

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## INSPECTION REPORT ON

### Highgate School

Full Name of the School	<b>Highgate School</b>
DfES Number	<b>309/6001</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>312765</b>
Address	<b>North Road, Highgate, London N6 4AY</b>
Telephone Number	<b>020 8340 1524</b>
Fax Number	<b>020 8340 7674</b>
Email Address	<b>office@highgateschool.org.uk</b>
Name of Headmaster	<b>Mr Richard Kennedy</b>
Chairman of Governors	<b>Mr John Mills</b>
Age Range	<b>3 – 18</b>
Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> November 2005</b>

This inspection was a pilot of ISI's *Second Cycle* of inspections. The school is thanked for co-operating in the development of this form of inspection. It is linked more closely to the regulatory framework than the existing inspection framework and concentrates on the aims and character of the school.

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 162A(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002, as amended by the Education Act 2005, 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.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Characteristics of the School

1.1 Highgate School is an independent day school with a selective entry. It is a charitable body established in 1565 by a Royal Charter of Queen Elizabeth I and administered in accordance with a charity commission scheme dated 2005. It consists of three schools within the one foundation, providing education from the age of 3 to 18. It places a strong emphasis on its pastoral care (the senior school house system being unusual in a day school), on its academic education and on extra-curricular activities, including music, drama, sport, societies and outdoor activities. The school reflects the diversity of modern London, with pupils from many different cultural traditions.

1.2 The senior school is situated in the centre of Highgate, in North London, with local facilities at hand and the cultural and educational resources of central London just a few miles away. The upper floors of the senior school afford wide views over London from Highgate Hill. The school's listed older buildings are Victorian, including the chapel, with its distinctive brickwork and stained glass. Many of the classrooms are modern, and brand-new classrooms have recently been added on the top floor of the main building.

1.3 The junior school opened in 1889 and moved to its present site in the purpose-built Cholmeley House in 1938, 400 metres west of the senior school. Two of its other buildings occupy what were previously large private mansions. It is situated near Hampstead Heath in a pleasant tree-lined road, with the extensive school playing fields on either side. The pre-preparatory school opened in 1993, in a separate building in the same road.

1.4 The senior, junior and pre-preparatory schools use several shared facilities, including the dining hall and the Mallinson sports centre, both purpose-built. What was previously boarding accommodation for 'school house' is now the Mills centre for art and design and technology. This has been radically refurbished and returned to its pristine 19th century splendour. The school also has an outdoor centre in Wales, for field study and adventure activities.

1.5 The pre-preparatory school has been co-educational since its opening, and co-education is gradually being extended through the rest of the foundation. Years 3 and 4 in the junior school and Years 12 and 13 in the senior school are now co-educational. It is planned that from 2006 the 11+ entry will be mixed, as will the 13+ entry in 2008. The school expects all year groups to be mixed in 2010 and to be fully co-educational in 2012.

1.6 Along with the move to co-education, the school has increased considerably in numbers since the last inspection reports (full HMC report, September 1999, for the senior school; brief ISI report, March 2003, for the junior school). It now has a total of 1,188 pupils, with plans to expand to about 1,400. The pre-preparatory school includes 65 children in the Foundation Stage and 64 in Years 1 and 2. The junior school has 415 pupils from Year 3 to Year 8. The senior school has 374 pupils in Years 9 to 11 and 270 students in the sixth form. The school is planning a new division between the junior and senior schools at the age of 11, effective from 2008.

1.7 The school makes its own 'baseline' assessment of the Reception children within their first half term. Further pupils are admitted in Years 3 and 7, and evidence from standardised tests indicates that the pupils as a whole are well above average in ability. If they performed according to their abilities, their results would be well above those for all maintained primary schools. In the senior school, the average ability is similar to this and very much like that in selective maintained schools. Accordingly, these are the schools with which the senior school is compared in this report.

1.8 Of the pupils identified as needing learning support, 17 are in the pre-preparatory school, 38 in the junior school, including one with a statement of special educational needs, and 56 are in the senior school. At all ages the most usual difficulty is mild dyslexia. All pupils are proficient in English.

1.9 Almost all the pupils in the pre-preparatory school transfer to the junior school at the age of seven, and almost all those in the junior school transfer to the senior school at the age of 13, where they are joined by around 50 pupils from schools outside the Highgate foundation. Most of the Year 11 pupils proceed to the school sixth form and in recent years 30 or so have joined from outside. By the time they leave the school, almost all the sixth-form students have gained places at well-known universities.

1.10 The school's main purpose is to provide an excellent all-round education and its aims may be summarised as follows:

- to make the welfare of the pupils the first priority;
- to promote academic excellence by offering first-class teaching, facilities and resources, so that pupils are inspired to fulfil their potential by aiming high and developing curiosity, creativity and independent learning;

- to foster understanding and tolerance, developing a commitment to the wider community and an awareness of the needs of others, through managing the life and work of the school in a manner which is consistent with the Christian values which have always been central to the school's tradition;
- to develop within pupils personal qualities which will equip them as future citizens, able to make a positive contribution to society.

1.11 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

### **The Educational Experience Provided**

#### *Whole School*

2.1 Highgate School provides a rich educational experience for its pupils and prepares them thoroughly for their journey through school and into the world beyond. It is outstandingly successful in its aim to provide an all-round education which extends the pupils' horizons, notably through its extra-curricular provision.

#### *Pre-preparatory and Junior Schools*

2.2 The educational experience is of high quality and in line with the schools' aims, which encourage pupils to develop curiosity, creativity and independent learning skills.

2.3 In the pre-preparatory school, the children experience a broad range of subjects with due emphasis on each. They are suitable for their ages and abilities and based on the nationally specified Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage and on the National Curriculum programmes of study, which pupils start early in their Reception year. The junior school curriculum is also built around the National Curriculum, with the addition of French for Years 3 to 8 and Latin for Years 7 and 8. However, while the range of subjects is wide and each is properly represented, a few difficulties are caused by the need to timetable the increasing number of senior school staff now teaching in Years 7 and 8. For example, one Year 7 class has five single lessons for science in one week with no double periods: this alters the educational experience received by the pupils and makes teaching the required scientific skills more problematic.

2.4 The educational experiences in the pre-preparatory and junior schools contribute effectively to the pupils' progress in all areas of learning, and very good provision is made for the acquisition of skills in oral and written expression in particular. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support the teaching of subjects is not yet fully established throughout the pre-preparatory school; however, creativity is emphasised through the topic-based approach to the curriculum. Personal, social and health education (PSHE), which has improved significantly in the junior school since the last inspection, is strong throughout both schools and complements the foundation's aims. Visiting speakers enhance this aspect of the curriculum and pupils cited 'circle time' as being of particular value, when they gather with their teacher to discuss matters of importance to them and their personal development.

2.5 Extra-curricular activities are not offered by the pre-preparatory school. Provision within the junior school, where there is an extremely wide range of activities, is outstanding. There are 45 clubs in total; of these 17 are sports-based, 11 centre around music and the remainder reflect a variety of interests of staff and pupils. The mathematics activity for gifted and talented pupils in Years 4 and 5 is run in conjunction with the adjacent maintained primary school. Students from Highgate sixth form support the activities and they work with the junior pupils from both schools. Various high quality opportunities for enrichment are given, particularly through residential trips for pupils in Year 2 upwards; for example, the orchestra's tour of Paris in the summer of 2005.

2.6 The induction arrangements for pupils entering the pre-preparatory school are very effective, and procedures are well established to ensure the smooth transition of pupils from the pre-preparatory to the junior school. The principals and teaching staff of both schools meet to discuss each individual and pass on information that is both academic and social. All new pupils entering Year 3 have the opportunity to visit the junior school for a day before they officially start. Transition from junior to senior schools follows a similar pattern and is further facilitated by the number of senior school staff who teach Years 7 and 8.

2.7 Within the pre-preparatory school, schemes of work vary in quality and some subjects are currently reviewing their documentation. However, links between the content of different subjects are well established. Planning within the junior school has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now a strength, with the links between subjects continuing to be developed, although they are not yet as effective as in the pre-preparatory school. Curriculum planning documents are not yet fully shared across the two schools.

2.8 All pupils in both schools experience the full curriculum and enjoy a wide variety of educational activities, but not enough investigative work is carried out within some subjects in the junior school: for example, mathematics and science. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is outstanding: individual or paired sessions are provided for some pupils withdrawn from lessons and others receive support within the classroom. These pupils have individual education plans which are appropriate to their needs. Any pupil with a statement of special educational needs receives a suitable and efficient education in line with the statement, and a review takes place annually. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection.

### ***Senior School***

2.9 The school provides an effective educational experience for all its pupils through the subjects taught and especially through the activities offered. In the questionnaire completed before the inspection, many pupils commented favourably on the school: “Highgate gets a thumbs-up” as one pupil put it. Within a framework of equal opportunity for all, the school is successful in supporting its aim to provide an all-round education which inspires the pupils to fulfil their potential. The educational experience is essentially similar to that provided at the time of the last inspection, but with advantageous refinements such as the brand-new facilities for art and design and technology, increased provision for learning support, further development of the extra-curricular programme, and the introduction of a sixth-form course in the history of art.

2.10 The curriculum is distinctive in its emphasis on science, taught as three subjects, and in the availability of several modern languages (French, German, Spanish and Russian) and three classical subjects (Latin, Greek and classical civilisation). By taking account of ideal choices, the school endeavours to accommodate the individual’s selection of GCSE subjects. On the other hand, the provision for religious education and ICT is only one period in the fortnightly cycle in Years 9 and 10 and no timetabled provision is made in Year 11. The relatively low allocation of curricular time for creative subjects is offset by the formation of small groups and by the extensive extra-curricular provision.

2.11 The PSHE programme is highly developed and includes a range of age-appropriate issues such as alcohol and relationships. Support materials are in good supply and teaching approaches are varied – for example, through interviews, presentations by pupils, workshops and lectures.

2.12 The pupils are enabled to gain a wide range of skills and a high level of competence in expressing themselves clearly in speech and writing and in the application of numeracy.

2.13 The pupils’ involvement in extra-curricular activities is outstanding and their achievement high rather than ‘generally appropriate’, as at the time of the last inspection. In the activities observed, the pupils were confident and committed. A glittering array of clubs and societies is on offer, covering sporting, scholarly and cultural fields, with emphasis on drama and music. The range of activities has enlarged since the last inspection: over 400 creative pupil-activity slots are now enjoyed each week. Rates of participation are high. Where pupils wish to start up a new venture, they undertake much of the administration and direction of these activities themselves. In the

Tuesday afternoon activities, pupils make a valuable contribution to the welfare of the school or the wider community through options that include the combined cadet force (CCF), Duke of Edinburgh awards, and also community service, for which the provision has been further developed since the last inspection. The curricular sport is enriched by thriving inter-house and inter-school competitions.

2.14 Valuable educational enrichment furthers the pupils' subject-specific and broader education, enabling them to gain insights and interests and to develop their skills of enquiry and oral expression. Talks are given by important figures from the public and academic worlds and the school organises visits which have recently included modern language exchanges to France and Germany, a visit to Russia, a classical tour of Rome and Pompeii and a ski party. In addition many pupils benefit from participation in concerts and dramatic performances, ranging from *Oklahoma!* to Molière's *L'Avare* in French.

2.15 Pupils are well prepared for life after school through aptitude testing for all, through careers education and guidance and through advice on entry to university, including Oxbridge sessions where needed. Most pupils engage in work experience and the school aims to increase participation further.

2.16 Pupils in need of learning support benefit from a system which provides specific assistance for some and keeps teachers informed about the needs of all, so that help can be given in the classroom. The formation of small sets – for example, in mathematics – is helpful to those with special needs. In some subjects, extension work is provided for pupils who are gifted or talented.

#### ***Whole School***

2.17 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

### **Pupils' Learning and Achievements**

#### ***Whole School***

2.18 The pupils' learning is effective and it results in significant achievements in their academic and broader education.

#### ***Pre-preparatory and Junior Schools***

2.19 The pupils learn effectively and achieve well, in line with the aim of the school to develop curiosity, creativity and independent learning. They are well grounded in knowledge, skills and understanding in their subjects and in other activities.

2.20 In the pre-preparatory school, literacy skills are highly developed and pupils write and read with confidence and enjoyment. Numeracy skills are also built upon firm foundations and pupils progress well. Their knowledge and understanding are developed effectively through well-planned lessons and high quality teaching. Creativity is deliberately fostered through many different experiences within the curriculum, including the 'activity weeks'.

2.21 In the junior school, pupils apply their knowledge and understanding effectively in a variety of situations in many different subjects. This is evident in written work over time and in lessons. Pupils have highly effective speaking and listening skills, and literacy activities in different subjects give many opportunities for developing creativity through extended writing. Pupils undertake their own investigative work successfully in subjects such as English, history, religious education and languages, although in mathematics and science these opportunities are limited.

