



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**RISHWORTH SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Rishworth School

Full Name of School	<b>Rishworth School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>381/6001</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>1115562</b>		
Address	<b>Rishworth School Oldham Road Rishworth Sowerby Bridge West Yorkshire HX6 4QA</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01422 822217</b>		
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Email Address	<b>admin@rishworth-school.co.uk</b>		
Headmaster	<b>Mr Richard Baker</b>		
Chairman of Governors	<b>Dr Andrew Brooks</b>		
Age Range	<b>3 to 19</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>493</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (291 boys; 202 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>0</b>	5-11: <b>95</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>21</b>	11-19: <b>377</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>394</b>	Capacity for flexi-boarding: <b>Variable</b>
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>99</b>	
	Full:	<b>96</b>	Weekly: <b>3</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mr Anthony Wilkins</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection dates	<b>4 Oct 2011 to 5 Oct 2011</b>		
	<b>2 Nov 2011 to 4 Nov 2011</b>		

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in September 2005.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the 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 Standards 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.

The inspection of boarding was not carried out in conjunction with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills, and the report does not contain specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education and development in general. The full Ofsted report refers to an inspection in March 2010 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 Rishworth aims to provide a broad education for boys' and girls' enrichment and enjoyment, through curricula which it calls 'Academic and Beyond Academic'. The school endeavours to offer a friendly, caring and stimulating environment, where pupils feel happy, secure and challenged, a wide range of educational opportunities, and expert tuition. It is intended that pupils develop a love of learning and a thirst for excellence, self-reliance and an appreciation of personal virtues and spiritual values. To achieve these aims the school wishes to work closely with parents and the community at large.
- 1.2 Founded in 1724 as a co-educational school for twenty boys and girls, Rishworth is a school with a Christian ethos in the Anglican tradition that welcomes people of all faiths and of none. The original small school building is now the chapel. Heathfield, the junior school, opened in 1951, a ten-minute walk away, in an old mill and the mill owner's house. Rishworth is set in about 130 acres of parkland. A board of governors is responsible for the school, supported by four sub-committees which keep abreast of key aspects.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, additional senior staff have been appointed, a new boarding house has been opened, a room created where lessons can be observed and filmed, and a community sports club founded. The school has changed from being a trust to becoming a charitable company limited by guarantee.
- 1.4 The school has 493 pupils on roll, 291 boys and 202 girls. The junior school, for pupils aged three to eleven, has 116 pupils, including 21 in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which comprises Nursery and Reception classes. The senior school has 377 pupils aged eleven to nineteen, with 88 in the sixth form. There are 99 boarders aged ten to eighteen, 39 girls and 60 boys. English is an additional language (EAL) for 79 pupils, 73 of whom receive support. Most pupils are of white British background; about one seventh are international, mainly from Germany, Russia, Spain and the Far East.
- 1.5 The criterion for entry into the school is that pupils will benefit from the education provided. The Nursery is open to pupils from the age of three. Although pupils are welcome to join at any stage, the main entrance points are Nursery, Reception and Year 6 for the junior school and Years 7, 10 and 12 for the senior. All junior entrants take an age-appropriate assessment test. Senior pupils must have a suitable report from their previous school, are interviewed and may be required to take a written test. Almost all Heathfield pupils transfer to Rishworth alongside a similar number from a range of local preparatory and junior schools. The analysis of standardised tests shows that the ability profile of pupils entering the junior school is above the national average; the profile of senior school pupils taking GCSE is slightly above average. Pupils demonstrate a fairly wide range of abilities. The needs of the 71 pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are principally associated with dyslexia.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 Good achievement and pupils' excellent attitudes and personal development show that the school meets its aim of providing a broad education that generates, interest, enjoyment and success. In the EYFS, outstanding provision, leadership and management result in outcomes for children that are good with some excellent aspects; writing standards are not quite as high as in other areas. Pupils throughout the school are confident learners who behave extremely well and concentrate hard. They listen well, and cooperate with their peers and staff because they enjoy so much of what takes place. Progress is good because teaching is effective and pupils benefit from a curriculum which is good overall and excellent in the junior school. Extra-curricular activities are popular and successful, particularly in sports.
- 2.2 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They show great pride in their school and care deeply about each other's well-being. They learn from the positive examples set by the staff. Christian behaviour, integrity and happiness are all high on the list of pupils' characteristics. The welfare, health and safety of pupils have the highest priority so that in areas such as anti-bullying and child protection, procedures are detailed, systematic and implemented in a rigorously consistent manner. Pupils and their parents value greatly the high quality relationships staff engender, with a strong focus on pupils taking responsibility for their actions. The quality of the boarding experience is excellent.
- 2.3 Governance, leadership and management are excellent. Knowledgeable governors challenge the headmaster and are fully aware of the many strengths of the school and the priorities for further improvement. A highly cohesive team of senior leaders work towards a clearly stated vision of excellence and have ensured that all regulatory requirements are met. Parents report that they are very pleased with the quality of education provided for their children. They are most pleased with their children's attitudes and values, school leadership, the availability of policies, the quality of care and the extra-curricular activities available. A few parents are dissatisfied with the level of encouragement to become involved in school life but this view was not supported by inspection findings. The school has responded well to two recommendations of the previous inspection, improving assessment systems through individual pupil tracking and the formulation of targets, combined with better planning to meet the needs of lower attaining pupils. The school continues to focus on making improvements in teaching and learning and meeting the needs of the most able. However, at present, expectations of the highest attaining pupils are not always sufficiently high. This remains a priority in the school development plan, and was also a point made by a few parents.

