

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS COUNCIL
(ISC)**

INSPECTION OF

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE SCHOOL

By the

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE
(ISI)**

on

November 14th – 18th, 2005

MAIN REPORT

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

University College School

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

Full Name of the School	University College School		
DfES Number	202/6018		
Address	Frognal, Hampstead, London, NW3 6XH		
Telephone Number	020 7435 2215		
Fax Number	020 7433 2116		
E-mail Address	office@ucs.org.uk		
Name of Headmaster	Kenneth Durham		
Chairman	Sir Victor Blank		
Age Range	11 - 18	Gender	Boys
Number of Pupils	743	Number of Boarders	None
Inspection Dates	November 14 – 18th. 2005		

This inspection report follows the framework laid down by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The inspection was carried out under the arrangements of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. It was also carried out under Section 162 (A) of the Education Act 2002, as amended by the Education Act under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills has accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003.

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

CONTENTS

	Page no.
1 MAIN FINDINGS	1
2 MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS	8
3 INTRODUCTION	9
Characteristics of the School	9
Key Indicators	10
4 EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	11
Attainment and Progress	11
Quality of Learning, Attitudes and Behaviour	12
Attendance	12
5 QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED	14
Teaching	14
Assessment and Recording	15
Curriculum	15
Teaching and Non-teaching Staff	16
Resources for Learning	17
Libraries	18
Premises and Accommodation	19
Links with Parents and the Community	19
6 PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PASTORAL CARE	22
Pupils' Personal Development	22
Pastoral Care, including Welfare and Health & Safety	23
7 THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL	26
Governance and Management	26
8 ACHIEVEMENT AND QUALITY IN SUBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES	27
Achievement and Quality in Subjects	27
Achievement and Quality in Activities	44
9 SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE	45
LIST OF THE INSPECTORS	45

1. MAIN FINDINGS

Overall Summary

- 1.1 University College School meets the needs of its pupils well, offering a fully rounded education in a secure, friendly and tolerant environment. Academic standards are high and the commitment of the staff and governors ensures that the school's high expectations are maintained without undue pressure. There is a need to review the school's arrangements for pupils requiring learning support.

What the School Does Well

- 1.2 The school has many strengths. Among the most significant are the following:
- The provision of pastoral care is outstanding. The meticulous management and the commitment of the staff ensure that the pupils feel secure, happy and fulfilled throughout their time at school.
 - Relationships among all members of the school are warm, mutually supportive and tolerant; within this environment pupils are encouraged to express themselves freely and, as a result, develop a very high level of oral skills.
 - The pupils' attitudes towards learning are very positive. They respond well to intellectual challenge and this is reflected in the high level of achievement in public examinations.
 - Through a wide range of activities, clubs and societies, and the arrangements for service in the school and in the community, pupils enjoy excellent opportunities for personal development.

What the School Should Do Better

- 1.3 The school should pay attention to the following:
- The arrangements for the identification of, and support for, pupils with special educational needs are limited and the responsibilities in this area are not clearly defined.

Standards of Attainment and Progress in Subjects

- 1.4 Pupils achieve high standards. Their attainment is high in relation to their abilities in GCSE, where pupils' attainment has been well above the national average for all maintained selective schools over the last three years. A level results have also been well above those for all maintained selective schools. Standards of oral skills at each key stage are very high. Pupils' abilities to argue cogently and expound at length at all age levels are a strength. Pupils have good knowledge and understand subject based skills and concepts. They are numerate and employ information and communication technology (ICT) to a good level in most subjects.
- 1.5 Pupils' long-term progress was very good, and their short-term progress was good or better in four out of five lessons observed. Unsatisfactory progress was witnessed in a very small number of lessons. Written work reveals very good progress at all stages in most subjects. The school's arrangements for identification of, and support for, pupils with special educational needs are not secure and responsibilities in this area are not clearly defined.

The Quality of Pupils' Learning, Attitudes and their Behaviour

- 1.6 The overall quality of learning and behaviour is very good. There is, in addition, a very strong work ethic and these are major factors in promoting attainment. Pupils are very bright, keen to learn and think for themselves and are attentive and quick to get on in class. They respond enthusiastically and constructively in lessons and demonstrate a very strong learning ethic, frequently asking searching questions which challenge the teachers without arrogance. Pupils show strong self-confidence and are very articulate. Their sophisticated communication skills are a consistent and strong feature in the school. They are willing to put across their views confidently, even in front of large audiences and more senior pupils.
- 1.7 A relaxed but focused atmosphere exists in classrooms and the pupils are polite and considerate towards one another, creating an excellent atmosphere of mutual respect between themselves and teachers. They work well together and are very supportive of one another's endeavours.
- 1.8 Pupils are proud of their school and all who were interviewed professed themselves very happy and grateful for the opportunities they enjoy. Their respect for the teachers was also evident. The boys show very great tolerance of beliefs, values and faiths of others. There is no evidence of any bullying. The consequent atmosphere of friendliness and humour is a strength of the school and promotes free participation by all pupils.
- 1.9 There is a lack of clarity about the required standards of dress and appearance. On occasion the freedom they enjoy allows pupils to cross the boundaries of courtesy. The school expects a higher standard of manners than is always observed and in a number of areas a line can be drawn more firmly.

The Quality of Teaching

- 1.10 Overall the quality of teaching is good, and it contributes very effectively to pupils' attainment and progress. In about three-quarters of the lessons seen, teaching was good and sometimes very good or excellent; in all but a few of the others it was satisfactory. The quality of teaching received strong approval in the parents' replies to the inspection questionnaires.
- 1.11 The teaching at all stages meets the needs of the great majority of the pupils in the school. The arrangements for pupils with special educational needs, or with English as an additional language, are not secure, so that it cannot be stated with certainty that all pupils make progress commensurate with their abilities.
- 1.12 Teachers have a secure and thorough knowledge of their subjects, and deal very ably with pupils' questions. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour, effort and achievement, and these are almost always fully met. However, expectations on punctuality are much more varied. In a very small number of lessons the teaching was unsatisfactory, usually because the pupils were allowed to play little part in the lessons.
- 1.13 Lessons are well planned, and learning objectives are clearly explained to the pupils; there is a good progression in the difficulty of tasks. In the great majority of lessons seen, teaching was conducted at an appropriate pace, and offered sufficient challenge to the full ability range. However, in some subjects, the teaching concentrated too heavily on examination requirements, which curtailed discussion, and hindered intellectual curiosity.

Other Aspects of the School

Attendance

- 1.14 The level of attendance is good and this enables the pupils to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the school. Procedures for monitoring attendance and maintaining high levels are in place but not always effective. Daily registers are not always up to date or maintained in a consistent form.

Assessment and Recording

- 1.15 The procedures for assessment and recording are satisfactory. The school maintains an accurate central record on file of all reports to parents, examination results and related correspondence. Public examination results are stored and updated effectively.
- 1.16 Reporting is good. Twice-yearly reports contain pertinent detailed information on pupil progress often with help to understand any shortcomings, along with the effective use of grades for attainment and effort. Adverse reports may be followed up by the pastoral tutor placing a boy on update report and requiring teachers in all or some subjects to produce regular progress reports. This closer monitoring is often successful in improving pupil performance.
- 1.17 Marking is satisfactory. Most teachers mark frequently and accurately, giving specific information to assist and encourage pupils to make progress and use the information gained to inform lesson planning. Nationally standardised tests are taken by all pupils. The results provide objective information about their aptitudes, but are not routinely used by departments to identify areas where pupils do not appear to be performing at expected levels. The opportunity to identify pupils' learning needs is thus lost.

Curriculum

- 1.18 The curriculum provided by the school offers a good broad and balanced education appropriate to the school's full age and ability range.
- 1.19 At all age levels, the academic curriculum is enriched significantly by the wealth of sport, clubs, societies, activities and trips offered throughout the school. It is, furthermore, school policy, and practice in most departments, to stretch more able pupils well beyond the confines of the examination syllabuses.

Teaching and Non-teaching Staff

- 1.20 The quality of teaching staff and support staff is very good. Staff are well qualified in their teaching subjects and most of the teaching staff are highly experienced. The deployment of staff is effective in meeting the needs of the students. The teacher-pupil ratio is appropriate to the stated aims of the school, allowing individual students to receive a high level of personal attention and support.
- 1.21 A system of appraisal is in place for teaching staff. It has been effective in identifying areas where individual members of staff have needed support but has not contributed to the whole school development plan.

Resources for Learning

- 1.22 The quality of resources is good. There are two ICT rooms in the school offering 57 computers. A hundred and sixteen computers are located in subject areas, the library, sixth

form area and staff areas. Examples of good practice are not disseminated across the school. The newly developed virtual learning environment (VLE) offers subject areas the opportunity to incorporate independent learning into their teaching strategies. The appointment of an IT manager is aimed at bringing about an improvement in the provision and use of ICT.

- 1.23 The provision of funding is good and enables departments to purchase the necessary books, equipment and support material to implement their curriculum effectively. Regular use is made of the resources such as theatres and museums in the area to broaden pupils' experience, and mini-buses provide opportunities for trips further afield.

Libraries

- 1.24 The quality of provision is very good, but full use is not made of what it has to offer.
- 1.25 The library provision supports effectively pupils' attainment, progress and quality of learning through a wide range of course-related books, periodicals and access to the internet. The total stock exceeds the Library Association recommendations. The library is well managed by a well qualified full-time librarian, who is carrying out a review to enhance the quality of its structure and provision. Pupils use the facilities for private study, some personal reading and extra-curricular activities such as debating. A questionnaire of Year 13 pupils indicated that pupils feel that the library offers a good service and they are confident about finding relevant material. There is no inter-departmental committee to develop greater liaison between departments and the library.

Premises and Accommodation

- 1.26 The overall quality of the premises and accommodation is good. The buildings provide adequate accommodation for the numbers, abilities and ages of pupils. Pupils do not leave litter and there is little graffiti to detract from the appearance of rooms and furniture.
- 1.27 In many, but not all, departments wall space is used effectively to display posters and pupils' work. Provision for practical subjects varies. Larger areas of the school are well used. The attractive galleried main hall can accommodate the whole school for assemblies but is also used for other meetings and events.

Links with Parents and the Community

- 1.28 Links with parents and the community are very good. Parents are provided with very good information about the school. They receive helpful information on pupils' work and progress through regular reports and frequent meetings with staff.
- 1.29 The school handles the concerns of parents well. Avenues of communication are clearly defined and effective. Of the parents who replied to the inspectors' questionnaire, most expressed strong approval of the attainment, progress, curriculum, pastoral care, attitudes and values promoted and the range of extra-curricular activities, as well as of the information and opportunities provided in the school. The inspectors concurred with these views. Concerns about the arrangements for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs were also expressed, and it was the view of the inspectors that these concerns were justified. The school does not provide a contact address for parents to communicate with the chairman of governors.
- 1.30 Pupils' experience is enriched by very good links with the local community. The whole school charity drive is considerable. Pupils raise substantial sums of money for local and national charities through well-supported activities.

Pupils' Personal Development

- 1.31 The provision for pupils' personal, social and cultural development is very good. The school makes it clear that it does not hold religious assemblies nor does it allow for the teaching of religion within the academic curriculum. Nevertheless, the pupils are given opportunities to learn about spiritual matters.
- 1.32 Assemblies offer the opportunity to both staff and pupils to convey important moral messages. The atmosphere of supportive tolerance and active liberalism permits the pupils and staff to engage in free and comfortable discussion of religion.
- 1.33 The provision for moral education is very good. The staff in their support of the school, its pupils, its ethos and its secular moral code very much set the tone for the pupils' moral behaviour and responses.
- 1.34 The school offers very many opportunities to help pupils to develop socially to a high standard. The school prides itself, justifiably, on the emphasis it places on the individual and his response to the world he encounters around him.
- 1.35 Provision for cultural development is also very good. There are ample opportunities for the pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions and the diversity and richness of others. The pupils also enjoy the benefits of an ethnically diverse school community which makes them fully aware of other cultures in the wider world in which they live.

Pastoral Care

- 1.36 The quality of pastoral care is outstanding. It was appreciated by more than 9 out of 10 of the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Relationships between staff and pupils are open and straightforward and the vertical system engenders a strong feeling of community inside the wider school.
- 1.37 The school has not integrated into the academic management any objective scheme for the tracking of pupils or targeting of grades and there is no robust objective identification of those pupils who might be under-achieving or who may need learning support.
- 1.38 The quality and quantity of advice leading to GCSE choice is good, and the quality of higher education advice is excellent.
- 1.39 The uncompromising policy on bullying needs to be used rarely and the UCS code of conduct underlines the need for tolerance, courtesy and respect, which is recognised throughout the school community

Governance and Management

- 1.40 The governance and management of the school are good. The school's aims are clear and distinctive. The tolerance, friendly relationships and respect for the individual evident in the school stem from the awareness of staff and pupils as to the nature of the school.
- 1.41 The values the governors and senior managers place on high academic standards and a rounded education are evident in the hard work of the staff, the learning and articulacy of the pupils, the high achievements in public examinations and the pupils' whole-hearted involvement in the opportunities offered. They are also reflected in the happiness of the pupils and in their appreciation of the pastoral care they receive.

Achievement and Quality in Activities

- 1.42 Achievement and quality in activities are very good. The range and variety of activities makes this area a great strength of the school. Extra-curricular opportunities are provided for the varying ages and abilities of the pupils and make a significant contribution to their personal development. Pupils throughout the school derive a great deal of enjoyment through participation in these activities and this enhances the ethos of friendly cooperation.
- 1.43 The pre-inspection questionnaire to parents revealed a very high level of satisfaction with the extra-curricular activities offered at the school.

Progress Made by the School since its Last Inspection

- 1.44 The school was last inspected by the HMC in 1999. Since then the school has made significant progress in many ways, significantly in its academic achievements, its links with the community, its still richer programme of activities and opportunities for personal development and in its facilities. The inspection team made three main recommendations:
- (1) *Take action to ensure that all pupils are competent in the use of ICT and have an understanding of its potential.* This has been met in full and the school has kept pace with developments since then.
 - (2) *Ensure a culture of more consistent and focused staff training with a particular emphasis on the quality of teaching.* Progress has been made in this area, in improving both the staff training and the quality of teaching. The appraisal of staff does not yet form a part of the school's development plan.
 - (3) *Reinforce the academic leadership at senior level, clarify expectations of heads of departments and monitor them regularly.* The academic leadership has been strengthened and several initiatives are under way to improve further the quality of pupils' learning. The quality of academic management, in particular the monitoring of heads of departments' work, needs to be more rigorous, as practice is uneven.

Compliance with the Regulations for Registration

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

Actions Required for Compliance with the Regulatory Requirement

- 1.45 In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:
- (1) Maintain the school register in a consistently written form in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995; [Regulation 3.(9)]
 - (2) Provide the address of its chairman of governors in the school information sent to parents. [Regulation 6.2(c)]
- 1.46 In addition to the action set out above, the school is asked to address any issues highlighted in *What the School Should Do Better*. These are set out as recommendations for the school in Section 2 of the report.

2. MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The actions needed to comply fully with the regulatory requirements are specified in paragraph 1.45. The main recommendation is listed below. The numbers in brackets refer to the relevant paragraphs in the body of the report.

R1 Review in full its arrangements for pupils with special educational needs. (Paragraphs 1.9; 1.15; 1.35; 4.7; 5.2; 5.12; 5.49; 6.11-14)

3. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 3.1 University College School was founded within the Benthamite tradition of religious tolerance, respect for the individual and the development of independence of mind. The school is bound by its statutes to permit no religious observance or religious education.
- 3.2 There are 743 boys in the school, of whom 232 are in the sixth form. In accordance with its foundation the school keeps no record of its pupils' race or religion. It clearly has a diverse racial mix and estimates that some 85 pupils speak a language other than English at home, with other European languages being prevalent. No particular other first language predominates. The school does not provide additional help with English.
- 3.3 There are no pupils in the senior school with a statement of special educational needs. Ninety-one pupils are currently identified as requiring learning support.
- 3.4 Pupils come very largely from the local area, which is wealthy, with house prices amongst the highest in the country. Many parents work in finance, law, medicine or the media.
- 3.5 The annual intake at Year 7 is of 90 boys, some 60 of whom come from the school's own junior school known as the Junior Branch. The 30 other boys tend to come from local state primary schools. A further 30 boys join the school in Year 9, mainly from preparatory schools.
- 3.6 Pupils from the Junior Branch are not tested for entry. Other pupils are tested in English, mathematics and reasoning, and on the basis of these tests are called for interview. The headmaster's report from the feeder school is also considered. Level 5 at Key Stage 2 of the National Curriculum is the expectation for entry. A similar system operates for pupils for entry to Year 9.
- 3.7 All pupils take an assessment standardised against a national sample in Years 7 and 9. The school's average ability is above the national average, though rather less than the average in maintained selective schools. If pupils are performing in line with their abilities their results should be above the average for all maintained schools and somewhat below average for maintained selective schools. It is this measure that is used throughout the report to determine attainment.
- 3.8 The vast majority of pupils proceed to university or other forms of higher education on leaving school.
- 3.9 The school explicitly aims to provide an education of the highest academic order combined with a diverse range of opportunities for personal development. In addition to the aims of the Benthamite tradition the school seeks to foster informality, honesty, respect, independence and close personal relationships between pupils and staff.

- 3.10 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table:

School	NC
Entry	Year 7
Shell	Year 8
Lower Remove	Year 9
Remove	Year 10
Upper Remove	Year 11
Transitus	Year 12
Sixth	Year 13

Key Indicators

- 3.11 GCSE

	Most recently completed Year 11	Average for the last <i>three</i> years
Entered for 5+ subjects (%)	100	100
Achieved 5+ @ A* - C (%)	100	96.6
Achieved 5+ @ A* - G (%)	100	100
Average score per candidate*	71.4	68
Average score per entry*	7.2	7.1

* Scoring is 8 for GCSE grade A*, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 for grades A – G.

- 3.12 A Level and AS

	Most recent Year 13	Average for the last three years
Average score per candidate	30.6	30.3
Average score per subject entry	8.9	8.6

Scoring is 10, 8, 6, 4, 2 for A level grades A – E, and 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 for AS grades A to E.

- 3.13 Absence (first half of Autumn term)

	Authorised	Unauthorised
Percentage absence	6.1	0.6

- 3.14 Exclusions Over the Previous 12 Months

Temporary exclusions	Permanent exclusions
2	1

4. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and Progress

- 4.1 Pupils achieve high standards. Their attainment is high in relation to their abilities in GCSE, where pupils' attainment has been well above the national average for all maintained selective schools over the last three years. A level results have also been well above those for all maintained selective schools. In the most recent 2005 examinations, attainment was higher at all levels of public examination. Approximately 96% of the pupils go from the school higher education each year.
- 4.2 Standards of oral skills at each key stage are very high. Pupils' abilities to argue cogently and expound at length at all age levels are a strength. In many GCSE lessons observed, for instance in English, comments and oral evaluations were at a standard commensurate with A level. In Years 7 to 9 pupils are equally articulate and many of the lessons seen played to this strength.
- 4.3 Pupils have good knowledge, ably apply it and understand subject based skills and concepts. They are numerate and employ ICT to a good level in most subjects, for example in geography. IT results at GCSE have been far above the national average.
- 4.4 Attainment in written tasks is good in Years 9 and 10, and in the sixth form. Pupils have good analytical skills and the ability to structure argument. From Year 10 they write concisely and with increasing sophistication. In some subjects there are strategies to improve extended writing, for example in history.
- 4.5 In Years 9 and 10 attainment is good, though some work is unfinished or undeveloped. The failure by some teachers to follow up such work hinders attainment and progress.
- 4.6 Pupils' practical skills are good; they exhibit numerical fluency and apply increasingly sophisticated terminology across the range of subjects. Nearly all pupils consolidate their work effectively.
- 4.7 Pupils' long-term progress is very good. Short-term progress was good or better in four out of five lessons observed. Unsatisfactory progress was witnessed in a very small number of lessons. Through oral expression, pupils demonstrate an increase in skills, understanding and application of prior knowledge. Good progress is made in language skills at all age-levels with rapid progress in some, for example in German and Sixth Form Latin. Written work reveals very good progress at all stages in most subjects, but notably in biology, physics, mathematics, English, classics, and history. In chemistry rapid progress is made among those new to the school in Year 7 and in business studies in Years 10 and 11. Progress in ICT application is good across the subjects and in geography it is rapid, as a result of ambitious use of new technology and high expectations of the pupils. Independent learning effects good progress at each level. Pupils work with determination and concentration to cover new material. They approach abstract concepts with growing intellectual maturity and are realistic about their own progress. In a small number of lessons a lack of challenge, a monotonous teaching style or slow pace hampered progress. The school's arrangements for identification of, and support for, pupils with special educational needs are not secure and responsibilities in this area are not clearly defined.
- 4.8 Pupils sit standardised tests in Years 7, 8 and 9. During the last three years progress overall and in almost every GCSE subject was above national norms.

- 4.9 The school plans to develop a learning strategy more effectively through greater use of baseline testing data, including information from dyslexia screening and reading tests.

Quality of Pupils' Learning, Attitudes and Behaviour

- 4.10 The quality of learning and behaviour is very good. There is, in addition, a very strong work ethic and these are major factors in promoting attainment. Pupils are very bright, keen to learn and think for themselves and are attentive and quick to get on in class. They respond enthusiastically and constructively in lessons, frequently asking searching questions which challenge the teachers without arrogance. Pupils show strong self-confidence and are very articulate. Their sophisticated communication skills are a consistent and strong feature in the school. They are willing to put across their views confidently, even in front of large audiences and more senior pupils. Strong motivation and very high concentration skills are evident in many lessons and pupils show a high capacity for independent work. Completed homework is often extensive and thorough in response to high challenges, and this too contributes to the high levels of attainment.
- 4.11 A relaxed but focused atmosphere exists in classrooms and the pupils are polite and considerate of one another, generally creating an excellent atmosphere of mutual respect between themselves and teachers. They work well together and are very supportive of one another's endeavours. This is less obvious in the middle school, where pupils often talk as soon as the teacher stops, sometimes even cutting across discussion to create an atmosphere less conducive to study. There is tremendous enthusiasm in the junior years and purposeful focus in the sixth form.
- 4.12 There is a lack of clarity about the required standards of dress and appearance. On occasion the freedom they enjoy allows pupils to cross the boundaries of courtesy, for example in areas such as orderly queuing and proper protocol at doorways. The school expects a higher standard of manners than is always observed and in a number of areas a line can be drawn more firmly.
- 4.13 Pupils are proud of their school and all who were interviewed professed themselves very happy and grateful for the opportunities they enjoy. Their respect for the teachers was also evident. The boys show very great tolerance of the beliefs, values and faiths of others. They show good initiative, for example they participate willingly and purposefully in charitable activities. There is no evidence of any bullying and when pupils make mistakes in public, for example in assemblies, they are supported with humour and camaraderie. The consequent atmosphere of friendliness and humour is a strength of the school and promotes free participation by all pupils.

Attendance

- 4.14 The level of attendance is good and this enables the pupils to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the school. The level of attendance last year was 93%, with no unauthorised absence.
- 4.15 Procedures for monitoring attendance and maintaining high levels are in place but not always effective. The school's admissions and annual digest of attendance comply with all statutory requirements. Daily registers are not always up to date or maintained in a consistently written form.
- 4.16 Pupils attend school promptly and lessons start on time. However, it is commonplace for pupils to arrive late to lessons and not solely on account of the distance they have to walk between lessons.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

- 5.1 Overall the quality of teaching is good, and it contributes very effectively to pupils' attainment and progress. In about three-quarters of the lessons seen, teaching was good and sometimes very good or excellent; in all but a few of the others it was satisfactory. The quality of teaching received strong approval in the parents' replies to the inspection questionnaires.
- 5.2 The teaching at all stages meets the needs of the great majority of the pupils in the school. The arrangements for pupils with special educational needs, or with English as an additional language, are not secure, so that the levels of progress for such pupils cannot be determined. Teachers are, however, very willing to give up their free time to assist pupils who need extra help one-to-one, for whatever reason. Extension questions are used, where appropriate, for rapid learners.
- 5.3 Teachers have a secure and thorough knowledge of their subjects, and deal very ably with pupils' questions. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour, effort and achievement, and these are almost always fully met. They generally exercise a natural control over their classes without resorting to disciplinary measures. However, expectations of punctuality are much more varied, and some pupils arrive later for lessons than can be explained by the distances between different parts of the site; this disrupts unnecessarily some already short lessons. Relationships are mutually respectful and relaxed, but not unduly familiar. In a very small number of lessons the teaching was unsatisfactory, usually because the pupils were allowed to play little part in the lessons.
- 5.4 The efforts of teachers and pupils together create a positive and constructive atmosphere which is conducive to very good attainment and progress. Nevertheless, the assessment of the pupils' skills as learners is even higher than that of the teaching, which suggests that the school's efforts to improve further the quality of the teaching should produce positive results; pupils do respond very well to the challenges of work beyond the strict confines of the syllabus, and this is reflected in the high levels of attainment.
- 5.5 Lessons are well planned, and learning objectives are clearly explained to the pupils; there is a good progression in the difficulty of tasks. Challenges are varied and often stimulating. In a small number of lessons, there were relatively few opportunities for the pupils to participate, but in the great majority of lessons seen, teaching was conducted at an appropriate pace, and offered sufficient challenge to the full ability range. A variety of techniques is used, and pupils are often encouraged to ask questions, and to put forward their own opinions; in the best cases, the constant use of open-ended questions is a clear strength. This approach helps to engender tolerant attitudes in the classroom. However, in some subjects, the teaching concentrated too heavily on examination requirements, which curtailed discussion, and hindered intellectual curiosity.
- 5.6 Departments have a good range of resources, which they use effectively. The use of ICT is more mixed; in biology and chemistry there are relatively few opportunities for pupils to become familiar with the technology, while in physics there is some excellent practice. The creation of a virtual learning environment, as seen for example, in geography, enables all pupils to make excellent use of their time.
- 5.7 Time management is a strength of the teaching staff; although many lessons are relatively short, they begin by recapping key points from previous lessons, or by going over some key

points in a homework exercise, and lessons are generally brought to a clear end. Homework is appropriately demanding.

Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for teaching?

5.8 Yes.

Assessment and Recording

5.9 The procedures for assessment and recording are satisfactory. The school maintains an accurate central record on file of all reports to parents, examination results and related correspondence. Public examination results are stored and updated effectively.

5.10 Reporting is good. Twice-yearly reports contain pertinent detailed information on pupil progress often with help to understand any shortcomings, along with the effective use of grades for attainment and effort. Adverse reports may be followed up by the pastoral tutor placing a boy on update report and requiring teachers in all or some subjects to produce regular progress reports. This closer monitoring is often successful in improving pupil performance. Each half term there are internal, informal, frank assessments, which are not to be read *verbatim* to the pupil, nor issued to parents. These are useful in monitoring pupil progress and giving advice on ways to improve attainment. Year 11 and Year 13 receive a letter outlining all-round achievement, after examinations as their final assessment of the year.

5.11 The progress and work habits self-assessment in Year 9 is used, along with a computer careers program, to help inform GCSE subject choices. During Year 12 one self-assessment gauges transitional progress and a second progress and possible university choices. Pupils feel they benefit from the process and subsequent tutor interviews.

5.12 Marking is satisfactory. There is not a whole-school marking policy; each department marking according to its own criteria. For most subjects pupils understand these criteria. The school policy is that homework and classwork, once completed, must be assessed. Most teachers mark frequently and accurately, giving specific information to assist and encourage pupils to make progress and use the information gained to inform lesson planning. The rest mark regularly, but do not always make useful comments to help pupils to improve, or they fail to assess all the work. Gaps in some mark books reveal inconsistent monitoring of work. Marking at GCSE and AS/A level indicates a good understanding of examination board assessment criteria.

5.13 Some departments have responded to public examination results to effect curriculum change, but there is not a whole-school policy for monitoring the curriculum in response to internal or external assessment. Nationally standardised tests are taken by all pupils. The results provide objective information about their ability, but are not routinely used by departments as a measure of progress other than after pupils have taken their GCSE examinations. The school has recently announced that it is to collate data to provide baseline information on each pupil.

Curriculum

5.14 The curriculum provided by the school offers a good broad and balanced education appropriate to the school's full age and ability range. In accordance with the school's statutes, religious education is not taught as a subject.

- 5.15 In Years 7 and 8, pupils follow a broad curriculum which contributes effectively to their overall attainment and development. All pupils study both French and Latin at this stage and there is a balanced allocation of art, drama, music and design and technology (DT). Separate sciences are started in Year 8. The setting provision in French allows for differentiation between those who have already studied French and those new to the subject; otherwise subjects are not streamed at this level. The further increased breadth in Year 9, where Greek, German, Spanish and European cultural studies are offered as options, is achieved at the cost of reduced time allocations in some subjects, such as music and drama, but the curriculum as a whole prepares pupils appropriately for the next stage of their education. Links between the Senior School and the Junior Branch, ensuring appropriate continuity and progression of curriculum, are well developed in some departments, whilst others would benefit from much stronger links in this area.
- 5.16 In Years 10 and 11, only English and mathematics are compulsory and, although it is a school requirement that pupils choose at least one science and one modern language, they are otherwise offered an unusually broad level of freedom in selecting a further five GCSE subjects. Whilst this policy is in line with the school's desire to match the GCSE curriculum to individual pupils' particular strengths and interests, it is unusual for pupils nationally to follow a single science course and this may in some circumstances prove to be restricting in terms of future career choice.
- 5.17 Further subjects, including economics, philosophy and politics, are added to the curriculum at sixth form level, providing a wide range of choice for pupils. Choice is unrestricted, allowing pupils again to select freely according to personal preference. More able pupils are offered guidance for Oxford and Cambridge entrance, and Advanced Extension Awards are offered in some subjects. Breadth in the sixth form curriculum is provided partly through the Friday activities programme, where pupils are offered a variety of community and cultural enrichment options, and also through the programme of personal, social and health education. Sixth form pupils are thus suitably prepared for the next stage of their education.
- 5.18 At all age levels, the academic curriculum is enriched significantly by the wealth of sport, clubs, societies, activities and trips offered throughout the school. It is, furthermore, school policy, and practice in most departments, to stretch more able pupils well beyond the confines of the examination syllabuses.
- 5.19 The planning of the curriculum provides continuity and progression of learning throughout the school and there is equality of access for all pupils.

Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the curriculum?

- 5.20 Yes.

Teaching and Non-teaching Staff

- 5.21 The quality of teaching staff and support staff is very good. Staff are well qualified in their teaching subjects and most teaching staff are highly experienced. Criminal record checks are made on all personnel as required by the relevant legislation. The system for carrying out checks is thorough.
- 5.22 The deployment of staff is effective in meeting the needs of the students. The teacher-pupil ratio is 9.5:1 and is appropriate to the stated aims of the school, allowing individual students to receive a high level of personal attention and support.

- 5.23 All newly appointed staff follow an effective induction programme. A mentor is appointed to support them in their first year at the school and they are observed and given feedback on their progress at regular intervals. The school also meets the statutory requirements of the national scheme for newly qualified teachers. Two new members of staff commented on the effectiveness of the process in offering support and personal development.
- 5.24 A system of appraisal is in place for teaching staff. It has been effective in identifying areas where individual members of staff have needed support but has not contributed to the whole school development plan. Guidelines and in-service education and training (INSET) have been given to heads of department on lesson observation but there is no process in place to ensure the recommendations are carried out. Heads of department are appraised by a senior member of the management and in addition are interviewed each year by a senior member of management to discuss the performance of the department in examinations. The appraisal process has not identified examples of good practice or ensured that areas requiring development are effectively supported.
- 5.25 The INSET budget is generous and no staff have been refused reasonable requests to attend INSET courses. Individual staff, heads of department and the appraisal process inform the majority of INSET spending. Whole-school INSET is prioritised according to whole-school needs. Separately from the appraisal process some INSET is focussed on ways to improve teaching and learning.
- 5.26 The quality of support staff is good and they are employed effectively to support teaching and learning. They are highly motivated and are valued as an integral part of the education team in many departments. A support staff appraisal scheme has been piloted and is due to be fully implemented over the current academic year. Support staff have no formal mechanism to identify training needs.

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

- 5.27 Yes.

Resources for Learning

- 5.28 The quality of resources is good. There are two ICT rooms in the school offering 57 computers. The rooms are also used for ICT teaching, which reduces the available time for other subjects. A booking mechanism exists to reserve the rooms outside timetabled ICT classes. The restricted access to ICT has, to some extent, frustrated attempts by individual teachers and departments to incorporate ICT into their teaching programmes and support independent student learning.
- 5.29 A hundred and sixteen computers are located in subject areas, the library, sixth form area and staff areas. A small number of individual departments have developed their own ICT resource centres and taken responsibility for them. Examples of good practice, such as the geography department, which has developed its own independent learning centre, are not disseminated across the school.
- 5.30 A significant number of digital projectors are distributed throughout the school. These are widely used by teaching staff to introduce ICT into their lessons. The effectiveness of such resources as a teaching aid is limited by a lack of confidence in the use of ICT amongst some staff.

- 5.31 The newly developed VLE offers subject areas the opportunity to incorporate independent learning into their teaching strategies. The lack of a whole school ICT strategy has until now, delayed the adoption of the VLE throughout the school.
- 5.32 Expenditure on ICT has been *ad hoc* in its approach with no clear whole school strategy. The dissemination of hardware to departments has been demand-led with no formal mechanism to ensure that spending meets the needs of the curriculum. The appointment of an IT manager is aimed at bringing about an improvement in the provision and use of ICT.
- 5.33 Subjects receive funding for non ICT expenditure on a bid basis. The provision of funding is good and enables departments to purchase the necessary books, equipment and support material to implement their curriculum effectively. Regular use is made of the resources such as theatres and museums in the area to broaden pupils' experience, and mini-buses provide opportunities for trips further afield.

Libraries

- 5.34 The quality of provision is very good, but full use is not made of what it has to offer.
- 5.35 The library provision supports effectively pupils' attainment, progress and quality of learning through a wide range of course-related books, periodicals and access to the internet. The total stock exceeds the Library Association recommendations. Most departments have their own libraries and staff bookshelves which they share with pupils. The English department's book box and set text purchase policies encourage pupils to develop their own tastes and personal libraries. There is no catalogue of departmental libraries available to the librarian to inform purchase planning.
- 5.36 The library is well managed by a well qualified full-time librarian, who is carrying out a review to enhance the quality of its structure and provision. The librarian's skills are complemented by two assistants, one full time. Pupils are actively involved in the acquisition of new texts and as librarians, and enjoy good relations with staff. The librarians are aware of the high reading ages of lower school pupils and take steps to match available texts to their needs. Recent culls to some sections as part of the library's stock editing policy have enhanced their ability to match curriculum needs. The process has yet to be carried out in all sections.
- 5.37 Pupils' use of the library as a reference area is increasing and all ages use the facilities for private study, some personal reading and extra-curricular activities such as debating. Boys' behaviour is generally good, but they were noisy during an inter-house debate at lunch time and lack additional supervision from teaching staff. Stocks in physics, art and history are well targeted to the needs of research projects. Borrowing figures are very low by comparison and have altered little in the last three years. Departmental use of library facilities is variable, largely linked to projects, such as the Year 9 history course and individual teachers' initiatives. All Year 7 pupils are given an induction in library use.
- 5.38 A questionnaire of Year 13 pupils indicated that pupils feel that the library offers a good service and they are confident about finding relevant material. Attractive, regularly issued leaflets promoting new acquisitions linked to subject areas are available. There is no inter-departmental committee to develop greater liaison between departments and the library. Closer links would enable the library to take its place as a hub of the school and encourage its use as a base for wider study and borrowing.

Premises and Accommodation

- 5.39 The overall quality of the premises and accommodation is good. The buildings provide adequate accommodation for the numbers, abilities and ages of pupils. At the time of inspection a major programme of building was underway. Although restricted in size in certain areas, classroom space is used efficiently and enables the curriculum to be taught effectively. The state of decoration is generally good, although some areas and entranceways need attention. Pupils do not leave litter and there is little graffiti to detract from the appearance of rooms and furniture. Some of the doors need the provision of sight panels.
- 5.40 In many, but not all, departments wall space is used effectively to display posters and pupils' work. Good examples were seen in classics and mathematics, where well-maintained displays support curricular provision and create an attractive learning atmosphere. The geography department also makes very good use of displays that help to brighten up accommodation that suffers from a lack of natural light in a subterranean location. There is an opportunity to increase the level of displays generally, for example pupils' art, which could make an impact in the school. Two ICT suites provide well for this area in the school. An area less well appointed is that occupied by economics, where noise interference from adjacent areas and classes penetrates the poorly soundproofed walls.
- 5.41 Provision for practical subjects varies. The science departments are well appointed and have benefited from some refurbishment, with individual laboratory space available to teachers who are consequently able to personalise their laboratories, in some creating very pleasant learning environments, for example with attractive displays of plants and animals in biology. Art and DT areas are both very cramped and there is unsatisfactory storage, creating hazards through obstacles and overcrowding, such as in the dark room. In DT it is also possible for pupils to be working out of sight of staff, creating a safety issue. Redevelopment of both areas forms part of the current building project.
- 5.42 Larger areas of the school are well used. The attractive galleried main hall can accommodate the whole school for assemblies but is also used for other meetings and events. The annual poetry café makes very good use of this space. Performing arts and visiting lectures are well accommodated in the theatre or in the lecture room, which has versatile seating allowing variety of use. A large dining room provides well for both staff and pupils. The school library is well lit and welcoming.
- 5.43 Outdoor play areas are available but are not extensive. During the inspection a temporary sports hall occupied some of the available tennis court space. Car parking is available near the play areas and security wardens control the movement of traffic around the site.
- 5.44 A medical centre serves the school's needs well and there is adequate provision of lavatories, washrooms and fresh water through drinking fountains.

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

- 5.45 Yes.

