



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**IMMANUEL COLLEGE**

**INTERIM INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Immanuel College

|                           |  |                              |                   |
|---------------------------|--|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Full Name of School       | <b>Immanuel College</b>  |                              |                   |
| DCSF Number               | <b>919/6231</b>  |                              |                   |
| Registered Charity Number | <b>803179</b>  |                              |                   |
| Address                   | <b>Immanuel College<br/>87-91 Elstree Road<br/>Bushey<br/>Hertfordshire<br/>WD23 4EB</b> |                              |                   |
| Telephone Number          | <b>020 89500604</b>  |                              |                   |
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| Head Master               | <b>Mr Philip Skelker</b>   |                              |                   |
| Chair of Governors        | <b>Dr Sara Levene</b>  |                              |                   |
| Age Range                 | <b>11 to 18</b>  |                              |                   |
| Total Number of Pupils    | <b>485</b>   |                              |                   |
| Gender of Pupils          | <b>Mixed (258 boys; 227 girls;)</b>  |                              |                   |
| Numbers by Age            | 0-2 (EYFS):  | <b>0</b>                     | 5-11: <b>0</b>    |
|                           | 3-5 (EYFS):  | <b>0</b>                     | 11-18: <b>485</b> |
| Number of Day Pupils      | <b>485</b>   | Capacity for flexi-boarding: | <b>Nil</b>        |
| Number of Boarders        | Total:   | <b>0</b>                     |                   |
|                           | Full:  | <b>0</b>                     | Weekly: <b>0</b>  |
| Inspection Dates          | <b>15 Mar 2010 to 16 Mar 2010</b>  |                              |                   |

## PREFACE

This report is according to the *Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)* schedule for INTERIM inspections. The inspection is a two day visit with a focus on compliance with regulatory requirements. ISI inspections occur every three years and have two formats, interim and standard, which usually occur in an alternating pattern. The school's next inspection will therefore follow the standard schedule, which includes two visits totalling five days and places greater emphasis on the quality of education and care in addition to reporting on regulatory compliance. The school's previous inspection was in May 2006.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as subsequently amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) The quality of education provided (Curriculum)
- (b) The quality of education provided (Teaching)
- (c) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) The welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) The suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) The premises and accommodation
- (g) The provision of information
- (h) The manner in which complaints are to be handled

Legislation additional to the welfare, health and safety Standard 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 does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Immanuel College was founded in 1990 by the late Chief Rabbi, Lord Immanuel Jacobovits, to fulfil his vision of a school combining an excellent education with a daily life which would affirm orthodox Jewish values and practice. It is a co-educational day school for pupils aged eleven to eighteen, in which most lessons in Years 7 to 11 are conducted separately for boys and girls. The school occupies an eleven acre site in a residential area of Bushey, using a variety of modern buildings alongside a listed 19<sup>th</sup> century mansion. The board of governors consists almost entirely of current parents, but the education committee contains external members as well. Since the previous inspection, the school has further developed its range of courses at GCSE and A level, put an increased emphasis on independent work and study, and introduced a Beit Midrash, a study hall offering enriched Jewish learning.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection, the school had 485 pupils, of whom 258 were boys and 227 girls. Pupils are admitted following examinations in English, mathematics and, for scholarship candidates, Jewish studies. The analysis of standardised tests shows that the pupils' average ability is above the national average. Three pupils have statements of special education need (SEN) with another 93 identified as having some level of learning difficulty and/or disability (LDD). Eight pupils come from homes where English is a second language, of whom two receive language support. All pupils must be Jewish and they come from professional families who live mainly in north London and Hertfordshire. Many staff are also Jewish. About a quarter of the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is given to Jewish studies and modern Hebrew.
- 1.3 The school is committed to "a recognition of the unique worth and purpose of each pupil, to school life which is an extension of that which gives meaning and purpose within their families, and for the highest standards of academic excellence in both Jewish and secular studies." It aims to create in pupils "an integrated personality whose Jewish identity is knowledgeable, secure and proud, as a spur to achievement and a responsibility, and as a challenge to exemplary citizenship in a pluralist society."
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## 2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

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

- 2.1 Standards are excellent. The pupils' results at GCSE are high in comparison with all maintained schools; at A level they are high in comparison with maintained selective schools. Throughout the school, pupils make excellent progress in relation to their above average ability, showing an exceptional grasp of Jewish language, culture, faith and practice, in addition to achieving success in examinations and across the secular curriculum. They bring their love of learning and considerable perseverance to a curriculum that has an exceptional range of study, which goes well beyond a secular curriculum. For example, all pupils take modern Hebrew and Jewish studies in Years 7 to 9, and either biblical Hebrew or religious studies at GCSE. This enables them, not only to participate fluently in the daily life of prayer in school, but also to play a significant role in leading it. They are well prepared for adult life, both academically and personally.
- 2.2 From an early age, pupils show initiative in their learning. For example in Year 8 they undertake an exceptional variety of projects ranging from 'what is fashion?' to 'the nature of evil'; in these, they complement more conventional research with face-to-face interviews with people ranging from prison governors to internationally known Premier League football managers. In addition to acquiring secure basic skills in literacy and numeracy, they produce highly expressive writing, for example capturing the mood of Reformation England in an historically based story. High levels of creativity support lively and imaginative art. In discussion, pupils argue their point of view confidently. Their close attention to Jewish texts prepares them well for high quality textual work in subjects such as English. Some sixth form pupils take Open University modules as an extension of school work. They do well in challenges in mathematics and individual examinations in music, as well as achieving success in sport. Pupils are successful in gaining entry to university and higher education.
- 2.3 A high proportion of excellent teaching was seen in the small sample of lessons observed. Teachers constantly engage pupils with questions, and ensure they think for themselves. Questions are used well to assess pupils' understanding. A wide variety of tasks fosters interest and application. Excellent relationships underpin the high quality of teaching and learning; one pupil said "their eagerness to mark any work I provide slightly startles me". A brisk pace and strong leadership in almost all lessons keeps pupils focussed. Pupils with LDD and statements of SEN receive appropriate support. Information and communications technology (ICT) is used to support learning in some subjects such as French, but is not used fully across the whole curriculum. Much marking is detailed, informative and helpful, though some is more brief. Teachers use assessment to monitor pupils' progress, for example in target setting in mathematics.
- 2.4 The pupils' experiences are much enhanced by exceptional opportunities to visit Israel for just under a month in Year 9 and Poland in Year 12, as well as by other trips and by visitors to the school. They also enjoy a wide range of activities, many of which they help to run. Pupils also help to run residential retreats. Both individual pupils and the school are heavily committed to community service at home and overseas.

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

- 2.5 Pupils have a strong sense of identity, reflecting their excellent personal development. They are committed to their faith, being enthusiastic, devout and reverent and thus fulfilling the school's aims. They enrich their faith through daily prayer and lessons, through opportunities for further study and learning in the Beit Midrash, and through the annual trip to Israel. Pupils develop their leadership skills through leading prayers but also through running subject clubs and organising assemblies. In assemblies they widen their understanding of English culture and deepen their understanding of global events. Sixth formers run many clubs and societies, chair committees and organise a range of charity events, including a whole school sponsored walk which recently raised over £17,000 pounds. In all these they show self-confidence, combined with a sensitivity to others.
- 2.6 Pupils are pleasant, articulate, confident, courteous and helpful to visitors. They are respectful of each other and work co-operatively in lessons. In personal, social and health education, pupils are introduced to a variety of health issues, deepen their understanding of needs such as disability, as well as learning the history of other cultures. They have a good knowledge of public institutions and services, combined with a well-developed sense of right and wrong.
- 2.7 Both pupils and parents are extremely positive about the excellent quality of pastoral care. They know that each individual is cared for and valued equally. The outstanding support and guidance that the pupils receive is rooted in the excellent relationships between all at school. Pupils value highly the help they are given by tutors and all other members of the pastoral team. They describe the school as a second family, in which they feel looked after extremely well. Communication between pupils and staff is good so that problems are quickly and sympathetically dealt with. Pastoral care is monitored by fortnightly meetings of all the staff involved. The duty of care extends outside the school, for example to pupils who are ill for long periods of time and to parents.
- 2.8 Pupils support each other, promoting a safe and comfortable environment within which they develop securely and in which unpleasantness is rare. Senior pupils encourage initiative and good behaviour both by their example and through the peer mentoring scheme. The school has suitable policies and procedures for promoting good discipline and caring for pupils' welfare, including arrangements for child protection. It provides an appropriate range of hot and cold dishes at lunchtime and is currently working with pupils to develop this range further. Opportunities for sport provide for healthy living.

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

- 2.9 Governors oversee all aspects of the school's work very well. They are well informed; being almost entirely current parents, they have an immediate insight into many areas of school life. They also have the opportunity to work with senior staff at meetings and to hear from heads of department about their work. People with educational experience from outside the school community strengthen the work of the education committee, so that it discusses matters such as the curriculum in depth. In most respects, governors oversee welfare arrangements and staff recruitment well, though closer attention to detail is sometimes needed. They have a clear strategic view backed by a shared sense of the school's ethos and priorities. Communication between the school and the governing body is open and frank, enabling issues to be discussed fully and constructively.

- 2.10 The school is quietly but outstandingly led, and its day-to-day work is underpinned to an exceptional degree by its clear set of values and principles, enshrined in the attention given to the daily life of prayer and to the practices of the Jewish faith. Pupils say they appreciate the way the school leadership welcomes, supports and values them, an ethos which permeates the school at all levels. Meetings between heads of department and members of the senior management team, complemented by fortnightly meetings of heads of department, enable teaching and learning to be reviewed on a regular basis; similar meetings underpin pastoral care. School policies are for the most part implemented well, though there are some inconsistencies in the quality of marking. The school development plan identifies key strengths and areas for improvement.
- 2.11 Staff show considerable commitment to their work, in particular providing good support to individual pupils. In turn, they are monitored and supported by heads of department. Appropriate care is taken over their recruitment; however, some checks were overlooked at a small number of recent appointments, though in most cases these have been carried out since. Facilities are generally good, but the lack of access to ICT sometimes limits its use across the curriculum.
- 2.12 Parents enjoy excellent links with the school, about which they are exceptionally supportive. The school community reaches out to them as well as to their children. Almost all responses in the pre-inspection questionnaire were positive and there were no areas showing significant levels of concern. Parents are well informed about all aspects of school life. They receive good quality reports about their children's work. For the most part they find the school open and responsive to any concerns; the procedures for dealing with formal complaints have never been used.

### **3. ACTION POINTS**

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

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

3.1 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2003 as subsequently amended, and therefore must:

- obtain a CRB check for the chair of governors from the Secretary of State in addition to the one she already has [Regulation 4B.(2) and (3), under Suitability of staff and proprietors];
- ensure that references and medical fitness declarations are always obtained before staff start work [Regulation 4.(2)(a), under Suitability of staff and proprietors].

#### **(ii) Recommended action**

3.2 In addition to rectifying the weaknesses in meeting regulatory requirements, the school is advised to make the following improvements:

1. continue to develop computing facilities so that ICT can be used more fully across the curriculum; and
2. continue to develop monitoring, in particular to ensure a more consistent standard of marking.

## **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. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mr Ian Newton

Reporting Inspector

Mrs Mary Booth

Head of department (HMCschool)