



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE SCHOOL

JUNIOR BRANCH

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

University College School Junior Branch

The senior school was inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School **University College School Junior Branch**

DfE Number **202/6018**

Registered Charity Number **312748**

Telephone Number **020 7435 3068**

Fax Number **020 7435 7332**

Email Address **juniorbranch@ucs.org.uk**

Headmaster **Mr Kevin J Douglas**

Chairman of Governors **Rt Hon Sir Brian Leveson**

Age Range **7 to 11**

Total Number of Pupils **254**

Gender of Pupils **Boys**

Numbers by Age 7-11: **254**

Number of Day Pupils Total: **254**

Number of Boarders Total: **0**

Inspection dates **08 Nov 2011 to 09 Nov 2011**

05 Dec 2011 to 07 Dec 2011

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

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.

CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL	2
(a) Main findings	2
(b) Action points	2
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	2
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	2
3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	3
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills	3
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	4
(c) The contribution of teaching	5
4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	6
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	6
(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	7
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	8
(a) The quality of governance	8
(b) The quality of leadership and management	8
(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians	9
INSPECTION EVIDENCE	10

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 University College School was founded in Gower Street in 1830 as part of University College, London, and the senior school moved to Hampstead in 1907. The school was revolutionary in its approach to education, having as a fundamental principle that religion, in any form, should neither be an entry requirement nor a taught subject, believing rather that faith is a matter for the family and the individual - a tradition that continues today. The governing body is known as the Council and the members of Council are trustees. The Junior Branch, which is for boys from seven to eleven years, is located at the top of a hill with views over London. It opened in 1891 on its current site, and the main building was erected in 1927. Sixteen years after the Junior Branch was established the school separated from University College. The pupils have full use of the extensive playing fields, including a large all-weather pitch and two pavilions in West Hampstead, which are owned by the school.
- 1.2 Pupils are selected for the school with no regard to race or creed and the school aims to foster tolerance and a community spirit. It seeks to provide opportunities for all pupils to experience the joy of achievement and to develop academic and personal disciplines with self-confidence. The ability profile of the school is above the national average. The majority of pupils are of at least above average ability, some demonstrating ability that is far above the national average with few boys having ability that is in line with the national average or below. The vast majority of pupils are from families with a variety of cultural and faith backgrounds where parents are professionals who work in London.
- 1.3 Of the current roll of 254 boys, 17 have been identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and 13 of these receive specialist support. English is an additional language for 34 pupils and at present one of these receives additional support. No pupil has a statement of educational needs.
- 1.4 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 All pupils are highly successful in their learning and personal development. The school meets its aims to teach the value of commitment and the joy of achievement and to provide for the steady maturing of a boy's personality. The school does not enter pupils for national tests but results of standardised testing indicate that the majority of pupils are of at least above average ability with many demonstrating ability that is far above the national average and few boys having ability that is in line with the national average or below. Excellent teaching contributes to the high standard of achievement. Marking is regular, usually with helpful comments on how pupils can improve their work further but pupils' self-evaluation of their work is at an early stage.
- 2.2 The personal qualities of the pupils are outstanding and the school successfully fulfils its aim to enable pupils to develop academic and personal disciplines, self-confidence, thoughtfulness and public spirit. Pupils are welcoming to visitors and unfailingly polite. Older pupils are given leadership responsibilities which help to prepare them for life beyond the school. Both teaching and non-teaching staff provide an excellent level of pastoral care and their example leads to the happy and purposeful atmosphere which pervades the school. Technical support for art, design and technology (DT) and science is thinly spread.
- 2.3 Leadership and management of the school are outstanding and the leadership team is dedicated to ensuring that the school's founding ethos is upheld. The school's leaders have acted on all the recommendations from the previous inspection report. Governance of the school is excellent. Governors are fully committed to the school and by regular and informed discussion play an important role in its development. Governors take their legal responsibilities very seriously and ensure that all statutory policies and procedures are in place, meeting all regulatory requirements, including those for safeguarding. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires both parents and pupils showed overwhelming support for the school, its leaders and its staff.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

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

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Further develop the pupils' self-evaluation of their work.
 2. Increase technical support for the art, DT and science departments.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 From the time they enter the school at the age of seven, pupils' achievement is excellent. They are well educated and extremely successful in their learning across all subjects and activities. In lessons, and in their written work, they show clear understanding and most pupils make excellent progress. The school successfully fulfils its aim to develop academic and personal disciplines and increase self-confidence. At the age of eleven almost all pupils transfer to the senior school.
- 3.2 The pupils have a marked ability to listen to each other. They speak and read with confidence and self-assurance, whether in a classroom discussion, reading a poem, performing in a drama production or taking part in a debating competition. They use well-developed mathematical skills from the time they enter the school and are able to apply these in problem-solving. Older pupils successfully investigated the properties of prime numbers and factors. Excellent creative skills are evident in pupils' writing, speaking and art and all around the school stimulating and interesting examples of pupils' work are on display. In all age groups, pupils have excellent thinking skills. Pupils achieve good levels of competence in information and communication technology (ICT), which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Their ability to use their ICT skills in many curriculum subjects, both for research and to present their work, is good. Younger pupils enjoyed the investigative challenges about weight posed to them in a mathematics lesson using ICT. In a small number of subjects pupils are beginning to develop the skill of self-evaluation and use this to improve their work. As yet this practice is not yet widespread. High standards are achieved in physical activities, and school teams and individuals are successful in local, regional and national competitions in a number of sports including football, rugby, skiing, hockey, tennis and sailing. Pupils achieve high standards in music, both in singing and playing and all pupils benefit from opportunities to hear their peers performing at all levels.
- 3.3 Results of standardised tests suggest that pupils' attainment is far higher than national norms. Pupils' overall attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against a fixed national norm but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils make excellent progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. Those with learning difficulties receive the extra help they need to make good, and often rapid, progress. Evidence of this was seen in scrutiny of their work and in conversations with them. In conversations with some of the highest achieving pupils their command of advanced sophisticated vocabulary was evident.
- 3.4 Pupils thrive in the atmosphere of hard work, enjoyment and effort. Their attitude to their work is excellent and they take pride both in their achievements and the successes of others. They sustain high levels of concentration during lessons, maximising the opportunities that are presented to them. They work very well together.

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

- 3.5 The contribution made by the curriculum and extra-curricular activities is excellent. This enables pupils to achieve high standards in all subjects and supports the school's aims and ethos. The curriculum is broad and balanced, well planned in each subject and tailored to suit the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities. It covers all required aspects of learning and presents excellent opportunities for creative work in subjects such as art and music.
- 3.6 The school is well resourced, which allows pupils to participate in challenging and rewarding activities of a practical and scientific nature, whilst the well-stocked library helps develop their reading and acquisition of knowledge. Across the curriculum ICT is used in written work and for presentations, as when excellent talks were given by older pupils in their debate on the world's most famous icon.
- 3.7 Pupils who need either additional support or extra challenge are provided for across the curriculum. Extra materials were used to reinforce the learning objective by the use of key words in an English lesson with younger pupils and extension sheets challenged more able pupils in a mathematics lesson on weight. Further stimulation and challenge are provided by a comprehensive and diverse range of clubs including Mandarin, Spanish and mathematics. The curriculum is further enriched by activities, trips and visits. Annually, older pupils spend a week at a residential activity centre and the whole school participates in World Book Day. Pupils in their final year benefit from an enriched curriculum during the summer term which includes film making, geographical research, cookery and a number of visits and themed days.
- 3.8 The school has acted on comments made in the previous inspection report by conducting a thorough review of the curriculum over a five-year period and putting in place detailed development plans for each subject. Previous anomalies over the allocation of time for history and geography no longer exist.
- 3.9 A full and thriving extra-curricular programme is in place throughout the year, staffed largely by teachers but with additional help from outside coaches for activities such as fencing, karate and chess. Additionally almost all pupils, regardless of ability, represent the school in fixtures in one or more sports. Staff work hard to ensure that every pupil has the opportunity to take part and that he is encouraged to do so.
- 3.10 Links with the community are excellent. The school raises significant sums of money for an extensive range of charities. It has developed strong links with a school in Tanzania and several members of staff went there to teach during the summer holiday. Reports and photographs of their experiences enrich the curriculum and fascinate the pupils. Additionally, money is raised in a community action week and the charities are usually chosen by the pupils themselves. Guest speakers in assembly make pupils aware of charities needing their support. Inventive methods of fund raising such as badge-making, carol singing at the local underground station or mug designing capture the pupils' interest. Regular mufti days augment this work resulting in substantial sums of money being raised annually for charity.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.11 Teaching is excellent and makes a strong contribution to the high standards of academic achievement. It supports the aim of the school to help pupils to work independently and to provide for the steady maturing of a boy's capacities so that he develops academic disciplines that will allow him to transfer smoothly to the senior school. In most of the lessons the teaching is inspiring and, as a result, pupils are enthusiastic, responsive and stimulated to do their best.
- 3.12 Teachers have strong subject knowledge and know the pupils and their capabilities very well. They are particularly skilful in planning and adapting their teaching to the needs of individuals. In a mathematics lesson with younger pupils, in which data was being collected for a bar chart, coloured chocolate sweets were distributed for grouping but a few pupils who are colour blind were given assorted shapes to sort instead. Effective questioning techniques challenge all pupils to think, and allow them to demonstrate their understanding of the topics being covered. Older pupils were challenged to think how they would feel at the top of both a high building and a high mountain and describe the differences. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and provide opportunities for the boys to interact extremely well with each other and with the teacher. Management of time within lessons is good. Topics are presented in ways which are particularly appealing to boys. Setting up a fair test to investigate the friction generated by toy cars moving down assorted ramps, empathetic letter writing from a World War 1 soldier home to his mother, or using lizard eyes to inspire pattern for tessellating shapes, capture the boys' interest. The boys respond with enthusiasm and an obvious desire to work hard and please their teachers. Extension tasks are usually planned to stretch the knowledge and understanding of the most able and excellent support is evident for those pupils with SEND, with subject teachers using the detailed information provided by the learning support department.
- 3.13 A tracking system for each individual pupil is in place and is used by staff to ensure that challenges are appropriate and that progress is steady. In response to the previous inspection report, marking is now thorough and appropriate and indicates to the pupils not only how well they have done but also what they need to do to continue improving. Written and verbal comments are always positive and encouraging. Few examples exist of peer assessment or self-evaluation.
- 3.14 Resources are plentiful and of a high quality in all areas. The teaching is enhanced by the skilful use of these excellent resources, particularly the interactive white boards in all classrooms. ICT is an integral part of the teaching in many lessons and online resources are carefully chosen to aid pupils in their independent research. All pupils benefit from individual ICT programmes in mathematics. Technical support is shared between the art, DT and science departments and is spread too thinly, compromising the available help and support for pupils in these subjects.
- 3.15 Since the previous inspection the role of subject co-ordinators has been extended and reviewed, enabling them to develop systems to help and support colleagues and share good practice. Regular departmental meetings, training, mutual lesson observations, regular monitoring and discussions result in very high quality, challenging teaching in all subjects and year groups.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The quality of pupils' personal development is excellent. It reflects strongly the school's aim to foster in pupils a sense of community alongside a tolerance of and respect for the individual. Pupils have well-rounded personalities with a compelling degree of confidence. They demonstrate co-operation and willingness to support each other and they thrive within the close-knit community, where emphasis is placed on kindness, helpfulness, and honesty.
- 4.2 The pupils develop a sense of their own well-being, reflected in their appreciation of the needs of others. Their spiritual awareness is developed through assemblies that provide opportunities for contemplation and consideration of the spirit although religious issues are not discussed, in line with the school's founding principles. Individuality is respected and nurtured alongside opportunities to grow and flourish.
- 4.3 The pupils' moral awareness is excellent. Within the school, a culture of doing the right thing is emphasised such as when pupils were reminded at the start of the day about how to respect the views and needs of their peers. Pupils recognise the effect of good and considerate behaviour on the whole community, and are quite clear about the differences between right and wrong from an early age. They realise that their actions and words affect others, and the feeling of mutual respect between pupils and staff is strong. Pupils work hard to support a range of charities often chosen by them, locally, nationally and internationally.
- 4.4 The pupils' outstanding social development is a direct result of the example which is set by the caring and compassionate staff. Pupils are gregarious, care for each other and show highly developed social skills and courtesies when greeting visitors. They have a good knowledge of public services and institutions and are able to use the knowledge in discussions. They enjoy sharing each other's successes in assemblies, house meetings and form periods when academic, social, sporting and musical awards are distributed.
- 4.5 Pupils' appreciation and understanding of cultural diversity are excellent and they are enriched by the wide cultural mix represented in the school and by opportunities provided for them both within and outside the curriculum. In a conversation at lunch with inspectors one pupil commented that he really appreciated being in a school with boys of different cultures and backgrounds from his own. Pupils have a harmonious and respectful approach to different nationalities and are knowledgeable about other cultures and faiths. This knowledge is expanded in geography, history and personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons and through residential and day trips both at home and abroad.

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

- 4.6 The arrangements for pastoral care, welfare, health and safety are excellent. The school fulfils its aims to foster in pupils a sense of community alongside a tolerance of, and respect for, the individual. The arrangements for the care of pupils, which centre on the class teacher, are clear and effective. Staff discuss concerns about individual pupils at regular meetings and detailed records are kept.
- 4.7 Teachers know their pupils well and respond sensitively to their individual needs. The high degree of mutual respect between teachers and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves is clearly evident. Pupils feel they are listened to, and they understand how to seek help should they need it. Suggestion boxes are placed outside the dining room and library. The oldest boys particularly enjoy the responsibility of being peer mentors. This responsible job, having been volunteered for, requires training and dedication. The pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is excellent and they are polite when speaking to adults and visitors. Effective procedures are in place for guarding against bullying and dealing with any unacceptable behaviour. The anti-bullying policy is comprehensive and the boys report that bullying is extremely rare. They are confident that problems of this kind would be dealt with immediately and effectively.
- 4.8 Every pupil is a member of one of the four school houses. This promotes healthy competition within the school with merit points being awarded for individual and team efforts and achievements. These are totalled at the end of the year and the trophy awarded to the winning house is eagerly anticipated.
- 4.9 Pupils are encouraged to be healthy, and the bright dining room and good choice of daily menu establish a positive, relaxed environment in which lunch can be enjoyed. The meals provided are of an excellent quality and served by smiling, encouraging members of the catering staff. Table manners are good and the boys enjoy each other's company whilst they eat. Pupils understand the benefits of exercise and receive great encouragement to take part in the many sporting opportunities on offer.
- 4.10 Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and include appropriate measures to ensure that staff are checked and suitable to work with children. All staff have undertaken appropriate child protection training and the designated officers have been trained at the higher level. Educational visits are meticulously planned with suitable, thorough risk assessments in place. All necessary measures have been taken to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. Fire practices are held regularly and a fire risk assessment has been carried out. In the well-equipped medical room, excellent provision is available for pupils who are ill or have accidents and detailed records are kept. Attendance and admission registers are correctly completed and stored appropriately. A suitable plan exists for pupils with disabilities. The school buildings are light and airy and classrooms are welcoming and clean. The outside play areas are interesting, with a safe 'rough and tumble' playground, and quieter areas with well-maintained play equipment to stimulate and entertain the pupils.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 Governance is excellent. The governing body ensures that the school is successful in its aims to provide for the steady maturing of a boy's personality and capacities so that he develops academic and personal disciplines, self-confidence, thoughtfulness and public spirit. Members of the governing body have a valuable blend of experience and expertise, which enables them to give effective support to all areas of school life, including the oversight of educational standards. They exercise prudent financial control and have ensured that the school benefits from high quality buildings, resources and staff. A strategic plan for the long-term development of the school is in place and is reviewed and updated regularly.
- 5.2 Governors take their legal responsibilities very seriously and have excellent oversight of the policies and procedures for safeguarding and safe recruitment. They have attended courses on safer recruitment and child protection and review all required policies regularly. Governors spend time familiarising themselves with the staff and pupils of the school by making regular visits.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.3 Leadership and management are excellent. The school is led with vision and a deep commitment, promoting the aim that every pupil should be encouraged to fulfil his potential at the appropriate level. The excellent personal qualities of the pupils are a direct result of the ethos which has been created within the school and the example which is set by the senior leaders. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires and in interviews, pupils reported that they enjoy being at UCS and that they are very proud of their school. Parents were equally supportive, especially of the school's leadership and the wide variety of opportunities which are provided for their sons.
- 5.4 The senior leaders have a sharp focus for continuous future improvement, reflected in the school development plan. They provide clear educational direction, whilst encouraging individual members of staff to present and develop new ideas which benefit the pupils. Individual subject leaders play an important role in developing teaching and learning. Regular monitoring of pupils' work is in place to ensure consistency of marking and presentation. Peer observations are arranged and the sharing of good practice is encouraged. Appraisal systems are robust and are linked to staff professional development. Recent appraisals of non-teaching staff have highlighted the need for an increase in technical support for the art, DT and science departments.
- 5.5 The school's leaders ensure that appropriate attention is given to the welfare, health and safety of the pupils. All staff receive the appropriate training in safeguarding. Safer recruitment procedures are followed when new staff are appointed and these are recorded accurately on the single central register. Induction procedures for new staff are thorough.

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

- 5.6 The school has excellent links with parents and extended family members. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire are overwhelmingly positive and supportive of all that the school offers. Parents have many opportunities to support their children's learning and development throughout the year and they take full advantage of these. The school's website provides detailed information about the life of the school and this is supplemented by many additional publications and newsletters. Pupils have a homework diary which is often used as a quick and efficient means of communication between parent and school. An appropriate and thorough complaints procedure exists.
- 5.7 Parents comment on the school's understanding of how to deal with boys and appreciate the 'boy oriented' touches such as the provision of table football tables in the playground. Their support of the school through a vibrant parents' guild is clearly shown in the sale of over 1100 tickets for a recent fireworks event. Parents help as 'reading mums' and provide a useful and helpful service in school whilst others assist in the library, support teams and attend concerts in large numbers. Coffee mornings and grandparents' days also provide opportunities for the whole school community to come together.
- 5.8 Prospective parents can find information about the school from its excellent website and current parents also use this facility. In addition, two parents' evenings and termly grade cards or reports are provided each year. These supply detailed information about a pupil's work and progress, although discussions about the latter may happen at any time through mutually agreed informal meetings. A message system using electronic texts is proving very popular with parents and is used for fixture cancellations, snow warnings or on similar occasions.

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

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, 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 and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Penny Horsman	Reporting Inspector
Mr John Coakley	Principal, IAPS School
Mrs Janet Cooper	Former Head, IAPS School
Mr Nick Yelland	Former Head, IAPS School