Links with Parents and the Community

- 5.46 Links with parents and the community are very good. Parents are provided with very good information about the school through newsletters (twice each term), the newly established e-mail letter and an annual high quality school magazine (*The Gower*). The school website and the new virtual learning environment provide other means for parents to keep up to date with

- their sons' progress and with school activities. Information on the curriculum and optional subject choices are also sent to parents.
- 5.47 Parents receive helpful information on pupils' work and progress through regular reports and frequent meetings with staff. The frequency of reports and meetings is very good. In the past year twenty-seven meetings have been held, ranging from introductory meetings and parents' discussion evenings to full parents' evenings. In addition a GCSE options evening and AS choices evenings have been held. Formal reports are produced electronically and provide very full assessment of pupils' progress, effort and achievement. Reports record grades in both academic achievement and effort, any examination result and comment by subject and form teachers, wardens and the headmaster.
- 5.48 The school handles the concerns of parents well. Avenues of communication are clearly defined and effective. Parents are invited to telephone the school freely and staff are encouraged to deal with their concerns directly if this is appropriate. The homework diary issued to all pupils is a valuable and well used means of regular communication with parents. Written records of significant complaints are kept centrally.
- 5.49 Of the parents who replied to the inspectors' questionnaire, most expressed strong approval of the attainment, progress, curriculum, pastoral care, attitudes and values promoted and the range of extra-curricular activities of the school, as well as of the information and opportunities provided in the school. The inspectors concurred with these views. Whilst opportunities for parents to be involved in the life of the school are generally good and enhance pupils' learning and progress, a minority of parents voiced concerns in this area. However, the parents' guild is active in supporting the school in a number of ways and this was not felt by the inspectors to be a significant weakness. Concerns about the arrangements for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs were also expressed, and it was the view of the inspectors that these concerns were justified.
- 5.50 An extensive and varied programme of school activities is presented to which parents are invited. They attend many music, sporting, art and drama events including a modern languages evening in which pupils perform plays and sketches in different languages. They are invited to debating events, informative talks and presentations on a range of subjects relevant to their children's progress and welfare. The PSHE programme includes presentations to parents on issues such as drugs and alcohol, which give them an opportunity to consider and discuss parenting issues and to share information with one another and the school.
- 5.51 Pupils' experience is enriched by very good links with the local community. Speakers regularly visit the school through the PSHE, general studies or extra-curricular programmes. The annual book week and the science week are particularly good examples of such activity. Community service is organised jointly with South Hampstead High School. Students provide valuable service amongst local handicapped children and between 30 and 35 work in 10 local primary schools, others work in charity shops or host the annual concert for senior citizens.
- 5.52 The whole school charity drive is considerable. Pupils raise substantial sums of money for local and national charities through well-supported activities. Some individual initiatives by pupils are remarkable. One published a calendar raising a very substantial sum of money for breast cancer research and another returned from a visit to Romania and raised enough money within school to set up a permanent home for eight to ten orphans.
- 5.53 Work experience is organised for Year 12 students during the summer break between the AS and A level years and a one-day 'going to work day' is organised as part of the PSHE

programme in Year 9. Many placements are arranged through contacts with parents or former pupils.

- 5.54 Equally well supported, is the link with a school in Uganda. In the past two years UCS has raised a substantial sum to aid their funds. Textbooks and stationery are regularly sent and a scheme exists for UCS students to go to Uganda on gap placements. Last year students took part in the Physics Ambassadors Scheme which introduced an undergraduate to work in the physics department and, this year, three UCS students are involved with a pioneering internship at University College working on projects at the university with undergraduates and research students.

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

- 5.55 The school meets almost all of the regulatory requirements. In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:
- (a) Provide the address of the chairman of governors in the school information sent to parents. [Regulation 6.(2)(c)].

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

- 5.56 Yes.

6. PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PASTORAL CARE

Pupils' Personal Development

- 6.1 The provision for pupils' personal, social and cultural development is very good. The provision of opportunities for the pupils to consolidate a system of moral beliefs and to understand a range of spiritual beliefs is good.
- 6.2 The school, founded within the Benthamite tradition of religious tolerance, respect for the individual and the development of independence of mind, makes it clear that it does not hold religious assemblies nor does it allow for the teaching of religion within the academic curriculum. Nevertheless, the pupils are given opportunities to learn about, and to engage in debate about spiritual matters such as the Reformation in Year 8, world religions in the context of their friends and the wider community of UCS in Year 7 PSHE lessons, where some very good work on mind mapping the similarities between the pupils' religions (encompassing the major world religions) was observed, alongside the opportunity to take part in a teacher - guided meditation.
- 6.3 Assemblies offer the opportunity to both staff and pupils to convey important moral messages which may or may not have a religious slant to them, corresponding to the intention of the speaker. Additionally senior pupils run faith societies such as the Jewish Society, Christian Union and the Middle Eastern Society which demonstrate the interest in, and tolerance for, the spectrum of religious thinking. The atmosphere of supportive tolerance and active liberalism permits the pupils and staff to engage in free and comfortable discussion of religion, within the academic context, such as the Year 11 history lessons on the effects of the holocaust, and Year 13 philosophy lessons about influences of fundamentalist Christian religion in the USA. The headmaster provides clear leadership in this element of school life, taking a part in the Year 7 PSHE programme, in modules of moral philosophy in the Year 12 and 13 philosophy courses and in assemblies.
- 6.4 The provision for moral education is very good. The staff in their support of the school, its pupils its ethos and its secular moral code very much set the tone for the pupils' moral behaviour and responses. The PSHE programme is designed to cover a wide range of topics which are relevant to growing up in London as a teenage boy, including the threats of street crime, the responsibilities of friendships, the allure and dangers of drugs and dealing with stress and pressure. The sixth form programme includes topics such as alcohol awareness and sexual responsibility. Work on citizenship is included and is comprehensive in the items it covers on political literacy at Year 8 level. The course is taught by a variety of staff according to the age of the pupils, and caters for their changing needs. Its delivery through lessons in Years 7 and 8 and during tutorial time in the sixth form equips pupils with the knowledge, and promotes the confidence and self esteem for them to make independent, thoughtful judgements whilst exercising an appreciation of the rights and values of others within the wider and closer community. The ample opportunities within the curriculum for students to explore moral issues are very well exploited, with work on inequalities within the UK in geography, on genetic engineering at GCSE and A level in biology and discussions in English about disability.
- 6.5 The school offers very many opportunities to help pupils to develop socially to a high standard. The school prides itself, justifiably, on the emphasis it places on the individual and his response to the world he encounters around him. In this respect the school is very successful at nurturing the sense of the school community alongside the importance of individual responsibility and sense of self. Pupils at all levels relate very well to each other, to other members of the community and to visitors to the community. They take

responsibility at stages throughout the school for important areas of school life, such as the very high amount of fund raising which occurs during the eight-week period of community action, which is generated by the pupils themselves, aided by senior students. Not only is this a reflection of the importance attributed to the needs of others, through institutions as diverse as a local charity for autistic children to the school founded by a former UCS pupil, Robert Kamaska, in Uganda, but it is also an indicator of the autonomy and initiative allowed to the Year 13 head boy, vice head boys and deme captains, who oversee the fundraising projects. The senior students also make an important contribution to the life of the school through their work as mentors, generally through the school in demes, and in particular to new pupils in Years 7 and 9. Younger pupils also assume roles of responsibility through the positions of class presidents which are elected by the forms to represent them on the school council.

- 6.6 Provision for cultural development is also very good. There are ample opportunities for the pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions and the diversity and richness of others. Students participate in Model United Nations, and the Institute of Ideas under the auspices of the debating society. Music from a variety of cultures is studied in curriculum music lessons. There are regular exchanges to France and Germany and home stay visits to Spain. Additionally, visits to Ypres, Rome, New York, Barcelona, and Florence, to name but a few, offer all pupils the occasion to visit unfamiliar countries and to experience their culture, language and heritage at first hand. Extensive opportunities exist within the extra-curricular programme for pupils to participate in a wide range of musical and drama activities as well as expeditions such as the Ten Tors. The pupils also enjoy the benefits of an ethnically diverse school community which makes them fully aware of other cultures in the wider world in which they live.

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

- 6.7 Yes.

Pastoral Care, including Welfare and Health & Safety

- 6.8 The quality of pastoral care is outstanding. It was appreciated by more than nine out of ten of the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and was most strongly in evidence from the pupils interviewed who all declared themselves happy in the school and attributed this mainly to the care, support and attitudes of all the staff.
- 6.9 The statement in the school prospectus that “good pastoral care is founded upon close, honest and demanding relationships between pupils and teachers” is articulated in practice. Pastoral units are clearly defined. In Years 7 and 8 the work of two year wardens is overseen by the warden of the lower school, who together offer the specialised support needed in these transition years. On joining Year 9 pupils join one of five Demes (school houses). It is an unusual but cementing strength that pupils are taught in these Demes, and their attachment continues into the sixth form. Deme wardens are the key pastoral foci for pastoral care, but are well supported by form tutors and the senior management team. Relationships between staff and pupils are open and straightforward and the Great Hall is a well frequented forum for informal discussions.
- 6.10 The vertical system engenders a strong feeling of community inside the wider school. Relationships between senior and junior pupils are easy and informal, and senior pupils volunteer for mentoring roles within their Deme.

- 6.11 The academic monitoring of pupil progress is informal. The school has not integrated into the academic management any objective scheme for the tracking of pupils or targeting of grades. In this area heads of department do not adopt a leading role, and there is no robust objective system to ensure that all pupils who might be under achieving are identified.
- 6.12 The school has appropriate screening methods for all pupils at entry to the school, but staff do not use the information to identify pupils' potential weaknesses and strengths or to track their progress. The subsequent procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs are not efficient and therefore the school management cannot be sure that all pupils are being effectively assisted to make progress in line with their peers. The ways in which pupils are initially referred to the director of learning strategy are not systematic and the process for contacting parents and initiating individual support lessons can take up to half a term, even for pupils coming from the Junior Branch who are known to have received learning support.
- 6.13 Pupils currently receive short-term one-to-one coaching on specific study skills such as essay planning which improves their attainment, but no formal monitoring of the long-term impact of these sessions takes place. Boys were keen to learn and gained confidence in sessions observed. One Year 13 pupil found that his English essay grades rose from a low B to an A as a result of following advice given. The sixth form learning mentor scheme uses pupils' scientific skills to help their peers, but this is not run centrally by the director of learning support.
- 6.14 The staff are kept informed of pupils receiving support or using a laptop via termly up-dated lists, however there is no systematic process of discussing shared strategies for individual pupils. Some departments, such as geography, music, modern languages, biology and physics have liaised with the director of learning support to create their own special needs policy, but there are no checks carried out across the school. The senior management team has an ambitious whole school learning strategy for all pupils, including those requiring learning support.
- 6.15 The quality and quantity of advice leading to GCSE choice is good, involving Deme wardens, form tutors, parents and pupils. The careers department is less involved, and it makes no contribution to the GCSE booklet. The careers section of the school library has a limited and unattractive stock, hidden around a corner, and the lack of a designated careers area in the school contributes to the department's low profile.
- 6.16 All Year 11 pupils either sit careers tests or complete an in house statement, and each is given a personal interview with a specialist careers consultant. However, much of the careers advice is given by the Deme wardens, who are provided with up-to-date material from the head of careers. Nearly every pupil undertakes work experience in the summer following AS examinations.
- 6.17 Working with Deme Wardens, the senior tutors coordinate pastoral care and academic guidance in the sixth form. Pupils and parents receive thorough and detailed briefings about the demands beyond GCSE. Exhaustive documentation routes the progress to university entrance. Pupils remain in their Demes, and regular but informal liaison between the various pastoral figures ensures that they are supported. The quality of higher education advice is excellent. Introductory talks during weekly sessions trigger early thinking, and through UCAS evenings, a higher education convention and personal interviews guidance moves from the general to the specific. The sixth form pages in the virtual learning environment offer a range of material including annotated personal statements.

- 6.18 The uncompromising policy on bullying needs to be used rarely and the UCS code of conduct underlines the need for tolerance, courtesy and respect, which is recognised throughout the school community
- 6.19 A well-appointed medical centre is a welcoming environment at the heart of the school. An experienced full-time paediatric nurse is part of a Foundation team that covers all the sites, including the games fields. The centre offers advice on a variety of health issues, and the nurse contributes to the PSHE course. The medical committee regularly reviews the school's first aid policy. Accident statistics are routinely collected on a well-constructed report form, and trends are identified. Every department has at least one trained first aider. During their first year the school medical officer examines all pupils, and appropriate procedures are put in place for those suffering from allergies or who need regular medication.
- 6.20 An excellent variety of hot and cold lunches are the manifestation of a balanced healthy eating policy, which is challenged in practice by the pupils' dawn-to-dusk charity food stalls.
- 6.21 Appropriate and effective child protection policies include clear guidelines for staff and parents. A planned programme of training ensures that all staff are regularly updated. An experienced and independent school counsellor is available to all pupils and staff.
- 6.22 Excellent documentation identifies risks to pupils and staff. Good records of alarm testing and fire practices are kept, and throughout the school evacuation routes are clearly signed. A professional consultant conducts an annual two-day audit of risk on the school sites. Recommendations are quickly followed up. The health and safety committee effectively ensures that all departments and areas of the school retain a sharp focus on health and safety issues. Risk assessment procedures for out-of-school trips are excellent. Documentation specific to each trip, as well as generic documentation is required, which the vice master checks before and reviews after each activity. Clear guidelines are set and both parents and pupils sign a behavioural code of conduct.

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

- 6.23 The school meets almost all of the regulatory requirements. In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:
- (a) Maintain the school register in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 [Regulation 3.(9)]. See section 4.15.

7. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Governance and Management

- 7.1 The quality of governance and management is good and in certain areas very good. The governors have developed a structure of sub-committees which enable the council to monitor every aspect of the school's performance. The governors give readily of their time to serve on these committees.
- 7.2 The school's aims are clear and distinctive, and are stated in the school prospectus. The tolerance, friendly relationships and respect for the individual evident in the school stem from the awareness of staff and pupils as to the nature of the school.
- 7.3 The values the governors and senior managers place on high academic standards and a rounded education are evident in the hard work of the staff, the learning and articulacy of the pupils, supported by a very strong work ethic, the high achievements in public examinations and the pupils' whole-hearted involvement in the opportunities offered. They are also reflected in the happiness of the pupils and in their appreciation of the pastoral care they receive.
- 7.4 The development of the school has been well considered. The new five-year plan has clear aims and priorities relating to all aspects of its work. Analysis has been made of threats and opportunities. A detailed building plan has been drawn up and the governors have taken advice and co-opted help as appropriate in embarking on the first phase. Careful financial planning has taken place to avoid long-term debts. Other shorter-term initiatives, such as a strategy for learning, are discussed by sub-committees of the teaching staff, giving opportunities for them to be involved in the school's planning.
- 7.5 Careful controls are kept on costs to avoid waste and to ensure that money is spent in accordance with school priorities, as for example in the generous pupil:staff ratio to allow time for high quality pastoral care.
- 7.6 The headmaster provides a strong lead, showing vision and making his expectations clear, and the senior managers work very hard in supporting these.
- 7.7 Management of the pastoral system is very effective. The meticulous planning and the hard work of the staff involved provide a very high level of care, which is prized by parents and pupils. However the quality of management of academic departments is variable. The best is very good but the clear expectations for marking and assessment, appraisal, regular planning meetings and the monitoring of the quality of teaching are not carried out by all departments and the lack of rigorous monitoring of heads of departments' performance results in inconsistency of practice.
- 7.8 Routine administration is carried out very efficiently, courteously and cheerfully by the committed support staff.
- 7.9 Communication with parents and the local community is very good, and the parents acknowledge this in their responses to the questionnaires. The whole teaching staff hold a briefing meeting once a week to ensure essential information is passed on, and a great deal of time is spent discussing pupils both formally and informally.
- 7.10 The school has a complaints procedure which was last invoked in February 2005.

8. ACHIEVEMENT AND QUALITY IN SUBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Achievement and Quality in Subjects

English

- 8.1 Pupils achieve high standards at all levels throughout the school. Pupils' attainment in public examinations is high in relation to their abilities. Performance in public examinations has been well above the national average for maintained selective schools for the last three years. Over four-fifths of pupils gained A or A* at GCSE in English in this time. The number of boys with A or A* in English Literature has risen rapidly from less than half of the year group to a level matching that in English Language during the same period. Over nine out of ten gained A or B grades at A level, and at least ten pupils have applied to read English at Oxford or Cambridge every year.
- 8.2 Pupils' attainment in work observed was high at all ages. Pupils demonstrate an excellent sensitivity to language in many activities. Their oral skills are very sophisticated, for instance Years 8 and 9 discussed and performed demanding texts at a level appropriate to GCSE. Creative writing is lively, often faultlessly punctuated and showing a sense of individual 'voice'.
- 8.3 The progress of pupils in English is generally rapid. Lower school exercise books show pupils using increasingly complex sentence structures. GCSE folders contain increasingly wide-ranging responses with independent notes and planning styles in use. Close individual support from teachers outside lessons enables certain pupils with special educational needs to make good progress at GCSE and A level but some struggle with the pace of activities in class and their progress is hampered.
- 8.4 The quality of learning and behaviour is very good. Pupils enjoy their lessons and build positive relations with each other and their teachers. At their best, pupils were attentive and showed excellent independent thought, collaborating to search for meaning, but occasionally they did not listen to each other and their focus drifted where the pace became slow.
- 8.5 The quality of teaching is good. In some lessons it was very good, where teachers varied the nature of activities and kept a brisk pace with clear direction, as in a Year 11 class discussing "*A View from the Bridge*", where injunctions to move on were met with a lively, fresh enquiry. A range of teaching aids were employed, such as a combination of worksheets and digital projections in lessons on "*Macbeth*" to develop deeper thought into the theatrical potential of the feast scene. Teachers' expectations are very high, setting demanding texts, offering a challenge for gifted and talented pupils. In the Sixth Form pupils make links between texts, and one Year 13 group was stretched by exploring gothic influences in literature, art, music and film, demonstrating a depth of knowledge through precise references. Some pupils' needs are less well met, with instructions being given in a general manner, with no tasks specially suited for weaker pupils. It is also the case, however, that the teachers give readily of their time to help pupils with difficulties. Time management in class was not always good. Some teachers began and ended lessons very punctually, whereas in a few cases staff were very tolerant of pupils' late arrivals.
- 8.6 Individual teachers devise their own lower school mark scheme and the quality of detail on pupils' work was variable. In some A level work evaluative comments and marginal notes were closely linked to assessment objectives, but many books from Years 7 to 13 had only ticks in the margin and brief comments which did not enable specific targets to be set. A

similarly varied standard is evident in end-of-term reports. The department has the capacity to begin tracking progress and setting targets through the bank of past examination papers and self-assessment sheets given to all pupils, and is beginning to use this.

- 8.7 The management and leadership of the department are good. Staff are highly qualified, with a range of expertise which contributes to pupils' high attainment, the range of experiences offered to them, and their high regard for the department. Initiatives such as the lower school schemes of work, the core reading scheme and regular departmental meetings for pedagogical as well as administrative purposes help to provide some systematic structures whilst still allowing staff considerable freedom. Some good shared practice in ICT and media responses exists. The appraisal system functions well and staff feel supported. The delegation of tasks to individual members of the department encourages them further.
- 8.8 The department provides a wide programme of enrichment for pupils. The annual Book Festival, jointly run by a member of the department and the librarian, gives the whole school and public access to a range of creative arts. The Gunn Club literary society welcomes pupils of all ages to hear guest speakers, and is well attended. Pupils enjoy a frequent and varied programme of theatre visits. They are encouraged to enter writing competitions and are often successful. Very able candidates benefit from a thorough seminar scheme.

Mathematics

- 8.9 Pupils' achieve good standards. Pupils' attainment in public examinations is high in relation to their abilities. Over the three years to 2004 standards attained at A level were above those of maintained selective schools and well above national averages for boys. At GCSE results are in line with maintained selective schools and far above the national average. In 2005 results at A level were the best ever with nearly nine out of ten grades at A and B. A small cohort take further mathematics each year: exceptionally, these results were relatively poor in 2005, with only one-fifth A or B grades, compared to a previous three-year school performance of virtually all grades at A or B.
- 8.10 Pupils' attainment in mathematics lessons is good. Pupils in Year 7 displayed good mental arithmetic in quick-fire starts to lessons; in a Year 8 lesson pupils showed an appreciation and understanding of the operations of powers to the same base; a Year 9 lesson discussion of the use of different averages revealed articulate argument and good evaluation skills; in a Year 13 lesson on the normal distribution pupils recognised the use of symmetry in finding solutions and displayed good algebraic and numerical manipulation skills. Written work at all levels is clearly presented with good evidence of logical thought.
- 8.11 Pupils at all stages make good progress. In most lessons clear progress was made and written work showed consistent consolidation and improvement in understanding in all topics covered. In a Year 10 lesson pupils quickly proved the double angle formula and used it to prove two other circle formulae, whilst in another Year 10 lesson, a lower ability class made a rapid progression from general enlargement of shapes, to using rays from the origin and then to numerical methods of finding the image.
- 8.12 The quality of pupils' learning and behaviour is very good. There is a positive learning atmosphere and the pupils are well motivated and co-operative, responding well to a wide variety of lessons and teaching styles. They look for patterns, as in a Year 9 lesson on simultaneous equations where they quickly spotted the progression of values in plotting a straight line. In all lessons they displayed an ease in working collaboratively; for instance in trying to solve an investigational task using dominoes in Year 7. They show considerable respect for their peers, listening carefully and patiently to their answers, before putting forward their own ideas, as seen in a Year 9 discussion on averages. In a Year 12 lesson on

the binomial distribution, pupils asked searching questions about when to use the formula, to enable them to clarify its usage. Pupils are generally good at taking responsibility for their work.

- 8.13 The quality of teaching in lessons overall is good and often very good. Lessons are well planned, and well organised in the use of available equipment appropriate to curricular objectives. The best teaching engaged pupils and contained a variety of activities; as in a Year 10 lesson where pupils entered to Kate Bush singing 'Pi', with lyrics projected onto the board, followed by a correction to a mistake in the lyrics for O, then projection of a circle to start proofs for angles in a circle; and a Year 7 lesson which started with mental arithmetic, moved swiftly onto a dominoes investigation before finishing with a critique of newspaper statistic displays. In some lessons the pace was slow, the teaching lacked change in the style of delivery and intonation, and it failed to keep some pupils fully engaged. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions and contribute in class, where their suggestions are developed aurally and used to move the lesson forward, as in a Year 8 lesson on powers where the discovery of the reason for adding powers brought a gasp of realisation from one pupil. Homework is regularly set and appropriately challenging, with a variety of tasks from continuation work to good quality enrichment tasks. A key feature in pupil attainment is that teachers give freely of their time out of lessons helping pupils with their work.
- 8.14 Assessment and recording are sound. Marking is regular and much has clear, helpful comments, but overall marking is only satisfactory, as not all teachers follow this good practice and some exercises remain unchecked. Report writing is good, with comments on shortcomings and helpful suggestions.
- 8.15 The mathematics curriculum is good. In the lower school there is a clear emphasis on providing enrichment as well as the core syllabus. Investigational work is a regular feature. The GCSE and A level courses are carefully chosen to create the challenges appropriate to the pupils' abilities.
- 8.16 The management and leadership of the department are good. The head of department is a recent internal appointment and he has already started to make changes by issuing a revised scheme of work for all to follow, delegating responsibilities to members of his department, and ensuring accurate assessment by setting whole-year examinations. The department is split on two sites within the school and this makes communication in the large department problematic. Departmental meetings are held, minutes taken and kept, and collaborative department decisions reached. A second-in-department has recently been appointed and this is helping by allowing more delegation of responsibilities, so that the head of department can address issues of curriculum and teaching. A recent initiative was in-service training where the whole department looked at the use of 'mind maps'. The departmental office and store is small, restricting physical resources, but there is a programme for purchasing more visual and practical aids and improving the poor ICT provision. Resources are well managed. Teachers are well qualified and effectively deployed, but there is little peer observation to enable good practice to be disseminated.

Science

Biology

- 8.17 Pupils achieve good standards. Their attainment in GCSE is good in relation to their abilities. In 2003/4 results were well above the national average for maintained schools and above the national average for maintained selective schools. At A level pupils' attainment is high in relation to their abilities, with results in 2003/4 being well above with the national average for both maintained and maintained selective schools. The results in 2005 were

- better, 7 out of 10 of all GCSE candidates achieved A* or A grade, and 9 out of 10 passed with A and B grades at A level.
- 8.18 Attainment in lessons observed and in written work was high, and all pupils made very confident use of biological terminology. Attainment was high in Years 8-9, where pupils were able to recall and make very good use of their knowledge. For example, Year 8 pupils showed very good knowledge of data handling and made sophisticated links between control factors and experimental design. In Years 10-11 attainment was good. Year 10 pupils demonstrated good knowledge of diffusion gradients and accurately related this to xylem function. In a Year 11 lesson on kidney dialysis pupils accurately described the effect of dietary intake on blood water potential and independently linked this knowledge with kidney machine operation. In Years 12-13 attainment was high. For example in a Year 13 lesson pupils showed excellent knowledge of evolutionary processes and clear understanding of the underlying genetic principles.
- 8.19 Pupils' progress is good, and in half of the lessons observed it was rapid. Progress was rapid in Years 8-9. In Year 10 and 11 lessons overall progress was good but in some lessons it was at best adequate because of disruptive behaviour. Boys in Year 10 gained understanding of an unfamiliar potometer apparatus quickly and were able to explain the precautions involved in its use confidently and accurately. In Years 12-13 progress was good. Pupils in a Year 12 class on food testing used new information independently, quickly linking it with prior knowledge to arrive at a very good description of suitable methods.
- 8.20 The quality of pupils learning, attitude and behaviour is good. In Years 10 and 11 the pupils' attitudes were sound, and this is the only stage in which criticism could be made of their behaviour. On occasions pupils showed lack of consideration for each other and poor concentration, which slowed progress. In one lesson an inappropriate level of noise and interruptions undermined the teaching.
- 8.21 The quality of teaching is good. The teachers are well qualified and have formed a strong working relationship with one another and with the pupils. Dictated notes and handouts are combined with class discussion and use of sample examination questions, so that pupils quickly focus on using their knowledge. For example, a Year 9 class rapidly assimilated information on bones and skeletons, and were quickly able to apply new knowledge successfully in example questions. A range of practical work is used to aid learning. Extended assignments encourage pupils to use homework to explore beyond the syllabus, very good examples of this being evident in the work scrutiny. Teachers make limited use of ICT. Computer aided presentations are used well but other ICT opportunities, such as data logging, are not used.
- 8.22 Marking is regular and conforms with the stated departmental policy. There are often, but not always, comments to assist progress, for example linked usefully with published mark schemes. Pupils do not always follow up comments and correct their work accordingly. Reports mainly focus on examination performance and do not always contain sufficient detailed comment to enable specific learning weaknesses to be addressed.
- 8.23 The department is adequately resourced and there is a generous budget to cover its running costs. Some new resources remain unused and there is scope for the introduction of further practical work. Whilst very good examination results are achieved, the department has an opportunity for the introduction of new resources, for example in biotechnology and microbiology, so that progress is more exciting for pupils and staff. As a result of the initiative of the head of department there has been some internal reconstruction recently and this has improved the learning environment. There is limited pupil work on display but there are well-maintained aquaria and some attractive plant displays.

