



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**WESTFIELD SCHOOL**

**INTERIM INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Westfield School

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Full Name of School       | <b>Westfield School</b>  |
| DfE Number                | <b>391/6012</b>  |
| Registered Charity Number | <b>5281143</b>   |
| Address                   | <b>Westfield School<br/>Oakfield Road<br/>Gosforth<br/>Newcastle upon Tyne<br/>Tyne and Wear<br/>NE3 4HS</b> |
| Telephone Number          | <b>01912 553980</b>  |
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| Email Address             | <b>westfield@westfield.newcastle.sch.uk</b>  |
| Head                      | <b>Mrs Marion Farndale</b>   |
| Chair of Governors        | <b>Mrs Oonagh Forster</b>  |
| Age Range                 | <b>3 to 18</b>   |
| Total Number of Pupils    | <b>251</b>   |
| Gender of Pupils          | <b>Girls</b>   |
| Numbers by Age            | 0-2 (EYFS): <b>0</b> 5-11: <b>71</b><br>3-5 (EYFS): <b>16</b> 11-18: <b>164</b>                              |
| Number of Day Pupils      | Total: <b>251</b>  |
| Head of EYFS Setting      | <b>Mrs Margot Branson</b>  |
| EYFS Gender               | <b>Girls</b>   |
| Inspection dates          | <b>20 Sep 2011 to 21 Sep 2011</b>  |

## PREFACE

This report is according to the *Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) schedule for INTERIM inspections*. The inspection is a two-day visit with a focus on compliance with regulatory requirements. ISI inspections occur every three years and have two formats, interim and standard, which usually occur in an alternating pattern. The school's next inspection will therefore follow the standard schedule, which includes two visits totalling five days and places greater emphasis on the quality of education and care in addition to reporting on regulatory compliance. The school's previous inspection was in September 2007.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010\*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

\*These Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (j) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (k) 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 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 Founded in 1960, Westfield School is a day school for girls aged from three to eighteen. It is situated on a six-acre site in Gosforth, a residential suburb of Newcastle upon Tyne. The school is a member of Round Square, an international group of schools which share the same holistic view of education, based on the thinking of Kurt Hahn, the founder of Gordonstoun. Westfield is a charitable trust and the governing body consists of twelve members.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide a high standard of academic education and also to give each girl a sense of worth, whatever her individual strengths and qualities. It is committed to develop each child's full potential and it endeavours to provide a stimulating education which has an international outlook and which nourishes mind, body and spirit.
- 1.3 There are 251 pupils in the school, with sixteen pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS); 71, aged five to eleven, in the junior house; and 164, aged eleven to eighteen, in the senior house. The school has identified 55 pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), all of whom receive specialist help from the school, as do the two pupils who have statements of special educational needs. About a quarter of the pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. Of these, eleven do not have English as their principal language; four pupils receive extra help with their English. Most pupils come from professional or business families in the surrounding area.
- 1.4 The ability profile of the junior house is above the national average, with over half of the pupils being of at least above average ability. The ability profile of pupils entering the senior house in Year 7 is above the national average, with pupils demonstrating a fairly wide range of abilities. In Year 10, nationally recognised benchmarking data suggest that the ability profile is generally in line with the national average. The same can be said of the ability profile of pupils entering the sixth form.
- 1.5 Since the previous inspection, the major capital project has been the new dining room. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and music has been extended.

- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting***

|              |           |
|--------------|-----------|
| School       | NC name   |
| Nursery      | Nursery   |
| Kindergarten | Reception |

***Junior House***

|            |         |
|------------|---------|
| School     | NC name |
| Transition | Year 1  |
| Lower 1    | Year 2  |
| Upper 1    | Year 3  |
| Lower 2    | Year 4  |
| Upper 2    | Year 5  |
| Lower 3    | Year 6  |

***Senior House***

|             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| School      | NC name     |
| Upper 3     | Year 7      |
| Lower 4     | Year 8      |
| Upper 4     | Year 9      |
| Lower 5     | Year 10     |
| Upper 5     | Year 11     |
| Lower Sixth | Lower Sixth |
| Upper Sixth | Upper Sixth |

