

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

The Grammar School, Hipperholme

Full Name of the School	The Grammar School, Hipperholme
DCSF Number	381/6006
Registered Charity Number	517152
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Age Range	2 to 18
Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	28th to 31st January 2008

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 and May 2007.

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 The Grammar School, Hipperholme is an independent day school for boys and girls between two and eighteen years. It was founded in 1648 at a time of social and political turmoil, in the year that King Charles I was put on trial by his parliament for treason. The school established an early and enduring association with the nearby Coley Church, and for many years after 1944 it was a voluntary aided selective school for pupils between the ages of eleven and eighteen. In 1985 it became independent. In 2003, shortly after the last inspection of 2002, it acquired the nearby preparatory school at Lightcliffe, which had been established separately in 1915 as a family-run school for pupils aged between two and eleven. The two schools are now one, the Hipperholme Grammar School Foundation, with a single headmaster and one governing body. The site of the Preparatory School is separated from that of the Grammar School by less than a mile.
- 1.2 Both parts of the school are close to the centre of Hipperholme, which is itself within easy travel to the large cities of Bradford, Leeds and Huddersfield. The school's own playing fields are nearby.
- 1.3 The school aims to provide a high quality education in a caring, supportive and stimulating environment. It seeks to develop self-reliance in each pupil, to encourage and to develop curiosity, to direct concern for social and environmental issues and to provide high quality teaching and facilities.
- 1.4 The school has 356 pupils between the ages of 2 and 18. Of these, 26 are under the age of 5 and include pupils funded under the Early Years Education Scheme. Another 85 are in the Preparatory School in Years 1 to 6. The pupils in Years 5 and 6, who number 34, have all their lessons at the Grammar School but remain members of the Preparatory School. A total of 245 pupils are in the Grammar School, of whom 26 are in the sixth form. These figures are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. The school is wholly co-educational, with 191 boys and 165 girls. Nearly one-half of the pupils receive some fee support from the school. The social and ethnic mix of the school reflects closely the character of the surrounding West Yorkshire community of Calderdale.
- 1.5 No admission test is applied in the Preparatory School, nor do pupils take national tests whilst at the school. The average ability of the pupils is approximately in line with the national average. Some pupils leave the school after Year 6 for a variety of nearby state grammar schools and other independent senior schools but most, about 60 per cent, remain within the Hipperholme Foundation and pass to its own senior school.
- 1.6 All pupils who apply for entry to the grammar school sit an entrance examination in mathematics, English and non-verbal reasoning. The average ability of the pupils on entry is currently above the national average. This is higher than in recent years when the average ability of pupils joining the school was approximately in line with the national average. Consequently, if pupils in recent public examination years are achieving according to their abilities, their achievement in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations should be approximately in line with the national average of all maintained schools.
- 1.7 More than two-thirds of the pupils leave after completing GCSEs, often to attend nearby maintained sixth form colleges and other independent schools. The school admits a small number of new pupils. Numbers in the sixth form are small and the required qualification is five GCSE passes at grade C. Nationally recognised measures indicate that the average

ability is considerably below the national average for sixth forms so that, if pupils are achieving in line with their abilities, their results at Advanced level (A level) will be below the national average of all maintained schools.

- 1.8 No pupil in the school has a statement of special educational need. Ten pupils in the Preparatory School and eight in the Grammar School are recognised as having learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD), mainly associated with dyslexia. Two in the Grammar School are identified as needing support on account of having English as an additional language. Since the last inspection, the school has begun identifying pupils who are particularly gifted or talented. Almost all pupils leaving the school after A-level study proceed to higher education.
- 1.9 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 quality of education provided throughout the school is good. It is entirely consistent with the school's aim to strive for academic excellence and yet to see education as wider than the curriculum. It is well placed to develop self-reliance in each pupil, to encourage curiosity, to provide the imagination with worthwhile outlets, to develop competition and co-operation and to direct concern for social and environmental issues. Since 2002 the school has improved its arrangements for identifying and supporting pupils with LDD and those identified as gifted and talented.

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- 2.2 The curriculum in the Preparatory School is based securely on the programme Birth to Three Matters and on the National Curriculum. Study focuses strongly on the acquisition of social, literacy and mathematical skills. This is enhanced by the study of French from the reception year and music from Year 1. Religious studies and personal, social, health and citizenship education are also taught as distinct subjects. Years 5 and 6, who have their classes on the Grammar School site, benefit greatly from the specialist facilities there in science, art, design technology, information and communications technology (ICT) and physical education. As the school is aware, opportunities for these pupils to engage in competitive sports are currently limited and could beneficially be expanded. Classrooms are bright and stimulating environments with good displays to encourage interest and enquiry.
- 2.3 The Preparatory School prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education, not least through the attention teachers give to developing confidence, self-esteem and good study skills among the pupils, including exposure to independent learning and research. The teachers are well aware of the pupils' individual and group needs. Early Years staff work well together to help the youngest pupils to settle to school; and they control sympathetically the transition between nursery and reception class. Year 4 pupils who are about to proceed to the Grammar School site for their lessons in Years 5 and 6 are well prepared for this move by careful liaison and induction. All pupils' entry to secondary education is well prepared, both in the classroom and by the encouragement of increased personal responsibility. Provision for those pupils with LDD is good. Teachers identify specific learning needs early, and they monitor progress closely and review each pupil's change in need regularly.

Grammar School

- 2.4 The Grammar School provides a wide range of educational experience well suited to the aptitudes and needs of all its pupils. They are assessed on entry to the school and this data is comprehensively screened and analysed, then shared with all academic departments. Progress too is monitored carefully and shared among teachers and with parents.
- 2.5 Lessons in Years 7 to 11 follow closely the National Curriculum and they are extended by visits beyond the school and by an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities. The school contributes well to the pupils' linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative development. It offers a wide range of subjects at A level for the number of pupils. Throughout the school, extra-curricular activities, gathered into a programme of personal enrichment, enhance well the pupils' cultural, spiritual, social and physical qualities. The school effectively promotes an awareness of other people's needs, by organised charity fund-raising and work. Many pupils take specialist music lessons and a large number are engaged in sporting teams. Opportunities to participate and to perform in public are widespread. The Duke of

- Edinburgh's Award scheme is extensive, with several pupils progressing to gold award standard.
- 2.6 A number of subjects, especially religious studies and science, provide a clear programme of personal, social and health education. Pupils in Year 7 study all major faiths. Year 9 classes in biology include sex education, and tutorial sessions stress personal and collective responsibility. All sixth formers take part in the Millennium Volunteers programme, which leads them into the local community to recognise and to meet the needs of others.
- 2.7 Pupils are well prepared for each transition in their education. They receive appropriate advice on the choice of GCSE subjects, which includes early information of career options and requirements. Year 10 pupils undertake further a week of work experience. A careers advisor visits the school each week and attends all parents' evenings to provide specialist guidance. Sixth form pupils are confident that they have good and clear assistance in choosing appropriate universities and courses of study. Their success in gaining places is excellent. Opportunities to travel beyond England on school trips and visits are extensive and used well.
- 2.8 The needs of pupils requiring special provision, those with LDD or with English as an additional language, are met well. An information system helps to track progress, which is regularly reviewed by senior staff and prompts new targets. This meets well a need identified in the school's previous inspection report, although the school continues to recognise that greater provision, including for the gifted and talented, is still called for.

Whole School

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

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.10 The quality of pupils' learning and skills and their attitudes to work and study are good throughout the school. Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve well. They increase their knowledge and understanding across the full range of subjects and activities offered to them, and they learn to apply these effectively. Results in national examinations at GCSE and at A level are good in relation to the abilities of the pupils and compare well with national averages in maintained schools. The standard is higher than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' independent learning and research is sound and the school recognises the need to encourage this further.

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- 2.11 Pupils of all abilities learn well. They respond eagerly to reading, writing, speaking and listening tasks, which are promoted strongly across the curriculum. They seize opportunities to develop practical mathematical and problem-solving skills, and these have much increased since the recent Ofsted inspection in January 2007 and have reached a good standard. A strong ethos of co-operation in lessons fosters well a high standard of social skills among all pupils. They are articulate, converse confidently, listen and learn well.
- 2.12 The pupils are keen on their studies, apply themselves carefully to their work and lessons, and they make good progress. They are excited by opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. A Year 2 class was highly expressive in examining two performance poems. When working together on a collaborative task in mathematical problem-solving, the pupils co-operated well, learned from each other and together produced successful outcomes. They are keen to achieve well, for example in weekly tests and in

frequent mental arithmetic challenges. Written work is to a good standard and plentiful. Pupils' achievements are recognised by stars, which are eagerly collected in competitive house totals. The school does not undertake national tests, but profiles indicate that pupils throughout are working and achieving beyond recommended national curriculum levels. Many Year 6 pupils succeed in competitive entrance examinations to selective maintained senior schools.

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- 2.13 Pupils' learning and achievement are good throughout the school. Their attitudes to work and study are keen and they develop their skills well. They settle quickly to their tasks, remedying a weakness recognised at the last inspection, and they are well prepared for their lessons. Knowledge is thorough. Understanding and listening, speaking and writing are all to a good standard. At all stages, the pupils think carefully and demonstrate a clear ability to criticise and to be creative. They show a good range of skills in ICT, much advanced since the last inspection. Mathematical skills too are well developed. Note-making is to a high standard and pupils of all abilities and at all stages show an eagerness to contribute to class discussion, to exchange ideas with their teachers and to clarify their understanding.
- 2.14 Achievement is good in relation to the pupils' abilities. The standard and quantity of written work are good and the pupils make good progress. Nationally recognised measures of progress, used by the school, confirm this. Pupils of all abilities achieve well in public examinations. Attainment at GCSE is good: results for the three years 2004 to 2006 have been above the national average for all maintained schools. The number of pupils in the sixth form is small and the ability range is considerably below the national average of entrants for A-level examination. Pupils' attainment at A level remains below the national average for all maintained schools but nationally recognised measures indicate that pupils' attainment is above levels predicted on their entry to Year 12.
- 2.15 Pupils enjoy significant regional and national success in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which includes cycling, rugby, swimming, cross-country running, fencing, hockey and ballroom dancing. In the most recent year, four pupils achieved gold standard in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.16 Throughout the school, the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school provides many excellent opportunities for this among its pupils. It declares its goal in its vision statement: 'Our Christian spirit of community underpins our strong moral and ethical code.' It pursues this in its curriculum, whereby religious studies is taught to all pupils from Year 1 to Year 11, and it succeeds by an evident community spirit among its pupils and by active engagement in responding to the needs of others. The high standards recognised at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and built upon well. Almost all parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that the school promoted worthwhile attitudes and views. The school has successfully established a culture of tolerance, respect and inclusivity.

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- 2.17 The pupils develop a sensitive awareness of themselves and others. They acquire moral understanding, self-discipline and an appreciation of a variety of languages, cultures and traditions. The school community has a strong feeling of family, which is enhanced by frequent class, department and whole-school assemblies. Spiritual awareness among the pupils is outstanding. An assembly arranged to thank God for His creation included Christian, Muslim and Hindu traditions. The lighting of a candle and appropriate music ensured a calm and reflective start to the day. Moral awareness too is outstanding, promoted in assemblies and in many lessons. For example, Aesop's Fables were used successfully in a Year 3 assembly to encourage 'treating others as you would like to be treated' and in thinking problems through.
- 2.18 The school uses a 'promises board' very effectively to encourage reliability, and circle time to encourage awareness of each other and membership of a group. The pupils' social awareness is outstanding. They are given personal responsibility, including the extension of a friendly reception and consideration for pupils new to the school. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of the local community, involving themselves in charity events, receiving visiting speakers, and sharing the skills of the community in chess clubs, nature and art, and through visits to a home for the elderly and to the local library. Recognition of the cultural richness of the school is strong, and expanded by the teaching of French to all pupils from the age of four.

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- 2.19 All pupils develop a clear spiritual awareness from their lessons, including a study of the major world religions in Year 7. This is reinforced very well by regular assemblies that encourage mutual tolerance and respect from all members of the school. It is further emphasised strongly in the school's policy documents and actively promoted in tutorial sessions. The pupils show a clear sense of the difference between right and wrong and they are considerate and respectful in their behaviour. A clear code is printed in every pupil's planner and it includes the exhortation to 'learn to listen and listen to learn'. Lessons reinforce this well. Pupils in biology classes in Year 9 assess responsible sexual behaviour, English and history classes illustrate acceptable and unacceptable attitudes and actions, and geography lessons examine poverty and exploitation. Care of the environment is taught well. Year 8 pupils undertook a day trip to study the physical and social effects of soil erosion.
- 2.20 Socially, the pupils develop easily. They gain responsibility as prefects and through participation on the School Council, which has a high profile and is well respected by both staff and pupils. Pupils have a clear sense of belonging to the school and they are very proud of it. A very strong Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme emphasises participation in group activities and personal responsibility for others. The pupils value the school's commitment of outreach to the community at home and abroad. Pupil initiative established support for the Bangladeshi appeal organised by Children in Need. Relationships among pupils and with staff are excellent. The recently expanded house system encourages wide participation and shared success among pupils. The clear programme of leadership and personal enrichment is not only a declaration by the school but a significant part of each pupil's education.
- 2.21 The development of pupils' cultural awareness is also strong. The cultural diversity of the pupils is wide and respect over the full range of traditions, customs and observances is manifest. French is already taught in the Preparatory School; German is introduced in Year 7 and taught to all until the end of Year 9. Thus the curriculum leads all pupils to explore and value cultures other than their own. In music and in art, cultural traditions are further explored.

Whole School

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

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.23 The overall quality of teaching throughout the school is good. In more than a quarter of lessons it is outstanding, and very seldom does it fall below satisfactory. It enables and enhances pupils' progress well. Across all years and across the full range of ability, the teaching enables pupils to acquire new knowledge, to make progress and to increase their understanding and develop new skills. It is well planned, it is effective and it makes good use of class time. Assessment is both regular and thorough and it is carefully used to plan further teaching and to set new targets for learning. In some cases a written dialogue between teacher and pupil secures agreement on the strengths and weaknesses of presented work and the next steps needed for improvement. The assessment and monitoring of pupils are much better than at the time of the last inspection. Resources are good and readily available.

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- 2.24 Teaching is good. The teachers know the pupils well and have an easy rapport with them. They set appropriately challenging tasks and support the pupils well, enabling each to make good progress. The teaching is thoroughly planned and employs a variety of methods, activities and resources, suitable for the full range of pupil ability. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, the setting of challenging tasks according to identified need and ability was notable. In a football lesson for girls in Years 5 and 6 the teacher identified the range of skills quickly and set appropriate tasks to enable each to make rapid progress. Teachers are aware of those pupils needing learning support, and produce detailed individual education plans and update these regularly. Assessment is frequent and thorough. Teachers record pupils' progress carefully and they include measurement against nationally standardised scores. They also use assessment to inform planning and to identify those pupils requiring additional or special tasks. Subject knowledge is excellent.

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- 2.25 Teaching in the Grammar School is good overall. Often it is outstanding in the degree of subject knowledge of the teacher and the variety of challenge presented to a class of mixed abilities. The teaching enables pupils of all abilities to acquire new knowledge and to make good progress in lessons. Teaching styles are varied and different tasks are set to meet well the differing capabilities of pupils. High expectations ensure that the pupils behave responsibly and they enjoy learning. Almost all lessons proceed at a brisk pace; very seldom does lack of challenge allow pupil distraction.
- 2.26 The teaching is well planned and, in the best lessons, independent learning is encouraged and elicited well. Teachers support generously pupils with difficulties, for example through a mathematics workshop and a science drop-in club, both of which are used well. Teaching is well supported by a range of resources, including an interactive whiteboard in an ICT room and a number of digital projectors in classrooms. The school network is used well in some subjects, such as English and science, but not in all. Equally, the much improved, attractive and well-stocked library is underused. The school is aware of this variety of practice and recognises the need to encourage more uniform use of its good resources, especially to encourage more independent learning.

- 2.27 The teaching includes regular and thorough assessment of pupils' work. Teacher comment is clear and constructive to aid improvement and learning. The school provides clear information on the baseline assessment of pupils to assist planning, and pupils regard the sharing of this information with them as helpful. The information is used extensively and well by the school in its planning of provision and in the guidance it gives to its pupils. In most departments, assessment policies and practices are presented on classroom displays to inform pupils of the most appropriate routes to further progress.

Whole School

- 2.28 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 pastoral care throughout the school is outstanding and it accords well with the school's aim to provide a caring, supportive and stimulating environment. Arrangements are comprehensive; teachers know their pupils well and they care for them very effectively. The school fosters among all its members the ability to listen to and respect the views of others. The vast majority of parents throughout the school, responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire, indicated themselves content with the high standards of behaviour achieved in the school and its promotion of worthwhile attitudes and views. The school is a happy community, building on the high standards noted at the time of the last inspection.
- 3.2 All necessary child protection measures are in place throughout the school. The designated child protection liaison officer has undergone relevant training and maintains careful supervision and records. She is supported by a designated governor for child protection. Safe recruitment procedures are undertaken and all checks on staff and regular assistants and visitors are applied fully and correctly. The school pays careful attention to all matters of health and safety, and weaknesses noted in the last inspection have been remedied. Appropriate measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards have been undertaken and risk assessments, including those associated with trips and visits, are careful and complete. Admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and they are readily available.

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- 3.3 The Preparatory School has clear and highly effective pastoral structures, which enable the staff to provide outstanding support for each pupil's well-being and development. Behaviour, both in class and about the school, is excellent. The pupils see the school's rules for behaviour as fair, and these are reinforced by clear and attractive poster displays. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and trusting. The school diligently promotes healthy eating, with well-balanced and freshly cooked meals and fresh drinking water throughout the day.

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- 3.4 The quality of pastoral care in the Grammar School is outstanding. It meets well the school's aim to develop self-reliance in each pupil. Pupils new to the school are well supported by a carefully planned and effective guide system and they take part in a Year 7 camp during the first week of school to get to know and to trust each other. Comprehensive structures continue this level of care. A day book for each pupil facilitates a record of any concern, accessible to all teachers and shared with parents. Pastoral heads meet weekly with the headmaster and his deputy so that any significant issues or trends may be shared and effectively dealt with.
- 3.5 Relationships among pupils, and between teachers and pupils, are positive, warm and friendly. Pupils declare themselves wholly secure from all forms of bullying, including cyber bullying, and they have full confidence and trust in their teachers. Pupils indeed support strongly the school's measures to promote good discipline and behaviour, judging its systems of reward and sanction to be fair. They further trust confidently the School Council, which enables their views and opinions to be heard and, where appropriate, acted upon. A popular house system encourages lively social interaction among the pupils and good-natured competitiveness.

Whole School

- 3.6 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

- 3.7 Throughout the school, the quality of links with parents and the community is good and these links are expanding. An active parents' association meets with the headmaster and his deputy at least twice a term. Parents engage well in fund-raising, both for the school and for selected charities. Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate a high degree of satisfaction with information received from the school and the opportunities to clarify and discuss this. They express satisfaction with the handling of concerns, and they feel that the school encourages them to be involved in its life and work. An appropriate complaints policy is in place, with clearly and publicly stated procedures. The school seeks positive links with the community, both through involvement with it and by inviting members to address pupils.

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- 3.8 The Preparatory School supplies full and regular information to parents by way of newsletters and leaflets. Informal and formal discussions are frequent and every half term an 'Open Hour' for parents is held at the school when matters of concern are freely raised. The school encourages parents to visit and examine displays of pupils' work and to speak with teachers informally. The school holds a formal interview evening for parents in December and provides a full and detailed report each summer.
- 3.9 The school also provides positive links with the local community. Members are invited to the school and to speak at school assemblies. Equally pupils reach out into the community, visiting such places as a garden centre, the local library and a nearby mosque. They take harvest gifts to the elderly and provide entertainment at a retirement home. The school raises funds for charities at home and abroad, further extending the pupils' understanding of the lives and needs of the wider community.

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- 3.10 Parents of children in the Grammar School have equally good opportunities to be involved in the school's activities and in its work for the development of their children. The school produces a very useful information pack for all parents and holds an induction meeting for all new parents before the beginning of their children's attendance. Attractive and regular newsletters are sent by post, and published on the school website.
- 3.11 The school promotes positive links with the community. The sports hall is made available in the evening and during school holidays, and an activity camp is held at the school during the Easter and summer holidays. The school's sporting links with local clubs is matched by its establishment as a centre for the local historical association and its provision of a training course for local science technicians. All sixth formers participate in the Millennium Volunteers service, which provides extensive engagement with the local community each year. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme is extensive and regularly followed to gold award standard. The school also provides placements for university students undergoing teacher training. Pupils raise funds for local charities, visit nearby care homes and, under a pupil initiative, raised significant support for the Bangladeshi appeal organised by Children in Need.

Whole School

- 3.12 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].

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 The quality of governance for the whole school is good. The governors have a clear vision for the school to succeed and they have initiated and directed much recent change effectively. This includes the incorporation of the Preparatory School at Lightcliffe, to provide for pupils from the age of two through to eighteen. The governors share a wide range of experience and expertise: financial, legal, educational and business. The number of committees which meet regularly - finance, staffing, health and safety, marketing, facilities, scholarships and bursaries – indicates further the degree of direct engagement by the governors and their resolve to ensure success.
- 4.2 Goals are clear and incorporated into a comprehensive three-year school improvement plan for 2006 to 2009. Most objectives are immediate and practical, so that the improvement in resources is already evident: increased ICT facilities throughout the school; new fencing in the Preparatory School to improve safety at play; an extensive outdoor locker base in the Grammar School to increase pupil space within each classroom; an attractive library and dining hall; enhanced security; extensive redecoration and improvement. The governors have also encouraged contacts beyond the school, including overseas, and thus endorsed a wider vision for Hipperholme.
- 4.3 Governors have undergone appropriate and formal training and they are well aware of their responsibilities. They have reviewed and revised all statutory policies and ensured their compliance. They are careful in their responsibilities for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils and for child protection. They have supported a new management structure, including a large number of senior appointments and a shift from a faculty base to the joint responsibility of heads of subjects for teaching, learning and assessment. Relationships between governors and staff are good, so that all share a thorough knowledge of the school and its plans as well as a common eagerness to succeed.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.4 The quality of leadership and management in the school is outstanding. It is committed, strong and enthusiastic. The headmaster, appointed in 2006, provides clear and direct leadership over all aspects of school activity. Policy is put effectively into practice. The principal of the Preparatory School provides clear and sensitive direction to all her staff, although her position within the framework of the whole school is imprecisely defined.
- 4.5 The senior management team consists of the deputy head, the bursar, the principal of the Preparatory School, the director of studies, the three pastoral heads of Grammar School divisions, and the leadership and enrichment co-ordinator. It meets formally each week to discuss and resolve matters of current importance in routine management and to consider longer-term needs. Each member has clearly defined responsibilities and roles, which are effectively discharged. Initiatives, ranging from closer assessment of pupils' progress to a wider range of social involvement by the pupils, are carried out successfully. The commitment and enthusiasm of the senior managers are clear and effect successful change throughout the school.
- 4.6 Middle managers, both pastoral and academic, have clearly defined responsibilities which they discharge very well. Information on pupils' abilities and their progress towards declared goals is shared well, and new targets are set regularly. Heads of subject meet twice

a term under the director of studies to monitor the effects of new policies and to agree modification. This good practice of consultation does not presently include subject co-ordinators in the Preparatory School.

- 4.7 Pastoral heads monitor effectively pupils' behaviour and study habits and they encourage them to participate widely in the full range of school activities. They meet weekly to share experiences and to promote overall success. Their work in the Grammar School is supported by heads of house, who prompt and encourage active pupil participation in extra-curricular activities and in school competitions. Personal challenge and growth as well as team participation is greatly enhanced thereby.
- 4.8 The school has well-qualified and committed staff, sufficient for its current size and able to provide a wide and comprehensive curriculum. Recruitment procedures are efficient and safe and all checks on staff and regular assistants and visitors are applied fully and correctly. The school subscribes to the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers, although none has been appointed since the last inspection. Teachers new to the school receive clear induction to its particular character and ethos. The school has established a scheme of staff appraisal that has been well received, and which remedies a deficiency noted in the last inspection. It is not yet fully imbedded throughout the school. In-service training and attendance on courses are encouraged in line with the published staff development policy. In-house staff training days are held regularly each year. Teachers feel an important part of the school and responsible for and sharing in its success.
- 4.9 Routine administration is efficient. The bursar is prompt to seek advice and support from outside agencies and he is quick to follow appropriate recommendations. The school has upgraded its security from fire and other hazards and it has mitigated the penetration of water to the basement of the Preparatory School, commented upon in the last Ofsted inspection there in January 2007. As the school is aware, it has not yet found a permanent and complete solution to this problem, and further measures are still under consideration to prevent it altogether. Financial management is careful and thorough. Secretarial provision is good, with hardworking and cheerful staff. Grounds and premises are well maintained, and they have been recently improved to the benefit and increased safety of all. Members take an evident pride in the school and feel justly a share in its success.
- 4.10 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff [Standard 4].
- 4.11 The school meets most of the regulatory requirements for premises and accommodation [Standard 5]. In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:
- (a) take all measures necessary to prevent the penetration of water to the basement of the Preparatory School [Regulation 5.(f)].
- 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 The Grammar School, Hipperholme has undergone much recent and successful change. It remains loyal to its aims and provides a good standard of education to the full range of its pupils. It is a committed and happy community of successful teachers and learners. The school's provision for its pupils is good, and much improved since the last inspection in meeting the needs of those with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who are gifted and talented. The quality of teaching is good, and so pupils' learning and their academic attainment are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and they are very well prepared for successful adult lives. The quality of pastoral care, and the school's concern for the pupils' welfare, health and safety, are outstanding. This reflects the outstanding quality of leadership and management in the school, under careful governance. Weaknesses are few. These relate to the limited sharing of best practice in teaching, to the still patchy use of the school's good ICT facilities and to the limited engagement of Preparatory School managers in the overall school management process.
- 5.2 Since the last inspection in April 2002, the school has improved significantly in its recognition of, and in its provision for, the full range of ability among its pupils and in the effective use of assessment to specify targets for pupils and to monitor successfully their progress with these. It has improved its appraisal system for staff and increased its provision for staff training and improvement. It has carried out a wide range of risk assessments, including those for outside visits and trips and for fire and other hazards. Management structures have been significantly reformed, producing a sense of change and enthusiasm for the future.
- 5.3 The school complies with most of the regulatory requirements, but does not at present meet Standard 5 (premises and accommodation).

Next Steps

- 5.4 The school provides well for all its pupils and it has enhanced its quality of education, provision and management since the last inspection. To strengthen this work, the following steps should be taken:
1. extend its best practice in teaching including the effective use of ICT across all subjects and years;
 2. continue to implement its recently revised appraisal system for all staff;
 3. define more clearly within governance the status of the managers of the Preparatory School in the overall context of the whole school.
- 5.5 In order to meet all the regulatory requirements, the school must:
- (1) take all measures necessary to prevent the penetration of water to the basement of the Preparatory School [Regulation 5.(f)].

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 28th to 31st January 2008. 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. 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.

List of Inspectors

Dr Anthony Dachs	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Felicity Lawson	Assistant Reporting Inspector
Mrs Julie Bolter	Head of Department, SHMIS school
Mr Roger Clark	Headmaster, SHMIS school
Mr Steven Hardes	Head, COBIS school
Mrs Pamela Johnson	Senior Housemistress, GSA school
Mr Rory O'Doherty	Headmaster, ISA school