- 8.24 Enrichment opportunities include the medical ethics group and the biology society, while some pupils in the sixth form also enter Advanced Extension Award. Biology also contributes to the personal and social education of the pupils in areas such as drug/alcohol awareness and sex education. There is a very good field trip for the lower sixth that reinforces their learning, but the junior years are not involved with excursions and an obvious opportunity for further initiative exists here.
- 8.25 Management and leadership of the department are good, but an opportunity exists for firmer delegation in the areas of ICT development and the introduction of new practical resources. The head of department organises the curriculum efficiently and delegation takes advantage of the strengths of his staff, for example in organisation of fieldwork. Regular meetings are well used for discussion, planning and cascading of information, for example INSET feedback from recent courses. Sharing of resources is efficient and the head of department is leading the development of the biology area of the school's virtual learning environment. There is no systematic cross-department monitoring of pupil progress.

Chemistry

- 8.26 Standards achieved in chemistry are high. Pupils' attainment in national tests is high in relation to their abilities. Chemistry is an optional subject in Years 10 and 11, but over two-thirds of the year typically choose the subject. GCSE results over the last three years were above the national average for pupils in maintained selective schools, and well above the national average for all maintained schools. Results at A level were well above the national average for pupils in maintained selective schools.
- 8.27 Pupils' attainment in chemistry is good at all stages, and frequently very good. In Year 7, pupils learn quickly to express themselves using accurate technical language. In Year 11, pupils' written work shows that they can carry out numerical tasks on the amount of substance accurately, and in class they were able to explain the mechanism of electrolysis. In the Sixth Form, students interpreted the nuclear magnetic resonance spectra of simple molecules.
- 8.28 Pupils' progress in chemistry is rapid; this is confirmed by their growing factual knowledge, and ability to select relevant information. Pupils' files confirm that their ability to write at length about chemistry improves consistently well over time, and they use graphs well to explain their observations.
- 8.29 The quality of learning and behaviour is good, and often very good. Pupils contribute well to discussions, and listen to each other's points and questions. They behave well in class, and participate skilfully in practical sessions. Pupils in Year 10 could identify which reagent is in excess when copper oxide is mixed with sulphuric acid, and explain why it is important in the preparation of a pure product. Pupils in Year 7, who study chemistry as part of a practically based science course, responded enthusiastically to demonstrations of chemical reactions, and were able to suggest interpretations of their observations.
- 8.30 The quality of teaching is good at all stages, although in a few lessons the pace was too slow for brighter pupils. Lessons are carefully planned, but the best discussions are wide ranging, as seen in a demonstration of the aluminium-iodine reaction in the Sixth Form, which helped to give pupils a broader understanding of the subject. A weekly lunchtime session helps to prepare the brightest candidates for the Advanced Extension Award paper in chemistry. However, ICT is not used routinely by boys to analyse data, and the potential of the school intranet to encourage independent learning is only just beginning to be realised. Written tasks are set regularly and marked constructively. Quite extensive use is made of questions

requiring brief answers, but opportunities for pupils to express themselves at greater length are limited. Reports are helpful, and indicate pupils' strengths and weaknesses.

- 8.31 Refurbishment of three of the four laboratories has given these rooms a bright appearance, and they are kept in good condition. However, although there are some posters on the walls in the department, there are relatively few examples of pupils' work to improve the learning environment.
- 8.32 The management and leadership of the department are satisfactory. The department's routine administration is effective, even though the present timetable does not permit a regular time-tabled department meeting. A more active approach to staff training and appraisal would use time and energy more effectively. The limited use of mutual observation of lessons prevents the spread of good practice and the development of varied styles of teaching. The department handbook is clearly presented, and contains appropriate instructions on health and safety; these are closely followed by staff and boys. The technical assistance provided is supportive and of very high quality.

Physics

- 8.33 Pupils achieve high standards. The attainment across the ages is good. Results at GCSE over the last three years have been well above the national average for all maintained schools and well above the average for all maintained selective schools. In the last two years almost nine out of ten grades have been A*/A. Results at A level over the last three years have been well above the national average for all maintained schools and well above the average for all maintained selective schools. In three of the last four years over eight out of ten grades have been A or B. Pupils are taught physics as part of a science course in Year 7 and then as a separate subject in Year 8 and beyond. About two-thirds of pupils opt for the subject at GCSE.
- 8.34 Attainment in all aspects of the study of physics is good and often very good. Pupils question and answer articulately, with exact use of scientific language. In Year 9, pupils explained with assurance the differing conducting mechanisms in metals and non-metals. Calculative work is completed successfully, and both ICT and practical skills are strong. Air track experiments in Year 12 were confidently analysed on computer.
- 8.35 The progress of pupils is good, and frequently rapid, both in lessons and in their written work. Development of practical skills between the start of Year 9 and end of Year 11 is good, and pupils gain high marks in GCSE coursework. In a Year 10 lesson pupils moved swiftly from an understanding of Newton's Laws to a full understanding of the factors that determine terminal velocity, and a Year 12 class made a rapid transition from a factual knowledge to a conceptual appreciation of electronic charge.
- 8.36 The quality of pupils' learning and behaviour is very good. They are avid learners, and ask probing questions, often thinking several steps ahead in a scientific argument. In Year 10 pupils addressed together turbulence affecting a terminal velocity experiment, and in Year 9 cooperated in solving lens problems with both numerical and graphical approaches. They draw on previous work and experiences, and listen to the contributions of others.
- 8.37 The quality of teaching is good, and occasionally very good. There is a very secure knowledge, and love, of the subject, and this is transmitted to the pupils. More able pupils are challenged by open-ended questions, and questions demanding factual recall are rare. Planning and preparation is excellent, and the use of interactive whiteboards, including video clips, of demonstration and ICT, produce stimulating lessons. Teachers are encouraging and supportive. Year 8 pupils were made to feel proud of their results of a simple experiment

measuring the frictional forces from sandpaper, and the practical skills of Year 10 pupils dropping cones were cleverly developed by skilful questioning.

- 8.38 The management and leadership of the department are informal yet effective. Regular discussion and meetings ensure that teaching resources and approaches are gradually yet constantly developed. Newly refurbished laboratories are serviced outstandingly well.

Art

- 8.39 Pupils' attainment in art is good. Their attainment in GCSE and A level is good in relation to their abilities. Results at both levels over the last three years have been well above the national average for maintained schools. In 2005 three in every four pupils gained A* or A, with the same proportion at A level gaining A or B
- 8.40 Pupils' attainment is good. They achieve high standards in relation to their abilities in Year 7, good standards in Years 10 – 13 and satisfactory standards in Years 8 and 9. Their attainment seen in class was generally good but less so in folders or on display. Pupils use a variety of media in two or three dimensions and there are pockets of excellence evident, as in a "Dadaist" animation, the banners for "book week" made by Year 9 pupils and some excellent slide shows and computer presentations in Year 11. There is a raw energy in some of the painting at GCSE and A level which has an immediate visual impact. The course at all levels provides for the less able and the more gifted to produce highly original work and to enjoy themselves. Pupils talk and write about their work very well. On the other hand they often content themselves with poor presentation, and are deficient in traditional painting and drawing skills.
- 8.41 Pupils' progress is sound. Restrictions in time and space impede progress. The sophisticated level of research and enquiry begun in the Junior Branch and continued in Year 7 is not built upon later, where the course is deliberately "laissez-faire" and lacks the disciplines needed for the pupils to acquire skills in painting and drawing. Process and development are not sufficiently valued and pupils often move straight to the end product without trials, sketches or maquettes.
- 8.42 The quality of learning and behaviour is good, although some lessons are very noisy. Pupils are hard-working, co-operative and keen to learn. The work ethos is good and the pupils enjoy the lessons. Very good relationships prevail between pupils and between staff and pupils. Learning is encouraged by the setting of homework and the issuing of sketchpads, but the lack of grounding in conventional art skills means that some excellent ideas cannot be realised visually.
- 8.43 The quality of teaching is very good in Year 7, where firm discipline is maintained and pupils are shown how to apply washes and understand colour, tone and texture. It is very good in photography in Year 10, and printmaking and sculpture in Year 11, but deficient in some areas of drawing and painting from Year 8 onwards. Teachers work hard and enjoy working together. They have secure subject knowledge and an enthusiasm which the pupils recognise and adopt. Lessons are well paced with clear sense of purpose and direction but at times poor standards of work and careless presentation are tolerated.
- 8.44 The leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory in some areas. For example, display is often poor, departmental meetings are irregular, no minutes are taken and there is no universally applied system of assessment or marking. The school policy is followed on reporting. The departmental handbook contains clear documentation, schemes of work and policies on departmental development, homework and health and safety. Technician support is excellent. Accommodation is severely limited, which causes problems

for the storage and security of work, and prevents the establishment of dedicated spaces for critical studies and ICT. Single periods allocated to examination groups severely reduce opportunities for practical work.

Business Education

- 8.45 Business education is an option for pupils from Year 10 onwards. In Years 10 and 11 pupils follow a business studies GCSE course. In the sixth form they study AS or A level economics.
- 8.46 Pupils achieve good standards. Pupils' attainment in public examinations is good in relation to their abilities. Results in GCSE business studies over the last two years have been above the national average for maintained selective schools. In 2005 all but one pupil gained a grade above a C and 7 out of 10 achieved an A or A* Grade. This reflects a consistent improvement in the GCSE results over the last three years. Results at A level economics have been above the national average of maintained selective schools over the last three years. In 2005 all students obtained a pass grade, with 8 out of 10 achieving an A/B grade.
- 8.47 Students' written work in essays and, at GCSE, coursework, shows that they are able to deal with complex concepts with confidence and insight. Their ability to analyse information and apply their knowledge is well developed. Presentation is neat and tidy at A Level, although organisation at GCSE is less so. The use of ICT is limited, with few examples of independent learning aside from coursework in GCSE.
- 8.48 Students' progress is rapid overall, with students noticeably more advanced in the skills, knowledge and understanding than is required for their courses. Within the classroom progress is sound and in line with expectations of students with this level of ability. Scrutiny of students' written work, however, shows rapid progress and development of analytical skills and depth of understanding over time. Year 13 essay work, for example, shows complex understanding of competition under different market structures.
- 8.49 The quality of learning and behaviour is very good. Students are highly motivated and are accomplished learners. They are active in lessons in demanding explanations and seeking to develop their understanding of the topic under discussion. In a Year 12 lesson students successfully analysed the effect of spending on the economy to a level beyond AS requirements. Students' level of articulation in debating issues with their peers and teachers is very good. They work well together and, once the lesson has started, listen to each others' comments in a mature manner. Punctuality to lessons is, however, poor. In a Year 13 lesson students arrived up to ten minutes late, effectively reducing teaching time to twenty-five minutes.
- 8.50 The quality of teaching is good. Staff are well qualified and highly experienced. In a number of lessons very good teaching was observed. These were characterised by high expectations of the students, challenging question and answer sessions and a willingness to debate the interpretation and application of theory. A Year 12 lesson observed was extremely successful in encouraging student interest through an effective question and answer session. Students were encouraged to ask questions in order to deepen their understanding and broaden the application of their knowledge. In a Year 10 lesson pupils were successfully encouraged to link theory to examples of practice drawn from the local area.
- 8.51 The marking systems used by the department are satisfactory, with the best examples offering guidance to students on how their work can be improved. An example of this is feedback on an AS essay and data response work. Students' work was fully annotated with

clear instructions on how the answers could be further improved. Good practice is, however, not consistently applied. In some cases marking consisted of a tick or a single word as commentary. There is no formal mechanism to ensure effective marking practices are maintained across the department.

- 8.52 Management is good. It is effective in ensuring that administrative tasks are completed. Leadership is strong and cohesion of the department is good. Staff members share pastoral information about their students and deliver the curriculum in shared A level groups. There is no formal arrangement to carry out mutual observation, which limits the opportunities to observe and adopt good practice within the department.

Classics

- 8.53 Pupils achieve high standards in both subjects (Latin and Greek). Attainment in national tests is high relative to their abilities. In GCSE 9 out of 10 pupils achieved an A* or A over the last three years in both Latin and Greek, which is above the national average of maintained selective schools.
- 8.54 At A level the results in Latin and Greek over the last three years are well above those obtained by pupils in maintained selective schools. In the last three years all A level students achieved A or B grades in Greek and all but a few in Latin. Students regularly go on to read classics at university.
- 8.55 Latin is taught to all pupils in Years 7 and 8. The majority continue in Year 9 and several commence a study of Greek. High numbers carry on to Latin GCSE and several to Greek GCSE. The numbers of students taking the subjects at AS and A2 levels varies, with about three taking A level Greek and nine A level Latin.
- 8.56 The students have a good knowledge of grammar and vocabulary which allows them to translate fluently and accurately, and to enjoy the challenges of textual criticism and analysis. When translating the texts they relish the opportunity to unravel complex structures alongside contextual and literary discussion. A good example was seen in the Year 12 lesson on Livy XXX where the conceit of peripeteia was discussed in comparison to Sophocles' Oedipus Tyrannus. The students are adroit at manipulating vocabulary and using scansion to arrive at accurate and elegant translations. In Year 7 the pupils understood the ways in which a present tense verb changes endings, and the word order in Latin sentences. In Year 8 posters produced in groups on Roman Britain employed word processing and independent research skills to a very good standard. In a Greek Year 12 lesson they showed a good understanding of the differences between tmesis in Latin and Greek.
- 8.57 Progress at all stages is rapid. The pupils grasp new concepts quickly within lessons, as seen, for example, in the Year 8 group which readily understood the need for adjectives to agree in case, number and gender with nouns. By Year 9 pupils have made very good progress and are able to produce fluent and accurate translations of quite complex Latin, identifying correctly perfect passive and active participles, and drawing independent comparisons between English and Latin vocabulary. Most of those who select to study Greek continue into Year 10. They make good progress and are able to produce accurate translations from English into Greek.
- 8.58 The quality of pupils' attitudes to their work is very good. There is a good rapport between all the departmental staff and the pupils at all levels, and the pupils use every opportunity to clarify matters of doubt. They work collaboratively at all levels, whether it is sharing an idea about translating a sentence into Greek (Year 12; genitive absolutes) or working on performing plays in Latin (Year 8).

- 8.59 At all levels the teaching is good and sometimes very good. The knowledge of the subject teachers is very good. Pupils have a good knowledge of the languages and appreciate the need to dissect texts in detail, as seen in the Greek lesson on *Iliad VI* where Homeric dialogue was discussed, and in a Latin lesson which included an overview of the hierarchy of Roman authority in Britain in the context of the course book. Available ICT and visual resources are not currently used to support learning within the classroom, which limits the variety of techniques of teaching and learning.
- 8.60 Work is set regularly and marked frequently. The department does not have a marking policy but the pupils understand the significance of the marks and much of the work is supplied with useful comments for improvement.
- 8.61 A biennial visit to Rome by pupils in Year 10 and above, and trips to plays in translation staged in London benefit the pupils' knowledge, but there is a lack of visits arranged to sites and museums to stimulate the interest of the pupils beyond the classroom experience and to underpin the new course book.
- 8.62 The management of the department is good, with a supportive and calm leader, which helps the department to work well as a team. The handbook is informative and there is good recording of marks, which helps with the monitoring of pupils. Assessment data is currently not used to inform styles of teaching and learning within the department. The department is well resourced and has an extensive departmental library as well as good resources for pupils up to Year 9 in the main library

Design & Technology

- 8.63 Pupils' attainment is good. Pupils' attainment in public examinations is good in relation to their abilities. Results in GCSE over the last three years have been well above the national average for maintained schools and in line with those for maintained selective schools. At A level the results over the last three years have been above the national average for maintained schools, with almost all students achieving grade A or B.
- 8.64 Pupils' attainment in work observed was good. The quality of work seen in class or on display, and especially in the senior folders, was often high. Year 7 pupils working on pencil boxes designed them well, explored a number of different techniques, made an early start on computer aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM) and learned about different methods of jointing wood, all within one project. Attainment was high amongst a Year 11 group, with pupils working on projects as diverse as designing an umbrella to fit a child's pushchair or building a computer. Good graphic skills on the computer are evident as early as Year 8 and these develop into some excellent computer imagery produced in examination classes. Some examination candidates were less good at hand drawn diagrams and graphics.
- 8.65 Pupils' progress in design and technology is good. It is at least sound and often rapid across all the years, as observed in class, in pupils, folders and on display. In Year 9, for example, pupils were able to progress through their electrically powered "buggies" through the various processes of cutting, vacuum forming and assembling the electronic parts towards completion. The folders of pupils in Years 10 to 13 provide a precise record of progress over time from the original ideas and sketches through to the finished article or project. This is often rapid and supported by very good computer graphics.
- 8.66 The quality of learning and behaviour is good. Pupils are generally well behaved, though not always courteous in listening to their teachers. Relationships are, however, good. The pupils are eager to learn, strongly self-motivated and confident. Well chosen projects, such as the pencil case, enable them to improve their design skills, conduct meaningful research and

acquire practical knowledge, such as the making of wood joints. Good use is made of ICT for the development of skills in computer-aided design and of using the internet for research. Strong evidence of independent research and learning is seen in scrutiny of the folders from Year 10 onwards.

- 8.67 The quality of teaching is good across all year groups. In a Year 7 lesson a teacher showed great skill in a crowded room, managing to meet the individual demands of pupils. In one Year 10 group the teacher was leading pupils skilfully towards successful outcomes using computer numerical control. In the Sixth Form the quality of teaching allowed broad scope for individuality, combined with sound and thorough guidance. This was evident too in the students' files. The contribution of the technician is vital to the safe management of groups.
- 8.68 The quality of management and leadership is good. Departmental documentation is excellent, marking is effective, and assessment and reporting thorough. Assessment is used to build up pupil profiles and to analyse the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Departmental organisation is very good, and the health and safety policy and risk assessment are excellent. Resources are very good and the budget is generous, but the school acknowledges the inadequacy of the present accommodation. Attainment, progress, teaching and learning are all inhibited by the number of single periods and by the cramped space in most lessons.

Geography

- 8.69 Pupils achieve good standards. Pupils' attainment in public examinations is good in relation to their abilities. Over the last three years results at GCSE have been above those achieved in maintained selective schools. In 2005 over three-quarters of the grades were As and A*s. Results at A level have been well above the national average for maintained selective schools. The proportion of pupils passing A level at grades A or B is high and is improving. In 2005 all of the candidates achieved A or B grade at A level.
- 8.70 Pupils' attainment in geography is good in relation to their abilities in Years 7 to 9, and high in Years 10 and 11, and in the sixth form. They demonstrate a very good understanding of geographical principles and a well-developed sense of place at all levels. The pupils have an excellent grasp of applied skills. In a Year 8 the lesson the pupils were able to demonstrate good awareness of hurricane behaviour and impacts. Practical tracking skills were also employed. In a Year 13 lesson students discussed at length, and with clear understanding, the geographical implications of corporate imperialism.
- 8.71 Pupils make good progress in class and over time. Rapid progress was made in some areas. The pupils show very good progression in improving skills in cartography, written expression and discussion. Coursework files indicated excellent progression in practical fieldwork skills, and the GCSE level coursework on London Docklands allowed pupils of all abilities to improve their skills to produce top quality pieces of work. ICT is used extensively by the pupils at this level. The use of carefully standardized assessments encourages rapid progress for all pupils at their own level. Information from these assessments has enabled the development of modified schemes of work, thereby allowing all pupils to enhance their knowledge and understanding at all key stages. The work recently developed in this area has resulted in an acceleration of progress for all pupils.
- 8.72 Pupils' quality of learning and behaviour is good. There exists an extremely productive and supportive relationship between pupils and staff. Pupils work co-operatively together and share ideas in group discussion. The expectation of regular presentations by pupils develops confidence and motivation. A good example was seen in a Year 10 role-playing scenario focusing on development along the Queensland coastline.

- 8.73 The quality of teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and at times very good and frequently excellent in Years 10 to 11 and in the sixth form. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and communicate this with enthusiasm. Lessons predominantly have a clear structure and are well planned, with clear objectives. ICT is integrated into the schemes of work in many areas and is used effectively by staff to enhance pupils' learning. The complex mechanics behind plate tectonics were very well demonstrated with the ICT facilities in a Year 10 lesson. The very extensive virtual learning environment, which has been created by the department, is used with all year groups. Pupils can access a wide range of materials both from school and at home via the internet. The work by Year 7 on Brazil showed good evidence of very productive use of this facility. It is also used most productively, as a research portal, allowing pupils who have missed lessons to catch up work and is central to many of the topics and assignments used in all year groups. As this work has been developed it has resulted in greatly improved motivation and standards from the students.
- 8.74 Marking and feedback are done regularly; this allows pupils to develop their understanding and improve their report writing technique. Much of this is also now done electronically, allowing rapid feedback to the pupils and providing suggestions as to how to improve the work.
- 8.75 The department's five classrooms are sufficiently equipped with audio-visual and other resources, which are well used. The accommodation is located in a basement of the school and the availability of natural light is restricted, but this does not impact upon teaching and learning. The suite of personal computers in the geography resource centre is very well used by pupils of all ages. It is particularly useful for pupils doing coursework.
- 8.76 Leadership and management of the subject are excellent. The departmental documentation is comprehensive and up to date. There are regular and useful meetings. The team is mutually supportive, and initiatives are being developed in a variety of areas, including the pioneering of inter-school links and video conferencing. A comprehensive programme of field trips provides important teaching opportunities and considerable enrichment of lessons. They also help to reinforce the friendly and productive staff-pupil relationships.

History

- 8.77 Pupils achieve high standards. Results in public examinations are good in relation to pupils' abilities. GCSE results over the past three years have been well above the national average for all maintained schools and above those for maintained selective schools. Results for 2005 were excellent, with 9 out of 10 pupils attaining A or A*. A level results have been well above the national average for all maintained schools and above the average in maintained selective schools. Results in 2005 were very good, with 9 out of 10 students attaining A or B grade. Statistics from nationally standardised tests indicate that progress from Year 9 to GCSE is well above the national norm for all maintained schools.
- 8.78 Pupils' attainment at all age levels in the school is high. Pupils' ability to argue coherently, make incisive comment and draw on prior knowledge is very good. A Year 11 lesson on the Nazi wilderness years saw a high standard of comment on the role of the Wall Street Crash in Nazi resurrection. Written work in all years shows good knowledge, application and an ability to analyse. A Year 9 study on Thomas Paine, for example, produced original research and use of IT to a high level. Pupils can deploy data from different sources, such as statistics, to embellish a point.
- 8.79 Pupils' progress is good. In two-thirds of lessons observed progress was good or better and never less than satisfactory. Written work is of an increasing depth and complexity in all years. Writing skills are targeted to effect progress, often through alternative media. In Year

8 paragraphing is analysed and pupils are taught extended writing techniques. Sixth form files show good progress in assimilation and analysis of intricate topics. A Year 10 class used lyrics and composed songs to extend their understanding of Rasputin. Pupils apply prior knowledge effectively. Throughout all age levels progress is clearly made through discussion and targeted question and answer methods.

- 8.80 Pupils' attitude to work is good. In half of the lessons observed, pupils' attitude to work and behaviour was good or better. It was never less than sound. Pupils are positive in their approach, tolerant of others' views and always keen to be involved in discussion. They have a questioning approach which aids learning. The best respond positively to comments from other students. Pupils clearly enjoy the subject and this is reflected in the numbers opting for it at GCSE and A level. They are courteous to staff and appreciate the good rapport and use of humour.
- 8.81 The quality of teaching is good. Teaching was good or better in more than half of lessons observed. Lessons are well planned and teachers show excellent subject knowledge and draw pupils into discussions. A variety of media is used, including short video clips, analysis of paintings and ICT. The best lessons use carefully directed questions, are sharply focused and move at a fast, but varied, pace. A Year 7 class moved quickly through the role of monasticism and the church in relation to leisure in Tudor times and a Year 10 class assimilated details on franchise extension for women. In both cases understanding and progress were effected through rapid question and answer, and active pupil involvement. In the less effective lessons the pace was slow, and opportunities to further pupils' understanding were lost.
- 8.82 The departmental marking policy is applied consistently. Marking is regular, and contains constructive comments and hints for improvement. However, spelling and grammar errors are not always highlighted. In the Years 12 and 13 marking is thorough, constructive and well done. In these years, too, pupils' notes were often poorly organised, limiting their value for re-use or revision.
- 8.83 Management and leadership in the department are very good. Schemes of work are well planned, and effective new strategies to improve pupils' skills have been implemented. Departmental meetings are frequent and deal with strategic issues, although records of meetings are not maintained. There is a clear sense of team work in a well qualified and committed department. Pupils' work and posters on the walls emphasise the nature of the subject. A well used history library, complete with five computers, is a valuable and appreciated asset
- 8.84 The curriculum is enriched by regular trips to sites of historical interest, including the Flanders battlefields, London museums and lectures. A junior history society enables pupils' independent research to be presented to an audience, and the history society seeks to promote the school's concept of extended learning.

Modern Foreign Languages

- 8.85 Pupils achieve high standards in French, German and Spanish at all levels. Pupils' attainment at both GCSE and A Level is high in relation to their abilities. Results in GCSE and A level over the last three years in all three languages have been well above the national average for maintained selective schools. In 2005, all eleven pupils taking A level Spanish achieved grade A, which is outstanding.
- 8.86 Pupils' attainment in written work and in lessons observed in French is high in Years 7 to 8 and in the sixth form; it is always at least satisfactory in Years 9 to 11. In German and

Spanish, attainment is at least good at all levels, and at times high or very high. Pupils are particularly confident in expressing themselves orally and have highly developed listening skills. Good pronunciation is stressed and pupils' accents are generally good. Pupils succeed at all levels in communicating in the foreign language with the teacher; they are encouraged at all levels to communicate with each other and by the sixth form they have become confident enough to communicate accurately with each other in the foreign language. Particularly good examples were observed in a Year 8 French lesson discussing options for free-time activities, in a Year 13 German lesson where pupils acted out role plays on the theme of family relationships and in a Year 12 Spanish lesson where pupils read an article on smoking, discussed it among themselves in two groups and then summarised the main points in Spanish, all within a brief space of time. The highest levels of attainment were observed where pupils were encouraged to think independently and creatively.

- 8.87 Pupils' progress in French is rapid in Years 7 and 8 and good in Years 9 to 13. In German and Spanish, progress is rapid at all levels. In both German and Spanish, the relatively short amount of teaching time available over the three-year course to GCSE presents particular challenges and pupils rise to them. Most progress was made in lessons where pupils were appropriately challenged to master new language and use it actively, interacting both with each other and with the teacher. In a Year 12 French class, pupils showed considerable grammatical awareness in quickly acquiring an understanding of the use of the subjunctive with verbal expressions. In a Year 9 German lesson pupils responded well to a demanding exercise on word order; in a Year 11 Spanish lesson pupils listened to a tape recording and wrote responses in Spanish within tight time constraints. Progress in written work is good; there is considerable emphasis throughout on grammatical accuracy and by the latter stages of Year 11 most pupils are able to master complex language structures. In the sixth form most pupils write essays fluently and accurately; the very best write with considerable sophistication of expression.
- 8.88 The quality of learning and behaviour is good overall in all three languages and in a number of cases very good. Pupils are well motivated, concentrate well and work collaboratively. The highest quality of learning was observed in lessons where the tasks were clearly defined and challenging. In a Year 11 German class pupils responded particularly well to tasks requiring them to create sentences using the imperfect subjunctive; in a Year 7 beginners' French class pupils responded enthusiastically to a role play task on pets followed by the opportunity for peer group evaluation. Written work is good and at times very good, although the quality of presentation of written work and organisation of files and workbooks are extremely variable.
- 8.89 The quality of teaching is good overall in all three languages, and never less than sound. All teachers are well qualified, confident in the spoken language and enthusiastic about their subject. The best teaching observed was well planned, containing a variety of appropriately chosen activities enthusiastically delivered at a lively pace. In a Year 8 French class on daily routines a combination of speaking, listening and reading tasks, involving individual, pair and full group work, resulted in a lively lesson leading to high levels of achievement. In a Year 9 Spanish lesson involving the agreement of nouns and adjectives, the rules were explained with the use of flash cards and the pupils then moved briskly to practice in pairs followed by listening comprehension. Teaching was less successful when there was less variety of activity and opportunities were missed to make full use of the foreign language in communicating with pupils. Work is set and marked regularly, and is generally appropriate to the age and ability levels of the pupils; however, in all age groups pupils' written work lacks detailed explanations for how to improve and a clear indication of what individual marks mean. Reports are suitably detailed and often highlight not only strengths but also key areas for improvement.

- 8.90 The leadership and management of the department are good, with the head of modern languages (who also coordinates the French teaching) having overall responsibility for policy and direction, and more routine issues relating to German and Spanish being delegated to the co-ordinators of those languages. Regular minuted meetings ensure good communication and there is a good structure of support for newly qualified teachers. The work of the department is significantly enhanced by oral classes given to senior pupils by native speakers. The department is enthusiastic about the opportunities presented by ICT and attractive materials are regularly put onto the school intranet to encourage pupils' independent learning.
- 8.91 The curriculum is enriched by a variety of well supported trips and cultural activities, including study trips to Spain, exchanges in both France and Germany, a biennial modern languages evening and a French debating society. Members of Year 9 also have the opportunity to opt into a weekly beginners' course in Japanese.

Short Subject Reports

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

Drama

- 8.92 Four lessons were observed, one each in Years 7, 9, 11 and 12. A selection of pupil notebooks were scrutinised, drama rehearsals were visited and a discussion was held with the head of department
- 8.93 The quality of the teaching observed was good, and in some lessons very good. It reflected clear planning and objectives, high expectations and a suitable balance between teacher explanation, pupil practical involvement and discussion and evaluation. Emphasis was suitably placed both on understanding theoretical concepts and on personal response.
- 8.94 The quality of pupils' learning was very good. They responded positively at all levels and showed a high level of motivation and enthusiasm. In the Year 11 devised drama lesson, one group observed a second group's performance and was able to criticise it constructively and with intelligent reference to the taught theory. In the Year 12 lesson, pupils' preparation of a scene based on *The Shadow of a Gunman* showed a high level of sensitivity and understanding. The pupils' ability in all lessons to listen carefully to others, respond appropriately to criticism and work collaboratively was evidence of their knowledge and involvement.
- 8.95 The facilities for drama teaching in both the theatre and the dedicated classroom are good and there are a wide range of opportunities, enthusiastically embraced by many pupils, to be involved in school productions.

ICT

- 8.96 Four lessons were observed, one in each of Years 7 and 11, and two in Year 9. Two discussions were held with the head of department and a sample of books was scrutinised.
- 8.97 The quality of teaching was very good. Teaching approaches and strategies successfully engaged pupils with a wide range of background ICT skills. Explanations were succinct, direct, and did not detract from the pace of lessons.
- 8.98 The quality of learning was good. Pupils were enthusiastic learners and keen to progress through experience. They listened carefully, and applied the knowledge absorbed, using it to

solve problems. In a Year 9 class pupils using Lego Dacta confidently adjusted the command tasks to alter the speed of a fan and frequency of a flashing light. They cooperated well, and those who were more experienced with computers did not attempt to dominate.

- 8.99 Provision for academic ICT is good. The department is sited in two separate refurbished rooms containing a total of 57 computers.

Music

- 8.100 Three lessons were observed, pupils' work was scrutinised and discussions were held with the director of music. Pupils' rehearsals and a concert were attended.

- 8.101 The quality of teaching was very good. The department's schemes of work were carefully planned and the lessons were well structured. A good variety of techniques were used, including listening to music, analysis, musical dictation, discussion and question and answer. Good use was made of the facilities in the music centre to develop musical skills from an early age, for example in listening to music from different periods and countries. Very good relationships existed between pupils and staff, so discipline was easily managed.

- 8.102 The pupils' attitude to learning was good. Pupils attending examination courses were often talented musicians, keen to broaden their awareness of music, for example in learning theory or history. Many were highly motivated and the atmosphere was conducive to prompt response and willingness to tackle tasks set. Pupils were encouraged to try things out, so were not afraid to make mistakes.

- 8.103 Many pupils make use of the music centre in their free time to practise, make music, compose or listen to music. The teaching and learning of music is very significantly enhanced by a strong team of peripatetic teachers and a very rich and varied programme of trips and extra-curricular activities.

- 8.104 The department benefits greatly from the work of the administrator, which frees the teachers to give time to the pupils.

Physical Education (PE)

- 8.105 Three lessons were observed, a classroom based lesson as well as a practical training session in Year 10 and a classroom based lesson in Year 13. A discussion was held with the Head of Department, and a sample of pupils' files was scrutinised.

- 8.106 The quality of the teaching observed was always at least satisfactory, and mostly good; theoretical ideas were taught in conjunction with practical observations or the development of skills, such as different techniques for coaching football.

- 8.107 Pupils clearly showed interest in the subject, and were well motivated during the lessons. They worked well in discussions, and made good progress in mastering some basic shots in badminton. They kept full notes on their work, and wrote at some length in response to questions on human physiology.

- 8.108 The range of sports offered in Year 10 is wide; a unit on badminton had been preceded by one on swimming, and would be followed by one on outdoor sports.

Philosophy

- 8.109 Three lessons were observed and some files of Year 12 and 13 pupils were scrutinised. There was discussion with two of the teachers.

- 8.110 The quality of the teaching overall was good. Work was well planned and handouts were pertinent and stimulating for the students' interest as well as for the purposes of the examinations, for example a witty cartoon on Nietzsche.
- 8.111 The department's teachers are experienced, enthusiastic and knowledgeable. They actively engaged the students in thoughtful debate and harnessed their enthusiasm for the subject as a whole, for example in the Year 12 lesson directed at rationalism there was also discussion of Plato's definition of belief and knowledge. Lessons were well paced and incorporated a variety of activities allowing the students to make good progress.
- 8.112 Pupils were keen and focussed, and the quality of learning and behaviour was good. The students' respect and support for each others' views was apparent and this aided the learning process.
- 8.113 The department is cohesive and there is a good team spirit. The teachers have high expectations of their students and are justifiably proud of the department's achievements and the standing developed over the last three years.

Politics

- 8.114 Politics is taught in Years 12 and 13. Four lessons were observed, two in each year group. A discussion was held with the head of department and pupil files were scrutinised.
- 8.115 In nearly all lessons observed, the quality of the teaching was good. In the remainder it was sound. Teachers had clear aims and high expectations of the pupils, who were challenged to think and justify their reasoning. A Year 12 lesson used the morning's political news successfully as the way into a discussion on the powers of parliament and the role of the sovereign. The best lessons moved at a fast pace, although just occasionally not all pupils followed the discussions.
- 8.116 Written work was marked thoroughly and with appropriate comment for improvement.
- 8.117 Pupils' approach to learning was very positive. They were clearly engaged in the subject, were questioning and responded well to demanding new concepts such as proportional representation. Pupils' learning was evident in their application of background knowledge, for example in a discussion on the role of the London mayor and electoral procedure. Pupils took effective notes unprompted and used them in discussion. The relationship between the staff and the pupils was excellent.
- 8.118 The department is currently housed in portacabins which are poorly sound-proofed. A plan exists to relocate them to improved conditions as part of the building projects.

Achievement and Quality in Activities

- 8.119 Achievement and quality in activities are very good. The range and variety of physical, recreational and academic activities makes this area a great strength of the school. Extra-curricular opportunities are provided for the varying ages and abilities of the pupils and make a significant contribution to their personal development. Pupils throughout the school derive a great deal of enjoyment through participation in these activities, and this enhances the ethos of friendly cooperation.
- 8.120 There is a wide range of sporting activities, including team and individual sports with an extensive competitive fixture list. Standards attained are high. The school has an inclusive philosophy, however, which means fixtures will often involve C and D teams in matches representing the school. Recent sporting success includes the selection of boys to represent

the county in rugby, cricket, cross country and athletics. Pupils can also improve their health and fitness through personal training programmes.

- 8.121 The quality of musical activities is also excellent. There is a great variety of orchestras, choirs and ensembles, which operate regularly and involve a large proportion of pupils. Almost every lunchtime and evening after school has some musical activity taking place. Many of these to lead to public performances and shows.
- 8.122 Drama is also extremely important in the school. Drama groups and workshops are regularly held and in many cases these are run by Year 12 pupils. The school is able to put on its own full-scale productions and there is currently a great deal of effort going into the planning, preparation and rehearsals of *West Side Story*, for senior pupils, and *The Wizard of Oz* for junior boys.
- 8.123 The busy programme of other societies and clubs promotes a broader interest in academic areas, as do competitions such as the mathematics Olympiad. Recreational activities include clubs such as the skateboarding group. One of the most popular activities observed, as part of the school's fund-raising programme, was the comedy club held in the Lund Theatre featuring a headline act from outside school. This event, like many others, was run by the pupils, with staff guidance.
- 8.124 Visits and expeditions at home and abroad are also available to the pupils. Last academic year the school ran an art trip, a battlefields visit, two ski trips, a sports tour and a music tour, each to different parts of Europe. Regular exchanges, trips and study visits take place for students of modern languages. There was also a choir and orchestra trip to New York.
- 8.125 Tutors and Deme wardens monitor the pupils' involvement in activities, and detailed comments are included in reports.
- 8.126 This varied programme is successful due to the considerable amount of staff time which is invested in the running of all the activities. The pre-inspection questionnaire to parents revealed a very high level of satisfaction with the extra-curricular activities offered at the school.

9. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 9.1 The inspection was carried out from 14th to 18th November, 2005. All subjects of the curriculum were inspected and all members of the teaching staff in school were observed teaching. However, the size of the team did not permit all subjects to be reported on in full. The following subjects do not have full reports in Section 8: drama, ICT, music, PE, philosophy and politics. The inspectors visited 168 lessons or parts of lessons, examined extensive samples of work by pupils of different abilities in each year and held formal discussions with these pupils as well as informal discussions with other pupils. They attended four assemblies and twenty registration sessions. They observed numerous extra-curricular and sporting activities. They held discussions with 35 teaching and 18 support staff at various levels in the school. They analysed the responses of 253 parents to a questionnaire distributed in advance of the inspection. They examined a wide range of documentation made available by the school.

List of Inspectors

Mr A Silcock	Reporting Inspector. Retired Headmaster, HMC school
Miss V Barrett	Deputy Head, HMC school
Mr S Cole	Headmaster, HMC school
Mr A Cooper	Professional Tutor, HMC school
Mr P Fear	Deputy Head, HMC school
Mr S Morris	Deputy Head, HMC school
Miss B O'Connor	Headmistress, GSA school
Dr J Penny	Head of Science, HMC school
Mr N Plater	Director of Studies, HMC school
Dr P Scott	Headmaster, HMC school
Mr D Stockwell	Retired Head of Department, HMC school
Dr P Sutherland	Head of Department, HMC school