



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**HALL GROVE SCHOOL**

**INTERIM INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Hall Grove School

Full Name of School	<b>Hall Grove School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>936/6444</b>		
Address	<b>Hall Grove School London Road Bagshot Surrey GU19 5HZ</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01276 473 059</b>		
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Email Address	<b>office@hallgrove.surrey.sch.uk</b>		
Head	<b>Mr A R Graham</b>		
Proprietors	<b>Mr and Mrs A R Graham</b>		
Age Range	<b>4 to 13</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>330</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (234 boys; 96 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>23</b>	7-11: <b>174</b>
	5-7:	<b>68</b>	11-18: <b>65</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>325</b>	Capacity for flexi-boarding: <b>10</b>
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>5</b>	
	Full:	<b>1</b>	Weekly: <b>4</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection dates	<b>16 Nov 2010 to 17 Nov 2010</b>		

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

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 December 2008 by the Children's Directorate of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Hall Grove School was founded in 1956 for boys and girls aged from four to thirteen by the parents of the current headmaster, who took over the running of the school in 1981. The school is a limited company, owned by the headmaster and his wife, and there is no governing body. The school's founding philosophy, which valued learning by young children through play and discovery, continues to shape the school's ethos.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide children with a very strong and caring education that gains them entrance to the senior school of their choice. It pursues academic, cultural and sporting excellence, and civilised behaviour, in a distinctive family atmosphere, aiming to provide the best possible teaching and a sense of fun and adventure.
- 1.3 The school has a spacious site on the edge of Bagshot, and its facilities include an equestrian centre, a golf course, an open-air swimming pool, a large artificial pitch and two further artificial surfaces. The school offers an after-school club and holiday scheme. A separately managed pre-school operates on the site. A few pupils board weekly or on a flexible basis.
- 1.4 The school comprises the Pre-Prep from Reception to Year 2, the Middle School for Years 3 to 5, and the Upper School for Years 6 to 8. There are 23 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), in Reception.
- 1.5 The school is largely non-selective. The ability profile of the school is above the national average. The range of pupils' abilities is fairly wide. The school has identified 23 pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), 11 of whom receive additional learning support. Most pupils are from white British backgrounds. None requires support in learning English as an additional language.
- 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 The overall achievement of the pupils is excellent and the school is highly successful in realising its aim of preparing pupils to gain access to the senior school of their choice. Their skills in speaking, reading, writing and in applying mathematics are extremely well developed and they learn to think logically and creatively. Pupils confidently apply skills in information and communication technology (ICT) to support their learning in many areas. Their physical and creative skills are highly developed.
- 2.2 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be far above national age-related expectations. Findings from inspection confirm that pupils attain high standards across a wide range of subjects. Pupils do well in Common Entrance examinations and a significant number gain an academic scholarship or other award to their senior school.
- 2.3 Pupils make good and often exceptional progress over their time at the school. Those who find learning difficult are encouraged and guided to achieve as well as possible, and the most able are challenged by high expectations. From the start, pupils develop skills, attitudes and habits that underpin their success as learners. They readily ask questions, and confidently explain their ideas.
- 2.4 Pupils at all levels enjoy their education, displaying excellent attitudes to their work and activities. They have a zest for learning and are thoughtfully enquiring. They organise themselves well and take responsibility for their efforts, working effectively on their own or with others.
- 2.5 Pupils' achievement is supported by an excellent curriculum and an exceptional range of educational experiences within and beyond the classroom. Pupils achieve extremely well in practical and creative work, in dance, drama, music, art, ceramics, food science and design and technology. They participate in daily physical exercise and play a wide range of sports. All pupils have the opportunity to represent the school in teams. The school has many musical groups and a full calendar of music and drama events, giving pupils the opportunity to perform and to excel. The school fosters a sense of adventure and appreciation of the natural world. Pupils delight in their regular visits to Battisborough House, the school's own field study and outdoor pursuits centre. An outdoor classroom is also being developed in the school grounds to extend pupils' learning.
- 2.6 The quality of teaching is excellent and this is reflected in the pupils' progress. Teaching is well planned and thorough so that the pupils gain knowledge and understanding at a good pace. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are extremely well taught, providing solid foundations. Teaching is lively, igniting interest and challenging pupils' thinking. An imaginative range of methods is used to keep pupils engaged and focused. Teaching involves pupils in setting targets to work towards and helps them to take stock of how well they are learning. Assessment is used effectively to check pupils' progress. Pupils who find learning difficult receive support that is well tailored to their needs. Pupils respect and trust their teachers who, they say, 'squeeze the best' out of them.

### **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

- 2.7 The pupils' personal development is outstanding, spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. The school is highly successful in pursuing all-round excellence and fostering civilised behaviour in a family atmosphere. Pupils are polite, open, considerate and articulate, and their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils make their voice heard through the school council and readily take the initiative in organising charity fundraising and other events. Pupils show interest in faiths and cultures other than their own, and are eager to share the experiences of those who have joined the school from other countries. Pupils learn to work as part of a team and to exercise leadership, gaining confidence and self-awareness in the process.
- 2.8 The school makes excellent arrangements to secure the pupils' welfare, health and safety. All necessary policies are in place and procedures are well understood by staff. Risk assessments are carried out thoroughly, including careful preparation for visits. Effective procedures are implemented for ensuring fire safety and for detecting and dealing with any hazards. Careful attention has been paid to improving safety on the school's driveway. Effective provision is made for first aid and the quality of medical care is high. All staff are trained in child protection and robust safeguarding procedures are in place. Pupils enjoy tasty and nutritious meals.
- 2.9 The school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies are clear and implemented effectively. Pupils say that there would always be someone to turn to if they had a problem. No pupils returned the online questionnaire before the inspection, but those spoken to clearly enjoy school greatly, and value the friendliness of adults and children alike. Pupils thrive because they are known and cared for extremely well as individuals. Their personal and academic development is monitored closely and the staff are quick to note and to deal with any concerns.
- 2.10 The school makes excellent provision for those who board weekly or on a flexible basis. The boarding house is a small family-run community. Pupils, and parents, are extremely appreciative of the care provided by the head of boarding, and by the headmaster and his wife. Boarders benefit from supervised prep and from wide access to the school's facilities during the evening. Flexi-boarders are enthusiastic about their boarding experience. Boarding opportunities include themed nights and group stay-overs that pupils say are great fun. The boarding arrangements provide an excellent experience for pupils on an occasional basis, and a valuable introduction for some who will move on to board at their senior school.

### **The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management**

- 2.11 The school's leadership and management are excellent. They are highly effective in ensuring that the school's aims are met in full. The pursuit of academic, sporting and cultural excellence permeates the school. The education provided is characterised by a spirit of fun and adventure. The distinctive family atmosphere, marked by mutual respect and expectations of civilised behaviour, provides an excellent environment for learning.
- 2.12 In order to ensure appropriate governance, the headmaster draws on a range of consultants with relevant expertise, to provide oversight, support and challenge, and to help ensure compliance with statutory requirements. This has helped the school to operate efficiently and to develop the quality of its education and its facilities. The school is well organised and administered. The accommodation is of high quality

and well maintained. Communication, both formal and informal, is extremely good. The school is diligent in checking the suitability of staff, and a central register of checks on appointment is kept as required.

- 2.13 The headmaster works very effectively with the senior and wider management teams, providing a clear sense of direction. Teamwork is extremely strong. Contributions are encouraged from all staff in evaluating what works, and identifying areas for improvement. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored effectively, and mutual observation by teachers serves to develop the school's teaching culture and to share and extend good practice. The school is innovative and forward-looking. As it continues to extend its educational provision, it has identified the need to keep the use of staff time under review to ensure that it is used to maximum effect.
- 2.14 The school's relationship with parents is extremely strong. Parents are kept closely informed about their children's progress through regular reports and meetings with teachers. The school's leadership actively seeks the views of parents through the Parents' Forum. The school has an appropriate complaints procedure and follows up any concerns raised, in order, where possible, to improve its provision further. A comprehensive website gives detailed information about the school and its policies. Weekly newsletters keep parents up to date with what is happening at the school. The parental responses to the online questionnaire showed an extremely high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the school. Parents particularly commended the ease of communication, the breadth of educational experience offered and the high standards of behaviour achieved.



### **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. Further evaluate the use of staff time, to ensure that it is used to maximum educational effect.
  2. Develop opportunities for free access to the outdoor learning environment by children in the EYFS.

#### **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 The effectiveness of the EYFS is outstanding. Highly effective teaching nurtures creativity, active learning and critical thinking. Children demonstrate excellent levels of independence, self-motivation and enjoyment in their learning. Staff recognise the unique qualities of each child and have an excellent understanding of how to meet their individual needs. The children also benefit from specialist teaching in French, dance and physical education. Excellent relationships exist with parents, who express a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the provision. Significant improvements, particularly in regard to the resourcing of the outdoor environment and provision for role-play, have been made to the good provision identified at the previous inspection. Outstanding teamwork, excellent support from senior managers and a robust programme of self-evaluation provide a foundation for continued development of this outstanding provision.

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

4.2 Leadership and management are outstanding. Staff and senior managers have an ambitious vision for the future drawn from regular and robust self-evaluation, to which parents and children contribute. Rigorous safeguarding procedures, detailed risk assessments, comprehensive and consistently implemented policies and a strong commitment to equality and diversity create an environment where children feel safe and valued as individuals. Suitably qualified staff, with a strong commitment to professional development, attend training regularly and are well supported through links to outside agencies and local authority advisers. The creative use of resources and the flexible deployment of staff, both indoors and outside, has a positive impact upon the already excellent outcomes. Information provided to parents is outstanding with regular updates on children's progress and well-received guidance on supporting children's learning at home.

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

4.3 The quality of provision is outstanding. Children move freely between the well-organised, stimulating classrooms which reflect their interests and provide a rich array of structured and free play activities. Although full free-flow access to the immediate outside area is not currently possible, excellent use is made of this space and the wider school grounds, to extend children's learning. High-quality observations, excellent assessment and reflective 'learning journey' portfolios ensure that provision matches children's needs and interests. Excellent planning results in an extremely good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Partnership with parents is outstanding with many opportunities for a shared dialogue between home and school. Key people develop genuinely affectionate bonds with children and this contributes to the outstanding quality of care. Adults successfully reinforce health and safety routines and establish clear expectations of behaviour for children to follow.

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

- 4.4 Outcomes in the EYFS are outstanding. All children reach or exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year. Children are enthusiastic, confident and inquisitive learners who are equally happy to work independently or under adult direction. Excellent literacy, numeracy and ICT skills provide a strong foundation for future learning. Social development is a strength of the setting and children's behaviour is exemplary. They share, take turns and show great respect and tolerance for each other, resolving disagreements with maturity. Children play an active role in planning and assessing learning and this contributes significantly to the rate of progress. Children understand how to stay safe and feel confident about confiding in staff. They wash their hands before eating, describe the benefits of choosing healthy foods and enjoy physical activity within the extensive grounds. Children demonstrate their understanding of the world through varied and well-resourced role-play activities.

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

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed a sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with the headmaster and his advisers, and with senior members of staff, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the boarding accommodation and 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**

Mrs Joy Richardson

Mr Alistair Telfer

Chris Manville

Reporting Inspector

Senior Teacher, ISA school

Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector