



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
THE HAMMOND**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

The Hammond

Full Name of School	The Hammond
DfE Number	896/6016
Registered Charity Number	1022427
Address	The Hammond Mannings Lane Hoole Village Chester Cheshire CH2 4ES
Telephone Number	01244 305350
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Email Address	jan.foden@thehammondschool.co.uk
Principal	Mrs Maggie Evans
Chairman of Directors	Mr Dennis Hatfield CBE
Age Range	3 to 21
Total Number of Pupils	238
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (76 boys; 162 girls)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 4 11-21: 211 5-11: 23
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 162
Number of Boarders	Total: 76 Full: 75 Weekly: 1
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Deborah Speakman
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	28 Jan 2014 to 31 Jan 2014

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in March 2008

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State 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, as amended. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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 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 Education (DfE) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

This inspection contains 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, personal development and welfare. Until September 2011, Boarding inspections were carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors 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.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgements.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is**

'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade. Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements.

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 the chair of directors, 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 Adrian Underwood	Reporting Inspector
Mr David Dawswell	Team Inspector (Second Master, HMC school)
Mrs Linde Melhuish	Team Inspector (Former Principal, Society of Heads school)
Mrs Geraldine Yandell	Team Inspector (Headmistress, ISA school)
Dr Nicholas England	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Lynda Sharpe	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The Hammond is a day and boarding school for pupils aged 3 to 21. Located in Hoole Village on the outskirts of Chester, the school was founded in 1917, and in 1980 became a charitable trust overseen by a board of directors. The school is one of nine schools which receive the Music and Dance Award (MDS) from the Department for Education. The school also receives funding through the Dance and Drama Awards (DaDA) scheme for some of its post-16 courses.
- 1.2 The school consists of a large country house, a number of recently built vocational facilities and some mobile classrooms to the rear of the school, housing art, science and mathematics. The preparatory (prep) school, for pupils from the ages of three to eleven including those aged under five in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), occupies a building in the grounds of the senior school. The two boarding houses (for pupils aged 11 to 16) are situated two miles away from the school and boarders are bussed in and out each day. Boarders in the sixth form use lodgings in the Chester area.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, in March 2008, the Hammond has completed the building of its performing arts centre and dining facilities, instigated the building of a new music faculty and four professional dance studios, refurbished the main house, including a new information and communication technology (ICT) suite, upgraded the library and opened a small preparatory school in September 2011. A new principal was appointed in September 2008.
- 1.4 The school aims to provide specialist vocational training of the highest quality in dance, drama and music combined with an excellent academic environment for young people. The school seeks to value achievement, encouraging young people to adopt an individual learning style in a supportive and challenging, creative environment. The school strives to value co-operation, tolerance and friendship and aims to work closely in partnership with parents and carers in order to realise the full potential of every young person in all areas of school life.
- 1.5 The school currently has 238 pupils, 76 boys and 162 girls; 27 are in the preparatory school (including 4 in the early years) and 211 are in the senior school, of whom 92 are in the sixth form. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage. There are 76 boarders in Years 7 to 11, the majority of whom are from across the United Kingdom and a few from overseas. Forty-two sixth formers live in local lodgings. Pupils come to the school from a wide range of backgrounds and previous educational experiences.
- 1.6 Nationally standardised tests taken by pupils indicate that the ability profile of the senior school and the sixth form is in line with the national average, as agreed with evidence from the school. The numbers are still so small in the prep school that any data on ability profile is not reliable. Pupils applying to the senior school are assessed by audition for their potential in the performing arts, and, because of the nature of the school, this evaluation overrides any academic assessment. Eight pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) receive support for their language development. The school has identified 53 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 27 of whom receive specialist learning support. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.7 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 Hammond School provides an excellent quality of education. Although the prep school is a new section of the school, its pupils already enjoy a high standard of education through excellent teaching and strong leadership. The EYFS setting is an even newer addition and gives children a good start to their education, although the outdoor activities do not currently fully cover the seven areas of learning. Since the previous inspection, the school has enhanced its provision for the performing arts and this is reflected in the exceptional standards achieved by students in their vocational programmes. Academic standards in the senior school, including Years 12 and 13, are good and are supported by excellent teaching. The curricular and co-curricular provision is excellent throughout the school.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal and social development are excellent and underpin their success in performance and the harmony of the pupil community. Pupils are palpably happy, enjoy excellent relationships with their teachers and value the extremely strong pastoral care they receive. The quality of the pupils' personal development strongly supports their success in the performing arts. They are very supportive of each other in group work and exhibit a very high level of commitment to training and practice in their specialist discipline. The quality of the boarding education is good and the care for boarders in the two houses is excellent. Some requirements for lodgings in respect of monitoring are not fully met although arrangements for the general welfare, health and safety of pupils are good.
- 2.3 The governance of the school is good. The directors have ensured that new facilities for music and dance and preparatory education have been built. They also play an active role in the school, for example in the auditions programme, the in-service training sessions and the many pupil performances. Their oversight of safeguarding is good and they give support to the new EYFS setting and to the boarding houses, but have not given sufficient attention to the monitoring of lodgings. The leadership and management of the school are good and the recent developments in the management structure address the school's development plan, which is very well structured and covers in detail all of the school's educational programmes. The management of the individual boarding houses is excellent, but the overall management of boarding is not cohesive as no one person has oversight. The school has addressed the recommendation in the previous inspection to continue to develop the roles of subject co-ordinators, especially in the leadership and monitoring of the curriculum. The role of the heads of departments has been strengthened and they are leading their departments enthusiastically. Links with parents are excellent. Parents are strongly supportive of the school and highly value their children's educational opportunities.

2.(b) Action points**(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.
- 2.5 The school does not meet all the National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Boarding Schools 2013, and therefore it must:
- ensure that the requirements for lodgings arranged by the school for pupils under the age of 18 are fully implemented [National Minimum Standard 20, under Lodgings (long stay)].

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action point, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure a member of staff is delegated to have overall charge of the boarding.
 2. In the EYFS, extend the use of outdoor activities in order to give a better balance to indoor and outdoor provision across all seven areas of learning.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning

3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.

Preparatory School

3.2 In the EYFS, all children are beginning to develop skills for the future. From a wide range of starting points, children make good progress so that the majority achieve the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning by the end of Reception. Nursery children are learning to count and order numbers and they blend and segment sounds as a pre-reading activity. They are keen to make marks, show increasing imagination, creativity and a growing knowledge of the world. They display a wide range of interests and enjoy choosing their own activities. By the end of Reception, children can read well, write in sentences using simple punctuation, add and subtract competently using single digits and solve simple mathematical problems.

3.3 Pupils throughout the prep school listen very attentively and have very effective skills in literacy and numeracy. They enjoy the opportunities to complete independent research, demonstrating very well-developed reasoning skills. Older pupils are confident and articulate in discussing their work and can give sophisticated explanations of the sources of their written work. Pupils' creativity is very strong, supported by music, dance and drama lessons with specialist teachers. Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be excellent in relation to age-related expectations. The pupils follow a broad curriculum and, at the end of Year 6, the majority move into the senior school. This level of attainment was confirmed by the inspection judgements as assessed in lesson observations, in the scrutiny of the pupils' work and in discussions with them, and indicates that pupils make excellent progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. Pupils with SEND are well supported and, with the additional element of being in very small classes, are enabled to make at least good progress. No pupil in the prep school requires EAL support.

3.4 Pupils show an excellent attitude to their work in lessons and activities. They are well-motivated and speak about their lessons with genuine enthusiasm. The pupils' behaviour is excellent. They organise their work well and settle to work quickly both independently and when working in groups. They co-operate very well with each other and with the staff and successfully create an atmosphere that is highly conducive to their learning and progress.

Senior School

3.5 The achievement of pupils is in line with the schools' aims for academic and vocational education. Pupils show good understanding, skills and knowledge in practical and academic subjects in lessons and in their written work. Standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing are good and skills in dance, music and drama are very highly developed. Pupils have good mathematical skills which they apply to their learning across the curriculum. They make effective use of ICT to support their learning, as seen in creative display posters and in pupils' research, and their discussions in class confirm a good level of critical thinking. They have very strong physical, creative and aesthetic skills, further enhanced by an extremely wide range of opportunities for performance. Their achievements in co-curricular activities are outstanding. Visits to dance, theatre and music performances not only

enhance pupils' understanding but also play a vital role in encouraging pupils to aim for the highest standards in their vocational studies. Pupils in Years 12 and 13 reach very high levels in their chosen fields, many gaining distinction in their examinations. During the inspection students were observed giving musical performances of a very high level and then critiquing each other's performances with incisive observations. On leaving the sixth form, the majority of pupils go on to pursue courses or move directly into employment in the performing arts, with notable success. For example, former students have recently graduated from the Bolshoi Ballet Academy or been awarded a significant musical theatre scholarship by *The Stage* newspaper. *The Dancing Times* recently commended the pupils, highlighting their versatility in a wide range of performance skills.

- 3.6 Pupils with SEND make good progress, assisted effectively by the learning support staff and structured help given in small classes. Able, gifted and talented pupils are identified and supported by challenging performance and academic targets. The very few pupils with EAL have a good command of English and are able to make progress in all subjects.
- 3.7 Exceptional results in vocational courses such as BTEC and Trinity diploma examinations in dance, drama and music are a major strength of the school. Pupils also achieve outstanding success in a wide variety of examinations including those of the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) and the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) examinations. These carry significant points awarded by the Universities and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS) and by Year 11 many pupils have already gained these points and A-level equivalent passes.
- 3.8 Pupils also sit GCSE and A Level examinations. The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2010-2012. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. GCSE and A Level results have been similar to the national average for maintained schools in these years. In 2013 the GCSE results were notably higher than in previous years. This level of academic attainment indicates that pupils make at least appropriate progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. However, throughout the senior school, pupils show an excellent attitude to learning and make rapid progress in the vocational areas, and good progress was seen in academic subjects during the inspection, as standards have risen in the last two years. Pupils work with strong motivation, perseverance and dedication. They work independently and also co-operate in pair and group work, taking pride in their work, and they are highly supportive of each other. There are excellent relationships between staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves which have a positive impact on learning.

3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision

- 3.9 The contribution of the curriculum and co-curricular provision is excellent.

Preparatory School

- 3.10 In the EYFS and the preparatory school, the curriculum is well balanced and enhanced by specialist teaching in physical education (PE), dance, swimming and music. This curriculum enables pupils to develop linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative talents. It is suitable for all ages and abilities. The curriculum is strengthened by the use of senior school resources for ICT, dance and music. Those pupils who have been identified with SEND are supported with individual education plans, which teachers

use to target their needs in lessons. In the environment of the small classes in the prep school, pupils with SEND benefit from individual attention and regular reviews of their progress.

- 3.11 In the EYFS there is a good balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities and an accurate profile of each child informs staff about the next steps in learning so that each child's needs are met. The outdoor area does not, as yet, reflect the welcoming and colourful indoor environment and, as the EYFS setting is new, it is not yet widely used as an outdoor classroom across all areas of learning. However, there are plans to improve this and the weekly opportunity to take part in activities in the school's woodland area enables children to live adventurously, make decisions and think independently. EYFS pupils take part in extra-curricular fencing, crafts, gardening and a 'Horrible History' club.
- 3.12 The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is strong. Pupils have written their own school prayer and that, along with the mission statement, reflect the fundamental values of the prep school. Year 6 pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education. A wide range of co-curricular activities for all ages is provided with staff, visiting teachers and senior pupils contributing to the provision. The pupils' work in class is enriched by a number of visits and good links with a number of charities, both local and international.

Senior School

- 3.13 The school meets its aim of enabling pupils to experience a broad and balanced education, to acquire and develop knowledge, understanding, skills and qualifications, and to gain confidence to progress to the next stage in their life. The curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' achievements. The comprehensive PSHE programme enables pupils to question their attitudes and values and develop their oral skills.
- 3.14 The extended day gives time for pupils to develop their talents in specific areas, as well as to study a wide range of subjects. The excellent curriculum enables pupils to develop linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative talents. The curriculum is suitable for all ages and abilities. Pupils reported that their preferences are accommodated at GCSE. Small class sizes in many subjects enable teachers to respond sensitively and creatively to pupils' learning needs, and encourage pupils to develop confidence and show commitment. In addition to their many performance opportunities and practices, pupils' experiences are enriched by a carousel of other activities.
- 3.15 Support for pupils with SEND is aided by detailed education plans containing information about how teachers should enable pupil progress. Staff are clearly aware of the needs of their pupils, and spend time identifying those with additional needs through standardised tests. Teachers discuss learning concerns, and pupils are enabled to seek guidance and advice from the SEND department. Regular reviews are made of the progress of pupils with SEND. Pupils are identified as able, gifted and talented before entry to the senior school, as well as during their time in the school and the lists are monitored to ensure that effective progress is made.
- 3.16 Pupils in Years 12 and 13 have the opportunity to study for the Trinity level six diplomas in professional dance and professional musical theatre. In addition to the two, three year diploma courses there is a two year BTec Diploma level 3 course in Performing Arts (Acting). Most students also study for at least one A level.

Involvement in these opportunities for the highest level of performance makes an exceptional contribution to their excellent achievement and personal development.

- 3.17 Following assessment of their aptitudes and suitable work experience in Year 10, detailed careers guidance and advice is offered at the beginning of Year 11. As pupils' futures will be within the performing arts world, they benefit from the detailed knowledge of the many professionals involved in the teaching of the performing arts. Pupils reported that they valued this guidance and the advice on other careers.
- 3.18 Pupils have many opportunities to share their talents with the wider community; staff and pupils lead workshops at other schools as part of the outreach programme and local schools attend productions at the school. Pupils raise funds for charities, often where there is a personal connection between a pupil or teacher and the organisation. The Year 7 outdoor activities expedition provides the opportunity for pupils to challenge themselves and aids integration of all pupils. Enrichment is given through trips out of school, such as theatre and dance performances, and through overseas language trips which incorporate cultural aspects.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.19 The quality of teaching is excellent.

Preparatory School

- 3.20 In the EYFS the experienced staff have an excellent knowledge of the learning and development requirements and how young children develop. Staff are enthusiastic, work exceptionally well as a team and value each child as uniquely special. The staff set high expectations, helping children to make good progress in their learning and development and ensuring their individual needs are well met. Assessment through observation is part of daily practice and comprehensive learning journals, which are shared with parents, are used effectively to guide planning and target next steps. Staff promote good manners and helpfulness, with the result that the children are unfailingly polite, well behaved and considerate towards others.
- 3.21 In the prep school, teaching effectively promotes progress in fulfilment of the school's academic aims. Pupils respond to the high expectations of the teachers; for example, excellent and enthusiastic teaching encouraged the pupils to develop their singing skills effectively as witnessed in a whole school music lesson. Lessons are planned with meticulous care; they are well paced and have an excellent variety of stimulating activities. The progress of pupils is carefully monitored at all stages by a centralised system. This is a well-managed and recent initiative, but it is too early, as yet, to judge its effectiveness.
- 3.22 Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and use very effective questioning to extend the pupils learning; they know their pupils extremely well, matching activities to the pupils' needs. In all lessons praise and encouragement are used to good effect. In the best cases marking is thorough, with helpful comments for improvement, but not all marking follows this good practice. Teachers have access to a good range of resources and use them effectively to promote independent learning, in particular.
- 3.23 Pupils are provided with many good opportunities to work collaboratively in class. There is a good level of challenge for the most able and pupils with SEND are sensitively supported in class and perform very well relative to their abilities. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils, who are confident to seek help if

they need it. Throughout the prep school, the management of pupils' behaviour by teachers is excellent and contributes strongly to pupils' highly positive attitudes towards learning.

Senior School

- 3.24 Teaching is of a very high quality in the vocational courses and is good in the academic curriculum, fulfilling the schools' aim that pupils acquire and develop knowledge, understanding, skills and qualifications. Teachers have an infectious enthusiasm to which pupils respond positively. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and skills and, in the vocational dance programme in particular, contribute to pupils' progress by demonstrating techniques to a high level. Teachers plan their lessons well and include strategies to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers know their pupils very well and praise pupils for good achievement, whilst not ignoring the need to challenge them to aim higher. Very high standards of behaviour and presentation are the norm with pupils bringing their performance disciplines into the classroom.
- 3.25 Teaching in Years 12 and 13 enables pupils to be independent learners. Pupils report that they value this approach and the encouragement teachers give them to plan their projects, whether in dance choreography or researching the motivation of Iago in *Othello*. This was evident in all the lessons observed in these year groups, where the ease of communication with teachers was a major contribution to progress in the lesson. Throughout the senior school, pupils confirmed that one of the greatest strengths of the teaching was to give them much more confidence in their abilities. The teaching is enhanced by a very high quality of resources, notably in the performance field. Dance studios, theatre spaces and music rooms are fitted out with resources to a standard comparable with the professional stage, and teachers use these highly effectively both in lessons and in performance rehearsal.
- 3.26 Teaching successfully addresses the needs of pupils with SEND. Tasks are set at different levels and specialist help provided on an individual basis. However, it is notable that these pupils enjoy inclusivity within the Hammond community. In whatever academic or vocational discipline, those with SEND are fully engaged in the learning activity and teachers ensure that their strengths are utilised and praised. This is achieved through very good communication between the learning support department and teachers as well as regular training on special needs teaching techniques. Clearly, as a result of the competitive auditioning process for entry to the school, pupils are talented in the performing arts. These talents are equally well supported, significantly by teaching which expects pupils to aim for very high professional standards in preparation for careers on the stage.
- 3.27 More detailed assessment strategies for academic subjects have been developed, thus addressing the comment in the previous inspection that data performance management should be further exploited. Pupils' work is carefully marked and good guidance is given for improvement. Pupils confirm that they know the standards they have reached and what they need to do to improve their grades. This has been the result of teachers being made more aware of pupils' academic ability, regular reviews of targets and a developing pupil-monitoring mechanism. In vocational subjects, regular assessment informs pupils about what they have to do to excel in their discipline.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 In the EYFS, the children are well behaved, happy and co-operative, working together harmoniously in group and paired activities. They show respect for each other, listen carefully to and follow instructions well. They share and take turns from an early age, showing increasing independence. The children's personal, social and emotional development is well supported through circle time, assemblies and a system of reward stickers, and they are well prepared for their transition into Year 1.
- 4.3 At all ages pupils show outstanding maturity, self-awareness, and respect for each other. Their outstanding development is apparent in all they do and say during the school day and in their boarding houses. Pupils commented that they had developed significantly and felt able to be independent and self-reliant, particularly those who board or live out in lodgings. They are happy, positive people who value the opinions of others, and are confident in expressing their own. The environment of pupil and teacher support successfully encourages the pupils to show commitment and perseverance, however difficult they might find a task. Pupils who admitted to having difficulties in previous schools said they felt valued at The Hammond. In a senior school PSHE session about what pupils looked for in life partners, pupils showed great openness, wisdom and sensitivity in discussion.
- 4.4 Pupils show a keen sense of right and wrong. Behaviour around the school and in lessons demonstrated the pupils' respect for the norms of good conduct. They have impeccable manners, opening doors and addressing each other and adults politely. Clear expectations, with sensitive reinforcement, have led to a high standard of personal presentation and behaviour. The comprehensive programme of PSHE throughout the school encourages them to think about their own moral code. A senior class showed outstanding sensitivity to the pain of the holocaust and the *Pupils' Express* magazine had insightful pupil monologues on prejudice and discrimination. Prep school pupils demonstrated understanding of honesty at an assembly, where they considered the rights and wrongs of taking a sweet from a bowl even if no-one else knew.
- 4.5 Pupils take responsibility for themselves and others, with boarders willingly offering to take newcomers under their wing. Prefects supervise the lunch queue, boarders show initiative in organising discos and the student councils in the senior and prep school are pupil-led with representatives chosen by each form. Pupils commented on the many links and friendships between pupils in different year groups, and the ease of settling into the school. Pupils have good knowledge of British institutions through the PSHE programme. For example, they learn about the British justice system through visits to the Chester law courts. They are also aware of economic realities through discussion of employment issues in the stage professions. Pupils demonstrate awareness of their wider social responsibility in seeking to help others beyond the school by fund-raising for charities. The prep school is developing a three-way link with two schools in Nairobi, one for disadvantaged and disabled children. Boarders are involved in working creatively for *Children in Need*.
- 4.6 Pupils have a strong cultural awareness. In discussion in religious studies they demonstrated their strong understanding of different faiths and, in discussion with inspectors, they were able to articulate their grasp of the nuances of cultural

diversity, both in terms of race and art forms. For example, pupils had gained a strong awareness of the essence of Buddhist and Jewish meditation as they recalled, with obvious pleasure, their visit to such places of worship as a Buddhist centre and a synagogue. During the inspection the EYFS children enjoyed a special curricular day, developing their understanding of Chinese culture effectively by eating noodles using chopsticks, making Chinese lanterns and dragons, and learning about the animals making up the Chinese New Year. Pupils have a well-developed spirit of enquiry about all cultural issues and feel able to contribute their views. Boarders are free to go to worship on Sundays. Visits abroad, activities such as the Model United Nations, and pupils' breadth of artistic experience enhance their appreciation of other cultures. The practice of pupils making presentations of their experiences at assemblies further opens the minds of the pupils.

- 4.7 All conversations with pupils in Years 12 and 13 confirmed the maturity of their personal development by the time they leave the school for their chosen professions.

4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 In the EYFS, the caring staff ensure that each child is nurtured and their individual needs recognised. Good use of the key person system enables strong relationships to be formed and children feel safe and able to share any concerns with staff. Clear classroom routines foster independence and the children are sensitively helped to develop self-care routines; for example washing their hands after a visit to the toilet and in dressing warmly for the outdoors. Lunch and snack times are social occasions, children enjoy the nutritious food provided for them and they are taught about the importance of good health and regular exercise.
- 4.10 Throughout the school, staff know their pupils very well and offer effective guidance and support to their physical needs and their personal development. In the senior school, the weekly pastoral meetings are well documented and highlight any concerns and enable matters to be responded to swiftly.
- 4.11 In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils questioned the fairness of the school's rewards and sanctions. In interviews pupils expressed the view that they are fairly treated, and this was confirmed by scrutiny of the formal sanctions record and the house sanctions logs. In discussions with pupils, they said they felt valued by teachers and that relationships with teachers and amongst pupils were strong, based on mutual respect and the ethic of working as a group in performance. They are confident that there is always a member of staff available to confide in, including access to a counsellor in the senior school. The pupils are courteous to one another and display exemplary behaviour as they move around the site. Pupils report that bullying is not a feature of school life and feel confident that the school would deal with such matters swiftly.
- 4.12 The pupils' fitness levels are nurtured and maintained through the extensive programme of performing arts and the PE sessions. The atmosphere and surroundings of the dining room enable mealtimes to be conducted in a pleasant, civilised manner. The school has worked extensively with their caterers to provide and promote healthy eating, and fruit and salad are always available; special dietary requirements are catered for. Pupils learn about the importance of a healthy diet in

order to maintain their high levels of fitness. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities.

- 4.13 In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils felt that the school does not listen to their views. The inspection found that the school does employ effective methods in order to seek the views of the pupils across the school and, in interviews, the preparatory and senior school pupils spoke positively about their roles on the school council and the informal discussion with staff in the boarding houses.

4.(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety

- 4.14 The school's arrangements for welfare, health and safety are good.
- 4.15 In the EYFS, risk assessments are carried out efficiently to ensure that outings, equipment and accommodation are safe for the children. Children are taught about road and fire safety and they are shown how to use scissors and tools correctly. They thoroughly enjoyed a recent visit from the local fire brigade and the opportunity to try on a fireman's helmet and explore the inside of the fire engine.
- 4.16 The school has a robust approach to risk management, particularly in guidance to pupils about potential personal injury in demanding areas of the performing arts. Each lesson observed in this area of the curriculum had an individual risk assessment and pupils were carefully advised and monitored in all physical activities. Fire prevention procedures protect pupils and evacuation drills are regularly held and recorded well. The board of directors monitor health and safety issues termly but arrangements for lodgings have not been fully implemented.
- 4.17 All members of staff are trained appropriately in child protection, and safe recruitment guidance is carefully followed. The school's arrangements for safeguarding and the school's policy and procedures have regard to official guidance. Appropriate records of child protection issues are kept and are fully detailed, including recording expeditious links with external agencies as necessary. Twenty-one members of staff hold current certificates in first aid, including staff in the EYFS setting with appropriate paediatric first aid training. Pupils who are ill are cared for, in the first instance, in the medical room by a first aider followed up by the local medical support services and, in the case of boarders, appropriate medical facilities in the houses. The identification of, and provision for, students who require extra learning or personal support is excellent. The admission and attendance registers are accurately maintained and stored.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.18 The quality of boarding education is good.
- 4.19 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. The boarding experience makes a strong contribution to the personal development of boarders. They are very well-mannered, considerate, outgoing and modestly self-confident. Boarders are mature beyond their years; they take an interest in others and talk to adults with ease. In the boarding houses pupils live together in harmony, supporting each other, and tolerating and celebrating their differences. Pupils speak of warm friendships between themselves and excellent relationships with the house staff, who ensure that all boarders have equal opportunities to succeed in their studies and that the care given to them is sensitive to their different needs. Senior students who live

away from the school in self-catering accommodation show considerable organisation and self-reliance.

- 4.20 Boarders are proud of their school and their boarding communities. They value the opportunities available to them in this specialist school, applying themselves with commendable self-discipline and determination both in class and in their free time. Equally, boarders value time spent with people of their own age who share their vision and ambition. Boarders feel able to contribute to the running of their houses, to suggest ideas for improvement or to raise concerns with a member of staff. Pupils in the school and students in their own lodgings have good access to the local community, and they receive ample information about the outside world.
- 4.21 The quality of boarding provision and care is good. New pupils are looked after very well when they arrive in the school. They receive a helpful booklet of information, the school organises induction days. Young pupils say they are well supported by a pupil in the years above, and immediately feel welcome and part of the boarding community. The school has clear and effective policies regarding the medical care of pupils in boarding houses, which are meticulously applied by the staff. Boarders know who to see when they are ill, and speak highly of the care taken over their welfare. Pupils in lodgings are well cared for by their host families, and those in stand-alone accommodation know how to contact a doctor either at home or more locally as needs require. Boarders may also use the services of a local dentist practice or optometrist by appointment.
- 4.22 Issues of health and safety are well managed in the boarding houses. Fire drills are regularly carried out, and the fire log shows that boarders respond quickly to the alarm. Boarders' possessions are safe, and all have lockable cupboards. Each boarding house has a laundry, which deals efficiently with clothes and bed linen. The boarding houses are secure, and there is always a member of staff on duty to control access to the house; boarders say they feel safe.
- 4.23 A minority of boarders commented unfavourably in their questionnaires about the quality of the food and the availability of snacks. Snacks are readily available in the school and in the houses and boarders confirmed how much they enjoyed preparing snacks as part of their evening relaxation. The observations in the dining room confirmed that boarders enjoyed their food. The catering department is well managed, and a varied and balanced menu is provided. The caterers provide individual diets as required, and are fully aware of any pupils with allergies or medical needs. In their pre-inspection questionnaires, a small minority of boarders expressed concern over the balance between work and self-directed time. However, during the inspection the boarders interviewed felt that there was a good balance between work and leisure. They work very hard during the week, and value some rest at the weekend. For those who still have the energy, the school provides an interesting and enjoyable range of activities on Sundays. Boarders, many of whom come from distant parts of the country, are able to keep in contact with their homes through phone or email, and house staff are readily accessible to parents.
- 4.24 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of parents indicated that they felt the boarding accommodation was not comfortable. The inspectors found that the standard of boarding accommodation in the school is satisfactory overall. The bedrooms provide adequate space for each boarder, who is able to personalise his or her own area. Boarders have access to sufficient facilities for washing, cooking or recreation. Senior students who live out of the school, either with families or in their own houses, enjoy a very good standard of

accommodation with ready access to the usual home comforts. However, the school does not currently have a suitably robust arrangement to satisfy itself that all the requirements concerning lodgings are being met.

- 4.25 The arrangements for the welfare and safeguarding of boarders in the boarding houses are excellent. House staff are fully checked and vetted before appointment. Staff receive thorough induction, guidance and support when they first arrive, particularly in safeguarding, and the skills of the boarding staff have been enhanced by regular and varied training. There is an effective appraisal system to monitor and develop further the skills of an excellent team of boarding staff. The school has highly effective policies and procedures to prevent bullying and strongly encourages considerate behaviour. Discipline in the school and boarding houses is excellent and records show that sanctions for poor behaviour rarely need to be applied. The houses are always sufficiently staffed to ensure continuity of care and safety; staff know the whereabouts of boarders at all times and supervision in boarding time is suitable.
- 4.26 The effectiveness of leadership and management in the boarding provision is good. A well written handbook sets out the aims and ethos of the boarding provision. The management and organisation of each boarding house, and the level of care for the pupils in each, are excellent. Tutors are provided with clear support and guidance both orally and in writing from the heads of houses. The school has a rolling programme for refurbishment of accommodation and has a good long-term development plan. In general the boarding policies are well-written and clear, and support the efficient running of the houses and the welfare of boarders. However, a lack of clarity in the overall leadership of the boarding provision, across the houses and the lodgings, has reduced the effectiveness of administration, organisation and monitoring.
- 4.27 In their questionnaire responses both parents and pupils wrote positively about the school's boarding provision, praising the work of the staff and the happy atmosphere within the boarding houses and lodgings. The parents and pupils expressed their deep gratitude for the excellent care in the boarding houses and the opportunities provided by a Hammond education.
- 4.28 The recommendations in the previous Ofsted boarding welfare inspection regarding complaints, child protection training, punishments, weekend activities, contacting parents and the quality of furnishings have been met.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The governance of the school is good.
- 5.2 The school's aims are well supported by a committed board of directors who have a good grasp of their responsibilities. Since the previous inspection, the directors have overseen the building of a new music faculty and new dance studios, thus demonstrating their strength in financial planning. They were also fully involved in the planning of the new preparatory school, now in its third year, making good provision for human and material resources. The directors are equally involved in the school's future plans, using their expertise to assess innovative ideas for enhancing the educational breadth of the school. They have identified the areas of expertise to strengthen the support they give the school and have appointed new directors with appropriate professional skills.
- 5.3 The directors know the school well. They have specific roles to monitor areas such as safeguarding and boarding. However, the monitoring of the required arrangements for lodgings has not been given close enough attention by the directors. The designated director for the EYFS and prep school takes a keen interest in the setting, reporting back to the full board; EYFS policies and procedures are reviewed regularly.
- 5.4 Directors also monitor the specialist work of the school by participating in the auditions programme and monitoring the complementary aspects of performance and academic courses. The directors and the senior leadership team work well together and, with the specialist knowledge on the board of the performing arts, offer both support and challenge to the senior managers.
- 5.5 The directors are well aware of their responsibilities in relation to statutory requirements. The committees and the full board of directors review all policies regularly. Health and safety, safeguarding and staff appointments are monitored by delegated directors and the full board conducts an annual review of child protection procedures. Directors regularly attend the school's in-service training courses.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians

- 5.6 The leadership and management of the school are good.
- 5.7 Senior leadership attends the monthly meetings of the directors and ensures the smooth day-to-day running of the EYFS provision, setting clear priorities for improvement and development with a strong focus on the well-being and personal achievement of each child. There is an effective system for supervision of EYFS staff, an appraisal system is being developed and self-evaluation is undertaken through regular moderation and sharing of good practice at EYFS staff meetings.
- 5.8 Leadership at all levels is characterised by a commitment to nurture the talents of every pupil so that they can achieve their ambitions in the world of the performing arts. Leadership is successful in promoting the pupils' outstanding personal

development, supported by excellent pastoral care. This is reflected in comments from many pupils that they can be themselves at Hammond and feel safe and nurtured.

- 5.9 The senior leadership has recently experienced a process of change. Last year it was decided to have a more distributed senior leadership which has resulted in a structure below the principal of three assistant principals as well as the vocational faculty manager. In addition, a new head was appointed to the prep school at the beginning of this academic year. This structure has been designed to meet the management needs of the school in terms of curriculum development and academic improvement. These changes confirm that the management is reflective and self-evaluative. These developments have been welcomed by the staff who comment that their needs and the needs of the pupils have been considered and acted upon. The new senior leaders value the confidence placed in them by the principal and the support they receive from the principal and the directors in their new roles. Currently no one senior member of staff has responsibility for the management of the school's boarding and lodgings provision.
- 5.10 The new leadership in the prep school is addressing the needs of a school which is only in its third year of existence. The management structure is strong and is developing initiatives to improve further the high standards achieved through robust evaluation of pupils' progress, the teaching of the curriculum and communication with parents.
- 5.11 The recommendation at the time of the previous inspection to continue to develop the roles of subject co-ordinators, especially in the leadership and monitoring of the curriculum, has been strongly addressed. Heads of departments' roles have been strengthened and they now have responsibility for their annual departmental review, the appraisal of the staff in their departments and curriculum development in their subject. The annual review is monitored by senior leaders and the appraisal structure encourages dialogue about departmental development as well as individual targets. In discussions with heads of department, it was evident that they valued the greater responsibility of their roles and their ability to suggest developmental strategies across the school, reflected in the links between departmental development plans and the school's development aims. Allied to these middle management positions is the work of the pastoral committee, which plays a vital role in the support of pupils' personal development. By the nature of performers, pupils do have particular challenges over and above normal ones, and the pastoral structure of the school, including the significant contribution of the tutors, strongly supports the pupils' outstanding personal development. All these developments are indicative of senior management which is reflective, and evaluates before instituting changes.
- 5.12 The teaching and non-teaching staff are suitably trained and sufficient in number. Staff receive appropriate training in the safeguarding of pupils and their awareness of health and safety and welfare procedures is high. Staff recruitment is carefully monitored and checking of staff, directors and volunteers is well documented in a single central register. The induction process for new staff is thorough and supportive.
- 5.13 Links with parents and carers, including those with children in EYFS, are excellent. Relationships with parents are highly effective and meet the school's aim to work closely with parents and carers in order to realise the full potential of every young person in all areas of school life.

- 5.14 Senior leaders operate an 'open door' policy in order to deal quickly with any concerns and there are numerous formal and informal opportunities for parents to communicate with the school such as at parents' days, audition days and dance assessments. There are many musical concerts, dance, drama, and musical theatre productions throughout the year which parents of all pupils can attend. Prep school parents are also welcomed to assemblies and coffee mornings at the school. In the EYFS, parents are well informed of their child's learning and achievements through daily informal contact, reading records and a good range of written documents.
- 5.15 The vast majority of parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed complete satisfaction with the academic and performance education provided for their children. A small minority of parents said they found timely responses to their communication with the school difficult. Examination of the file of communications with parents confirmed that responses to parents are made without delay. From the evidence scrutinised of recent complaints, any parental concerns are correctly recorded and are followed up and resolved in an appropriate manner, often involving extensive contact and discussion. The panel hearing, when convened, includes an appropriate member who is independent of the management and running of the school.
- 5.16 The school provides parents of pupils and prospective pupils with the required information about the school through policies, a welcome pack, the school website and regular newsletters. They are clearly informed about the fact that they can obtain copies on request. A small minority of parents thought there was not enough information given regarding academic and dance progress. Inspectors found that parents receive detailed written reports twice yearly, which give clear information about pupils' academic and vocational work and progress, and these include a useful parent signature and comment sheet.
- 5.17 Parents are actively involved in supporting the school through the parents, teachers and friends association (PTFA), which organises social and fund-raising events, such as murder mystery evenings, coffee mornings and quizzes. Several school departments have purchased resources with monies raised through the PTFA such as radio microphones for use by stage managers at performances.

What the school should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.