2.22 No significant difference is apparent in the relative attainment of pupils in different classes or subjects. The pupils were equally willing to apply themselves intellectually to the tasks set. The junior school closely monitored any initial differences in attainment between the boys and girls following the move to co-education. Appropriate action was taken to correct any imbalance.

2.23 Results in national tests at age 7 and 11 over the three years up to 2004 in English, mathematics and science were far above the national average for all maintained primary schools. These results represent good achievement and are indicative of the quality of the education being offered. These standards of achievement were also reflected in lessons seen during the inspection.

2.24 The school has a fine list of individual and team achievements which are the result of the school's encouragement and nurture of talent. A hundred and fifty pupils were successful in instrumental music examinations and many achieved results that were far above those expected for their ages. Three music scholarships were awarded for the senior school. In the national mathematics challenge, 72 pupils were awarded gold or silver medals. In sport there are many outstanding achievements and the Under 13 1<sup>st</sup> XI football team has been unbeaten for the fourth season. Highgate School is the London Independent Schools swimming team champion at Under 10, 11, 12 and 14 age groups. One swimmer is ranked second in England for breaststroke and another third in freestyle. The school has consistently been the strongest school in England for Eton Fives and last year a Year 8 pupil represented Great Britain at Under 14 polo.

2.25 Pupils develop competent skills and attitudes for work and study across both schools. They are articulate, listen effectively, and read and write intelligently and fluently. They are confident in expression and use vocabulary well. For example, in music composition pupils used advanced terms such as 'articulation', 'drone' and 'genre' with confidence. They listen carefully to each other's comments and the debating society is a popular extra-curricular activity which enhances the provision. Pupils and parents attend this and contribute to challenging discussion topics. An effective study skills course has been introduced initially in Year 8 and, because of its success, there are plans to extend this down to Year 3.

2.26 Numeracy skills are well taught in both schools and pupils can apply mathematical concepts effectively. In science in Year 3, numeracy skills were well used when pupils constructed a chart comparing the amount of protein, vitamins, iron and calcium in various meals. Evidence of the use of ICT was observed, for instance, in graphs in Year 2 mathematics and in scientific wall displays in the junior school. Pupils reason and argue cogently and express themselves confidently and succinctly. Good reasoning skills were seen in science and mathematics in the pre-preparatory school, whilst in a junior school discussion in religious education pupils debated their views on freedom of religion confidently and with a clear understanding of the issues.

2.27 Pupils work independently and organise themselves very well, as was observed in mathematics in the pre-preparatory school and in French and Latin in the junior school. A variety of learning experiences fosters a good approach to paired and group work. Examples of pupils working together very successfully were seen in advanced role-play in French and in group work for pupils with special educational needs. The development of good practical skills was noted in design & technology, where pupils worked in teams, and learned how to use a range of tools safely.

2.28 Pupils arrive promptly to lessons and generally settle quickly and quietly to work. They concentrate well, persevere, and show great enthusiasm for their work and activities. Pupils enjoy the learning experiences offered.

### ***Senior School***

2.29 Pupils have extensive and in-depth knowledge in the subjects which they study. As the school intends, they aim high. This is an improvement since the last inspection when, in most subjects, the pupils were judged to 'attain levels commensurate with their ages and abilities'. They show perception and understanding, exercising their critical faculties and expressing their thoughts clearly; for example in work on literature. The sophistication of their ideas was apparent in many lessons, including ones with subject matter as diverse as the economics of scale, volcanic eruptions and Rastafarianism. In many subjects, they reach conclusions strongly substantiated by evidence. When given the opportunity, they reveal a facility for independent study, which is well represented in homework. In science, discussions and experimentation are often extensive and co-operative as they come to an understanding of material in advance of recording; however, carefully prepared worksheets sometimes exercise a restrictive influence on the scope of their thought.

2.30 Significant or systematic differences between subjects are not apparent in the quality of the pupils' work. In the sixth form, male and female students are equally involved in their studies and perform equally well. Elsewhere in the school, pupils in the lower sets often show themselves just as willing to engage intellectually as the more able pupils.

2.31 In GCSE and A-level examinations, results are good in relation to the pupils' abilities: they are above those for selective maintained schools, and they were well above the selective maintained average for boys in 2004. Results have shown good long-term progress, and since the last inspection there has been a rise – well beyond the national average – in the proportion of high grades (A\* and A in GCSE and A and B at A level).

2.32 Individual pupils and teams have achieved distinction in a wide range of activities. Pupils have been successful in the British Mathematics and Physics Olympiads. Individuals have been selected for the National Youth Theatre and the National Youth Orchestra and Choir. The school cross-country team won a national relay competition. One boy reached the finals of the Public Schools Fencing Competition. School teams won in all three age groups of the London Schools' Swimming Association Relay Championships. The school has representatives in area and county teams for most of its team sports. Sixth formers have been successful in several national business and economics competitions. Other notable achievements have included success in music examinations and performances, drama productions and chess. By facilitating such successes, the school inspires and strengthens academic and sporting achievement.

2.33 The pupils' skills and attitudes are a strong support to their learning. In accordance with the aims of the school, they show curiosity and relish opportunities to develop creativity and independent learning. Their application is a major feature and marks an improvement since the last inspection, when some inattention was noted. Enthusiasm was often shown, both in lessons and extra-curricular activities.

2.34 Fluent writing and articulate contributions to discussion characterise the work in subjects generally. Pupils also listen intently, often as a prelude to presenting opinions or asking questions.

2.35 Pupils' mathematical and numerical skills are strong: they have the confidence and understanding to use them effectively in mathematics lessons and elsewhere, when needed; for example, during statistical analysis in geography.

2.36 Most pupils make satisfactory use of ICT and some are highly competent, but a significant proportion have not made sufficient progress through the on-line course used in Years 9 and 10. This is for a variety of reasons, including shortage of time and problems with equipment.

2.37 Pupils are able to reason cogently, adducing evidence in support of their views, particularly when they are asked open-ended questions which stimulate independent thought. This is apparent from an early stage: for example, Year 9 pupils reasoned and argued well in history work on the Holocaust and, in classical civilisation, pupils could support their 'taking of sides' in the feud between Achilles and Agamemnon. Sixth formers were articulate and perceptive in their questions at a PSHE lecture by a visiting journalist. A conspicuously successful feature of the pupils' study skills is their ability to take notes, which they often do spontaneously.

2.38 Pupils study and work effectively both on their own and co-operatively with others, as in modern foreign languages, mathematics, science and physical education. However, opportunities for co-operative working are restricted in some subjects.

2.39 Once pupils arrive at their lessons (the nature of the school site does cause occasional delays), a speedy and effective start is made, and pupils apply themselves well, often remaining on task for long periods of time. They show perseverance with very little need for prompting.

## **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils**

### ***Whole School***

2.40 The personal development of the pupils is a vivid reflection of the school's outstanding commitment to this aspect of education, in which the long-term aim is to help them acquire the qualities which will equip them as citizens of the future.

### ***Pre-preparatory and Junior Schools***

2.41 The pupils demonstrate an outstandingly well-developed spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness that is evident in all aspects of school life. The relatively new PSHE programme and a very positive ethos support the school in meeting its aims for pupils' personal development, namely those of fostering understanding and tolerance, developing a commitment to the wider community and an awareness of the needs of others, and equipping pupils very well for their role as future citizens.

2.42 Pupils are encouraged to develop a strong spiritual awareness through assemblies – for example, in the holding of hands and the enjoyment of the singing in the pre-preparatory assembly. A broad range of opportunities is also provided in lessons and extra-curricular activities. For example, Year 6 boys were encouraged in their religious studies work to question their beliefs and to reflect on their feelings in the light of recent world disasters.

2.43 Pupils have a very strong moral sense and are able to distinguish between right and wrong from an early age. Pupils of all ages respect the school rules and appreciate the fairness of the systems of rewards and sanctions. They regard the anti-bullying policies as constructive. Pupils respond well to issues discussed in PSHE lessons and 'circle time'. For example, discussions in English and history lessons in the junior school revealed a keen appreciation of moral and social matters. Respect for the law is fostered in the pre-preparatory school by visits from the police and through 'citizenship week' in the junior school. Staff provide admirable role models for the pupils who, in turn, show courtesy to one another, to their teachers and to visitors.

2.44 As a result of the schools' provision, the social awareness of the pupils is high. Pre-preparatory pupils are trained to exercise self-discipline from the Nursery. Recently introduced initiatives in the junior school – for example, to establish monitors within each class – are proving a great benefit to pupils' social development. The integration of girls has been very well monitored and managed. Year 8 boys perform their leadership roles efficiently and contribute well to the smooth running of the daily routine. Pupils in Years 5 to 8 represent their peers ably on the school council. Fund raising for charity has a high profile amongst all the pupils in both schools and is frequently initiated by pupils as they consider the needs of others less fortunate than themselves. Valuable social experiences are provided by the numerous visits and residential courses offered from Year 2, where pupils learn to interact with each other and to show respect, tolerance and consideration. Many pupils understand the purpose of public institutions and services in England and awareness was enhanced through wide participation in mock elections held earlier in the year.

2.45 Pupils learn to appreciate their own cultural traditions and the diversity of others through a wide range of opportunities. Christian festivals are celebrated together with those of the Jewish, Moslem and Hindu faiths. Charity links with schools overseas promote understanding of life styles of other nations. Cultural awareness is also promoted in many curriculum areas, as observed, for instance, in wall displays, art and music lessons.

### ***Senior School***

2.46 The pupils' personal development is a particularly strong area of the school's work, with excellent benefits to their spiritual and social awareness and conspicuous influences on their moral and cultural sensitivity. The school meets its aim of fostering understanding and tolerance and operating in a manner consistent with its Christian tradition. The provision for personal development has improved since the last inspection, when it was judged to be very good. Self-knowledge, sensitivity and self-confidence are prominent attributes for pupils, as was shown by those leading house and year meetings on the theme of Remembrance Day. The school adjusts its provision according to age. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, sixth formers welcomed being treated 'more like adults' and having more choices and more responsibilities.

2.47 The Christian, Jewish and multi-faith assemblies ensure that pupils reinforce their own spiritual self-awareness and by so doing develop their self-esteem and their self-confidence. Pupils work hard to prepare and participate in the assemblies and their presentations are a further testimony to their development. This participation serves to extend and enrich their spiritual horizons. The school is hugely fortunate in having such effective spiritual leadership. The power of the human spirit is explored, for example, in a history visit to the Holocaust memorial and in lessons and assemblies on Remembrance Day, when pupils reflected on what it is to be human in the most extreme circumstances.

2.48 Pupils understand and accept the clear code of conduct in the school, which is displayed on the wall in every classroom. To reinforce this code there is a system of sanctions which is equally accepted by the pupils. They are encouraged to explore moral issues in the extensive PSHE programme, as in a tutorial for Year 10 on drugs awareness. This programme is of considerable importance in creating the right environment within which pupils develop their personal sense of right and wrong. Subject lessons also play an important part in providing material for moral considerations: for example, in English, history and the classics. Pupils are well aware of the needs of others less fortunate than themselves and give their support to charitable activities throughout the year and especially in 'charity week'.

2.49 Socially the pupils have a multiplicity of opportunities through which they develop, show initiative and contribute to community life. The successful house system enables them to come into contact with older pupils from the start of their career at the school. The many house competitions reinforce social identity and interaction and enable a young pupil quickly to feel at home in the school. Senior prefects are charged with the responsibility of liaison with the junior school, which makes the transition to the senior school easier to handle. The school ethos is such that pupils take the initiative in founding or joining societies in which others can pursue their interests and develop their personalities in an environment designed to promote a social maturity of which the school is proud. In the wider social context, the pupils' knowledge of public institutions and services is extensive, as was apparent in discussions with inspectors and in the content of assemblies.

2.50 Culturally the school is very rich, with a broad programme of extra-curricular activities and a large number of societies, including debating, philosophy, religion, music, sport, many of the school subjects, and even origami and bee keeping. The content of PSHE sessions and assemblies also gives wide scope for pupils to learn about and explore cultural and religious issues, such as religious hatred. In lessons too, pupils are able to experience the variety of ways people live in the world. For example, in subjects as diverse as art, chemistry, geography, French, classics and religious education, pupils see how different peoples made different decisions in different circumstances. They benefit from this insight into other cultures, and diversity and respect co-exist harmoniously in the school.

### ***Whole School***

2.51 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

## **The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)**

### ***Whole School***

2.52 The teaching is notably effective in promoting the pupils' learning and achievements.

### ***Pre-preparatory and Junior Schools***

2.53 The teaching is of a high quality and none was less than satisfactory. It enables the pupils to make progress and to work and think for themselves. Several instances of outstanding teaching were seen in both schools.

2.54 In the pre-preparatory school, lessons are planned effectively, with suitable and well-chosen activities. For example, children in Nursery developed their social skills in the home corner and enjoyed using the computer to make and print pictures. In all years, activities and time are used

productively to ensure pupils apply themselves throughout the lessons. Teaching is adapted well to the needs of all the children in the class, with activities promoting effective learning for all. Pupils with special educational needs are identified and receive well-judged support from the learning support teacher and teaching assistants. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects are good, ensuring that the most able pupils are challenged, as well as recognising the need to support others. Pupils are well managed in lessons; they behave very well in response to the teaching. An excellent programme of visits and well-planned 'activity weeks' contribute to the quality of teaching and the educational experiences of the pupils.

2.55 The pre-preparatory school is generously resourced overall. However, only limited ICT resources are available, for reasons of space. The library is well stocked and pupils borrow books weekly.

2.56 Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly using a variety of methods, including 'baseline' assessments, reading tests, standardised reasoning tests and effective assessment to promote learning. Assessment information in mathematics and English records pupils' progress and is used to adapt what is taught. Target setting in literacy and other areas helps learning. Marking is thorough and encouraging.

2.57 In the junior school, teaching enables pupils of all abilities to acquire new knowledge, make progress according to their ability, increase their understanding and develop their skills. Pupils with special educational needs are given appropriate work and are often supported effectively in class, either by a classroom assistant or the teacher. They perform as well as their peers because of specific support, both within the classroom and in withdrawal lessons. However, in a few classes during the inspection, more able pupils were not sufficiently challenged because the pace of the lesson was slow. In addition, lower attaining pupils were sometimes not given work appropriate to their ability.

2.58 Lessons are well planned with a variety of activities which meet the needs of all pupils. For example, in a music lesson, a card-sequencing game was distributed, followed by a listening activity and the production of syncopated music by using body rhythms only. Various layers of rhythms were gradually added, so that, from an initial reaction of "Wood-block tapping? That's boring!" the response was "That was really good!" Teachers know their pupils well and have a perceptive understanding of their aptitudes and previous attainment. They have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach and their questions are very well chosen. Most make their enthusiasm evident in lessons. Pupils are well managed and short-term targets keep all pupils focused on the main activity. Time is used very well, with a brisk pace to many lessons. Resources to support pupils' learning are outstanding both in quantity and quality in all subjects and are used effectively.

2.59 A whole-school marking policy is not established in the junior school, but each department has its own policy. Much of the marking is helpful and gives pointers for improvement. However, in Years 7 and 8 standards of marking are variable. Some marking is cursory with just a tick placed at the end of the work or with few comments designed to advance learning. Some unmarked work was seen.

2.60 All staff keep records of pupils' attainment in lessons and in their written work. In the best practice, these are analysed, and in some cases colour-coded to highlight planning issues.

2.61 A system of assessment operates effectively. Pupils' attainment is assessed regularly, through the use of a range of tests and examinations including assessments at the end of Year 6 against national criteria. Staff also record grades for attainment and effort which are placed on a central system. These results are monitored carefully by the school for any unusual emerging pattern of attainment, and senior managers use them to identify any general issues that need to be given attention and priorities for future learning. In addition, since the last inspection the school has begun to use nationally standardised testing to assist with checking the progress of individual pupils. Whilst this is a recent development, already it is helping the school to identify pupils who may require extra support, or those who may be gifted or talented.

### ***Senior School***

2.62 The teaching is highly effective and a significant proportion is outstanding. It promotes academic excellence according to the aims of the school and shows an improvement since the last inspection, when a few unsatisfactory lessons were observed. The teaching enables pupils of all ages and abilities, including those needing learning support, to acquire new knowledge, make good progress, and develop effective skills. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and this enables them to set challenging work and answer pupils' questions with confidence. They have high expectations of pupils and encourage them to enjoy and take an interest in their work. The teaching frequently enables the pupils to think and learn for themselves, and extensive use is made of phrases such as "Tell me ..." and "Why ...?"

2.63 Lessons are well planned, time is used effectively and most lessons are conducted at a brisk pace. Much of the teaching involves pupils in a good range of activities, including discussion, theory and practical work. In subjects such as science and physical education, pupils work in groups and pairs, which facilitates good learning, but this style of teaching is not used frequently elsewhere. The most successful lessons were characterised by the teachers' infectious enthusiasm, sense of purpose and excellent use of resources. In lessons which were sound rather than good, there was often a lack of variety in the teaching methods and the pupils were not required to make active contributions.

2.64 Relationships between staff and pupils are based on mutual respect, and this allows pupils to feel confident to express their ideas and opinions, so that their response is positive and productive. Staff know the pupils well and provide sensitive help, particularly for those needing learning support: subject teachers are familiar with their individual education plans and make use of them.

2.65 Teachers made effective use of the school's ample resources. Interactive white boards, which are readily available throughout the school, are used well in many subjects – for example, economics and science.

2.66 The well-stocked library is a valuable but underused teaching resource. However, departmental libraries are used effectively by a few departments.

2.67 There is a useful school policy on assessment which outlines suggested methods of assessment. Teachers use the results from homework, tests and assignments as evidence for pupils' attainment and progress. The predominant use of these assessments is in compiling reports on pupils' attainment and effort. Such grades are reported to parents five or six times a year. Complete harmony is not achieved between the guidance for staff and that for parents on the criteria for the achievement grades, but they are a useful basis on which tutors discuss the progress of pupils both with the pupils themselves and with colleagues.

2.68 The marking of pupils' work is sound overall, but varies between departments. For example, there is good practice in English and economics, but in some departments marking is superficial.

2.69 Standardised tests are taken in Year 9 to establish pupils' abilities and to mark their progress to GCSE. However, the use and analysis of these results have not been extensive.

#### ***Whole School***

2.70 The school meets the regulatory requirements for teaching [Standard 1].

### **3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS**

#### **The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils**

##### ***Whole School***

1. 3.1 The quality of pastoral care is excellent and the school is highly successful in ensuring the welfare, health and safety of the pupils.

##### ***Pre-preparatory and Junior Schools***

2. 3.2 Pastoral care is outstandingly effective and achieves the aim of the foundation to make the welfare of the pupils the first priority. Staff provide very high quality care for pupils of all ages and the schools pay close attention to their welfare, health and safety.
3. 3.3 Staff know their pupils very well and offer support in a friendly and relaxed manner. Pupils feel secure and know they can rely upon teachers to help them overcome any problems which occur. The atmosphere in both the pre-preparatory and junior schools is caring and purposeful.
4. 3.4 All staff are assisted by highly effective pastoral arrangements. Formal procedures operate for pupils' care and records are reviewed constantly. Staff are clear about their responsibilities and benefit from the high level of informal support given by senior managers.
5. 3.5 The quality of relationships amongst all in the community is high. Pupils mix well with their peers. They are kind and helpful to each other and spontaneously celebrate their personal and team achievements.
6. 3.6 Effective discipline and behaviour policies focus on positive issues. Pupils are aware of what constitutes acceptable behaviour and they know that the school will deal effectively with bullying should it occur. Quick intervention means that harassment of any type is resolved or prevented. In the junior school two examples of less than thoughtful behaviour were observed during the inspection, resulting from the limited space on stairways and in corridors. However, these incidents were dealt with effectively following the established procedures.
7. 3.7 Measures to safeguard and promote pupils' health and well-being are very successful. Child protection procedures are clear and staff have received relevant training in this area. Pupils are very well supervised. All fire prevention measures are in order and fire practices are held regularly and recorded. The school has a large number of staff qualified in first aid. First-aid equipment is provided at strategic places in both the pre-preparatory and junior schools. Risk assessments are undertaken within each subject area in the junior school and more generally in the pre-preparatory school and for all expeditions and visits. Meals are of a high standard with ample choice and caterers are aware of special dietary requirements.
8. 3.8 Both the pre-preparatory and junior schools are happy, pleasant and safe environments where pupils are valued and are able to develop in accordance with the aims of the school.

### ***Senior School***

9. 3.9 The pastoral care in the school is excellent and the pre-inspection questionnaires revealed that the vast majority of parents and pupils are happy with the pastoral arrangements. The school more than meets its aim of promoting well-developed and effective systems of pastoral care and it patently makes the pupils' welfare and safety its first priority. Developments since the last inspection have included the extended role of tutors and prefects and carefully prepared arrangements for girls. The house and tutorial systems are highly effective in providing a supportive community in which pupils can feel secure and where their academic progress and welfare are carefully monitored. The chaplaincy fulfils a valuable role in offering confidential counselling and guidance on personal matters as well as teaching about moral and social issues. Well-conceived policies are followed to ensure good behaviour and prevent bullying. Relationships between pupils are amicable and they behave courteously towards the staff and towards one another, regardless of age. Sixth formers also contribute to the programme of pastoral care, acting as prefects, mentors to new entrants to the sixth form, counsellors to younger pupils and leaders of extra-curricular activities. Girls have been well integrated into the sixth form and play a prominent role there and in activities with younger pupils.
10. 3.10 In all years of the school, the welfare of pupils is treated as a matter of paramount importance and the provision for their health and safety is equally assured. Two members of staff are named persons for child protection matters and they and the rest of the staff receive the necessary training. An ample choice of high quality meals, including breakfast, is served in the attractive dining hall. Fire prevention measures are in good order and regular fire practices are held. The well-equipped medical centre is professionally staffed. In addition, about 75 members of staff are

qualified in first aid, including a significant number at the higher level and others with experience in treating sports injuries. Health and safety precautions are administered professionally for the whole school, including workshops, laboratories and other areas. Routes across the school site have been chosen to maximise safety: for example, in reaching the library, dining hall and sports centre. Suitable risk assessments are undertaken for educational visits and other departmental activities. However, clarity is not fully achieved in those relating to experimental science.

### ***Whole School***

11. 3.11 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3].

## **The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community**

### ***Whole School***

12. 3.12 The school takes great care to keep parents informed and to develop purposeful and productive links with them and with the wider community.

### ***Pre-preparatory and Junior Schools***

13. 3.13 In these two schools, links with parents and the community are outstanding and parents are highly satisfied.
14. 3.14 A high proportion of the pre-preparatory and junior school parents returned the pre-inspection questionnaire. Their responses were extremely positive about all aspects of the schools' provision. Parents particularly appreciate the academic opportunities, the quality of the teaching, the promotion of worthwhile attitudes and values and, in the junior school, the wide range of extra-curricular activities. They value the ready accessibility of the principals if they want to discuss any concerns.
15. 3.15 The parents are given many worthwhile opportunities to be involved in the work and progress of their children and in the activities of the school. Helpful information meetings are arranged for parents both before their children join the school and when they reach various landmark stages in their school careers. Reading record books, house books and study organisers inform parents about their children's progress, achievements and homework and also provide opportunities for easy contact with form teachers and tutors. Parents are invited to support the school in a variety of ways, such as helping with harvest festival, sharing a particular skill or talking about their profession. Parents are welcomed at open mornings, plays, formal and informal concerts and to the Christmas carol service. Pre-preparatory parents are invited to attend their child's birthday assembly. The pre-preparatory and junior school parents' association is very active and seeks to welcome all parents into the school community by arranging a wide range of social events for adults and families. The association sends a detailed annual review to all the parents.
16. 3.16 Parents receive a wide range of information from the school. The prospectus, website and the parents' handbooks are interesting and informative. Form teachers write to new parents to welcome them to the school. Termly calendars and regular newsletters keep parents up to date about events and highlight children's activities and successes. Termly written reports are of exceptional quality: they are detailed and thorough. Junior school parents also receive helpful half-termly grade cards which assess achievement and effort.
17. 3.17 The pre-preparatory and junior schools have many links with the local community and further afield. Harvest festival gifts are given to a local soup kitchen, local almshouses and a local mother and baby unit. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 share mathematics enrichment classes with pupils in a neighbouring maintained primary school. The primary school uses the junior school art and ceramics facilities. The junior school holds its harvest festival and Christmas services in the local church. Pupils regularly visit places of interest in and around London. These visits support and enrich the work undertaken in the classroom. On occasions parents arrange special expeditions such as recent ones to the House of Lords and to an exhibition at a London art gallery. The parents'

association raises very substantial sums of money for a wide range of local and international charities; both the pupils and the staff also support chosen charities. A large number of gifts are donated to the Christmas 'shoebox' appeal.

### ***Senior School***

18. 3.18 The school has strong links with parents. Parents of prospective pupils are welcomed to the school and parents of current pupils are encouraged to contribute to the quality of school life through the parents' association, which organises social and charity activities. Since the last inspection, an increased number of workshops, social events and parental consultations have been organised.
19. 3.19 In the large number of responses to the questionnaire completed before the inspection, the parents were highly satisfied with the education provided by the school. They strongly endorsed the quality of teaching, the subjects and activities provided, homework, pastoral care and information received. They were well pleased with the ethos of the school, the support their children receive and the resulting high standards of behaviour.
20. 3.20 However, a small but significant proportion felt that more help could be given for pupils needing learning support, and a similar proportion did not consider that the school encourages parents to be involved in its life and work. In comments, parents recognised that involvement is likely to be less than in the junior school. The inspectors agree with the parents in their positive views. However, they find that appropriate help is given to the pupils on the learning support list and that there are good opportunities for parents to be involved in the life of the school if they wish.
21. 3.21 Parents support the school through the activities of the parents' association, of which all are automatically members. Money raised by its efforts has been used to support school ventures such as the *Diaghilev* arts review. Parents volunteer to be included in the school's work experience directory.
22. 3.22 Parents are provided with wide-ranging information about the school and its curricular and pastoral provision. The *Cholmeleian* magazine reinforces the nature of the school as one foundation and its continuity over time, with articles by former pupils ('old Cholmeleians') and those currently at the school. Homework diaries facilitate useful communication between school and home and reports record pupils' attainment and effort at key points in the school year. However, end-of-term reports on pupils are of variable quality. Some are very informative, briefly outlining the work covered, analysing the pupils' attainment and progress in different aspects of the subject and suggesting what action is needed to improve the quality of the work, but many others are not sufficiently subject-specific and confine themselves largely to comments on pupils' attitudes to work.
23. 3.23 In the parents' questionnaire, the general view was that parental concerns are well met. The school's replies to parents, as seen by inspectors, indicated a thoughtful and sensitive response to concerns raised.
24. 3.24 Links with the community are strong, and the school provides wide-ranging opportunities for contributions from pupils and staff. The charities committee is well established and recent projects have involved extensive work with a local primary school, assistance in charity shops, support for the Asian tsunami appeal, and funding of holiday trips for disadvantaged children. Young Enterprise ventures, work experience, community service and Duke of Edinburgh award activities enhance the opportunities available. Consequently, the pupils reap the benefits of exercising responsibility and coming to appreciate community issues.

### ***Whole School***

25. 3.25 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the provision of information and the manner in which complaints are to be handled [Standards 6 and 7].

## **4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

### **The Quality of Governance**

#### *Whole School*

4.1 The governors are deeply committed to the good of the school and its development. Their overall aim is to promote and facilitate an excellent all-round education. Since the last inspection, they have worked on imaginative, radical, yet sensitive development in the physical fabric and the structure and ethos of the school, through the move to full co-education. They are assiduous in making well-considered and generous provision for the school's accommodation and they ensure that resources are readily available to meet educational needs. Their structure is effective in keeping oversight of the school and they operate committees for finance and general purposes and for estates. They are well informed by the headmaster and the principals of the pre-preparatory and junior schools. They have a wide range of experience and expertise and are able to support the school in many ways. In particular they have played a vital role in planning and implementing the major changes to the school as it moves towards full co-education. Close contact is maintained between the chairman and headmaster for the welfare of the school.

4.2 The governors have an arrangement for regular social contact with staff over time and they visit the school for concerts, plays and chapel services. Their contact with the school is strongly supportive and usually channelled through the headmaster. As guardians of the effectiveness of the school they are well informed of the school's overall development and its successes in academic standards and cultural and other activities.

### **The Quality of Leadership and Management**

#### *Pre-preparatory and Junior Schools*

4.3 Leadership and management are successful and fully support the schools' aims of managing the life and work of the schools in a manner which is consistent with Christian values. The two principals provide highly effective leadership, and this is reflected in the quality of education and the care of the pupils.

4.4 The pre-preparatory school is given very clear direction by the principal who is well supported by her deputy and other co-ordinators. As part of the annual appraisal system, meetings are held with all staff members to carry out a review of school performance and subject and development planning. The role of the subject co-ordinator is limited, as the monitoring of teaching and learning remains the sole responsibility of the principal. However, the need to extend this role has been identified. Resources are plentiful and effectively managed, although there are limitations in the provision of ICT.

4.5 The principal of the junior school is very well supported by his senior management team, consisting of the deputy principal and the assistant principal. Further academic support is given by the senior teachers and subject co-ordinators, and all staff support the pastoral care of pupils. In the last two years, the school has welcomed the arrival of girls, and has successfully overseen their integration into Years 3 and 4, thus beginning the fulfilment of one of the main aims of the foundation. Whilst there is no formalised development plan in the junior school, an issue raised at the last inspection, a very clear educational direction is given by the junior school management team. The school's own view of its current position provides an accurate picture of the next steps which are needed to develop the quality of education which will enable the pupils to achieve even higher standards.

4.6 Appropriate policies have been drawn up covering all aspects of school life across the foundation, and the junior school continually checks and reviews the effectiveness of its procedures. For example, registration procedures are monitored weekly and a site check focusing on welfare and health and safety is undertaken once a fortnight. The procedures for pastoral care are regularly under

review and outcomes for the pupils checked weekly. Effective academic policies have been prepared by subject co-ordinators in all subjects, and the quality of planning represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. The checking of the quality of teaching and learning is undertaken by the management team. Pupils' work is examined regularly, and any issues identified are checked for improvement over the following weeks. The principal meets three pupils from two year groups each term, and discusses particular subjects with them, with a view to identifying strengths in provision and areas for development. However, subject co-ordinators are not currently involved in monitoring teaching and learning in their own subjects across the school.

4.7 Resources for learning in the junior school are outstanding and effectively managed. They are easily accessible and appropriately located near the areas where they are used. The well-stocked library is used extensively by pupils and staff and makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning experiences. Procedures for budgeting operate most efficiently.

4.8 Across both schools, teaching and classroom support staff are deployed effectively, and contribute significantly to pupils' learning and welfare. Staffing levels are good and enable strong support to be given to pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs. The recruitment of well-qualified staff is successfully managed, and the required staffing checks are carried out and appropriate records are kept. Induction procedures for staff new to the school, and for those new to the profession, support them very well and follow national requirements for newly qualified teachers. Many in-service training opportunities are available and a good appraisal system is in place. Curriculum links between the staff of all three schools are gradually developing.

4.9 The administration of both schools is efficient. The administrative and other support staff provide high quality assistance, upon which the efficiency of the running of the schools depends. Communication within the schools is highly efficient, and communications with the parents and the community are particularly strong.

4.10 The junior and pre-preparatory schools make good use of their own facilities and share some of the outstanding facilities of the senior school. Both schools are pleasant and welcoming places, and they provide a secure environment for the pupils. Some facilities have been upgraded in order for the junior school to accept girls, and the planning for this has been meticulously considered and carried out. Outdoor space is utilised imaginatively for educational and recreational play. The outstanding displays, particularly in the pre-preparatory school, create a stimulating learning environment. Pupils say they are very happy, and they are clearly proud of their school.

### ***Senior School***

4.11 The leadership and management of the school are fully successful in meeting the school's aim to provide a distinctive ethos in which academic success and a rich extra-curricular experience of cultural and sporting activities combine within a highly effective pastoral structure. Since the last inspection notable progress has been made. The headmaster's leadership is strong and has unerringly guided the development of the school in its move to co-education. The deputy heads, bursar and others with major responsibilities have provided able support in ensuring that the school runs smoothly and that developments have been securely achieved. The management of the school is facilitated by the structure of meetings and committees for pastoral and academic matters. In their pre-inspection questionnaires, many parents endorsed the quality of the school's leadership and management through their fulsome praise of the school ethos and the education provided.

4.12 The school's aims and priorities are clearly set out and cohere around the major development towards co-education and a differing structure for the senior school, as it moves towards including Years 7 and 8. The timescales for this development have been carefully worked out and linked to requirements for curriculum and staffing. The school has actively recruited well-qualified graduates, including a well-judged proportion of women teachers, and the quality of support is very good for newly qualified teachers, those on the Graduate Teacher Programme and those more experienced but new to the school. The professional development of other staff is also effectively managed.

4.13 The school's middle management is efficient and heads of department and housemasters play an important part in the success of the school. Great care has been taken to meet the needs of girls

and to help them integrate easily. For example, the physical education department is sensitive to the different needs of girls, while at the same time looking to integrate activities, such as dance in the sixth form.

4.14 The financial management of departments is effective in enhancing educational provision. However, since the school does not have a formal development plan for the improvement of whole-school academic matters, the quality of planning within departments is variable. While departments have objectives for their improvement, most do not have a well-formulated development plan with clear priorities, time scales, assigned responsibilities, costs and ways of judging success.

4.15 As yet there is no unified system for the appraisal of staff and such practice as there is varies between departments. The school is aware of this deficiency and currently two models of staff appraisal are being trialled with a view to implementing one. This was also an issue at the time of the last inspection. The use of ICT has increased but, as the school itself was aware, further management action is needed to maximize its potential in teaching. Pupils also need more opportunities to develop their ICT skills. Separately, but not identified by the school, a relative shortcoming exists in reporting to parents: development is needed in the shape and consistency of reports on subject performance.

4.16 Resources are in plentiful supply and are well used to support learning. The school has embarked upon an ambitious programme of redevelopment of older buildings to make more effective use of space available. The accommodation is efficiently maintained and includes many well-equipped specialist areas, among which is the superb Mills centre for art and design & technology. Washroom facilities for girls are of high quality and those for boys have been brought to the same standard. However, the library, though attractive and well-stocked, is inconveniently placed and too small to meet the needs of the school fully.

4.17 Communication within and beyond the school is particularly effective and facilitated by the staffroom notices, the associated office procedures, the school intranet and website and the efficient administrative support throughout the school.

### ***Whole School***

4.18 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].

4.19 The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers and meets its requirements.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS**

### **Overall Conclusions**

#### ***Whole School***

5.1 The school has many strong features and is outstanding in several important areas.

#### ***Pre-preparatory and Junior Schools***

5.2 The two schools achieve their aims and meet the needs of their pupils effectively. A broad and wide-ranging curriculum is provided with opportunities for all pupils to achieve well. Extra-curricular activities in the junior school are notably extensive and successful. In both schools teaching is generally good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils' writing and speaking skills are highly developed. Pupils are exceptionally well cared for and provision for their personal development is outstanding. Relationships between all in the community are very strong.

5.3 The schools were last inspected in 2003, when the pre-preparatory school had no significant weaknesses. The junior school has improved substantially since the last inspection and has

responded very well to all the recommendations, except the one concerning the lack of a development plan.

### ***Senior School***

5.4 The school's success in meeting its aims and aspirations is palpably represented in the outstanding personal qualities of its senior students. They are mature and reflective young people who express themselves very clearly and have a strong sense of service to the school and the wider community. Below the sixth form, the pupils are well-adjusted and enthusiastic, taking things in their stride in an ethos of 'work hard, play hard'. The move to co-education is proceeding smoothly and the enthusiasm and commitment of the girls are readily apparent, just as they are reflected in the lively article 'First Ladies' in the *Cholmeleian* magazine. The school clearly promotes academic excellence, as it intends, and its teaching is effective and in some lessons outstanding. Pupils engage in independent learning, particularly in homework and in extra-curricular activities, which are extremely varied and stimulating. Understanding and tolerance are clearly evident throughout the school and blossom in the school's charity work.

5.5 The school has made good progress in the majority of the areas identified for improvement at the time of the last inspection: accommodation, job descriptions and safety arrangements. However, ICT and staff appraisal continue to need further development.

### ***Whole School***

5.6 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

### **Next Steps**

5.7 The school has no major weaknesses, but to improve the quality of its educational provision it should take the following action.

### ***Whole School***

1. Develop further the curriculum links between all three schools within the foundation.

### ***Pre-preparatory and Junior Schools***

2. Extend the role of subject co-ordinators in both schools to include regular monitoring of teaching and learning.
3. Give more opportunities for curricular links between subjects in the junior school.
4. Write a development plan for the junior school to formalise its senior management team's clear educational aspirations.
5. In the pre-preparatory school, further expand the supply and use of resources for ICT, with associated staff training.

### ***Senior School***

6. Improve pupils' competence in ICT by:
  - increasing the time allocation
  - providing management for ICT across the curriculum.
7. Ensure that pupils' reports are consistently informative.
8. Establish a unified staff appraisal scheme linked to clearly identified school and departmental plans.

### ***Whole School***

5.8 In none of the three schools is action required in respect of regulatory requirements.

## **6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

6.1 The inspection was carried out from 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> November 2005. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching 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. The responses to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed from parents and pupils, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.

### **List of Inspectors**

#### *Senior School*

Richard Shannon	Reporting Inspector, Her Majesty's Inspector (rtd)
Joe Tierney	Her Majesty's Inspector (rtd)
Nick Argent	Headmaster, HMC School
Anthony Ayres	Head of Department, HMC School
Colin Edmundson	Assistant Headmaster, HMC School
Jane Hamilton	Former Headmistress, GSA School
Margaret Houston	Former Headmistress, GSA School
William Lomas	Vice Principal, HMC School

#### *Pre-preparatory and Junior Schools*

Elizabeth Coley	Reporting Inspector and Ofsted Inspector
Sara Wiggins	Assistant Reporting Inspector
Terry Fawell	Former Headmaster, ISA School
Sheila Hayward	Former Headmistress, IAPS School
Elizabeth Henson	Former Head of Junior School, GSA School
Anthea Hickman	Former Deputy Head, IAPS School
Margaret Renshaw	Head of Junior School, GSA School