## 2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

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

- 2.1 Pupils' overall achievement is excellent. They are extremely well educated in accordance with the school's aims. They display secure knowledge, understanding and skills in their academic disciplines and in a very wide range of activities. They are articulate and their standards of literacy and numeracy are very good at every stage. Pupils have a strong record of success in public examinations and of entry into their chosen university degree courses. Many achieve success in academic challenges such as the Physics and RSC Olympiads; national, district and county representation have been achieved in several sports; and in each of the past three years, prize-winning artwork has been exhibited at the Royal Academy.
- 2.2 As the school does not formally take part in national tests at age seven or eleven, the pupils' academic attainment at these ages cannot be measured in relation to a fixed national average, but on the evidence available it is judged to be high in relation to national age-related expectations. In recent years, results at GCSE and A level have been good in relation to pupils' abilities, being above the national average for girls in maintained schools and similar to the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. Pupils make good, and sometimes exceptional, progress in relation to pupils of similar ability, as indicated by examination results, feedback from standardised tests, lesson observation, work produced and curriculum interviews.
- 2.3 The high quality of their progress and attainment owes much to their extremely positive attitude to learning. In class they settle readily to their work and their behaviour is exemplary. Applying themselves with evident enjoyment, the pupils are keen to do well, willing to contribute and prepared to think for themselves. They co-operate very well in group work and listen appreciatively to the views of others. They produce a substantial volume of work and, on the whole, present work reflecting pride and care.
- 2.4 The well-balanced academic curriculum provides a good range of options at GCSE and A level. It is regularly reviewed: Spanish has lately been added in Year 6, Latin in Year 7 and psychology at A level, as well as the Baccalaureate for the ablest senior pupils. The course of personal, social, health and citizenship education effectively reflects the school's aims and ethos.
- 2.5 Pupils speak enthusiastically of the wide-ranging and challenging extra-curricular programme which gives them an exceptional variety of opportunities to acquire new skills and develop their talents, and which is a real strength of the school. As well as the extensive provision at all levels of clubs, societies, sport and the creative and expressive arts, many other activities further enrich the pupils' educational experience and personal development. Pupils have a good record of success at all levels of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. The school's membership of Round Square involves service activities, international exchanges, conferences and projects. Furthermore, as the only school which is also a part of the UNESCO-associated schools network, Westfield inculcates in its pupils an appreciation of many issues outside the usual range of young people's awareness. Pupils of all ages participate in a wide range of academically or culturally related residential visits, in this country and abroad. Most of the lower sixth take part in Young

Enterprise and all of Year 11 undertake work experience. Pupils help with Riding for the Disabled and in a local special school. The school has attained Green Flag status in environmental projects. The extra-curricular activities make a major contribution to the stimulating education which the school provides, in accordance with its stated aims.

- 2.6 Teaching is good overall, with a significant proportion of that observed being excellent. Its quality contributes centrally to the pupils' academic progress and achievement, and to their personal development. Lessons are mostly taken at a brisk pace, with suitably varied, and often imaginative, approaches. Lively and enthusiastic teaching is also characterised by high expectations of all pupils. The ablest are given appropriate extension work, while the implementation of individual education plans ensures that pupils with English as an additional language and those with LDD are able to keep pace. Teachers' rapport with their pupils is excellent: they pay close attention to the needs of individuals and tailor their demands accordingly. The pupils appreciate the amount of time their teachers devote to helping them outside lessons. Most marking is regular and helpful, but in some senior house pupils' work, too little attention is paid to errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. The previous report suggested that the school should consider ways in which senior house pupils' ICT skills might be more effectively applied across all subjects to enhance their learning and independent research: they now use ICT confidently and competently across a wide range of academic disciplines.

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

- 2.7 The pupils develop excellent personal qualities, in accordance with the aims of the school. The school successfully generates self-assurance and self-esteem, building on strengths and presenting opportunities for personal fulfilment. The pupils are clearly as happy to be at Westfield as they say they are. Examples of uplifting and inspiring experiences include the outstanding artwork on display, the range and quality of the music-making, the exploration of profound themes in assemblies and elsewhere, and the enrichment provided by the many ventures abroad. Pupils say that they value these experiences very highly.
- 2.8 Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong. Their social development is extremely good. A strong sense of friendly co-operation permeates school life. Parents agree that the school achieves high standards of behaviour and that it promotes worthwhile attitudes and views.
- 2.9 A notable feature is the extent to which the older pupils care for the younger ones, to mutual benefit. For instance, sixth formers help in the junior house, the big sister/little sister scheme flourishes, older pupils assist with Nursery lunches and senior members of the orchestra mentor the less experienced. The school encourages pupils to take responsibility: they respond very well and undertake their duties conscientiously, in the numerous roles which offer opportunities for leadership and service.
- 2.10 Pupils develop an increasingly mature understanding and appreciation of other cultures and traditions, for example through studying world faiths, art and music, and charitable fund-raising. Their horizons are significantly broadened by the extensive programme of Round Square activities and direct experience of other countries and their ways of life. The school successfully achieves its stated aim to provide an education with an international outlook.

- 2.11 Pastoral care is excellent. The staff provide high-quality support and guidance for the pupils, which is recognised and warmly appreciated by the parents. Relationships throughout the school, between staff and pupils and among the pupils themselves are outstanding. The staff's close knowledge of, and concern for, each pupil means that their individual needs are addressed, thus contributing greatly to their personal development. Every pupil is considered at staff meetings at regular intervals during the year. There is a strong sense of belonging and the school has an intimate corporate identity.
- 2.12 Courteous and considerate, the pupils conduct themselves in an exemplary fashion. Pupils say that instances of bullying are extremely rare and that differences are resolved promptly and effectively.
- 2.13 The safeguarding policy meets requirements and is implemented successfully. All staff receive regular child protection training. Arrangements for health and safety are effective. Appropriate measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards, and thorough risk assessments are carried out before school trips. The personal, social, health and citizenship programme has placed an increased emphasis on personal safety, for instance regarding internet safety and cyber-bullying. There are suitable medical facilities and arrangements. The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and stored.
- 2.14 Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits and to take regular exercise. Lunches are appetising and nutritious, with varied menus. The curriculum incorporates a full programme of sport and exercise.

