommendations for further improvement

3.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Build on existing good practice in the school to improve the overall quality of marking.
2. Continue with strategies that address the remaining inconsistencies in curriculum planning.
3. Consider ways of enabling the EYFS coordinator to monitor teaching and learning throughout the department.

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# 4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

## 4.(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 This is an outstanding setting that achieves its aim to provide a wide range of experiences and opportunities in order to allow all children to shine and develop their full potential within a safe and enjoyable environment. The cohesive team of key workers provides extremely effective teaching within an environment where academic progress and pastoral care are seen as joint priorities and the welfare of the pupils is of the utmost importance. The needs of all children are met very well. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to provide an excellent educational provision, and an ongoing and wide-ranging review of all aspects of the EYFS provision has enabled it to keep abreast of new initiatives.

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

4.2 Leadership and management of the EYFS are outstanding. Clear documents promote equality and eliminate discrimination. Records and policies are carefully organised, well managed and regularly reviewed, and children are safeguarded very well. The EYFS co-ordinator sets clear direction for initiatives and has a strong understanding of where the priorities are for future development. She prioritises her limited allocation of management time successfully. The suitably qualified staff team is effectively deployed and their ongoing professional development is encouraged. The school has an excellent range of age-appropriate and well maintained resources inside, and the outside environment is an outstanding area for learning and for play. Links with parents are strong and they expressed enthusiastic support for, and all round confidence in, the setting. There is a very beneficial link with the local authority.

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

4.3 The quality of the provision is outstanding. Risk assessments are detailed and comprehensive and a variety of observations record significant learning and development milestones. As a result, key staff make skilful and well targeted plans for individual children, which include an excellent and enjoyable mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. These activities cover all six areas of learning, as well as being designed to promote pupil well-being, and they are appropriate to all abilities. The adults combine a warm and caring approach with high expectations and their pupils respond very positively. The stimulating and creative outdoor environment nurtures the pupils' imagination, supports their physical development and fosters independence, all whilst providing first-hand experience of the natural world.

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

4.4 Children make outstanding progress in their learning in relation to their starting points and capabilities and many achieve the Early Learning Goals or exceed them. Literacy and numeracy skills are strong and most children make particularly rapid progress in these areas. They use non-fiction books as reference material when recording sentences about sharks and are able to combine two groups of objects and add coins with a combined total of up to twenty pence. Their knowledge and understanding of the world develops from direct experience; for example, incubated eggs were being closely monitored for signs of life. Pupils behave and concentrate exceptionally well, work competently alone or in groups and show good physical co-ordination. They demonstrate a genuine concern for the needs of others and respond very positively, and with great enthusiasm, to the extensive range of indoor and outdoor experiences which stimulate and develop their enquiring minds. They develop a good awareness of personal safety, demonstrate sophisticated self-help skills, understand about matters of hygiene, healthy eating, fitness and exercise and are ready, when the time comes, to move on to the next stage of their education.

**Section 3 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.**

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# INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed a small sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of 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 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 Ted Cohn | Reporting Inspector |
| Mrs Gillian De La Torre | Assistant Reporting Inspector<br>Former Deputy Head, ISC school |
| Mr David Ewart | Former Head, HMC school |
| Mr Jonathan Meadmore | Former Head, IAPS school |
| Mrs Penny Oates | Early Years Lead Inspector |

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