

# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

## **INSPECTION REPORT ON**

### **Town Close House Preparatory School**

Full Name of the School	<b>Town Close House Preparatory School</b>		
DfES Number	<b>926/6111</b>		
Address	<b>14 Ipswich Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 2LR</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01603 620180</b>		
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E-mail Address	<b>head@townclose.com</b>		
Name of Headmaster	<b>Mr G R Lowe</b>		
Chairman of Governors	<b>Mr J R L Beck</b>		
Age Range	<b>3-13 years</b>	Gender	<b>Co-educational</b>
Number of Pupils	<b>466</b>	Number of Boarders	<b>None</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>November 28<sup>th</sup> – December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2005</b>		

This inspection report follows the framework laid down by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The inspection was carried out under the arrangements of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. It was also carried out under Section 163(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills has accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003.

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.

# CONTENTS

	Page no.
<b>1 MAIN FINDINGS</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>7</b>
Characteristics of the School	7
Key Indicators	8
<b>4 EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>9</b>
Attainment and Progress	9
Quality of Learning, Attitudes and Behaviour	9
Attendance	10
<b>5 QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED</b>	<b>11</b>
Teaching	11
Assessment and Recording	11
Curriculum	12
Teaching and Non-teaching Staff	13
Resources for Learning	14
Libraries	14
Premises and Accommodation	15
Links with Parents and the Community	16
<b>6 PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PASTORAL CARE</b>	<b>18</b>
Pupils' Personal Development	18
Pastoral Care, including Welfare and Health & Safety	19
<b>7 THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>21</b>
Governance and Management	21
<b>8 ACHIEVEMENT AND QUALITY IN SUBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>23</b>
Achievement and Quality in Subjects	23
Achievement and Quality in Activities	36
<b>9 SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>LIST OF THE INSPECTORS</b>	<b>38</b>

## **1. MAIN FINDINGS**

### **Overall Summary**

- 1.1 The whole-hearted approach of the pupils at Town Close House School enables them to share a love of learning and respond positively to the high expectations set in exciting and stimulating lessons. They thrive in this caring community and achieve well, both in their entrance examinations to academically selective senior schools and in their many other accomplishments. Much of their success stems from the sensitive leadership of the headmaster and the support of the loyal team of teachers and non-teaching staff; all are alert to the needs of their pupils, open to new ideas and methods, and willing to support one another. The generous provision of resources, information and communication technology (ICT) and facilities ensures that the broad curriculum reflects current best practice, though its organisation has some minor blemishes.

### **What the School Does Well**

- 1.2 The school has many strengths; outstanding amongst these are the following:
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are very good: pupils collaborate wholeheartedly with their teachers; they are courteous, trustworthy and proud of their school.
  - Teaching is very good: most of it reflects current practice and modern pedagogy, and makes effective use of ICT.
  - The quality of the loyal, committed and hard-working teaching and non-teaching staff is very good.
  - The provision of buildings, facilities, resources, ICT and the library is very good.
  - Arrangements for pupils' personal development and pastoral care are very good.
  - Leadership by the governors, the headmaster and senior teachers is decisive, swift and effective.

### **What the School Should Do Better**

- 1.3 The school has no significant weaknesses but consideration should be given to the following issues to improve further the good quality of education it already provides:
- separate management of the curriculum in the two sections of the school results in some discontinuity and imbalance of provision in Years 1 to 3;
  - the structure of the timetable undermines equality of opportunity for some pupils;
  - the policy for gifted and talented pupils has yet to be fully implemented.

### **Standards of Attainment and Progress in Subjects**

- 1.4 Pupils' attainment and progress throughout the school are good. All pupils do well whatever their gender or background.
- 1.5 Attainment by the end of the Foundation Stage is good. Pupils make good progress and all are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the time they are aged 5. In Years 1 to 8, pupils' attainment and progress are good.

- 1.6 Attainment in national tests at age 7 is high in relation to pupils' abilities. Results in national tests at age 7 over the last three years have been far above the average for all maintained primary schools. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been consistently high. The school has a good record of results in entrance examinations at 11+ and 13+ to academically selective senior schools.
- 1.7 Attainment is high in French, history, Latin, music and physical education (PE). It is good at the Foundation Stage and in English, mathematics, science, ICT and religious studies (RS). Attainment in geography is satisfactory. Insufficient evidence was available in other subjects to assess attainment and progress.
- 1.8 Progress is rapid in Reception and in science, French, history, Latin, music, PE and RS. It is good in the Nursery and in English, mathematics and ICT. Progress in geography is sound.
- 1.9 Pupils with special learning needs achieve good standards and their progress in good.

### **The Quality of Pupils' Learning, Attitudes and their Behaviour**

- 1.10 The quality of pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour is very good.
- 1.11 Pupils are very competent learners who respond positively in lessons. They are well motivated and co-operative. They sustain very good concentration, willingly enter into the spirit of the lesson, and collaborate whole-heartedly with their teachers. Pupils show respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others, and they rally round to support those who appear to have a problem. Behaviour around the school is very good, and pupils are courteous and trustworthy.

### **The Quality of Teaching**

- 1.12 The quality of teaching is very good. Teaching was often excellent, was very good or better in over half the lessons, was good or better in almost all lessons, and was never less than sound. Teaching is appropriate to the needs of all pupils and contributes well to attainment and progress. Teachers' knowledge is good overall, and pupil management is always good; a very good rapport exists between teachers and pupils. Teachers' expectations of pupils are generally high and stimulating teaching captures the pupils' attention. Planning and organisation are always good, and the use of time and resources is efficient. The most effective teaching is alert to current practice and contemporary pedagogy, and makes appropriate use of the school's extensive investment in ICT.
- 1.13 Teaching quality is very good in mathematics, science, art, design & technology (DT), French, history, ICT, Latin, music, PE and RS. It is good at the Foundation Stage and in English and geography.

### **Other Aspects of the School**

#### **Attendance**

- 1.14 The level of attendance is high and no unauthorised absences have occurred over the past year. The school's admissions procedures fully satisfy regulatory requirements but those for registration are not fully met.

### **Assessment and Recording**

- 1.15 The quality of assessment and recording is very good. Systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are efficient, thorough and suitable for the age of the pupils, their particular needs and their stage of development. The results are used to inform curricular planning and teaching, and when referring pupils to the special educational needs co-ordinator. A policy for gifted and talented pupils has not yet been fully implemented but standardised tests have been used to identify high ability pupils. Assessments have also been recently introduced to measure progress made by pupils in the school compared with national norms.
- 1.16 Assessment procedures and teachers' marking are frequent, accurate, consistent and effective; books are occasionally unmarked in a few subjects. Pupils are increasingly aware of the marking and assessment criteria used and they understand the system of grades and rewards. They are encouraged in some subjects to review and assess their own work and to set targets. All standardised scores, effort grades and examination results are recorded on the school's database.

### **Curriculum**

- 1.17 The quality of the curriculum is good overall. The breadth of the curriculum is good and contributes well to pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development. The balance of subjects on the timetable is generally good. Separate management of the curriculum in the two sections of the school results in some discontinuity and imbalance in Years 1 to 3.
- 1.18 Curriculum policy is supported by thorough, effective and appropriate documentation for every subject. The provision for pupils with special learning needs is good and teaching is carefully planned to meet their personal circumstances. Although all pupils have access to the full curriculum, the structure of the timetable undermines equality of opportunity for some pupils. The curriculum is enriched by an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities, school trips, visitors to the school, after-school clubs and activities in the holidays.

### **Teaching and Non-teaching Staff**

- 1.19 The quality of the teaching and non-teaching staff is very good. Their numbers are sufficient and all are suitably qualified and experienced for the roles they undertake. They are effectively deployed. Teachers' happy relationships with pupils create the supportive environment that reflects the school's ethos.
- 1.20 Staff development needs are identified by the senior management team and supported by generous funding. Training in the use of ICT underpinned the successful deployment of interactive whiteboards. Appraisal is well established and regarded positively by teachers as an integral part of their professional development.

### **Resources for Learning**

- 1.21 The provision of resources for learning is very good. The quantity and quality of books, equipment, materials and ICT needed to support teaching, learning, study and recreation for all pupils are very good. They are organised well and used very effectively.

### **Libraries**

- 1.22 Library provision is very good. The range, quality and accessibility of the library stock are very good, and they support pupils' attainment, progress and quality of learning very well. Management by the librarian and the team of pupil-assistants is very effective.

**Premises and Accommodation**

- 1.23 The buildings, accommodation and other facilities are generally very good for the numbers, abilities, ages and gender of the pupils. They enable the curriculum to be taught effectively and they make a positive contribution to pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare.

**Links with Parents and the Community**

- 1.24 Links with parents and the community are very good. An excellent response to the parental questionnaire, completed prior to the inspection, expressed a very high level of satisfaction with the school's work. The school handles the very small number of parental complaints with due care and in accordance with regulatory requirements. Pupils' learning and personal development are enhanced by very good links with the community.

**Pupils' Personal Development**

- 1.25 Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop a system of spiritual beliefs and a moral code as well as developing socially and culturally.

**Pastoral Care**

- 1.26 The school's provision for pastoral care, support and guidance is very good. It enhances pupils' personal and academic development. Pupils' health and well-being are safeguarded by suitable measures.

**Governance and Management**

- 1.27 The governance and management of the school are very good. Leadership at all levels is good, and the school's sense of purpose to promote effective teaching and learning is very good. A planning culture is in place, analysing and prioritising needs, and the school's shared aims and values are reflected in thorough documentation. Communication is very good, and monitoring is good.
- 1.28 Routine administration is very good. The welcoming office team provides excellent support for pupils, parents, staff and visitors. The school is well served by loyal classroom assistants and the catering, cleaning, maintenance and grounds teams, all making a valuable contribution to the smooth running of the school.

**Achievement and Quality in Activities**

- 1.29 Achievement and quality in the very wide range of activities are very good for the ages, aptitudes and abilities of the pupils. The programme contributes strongly to their personal development.

**Progress Made by the School since its Last Inspection**

- 1.30 Very good progress has been made since the last inspection and all recommendations have been met.

### Compliance with the Regulations for Registration

DfES Standard		Does the school meet the regulatory requirements?
1. Quality of education:	1.(2) Curriculum	Yes
	1.(3)-(5) Teaching	Yes
2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils		Yes
3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils		It meets almost all of the requirements
4. Suitability of proprietors and staff		It meets almost all of the requirements
5. Premises and accommodation		Yes
6. Provision of information		Yes
7. Manner in which complaints are to be handled		Yes

### Actions Required for Compliance with the Regulatory Requirements

- 1.31 In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:
- (1) complete the check with the Criminal Records Bureau on the appropriateness of its part-time teachers to work with children [Regulation 4(b)];
  - (2) ensure that the governors fully undertake their responsibilities for child protection as set out in DfES guidance, *Safeguarding Children in Education*, DfES publication 0027/2004 [Regulation 3(2)(b)]
  - (3) maintain attendance registers totally in accordance with legal requirements [Regulation 3(9)].
- 1.32 In addition to the actions set out above, the school is asked to address any issues highlighted in *What the School Should Do Better*. These are set out as recommendations for the school in Section 2 of the report.

## **2. MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 The actions needed to comply fully with the regulatory requirements are specified in paragraph 1.31. The main recommendations are listed below. The numbers in brackets refer to the relevant paragraphs in the body of the report.

- R1 Improve management of the curriculum to ensure full continuity and balance in Years 1 to 3. (Paragraphs 1.3, 1.17, 5.14, 7.3, 8.36, 8.48, 8.54, 8.83)
- R2 Re-examine the structure of the timetable to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils in all subjects. (Paragraphs 1.3, 1.18, 5.17)
- R3 Implement the policy for gifted and talented pupils. (Paragraphs 1.3, 1.15, 5.10)

### **3. INTRODUCTION**

#### **Characteristics of the School**

- 3.1 Town Close House School is a co-educational day school for pupils aged 3 to 13 years situated in attractively wooded grounds close to the centre of Norwich. Founded in 1932, it is now a charitable trust managed by a board of governors. The school is based around two large town houses and their extensive gardens; the main house is early Georgian and the other mid-Victorian. Purpose-built classrooms and other premises and accommodation have been added, most in recent years.
- 3.2 There were 466 pupils on roll at the time of the inspection: 71 in Nursery and Reception, 130 in Years 1 and 2, 209 in Years 3 to 6, and 56 in Years 7 and 8. Although boys currently outnumber girls, the proportion of girls has risen to over a third in recent years and will continue to rise as pupils set to join the school arrive. Pupils are drawn mainly from the city of Norwich, but some come from the market towns and countryside of Norfolk and north Suffolk, and others from Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft. Most parents are employed in the professions, but the school population includes a wide socio-economic mix. A few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds: six families have English as their second language, but no pupils need special support. Non-verbal reasoning scores for pupils in Years 3 to 8 show that the pupils' average ability is above the national average; if they are performing in line with their abilities, pupils' national test results will be above the average for all maintained primary schools. The special needs teachers work with 65 pupils; there is one statemented pupil.
- 3.3 In recent years, about a fifth of the pupils have left at 7+ after winning places at local selective single-sex independent day schools, with about a third following at 11+. All other pupils take the Common Entrance examinations at 13+ for a wide range of independent schools, local day and national boarding.
- 3.4 The school aims to develop the full potential of each pupil. It is proud of its academic record, its renown for music, drama and art, and its reputation for sport.
- 3.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## Key Indicators

### 3.6 Externally audited National Curriculum Assessments at age 7 (Key Stage 1)

Subject		2005		Average for 2003-2005	
		Level 2 or higher (%)	Level 3 or higher (%)	Level 2 or higher (%)	Level 3 or higher (%)
Reading	Boys	100	51	98	54
	Girls	100	71	100	63
	All	100	58	99	57
Writing	Boys	100	21	97	25
	Girls	100	57	100	58
	All	100	33	98	35
Mathematics	Boys	100	50	100	58
	Girls	100	52	98	46
	All	100	51	99	54

3.7 The school does not use the audited National Curriculum Assessments at age 11 (Key Stage 2).

### 3.8 Attendance for 2004-2005

	Authorised	Unauthorised
Percentage absence	3.2	0.0

### 3.9 Exclusions Over the Previous 12 Months

Temporary exclusions	Permanent exclusions
2	0

## **4. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

### **Attainment and Progress**

- 4.1 Pupils achieve good standards and their progress is good. All pupils do well whatever their background.
- 4.2 Attainment by the end of the Foundation Stage is good. Pupils make good progress and all are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the time they are 5 years of age. In Years 1 to 8, pupils' attainment and progress are good.
- 4.3 Attainment in national tests at age 7 is high in relation to pupils' abilities. Results in national tests at age 7 over the last three years have been far above the average for all maintained primary schools. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been consistently high. The school has a good record of results in entrance examinations at 11+ and 13+ to academically selective senior schools. Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are good at all levels.
- 4.4 Attainment in current work is high in French, history, Latin, music and PE. It is good at the Foundation Stage and in English, mathematics, science, ICT and RS. Attainment in geography is satisfactory. High attainment is generally achieved when receptive and responsive pupils are taught well by teachers who are secure in their subject knowledge. No assessments were made in art and DT where there was insufficient evidence.
- 4.5 Progress in lessons and from year group to year group is rapid in Reception and in science, French, history, Latin, music, PE and RS. It is good in Nursery and in English, mathematics and ICT. Progress in geography is sound. Rapid progress is achieved when well-planned lessons are conducted at pace. Girls make equivalent progress to boys, as do the few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- 4.6 Pupils with particular learning needs achieve good standards and their progress is good. Beginning at the Foundation Stage, pupils with learning needs are identified by teachers and parents, are assessed by specialist teachers and, where appropriate, referred to an educational psychologist. They receive good individual tuition and additional support in lessons as and when necessary. Helpful individual education plans (IEPs) are prepared so that the information is shared with all teachers. The school recognises the need to identify gifted and talented pupils, and to challenge them effectively, but has yet to implement the policy fully.

### **Quality of Pupils' Learning, Attitudes and Behaviour**

- 4.7 The overall quality of learning, attitudes and behaviour is very good throughout the school and is most conducive to the learning process. Learning and behaviour are good across the school in English, mathematics and geography and very good throughout the school in all other subjects
- 4.8 Pupils are very competent learners who respond positively in lessons. They are well motivated and co-operative. Pupils arrive at lessons keen to know what they are going to be taught; inside the classroom they turn straight to the lesson aims displayed on the whiteboard. Pupils show obvious interest in their studies and apply themselves conscientiously to the tasks. A Reception class working on shapes asked to have more examples so that they could carry on work in their playtime. Pupils sustain very good concentration regardless of the nature of the

work and they willingly enter into the spirit of the lesson. Pupils are enthusiastic learners in all subjects and in different environments: a small group of pupils in Year 4 with learning needs wanted to go on working in their own time on a computer program to support their English.

- 4.9 Pupils are more than biddable: they are active learners who collaborate whole-heartedly with their teachers. They develop a capacity for personal study from the Foundation Stage through their understanding of the importance of independent learning. Pupils express their ideas clearly in discussion and answer questions thoughtfully and sensibly; oral work is a great strength. Homework diaries are taken seriously and pupils complete these tasks conscientiously. Their capacity for correcting their own mistakes in French and Latin contributes to their active learning. In several subjects, including DT, French, Latin and science, pupils were observed using logical thinking to solve problems. In music their curiosity and powers of observation were strong. Pupils are happy to remain in class until the end of the lesson to extract full value from it.
- 4.10 The school's ethos promotes very constructive relationships between pupils and with teachers and other staff. Pupils work co-operatively in pairs or small groups. On the games field, in the swimming pool or in the sports hall, pupils' ability to contribute positively to a team is very apparent. They play happily with each other at break times, even as they crowd around the outdoor table tennis games. Pupils show initiative for their own safety in the science laboratory and the DT room. Older pupils in particular display a willingness to seize the many opportunities for leadership and responsibility: for example, a Year 6 pupil has been elected chairman of the school council and Year 8 pupils ably led house meetings.
- 4.11 Pupils clearly show respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. They showed a keen interest in the achievement of others in art, drama, music and sport. More able pupils treat with respect the ideas put forward by their less able classmates. Pupils rally round to support those who appear to have a problem. Girls and boys make equal contributions to school life, as do the few pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.
- 4.12 Behaviour around the school is very good, and pupils are courteous and trustworthy. They behave calmly in the corridors between lessons. Their play shows a sympathetic awareness of others and a clear acknowledgement of the code of conduct. Pupils are keen to help visitors, displaying good manners as they guide them around the school. They are proud to be members of their community.

### **Attendance**

- 4.13 The level of attendance is high and no unauthorised absences have occurred over the past year.
- 4.14 The school's admissions procedures fully satisfy regulatory requirements but those for registration do not: (see paragraph 6.14.) Morning registration is efficient, but the use of proper codes in attendance registers is not consistent. Parents generally inform the school if a pupil is absent for any reason. The secretary telephones parents to check any unexplained absences. Afternoon registration for Years 3 to 8 is taken as pupils queue for lunch, with the information later transferred to registers. This process is not always accurate. Records of pupils attending after-school activities also lack accuracy.
- 4.15 Most pupils arrive punctually at school. Latecomers sign in at the school office and are registered by a secretary. Pupils are generally punctual to lessons. The lack of official

changeover time leads to a degree of uncertainty about when one lesson ends and the next begins.

## 5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

### Teaching

- 5.1 The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school. During the inspection, teaching was often excellent, was very good or better in over half the lessons, was good or better in almost all lessons, and was never less than sound.
- 5.2 Teaching quality is very good in mathematics, science, art, DT, French, history, ICT, Latin, music, PE and RS. It is good at the Foundation Stage and in English and geography.
- 5.3 Teaching is appropriate to the needs of all pupils and contributes particularly well to attainment and progress in all subjects. Teachers' knowledge is good overall, and is a strength at the Foundation Stage and in English in Years 7 and 8, mathematics, science in Years 3 to 8, art, French, geography, history, ICT in Years 3 to 8, Latin, music, PE and RS and special educational needs (SEN).
- 5.4 Management of pupils is always good, and is a strength in science, art, DT, French, ICT, Latin, PE and RS. A very good rapport exists between teachers and pupils. Teachers' expectations of pupils are high, especially in Reception and in mathematics, art, French, history, Latin, music, PE and RS, where stimulating teaching captures pupils' attention.
- 5.5 Planning and organisation are always good, and are particular strengths at the Foundation Stage and in mathematics, science, art, DT, French, geography, ICT, Latin, music, PE, RS and SEN. The use of time and resources is efficient, and is particularly effective at the Foundation Stage and in science, art, DT, French, history, ICT, Latin, music, PE, RS and some mathematics.
- 5.6 The most effective teaching is alert to current practice and contemporary pedagogy. This is the case in science, French, history, ICT, Latin, music and RS. The school's extensive investment in ICT is used most effectively at the Foundation Stage and in French, history, Latin, music, PE, RS, SEN and some mathematics. Information from assessment is used well throughout the school to plan teaching so that pupils can progress faster.

### *Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for teaching?*

- 5.7 Yes.

### Assessment and Recording

- 5.8 The quality of assessment and recording is very good.
- 5.9 Systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are efficient, thorough and suitable for the age of the pupils, their particular needs and their stage of development. Nursery and Reception pupils are assessed using the Foundation Stage Profile. Regular observational assessment occurs in Years 1 and 2 and pupils are prepared for the national tests at age 7. In Years 3 to 8, very good use is made of standardised tests in mathematics, reading and spelling, and in verbal and non-verbal reasoning. A colour-coded system records attainment and progress in PE. Examinations occur annually in Year 3, twice a year from Years 4 to 7, and termly in Year 8.
- 5.10 The results of all assessments are used to inform curricular planning and teaching: in science, for example, Year 6 pupils' uncertainty on neutralisation led to more time being given to acids

and bases in Year 7. Assessment data is also used when referring pupils to the special educational needs teacher. A policy for gifted and talented pupils is not yet in place but standardised tests have been used to identify high ability pupils in Years 4 and 5. Assessments have also been recently introduced to measure progress made by pupils in the school compared with national norms. These are based on national test results in Years 1 to 2 and on standardised test findings in Year 3 to 8.

- 5.11 Assessment procedures and teachers' marking are frequent, accurate, consistent and effective; however books are occasionally unmarked in a few subjects. The policy on marking for Years 1 to 8 gives clear guidance. A separate marking policy is in place for Reception but not for Nursery. Pupils are increasingly aware of the marking and assessment criteria used and they understand the system of grades and rewards. Pupils are encouraged in some subjects to review and assess their own work and to set targets. Self-assessment forms apply throughout Years 7 and 8 in science and ICT, whilst in French and Latin targets are written into exercise books and progress towards achieving them is discussed regularly.
- 5.12 Foundation Stage Profiles are taken through to Year 1 and used effectively. In Years 1 to 3, results of assessments are entered on individual pupil records and records of achievement are compiled. Personal record cards are maintained by tutors for pupils in Years 4 to 8 and house cards, carried by pupils, log each day's achievements or matters for concern. Music teachers have introduced a system of individual DVD mini-discs to record pupils' performances. All standardised scores, effort grades and examination results are recorded on a database.

## **Curriculum**

- 5.13 The quality of the curriculum is good overall. It prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. A wide programme of activities and trips enhances the timetabled curriculum.
- 5.14 The breadth of the curriculum is good and contributes well to pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development. It is particularly enhanced by the contributions of art, French, music and PE, but diminished by the lack of timetabled dance and drama. The balance of subjects on the timetable is generally good, although in Years 1 and 2 the lavish time allocation to PE is at the expense of geography, history and RS. Separate management in the two sections of the school results in some discontinuity of the curriculum in Years 1 to 3.
- 5.15 The broad and balanced curriculum at the Foundation Stage is based on the early learning goals. The National Curriculum provides the core for what is taught in Years 1 to 8, though it is adapted appropriately to take account of the school's traditions and the demands of senior school entrance examinations taken by pupils in Years 6 and 8. Curriculum policy is supported by thorough, effective and appropriate documentation for every subject. Long- and medium-term planning guides all teaching. Frequent reviews of programmes of study strive to ensure that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are developed progressively as they move through the school.
- 5.16 The provision for pupils with special learning needs is good and teaching is carefully planned to meet their personal circumstances, whether through specialist support in lessons or by individual and group tuition. The need to make appropriate provision for gifted and talented pupils has been recognised but not yet fully implemented.
- 5.17 Although all pupils have access to the full curriculum, the structure of the timetable undermines equality of opportunity for some pupils. A run of four lessons without a break places great demands on pupils' concentration, whilst shorter afternoon lessons limit their

effectiveness. The lack of official changeover time leads to a degree of uncertainty about when one lesson ends and the next begins.

- 5.18 The curriculum is enriched by an extensive programme of school trips, visiting speakers, extra-curricular activities, after-school clubs and activities in the holidays. The generous provision of athletics, games, gymnastics and swimming is much appreciated by pupils.

***Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the curriculum?***

- 5.19 Yes.

**Teaching and Non-teaching Staff**

- 5.20 The quality of the teaching and non-teaching staff is very good. Their numbers are sufficient and all are suitably qualified and experienced for the roles they undertake. They are effectively deployed.
- 5.21 Teachers are well qualified for their responsibilities. Class teachers are employed in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 4; subject specialist teachers are introduced for music and PE at the Foundation Stage and take prominence as pupils progress from Year 3 to Year 8. Staffing ratios at the Foundation Stage are in line with current guidelines. Class sizes of 20 or fewer throughout Years 1 to 8 contribute to the high level of individual attention that teachers offer pupils. The deployment of teaching and support staff is very effective, and their strengths and skills are used appropriately. Teachers in the pre-prep and Year 3 are supported well by a team of teaching assistants.
- 5.22 There is a good spread of age and experience across the teaching staff. Work loads in teaching and management are sensibly balanced. All teachers are allocated sufficient time for planning, marking and administration. They give generously of their time to the pupils and to their extra-curricular, weekend and holiday activities. Teachers' happy relationships with pupils create the supportive environment that reflects the school's ethos.
- 5.23 A wealth of support staff is employed and all make a highly valued contribution to the smooth running of the school. They add their own ingredients to pastoral care: kitchen staff chat to pupils at lunch and the librarian prepares materials for class projects and helps pupils to choose books. Parents' and visitors' requests are fulfilled calmly and promptly. Gap year students assist capably in many areas and set a good example to the pupils as role models. The lack of a laboratory technician extends the demands made on science teachers.
- 5.24 Good policies and procedures for induction, appraisal, training and professional development contribute to the effectiveness of all staff. The policy for the induction of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) is effective and meets regulatory requirements. Appointment procedures are good and school employees are properly checked for their identity, qualifications and appropriateness to work with children. However, at the time of the inspection the school had not completed checks with the Criminal Records Bureau on some part-time teachers.
- 5.25 Staff development needs are identified by the senior management team and supported by generous funding. A strong record of attendance at training courses has enabled teachers to stay abreast of educational initiatives, use fresh methods in their teaching, and enrich their career prospects through post-graduate study. Training in the use of ICT underpinned the successful deployment of inter-active whiteboards in the majority of classrooms. Appraisal is well established and regarded positively by teachers as an integral part of their professional

development. Monitoring of lessons and sharing of pedagogic knowledge spreads good practice in some subjects.

***Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff?***

- 5.26 The school meets almost all of the regulatory requirements. In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:
- (a) complete the check with the Criminal Records Bureau on the appropriateness of its part-time teachers to work with children [Regulation 4(b)].

**Resources for Learning**

- 5.27 The provision of resources for learning is very good. The quantity and quality of books, equipment, materials and ICT needed to support teaching, learning, study and recreation for all pupils are very good. They are organised well and used very effectively.
- 5.28 ICT provision is excellent. Computers installed throughout the school are linked by a wireless network that enables software and other resources to be shared on the intranet. Pupils may also connect from home to send coursework and messages to school. In addition to the computers in the ICT rooms, 22 inter-active whiteboards have been installed in classrooms: these were used imaginatively in many lessons. A transportable class set of tablet laptops is on hand for teachers in the main classroom block.
- 5.29 The range, availability, quality and accessibility of all other resources for learning are very good. Most subjects have very good stocks of modern text-books and other paper-based resources, such as the stock of maps for geography.
- 5.30 VCRs are put to good use in several subjects, and the music room has an extensive selection of CDs of music from many genres and equipment to record pupils' performances. Artwork is borrowed from outside organisations to supplement the school's own supply, and the Little Theatre is decorated with a mural produced by pupils under the direction of a local artist. Resources for history include a vast array of artefacts, posters, models and other material that is displayed on every available surface, including the ceiling: this is an exciting classroom.
- 5.31 Ample and accessible storage space for resources is provided adjacent to most classrooms, though the lack of a central store limits effective use of resources in English teaching.
- 5.32 Three minibuses are in regular use to transport pupils to sports fixtures and other activities away from the school site. The wooded grounds are a rich natural resource that includes an area for environmental conservation and ponds with safe surrounds. The school's chickens are an unusual and popular educational resource. The Foundation Stage is particularly well provided with outdoor play materials including play-houses, tricycles and road-safety equipment.

**Libraries**

- 5.33 Library provision and its use are very good. The range, quality and accessibility of the library stock are very good, and they support pupils' attainment, progress and quality of learning very well.
- 5.34 The library serves all ages in school. It is located in a large, attractive room, well situated within the main teaching block with easy access for all classes. It incorporates areas for

research and study, for access to ICT, and for comfortable leisure reading. The area that contains the books for the youngest children is well-defined and appropriately furnished.

- 5.35 The quality and number of books is very good. Fiction and non-fiction books are plentiful; the number per pupil exceeds the recommendation of the Library Association. The non-fiction section effectively supports teaching and learning by offering sufficient material for research and general reading; the fiction section provides for a wide taste in reading. The stock of audio books is generous. The main library is usefully augmented by books in subject rooms, and Foundation Stage and Year 1 classrooms are well stocked with suitable books.
- 5.36 Management by the librarian and the team of pupil-assistants is very effective. Budget provision is generous. Stock and loan information is computerised, and thumbprint scanning technology enables pupils in Years 4 to 8 to manage their own borrowing. Records show that over 4000 loans have been made in the course of the current term, reflecting the importance that is accorded to reading within the school. The librarian liaises well with subject heads, and teachers can ask for sets of books to be prepared to cover topics being taught. The youngest pupils enjoy the story sessions that the librarian arranges for them in conjunction with their teachers. Local and national authors have visited the school, and this has stimulated an interest in literature.

### **Premises and Accommodation**

- 5.37 The buildings, accommodation and other facilities are generally very good for the numbers, abilities, ages and gender of the pupils. They enable the curriculum to be taught effectively and they make a positive contribution to pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare.
- 5.38 The newest buildings are spacious, light and airy and provide an excellent environment for teaching and learning. The site incorporates older buildings, including two large former town houses and a collection of other structures, some prefabricated. All are maintained well and in good decorative order, and imaginative means have been found to make almost all areas welcoming and attractive. Very good displays of materials and pupils' work are found throughout the school.
- 5.39 Foundation Stage and Year 1 classes are taught in a separate building, where good-sized rooms are appropriate for the age of the pupils. Its multi-purpose hall is put to effective use throughout the school day for assemblies, PE and lunch.
- 5.40 The sports hall is of good size, well suited to the age and numbers of pupils who use it, but the lack of a sprung floor demands health and safety vigilance and limits the activities for which it may be used. The 16m indoor swimming pool, with its adjacent learner pool, is used by all pupils. The school has two playing fields at separate sites nearby, and in addition regular use is made of all-weather pitches at two other locations. The grounds include delightful wooded areas, where many trees have name labels, and two adventure playgrounds. Hard play surfaces are situated around the site, enabling the segregation of pupils of different ages to play happily and safely.
- 5.41 The wide variety of age and construction of buildings causes some unevenness of curricular provision. Only one laboratory for this large school restricts the breadth of the science curriculum for some pupils. Although the DT room is adequate, the art room is small for the number of pupils using it. Most music teaching takes place in a spacious detached building at the centre of the school; however, some music lessons for the youngest classes are held in a cottage that is too cramped for effective teaching. The lack of an assembly hall hinders the

performance of drama and music productions and the sports hall's acoustics limit its suitability as a venue.

- 5.42 The school is situated within a conservation area and the two main houses are listed buildings. Constraints are therefore placed on the adaptation of premises to provide access and facilities for the disabled, though the school has taken all reasonable measures. Provision of washrooms for pupils is generous, but lavatories are not evenly distributed across the site.

***Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for premises and accommodation?***

- 5.43 Yes.

**Links with Parents and the Community**

- 5.44 The school has developed a very good partnership with parents and very good links with the community.
- 5.45 Parents are provided with accurate and comprehensive information about the school through the prospectus and web-site. Separate handbooks for parents with children in the pre-prep and Years 4 to 8, as well as guides for Nursery and Reception, contain useful information about the curriculum and the daily routine. Frequent sessions are organised for parents on educational topics: for example, 'Helping your child to learn to read', 'Helping your child with mathematics in Years 1 to 6' and geography, history and science revision workshops for parents of children in Year 8. Regular newsletters from the headmaster and the head of the pre-prep keep parents up to date with events and successes. The school's practice of openness and accessibility is very successful, and all senior managers are readily available to see parents.
- 5.46 Reports to parents are regular, clear and helpful. In most subjects, advice is given as to how pupils can raise their levels of attainment. Written reports are supported by an appropriate number of parent consultation evenings. Parents are also encouraged to discuss their children's progress with teachers at any time.
- 5.47 There were 319 responses to the questionnaire that was distributed to parents before the inspection. These expressed a very high level of satisfaction with the school's work. Issues that were raised about homework, involving parents in the life of the school, handling complaints and other matters were shared with the headmaster but evidence gained during the course of the inspection and from two meetings with parents suggested that these were minor concerns. The school handles the very small number of parental complaints with due care and in accordance with regulatory requirements.
- 5.48 Support for the school by parents is very good. School matches, assemblies, concerts and plays are well attended by parents. Many assist the school in ways ranging from helping with swimming lessons in the pre-prep to accompanying educational visits. The Parents Association actively supports the school by running numerous social activities and raising funds for special projects.
- 5.49 Pupils' learning and personal development are enhanced by very good links with the community. Visits to local churches, the synagogue and other religious centres strengthen ties with people from many faiths. Activities associated with the Adventure Service Challenge Scheme enable older pupils to do voluntary service in the community. Choirs sing carols at two local residential homes for the elderly, and charities, such as the Salvation Army, are

generously supported. The school's grounds and facilities are shared with other organisations, including local clubs for swimming and fencing.

***Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the provision of information?***

5.50 Yes.

***Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the manner in which complaints are to be handled?***

5.51 Yes.

## **6. PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PASTORAL CARE**

### **Pupils' Personal Development**

- 6.1 The school offers very good support for pupils' personal development: it is a strength of the school. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop a system of spiritual beliefs and a moral code as well as developing socially and culturally. The programme of lessons in personal, social and health education (PSHE), together with tutorials and house meetings, allows the importance of personal development to pervade and permeate almost every aspect of school life.
- 6.2 The provision for spiritual development is very good. Tolerance and understanding of Christianity, and of other faiths and values, are promoted effectively through lessons, assemblies and circle time. Spiritual awareness is encouraged through art, assemblies, drama, music and poetry. Attractive and well-kept areas around the school allow for quiet reflection. Pupils have an appreciation of their surroundings and their care and consideration reflects the ethos of the school: to treat others with respect and courtesy whatever their beliefs. Knowledge of self is well developed through competitions, drama, music and sport. Displays of pupils' art work touch the personal inner emotion.
- 6.3 Moral development is very good. Assemblies and lessons make a valuable contribution through discussion on relationships, problems and the value of the individual. Pupils take time to reflect and to recognise their place as world citizens. Pupils know right from wrong and take responsibility for their own actions. School rules are presented as a code of conduct on each pupil's 'House Card' and as Golden Rules in the pre-prep. Teachers and non-teaching staff act as valuable role models in the way they generate a shared understanding of mutual respect, work as a team, and care for each other. "We can trust everyone", said one pupil. The tradition of charitable giving flourishes and all pupils are involved in selecting the local and national charities they wish to support.
- 6.4 The social development of the pupils is very good. They show a sense of responsibility towards each other both in the classroom and at play. Pre-prep playtime is an opportunity for the youngest to extend the development of their social skills through co-operation or joining together for imaginative play. Opportunities for older pupils to take responsibility or make a contribution to the school community included ICT and library monitors, prefects and house captains, and games captains. The head boy and head girl lead by example. The school council gives elected pupils opportunities to express and share their views. The merit system encourages pupils to strive for excellence both in and outside the classroom. Houses contribute well to pupils' sense of community: regular house meetings are led by the senior pupils and older pupils help and encourage younger house members.
- 6.5 Provision for cultural awareness is very good. British and Western European culture is well represented in art, literature and music. Pupils have many opportunities to broaden their experience and understanding of other cultures: for example, when listening to invited parents talking about their own culture and faith, and when visiting the local Buddhist centre or synagogue. As part of their project on 'The role of the Church in the community', pupils in Years 7 and 8 visit a local church to interview members of the congregation. Trips to theatres, museums, art galleries, concerts and other countries, and participation in school concerts and drama productions all play their part. Visiting musicians, authors, poets, drama groups and members of the professions talk about their work to enrich pupils' experiences of their own cultural traditions and the diversity of others. Pupils also take much pride in the culture of their own school.

*Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils?*

6.6 Yes.

**Pastoral Care, including Welfare and Health & Safety**

6.7 The school's provision for pastoral care, support and guidance is very good. It enhances pupils' personal and academic development.

6.8 Systems for monitoring pupils' academic and social progress are very good. They make a positive and effective contribution to the educational standards and personal growth achieved by pupils. The school emphasises positive achievements and pupils are well aware of how they are expected to behave. A strong framework of tutors and houses supports pupils and enhances academic, sporting, cultural and social opportunities. Appropriate and clear policy documents in the staff handbook cover all aspects related to behaviour and bullying. Other documentation covers academic and pastoral matters to reinforce a consistent approach. Detailed personal and academic records are well maintained and stored safely.

6.9 Teachers and non-teaching staff provide effective support and guidance for all pupils. The school is a very caring community for both pupils and staff, all of whom are aware of their mutual responsibilities. It is clear that the great majority of pupils feel very well supported in their academic and personal development. Form teachers know their pupils well and they are often the first person to whom a pupil would turn for assistance. Pupils talk positively of the confidence they have in tutors, house staff and senior teachers and they are clear about the structure for receiving support.

6.10 Measures taken by the school to promote good discipline and behaviour are very effective. The rewards and sanctions system is well understood by pupils and considered to be fair. Courtesy, consideration and respect underpin the school's disciplinary system. Procedures exist to deal with inappropriate behaviour, such as bullying; details of such incidents are recorded in confidence. Examples of good behaviour or high achievement are celebrated and rewarded in assemblies.

6.11 Pupils' health and well-being are safeguarded by suitable measures. A choice of school meals of a good standard is provided but the queuing process is long, slow and fosters restless behaviour. Policies ranging from developing spiritual and moral values to warnings on drug- and alcohol-abuse are in place and regularly reviewed. Risk assessments are completed as appropriate and all necessary measures have been taken to reduce the risks from fire and other hazards. Practice drills occur regularly although evacuation times are not always recorded. All employees are covered by the school's health and safety policy and practice. The school meets the requirements of the Disability Act.

6.12 Child protection procedures are in place with the headmaster as the appointed Child Protection Officer. Teachers were trained in child protection procedures in 2003 but, as their non-teaching colleagues have yet to receive such training, the school does not fully comply with regulatory requirements.

6.13 Arrangements to ensure a healthy and safe environment are in place. The bursar is the nominated Health & Safety officer and she chairs the school-wide committee. There is no nominated Health & Safety governor but the bursar reports on behalf of the committee at each governors' meeting.

***Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils?***

- 6.14 The school meets almost all of the regulatory requirements. In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:
- (a) ensure that the governors fully undertake their responsibilities for child protection as set out in DfES guidance, *Safeguarding Children in Education*, DfES publication 0027/2004 [Regulation 3(2)(b)]; and
  - (b) maintain attendance registers totally in accordance with legal requirements [Regulation 3(9)].

## **7. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### **Governance and Management**

- 7.1 The governance and management of the school are very good. Much of the success of the school stems from the well-founded confidence of the governing body, the sensitive leadership of the headmaster and the support of the loyal team of teachers and non-teaching staff.
- 7.2 The management framework is very good. The governing body's role is well defined, its members cover an appropriate range of professions, and recent changes have introduced new blood. The full board and the finance committee each meet termly, with the headmaster and the head of the pre-prep in attendance and the bursar acting as clerk. In school, the headmaster has designed a comprehensive management grid. The senior management team, which meets weekly, has representatives from all sections of the school. Separate finance, prep and pre-prep management teams deal with delegated matters.
- 7.3 Leadership at all levels is good. The headmaster works in close partnership with the head of the pre-prep to produce a whole-school approach. However, separate leadership of the curriculum by the head of the pre-prep for the Foundation Stage to Year 2 and by the director of studies in Years 3 to 8 leaves some discontinuity in Years 1 to 3. The director of studies leads a strong team of subject heads with clear purpose, whereas some delegation in the pre-prep is at an early stage. The deputy heads give a strong lead on pastoral matters through tutors and house staff, with tutorial programmes and house cards as happy recent innovations. The bursar manages the non-teaching team, with some joint responsibility with senior teachers. Job descriptions for all staff are detailed; regular meetings ensure that everyone is well informed.
- 7.4 The school's sense of purpose to promote effective teaching and learning is very good. The staff team is committed to the education of the whole child and to the welfare of every pupil. The school is a warm, friendly and caring community in which pupils flourish.
- 7.5 The very good quality of the school's shared aims and values are reflected in thorough documentation. The school lives up to what it proclaims: to make the most of each pupil's abilities, to offer effective pastoral care, and to encourage spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The headmaster's ambition to install a uniform approach across the whole school is nearly fulfilled.
- 7.6 A very good planning culture is in place, analysing and prioritising needs. The governors' next strategic plan awaits the publication of this report. In-school planning is led by the headmaster and shaped by the management teams. Subject and aspect planning is comprehensive and effective. Ample data on pupils' attainment is collected and used well in planning teaching and the curriculum. The recent investment in ICT across the school is already paying dividends, and plans are in place to improve arrangements for the performing arts. Staff development needs are identified by the senior management team and are supported by generous funding.
- 7.7 Routine administration is very good. Financial management is secure and resource provision in most areas is generous; the bursar runs a well-oiled machine. Budget allocation is currently calculated on historical data, but plans are in place to introduce a fairer system based on itemised requests. Administration by teachers in subjects and aspects is efficient. The welcoming office team provides excellent support for pupils, parents, staff and visitors. The

school is well served by loyal classroom assistants and the catering, cleaning, maintenance and grounds teams; all are part of the school family.

- 7.8 Communication is very good. Governors know their school well and liaise frequently with staff. The headmaster reports in detail to the governors each term. He and the bursar are highly visible about the school. The encyclopaedic staff handbooks are updated regularly. Communication amongst teachers and to parents and pupils on academic and pastoral matters is swift and effective. Correspondence, meetings, newsletters and the web-site fill the need for accurate and up to date information. Complaints procedures for parents and for pupils are in place, the latter linking tutors to the pupils' representatives on the school council.
- 7.9 Monitoring of the school is good, and adherence to the teaching and learning policy ensures that high standards are maintained. Learning is assessed by subject or year group heads: subject heads monitor the curriculum and its resources, some subject heads observe lessons, others scrutinise pupils' work. Some teachers operate peer review, share good practice, and offer mutual help. Appraisal is good, and there are plans to co-ordinate the scheme more effectively, to review teaching practice regularly, and to involve more senior managers in the process. The headmaster is appraised by an educational consultant on behalf of the governors.

## **8. ACHIEVEMENT AND QUALITY IN SUBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES**

### **Achievement and Quality in Subjects**

#### **The Foundation Stage**

- 8.1 Pupils achieve good standards and make rapid progress. All children are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the time they are aged five.
- 8.2 Children enter from the age of three. Very good provision is offered: first in the Nursery staffed by a teacher and three teaching assistants; and then in three full-time Reception classes, where each teacher is supported by a teaching assistant.

#### ***Personal, Social and Emotional Development***

- 8.3 Children's attainment is high and they make rapid progress. Nursery children learn to cooperate, take turns and help each other. They are very well supported in their activities and they are given many opportunities to become independent; for example, Nursery children are responsible for collecting and delivering the register. Expectations of good behaviour, kindness and thoughtfulness are high. Children are encouraged to take responsibility by helping to tidy up and serving each other snacks and drinks. Their behaviour is very good and their concentration is high. They are keen to participate; they listen carefully and follow instructions. All are encouraged to value each other.

#### ***Communication, Language and Literacy***

- 8.4 Attainment is good, with some high standards in speaking and listening; progress is rapid. Children listen carefully and are articulate, speaking clearly when expressing their thoughts and ideas. Children are ready to read by the end of Reception and have embarked on a reading scheme. They are encouraged to look at and enjoy a good range of books. This is enhanced by browsing in the main school library and listening to the librarian's story-telling. Children soon learn how books work and develop a love for them. Role-play activities are used, though sometimes without sufficient guidance. Writing develops gradually and Nursery children are beginning to write their names. The lack of nursery pencils or rubber pencil grips hampers the progress for some. Most children by the end of Reception can form letters correctly and write simple phrases and sentences, but they have little opportunity for independent writing.

#### ***Mathematical Development***

- 8.5 Attainment is high and progress is rapid. Nursery children are given many opportunities to reinforce their knowledge and understanding of number and mathematical concepts. For example, at registration they count the number of pupils present and subtract the answer from the class total to work out the number of absentees, and they enjoy counting games and number rhymes. Attainment in Reception classes is high. Careful planning ensures that the needs of children of different ability are met, and that they make rapid progress as they follow clear and careful guidance through open-ended questioning. Mathematical vocabulary is well developed and, whether lining up or counting lunches, every opportunity is taken to reinforce number concepts. Shape recognition, for example, was reinforced in a walk in the school grounds as children were asked to find examples of their given shape.

***Knowledge and Understanding of the World***

- 8.6 Children's attainment is high and their progress is rapid, for they show great enthusiasm for this area of the curriculum. They study living things and are becoming aware of the seasons. Children are actively encouraged to explore, discover and question: Nursery pupils explained in very simple terms how a torch worked. Skilful questioning, extended answers, and flexible explanations satisfy children's curiosity and reinforce their learning. Good use of the immediate outdoor environment provides a valuable resource. Awareness of ideas and traditions from a variety of cultures is introduced at appropriate festivals throughout the year: for example, Reception children found out about Divali.

***Physical Development***

- 8.7 Attainment and progress are good. The use of a large hall and a variety of outdoor areas, as well as access to the school's swimming pool, underpins broad and balanced physical development. Teachers use a good range of outdoor equipment to set appropriate challenges for all children. Activities are structured to encourage co-operation in teams as well as the improvement of personal skills. Many fine motor skills are mastered in daily activities such as cutting, threading and lacing, and children are beginning to develop good control of the mouse when using the computer.

***Creative Development***

- 8.8 Attainment is high and rapid progress is made. Children explore a very wide range of media and techniques; colour and shape are introduced in many ways. By the end of Reception, children recognise primary colours and know what happens when colours are mixed. The programme of study is linked to all other areas of the curriculum and artwork is carefully displayed to provide a stimulating environment. The 'Jack Frost' display in Nursery provided a focus for language as children discussed the weather, whilst number displays in Reception enhanced mathematical learning. Nursery children, however, have few opportunities to develop independent skills in cutting out, design and choosing materials. The children sing well and enjoy songs with actions, and they can clap a rhythm with a specialist teacher. They have opportunities to listen to music and to play a variety of instruments.

***Other Aspects of the Foundation Stage***

- 8.9 Children have a very good attitude to learning and move between activities confidently and happily. They co-operate very well, both with teachers and with each other. Behaviour is very good, concentration is high, and listening is attentive.
- 8.10 The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals and they plan lessons thoroughly. Teaching is enthusiastic, lively and stimulating. Teachers, especially in Reception, challenge their pupils effectively and give appropriate support within a caring and secure relationship.
- 8.11 Assessment and recording are very good. Progress is well monitored and effective systems of assessment are in place: a Foundation Stage Profile is completed for each child, and these continuous records inform future teaching and aid reporting to parents. Parents have daily access to staff and are invited at regular intervals to discuss their child's progress.
- 8.12 The good curriculum is broad, balanced, relevant and appropriate to the needs of all children. Teachers are supported by very good documentation. Children are benefiting from the collaborative planning which now takes place between Nursery and Reception class teachers.

- 8.13 Teachers and their assistants are beginning to form an effective team, led by the early years' co-ordinator. All are suitably qualified or experienced, and staffing ratios are in line with recommended guidelines. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the curriculum and to children's learning. They are deployed best when careful planning has them working closely with teachers. All staff place great importance on the personal development, welfare and pastoral care of their pupils.
- 8.14 Resources, including ICT, are generously provided to support learning and are used effectively by teachers. All are well-maintained and accessible to children. Accommodation is good overall. Some Reception classrooms are small, but they are well organised. However, the arrangement within the large Nursery classroom does not capitalise on its full potential. Welcoming classrooms are enhanced by stimulating displays of children's work. Outdoor play facilities are very good and children use the pre-prep hall for physical activities. The swimming pool and main library are valuable resources, but the small music room is less conducive to learning.
- 8.15 Leadership and management are good. The early years' co-ordinator is secure in her knowledge and supports her team well. She encourages colleagues to have high expectations for themselves and for the pupils.

### **English**

- 8.16 Pupils achieve good standards at all ages. Pupils' attainment in national tests at age 7 is high in relation to their abilities. Results in national tests at age 7 over the last three years have been far above the national average for all maintained primary schools. Results in entrance examinations to senior schools at 13+ over the last three years have been good.
- 8.17 Attainment in lessons observed and work sampled is good. Pupils speak confidently and develop their ideas thoughtfully. For example, Year 8 pupils, as part of their study of *Lord of the Flies*, were asked to produce a priority list to survive on an island. They listened carefully to each other in pairs and responded accordingly, reporting back to the whole class. A Year 5 group continued a play script, understanding stage directions and how to inject humour. In a Year 6 lesson on Shakespeare's use of language in *As You Like It*, pupils used inference and deduction and understood that answers had to be supported by evidence.
- 8.18 Pupils make good progress at all ages. Progress is particularly marked when open-ended discussion takes place. For example, a discussion on frightening sounds in a Year 3 class led to some enthusiastic writing. Progression over time is evident in exercise books; by Year 6, most pupils are paragraphing and using direct speech. Progress is linked to pupils' individual targets and self-assessment questions, for example 'Can I write a letter in the character of a nurse?'. Although pupils in Years 1 to 4 have spelling logs and regular tests, progress in spelling lags behind that in other skills.
- 8.19 The quality of learning and behaviour is good. Pupils of all ages are keen to learn. They collaborate in pairs or small groups and respond positively to challenging tasks. For instance, when miming adverbs, Year 4 pupils were engaged and enthusiastic. Pupils enjoy the stories that are read to them; a Year 2 group empathised with a character and linked the story to personal experiences. Pupils take a pride in their work and books are well presented. They read fiction and some good reading logs are compiled in Years 1 and 2. They plan using mind maps and spider diagrams. Pupils in all years are encouraged to set targets and self-assess their work: Years 2 and 3 use a traffic light system and Year 5 have self-assessment forms in their books. However, written corrections in exercise books are not done consistently.

- 8.20 The quality of teaching is good. Teachers display good subject knowledge, particularly in Years 7 and 8; and lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives. Teachers manage their groups well; have high expectations, set challenging tasks and make effective use of higher-order questioning. Teachers give effective individual support to pupils during written tasks, with praise and encouragement much in evidence. Teaching successfully involves pupils in speaking and listening activities and takes into account their different capabilities. Topics and activities are well chosen to deliver learning objectives: *The Phantom Sausage Stealer* is an example of this and also demonstrates how teachers often make the learning fun.
- 8.21 Assessment and recording in Years 1 and 2 are rigorous and linked to targets. Formative assessment and self-assessment are developing from Year 1. A pupil, asked what he had learnt, answered without hesitation, 'I didn't know there were two ways of saying 'u' and 'oo'. I do now.' Although most marking is regular and helpful, some examples of unmarked work were seen.
- 8.22 The curriculum is generally broad and balanced, though the provision of drama is inconsistent. There is no timetabled drama, but a flourishing drama club and photographs of school performances indicate pupils' strong interest. Resources are good, but opportunities to use ICT are limited, especially in Years 7 and 8. Year 5 pupils drafted play scripts on laptops and wall displays provide further evidence of some good quality work using computers. A Year 1 class used a computer program on phonemes.
- 8.23 Leadership and management are sound. The results of recent initiatives have yet to be felt. The subject head has begun to monitor progress in reading by using the information gained in standardised reading tests and he now conducts work sampling across the year groups. Meetings have been used to compare exercise books across the age ranges, to monitor standards and to promote continuity and progression. National tests at age 11 have been introduced with a view to using the information gained to improve the standards of teaching and learning.

### **Mathematics**

- 8.24 Pupils achieve good standards. Pupils' attainment in national tests at age 7 is high in relation to their abilities. Results in national tests at age 7 over the last three years have been far above the national average for all maintained primary schools. Results in entrance examinations to senior schools at 13+ over the last three years have been very good.
- 8.25 Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 is good. Year 1 pupils recognise sequences and predict what comes next. Year 2 pupils understand place value in three-digit numbers, measure length and use known facts to solve a problem. This good understanding of concepts is developed further in Years 3 to 8. By Year 6, pupils' attainment is good and standards of numeracy are high. Most pupils know their multiplication tables thoroughly, and they understand and can manipulate fractions well. Their workbooks show they understand various types of graph and the concepts of area and perimeter. By Year 8, pupils' attainment is good: the weaker pupils can solve algebraic equations and the stronger ones can interpret tables, graphs and diagrams and draw inferences from the data.
- 8.26 Progress in the development of mathematical knowledge and skills from Year 1 to Year 8 is good, with boys and girls progressing equally. Carefully considered strategies led Year 1 pupils to see number patterns and then accurately predict sequences. Practical tasks based around money helped the progress of Year 2 pupils adding and writing two-digit numbers.

Pupils with learning needs are supported with appropriate work and make good progress in relation to their abilities.

- 8.27 The quality of learning and behaviour is good overall. Pupils usually respond well: they show positive attitudes, listen carefully, work hard and complete their set tasks. Behaviour is always good, and often very good in Years 3 to 8.
- 8.28 The quality of teaching is very good and occasionally excellent. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards, whether in mental introductions relating to the main topic, or the completion of geometric constructions to explain a concept. Teachers constantly look to support pupils, keep them on task, or challenge them. As one teacher worked with a pupil, another pupil was questioned at the same time about his progress: this awareness of pupils' needs has a very positive effect on learning. Teaching is thorough and carefully planned. Effective questioning early in the lesson enables teachers to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding, and to fine-tune their strategies. In very good or excellent lessons, without exception, a good pace was maintained. All teachers have good subject knowledge.
- 8.29 Marking is usually thorough, though very occasionally work goes unmarked. Teachers' comments are helpful and pupils sometimes add self-assessment. Assessment and recording are thorough and useful analysis aids curriculum planning and teaching. The subject is well resourced, with sufficient practical equipment, text-books and ICT programs.
- 8.30 Leadership and management are good. Clear curriculum documentation has been developed, showing medium- and long-term targets. Professional development is valued and supported, and monitoring of teaching has been introduced.

### **Science**

- 8.31 Pupils' attainment in science is good. Results in entrance examinations to senior schools at 13+ over the last three years have been satisfactory.
- 8.32 Pupils throughout the school achieve good standards in lessons and in their written work. Pupils in Year 2 were able to carry out a class survey of preferences of different types of bread and produced a bar chart of their results. Pupils in Year 6 showed good understanding of separating substances, including distillation and chromatography. Pupils in Year 8 had carried out an original investigation into the relative merits of various high energy drinks in their study of respiration.
- 8.33 Pupils make good progress at all ages. For example, a Year 2 class used earlier training to make predictions and plan a fair test before conducting an experiment. A Year 7 class was challenged by a lively discussion on whether heating copper sulphate was a physical or chemical change. Good progress was displayed by classes taught in non-specialist rooms as well as in the laboratory: for example, Year 5 pupils showed their ingenuity in using materials to soundproof a plastic box, later testing and recording their results electronically. Boys and girls of all abilities progress well, as do the few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- 8.34 The quality of learning and behaviour is very good throughout the school. Pupils arrive with high anticipation. They behave very well and are particularly careful in the laboratory. They are very mindful of safety; laboratory coats and goggles were worn without prompting when pupils conducted experiments on heating chemicals. They concentrate well when listening to instructions and then carry out the task willingly and sensibly. They co-operate very well in practical work in pairs or small groups, for example, when Year 5 pupils designed and tested a balloon-powered monorail. They display logical thinking in tackling problems, as when a

Year 6 class studying energy tried to work out why a television would not work. They are eager to answer questions, but wait their turn and listen to each other's answers appreciatively.

- 8.35 The quality of teaching is very good overall and is never less than good. Teaching was very good in well over half of lessons. Lessons are well planned, often with work and information sheets, to stimulate scientific thinking. The aims of each lesson are made clear to pupils in both written and spoken form. Teaching is characterised by an investigative approach which encourages pupils' understanding. Pupils regularly carry out their own investigations: Year 2 pupils tested whether materials were translucent, transparent or opaque. All teachers are secure in their subject knowledge, and this is a strength in Years 3 to 8. They teach with enthusiasm in a disciplined environment. The best lessons offer fast pace, as when a Year 7 class observed features associated with chemical change. Oral work, including the questioning of pupils, is a strength of the teaching, enabling pupils with learning difficulties to express themselves effectively. Lesson tasks are matched to pupils' abilities, with the more able being given challenging extension activities. Exemplary health and safety practice is emphasised in every lesson. The inter-active whiteboard is regularly used to enhance teaching.
- 8.36 Leadership and management are very good and have contributed to development. Plans are in place to improve the continuity of learning from the Foundation Stage to Year 8, especially in Years 1 to 3. The system for assessing pupils is regular and thorough. The use of a target-setting system contributes positively to individual performance. Self-assessment sheets involve pupils in this process. Assessment feeds back into short- and medium-term planning. The marking of books is particularly detailed, positive and constructive. Most teaching below Year 5 takes place in non-specialist rooms. The laboratory is well equipped and its potential fully exploited. The lack of a second laboratory limits the practical work that can be carried out with younger pupils in the preparatory school. The absence of a laboratory technician and the lack of a dishwashing machine place considerable time pressure on the subject head.

### **French**

- 8.37 Pupils' attainment in French is high. Results in entrance examinations to senior schools at 13+ over the last three years have been very good.
- 8.38 Pupils' command of spoken and written French is very good. They have a thorough command of vocabulary and possess the language structure to respond to teachers' instructions, almost always given in French, and to answer their questions accurately. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are able to initiate discussions in French. The quality of their pronunciation is very good. Written work in pupils' exercise books also shows good standards of attainment.
- 8.39 Pupils' progress in lessons, and over longer periods, is rapid. Oral work by pupils in Years 3 to 8 shows rapid progress over the school year, and from one year to the next. A pupil whose first language is not English is making equally rapid progress. Written work in French also shows rapid progress. Pupils' very good use of their independent learning skills often contributes to the speed of their progress. By Years 7 and 8, pupils can comprehend and respond to the language spoken at a fast speed. They readily assimilate new vocabulary, and grasp new grammatical structures. No differences in attainment and progress are evident between girls and boys.
- 8.40 The quality of pupils' learning and behaviour is very good. Pupils show themselves to be very competent learners. They are alert and questioning in lessons. They concentrate very well and join enthusiastically in all activities suggested by the teachers. Pupils work very well both individually and co-operatively in pairs or small groups. They enjoy their successes, and

understand that they can learn from their mistakes. The quality of presentation in their exercise books bears further evidence of pupils' enthusiasm for the subject. They are very well behaved in lessons; their relationships with the teachers are constructive, friendly and respectful. Senior pupils will occasionally converse in French with their teachers when they meet them about the school.

- 8.41 The quality of teaching is very good and occasionally excellent. Teachers communicate a vigorous, lively enthusiasm for the task in hand, which clearly strikes sparks in their pupils. A Year 6 pupil commented in the course of a French lesson, 'I love this game.' Planning of lessons is careful and informed by assessment. The pace of lessons is often brisk. Teachers listen very well to pupils' contributions; their style of teaching directly encourages their pupils' independent thinking. Teachers know their pupils very well as individuals, and direct appropriate questions to pupils of varying levels of ability. Teaching strategies are very varied and help to retain the interest of the children, as well as leading directly towards the stated teaching objectives. Pupils of all levels of ability are drawn to take part in the lessons. Able pupils are extended; more challenging work is set for them and they are given responsibility for their own learning. Pupils who need learning support are given appropriate tasks, and additional help and encouragement.
- 8.42 Leadership and management by the subject head are very good. Regular meetings are held for the purpose of planning and reviewing departmental strategy, and sharing good practice. Policy documents are up-to-date, clear and detailed. Progress is assessed on a regular and continuous basis, and more formally in Years 5 and 6 through annual examinations and in Years 7 and 8 through twice-yearly examinations. Written work is regularly marked; the teachers' comments, generally in French, are positive and helpful, pointing out to the pupils when they have done their best, and when (much more rarely) they have not. The very successful use of ICT is a regular feature of teaching. The subject development plan has been thoughtfully compiled so as to provide a useful basis for the future. Year 7 pupils spend a week in France at the Château de la Baudonnière in Normandy. The pupils' French benefits very significantly, while the work undertaken also has cross-curricular relevance. This trip makes a great contribution to pupils' educational opportunities and personal development, extending their linguistic abilities and broadening their cultural horizons.

### **Geography**

- 8.43 Pupils' attainment is satisfactory. Results in entrance examinations to senior schools at 13+ over the last three years have been satisfactory.
- 8.44 The standard of analytical skills used in class activities is satisfactory, as is the understanding and knowledge exhibited in pupils' written work. Year 3 pupils correctly linked countries and climates. Those in Year 5 showed satisfactory knowledge of river flow around a meander. Pupils in Year 7 showed an appropriate understanding of the development of towns.
- 8.45 Progress is sound. Year 5 pupils made appropriate progress in their understanding of river flow through well-chosen questions. Pupils in Year 7 developed a fair understanding of the social issues related to urban life. No difference was detected in attainment and progress when measured against gender or ethnic background. Pupils with learning needs made good progress, but high ability pupils did not reach their potential.
- 8.46 The overall quality of learning is good. Pupils respond well, show sustained interest and concentrate for long periods. They are well behaved, seeking information and asking questions politely. They work collaboratively when required, as when sharing a holiday selection task,

and take responsibility for their work. Relationships are good, both amongst pupils and with their teachers.

- 8.47 Teaching is good overall and never less than sound. Lessons are planned with care, though insufficient challenge is set for the ablest pupils. Subject knowledge is good and lesson preparation for follow-up questions is thorough. Teachers are careful to draw all pupils into discussions and they ask appropriate questions to help pupils learn more effectively. The organisation of time and resources is efficient.
- 8.48 Leadership and management are good. The curriculum is broad and balanced, resources are good, and the use of ICT is widespread and increasing. Insufficient time, however, is allocated in Years 1 and 2 to allow a thorough introduction to the subject and the otherwise thorough schemes of work do not cater fully for these pupils. A range of field trips and visits supports and extends pupils' learning. Assessment is well established, monitoring of teaching and learning has started, and the analysis of pupils' attainment is beginning to influence planning.

### **History**

- 8.49 Pupils achieve high standards across the age groups. Results in entrance examinations to senior schools at 13+ over the last three years have been very high.
- 8.50 Attainment in lessons and in pupils' written work is high. Year 4 pupils demonstrated precise factual knowledge of Boudicca and a correct sense of chronology. Year 5 pupils empathised with World War II evacuees and selected appropriate information from different sources for use in a writing task. History was not taught during the inspection in Years 1 and 2; however, the sample of written work in literacy folders showed pupils attaining good standards.
- 8.51 Pupils make rapid progress. In a Year 8 lesson on the Hundred Years War pupils quickly acquired a thorough knowledge and understanding of the causes of the war. The books of pupils in Years 5 to 8 reveal pupils' increasing depth of factual knowledge and their ability to interpret aspects of the past. The written work for pupils in Years 1 and 2 showed them making good progress in their acquisition of knowledge of people and events, for example Florence Nightingale and the Gunpowder Plot.
- 8.52 The quality of learning and behaviour is very good. Pupils enjoy history. They are keen to get involved, are observant and ask questions. They volunteer answers, thoughts and opinions. They collaborate well in pairs or small groups and respond to challenging tasks and questioning. A Year 6 class, using pictures of Tudor schools, looked for detail and applied their previous learning of Tudor life to good effect. Pupils take a pride in their work, and their books are well presented. The exercise books of pupils in Years 7 and 8 are particularly meticulous and present clearly developed notes for revision purposes.
- 8.53 The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers display very good subject knowledge; lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives. Teachers manage their groups very well; have high expectations, set challenging tasks and make effective use of higher-order questioning. A wide variety of activity contributes to pupils' enjoyment of the subject and takes into account their different capabilities. The use of ICT, primarily for video footage, effectively promotes learning. Year 5 pupils watched a clip of *Goodnight Mr. Tom* in their study of evacuees and Year 7 pupils, using the events of 1066 to study bias, were shown a clip from *Battlefield Britain*.
- 8.54 Leadership and management are good, characterised by passionate teaching, enormous enthusiasm and a desire to foster a love of history throughout the school. Comprehensive

documentation guides the non-specialist team of class teachers, but the curriculum lacks continuity in Years 1 to 3. Marking is regular and helpful with suggestions for improvement. Year 3 marking prompts pupils to think further and directs them to the sources available. Marking for Year 5 pupils points to ways of improving historical skills. English mistakes are not consistently corrected. The quality of display and artefacts in the history room is outstanding. The wide range of carefully selected and prepared resources and the use of artefacts contribute to the high standards of both teaching and learning.

### **Information and Communication Technology**

- 8.55 Pupils achieve good standards throughout the school.
- 8.56 Pupils of all abilities achieve good standards in their lessons and in the quality of their finished work. Pupils in Year 2 created attractive patterns by importing a variety of shapes and changing their size and colour. Those in Year 6 compiled a word-search using word-processing software. Pupils in Year 8 designed their own complex web-sites.
- 8.57 Pupils' progress is good throughout the school. Year 1 pupils responded well when challenged by a program to categorise musical instruments in their study of sound. A Year 6 class made good progress as they used a combination of functions in a word-processing program to create mazes. Pupils in Year 8 thought creatively to insert working hyper-links neatly into text. Good progress was also observed in the increasing quality of pupils' material available on the school's intranet and in the increasing sophistication in pupils' use of both hardware and software; for example, Year 8 pupils used lap-top tablets in their RS projects.
- 8.58 Learning and behaviour are very good. Pupils enter the separate computer rooms in the prep and pre-prep departments with a sense of enjoyable expectation. They are keen to discover the lesson content. They are comfortable working with a computer, which older pupils view as a working tool. They concentrate well on their tasks. However, pupils in Year 1 needed considerable support to stay focused when working in pairs on a program on phonics. Pupils in Years 3 to 8 listened carefully to instructions and then carried them out conscientiously. Occasionally a few pupils either race ahead, or ask for help as soon as they meet a problem rather than strive to solve it for themselves. Pupils enjoy using the computers to design personal products: for example, making attractive party invitations in Year 3 by importing pictures into a word processing program, or creating colour-coded timetables in Year 6. All show appreciation of each other's work, on-screen, on display in the computer room, and around school. Pupils are happy to offer help to each other.
- 8.59 The quality of teaching is very good overall. Lesson aims are clearly stated and on display to pupils. Lessons are very well planned, taking into account pupils who are at different stages in their work. New work builds on what has already been achieved. Projects are well chosen to reinforce skills being taught, as well as being interesting and relevant in their own right. Extension work is made available through the school intranet, which can also be used by those who need to catch up. Teachers have a good mastery of their subject: this is a strength in Years 3 to 8. They make very good use of the inter-active whiteboards to explain skills and processes to the whole class. Teachers know their pupils' abilities well and respond calmly and personally to their requests. A plenary session is always used to reinforce the lesson's aims.
- 8.60 The subject is very well led and managed. Efficient organisation contributes significantly to pupils' education by encouraging the use of ICT in many other subjects. Weekly meetings have focused teachers' planning on producing an ambitious development programme.

Assessment is achieved through the judgment of pupils' final output; a system of target-setting and self-assessment usefully involves pupils in this process. However, reports, though thorough, contain little advice on further improvement. The single weekly lesson limits the breadth and depth of what can be taught. The widespread use of ICT in other subjects has yet to be fully co-ordinated to produce an integrated approach. Teaching is well resourced in modern premises. The recent purchase of lap-top tablets and voting units is the latest example of a generous budget to support the development of ICT. The school-wide provision of interactive whiteboards and the school intranet make an increasingly significant contribution to pupils' learning.

### **Latin**

- 8.61 Pupils achieve high standards in Latin. It is studied by the more able pupils in Years 5 to 8. Results in entrance examinations to senior schools at 13+ over the last three years have been very good.
- 8.62 Attainment is high in oral work in class and also in the written work in pupils' exercise books. Year 8 pupils have a very good knowledge of the basic grammatical structures of the language, and are able to understand and translate Latin prose passages.
- 8.63 Pupils make rapid progress. Written work presented by pupils exhibits marked progress over the school year, and of speedy progression from one school year to the next. Some pupils start Latin at the beginning of Year 7, either because they have joined the school at that stage, or because they have moved up a stream within the school. They too make rapid progress. No differences in attainment and progress are evident between girls and boys.
- 8.64 The quality of learning is very good, and on occasions excellent. Pupils focus very well in lessons, and show great interest. They participate eagerly, and constantly wish both to answer questions and offer suggestions. They show no anxiety about risking the odd wrong answer. They work very well collaboratively, supporting, prompting and allowing each other time to work out the answer to a difficult question. They clearly enjoy the process, deliberately encouraged by the teaching, of solving problems by logical thinking. Their very good behaviour reflects the very good relationship that clearly exists between the teacher and his pupils.
- 8.65 The quality of teaching is very good overall, and often excellent. Strengths include very good subject knowledge, effective communication and enthusiasm for the language. Classroom rapport is supportive and sympathetic: essential if pupils are going to be prepared to risk sometimes giving wrong answers. At the same time a quiet but effective discipline is in place; pupils know that high standards are expected and that they are relied upon to work hard at learning the essential grammatical building blocks of the language. Planning of lessons is very good, and is informed by assessment. The pace of lessons is very well judged. The matching of challenges to pupils' abilities is excellent, especially in Year 7 where pupils with widely different levels of experience of the language are taught in the same set. The teaching is encouraging, methodical, thorough and patient, and regularly enlivened by a humorous approach.
- 8.66 Leadership and management are very good. Subject policy and planning documents are clear and very carefully prepared. The assessment of the pupils' progress is carried out on a regular and continuous basis, and more formally in annual examinations in Year 6 and twice-yearly examinations in Years 7 and 8. Marking of the pupils' written work is regularly carried out; comments are encouraging, positive and helpful in enabling pupils to see how they can

improve their work. The use of ICT is well embedded within teaching strategy, and the interactive whiteboard is used to very good effect. The subject's development plan has been thoughtfully compiled.

### **Music**

- 8.67 Pupils achieve high standards in music throughout the school.
- 8.68 Pupils' attainment is high in all aspects of music, especially in understanding musical concepts. Class- and choral-singing is of high quality, featuring good tone and tuning, and secure part-singing. Pupils in Year 2 used a range of musical vocabulary confidently, keeping a crotchet beat with their feet while moving arms to show other note lengths. Year 6 pupils sang confidently in six independent parts. Year 7 pupils discussed the thickening texture of music with detailed knowledge of forms, and could hear in their heads a series of missing notes. Many individual music lessons take place, and examination successes are often at merit or distinction level.
- 8.69 Pupils make rapid progress during lessons and over time. Pupils in Year 4, for example, made rapid progress creating a performance of a song with recorders and chime bars. Year 5 pupils rapidly learnt the fingering of a new recorder note and assimilated it into their playing.
- 8.70 Learning and behaviour are very good throughout the school, and occasionally excellent. Motivation and determination have a significant impact on pupils' rapid progress. Relationships with fellow pupils are of the highest order. Pupils are patient when others make mistakes, and have the confidence to ask for help. They are highly observant: pupils in Year 4 immediately noticed when a hand-sign and sung note did not match. Year 3 pupils were fascinated by differences between notes played on a glockenspiel and a xylophone, keenly exploring the effect of using various beaters.
- 8.71 The quality of teaching is very good, and on occasions excellent. Subject knowledge is excellent and high expectations are set. Inter-active whiteboards are used as a tool alongside traditional teaching methods: the former helped to explain intervals with a "virtual keyboard" and to display notation as music was played. Well-planned lessons move swiftly through many activities using a wide array of resources. The dynamism and enthusiasm of teachers has a positive impact on the quality of learning, where excitement is infectious. Teachers show great respect for pupils. A late arrival from an instrumental lesson gave an opportunity to discuss progress on the cello rather than being an annoying interruption.
- 8.72 The curriculum is guided by detailed schemes of work. Balance is good, with appropriate emphasis on participation and performing. However, although ICT is used in teaching music, there are currently no opportunities for pupils to use it themselves, for example, in composition. The assortment of extra-curricular choirs and ensembles is attended by large numbers, making a significant contribution to the success of the department. Informal assessment is continuous, and teachers are ever mindful of the needs of individual pupils. Every pupil has a personal mini-DVD on which performances are periodically filmed. This provides material for assessment and in time will create fascinating records of progress across years.
- 8.73 Subject leadership and management are very good; the head of department is supported by a very good team of full-time and visiting teachers. Music has high status. Concerts in school are frequent, and choirs sing in local churches. Other staff value music, singing enthusiastically in hymn practices. Many sing in a staff choir which occasionally performs with pupils. The main music room is an excellent, versatile space that is put to very effective

use with a variety of layouts. Practice rooms are spacious. Resources of sheet music, CDs and instruments are very good.

### **Physical Education**

- 8.74 Pupils achieve high standards and make rapid progress. Pupils in Year 2 exhibit good attainment in skills, co-ordination and mobility, and by the end of Year 8 they display high attainment in physical development, gymnastics and swimming, and in the games skills for hockey, football, rugby and netball. The standard of swimming is high, with most pupils able to swim one or more of the four strokes, and many proficient in all. Their survival and life-saving skills techniques are also well developed.
- 8.75 Pupils' progress during lessons is rapid, with continuous building on earlier skills and knowledge. The progression becomes clear when "dodging skills" taught in Year 1 are translated to a rugby or netball game in more senior years. Similarly the introduction of hockey skills using soft balls and plastic sticks in Year 2 develops into confident and competent team play in Year 5 and above.
- 8.76 Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are very good. They listen intently, carry out instructions promptly, and work with enthusiasm and commitment. When placed in groups for an activity, they display good mutual respect and a sharp sense of awareness, and are ready to share ideas. For example, pupils working in groups during a Year 8 gymnastics lesson discussed and developed ideas for a sequence of moves that took account of the strengths and limitations of each member.
- 8.77 The quality of the teaching is very good overall and often excellent. Subject knowledge is secure. All lessons, whether in gymnastics, games or swimming, start with warm-up exercises and finish with a cool down. Very good behaviour is encouraged through the lively pace and varied content of lessons. Thoughtful and careful planning, together with clarity of instruction, allows pupils to develop a confidence and self-assurance. Lessons are well managed, with good use of resources and an appropriate emphasis on safety and the correct handling of the equipment. Teachers skilfully show the appropriate level of sensitivity to each pupil's prowess and age, and all pupils are encouraged to take part, be fully involved and strive for high standards.
- 8.78 The quality of leadership and management is very good, combining clear direction with the expectation of high standards. The school enjoys the support of experienced and enthusiastic specialist and non-specialist teachers who have created and cultivated a healthy sporting ethos. Detailed assessment records of pupils' achievements are recorded using ICT and used to guide future planning. Policy documents underpin a comprehensive and well planned programme for all pupils. Dance, however, is not included beyond Year 2. The subject is very well resourced with a good range of equipment suitable for all ages. Learning benefits from a large and purpose-built sports complex on-site: this includes a sports hall; a 16m heated indoor swimming pool, and a learning pool for non-swimmers. Two extensive and well maintained playing fields are situated a short distance from the school, and access is granted to two all-weather pitches nearby. Additionally, two hard and one grassed play areas on the school site give immediate access to open space for pupils.

### **Religious Studies**

- 8.79 Pupils' attainment is good overall. It is good in Years 1 and 2, high in Years 3 to 6, and good in Years 7 and 8. Pupils in Year 2 have a broad vocabulary of technical terms and can form and write searching questions. Those in Year 6 were accurate in their recall on Buddhism and

could argue and counter cases with effective reasoning. Year 8 pupils could formulate and define the aims of their extended writing projects, and use ICT skills appropriately to record their findings. Results in entrance examinations to senior schools at 13+ were satisfactory over the last three years and very good in 2005.

- 8.80 Pupils' progress is rapid. Year 1 pupils have efficient learning disciplines in place from past training. Pupils in Year 4 made rapid progress through their ability to listen attentively to each other and to work both independently and in pairs. Those in Year 7 drew on their experience to review earlier lessons effectively and to assess their own progress. Throughout the school, boys and girls make equivalent progress, and the presence of pupils from minority ethnic and religious backgrounds makes a positive contribution to their learning.
- 8.81 The quality of learning and behaviour is very good. Pupils are keen to start their lessons, they settle quickly to their tasks, work sensibly in groups, and maintain prolonged concentration. For example, pupils in Year 2 adapted swiftly to different roles; those in Year 4 were enthralled as they shared memories of a recent visit to a synagogue; and Year 8 pupils were able to criticise classmates' projects and apply improvements to their own.
- 8.82 Teaching is very good. Subject knowledge is secure, planning and organisation are well structured, and management of pupils is both sure and sensitive. Lessons are well paced, and contain much variety and occasional elements of spirituality. ICT is integrated effectively by teachers and pupils. In the best lessons, high expectations are set, all abilities are suitably challenged, and extension work is provided for the ablest.
- 8.83 Leadership and management by the subject head are very good. Comprehensive documentation, work scrutiny and lesson observations guide the non-specialist team of class teachers, but the curriculum lacks continuity in Years 1 to 3. The Christian basis of the curriculum reflects the school's founding aims, but due emphasis is also given to the contribution of other major religions. An excellent programme of visits and visitors forges strong links with parents and the community. Marking is regular, careful and follows the school's policy. Encouraging comments on pupils' work suggest areas for improvement. Detailed assessment records influence planning and teaching. Provision and use of ICT and other resources are very good, and attractive classrooms display much work by pupils. The subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development.

### **Short Subject Reports**

Short subject reports contain concise evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning and of provision in the school.

#### ***Art***

- 8.84 Four lessons were observed in Years 2, 5, 6 and 7, a range of pupils' work was scrutinised and a discussion held with the subject head.
- 8.85 The quality of teaching was very good. Lessons were very well planned and organised, with materials ready to ensure that no time was wasted. Pupils study artists' work and use a wide range of media including paint, pastel, pottery and collage. Tasks are carefully matched to pupils' abilities and interests, such as Year 6 pupils using block figure printing in the style of Dale Devereux-Barker.
- 8.86 Pupils' learning and behaviour was very good. They settled to their work quickly and organised themselves sensibly. Pupils were very keen, interested and well-motivated. They

responded positively to their teacher and were keen to offer ideas and opinions. They worked very well collaboratively. Relationships with teachers were very good and pupils value the individual help they receive

- 8.87 Extensive and varied displays in the art room and throughout the school greatly contribute to the environment, and supported learning. Learning is well supported by members of staff who help with the teaching of art throughout the school.

### ***Design & Technology***

- 8.88 Three lessons were observed in Years 3, 5 and 7. Examples of pupils' work on display were examined and a discussion was held with the subject head.
- 8.89 The quality of teaching was very good. Lessons benefited from very good planning, with materials readily available to pupils. Projects are varied and include examples from pneumatics and the application of levers to designing and making a door-stop.
- 8.90 Pupils were enthusiastic and interested learners. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and the teacher, were very good. Pupils worked co-operatively and independently, using tools carefully. They produced well-prepared project sheets and evaluated their work critically. They drafted several ideas and then chose the one that fitted the project best.
- 8.91 Teaching and learning are well supported by a good policy document. Detailed curriculum planning provides continuity and progression in skills and knowledge from Years 3 to 8.

### **Achievement and Quality in Activities**

- 8.92 Achievement and quality in the very wide range of activities are very good for the ages, aptitudes and abilities of the pupils. The programme contributes strongly to their personal development.
- 8.93 The extra-curricular programme is much enjoyed and valued by pupils, who achieve good standards in sporting, musical and intellectual activities. Sports offered are popular with pupils of all abilities and they achieve good skill levels. The overall quality of coaching and instruction ensures that pupils derive pleasure and learn much from participation.
- 8.94 Musical activities include a multitude of ensembles and choirs: high standards are expected and achieved. Science offers opportunities to explore environmental issues or to extend understanding beyond the demands of examinations. Clubs for chess, German, ICT, philosophy and Spanish illustrate the range of opportunities pupils have to fulfil their love of learning. Other activities, including the popular table tennis, focus more on leisure and social interaction
- 8.95 Methods used to implement the programme are effective and, where possible, take account of pupils' wishes and needs. Pupils are enthusiastic about the activities programme, which extends the curriculum well, and many make good use of the opportunities offered. Most teachers are involved in the programme, and clear information about the provision is advertised.
- 8.96 After-school care is available for younger pupils whilst older pupils may attend supervised homework sessions. Attendance at activities is not always accurately recorded, and there is no formal reporting on activities to parents.

## 9. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 9.1 The inspection was carried out from November 28<sup>th</sup> to December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2005. All subjects of the curriculum were inspected and almost all members of the teaching staff were observed teaching. However, the size of the team did not permit all subjects to be reported on in full. The following subjects do not have full reports in Section 8: art and design & technology. As many lessons in PSHE occur on Mondays and Fridays, they were not inspected; judgements on the provision for PSHE are included within the section on pupils' personal development. The inspectors visited 162 lessons or parts of lessons, examined extensive samples of work by pupils of different abilities in each year and held formal discussions with these pupils as well as informal discussions with other pupils. They attended assemblies and registration sessions. They observed extra-curricular and sporting activities. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff at various levels in the school. They analysed the responses of 319 parents to a questionnaire distributed in advance of the inspection and held two meetings with parents. They examined a wide range of documentation made available by the school.
- 9.2 A bursar from another school joined the reporting inspector on the preliminary visit as part of the ISBA scheme, spending the day with the bursar's department. The principal findings have been included in the relevant sections of this report.

### List of Inspectors

David Bunkell	Educational consultant
Penny Forsyth	Former Head, IAPS school
Marilyn Lane	Former Head, IAPS/GSA school
Peter Lee-Smith	Head, IAPS school
Jacqueline Merva	Director of Studies, IAPS school
Tim Owen	Head, IAPS school
Frank Skipwith	Former Head, IAPS school
Malcolm Tozer	Former Head, IAPS school; Reporting Inspector