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

- 2.15 The quality of governance is excellent. Governors exercise effective oversight and fully support the school's aims and standards. They contribute a wide range of experience and expertise. In its advisory and consultative role, the governing body gives valued support to senior management. Members of the governing body, some of whom are former pupils and most of whom have or have had daughters in the school, take a lively personal interest in its life and work.
- 2.16 Governors discharge their responsibility for child protection, welfare, health and safety effectively, receiving and reviewing regular reports on these aspects of the school's provision. All members of the governing body have specific areas of responsibility, on which they report at governors' meetings. Governors have received a considerable amount of training in aspects of their duties and responsibilities.
- 2.17 Leadership and management are excellent and highly effective in furthering the aims of the school. The senior management team clearly communicates its priorities and expectations to all staff, thus ensuring that the school has a strong sense of purpose. All members of the team are accessible and approachable. The school is extremely well run. The high quality of communication within the school is achieved by informal day-to-day contacts and from a formal structure of frequent timetabled meetings. There is a clear scheme for the staff to evaluate and improve standards of education, incorporating regular meetings, lesson observations, departmental reviews and a staff appraisal programme.
- 2.18 The bright, welcoming buildings are maintained to a high standard, as are the grounds and sports facilities. Outstandingly presented wall displays reflect the

many-faceted life of the school. The fact that it is based in two large houses reinforces the evident sense that it is a happily integrated 'family'.

- 2.19 Relationships between the school and parents are excellent. Communication at all stages is extremely good. A suitable schedule of parents' evenings and thorough, constructive written reports, together with the school's 'open door' approach, ensures that parents are fully informed of their daughters' academic and general progress. Colourful and packed with activity, the termly newsletter and annual magazine tell the story of a happy, busy and vibrant community. The parents' association organises a series of annual social and fund-raising events, and the grandparents' tea party is much appreciated.
- 2.20 Parents affirm that the school is very well governed and managed, agreeing that information is readily available, that communication is easy, that they receive timely responses to questions, and that concerns and complaints are well handled. Parents subscribe to the ethos of the school and approve wholeheartedly of the education which it provides.

### **3. ACTION POINTS**

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

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

- 3.1 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

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

- 3.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. In the marking of senior house pupils' work, ensure that mistakes in spelling, punctuation and grammar are consistently corrected.
  2. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, involve parents more fully in assessment practices.

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

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

4.1 The overall effectiveness of the setting is outstanding. It offers a warm and welcoming environment where children learn and develop exceptionally well through stimulating play, talk and valuable first-hand experiences. They enjoy school and participate with great enthusiasm. This prepares them well for the next steps in their education. Staff are highly effective practitioners who keep the needs of the children at the heart of everything they do and show an excellent capacity to sustain and to improve on the current high standards.

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

4.2 The quality of the leadership and management is outstanding. Staff have a clear vision and self-critically strive for improvement. They have a strong understanding of how young children learn. Assessment practice is excellent. All adults have a thorough knowledge of each child's stage of development, and learning activities focus well on individual needs so that progress is rapid. All relevant policies are in place to safeguard each child, whilst detailed and continuing risk assessment ensures that children are safe. Excellent staff development and links with other agencies ensure that the needs of all children are extremely well met. Parents, many of whom are former pupils, are delighted with what the school offers their children. They speak particularly highly of the family atmosphere and nurturing care which their children receive.

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

4.3 The quality of provision is outstanding. Staff are highly effective in supporting pupils' development. The well-balanced curriculum ensures that basic skills are developed effectively. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Children are provided with frequent opportunities to be outdoors. The garden area gives them a year-round opportunity to discover the natural world, and a variety of outings and visitors provides children with an excellent understanding of the wider world. Staff actively promote their welfare, enabling them to feel secure and thrive in their learning. Behaviour is exemplary. Careful assessments identify what children can do and help to match activities to their needs. An excellent record provides a full picture of each child's progress. Staff are keen to develop further the involvement of parents in assessments.

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

- 4.4 Outcomes for children are outstanding. Most children attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage and many exceed them. Children respond well to the high expectations of staff and clearly enjoy their learning. They listen and contribute well orally. Numeracy and literacy are taught through actions, rhyme and song from the beginning of Nursery. By the end of Reception, children write independently and confidently; they can also add and subtract numbers up to ten and beyond. Children are independent, active learners who are encouraged to solve problems. Visits give them an excellent awareness of the wider world, which is continued at school and through play. They enjoy their food and understand about eating healthily. They are aware of the importance of personal safety and of the need for good hygiene. They learn to share, take turns and interact confidently with adults.

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

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed a sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mr Paul Spillane

Reporting Inspector

Mrs Doris Hugh

Head of Department, GSA school

Mrs Linda Swain

Head of Department, IAPS school

Mrs Ann Richards

Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector