

# HIGHGATE SCHOOL

Independent Schools Inspectorate

Highgate Senior School

Standard Inspection  
2011





# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

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**STANDARD INSPECTION**

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## Highgate School

The pre-preparatory and junior schools were inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School/College **Highgate School**

DfE Number **309/6001**

Registered Charity Number **312765**

Address **Highgate School  
North Road  
London  
London  
N6 4AY**

Telephone Number **020 83401524**

Fax Number **020 83407674**

Email Address **hm@highgateschool.org.uk**

Head Master **Mr Adam S Pettitt**

Chairman of Governors **Mr John Mills**

Age Range **11 to 18**

Total Number of Pupils **1008**

Gender of Pupils **Mixed (626 boys; 382 girls)**  
**11-18: 1008**

Number of Day Pupils **Total: 1008**

Inspection dates **18 Oct 2011 to 19 Oct 2011**

**16 Nov 2011 to 18 Nov 2011**

## PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Highgate School is an independent day school consisting of three schools within the one foundation, providing education from the age of 3 to 18. It is a charitable body established in 1565 by a Royal Charter and administered in accordance with a charity commission scheme dated 2005. The junior school opened in 1889 and the pre-preparatory school in 1993. In 2004, the decision to admit girls to the junior and senior schools took effect and all three schools are now co-educational. Years 7 and 8, which were formerly in the junior school, now form part of the senior school. The head master has taken up his appointment since the previous inspection.
- 1.2 The senior school is situated in Highgate Village, near Hampstead Heath, in North London. The senior, junior and pre-preparatory schools share several facilities, including the Mills Centre for Art and Design Technology, a dining hall and the Mallinson Sports Centre.
- 1.3 The school aims to promote academic excellence through rigorous, critical, engaging and learned teaching so that pupils are inspired to fulfil their potential by aiming high and developing curiosity, creativity and independent learning. It seeks to foster open-mindedness, understanding and an awareness of the needs of others, and to promote a sense of service and a commitment to the wider community. Through its pastoral care system and the extra-curricular programme, the school aims to secure the welfare of pupils, enabling them to develop personal qualities which will equip them as future citizens, able to make a positive contribution to society.
- 1.4 Pupils are admitted at the ages of 11, 13 and 16 on the basis of tests and interviews. Standardised tests indicate that the ability range in Years 7 to 11 is far above the national average; in the sixth form it is above the national average. There are 72 pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 37 receive specialist learning support; only two pupils require support for English as an additional language (EAL). The school reflects the diversity of London, with pupils from many different cultural traditions.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 Highgate School provides an exceptional education. The intellectually-accomplished pupils make outstanding progress, doing justice to their high abilities. The pupils are high achievers at GCSE and A level, doing even better than their abilities would indicate and are very successful in gaining places at their first choice of university and course, even at the most competitive universities.
- 2.2 The pupils follow an excellent and challenging curriculum together with an exceptionally wide range of high quality extra-curricular activities, especially rich in learned societies; they are well-rounded and balanced and are adroit learners. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is outstanding. The pupils demonstrate their practical concern in the large amount raised for charities. The pupils are happy, well looked after and show excellent discipline. All this is achieved by excellent teaching, specifically adapted to the high potential of the pupils, which stimulates in them intellectual curiosity, academic rigour, and a determination to succeed.
- 2.3 The school is an exceptional community in its intellectual and cultural life. The pupils benefit from the example set by the staff whom they respect as academic authorities and partners. The pupil body is cosmopolitan and, while maintaining its Christian traditions with a beautiful school chapel and a chaplain, the school caters very well for the spiritual needs of pupils of other faiths. The leadership of the head master and the senior team is exceptional: indefatigable, self-critical, striving for continuous improvement and treating all staff with care, respect and interest. That leadership reflects the intellectual quality of the school and acts as a model of educated, civilised and urbane living. They are supported by a governing body that is most effective in its planning and monitoring and that engages with staff. They ensure that the school's high aims are achieved. The school has responded thoroughly to the recommendations in the previous inspection report, and has made significant improvements. The school has burgeoning plans to improve the library which currently does not do full justice to the needs of the pupils. The school has excellent relations with parents, who showed their strong support in the pre-inspection questionnaire. So did the pupils themselves and, although such astute pupils were not always uncritical, the inspectors found no cause for any concern.

## **2.(b) Action points**

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

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

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

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

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Bring the library facilities up to the high standards that exist elsewhere and give it a central location in the heart of the school, as planned.



### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' overall achievement is outstanding. Pupils are exceptionally well educated and the school is successful in achieving its aim to promote academic excellence so that pupils are inspired to fulfil their potential by aiming high and developing curiosity, creativity and independent learning.
- 3.2 Pupils show high levels of knowledge, skills and understanding. They demonstrate the ability to think critically, applying logic and using evidence. They write fluently and accurately for a wide range of purposes. They use mathematics confidently across the curriculum. In modern languages, classics, and English, the pupils show a clear understanding of grammar, syntax and the nuances of expression. Pupils apply information and communication technology (ICT) confidently and relevantly. They are very well spoken, fluent and clear, speaking effectively and articulately. They are creative, as shown especially in literature, the arts, and music, and they also develop well their physical abilities. Some 30 Year 13 pupils benefit from taking the extended project qualification, demonstrating the ability to write a 5000 word essay. The school has introduced the International General Certificate of Education (IGCSE) examinations in several subjects to provide greater rigour and pupils have risen to this challenge.
- 3.3 Pupils, at all levels, including those with SEND, make excellent progress, equivalent to that of their contemporaries. The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2008 to 2010. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in GCSE have been far above the national average for maintained schools, and above the national average for maintained selective schools. These results show improvement during the three year period. Results in IGCSE English and Mathematics are higher than both worldwide and UK averages. A-Level results have been far above the national average for maintained schools, and above the national average for maintained selective schools. Results in GCSE and at A level are high in relation to pupils' abilities, indicating that progress to Year 11 and in the sixth form is exceptional in relation to the pupils' abilities. Pupils are highly successful in gaining places at their first choice of university and course, achieving entry to the most competitive universities.
- 3.4 The school has achieved many exceptional successes in recent years in national and international competitions, such as the Senior Mathematics Challenge, and the Mathematics and Chemistry Olympiads. In music a quarter of the 87 results in grade examinations in 2010/11 were distinctions and more than half were merit. Sporting honours have been achieved, especially in Eton Fives, and pupils have represented the county. Through their membership of the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, pupils find other opportunities to excel.
- 3.5 The pupils are engaged learners who are inquiring and eager to learn. They are aware of scholarship and of learning for its own sake, and they are consciously aware of how they learn. They have mastered the arts of paying attention, copying accurately, taking notes, following an argument, detecting an ambiguity or a false inference, and organizing their time and thoughts for study. They undertake independent work as shown in a fine talk on what modern medicine owes to the ancient Greeks. Pupils work well together in groups in classes, and in teams. They respect the teachers as academic authorities and partners.

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

- 3.6 The school offers an excellent broad, scholarly and enriching curriculum and an outstanding extra-curricular programme. These make a highly effective contribution to achieving the school's aims of encouraging independent learning, and developing critical intellect, and they take pupils far beyond public examination specifications.
- 3.7 Pupils study a broad range of subjects until Year 9, and then can study 9 or 10 GCSEs ensuring a commendable breadth. Religious education is continued for all pupils until the end of Year 11 as a non-examined subject. All pupils take GCSEs in English language and literature and at least one modern language from a choice of five. The separate science subjects are taken by most pupils. Numeracy is strengthened by the use of numeracy ambassadors across the curriculum who co-ordinate the teaching of mathematical topics in different subjects. Sixth form pupils have a wide range of A-level subjects from which to choose, including Latin, Greek, classical civilisation and further mathematics, and almost any combination is possible.
- 3.8 The curriculum is very well planned and co-ordinated, and the school identifies curriculum synergies so that, for example, ideas of global warming encountered in geography are also subjected to rigorous investigation in science lessons. The excellent breadth of the curriculum is complemented by outstanding depth. Across all subjects, opportunities for academic extension abound both in class and through subject societies, for example in the study of atomic theory in Year 11 chemistry. In a minority of subjects opportunities for such independent study are restricted by the size and location of the library, and the embryonic nature of the virtual learning environment. The school recognises these restrictions and is addressing them with a new library building, centrally situated, having received planning permission. A strong programme of university advice and guidance benefits pupils, and the provision for careers education has improved since the previous inspection and is now excellent.
- 3.9 Pupils benefit from an exceptionally wide range of extra-curricular activities. A programme of sporting excellence benefits pupils, with an emphasis on sport for all; pupils appreciate the range of sports options. Music and drama are of a very high standard with pupils being given the opportunity to perform at regular intervals and to a very high standard, including working with internationally-acclaimed musicians. Drama includes performances of Shakespeare and a biennial Greek play performed in English. Pupils can select from some 77 societies or they can elect to start their own. The diverse and eclectic range of societies includes the automobile, meteorological and tiddlywinks societies; meetings are well attended and vibrant. The school is exceptionally rich in learned societies. Pupils gain valuable experience from themselves being heavily involved in the running of most clubs and societies.
- 3.10 Pupils also benefit from an exceptional programme of community links. An outstanding commitment to community service is demonstrated with all pupils in Years 9 and 10 and volunteer pupils in Year 12 participating in community days which include volunteering in primary schools, charity shops and care homes. Pupils also help take Latin into primary schools through the *Minimus* project, and assist children mainly from asylum and refugee status backgrounds through the SHINE scheme of Saturday morning lessons, where pupils act as mentors helping children from local schools to develop their reading and writing.

### **3.(c) The contribution of teaching**

- 3.11 The quality of teaching is excellent. It is highly effective in promoting the pupils' progress and is instrumental in helping the school to meet its aim of providing, rigorous, critical, engaging and learned teaching. A strength of the school is the relationships between staff and pupils, with lessons conducted in an atmosphere of the co-operative pursuit of knowledge and truth.
- 3.12 Teachers set high standards and are extremely well qualified and knowledgeable in their academic subjects: they promote academic rigour and curiosity, and pass on to their pupils their own love of their subject and of learning. Their lessons are intelligently planned to maximise the progress of all pupils. In contrast to the position at the time of the school's previous report, paired and group work are now used very effectively. Teachers have excellent discipline and encourage high standards of behaviour in the classroom so that academic good manners prevail; minor incidents are managed with a light touch and a sense of humour. Teaching ensures that from time to time complete silence is preserved in classes.
- 3.13 Academic expectations are consistently high and pupils are encouraged to think things out for themselves. In a Latin and Greek lesson, pupils were encouraged to work out the derivation and exact meanings of English words by looking at origins in Greek and Latin and cognate words in French. Teachers choose the most stimulating books and materials; they recognise that many commonly used teaching materials would not challenge the pupils sufficiently. Homework is challenging and frequently offers opportunities for independent reading and work. Pupils are expected to work hard at school and at home and do so, to excellent effect.
- 3.14 Teaching aims to educate its pupils beyond what is necessary for public examinations. For example, a series of experimental demonstrations in chemistry took the pupils' conceptual understanding of chemical bonding well beyond any A-level syllabus. Further mathematicians looked at Mandelbrot sets using computer-generated images and English sixth formers prepared well-informed talks on the Romantic period and gave them to their peers.
- 3.15 The school has a thorough and well organised framework to assess the pupils' work regularly. Marking is of an exceptionally high and consistent standard throughout the school. Work is marked regularly with an analysis of strengths and detailed suggestions for further development. Pupils say they find marking consistently helpful. Regular tests help older pupils prepare for public examinations. Teachers give freely of their time to support the pupils' learning outside the classroom. Staff offer drop-in clinics, subject-based clubs, educational visits, competitions and lectures. Pupils say they can arrange to see a teacher when they need extra help.
- 3.16 Although a small proportion of parents who completed the questionnaire expressed reservations about the school's provision for pupils with SEND, inspectors found that the school has extremely efficient systems in place to identify and support these pupils, and that the provision is monitored by the observation of such pupils within the classroom. Teachers are aware of pupils specifically gifted in certain areas, such as those holding special scholarships. Teaching encourages pupils to talk over matters with parents, for example in religious education pupils were asked to discuss with their parents their religious beliefs.

## 4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent, fulfilling the school's aim to foster open-mindedness, understanding and an awareness of the needs of others, and to promote a sense of service and a commitment to the wider community and for the pupils to develop personal qualities which will equip them as future citizens, able to make a positive contribution to society.
- 4.2 Pupils have a deep spiritual awareness through their understanding of the school's Christian heritage and its embracing of pupils of other faiths in a cosmopolitan community where the chaplain is approached by pupils of all religions. Pupils are confident without arrogance, urbane and civilised without preciosity. They use well the opportunities for reflection offered by the Chapel, or the other religious services. Pupils in the middle school, in leisure time, discussed the spiritual depravation of Soviet Russia. Pupils readily discuss spiritual matters, metaphysical and even ontological ones, both in specific philosophy lessons and generally. They are aware of the spirituality of the arts.
- 4.3 Pupils also have a mature moral sense and imagination. Pupils make every use of opportunities to consider their own values and role in society. They relish discussion of ethical issues in general terms, as in sixth form philosophy lessons or in practical situations such as when debating current ethical dilemmas.
- 4.4 Pupils have a very well-developed social awareness showing genuine respect for each other as demonstrated by the way they move around a busy site showing good manners and courtesy. Pupils respect the school's code of conduct. Their attitudes show an understanding of, and a commitment to, service. They relish the opportunities presented for leadership and responsibility. Pupils are keen to take a lead in assemblies, organise activities and take responsibility for others. At a Jewish assembly, pupils introduced an outside speaker talking about foreign aid and oversaw the resulting discussion. Sports captains share responsibility with staff for selecting teams and devising match tactics. In the CCF, pupils show the ability to lead and to follow, and they develop their awareness of the value of order and discipline.
- 4.5 Those on the School Council take their responsibilities seriously and pupils commented on positive changes brought about by the Council. In the pupils' pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils expressed the opinion that the school did not listen or respond to their views – possibly because pupils are appointed rather than elected to the Council. The inspectors agree that the pupils have a point and the school is considering some changes. Pupils' understanding of the community is enhanced by the school's community service programme. *The Arbiter*, a political magazine written by pupils is an illustration of this awareness. The support for international communities has increased with significant pupil fund-raising for Sri Lankan and Ugandan projects.
- 4.6 The pupils' cultural awareness is also excellent. They make full use of the cultural, artistic and other opportunities of London. The curriculum provides a rich environment in which pupils experience a variety of different cultural perspectives without neglecting that of England. In religious education, for example, the study of the annunciation was deepened by the pupils' looking at old masters' depictions of this event, and listening to settings by great composers of the *Magnificat*, ranging

from Bach to the contemporary composer, and former pupil of the school, John Taverner. An unusual example of the pupils' appreciation of cultures is the exchange of joke books, one by pupils of a school in Uganda and the other by Highgate pupils.

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

- 4.7 The pastoral care throughout the school is excellent, enabling the school to meet its aim to secure the welfare of pupils and supporting their outstanding personal development. The staffing pastoral structure is well developed with housemasters, tutors and heads of year supporting the pupils in all aspects of their school lives. Housemasters (the name for house leaders of both sexes) and heads of year are the key points of contact for parents and are highly effective in ensuring that information is circulated to key staff and, where relevant, appropriate action taken. Senior staff are informed, on a weekly basis, of concerns from housemasters and heads of year.
- 4.8 The house system works well and housemasters work very hard to create a very positive and mutually supportive ethos in their respective houses where the school's commitment to service is very transparent. Pupils comment very favourably on the support that they receive from their tutors and are also very loyal to their houses, as illustrated by their enthusiasm for inter-house competitions. The pastoral life of the school has been further strengthened by the appointment of a school counsellor to take an active role in helping to refine and develop pastoral practices. The chaplain is regarded by pupils as an element of the pastoral staffing and is accessible to all. The school is constantly reviewing and developing its pastoral and welfare policies and procedures, most of which are already outstanding.
- 4.9 The pupils are very supportive of each other and their relationships with each other and with staff are consistently positive. Pupils are well behaved, display good manners and clearly enjoy being at school. Pupils say that bullying is rare and, if it occurs, it is dealt with effectively by staff. The role of the pupils' anti-bullying committee is seen by many pupils as being helpful and active, and recent discussion of a new anti-bullying questionnaire was positive. Sanctions, when needed, are applied in line with the school's policies. However, feedback from the pupils' pre-inspection questionnaire highlighted the fact that a significant minority of pupils felt that some teachers are not fair in the way that they give rewards and sanctions and a similar proportion felt that they were not treated equally. These comments were most prevalent in Years 10 and 11. The inspectors did not find any evidence to support these views.
- 4.10 Pupils commented favourably on the choice of food available and are clearly encouraged to develop healthy eating habits. A healthy lifestyle is further strengthened by a good sports programme for boys and girls, all of whom have numerous opportunities for participating in physical activities and organised teams.
- 4.11 Policies to promote good conduct and behaviour are effective and are very familiar to pupils, being displayed around the school. The safeguarding policy meets requirements and is implemented successfully. All staff and others concerned regularly receive suitable training. All necessary measures are taken to reduce risks from fire and other hazards. Arrangements to ensure health and safety are effective and include excellent provision for pupils who are ill. The school has a suitable plan to improve access for those with disabilities. The admission and attendance registers are meticulously maintained and stored electronically.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) The quality of governance**

- 5.1 The governing body provides excellent oversight of the school in line with its aims and discharges most effectively its responsibilities for educational standards, financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. It ensures the school fulfils its aims and supports the pupils' excellent achievement and personal development. A Foundation development plan provides effective strategic guidance and the introduction includes a clear statement of the governors' commitment to excellence in all that the school does. The governing body enables the school regularly to upgrade buildings and facilities. The governors have between them much experience and professional expertise, and the body includes some parents. Governors work well through a system of sub-committees. A new, modernised scheme for the charity agreed in 2005, to replace the previous one that had been in place since 1876, has strengthened governance. It slightly redefines the objects of the Charity and sets out clearly the role of the head master in leading the school and the governors in exercising oversight.
- 5.2 The governing body has a very good insight into the working of the school and provides support and stimulus for growth and improvement. The governors are informed by regular and comprehensive reports and they visit the school frequently. The chairman of the governors meets regularly with the Common Room Committee. Regular Foundation Dinners are held that give an opportunity for all members of staff to meet the governors in an informal setting. A relevant and effective scheme of induction benefits new governors. An outside review of governance was recently commissioned.
- 5.3 The governing body is effective in discharging its responsibilities for child protection, welfare, health and safety throughout the school. All the necessary checks are done and carefully recorded. All the required policies are in place, implemented and regularly reviewed.

### **5.(b) The quality of leadership and management**

- 5.4 At all levels of responsibility the leadership and management of the school are excellent. Leadership and management provide clear educational direction, as reflected in the quality of the pupils' education and the high standards of their achievements and personal development. They are also very effective in self-evaluation, setting priorities and ensuring that they are achieved. The management applies the school's policies and procedures with common sense and wise judgement. All academic departments work to development plans which have to be in accord with the school's statement of aims and ethos and development plan.
- 5.5 The senior leadership is especially successful in conveying to the pupils the main aims of the school, setting ideals, promoting learned teaching in a civilised community, and maintaining very high standards. Senior leadership, strongly supported by a highly effective team, is inspirational, proclaims the values of the school and is well aware of how to achieve them. Members of the leadership team are accessible to the whole school. Staff at all levels report that they feel valued and they especially appreciate the frequent opportunities to meet socially with dignity in circumstances where views can be frankly exchanged. Staff also say that senior management has handled well the rate of change and improvement. The move to

co-education has been treated very successfully. An excellent system of appraisal is in place which meets the recommendation of the previous inspection and supports the pupils' education by ensuring consistent staff development. New teachers benefit from a very thorough induction consisting initially of two whole days, with continued support through the academic year. The senior leadership is very self-critical and is constantly guarding against any complacency. It shows great attention to detail and is specific about how improvements should be made.

- 5.6 A strength is the introduction of an extra tier of posts, between senior management and head of department, where staff are given a specific responsibility to develop certain academic initiatives. These support and help staff to improve, and the prudent use of these posts has been a factor in the successful development of the school.
- 5.7 The management is successful in securing, supporting, developing and motivating well-qualified staff and ensuring they are suitably trained for their roles in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. The school has thorough arrangements for checking the suitability of staff (including volunteers), supply staff and governors. The school's recruitment procedures are exemplary.
- 5.8 The bursary looks after the school's finances with care, supervises the support staff and is responsible for the efficient upkeep of the buildings and grounds. The school is very well served by dedicated support staff who make a vital contribution to school life: administrators, secretaries, technicians, maintenance staff, groundsmen, cleaners, catering staff and others.

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

- 5.9 The school maintains an excellent relationship with parents. Channels of communication are open and varied and they actively encourage parents to be involved in their children's education and in the life of the school. Those parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very strongly supportive overall and particularly commended the ease with which they could communicate with, and obtain information about, the school.
- 5.10 The quality of information provided to parents is high: the website is attractive and easy to navigate, and contains a wide range of pertinent material about the school's activities. A number of printed booklets and newsletters provide details of the pupils' achievements and progress during the year. Parents are kept up-to-date increasingly through the parents' portal on the school website where they have access to correspondence, reports, policies and procedures and can check their child's attendance. Parents have a main point of contact in the housemasters who provide them with clear and detailed information via email or telephone. Parents of pupils and of prospective pupils are supplied with all the required material about the school and with much more besides. The quality of reports has improved following the previous inspection and parents now receive clear and useful reports, grades and comment cards detailing their children's work and progress.
- 5.11 The school handles the concerns of parents with care and follows its published procedures to deal with complaints appropriately; in recent years these have never proceeded beyond the initial stages. Information on parental concerns is collated by an assistant head and data and any trends are examined by the senior team on a regular basis.

- 5.12 Parents have many opportunities to be actively involved in the school's life. The Parents' Association is enthusiastic and parents are able to participate in a range of social and fundraising events. Head master's forums have been established where parents are invited into school to discuss a particular topic but are also able to raise any other issue. Parents' presentations take place and parents are invited in to school for additional information on pastoral and parenting matters such as internet safety or dealing with examination stress. Strong direct links with parents are encouraged, maintained and initiated by the school, for example staff associated with the school's bursary programme visit the pupils' homes when suitable or necessary.

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



## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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

### Inspectors

Mr Eric Hester	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Jane Buttery	Deputy Head, GSA school.
Mr Edward Elliott	Headmaster, HMC school.
Mr Nigel Lashbrook	Headmaster, HMC school.
Mrs Cathy Williamson	Former Deputy Head, GSA school.