## **2.(b) Action points**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Improve the quality of teaching of the most capable students in Heathfield and Rishworth, raising expectations of what they can achieve and so increasing their attainment.
  2. Raise children's attainment in early writing in the EYFS.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

#### **3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills**

- 3.1 Achievement is good overall and accords with the school's aim to instil in pupils a love of learning and a will to succeed. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and achieve much individual success. Progress is good in both the junior and senior schools, and attainment is above average.
- 3.2 A significant proportion of Heathfield pupils join the school at times other than the usual admission point, with a wide range of prior knowledge and understanding in English and mathematics. Through a good allocation of curriculum time and effective teaching, pupils' speaking, listening, reading, writing and numeracy improve steadily to a good standard. Pupils, particularly those with EAL and SEND, benefit from individual attention provided by teaching and support staff in small classes. Pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are good because effective use is made of a modern computer suite. In the best lessons pupils are creative, logical and show the ability to work well independently and co-operatively. In some lessons, the challenge and pace for the most capable pupils are not great enough for them to achieve what they could. Involvement in such spheres as sport plays a major part in pupils' education, resulting in highly successful achievements.
- 3.3 Rishworth pupils are similarly successful, showing good standards of literacy and mathematical ability. They use computer software confidently to enhance their learning. Their physical and creative skills are good, developed through many and various lessons, sports fixtures and clubs. Through their humanities lessons, pupils develop a good knowledge of environmental issues and reflect logically on global concerns such as population density and the causes and consequences of life in squatter or slum communities. As in Heathfield, the most able do not always maximise their learning in lessons because expectations are not high enough. Those pupils with particular needs and those with EAL are as successful as their peers.
- 3.4 Individual pupils are successful in areas as diverse as the triathlon, the National Youth Orchestra and gaining places at top universities. Each year nearly all Heathfield pupils gain places at Rishworth and virtually all pupils leaving Year 13 gain places at their chosen universities. Many pupils achieve examination success in a wide range of musical instruments. Hockey, netball, rounders and basketball teams have been league and tournament winners; individuals have been selected for representative honours in swimming, fencing, rugby, water polo, hockey and football in recent years.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data available for the years 2008 to 2010. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national tests at age eleven, and GCSE results at age 16, have been above average in relation to the national averages for maintained primary and secondary schools respectively. Performance in IGCSE English as a Second Language in 2010 was similar to United Kingdom norms. Results at A level have been similar to the national average for maintained schools.
- 3.6 The 2011 results were higher than those in 2010 and the highest the school has achieved. Almost all pupils at the age of eleven attained National Curriculum levels 4 or 5 in English and mathematics. About seven in every ten pupils attained five or

more A\* to C GCSE passes including English and mathematics. Approaching nine in every ten GCSE results were at A\* to C and about one-third were at A\* or A grade. In the sixth form over half the A-level outcomes were A or B grade. About a quarter of the sixth-form students carry out additional study for the Extended Project Qualification, equivalent to half an A level.

- 3.7 These levels of attainment, supported by standards observed in lessons and written work, indicate that pupils in both Heathfield and Rishworth make good progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability, as confirmed by standardised measures of progress.
- 3.8 Pupils' attitudes are extremely positive and much better than reported at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils show great respect for one another and take their responsibilities seriously. Polite and considerate, they enjoy working together as well as achieving individual success through their own initiative.

### **3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)**

- 3.9 The curriculum contributes well to pupils' academic development at both Heathfield and Rishworth, supporting the school's aim to provide a wide range of educational opportunities. The Heathfield curriculum is excellent and enhanced by an outstanding extra-curricular activities programme. At Rishworth the curriculum is good and supported by a good range of extra-curricular activities for day pupils and an excellent range for boarders, especially at weekends. Curriculum links between the junior and senior schools are strong.
- 3.10 The curriculum is very well thought through at Heathfield, contributing to above average standards in relation to pupils' age, ability and needs. All expected subjects are covered, including French and information and communication technology (ICT) from Year 1, and provision is strong for the creative arts, particularly music and art, and for sport. The balance of subjects is excellent with a focus on literacy and numeracy. Outdoor learning is a particular strength, taking advantage of the school location. The use of specialist facilities, for example for art, music, design and technology and sport, is carefully timetabled to enhance the richness of provision. Pupils' learning experience is also enriched by a programme of regular visits locally and abroad, often connected to specific subjects, such as a residential journey to France and theatre company visits to the school involving science and English.
- 3.11 At Rishworth, the curriculum is broad with a good range of subjects at each phase. The choice of options at GCSE and in the sixth form is good, and courses usually run even when numbers are low. ICT and religious studies are taught as discrete subjects for younger pupils enabling them to develop firm foundations of knowledge and understanding. Almost all pupils take French or Spanish at GCSE. Pupils' needs are met in science through single, double or triple (separate physics, chemistry and biology) courses. Physical education and sport lessons are included for all, with Year 11 joining Years 12 and 13 for an afternoon of senior games each week. A good range of A-level subjects is on offer, including psychology and economics, and general studies for those who wish. A good programme of visits outside school enhances the learning experience, such as to a variety of local places of worship and to theatre productions for English and drama students. Pupils derive great benefit from contact with local sports groups, such as in basketball and athletics, which use the school's facilities and offer coaching and training in return.

- 3.12 Specialist learning support is extremely effective with classroom assistants available at Heathfield and carefully planned additional provision at Rishworth. The English as a second language curriculum is a strength at Rishworth, with specific timetabled lessons and additional time available for those who need it. The personal, social, citizenship and health education programme is similarly strong throughout the school. Careers support is well structured, including substantial guidance on entering higher education.
- 3.13 The most able pupils are identified at an early stage at Heathfield and enrichment opportunities are built into the extensive extra-curricular programme, such as a creative writing club, mathematics challenge club, and chess organised by capable sixth-formers. A wide range of peripatetic music lessons and sports clubs are available at both school sites. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme is popular with pupils and successful. Academic extra-curricular courses are available at Rishworth, but these are fewer in number than for other areas. A comprehensive PAMA programme (Provision for the Academically Most Able) is available at Rishworth, sometimes for selected pupils and at other times for a wider audience. Philosophy and thought-provoking questions, such as 'Can we live forever?' and possible causes of the community riots this year, are examples of this provision.

### **3.(c) The contribution of teaching**

- 3.14 The quality of teaching is good with a significant number of high quality lessons in a range of subjects. The school aims to provide a stimulating environment in which pupils feel happy and secure in their learning. Teaching is effective in supporting this aim and promoting pupils' progress.
- 3.15 Teachers are well qualified and their strong subject knowledge facilitates pupils' achievements. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching, for example, in each of the modern foreign languages and in the individual sciences. Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent and this contributes to pupils' positive learning attitudes. Behaviour in lessons is excellent. Teachers make themselves readily available outside lessons to support pupils.
- 3.16 Planning is of a high quality and the best lessons have a distinct three-part structure, which includes opportunities for active engagement and for pupils to reflect on their learning. In some excellent lessons, clearly defined objectives and a brisk pace were set. Effective questioning allowed pupils to think for themselves; for example, in a Year 8 ICT session, pupils were shown some exemplar work on pop videos and, when asked to identify the strengths and weaknesses, did so with imagination and skill. On occasions, the pace of work is too slow or pupils are not given much opportunity to develop their independent learning and thinking skills through over-direction by the teacher.
- 3.17 Marking is generally regular. Frequently, good work is praised and recognised through the consistent use of a stamp in pupils' books and the allocation of credits, which are popular with pupils. The best marking offers detailed written comments which give an indication of how to improve; however, sometimes no advice is provided. Marking shows increasing evidence of the focus on literacy in the junior school, with detailed feedback written in books. The Year 7 marking policy has been effectively implemented and mistakes in spelling, punctuation and grammar are highlighted, with requests for correction. Target sheets are effectively used by teachers to raise expectations and the helpful self-evaluation sheets used by pupils are developing well. A good system for assessment and tracking involves careful

recording of the outcomes of regular assessments so that individual pupils' progress is tracked over time and support provided where necessary.

- 3.18 Classrooms are well-resourced. Interactive whiteboards and projectors are used routinely in many subjects, and where they are used effectively they provide a good visual stimulus to enhance learning; for example in a Year 9 biology class, a captivating short video clip of influenza germs spreading provoked enthusiastic discussion amongst pupils.
- 3.19 Since the previous inspection, teaching has been strengthened with a greater variety of styles employed to engage pupils in lessons. Regular lesson observations by line managers with constructive feedback to those observed, and the use of the lesson observation room, encourages teachers to reflect upon and improve their practice. The school has made progress in addressing the needs of the most able pupils. In some of the lessons observed, a lack of challenge was still evident and expectations were insufficiently high. However, pupils with particular learning needs, including those speaking English as a second language, receive excellent support from specialist teaching which contributes to their good progress.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils**

- 4.1 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and has improved substantially since the previous inspection. A strong sense of community and personal responsibility, together with happy, respectful relationships, demonstrate that the school fully meets its aims that pupils should develop an appreciation of personal virtues and spiritual values.
- 4.2 Pupils of all ages develop a strong spiritual awareness. Secure and confident, they feel accepted and supported by those around them. Pupils find their niche, for example through involvement in extra-curricular activity, and this contributes to their self-confidence. Their spiritual life has been greatly enhanced in recent years by the work of the visiting chaplaincy. The introduction of discrete religious studies lessons at Rishworth, complementing those at Heathfield, is adding a further dimension, both spiritually and culturally. In conversation, pupils show a mature understanding about what they and their friends hold important in their lives and they respond positively to the school's efforts to help them recognise their own individual worth and the worth in others. Pupils appreciate achievements being acknowledged in displays around the school, during assemblies, in newsletters and in the school magazines.
- 4.3 Pupils' moral awareness is outstanding and is developed by the daily life of the school, with its emphasis on acting in harmony with others. The mutual respect between staff and pupils creates an environment where rules are respected and followed. Pupils are highly conscious of their responsibility for those less fortunate than themselves and learn about the impact of their actions on others, for example through assemblies, religious studies and the personal, social, health and citizenship education programme. They apply their well-developed organisational skills in arranging fundraising events for a wide range of charities such as those supporting children and the homeless, collecting substantial sums of money.
- 4.4 The pupils' social development is excellent. Pupils are friendly and welcoming, proud of their school and supportive of each other. They take on responsibilities willingly, whether it is as simple as distributing pencils, or accepting the challenge of serving on one of the several committees, such as the food or charity committee. On these, pupils display initiative and develop leadership skills, growing in confidence as they begin to influence school practice. In the junior school, the imaginative 'spotters system' recognises and rewards any child who is spotted doing a good deed - such as carrying out an act of kindness, helping someone or picking up a piece of litter. In the senior school, a highly effective 'guide' system supports boarders new to the school. A strength of the guide and prefect systems is the rigorous training programmes which prepare the pupils for service and leadership.
- 4.5 Pupils are responsible citizens. They have a broad knowledge of public institutions and a clear awareness of how our wider society functions. The successful development of the various elected pupil bodies throughout the school is a practical example of the democratic process in action. Pupils' understanding of citizenship is apparent from learning to share in the EYFS, to sixth-form pupils exploring issues such as injustice, prejudice, and challenges to family life values.
- 4.6 Cultural awareness is excellent. The school is a harmonious, international community of day and boarding pupils, fostering understanding, tolerance and an appreciation of global cultures. Pupils from overseas are well integrated and highly

valued members of the community. Pupils' visits to religious centres, such as a Jewish museum, develop their strong awareness of the values and contributions of a wide range of religious and cultural traditions. A feature of the curriculum is the frequent visits of Rishworth pupils to talk to the pupils at Heathfield about their own cultures and faiths. As well as the chapel, which is used for Christian services throughout the year, an Islamic prayer room has been created in the senior school for use by Muslim pupils. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of the world in which they live, appreciate its diversity, and recognise the need for harmony. Pupils' involvement in music-making, drama productions and the many visits in this country and beyond, as far afield as Alaska, adds greatly to their understanding of culture.

#### **4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety**

- 4.7 The school provides excellent pastoral care for all its pupils, fulfilling its aim of creating a friendly and caring environment in which they feel happy and secure. Alongside the formal pastoral structure of form tutors and pastoral leaders, sixth-form prefects are trained to carry out a valuable pastoral role, making themselves available to younger pupils for help and support. A particular strength of the school is that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, know the pupils extremely well and contribute to the creation of a supportive and positive environment.
- 4.8 Staff know and understand pupils' needs and are generous in the time they give to them, resolving problems at an early stage. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved its programme of guidance for pupils selecting sixth-form subjects, and pupils speak appreciatively of the guidance they receive, which begins in Year 10.
- 4.9 The school operates clear reward systems, for the youngest pupils through to the sixth form. Pupils' achievements are celebrated in lessons, assemblies, school displays and newsletters. The school's sanctions policy is clear and logical and pupils regard it as fair. Accurate records are kept for statutory purposes. Pupils are extremely confident in the school's ability to deal with all pastoral issues, including bullying, promptly and effectively. Helpful notices around the school remind pupils of procedures to be followed.
- 4.10 Safeguarding arrangements are excellent. The school is scrupulous in its determination to ensure the safety of its pupils, as reflected in the many extremely thorough policies and procedures it has in place, including governors' 'no notice' checks upon information kept on staff. A careful consultation process has produced an accessibility plan for those with physical or learning needs. An admission register is completed and stored appropriately. Pupil registration is carried out promptly and efficiently, logging late arrivals and following up absences. Regular back-ups of the electronic register are kept, both electronically and on paper. Matrons provide outstanding care for pupils who are unwell and are also responsible for implementing the school's comprehensive first-aid policy. The school is rightly proud of the way excellent health and safety practices are embedded in the routines of school life, with individual staff members instinctively taking responsibility for developing and implementing policies and procedures in their own areas. Risk assessments are thorough and robust. When a complex risk requires assessment, the school consults widely and thoughtfully, to produce a document which is truly fit for purpose. Regular fire drills combine with other fire prevention measures to minimise the likelihood of fire.

- 4.11 School lunches are of excellent quality. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and well. Pupils appreciate both the good variety and choice of food and the catering team's responsiveness to suggestions made by the school council. The school's curricular and extra-curricular sporting provision, which extends to the sixth form, encourages pupils to engage in physical activity and adopt a healthy and active lifestyle.

