



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**WHITGIFT SCHOOL
INTERIM INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Whitgift School

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Full Name of School | Whitgift School | |
| DfE Number | 306/6014 | |
| Registered Charity Number | 312612 | |
| Address | Whitgift School Haling Park South Croydon Surrey CR2 6YT | |
| Telephone Number | 020 8688 9222 | |
| Fax Number | 020 8760 0682 | |
| Email Address | office@whitgift.co.uk | |
| Head | Dr Christopher A Barnett | |
| Chair of Governors | Mr Ian Harley | |
| Age Range | 10 to 18 | |
| Total Number of Pupils | 1289 | |
| Gender of Pupils | Boys | |
| Numbers by Age | 5-11: | 57 |
| | 11-18: | 1232 |
| Number of Day Pupils | Total: | 1282 |
| | | Capacity for flexi-boarding: N/A |
| Number of Boarders | Total: | 7 |
| | Full: | 7 |
| Gender | Boys | |
| Inspection dates | 10 May 2011 to 11 May 2011 | |

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 April 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.

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 January 2009 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
- (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 Whitgift School is a selective school for boys from ten to eighteen years old. The school was founded in 1596 and moved in 1931 to its current site. It is one of three schools owned by The Court of the Whitgift Foundation, a charitable trust, whose trustees have ultimate responsibility for the school. Much of this responsibility, particularly in relation to the day-to-day running of the school, has been devolved to the school's governing body, a committee of the Court.
- 1.2 Pupils come from across the south London boroughs, Croydon and neighbouring counties. They come from families with diverse ethnic, cultural, religious and occupational backgrounds and about half of the pupils benefit from scholarships, or bursaries funded by the Whitgift Foundation. The ability profile of the pupils is above the national average, with a significant proportion of pupils who are far above the national average. The school has 1289 pupils, of whom seven are boarders coming mainly from families living in Eastern Europe. Fifteen pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), of whom four receive specialist learning support. Over 200 other pupils live in families where English is not the only language spoken at home. In total, 122 pupils have been identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). The school also has three pupils with statements of special educational need.
- 1.3 The key aims of the school are: to strive for excellence in all aspects of school life, promoting a culture of achievement in a stimulating learning environment, which inculcates positive values of mutual respect, tolerance and self-esteem; and to provide a broad, balanced and innovative curriculum and a rich and broad co-curricular programme, which prepares pupils well for the challenges of the future.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

| School | NC name |
|---------|---------|
| Lower 1 | Year 6 |
| Upper 1 | Year 7 |
| Lower 3 | Year 8 |
| Upper 3 | Year 9 |
| Lower 5 | Year 10 |
| Upper 5 | Year 11 |
| Lower 6 | Year 12 |
| Upper 6 | Year 13 |

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

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

- 2.1 Pupils are very well educated and the quality of their achievements is excellent. The school is very successful in achieving its aim of striving for excellence in all aspects of school life. Pupils are highly articulate, listen carefully, read very well and write with fluency, style and technical accuracy. They develop excellent mathematical and scientific knowledge and skills that they apply very effectively. Their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and other technologies are well developed, as are their creative abilities. The great majority of pupils are successful in gaining places at their first choice universities.
- 2.2 Achievements in extra-curricular activities are outstandingly good, and include national success in a wide variety of team sports and the achievement of many representative honours at regional and national level. Great success is achieved in music and drama. Pupils do very well in various national subject competitions, a considerable number of pupils achieve Duke of Edinburgh's Awards and the Combined Cadet Force is very successful.
- 2.3 Examination results in the years 2007 to 2009, for which there are comparative statistics, are excellent in relation to the national average for maintained schools and are good in relation to maintained selective schools. Results in IGCSE subjects and the International Baccalaureate are above United Kingdom and world averages. The recent foreign language results for examinations of various foreign institutes, taken by able linguists instead of an extra GCSE, and the BTEC National Diploma in Sport results are of a high quality. The progress that pupils make across the school is excellent in relation to their abilities, including those pupils with LDD and gifted and talented pupils.
- 2.4 Pupils often show considerable interest in what they are doing and are tenacious in pursuit of success. They are attentive, work very well independently, individually and in groups, and develop increasingly good investigative skills.
- 2.5 The school is very successful in achieving its aim of providing a broad and balanced curriculum, with a varied and extensive extra-curricular programme, which challenges all pupils and provides a rich educational experience. The needs of the most able pupils are addressed well through initiatives, such as bilingual foreign language courses in Years 7 to 11 for the most able linguists, and extra-curricular activities. Personal, social and health education (PSHE), general studies, assemblies and a wide range of curriculum visits broaden educational experience effectively. Curriculum planning is generally detailed, but does not always indicate in sufficient detail how pupils' learning will be assessed.
- 2.6 Teaching is of a high quality and makes a key contribution to pupils' achievements. Teachers bring a deep knowledge of their subjects to their teaching. They know their pupils' learning needs very well, lessons are very well planned and organised and class management is excellent, leading to a very brisk pace of learning. Teachers have close relationships with pupils and a strong commitment to their success. The progress of pupils with LDD is very well supported by the learning support department and gifted and talented pupils are challenged by the work that they do. All of these factors produce a learning environment that is highly conducive to successful learning and achievement. Marking is regular and sometimes includes

detailed comments about pupils' achievement and how they can improve their work, but this good practice is inconsistent. Highly effective use is made of standardised data and national measures of achievement to monitor pupils' progress and identify areas for further improvement.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 2.7 The personal development of pupils is excellent and strongly reflects the school's aim of inculcating mutual respect, tolerance and self-esteem within an informed and critical awareness of the world. They develop a strong sense of self-esteem and confidence as they move through the school, encouraged by the school's successful promotion of a culture of achievement and the encouragement and support of staff and their peers.
- 2.8 Pupils' well-developed ability to distinguish right from wrong contributes to the excellent standards of behaviour in the school. Fair play and sportsmanship sit comfortably alongside the desire to succeed. Pupils develop a strong sense of social responsibility, which is actively promoted by the school through many opportunities for leadership and collaboration, frequent chances to discuss moral and social issues and the ethos of the school.
- 2.9 The high quality of pupils' social and cultural development owes much to being part of a vibrant community of learners from different social and ethnic backgrounds. Pupils develop a good knowledge of public institutions and services through aspects of the curriculum. Cultural development is enhanced through a wide variety of subjects and an extensive programme of overseas trips broadens the pupils' cultural horizons. The small group of boarders, gifted pupils from overseas, make a valuable contribution to cultural development through sharing their very different experiences and talents. Boarding also makes an important contribution to boarders' own personal development, through learning to live harmoniously in a community of pupils from different cultures and traditions.
- 2.10 In accordance with its aims, the school provides excellent pastoral care. Support and guidance is available through a highly effective system of form tutors, heads of year, boarding staff and senior staff, supported by subject teachers. Relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and staff are very positive. Those pupils in need of help can identify people they can turn to, no matter how serious the issue. The school has an effective anti-bullying policy, reviewed annually; procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour are well understood by pupils and parents and a clear record of sanctions administered is kept.
- 2.11 Arrangements for health and safety are well-organised and thorough. Staff training in child protection and safeguarding, including safer recruitment, is comprehensive and updated regularly. All measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards are in place. The school's medical staff, the large number of staff trained in first aid and excellent medical facilities ensure that medical emergencies can be tackled promptly and confidently. The pupils are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle through the PSHE and sports programmes and meals provided are healthy, palatable and nutritious.
- 2.12 Admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and correctly stored. The school has an appropriate accessibility plan.

The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management

- 2.13 The governance of the school is good and makes a helpful contribution to the achievement of the school's aims. The school committee of the governing body has good oversight of the work of the school, including health and safety and safeguarding, and governors have been recruited carefully in order to provide the breadth of expertise to do this effectively. Governors are closely involved in strategic planning and communication between the school committee and the Court of the Whitgift Foundation, criticised at the time of the last inspection, is much improved, but strategic planning is still hindered by a lack of clarity about financial support from the Foundation.
- 2.14 Leadership and management are excellent and make an essential contribution to the achievement of the school's aims and the pupils' success. The senior management team provides purposeful leadership, open to discussion and new ideas, which creates a common sense of purpose. This helps to empower middle managers, who provide excellent professional leadership and manage departments well, thus making a major contribution to the continuing success and development of the school.
- 2.15 Close collaboration between pastoral managers and heads of department about academic performance supports pupils' progress well. The school is successful in recruiting and keeping high-quality staff and the further development of the performance management system since the last inspection supports their professional development effectively. Procedures for checking the suitability of staff, volunteers and governors are comprehensive, and the central register is maintained correctly.
- 2.16 The administration of the school is excellent. It ensures the smooth day-to-day running of the school and provides very effective support to staff and managers in carrying out their roles. It also helps to ensure that the school is very well maintained, so that the buildings and the extensive grounds are aesthetically pleasing and a positive feature of the school.
- 2.17 Links with parents and guardians are excellent. The great majority of parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed high levels of satisfaction with the education their children receive. Parents receive high-quality information about the school and its activities. They are well informed about the progress of the children and any concerns are dealt with swiftly. The school's complaints procedures are clear and no formal complaints have been made in the last year.

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. Ensure that marking regularly identifies how pupils can improve their work.
 2. Improve the clarity of support from the Court of the Whitgift Foundation, so that the school can plan more effectively for future developments.

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

Dr Simon Hyde

Deputy Head, HMC School