



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

THE ROYAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL WORCESTER

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

The Royal Grammar School Worcester

Full Name of School	The Royal Grammar School Worcester comprising RGS Worcester RGS The Grange RGS Springfield
DfE Number	885/6028
EYFS Number	EY366305 (RGS The Grange) / EY366313 (RGS Springfield)
Registered Charity Number	527527
Address	The Royal Grammar School Worcester Upper Tything Worcester Worcestershire WR1 1HP
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Headmaster	Mr John Pitt
Headmaster of RGS The Grange	Mr Gareth Hughes
Headmistress of RGS Springfield	Mrs Laura Brown
Chair of Governors	Mrs Rosemary Ham
Age Range	2 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	1304
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (689 boys; 615 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 49 2-5 (EYFS) 100 5- 11: 369 11-18: 786
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Sam Salisbury (RGS Springfield) Mrs Phenice Fletcher (RGS The Grange)
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	3rd to 6th March 2015

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection of RGS Worcester and RGS Springfield was in January 2009. RGS The Grange was last inspected in January 2010, with the Early Years Foundation stage being inspected in March 2012.

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) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations 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.

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. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

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 governors and another governor, 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

Dr Joe Tierney	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Gillian Bilbo	Assistant Reporting Inspector
Dr Joanna Goodman	Assistant Reporting Inspector
Mr Alfred Bogyor	Team Inspector (Senior Master, HMC School)
Mr Andrew Cleary	Team Inspector (Director of Music, HMC School)
Mr Jonathan Eyles	Team Inspector (Head, GSA School)
Mr Peter Grant	Team Inspector (Head of Department, HMC School)
Mr Stephen Holliday	Team Inspector (Head, HMC School)
Mr Robert Lilley	Team Inspector (Head, HMC School)
Mrs Linda Macfarlane	Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, HMC School)
Miss Joanna Mackenzie	Team Inspector (Head, GSA School)
Mr Alasdair McBay	Team Inspector (Director of Studies, HMC School)
Mrs Deborah Nisbet	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS School)
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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The Royal Grammar School (RGS) Worcester is a charitable company limited by guarantee. It comprises RGS Worcester, a senior school for pupils aged 11 to 18 years, and two preparatory schools for pupils aged 2 to 11, RGS The Grange and RGS Springfield. The senior school and RGS Springfield are close to each other near the city centre and RGS The Grange is about two miles north of Worcester. All three schools have a single governing body and each has a separate head. The three heads and the bursar form a strategy group, chaired by the head of RGS Worcester as the senior officer.
- 1.2 The school was originally founded in Worcester around 685 by Bishop Bosel. It received its first Royal Charter in 1561 and a second was granted in 1843 by Queen Victoria, with the title of 'Royal' being conferred in 1869. It moved to its current site in 1868 and, in 1996, RGS The Grange became the preparatory school. In 2007 RGS Worcester merged with The Alice Ottley School, a well-established girls' school. This also saw the Alice Ottley Preparatory School, RGS Springfield, being absorbed into the family of schools. The senior school first admitted girls in 2002 and became fully co-educational in 2007.
- 1.3 The aim of RGS Worcester is to provide an excellent all-round education for children, supporting them in their passage to adulthood by developing character, intellect, physical well-being and aesthetic sense within a scholarly community. The school and its staff aim to cultivate an ethos in which each individual is cared for and valued equally.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection there were 786 pupils in the senior school, including 229 in the sixth form. RGS Springfield had 147 pupils, of whom 65 were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), whilst RGS The Grange had 371 pupils, of whom 84 were in the EYFS. There are very few pupils from ethnic minorities. The catchment area of the senior school and RGS The Grange is broad and covers an approximate radius of 25 miles from Worcester. Pupils at RGS Springfield generally live in the city of Worcester.
- 1.5 At the senior school there are two pupils with a statement of special educational needs and a further 209 identified as having some learning difficulty; of these, 59 have additional support. Fifteen pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), of whom six receive additional help.
- 1.6 At RGS Springfield ten pupils have been identified as having some learning difficulty and all have support. Four pupils have EAL but none require additional help. At RGS The Grange, 63 pupils have been identified as having some learning difficulty and 17 have support. Six pupils have English as an additional language and three receive additional help.
- 1.7 The ability profile of the two preparatory schools is above the national average, with most pupils having ability that is at least above average. In the senior school the profile is above the national average, with around a fifth of pupils having ability that is well above average and few having ability that is below average. Pupils in the sixth form are above the national average for pupils in sixth form education.
- 1.8 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 RGS Worcester forms a very successful group of schools characterised by excellence in all aspects of its provision. All three schools are welcoming and imbued with a pleasant atmosphere conducive to high quality learning.
- 2.2 Pupils achieve well because of the high quality of teaching they receive, the breadth of opportunities they are offered both in the formal curriculum and beyond the classroom, and the care and concern shown by staff. Pupils in RGS The Grange and RGS Springfield attain high standards by the end of Year 6 and in the senior school strong examination success is achieved at GCSE and in the sixth form. Those pupils with special educational needs or learning difficulties (SEND) or EAL are well provided for and achieve well.
- 2.3 Pupils' personal development in all schools is excellent. This is because of well-defined pastoral structures administered by caring staff. Pupils respond to this with good behaviour, a sense of pride in their school, and ever-maturing personal qualities. Pupils speak with confidence and assurance whilst respecting the views of others. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and willingly contribute to the society of the school and are keen take on responsibility. Measures to safeguard pupils are secure and carefully overseen by governors. The welfare, health and safety of pupils is taken seriously.
- 2.4 Parents are very pleased with the schools, as are pupils in RGS The Grange and RGS Springfield. In all three schools parents appreciate the breadth of the curriculum, the information provided, and the care and security given to their child. Pupils in the senior school are pleased with most aspects of provision but expressed some concerns over homework, the lack of opportunities to take responsibility, and whether their views are heard and acted upon. The new head of the senior school is aware of these issues. Communication with parents is a strength of the schools. Complaints are handled with due care and attention.
- 2.5 Excellent governance, leadership and management ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are in place, and that the schools meet statutory requirements. The schools have responded well to the previous inspection and all regulatory failings have been rectified. Careful financial planning has resulted in the provision of very good resources and levels of staffing. Styles of leadership across the three schools vary, but all are effective, so that improvement in all schools is evident. Middle management in both prep schools is very effective but the quality in the senior school is variable, although there is some excellent practice. This leads to a variation in monitoring of subject areas and a subsequent disparity in the marking of pupils' work and planning for development.
- 2.6 Both the EYFS settings offer outstanding provision where pupils are nurtured and developed in a stimulating and caring environment. Contributory factors to this include excellent oversight by governors, strong leadership and management, and a keen eye for high standards.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.7 The school meets all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- 2.8 See the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage section 6 for the inspection findings in relation to the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 for children under three.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.9 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. In the senior school, improve the consistency of quality of management by heads of departments to that of the best.
 2. In the senior school, give pupils more opportunities to take responsibility.
 3. In the senior school, monitor the provision of homework to ensure it is set consistently.
 4. In the senior school, ensure that pupils' views are heard and acted upon.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

The senior school

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated in accordance with the school's aim of developing character, intellect, physical well-being and aesthetic sense within a scholarly community.
- 3.3 Pupils achieve well in lessons. They are highly articulate, such as when discussing sophisticated ideas in class or participating with enthusiasm in the debating society. They listen well, both to their teachers and to one another, and make thoughtful responses to texts, both in their own and in other languages. Standards of numeracy are high and pupils have a strong capacity for logical thought and forming cogent arguments. They learn well, both as individuals and when sharing ideas in pairs or groups. In subjects such as science, textiles and design and technology they show advanced practical skills and produce high quality work. Pupils demonstrate a high degree of sophistication when using computing and IT which is enhanced by the extensive range of opportunities presented by the school's digital learning programme (DLP). Artistic and other work displayed around the school shows high levels of creativity. Pupils' prowess in physical activity is shown by their sporting achievements.
- 3.4 Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They take pride in their work, which is very well organised and, for the most part, neatly presented, and relish opportunities to carry out independent research and to present their findings. They are conscientious in their approach to homework and behave very well in classes.
- 3.5 Pupils perform well in regional and national competitions. Success in mathematical challenges and music examinations is good and excellent in science competitions. Many pupils achieve Arkwright Scholarships. Pupils participate enthusiastically, and to a good standard, in choirs, ensembles and drama, including performances they lead themselves. The school competes in netball, rugby, hockey, football, rounders, athletics and rowing to a high standard, with a good number of pupils in recent years gaining regional representation and championship honours.
- 3.6 In the period from 2011 to 2013, the most recent for which national comparisons can be made, results at GCSE were above the average for maintained schools and similar to those in maintained selective schools. In the years 2011 to 2014 the percentage of pupils gaining A* and A grades has varied between 61 and 71 per cent. Statistical comparisons show that pupils made good progress from Year 9 to GCSE although this was greater in 2013 when it was high. Girls' progress in the years from 2011 to 2014 from Year 9 to GCSE has been excellent. The IGCSE results have been higher than worldwide norms.
- 3.7 Pupils with SEND and EAL achieve very well. In 2014 they made better progress between Year 9 and GCSE than the good progress of their peers. Girls with learning difficulties made far higher progress than their peers and boys with learning difficulties achieved at least as well as that of other boys. Able, gifted and talented pupils make very good progress.

- 3.8 Results at A level have been well above the national average for maintained schools, and above the national average for maintained selective schools. In the period 2011 to 2013 A level results have been steady, with about three-quarters of pupils attaining grades A* to B, and the school attained its best results in 2014. Results indicate that pupils in the sixth form make progress that is good in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. In 2014, nearly half of leavers went to highly selective universities.

RGS Springfield

- 3.9 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.10 During their time at the school the pupils become progressively more confident in their abilities. The school achieves its aims to help pupils to enjoy their education and to fulfil their all-round potential.
- 3.11 Pupils display high levels of literacy and numeracy. They use this knowledge in other subjects confidently, either orally, or in their excellent written work, or with the creative use of digital media. From the early years onward children are able to express themselves clearly and they delight in sharing ideas with adults and expressing their views. In lessons, interviews and informal conversations they were open and confident and they contribute well when answering questions and presenting their ideas. Written work is very well presented and pupils take real pride in their efforts. Numeracy skills are well used in investigative work where pupils are able to develop their own strategies. Their creativity is particularly strong and the school is embellished with many examples of art and design technology created with a wide range of media. Pupils' skills in games and physical education are well developed through a variety of sports and all pupils from Reception upwards swim regularly. High quality performances celebrate pupils' musical and dramatic talents.
- 3.12 Pupils are very keen to learn and clearly enjoy what they do in lessons and other activities. They commit themselves to producing work of very high standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and EAL are well supported with comprehensive plans which are used effectively to monitor their progress and inform teaching. The provision of a range of suitable materials in lessons means that pupils of all abilities, including the most able, make excellent progress.
- 3.13 Pupils are successful in a wide range of activities and this makes a significant contribution to their personal development. They show personal confidence, good team skills and a respect for each other. All pupils are actively encouraged to take part in speech examinations and the majority choose to enrol in private music lessons. The most talented pupils are able to attain very high standards in music examinations.
- 3.14 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to national tests as these are not undertaken. However, from the evidence in lessons and from the examination of written work and interviews, all pupils achieve well in relation to national age-related expectations. They have considerable success in gaining academic scholarships to the senior school.

RGS The Grange

- 3.15 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.16 The school is successful in its aims of offering an excellent all-round education for children and supporting them in their passage to adulthood by developing character, intellect, physical well-being and aesthetic sense within a scholarly community. The school and its staff successfully cultivate an ethos in which each individual is cared for and valued equally.
- 3.17 As they progress through the school, pupils develop exceedingly good speaking and listening skills, expressing themselves clearly and listening carefully to others. They read fluently and are able to write for a range of purposes, including fiction, debate or play scripts. Pupils can reason and think ideas through for themselves. They have a thorough grounding in mathematical skills, which they apply well to other subjects, and a very good working knowledge of ICT and new technologies. Pupils' creative talents are well developed, particularly in their design and technology and art work.
- 3.18 Pupils' attitudes to learning are highly positive. As they progress through the school they develop mature and focused work habits, and understand that they need to take their work seriously and apply themselves thoroughly. They work equally well individually or in groups and are eager to learn, take pride in what they can achieve and persevere with their tasks. Pupils make every effort to present their work as well as they can, with a good measure of success. They are extremely well prepared to move on to the senior school.
- 3.19 Inspection evidence, including lesson observations, discussions, examination of work and scrutiny of the school's records, shows that all pupils make good progress through the school, including those with SEND and the able, gifted and talented. Pupils with EAL receive effective support, allowing them to make good progress with English and achieve well.
- 3.20 Outside the classroom, pupils' sporting and musical achievements are highly noteworthy and they are able to achieve well at their own level. They enjoy significant success in sports and cross-country, both at local and national level and are regular winners at local and regional arts festivals. This is an area which has improved since the previous inspection.
- 3.21 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be high in relation to national expectations for their age. They have considerable success in gaining academic scholarships to the senior school.

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

- 3.22 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.23 The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils, which covers all the requisite areas of learning. There have been a number of changes since the previous inspection, such as a new two-week timetable giving all subjects an increase in teaching time. In Years 7 to 9 pupils experience all three modern foreign languages. Those taking science and English language and literature take IGCSE

examinations and Year 9 pupils can select between the dual award or triple science. Those taking the dual award can thus choose another GCSE subject or opt for additional support in the core subjects. In line with recent developments, computing is now also offered at GCSE.

- 3.24 In the sixth form, a good range of courses leading to A Levels are offered. The Extended Project Qualification has proved successful and now has 36 pupils studying it. Enrichment lessons have also been introduced to give further breadth of study including, for example, GCSE astronomy, as well as master classes in a range of subjects.
- 3.25 The school helpfully accommodates the needs of specific pupils, such as those not wishing to take 9 or 10 GCSEs. They have also made special provision in a number of subjects for girls taken from a recently-closed local school. The personal, social, health, and citizenship education (PSHCE) curriculum is comprehensive and recognises of the need to present a balanced political view.
- 3.26 There is a broad range of links with both local and international communities from which pupils benefit. This includes a wide range of modern language exchange programmes and links with schools across the world, including sports tours.
- 3.27 Provision for pupils with SEND and EAL is excellent. The learning development department is well resourced and valued by the school and pupils. They screen every individual and keep comprehensive records. Teaching staff are provided with detailed information about the pupils so that they are aware of those who need additional support.
- 3.28 Provision for able, gifted and talented is also excellent. Scholars are identified through their entrance examinations and provided both with mentoring and with a full enrichment programme. The provision for scholars is comprehensive and there are many opportunities for pupils to be challenged. The school has a growing number of sports scholars who are well provided for.
- 3.29 The range of extra-curricular activities is extensive. Many pupils participate in the wide-ranging sports programme. Girls' sport has benefited from recent increased staffing in netball. The extensive list of fixtures includes netball at a local university and rugby and football at local rugby and football clubs.
- 3.30 Pupils have excellent opportunities to be involved in artistic pursuits, such as dance, music and drama. Many are engaged in musical groups and benefit from performing publicly. Debating and public speaking are very popular and pupils have opportunities to compete in house, local and regional debating competitions. The house system has recently been restructured to facilitate greater pupil identification with specific houses, and for more viable teams to engage in inter-house competitions. Recent art and fashion shows have given pupils opportunities to display their textiles work and many subjects offer support or extension clubs to pupils.
- 3.31 Pupils gain useful experience from a wide range of trips and educational visits, such as biology and geography field trips, a physics visit to CERN, art trips to Berlin, and many foreign language and classics visits to European destinations. A large number of pupils benefit from visits and activities through their participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme or in one of the three Combined Cadet Force sections.

- 3.32 Improvements have been made in careers education and guidance. Careers education begins with lessons in PSHCE and is very effectively supported by careers staff and tutors. Testing in Year 10 is followed up by qualified careers advisers and pupils also benefit from seminars, external visitors and extensive careers fairs. The provision for pupils applying to higher education is very strong and pupils feel very well supported.

RGS Springfield

- 3.33 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.34 The broad and balanced curriculum meets the needs of the children as they move through the school, enthusing them to extend their learning in line with the school aim to ensure that children develop their full academic potential.
- 3.35 The majority of subjects, including daily mathematics and English lessons, are taught by form teachers, thus ensuring that their knowledge of each pupil is used effectively to help pupils' learning. Well-planned and well-resourced termly topics, chosen after discussion with the pupils, are used to teach history, geography, art and design and technology as part of the creative curriculum, and promote individual learning skills. Weekly science and ICT lessons are enriched by links with the current topic. Music, French and physical education are taught by specialists. The comprehensive syllabus for PSHCE, which addresses pastoral issues and teaches the pupils how to care for themselves, is supported by weekly religious studies lessons to enhance the spiritual element of the curriculum.
- 3.36 Pupils' progress and subject knowledge are meticulously mapped against the National Curriculum to ensure appropriate coverage and to inform future planning, making sure that new challenges are met as pupils progress through the school. Pupils greatly benefit from sharing facilities, such as the language suite and the dance studio at the senior school. Links with RGS The Grange are helpful in promoting opportunities for boys' games.
- 3.37 The curriculum and co-curriculum are carefully planned to suit all ages, needs and abilities. Pupils with SEND benefit hugely from the small class sizes that promote an intimate learning culture within which they receive support from skilled and experienced classroom assistants. Lessons are effectively planned to ensure that all pupils can access the curriculum. Extra challenges are provided for able and gifted pupils, including the provision of lessons to prepare for scholarship applications.
- 3.38 The curriculum is supported by a wide range of clubs, including chess, riding, karate, arts and crafts, Woodland Club, dance and golf. An exciting range of trips, planned to support topic work, include visits to a local chocolate factory, to Worcester Cathedral and to a museum to study the life of the Egyptians and are eagerly awaited by the pupils. Residential trips have included visits to York, Osmington Bay and Malvern. All girls from Year 3 onwards are given the opportunity to take part in competitive sport and for a school with such small numbers are able to compete well. A recently appointed boys' specialist has created the opportunity for the boys to have similar opportunities.
- 3.39 Links with the community are promoted by visits to the local supermarket as part of a topic on food, and also joint events with local residents, such as carol singing at Christmas and a weekly play group for neighbourhood babies and toddlers. Harvest baskets are delivered to the nearby alms houses.

- 3.40 Since the last report, a system for measuring individual pupils' underlying ability has been introduced to assess their progress and achievement more effectively. The profile of science within the curriculum has been raised by effective links with relevant areas of the creative curriculum.

RGS The Grange

- 3.41 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.42 Throughout the school, pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum, which is well matched to their abilities and needs and is very well supported by a range of extra-curricular activities. This is in line with the school's aims to ensure that pupils develop independence in their learning. Parents and pupils are extremely pleased with the curriculum, the wide range of activities, and the opportunities for learning.
- 3.43 Since the previous inspection, the curriculum has been substantially reviewed in line with the new National Curriculum. The curriculum in Years 1 and 2 builds on the strength in the earlier years. A particular focus is given to literacy and numeracy, and all other areas of learning are well covered. From Year 1, linguistic skills are enhanced by the provision of French and, in Year 6, pupils benefit from the residential trip to France to enrich their cultural awareness. Pupils have opportunities to develop their investigative and practical skills, for example in design and technology, geography and science.
- 3.44 The use of ICT is well developed throughout the curriculum and pupils use tablet computers effectively for independent work and research. The PSHCE programme has been reviewed since the previous inspection and a new co-ordinator appointed. Updated schemes of work are in accordance with the National Curriculum and identify clear cross-curricular links for greater relevance and reinforcement.
- 3.45 Pupils with SEND and EAL receive excellent support. Their needs are clearly identified and their progress is closely tracked, with appropriate work set. All teachers are involved in identifying appropriate provision, which is reviewed and evaluated effectively. Gifted and talented pupils are appropriately identified and challenged.
- 3.46 Pupils' academic curriculum experience is effectively enhanced by a wide range of co-curricular activities. This is an improved area, particularly in the performing arts, which are now embedded in the activities programme. In addition to the daily clubs, the curriculum is strongly supported by a number of educational visits and residential trips with a strong outdoor flavour. Pupils gain a greater awareness of the local and wider community through fund raising for local and national charities, or the regular choir visits to the local residential home for the elderly.
- 3.47 The provision for music is strong and many pupils learn a musical instrument and participate in musical ensembles. An annual carol service and joint concert with the senior school and RGS Springfield at Worcester Cathedral enable pupils to participate in a joint spiritual and musical event. Art and design and technology are well catered for and creativity is also enhanced by drama productions.
- 3.48 Pupils have many opportunities for participation in sporting fixtures, an improved aspect since the previous inspection. Also, stronger links with the senior school have been developed on the sporting, musical and creative arts front to ensure a more coherent transition from the prep school.

- 3.49 Effective use is made of school facilities, including specialist rooms for art, music, design and technology, ICT and the extensive grounds. Pupils are very well prepared for the main transition stages in their education and scholarship preparation classes are offered in Year 6.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

The senior school

- 3.50 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.51 The quality of teaching fulfils the aims of the school to encourage the growth of intellectual curiosity, creativity and habits of learning, and is highly successful in promoting pupils' progress. Measures put in place since the previous inspection to improve teaching have been successful and recent innovations, such as the introduction of the DLP, enhance it. In many lessons pupils were encouraged to take charge of their learning, be creative and develop subject-specific skills. For example, in a Year 13 history lesson, presentations by pupils on Elizabethan foreign policy stimulated perceptive questions and incisive analysis of key issues.
- 3.52 Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and have strong subject knowledge, which they use to guide pupils. A wide variety of teaching techniques involving the use of excellent resources caters well for different learning styles and pupils of all abilities. Teachers make excellent use of ICT and are increasingly incorporating the use of tablet computers in lessons. For example, in a Year 12 physical education (PE) lesson, they were skilfully used to enhance the teaching of event management and to evaluate performance in practical activities. The PSHCE programme recognises the need to teach tolerance and respect and balanced coverage of political issues.
- 3.53 Lessons are very well planned and the majority are conducted at a brisk pace. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to work in pairs or groups; this was seen to good effect in a Year 10 religious studies lesson where pupils discussed the concept of a just war. Skilful use of questions and answers to develop understanding characterises many lessons and, in more practical subjects such as art and textiles, pupils are inspired to be creative and to develop their talents to the full. Opportunities for independent learning, often using the DLP, are increasingly plentiful.
- 3.54 Most teaching supports pupils with particular educational needs, and extension work is often available for more able pupils. In the pupil questionnaires, a minority of pupils indicated unhappiness about the large amount of homework set by teachers, although this was less of a problem in the sixth form. Discussions with pupils revealed that the amount of homework set is usually appropriate but that it is not always set consistently and this creates pressure for busy pupils.
- 3.55 The best marking of pupils' work is of a high standard, with helpful formative comments, but there is much variation in the quality both between and within departments. Some is cursory and offers little by way of suggestions for improvement. Sophisticated assessment data analyses are used skilfully and sensitively by staff to set targets for pupils and to track their progress.
- 3.56 In a small proportion of lessons, teaching was less successful. These lessons were too dependent on the teacher, often lacked appropriate pace, or offered insufficient challenge and opportunity for pupils to participate actively in their learning.

- 3.57 Teaching areas are attractive and departments are well resourced. The centrally-situated school library is well appointed for private study and research and significantly enhances pupils' learning. Pupils use the facility regularly and rates of borrowing are good. The stock is up-to-date, well organised, and appropriate for the needs of all ages, and evidence from meetings with pupils suggests that they value the support and service offered by library staff.

RGS Springfield

- 3.58 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.59 Teaching successfully supports the aims of the school to develop each child to its full potential academically, socially and emotionally in a safe and caring environment.
- 3.60 Teachers are well qualified, experienced, and challenge pupils to extend their knowledge and application. Teachers are ambitious for their pupils and there is a mutual respect between them. This means pupils enjoy learning and behave in an exemplary manner.
- 3.61 Teachers know their pupils very well and have a clear understanding of their academic needs. The work set in lessons is appropriate in terms of volume and challenge, which results in pupils making rapid progress and developing a secure understanding of the subject. Lessons are meticulously planned to match the range of abilities within the class and provide clear aims and objectives. Cross-curricular links are made within the creative curriculum enabling pupils to consider their everyday life, immediate environment, and to consider issues from other peoples' perspectives.
- 3.62 Pupils with SEND and EAL are well supported and very good use is made of classroom assistants to enhance their learning.
- 3.63 Teachers are dynamic and have extensive subject knowledge. They use a variety of teaching methods to facilitate a range of learning styles. In the most successful lessons pace is brisk and pupils are given clear time constraints with regards to completing tasks. Where pace is not brisk, learning is too teacher-led and pupils are not given freedom for independent thinking. The use of learning objectives and success criteria is excellent. Pupils have regular opportunities for collaborative learning and to develop their understanding through discussion with each other. They show the ability to think creatively when given the opportunity to do so. They are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning through working independently, although opportunities to initiate their own activities are fewer. In a Year 4 class groups of pupils worked effectively together to make persuasive arguments in relation to the value of buying fair trade products.
- 3.64 Pupils receive appropriate and timely feedback on their progress and next steps in learning. A recently implemented marking policy promotes positive comments and is understood and appreciated by pupils. Progress is carefully and skilfully monitored by the teachers and rigorously assessed to inform future planning. Pupils are encouraged to assess their own work and this encourages a high level of autonomy and control in their learning.
- 3.65 Excellent use of resources is made in lessons, including interactive technology to enhance the teaching. Two and three-dimensional displays are used to create an exciting environment for learning. Many resources are bespoke, created specifically

for lessons and tailored to differing needs, with primary resources used wherever possible. Pupils use tablet computers effectively, not only for research but to plan work and to record their findings in a variety of ways. This encourages them to think creatively and to extend their knowledge.

- 3.66 The outdoor learning area provides an outstanding resource. Staff are well trained and their enthusiasm provides pupils with the opportunity to develop investigative and imaginative skills and gives them first-hand experience of the outdoors in a safe and controlled environment.

RGS The Grange

- 3.67 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.68 High quality teaching allows pupils to learn with enthusiasm and enjoyment and makes a strong contribution to the pupils' excellent achievements and progress. The teaching fully meets the school's aims to provide academic rigour, monitor individual progress and gives pupils a rich and enjoyable learning experience.
- 3.69 Teachers' excellent knowledge of their subject area is in evidence throughout the school and this, coupled with rigorous and skilful planning, means that lessons are well matched to pupils' needs and proceed with energy and pace. Pupils benefit from teaching by specialists in music, French, PE and ICT. Opportunities for independent learning have improved since the previous inspection and assessment strategies are used for developing pupils' learning autonomy.
- 3.70 Excellent use is made of a range of teaching methods and resources to engage and motivate all pupils. For example, an energetic Year 4 French lesson on zoo animal vocabulary combined the use of stuffed animals, a matching activity, song and drama to capture the pupils' interest.
- 3.71 The relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and create happy purposeful learning environments, imbued with respect. Teachers' passion for teaching their subject infects the children with a delight for learning and motivates them to succeed. Their expectations of their pupils are high and sensitively matched to individual capabilities. Objectives for learning and criteria for success are consistently shared with pupils, as seen in a Year 2 mathematics lesson on money which gave pupils a clear purpose and a tangible sense of their progress.
- 3.72 Regular, constructive marking, oral feedback and the clear setting of targets, particularly in mathematics and English, give pupils a clear idea of what they need to do to progress and achieve at a higher level. This system is understood by pupils. Teaching also encourages pupils to use peer assessment and self-evaluation to measure their own success. Progress since the previous inspection in the use of assessment data has been excellent. The implementation of rigorous assessment and tracking models allows for informed future planning that is tailored to pupils' needs.
- 3.73 A wide range of resources, human, physical and electronic are deployed extremely effectively. Teaching provides excellent support for pupils with SEND and EAL. Individual support is provided where needed and highly effective use is made of teaching assistants who work alongside teaching staff to meet the specific needs of pupils in their classes. The most able are appropriately challenged as seen in a Year 3 English lesson where they were using sophisticated language and

vocabulary. Able pupils in Year 5 carried out self-assessments against success criteria in science.

- 3.74 Pupils use technology with confidence, both for independent research and in a wide range of lessons, including discrete ICT. For example, pupils in Year 5 made excellent use of computers whilst working on an animation project. Opportunities to develop as independent learners are strongly in evidence through research projects.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

The senior school

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The school is highly successful in meeting its aim of developing in its pupils 'self-discipline, resilience, spiritual values and a personal moral code'. It actively promotes pupils' personal development through elements of the PSHCE programme, which includes lessons on relationships, healthy eating, mindfulness and study skills. Spiritual values are strong and pupils value the non-material aspects of life which are promoted by the many colourful, celebratory displays of pupils' work and the study of creative subjects, such as art, textiles, dance, music, drama and literature. In a Year 8 design and technology lesson there was a palpable sense of awe as pupils watched a video of robots landing on Mars.
- 4.3 Pupils are proud of their school and respect its values. Courtesy, thoughtfulness are the norms of good behaviour that underpin the relationships among pupils and between pupils and their teachers. Pupils have a strong sense of justice, which is actively encouraged through classroom discussion and debating society topics. They are keen to reflect on a wide range of moral and ethical issues and their studies in literature, religious studies and science offer opportunities for such reflective discourse. In a Year 8 PSHCE lesson, they discussed the implications of sharing and poverty. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong, and they learn in their history lessons and through the PSHCE programme about the nature of civil and criminal law in England and the democratic processes of parliament. There is no school council or its equivalent and so pupils do not have direct opportunities to experience democracy in action. Formal opportunities for pupil views and opinions to be heard are limited. Questionnaire responses showed that a minority of pupils felt that the school does not seek their opinions or listen to what they have to say. When this was discussed with them, pupils' feelings and opinions on the issue were mixed.
- 4.4 Pupils willingly contribute to the society of the school and are keen to take on responsibility in sporting and extra-curricular activities. They have initiated the formation of an Amnesty International group and the introduction of cricket for girls. Their responses to the questionnaire showed that a majority of pupils in Years 9 to 11, and a minority elsewhere, would like more opportunities to take responsibility. Inspection evidence supports this view. Pupils are thoughtful towards others in practical ways: the choir's visit to St Richard's Hospice and the Flourishing Fivers charity event are enthusiastically supported. Year 13 pupils make a generous and welcome commitment as pastoral form prefects. Although there is no formal community service programme, pupils do some community service as they work towards their Duke of Edinburgh's Awards.
- 4.5 Through the opportunities the school affords for discussion and debate pupils are accustomed to hearing all sides of a question. Visiting speakers from a local mosque and from organisations such as The Friends of Israel, offer opportunities for them to broaden their thinking and develop tolerance of cultures and faiths other than their own, as do the many organised visits abroad. In the religious studies programme religions of all the major faiths are studied and celebrated in work and displays. Pupils are respectful of the beliefs and opinions of others and clearly

understand how important it is to combat discrimination and protect individual freedoms.

- 4.6 By the time they leave school pupils are articulate and confident; they have a purposeful sense of what they want to do next and are ready to meet the challenges of adult life.

RGS Springfield and RGS The Grange

- 4.7 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development at both RGS The Grange and RGS Springfield is excellent.
- 4.8 This is in line with the schools' aims and values and is effectively underpinned by detailed policies and schemes of work for both PSHCE and SMSC.
- 4.9 Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. They have a strong sense of personal identity and are open and comfortable in their surroundings. They show a sophisticated ability to reflect on the themes of the morning assemblies, either by writing their own prayers to share with the school community, or having a time of reflection following the recitation of the Lord's Prayer. Pupils in Year 6 at RGS The Grange spoke passionately about an assembly on Martin Luther King that they had led, which had clearly had a strong impact on their understanding of the rights of people all over the world. Pupils are confident and demonstrate high levels of self-awareness and empathy with others, supporting each other through emotional difficulties. Year 5 pupils at RGS The Grange ably demonstrated feelings of empathy as they considered Simon Peter's betrayal of Jesus and ways in which they might have let others down in their own lives. Pupils express a natural and easy sense of wonder at the natural world around them, as at RGS Springfield when they played outdoors.
- 4.10 Pupils have a strong moral awareness. They strive to be good role models for one another through their respectful and courteous behaviour. Pupils clearly trust each other; they are supportive and show consideration for others. In their interviews both boys and girls were very aware of the need to respect the law, the concept of right and wrong, of the benefits of rewards, and the need for sanctions in certain circumstances.
- 4.11 The social development of pupils is excellent. They enjoy opportunities to take on positions of responsibility by representing their peers on the highly effective school councils, or helping members of the school community on a day-to-day basis as monitors within their classes. In their final year pupils are able to gain from the experience of leadership by becoming prefects. They develop a caring approach for the safety and well-being of younger pupils. Year 6 pupils at RGS Springfield act as role models for the younger pupils at the family lunch service and Year 6 pupils at RGS The Grange act as playground buddies. Pupils are also able to make common sense decisions about the use of digital technology in modern culture and older pupils hold debates on the benefits and pitfalls of social media in PSHCE.
- 4.12 Pupils speak with assurance and confidence but give and justify their opinions in a friendly manner. They take responsibility during assemblies and show personal interest in and understanding of the needs of the modern world through a wide range of charitable fundraising. In addition to school-led events supporting national charities, individual pupils take initiative by running cake sales, selling hand-made items and taking on swimming challenges to raise money for local good causes.

- 4.13 The pupils' cultural development is excellent. They have a good knowledge and understanding of British institutions and culture. Both RGS The Grange and RGS Springfield mark significant national days, with St David's Day celebrated with fervour. Pupils understand how fair voting works by electing house captains and school council members. A PSHCE lesson on the differences between dictatorship and democracy and the structure of our Government prepared Year 6 pupils very well for their forthcoming visit to the Houses of Parliament and strengthened their knowledge of British values. Younger children at RGS The Grange understand the roles that the police and fire brigade play in society. Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to develop their aesthetic appreciation through art showcases, musical and stage performances and special concerts in Worcester Cathedral.
- 4.14 Pupils demonstrate high levels of respect for different cultures and religions and are able to discuss faith choices. In a Year 4 science lesson at RGS The Grange on the digestive system, an animated discussion took place on how dietary choices can be influenced by faith and religion. A visit to RGS Springfield's Year 6 by a Chinese sixth former from the senior school enhanced the pupils' understanding of Chinese culture. Festivals from other countries and cultures are celebrated throughout the year through the Global Overview in the creative curriculum at Springfield and with European Week at RGS The Grange. All these events enhance pupils' cultural awareness.
- 4.15 Pupils at RGS The Grange and RGS Springfield are articulate, polite and happy. They are caring, considerate and confident in themselves and have a strong sense of pride in their schools. By the time they leave their respective school they are strong self-aware individuals with a clear sense of their place in the world, their value and the value of others.

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

The senior school

- 4.16 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.17 Restructured since the previous inspection, pastoral systems are robust and contribute very significantly to pupils' well-being. Tutors, who are the cornerstone of pastoral provision, provide excellent individual support for all pupils, monitoring their personal development and academic progress closely. Some examples of excellent tutorial work were seen, although tutorials are not of consistent quality. Younger pupils also derive considerable benefit from the guidance provided by the pastoral prefects. The chaplain, counsellor and nurses are further valuable sources of pastoral support.
- 4.18 Based on mutual respect, relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils are highly positive. Staff know the pupils well, and pupils know to whom they can turn for help if they have any personal difficulties. They greatly appreciate the help and support that they receive. A very large majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that the school achieves high standards of behaviour and that their children are safe and well looked after. The rare incidences of bullying and harassment are dealt with promptly, sensitively and in accordance with published procedures.
- 4.19 A minority of pupils in the questionnaire indicated that sanctions and rewards are not always used fairly, but discussions with pupils and records of sanctions provided

little support for this concern. The school has recently modified its rewards and sanctions systems in response to this issue in the past.

- 4.20 The school attaches great importance to the need to seek and respond to pupils' opinions and suggestions, but evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that some pupils feel that it does not take sufficient account of their views. Inspectors agree; the school does not have a school council to act as a forum for pupils' views.
- 4.21 The school successfully promotes the benefits of healthy living through well-balanced menus, excellent provision for physical exercise and frequent opportunities for discussing lifestyle choices through, for example, the carefully planned PSHCE programme.
- 4.22 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with special needs or disabilities that covers all three sections of the school.

RGS Springfield

- 4.23 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.24 The school fulfils its aim to ensure that pupils develop their full potential academically, socially and emotionally in a safe, caring environment. Carefully developed pastoral systems are used to monitor the children's well-being at all times and ensure that any concerns are swiftly addressed.
- 4.25 A detailed policy promotes good behaviour, clearly outlining the system for rewards. High expectations, supported by staff vigilance, mean that sanctions are rarely used. Pupils find the system of house points a strong incentive; these are awarded for special acts of thoughtfulness and hard work. The relaxed, family atmosphere, engendered by small class sizes, allows pupils to develop their self-confidence and prepares them for the wider world.
- 4.26 Healthy and nutritious meals and the daily provision of fruit snacks meet all dietary requirements with pupils encouraged to make balanced choices. The family service for lunch, where children eat together in mixed-age groups served by an older pupil, helps children get to know one another and provides a valuable sociable interlude in the day.
- 4.27 In interviews held during the inspection, pupils said that they knew who to turn to if they had any friendship problems. They were aware of the implications of bullying but considered this rare. Pupils and parents are made aware of the dangers of cyber-bullying and use of tablet computers is strictly regulated.
- 4.28 In the questionnaire, pupils indicated that they like sport, the chance to play in matches, and the variety of clubs available. A small minority expressed concern that sports awards were unfairly awarded. Inspection evidence supports this concern and the school has taken steps to allocate the awards across a wider spectrum of activities.
- 4.29 The school listens to the views of pupils at the democratically elected school council, which is run by Year 6 pupils. Current projects include choosing a mini-fundraiser for a future charity event.

RGS The Grange

- 4.30 The quality of pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.31 Staff provide effective support and guidance for the pupils in accordance with the school aims, contributing to outstanding personal development.
- 4.32 Relationships between staff and pupils and among the pupils themselves are caring, friendly and respectful, and help to contribute to a happy school environment. The pastoral leadership and structures have changed since the previous inspection to provide greater support to pupils at every level. The structures include clear lines of communication between staff and the school leadership, and the system is well understood by pupils.
- 4.33 Pupils are encouraged to be healthy through developing appropriate eating habits and taking regular exercise. They appreciate the good choice of food available at lunchtime, which is tasty, nutritious and well balanced. Pupils benefit greatly from regular physical activities through an extensive games programme and extra-curricular activities.
- 4.34 The school is effective in promoting excellent standards of behaviour and guarding against harassment and bullying. It deals promptly and constructively with any unacceptable behaviour taking account of personal needs. Pupils are well mannered, friendly, extremely courteous and caring towards one another. They display polite confidence in initiating conversations with adults. They have a thorough understanding of the system for rewards and sanctions.
- 4.35 Through excellent lines of communication and careful monitoring of pastoral systems, the school is effective in promoting excellent behaviour standards and moral values in accordance with its aims.
- 4.36 The school employs effective methods in seeking the views of pupils through the pupil council and a regular programme of meetings. Senior staff actively seek pupils' views on the effectiveness of the pastoral structures, thus effectively involving pupils. Pupils feel consulted and were able to give examples of suggestions made, to which the school responded positively. Pupils have many opportunities to take on various positions of responsibility and this contributes greatly to the development of their leadership skills and their sense of responsibility.

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

- 4.37 The arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils are excellent.
- 4.38 The schools have robust measures in place to safeguard pupils' welfare, which have regard to official guidance. Designated staff receive regular child protection training and fruitful working relationships are maintained with local agencies and the governing body. Child protection training for all other staff is effective. Induction for new staff is both prompt and thorough, and arrangements ensure that temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of the appropriate procedures.
- 4.39 Pupils' registration is undertaken carefully and any unauthorised absence is followed up quickly by office staff. Both admission and attendance registers are backed up and stored appropriately, in line with requirements.

- 4.40 All pupils who feel unwell are cared for by attentive nurses in the well-equipped medical centres. At RGS Springfield, although there is not a nurse on site, the medical care is of a similar high quality; there is a medical room, suitably qualified staff and a nurse can be speedily summoned from the senior school if necessary. A comprehensive first aid policy includes good provision for particular areas of each of the school's work, such as sport and school trips.
- 4.41 Measures to prevent risks of fire and other hazards, including those related to school visits are very efficient. Regular fire drills are held, equipment is checked and maintained appropriately, and staff are well trained in their health and safety responsibilities. Safety concerns are dealt with very promptly by the dedicated site maintenance team. The health and safety committees are very active and are overseen by a nominated governor. In addition, specialist external advice is sought wherever necessary. Assessments of risk are effective and wide-ranging, and a safety-conscious culture is embedded throughout the work of the schools.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The governors provide very effective oversight of all three schools. They form a small but keen and enthusiastic group and have the well-being of the schools at the heart of their work. Careful planning and judicious financial management have ensured that the schools are very well resourced and staffed. Detailed strategic planning has been used to help develop the schools and to facilitate the governors' vision for the future.
- 5.3 Considered attention to regulatory requirements means that the welfare of pupils and their safeguarding are secure. Links to the schools' designated safeguarding leads are strong. Reports on safeguarding are received each term, as well as an annual review, and all governors have received training in child protection, with time for further training on a variety of topics being made available before each board meeting. All governors have induction training.
- 5.4 Governors have a good insight into the working of the schools. Most have a specific role, such as liaison with the preparatory schools or the safeguarding of pupils. One governor liaises directly with the chair of the common room in the senior school and reports on staff views. The liaison with the preparatory schools means the governors are well informed about the two EYFS settings and very appreciative of their quality. Links to senior staff are strong and all three heads attend governors' meetings. Regular visits and effective communication ensure that governors are well informed on school matters and are hence in a position to act on securing improvements as required. They are aided by informative reports from each head and presentations made by members of staff on current educational issues. Visits to lessons and departments further cement their understanding of school life.
- 5.5 The work of the main board is supported by that of committees for education, finance and general purposes, and nominations. These committees are very ably supported by the bursarial team which provides helpful financial information and other support. The education committee monitors the schools' academic performance with helpful support from an assistant head and the provision of valuable data on examination results.
- 5.6 Response to the previous inspection report has been good. Strategies to ensure effective monitoring of teaching, planning, marking and assessment have been put in place and the system of rewards and sanctions in the senior school has been modified. However, both of these initiatives are not yet consistently implemented in practice.

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

- 5.7 The quality of leadership and management across the three schools is excellent.
- 5.8 All three schools have a strong and clear ethos so that the values which encourage respect for others and democracy are evident. The most senior leadership in all schools have a clear and well-executed vision resulting in significant school improvement. Policies and practices for effective management ensure that all regulatory requirements are met and that the welfare and safeguarding of pupils are secure. Good communication between the governors and staff, together with the work of senior staff, are key factors in safeguarding.
- 5.9 Excellent support is provided by senior staff who work well as teams and, collectively, have significant strengths. At the senior school and RGS The Grange roles and responsibilities are appropriate and clearly defined, but at RGS Springfield there is some overlap in the academic and pastoral roles which adds to the workload of the head.
- 5.10 Planning for the future is a strength and mapped out in a range of detailed development plans. These establish clear priorities for the schools in a number of key areas, and they are supported by departmental plans for subject areas. In the senior school these vary in quality. Some are detailed and identify clear and important priorities and issues, others do not. Subject development plans in all schools usefully dovetail into the overall planning.
- 5.11 The leadership of some departments in the senior school is generally excellent, with a few where leadership is weaker, resulting in uneven planning and monitoring within departments. Heads of department are supported well by senior staff who undertake an annual review of each department which are helpful in helping the new head to identify some inconsistencies.
- 5.12 Subject leadership at RGS The Grange and RGS Springfield is very effective and demonstrates vigour and enthusiasm, combining autonomy with a good level of support. There are excellent systems in place to assess, monitor and evaluate teaching. All roles are clear and there is a strong drive to raise standards. The management of the two EYFS settings is outstanding and a major contributor in the excellence of their provision.
- 5.13 In all three schools, lessons are observed for the purpose of monitoring and evaluation. Work is scrutinised and appraisal is used to inform developments for the future. Monitoring of teaching and learning in the senior school is not fully consistent because of the variation in the quality of middle management. Similarly, changes to the rewards and sanctions in the senior school have been made only recently and have yet to have a full impact.
- 5.14 Staff new to teaching, or new to the schools, have a very good induction programme and are well supported by their colleagues. Staff are encouraged to undertake professional development and many take advantage of this. They have received appropriate training in matters of welfare, health and safety and in the safeguarding of pupils. Arrangements for checking staff on recruitment are secure and conducted in accordance with regulatory requirements.
- 5.15 All three schools are making good progress. The headmaster and leadership team in the senior school are new and initiatives are planned for the future, in particular to

raise pupils' attainment and achievement. At RGS The Grange and RGS Springfield the style of management is attractive to both parents and pupils. Acting on findings of the previous inspection, RGS Springfield is introducing a system of assessing individual pupils' abilities. RGS The Grange was advised to make a number of improvements and these have now been completed, as have those concerning previous failure of the regulatory requirements.

- 5.16 In line with its aims, the schools promote excellent relationships with parents, who value the open channels of communication. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were highly supportive of the way in which the school looks after their children. They also appreciate the diversity of the curriculum, the high quality of pastoral care and the excellent provision of extra-curricular activities. Parents who were spoken to during the inspection said that staff know their children very well and deal quickly with any concerns. Parents report that the heads and staff are very approachable, and that the use of email aids communication with staff regarding their child's work and progress. The school has a clear formal complaints procedure that is available to parents and which meets statutory requirements. Any concerns are recorded carefully and in detail, treated sensitively, and resolved through prompt action, following the published procedures. Where necessary, the chair of governors is heavily involved. Records show that prompt referrals to safeguarding agencies are made, or advice sought, as appropriate.
- 5.17 In the pre-inspection questionnaire a very small minority of concerns were expressed by parents with regard to their involvement in the life of the school. Inspection found that parents are very much considered part of the school and are encouraged to be involved. The schools' parents associations organise activities with a clear aim of developing community relationships between parents and the school, as well as raising funds to support the work of the schools. Parents and friends are encouraged to attend sporting fixtures, concerts, drama productions and parent association events, all promoted clearly in the calendar and on the schools' websites.
- 5.18 Parents of current and prospective pupils receive a wide range of relevant information with necessary information on procedures and policies shown on the websites. They appreciate the weekly e-newsletters, the termly *Excel* magazine and the annual *Worcesterian*, which keep them well informed. Parents' evenings are positive occasions when parents can get a clear view of their child's progress. They are also invited to a number of parents' information evenings, such as guidance at times of key change.
- 5.19 Parents appreciate the quality of information regarding their child's progress. In all schools they receive reports which provide clear explanation of the criteria for effort and achievement. They are comprehensive, informative and thorough, and reflect the teachers' deep knowledge and understanding of their pupils. Parents at RGS Springfield and The Grange receive a full report at the end of the academic year supported by termly grade cards and parents meetings. Senior school parents receive half-termly grades and full reports twice a year. All parents are invited to make a follow-up appointment with the school to discuss any concerns arising from reports.

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

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE IN RGS SPRINGFIELD

6.(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

- 6.1 In meeting the needs of the children, the setting is outstanding. Effective planning ensures that most children reach, and many exceed, the expected levels of development in their areas of learning. The curriculum is enhanced by specialist teaching in music, French and physical education and by a range of activities, including ballet and horse riding. Outdoor sessions provide an exciting focus for activities.
- 6.2 The richly-resourced classrooms and inspiring opportunities for role play stimulate the children's imagination and promote positive social interactions. A very effective balance between adult-led and child-initiated experiences fosters independent learning, planned to reflect the children's interests and with the outdoor learning areas.
- 6.3 Careful planning, matched to individual learning goals, ensures that each child is challenged and fully engaged. Both younger and older children have a wide range of activities available and are encouraged to make independent choices and to investigate. Daily investigative tasks, for example finding out how many cheerios can be threaded onto a piece of spaghetti, encourage the children to experiment and to develop their fine motor skills. Provision for pupils with SEND, or those with EAL, is effective and outside agencies are consulted if necessary.
- 6.4 The high level of professional commitment to good practice and intuitive team-work is reflected in all aspects of teaching. The wide variety of teaching methods employed ensures that all children can access the curriculum. Baseline assessments, including two-year checks, inform the starting points for each child. Achievements are carefully recorded and the next steps for learning identified.
- 6.5 Parents are very pleased with the setting. Excellent links ensure that they are fully informed of their child's progress. They particularly appreciate the regular online feedback about each child's activities and the opportunity to express their opinions on the parents' noticeboard.

6.(b) The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being

- 6.6 The contribution of the early years to children's well-being is outstanding. Strong relationships between staff, the children and their families gives the children confidence to share any worries. Staff act as excellent role models, demonstrating the teamwork and consideration which they expect from the children, and promoting an atmosphere of mutual respect.
- 6.7 Children of all ages play well together, learning to share and to look after each other. Clear boundaries and high expectations promote excellent standards of behaviour and special acts of thoughtfulness or hard work may be rewarded with house points or a certificate.
- 6.8 The varied opportunities for activity promote pupils' physical development and controlled risk-taking. During an outdoor activity, children were discretely supervised

while they worked out the safest way to climb over a pile of logs. Healthy eating is promoted through tasty and nutritious lunches and fruit snacks. Older children can attend to their personal hygiene. Parents of younger children appreciate the detailed daily records of their child's activities and diet. All staff are trained in paediatric first aid, ensuring that any medical needs are fully addressed.

- 6.9 Comprehensive systems for records and visits to their next classroom ensure that children are well prepared for their next class.

6.(c) The leadership and management of the early years provision

- 6.10 The leadership and management of the setting are outstanding. Strong support and highly effective oversight by the governors ensure that their statutory responsibilities are met. The head of the EYFS is a member of the senior leadership team and provides regular reports to the education committee, ensuring that governors are fully informed.
- 6.11 Thorough induction procedures and regular training mean that all staff are fully aware of current safeguarding and health and safety protocols. This means that all children learn in a safe and stimulating environment. Recruitment procedures are rigorously followed and effective daily checks are made on pupils.
- 6.12 Careful monitoring and moderation of pupils' work means that standards are maintained and provide a benchmark for self-evaluation. A detailed audit of the provision provides further ideas for improvement and staff have the opportunity to contribute to the school development plan.
- 6.13 Annual staff appraisals are used to set personal targets and identify training needs. Teaching assistants may share any concerns about children for whom they are the key person and the system of peer review provides opportunities to share good practice.
- 6.14 Strong links with parents ensure that pupils' needs are fully met.

6.(d) The overall quality and standards of the early years provision

- 6.15 The overall quality and standards of the EYFS are outstanding. Most children make very good progress relative to their ability and needs. At the end of the Reception year, most children achieve, and many exceed, expectations preparing them well for the next stage of their education.
- 6.16 In Reception, most children work confidently with numbers to twenty. They enjoy number challenges and can use appropriate mathematical language. They apply their developing phonic skills to read simple words and in their independent writing, for example drawing up shopping lists at the farm shop. In the Nursery, daily activities provide many opportunities to practise number skills, such as counting their friends at registration. Older children enjoy mark making and many can recognise, and are learning to write, their own names. Younger children accurately match objects to numbers up to five and confidently join in songs and rhymes, often re-enacting the actions in the role-play areas.
- 6.17 Across the setting, children are involved in planning their own activities and are encouraged to extend their learning, such as when younger children used magnifying glasses to take a closer look at the materials in the small-world farm.

Children in Reception toured the senior school and formulated their questions to interview the head over tea.

- 6.18 Good behaviour is quietly reinforced and the good manners and confident conversational skills displayed at lunchtime make these sessions very enjoyable for everyone. Pupils feel safe and secure. Welfare and safeguarding procedures are secure, and risk assessments and fire procedures well known.
- 6.19 Continuous self-evaluation has produced suggestions for improvement, as staff maintain the outstanding standards of the setting. These include redecoration, plans to improve the coach house to further enhance the learning environment, and providing the capacity for learning support within the EYFS setting.
- 6.20 Since the previous inspection the head of the EYFS has become a member of the senior leadership team and a system of assessment has been introduced to record and track children's progress.

7. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE IN RGS THE GRANGE

7.(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

- 7.1 The setting makes outstanding provision in meeting the needs of the range of children. Consistently high standards are achieved through the varied, interesting and challenging curriculum, which helps all children to reach, and in many cases exceed, age-appropriate levels of development. All children are extremely well supported in their learning and development, including children with additional needs, ensuring good progress and excellent preparation for the next stage of their learning.
- 7.2 All adults have high expectations, and they motivate and engage children through a wide variety of exciting and challenging opportunities, both indoors and outside.
- 7.3 Thorough planning and assessments enable individual next steps to be identified and implemented. There is an excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities to match individual needs and stages of development. Considerable emphasis is placed on personal, social and emotional development, communication and language and physical development for the youngest children to ensure firm foundations for future learning. All children benefit from specialist teaching in music and, for older children, physical education. The older children also benefit from attending assemblies, belonging to houses and going to house meetings. Outdoor play significantly enhances the curriculum, giving extensive opportunities for risk-taking and solving problems.
- 7.4 Relationships with parents are excellent and staff work closely with them to ensure children settle happily into school. Much helpful information is given to parents, including detailed reports, to ensure they are fully involved in their child's development. Parents report they are very pleased with the setting, particularly that their child is very happy, well looked after, and making excellent progress.

7.(b) The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being

- 7.5 Provision for children's well-being is outstanding. All children, including those under three and those with additional needs, are known extremely well by their key person, who recognises their unique qualities and ensures their successes are celebrated. All adults promote the excellent standards of behaviour and courtesy expected, and are highly effective in ensuring that all children form strong relationships at all levels. Adults intervene skilfully to avert or resolve any disagreements.
- 7.6 The caring and supportive environment leads to confident children and there is an atmosphere of mutual respect, with great importance placed on children's happiness. Adults act as excellent role models so that children know how to play co-operatively and imaginatively as they explore their richly resourced environment.
- 7.7 Young children are helped to manage their personal hygiene and care practices, particularly for the youngest children, are exemplary. Children of all ages are given many opportunities to be physically active and the older children know that exercise is important. Healthy eating is strongly promoted.
- 7.8 Transitions between different stages are carefully managed to ensure all children are sensitively prepared for their next class.

7.(c) The leadership and management of the early years provision

- 7.9 Leadership and management are outstanding. Governance is highly effective and supportive. It is based on a thorough knowledge of the requirements of the EYFS and the individual qualities of the setting, gained through regular visits and a genuine interest in its success. The children's welfare and safeguarding are given high priority and all staff have received the necessary training in child protection. Great importance is placed on health and safety issues.
- 7.10 The relatively new leadership team have a clear and ambitious vision for the future. Less experienced staff benefit greatly from the excellent modelling of best practice by senior leaders. Rigorous self-evaluation and appraisals are used to review practice, set challenging targets for improvement, and identify training needs. This has a very positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning.
- 7.11 Excellent partnerships with parents and external agencies have been established which contributes to children's achievement and development. All adults work hard to promote a positive and inclusive atmosphere and excellent teamwork makes a strong contribution to the progress of all children.

7.(d) The overall quality and standards of the early years provision

- 7.12 The overall quality and standards of the early year's provision are outstanding. Much of the setting's success is due to the highly dedicated staff. Children of all abilities, including those with SEND or EAL, make good, and sometimes rapid, progress overall in relation to their individual starting point.
- 7.13 The exciting opportunities for learning and the care for children under three enable them to become safe, active and happy learners. They enjoy songs, rhymes and stories, begin to know colours, and express their needs. As children progress through the setting they become attentive listeners, they describe their feelings and experiences with increasing confidence, and develop their counting and physical

skills. Reception children express themselves articulately, as was seen in a discussion about global warming. They use their increasing knowledge of phonics to write simple stories independently and work competently with numbers to 20 and beyond. They are able to do simple addition and subtraction sums. Children use tablet computers competently for a variety of purposes.

- 7.14 The personal development of all children is excellent. They are able to share, take turns and be highly independent. Excellent support systems enable them to build trusting relationships with staff. Welfare and safeguarding procedures are secure, and risk assessments and fire procedures well known.
- 7.15 The setting has a strong capacity for continuous improvement and the recommendation from the previous inspection to unify daily planning has been fully met. All children have firm foundations and excellent opportunities to learn in a safe, stimulating and extremely happy environment.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

- 7.16 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

Section 2 includes any identified action the Early Years Foundation Stage is recommended to take in order to improve its provision.