#### **4.(c) The quality of boarding education**

- 4.12 The quality of boarding education is excellent and plays a valuable part in pupils' education and personal development, meeting the school's aims. The outstanding standard of boarding as judged by Ofsted in 2010 is being maintained. Currently all boarders are of senior school age, although Heathfield pupils can be accepted as boarders.
- 4.13 Boarders' accommodation is homely and welcoming. Girls are members of one house and accommodated in one building. Boys are members of one house and have accommodation in four separate areas. High quality communal areas, equipped with computers, televisions and games, are appreciated for relaxation and socialising. Snacks and drinks can be made in fully equipped kitchens from readily available supplies of food. Boarders take a pride in their surroundings and keep them neat and tidy. They are very happy with arrangements, which give them many of the freedoms of home as well as setting appropriate boundaries. They are able to experience a real sense of independent living; this is particularly true for sixth-form pupils who can opt to live in separate areas in the houses if they wish. All the boarders who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire stated that they enjoyed boarding and it helped them develop as a person, and almost all parents responded in a similar vein.
- 4.14 The standard of pastoral care and supervision provided by resident and non-resident members of staff is exemplary. Staff display great kindness and thoughtfulness towards boarders, many of whom are far from their home countries. Pupils for whom English is a second language are supported extremely well, for example by placing them in bedrooms with English speaking pupils to support integration and the acquisition of English. The experienced boarding staff team are exceptionally well organised, and work closely together. Documentation is detailed and very helpful for pupils, parents and staff. Medical and boarding staff deal extremely well with medical issues and consequently the boarders feel well looked after and safe. Through bi-weekly reports, all teaching staff are made aware of developments in the boarding community, ensuring that both academic and pastoral welfare have a high priority. Relationships are very strong and so boarders feel happy approaching any of their house staff.
- 4.15 Boarders said that they are given a voice for their views through various committees and they are offered opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility. For example, overseas pupils establish clubs in their own language. Evening and weekend activities are excellent. Staff plan events which meet pupils' needs, including occasional 'lazy days' when, by request, nothing is planned, so all can relax. In addition to week-time experiences such as basketball, film club and early evening social bar, arrangements are made at the weekend for all the boarding community to visit historic centres such as York and Chester and carry out shopping visits to Manchester and Sheffield. They can opt into popular Sunday activities such as go-karting, paintballing and skiing. Services are provided in the chapel on several Sundays each term.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) The quality of governance**

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent. Governors have a wide range of expertise, covering law, administration, estate management, business, education and the Church, and they give generously of their time and experience to support the school in achieving its aims. The governors take seriously their responsibility to oversee educational standards. To this end, they are provided with high quality data by the headmaster and bursar, enabling them to provide challenge and stimulus for improvement. Governors are a visible presence in the school. They observe lessons, attend staff in-service training and meet pupils, staff and parents both formally and informally. Regular reports from the headmaster and senior team, together with sub-committees and other regular meetings, ensure that the governors have an excellent insight into the working of the school. One governor has particular responsibility for Heathfield.
- 5.2 Governors speak with knowledge and understanding of school development initiatives, such as provision for the academically most able, and the focus upon standards of spelling and grammar in the assessment of pupils' work. The governing body is extremely effective in discharging its responsibilities for child protection, welfare, health and safety throughout the school. Designated governors exercise strong oversight of these areas, working closely with the headmaster and his senior team and undertaking formal training as appropriate. The governors' relationship with the headmaster and the school is characterised by openness, honesty and challenge, as illustrated by their recent decision to appoint one governor as an 'independent scrutineer and challenger' to test the robustness of the school's compliance with safeguarding regulations. The governors are committed to careful financial planning for the maintenance and development of accommodation, resources and the safe recruitment of high quality staff. Their strong commitment and support for the school is recognised by parents.

### **5.(b) The quality of leadership and management**

- 5.3 The leadership and management of Heathfield and Rishworth are both excellent. The headmaster, with the support of his senior team, has generated a friendly, caring and stimulating environment, where pupils are happy and secure, a most effective implementation of the school's aims. Standards are improving at a good rate, as is the quality of teaching, as a result of continuing emphasis on these key areas. Responsibilities are clearly delegated in both schools. The line management structure gives senior staff confidence and security as they carry out their roles. The head of Heathfield has responsibility for its day-to-day leadership and management but works closely with the headmaster, ensuring consistency of implementation of whole-school policies, such as those concerning child protection, and the drive for higher standards. Appropriate differences in practices between the two sites are valued, helping pupils to look forward to their move to Rishworth.
- 5.4 The many strengths of the senior team, and the co-operative manner in which they work, have been instrumental in bringing about substantial improvements over a period of many years. In all areas of school life, leaders are driven by the well-being of the pupils and the need to maximise their enjoyment and success. They hold the extended senior team and middle leaders to account for their successes, modelling

best practice. Senior managers are most effective teachers, aware that this remains their core skill and purpose as educators.

- 5.5 To assist with improvement in teaching and learning, the school has invested much time and energy in developing use of the lesson observation room. Observers become familiar with how to appraise the quality of teaching and learning first hand and have the opportunity to review their decisions by checking recordings of lessons. This process has been instrumental in improving the quality of provision, although judgemental criteria are not always followed rigorously. These voluntary activities enhance the effective appraisal systems used at Heathfield and Rishworth. In working towards the goal of higher attainment, greater priority is being given to the monitoring and evaluation of lessons, pupils' work and all aspects of the school.
- 5.6 Communication is very effective and positive, which results in high morale and a willingness and openness amongst the staff. The facilities for learning are excellent and well maintained at both Heathfield and Rishworth, including the refurbished swimming pool, gymnasium and sports hall, sixth-form centre and day houses. They make a key contribution to pupils' success in a number of areas. Teaching staff are well-qualified and appointed using rigorous selection systems. They receive excellent help from administrative, catering and other support staff. Effective in-service training has a high priority for all staff and governors, and staff are properly trained in child protection procedures.

### **5.(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians**

- 5.7 The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent. The school is fully meeting its aim to work closely with parents and the community at large. In questionnaire responses parents were highly positive about most aspects of the school's work and the readily available information that the school provides about its policies and procedures. A small minority of responses showed some concern over the extent the school encourages parents to become involved and the help provided for their children's academic needs. All required policies are available to parents and are published on the website.
- 5.8 High quality school prospectuses and parent and pupil handbooks give clear and thorough information to parents. Regular newsletters are sent as paper copies or electronically - as parents wish - at both Rishworth and Heathfield. Communication with parents of boarders is exceptionally good. When staff travel to countries where pupils originate, they make a point of meeting with parents who may not have been able to visit Rishworth themselves. Most parents feel encouraged to get involved with the life of the school, such as through the parent teacher association, which hold its own evening at the start of each year for new parents. Inspection evidence of parental attendance and involvement supports the positive majority view. With regard to support for pupils' academic needs, inspection evidence shows that those pupils with particular needs are very well provided for, including those for whom English is an additional language, but that a greater degree of challenge is needed at times for high attainers.
- 5.9 The school has an appropriate complaints procedure policy and inspection evidence indicates that parental concerns are dealt with promptly, carefully and generally to parental satisfaction. There are no formal complaints on record. Almost all parents agreed that timely responses were received to any questions they asked, in line with the school's aim of responding to all parents within twenty-four hours, and that communication with the school is easy.

- 5.10 All Heathfield pupils from Year 1 upwards have a homework diary which is used very effectively to communicate with parents. Regular formal and informal contact is made and parents are invited to coffee mornings where issues can be raised. These discussions have led to some helpful changes in practice, for example, the use of electronic communication with parents, and to the provision of ICT lessons for parents who wished to upgrade their technological skills. This has since developed further, as parents visit the school to learn about mathematics, reading and writing strategies they can use to help with their children's homework.
- 5.11 Staff and parents at Rishworth communicate very effectively using the student planner as a conduit. All parents are invited to meet their child's new form tutor at a parents' evening early in the year and leaders of sections of the school make contact with parents of all new pupils as they enter the school to establish a direct line of communication.
- 5.12 Written reports to parents are very informative, and include targets for improvement. Each year, two full reports are issued for all year groups at Heathfield and for most year groups at Rishworth. One full report is provided for Years 11 and 13. Senior school pupils and their parents also receive attainment and effort grades each half term. Senior school parents' evenings are complemented by a wide range of different meetings to inform parents about important choices such as GCSE, sixth-form courses and applying to higher education.

## **6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

### **6.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

6.1 The effectiveness of the EYFS provision is outstanding. It is underpinned by a warm, family environment where the children are safeguarded effectively and cared for exceptionally well. Comprehensive recording of observations and assessments enables staff to plan to meet the needs of each child. Effective self-evaluation enables existing high standards to be maintained and also identifies areas for further improvement. Very positive relationships with parents and the local education services promote an excellent quality of education and care. Since the previous Ofsted inspection, staff have very successfully addressed the shortfall in children's listening skills. The great strengths in the EYFS indicate that its capacity for further improvement is outstanding.

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

6.2 Leadership and management are outstanding, resulting in a safe and secure environment where the needs of the children are nurtured and safeguarded highly effectively by suitable, well-qualified staff. Policies and procedures are implemented consistently to promote a positive and inclusive atmosphere in which children thrive, supported by accessible and stimulating resources. High aspirations and clear vision are communicated well by the leaders: consequently staff work together as a happy, caring and excellent team. Regular and productive planning and evaluation meetings result in continuous improvement and clear self-evaluation. Staff have access to relevant training, including visiting other settings, and links with the local authority are highly supportive. The wide range of good quality resources is used effectively to achieve high quality outcomes. Parents are supportive of the school and they are well informed of their children's learning and development, documented through useful learning journals.

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

6.3 The quality of the provision is outstanding. Staff support children extremely well. Their careful observations and assessment lead to planning which targets the next steps and benefits children's learning. They identify individual needs, ensuring that every child receives the necessary support. The unit provides a stimulating and welcoming environment where children have many opportunities for planned, purposeful play and exploration, well balanced between adult-led and child-initiated activities. Excellent examples included children re-telling the story of *Rosie's Walk* with their teacher and the use of the 'atelier' area where children were creative with a wonderful selection of craft resources. The use of the outdoor area, including the woodland, where for example three Nursery children enjoyed a phonics activity with their teacher and the class bear, further enhances children's active learning. However, linking the outdoor area activities to the planned curriculum, including physical development, is at an early stage. Children's welfare is given a high priority. Staff guide children in establishing clear routines that assist the understanding of safety and the development of excellent attitudes to health and

personal hygiene. Regular checks of equipment both indoors and out, and suitable risk assessments, create an extremely safe environment.

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

- 6.4 Outcomes for the children are good with a number of excellent features. From different starting points they make substantial progress. At the end of Reception, most achieve good standards in all six areas of learning and some exceed the expectations of the Early Learning Goals, although standards in writing are not as high as in other areas. Children are active and enthusiastic learners and show excellent levels of concentration and motivation, working well both individually and co-operatively. They can work independently, accessing their own resources and enjoy solving problems, such as 'Why is the octopus sticking to my rod?' At this early stage in the school year, literacy and numeracy skills are developing appropriately, alongside ICT skills. Role-play areas and projects enable children to learn about the wider world, including Chinese New Year, and European Languages Day, where they become French for the day. They demonstrate excellent levels of behaviour and show respect and care for each other by taking turns and sharing willingly. They approach adults with confidence and are willing to share with their key workers any concerns they may have. Children understand about eating healthily, the need for personal hygiene and being safe. They are developing secure foundations for their future well-being in all aspects of learning.

**Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.**

## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed 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 boarding houses 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

Mr Peter McGregor	Reporting Inspector
Mr Stephen Buglass	Head, IAPS school
Ms Pat Clayfield	Deputy head, HMC school
Mrs Isobel Nixon	Head, SHMIS school
Miss Adrienne Richmond	Director of studies, GSA school
Dr Angela Slater	Head, SHMIS school
Mrs Sally Gray	Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector