

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS COUNCIL
(ISC)**

INSPECTION OF

ST HELEN'S COLLEGE, HILLINGDON

By the

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE
(ISI)**

on

March 7th – 11th, 2005

MAIN REPORT

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

St Helen's College, Hillingdon

Full Name of the School	St Helen's College		
DfES Number	312/6058		
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Names of Heads	Mr D A and Mrs G R Crehan		
Proprietors	Mr D A and Mrs G R Crehan		
Age Range	3-11	Gender	Co-educational
Number of Pupils	338	Number of Boarders	None
Inspection Dates	March 7th – 11th 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 163(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills has accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003.

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

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1. MAIN FINDINGS

Overall Summary

- 1.1 St Helen's College provides a haven of harmony in which pupils thrive and achieve well in their entrance examinations to academically selective senior schools. Much of the success stems from the sensitive leadership of the two heads and the support of a loyal and hard-working teaching and non-teaching staff. All are forward-looking, ambitious to improve, and aware of what could be done better. The broad curriculum enriches the lives of the pupils, though some subjects lack sufficient time and not all assessment is used effectively. Pupils are happy in a very caring community that promotes traditional values.

What the School Does Well

- 1.2 The strengths of the school include:
- pupils' attainment and progress are good, and good results are achieved in entrance examinations to academically selective senior schools;
 - pupils' skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing, numeracy and presentation of work are strong; and high quality art, drama, music and sport enrich the curriculum;
 - attitudes to learning and behaviour are very good: pupils are proud of their school, they uphold its ethos, and are its best ambassadors;
 - the quality of the loyal, committed and hard-working teaching and non-teaching staff is very good;
 - the provision for pupils' personal development and pastoral care is very good;
 - leadership by the two heads is decisive, swift and sensitive.

What the School Should Do Better

- 1.3 The school has no significant weaknesses but consideration should be given to the following issues:
- information from the assessment and recording pupils' attainment is not always used to accelerate pupils' progress, to inform future teaching and to plan curriculum developments;
 - some subjects, notably science, drama and ICT, have insufficient curriculum time;
 - effective middle tier leadership by subject and aspect co-ordinators is limited by high work loads that make great demands on time and energy;
 - teachers lack the expertise and confidence to incorporate information and communication technology more effectively in their teaching.

Standards of Attainment and Progress in Subjects

- 1.4 Pupils' attainment and progress throughout the school are good. All pupils do well whatever their background.
- 1.5 Attainment by the end of the Foundation Stage is good. Pupils make good progress and all are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the time they are 5 years of age. In Years 1 to 6, pupils' attainment and progress are good.

- 1.6 Attainment in national tests at age 7 and 11 is good. Results in national tests at age 7 over the last three years have been far above the average for all maintained primary schools. Results in national tests at age 11 over the last three years have been far above the average for all maintained primary schools. The school has a good record of results in entrance examinations at 11+ to academically selective senior schools.
- 1.7 Attainment is high in mathematics, French, music and physical education (PE) for Years 3 to 6. It is good at the Foundation Stage and in English, science, art & design, information and communication technology (ICT), PE for Years 1 and 2, and religious education (RE). Insufficient evidence was available in other subjects to assess attainment and progress.
- 1.8 Progress is rapid in mathematics, French, music and PE. It is good at the Foundation Stage and in English, art & design, ICT and RE. It is sound in science.
- 1.9 Pupils with particular learning needs achieve good standards and their progress is good.

The Quality of Pupils' Learning, Attitudes and their Behaviour

- 1.10 The quality of pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour is very good.
- 1.11 Pupils are motivated and respond positively. They are very competent learners who work effectively on their own at an early age. Pupils concentrate fully and become engrossed in their work. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. Pupils relate very well to each other, regardless of background or ethnic group.

The Quality of Teaching

- 1.12 The quality of teaching is good. Teaching observed was occasionally excellent, was very good or good in over three-quarters of lessons, and was only rarely less than sound. Teaching is appropriate to the needs of all pupils in all subjects, and it contributes particularly well to attainment and progress at the Foundation Stage and in English in Years 1 and 2, and SEN. Teachers' knowledge is good overall, though many lack the expertise to incorporate ICT effectively in their lessons, and pupil management is always good. The expectations of pupils are high, planning and organisation are always good, and the use of time and resources is efficient.
- 1.13 Teaching quality is very good at the Foundation Stage and in French, music, PE in Years 3 to 6, special education needs (SEN) and Spanish. It is good in English, mathematics, science, art & design, history, PE in Years 1 and 2, and RE. Teaching in geography and ICT is sound.

Other Aspects of the School

Attendance

- 1.14 The level of attendance is good and very few unauthorised absences have occurred over the last year. The school meets legal requirements.

Assessment and Recording

- 1.15 The methods for assessing and recording pupils' achievements, progress and needs are good. The school has a detailed and effective system but, although there are examples of very good practice, not all teachers and subject co-ordinators use the copious data to help improve pupils' attainment and progress through changes to planning and teaching.

- 1.16 Standards of marking are generally good, with almost all teachers adopting the school policy, and helps pupils to make good progress. Pupils have a good understanding of the assessment criteria.
- 1.17 Individual education plans (IEPs) for those in need of learning support are detailed and helpful.

Curriculum

- 1.18 The curriculum is sound. The broad education is well suited to all pupils, but the balance is uneven. English dominates teaching time at the expense of other subjects, notably science, drama and ICT. The curriculum is well planned and provides effective continuity of work and progression of learning. Policies and schemes of work for each subject cater for the requirements of pupils with different abilities. There is equality of access for all pupils, and those with learning needs are well supported. Extra-curricular provision is good.

Teaching and Non-teaching Staff

- 1.19 The quality of the teaching and non-teaching staff is very good and is a strength of the school. Their numbers are sufficient and all are suitably qualified and experienced for the roles they undertake. They are effectively deployed. Teachers communicate and work well together and are dedicated to the education, care and welfare of their pupils. All are very good role models. Teachers' assistants and non-teaching staff make a highly valued contribution to the effective smooth running of the school.
- 1.20 Professional development arrangements are sound, but few opportunities are provided for subject specific training and in the use of ICT across the curriculum.

Resources for Learning

- 1.21 The quality of resources for learning is sound. ICT resources are sound, and provision in art & design, music, PE and science is good. Provision of other resources is sound. Textbooks are up to date and support learning. There is a wide range of suitable resources at the Foundation Stage.

Libraries

- 1.22 Library provision is sound. Libraries are well used and support many areas of the curriculum effectively. The number and range of books is limited, but the quality is good and there is ease of access for all the pupils.

Premises and Accommodation

- 1.23 The quality of the premises and accommodation is sound. The very best use is made of the available space on the two sites, to maximise their potential.

Links with Parents and the Community

- 1.24 Links with parents and the community are very good. An excellent response to the parental questionnaire, completed prior to the inspection, showed that parents are strongly supportive of the school. Pupils' experiences are greatly enriched by very good links with the community.

Pupils' Personal Development

- 1.25 The provision for pupils' personal development is very good. Arrangements for spiritual development are good, and those for moral, social and cultural development are very good.

Pastoral Care

- 1.26 Provision for pastoral care, support, welfare and health and safety is very good. After school care and the holiday club provide a very good environment.

Governance and Management

- 1.27 The leadership and management of the school are good. Leadership by the two heads is very good. Routine administration and monitoring are efficient and communication is excellent. Effective middle tier leadership by subject and aspect co-ordinators is limited by high work loads that make great demands on time and energy.
- 1.28 The school has a strong sense of purpose. It promotes the all-round development of its pupils, sets high expectations, and encourages a love of learning.

Achievement and Quality in Activities

- 1.29 The overall achievement and quality in activities are good. A wide range of activities in sport, music and drama contributes to pupils' personal development.

Progress Made by the School since its Last Inspection

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

Compliance with the Regulations for Registration

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

Actions Required for Compliance with the Regulatory Requirements

- 1.31 In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:
- (1) provide an additional toilet for girls in the Upper School and two additional washbasins. [Regulation 5.(k)];
 - (2) install a washbasin in the medical room and provide toilet facilities in or reasonably near the medical room. [Regulation 5.(l)]

- 1.32 In addition to the actions set out above, the school is asked to address any issues highlighted in *What the School Should Do Better*. These are set out as recommendations for the school in Section 2 of the report.

2. MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The main recommendations are listed below. The numbers in brackets refer to the relevant paragraphs in the body of the report.
- R1 Use information gained from the assessment and recording pupils' attainment to accelerate pupils' progress, to inform future teaching and to plan curriculum developments. (5.5, 5.7, 7.8, 8.23, 8.30, 8.51)
 - R2 Provide additional curriculum time for some subjects, notably science, drama and ICT. (5.9, 5.10, 8.23, 8.35, 8.45)
 - R3 Increase opportunities for effective middle tier leadership by subject and aspect co-ordinators by reducing the demands on their time and energy from other responsibilities. (5.11, 7.3, 8.30, 8.35, 8.51)
 - R4 Provide suitable training to boost teachers' confidence to incorporate more information and communication technology in their teaching. (5.2, 5.3, 5.13, 5.20, 5.23, 7.5, 8.22, 8.29, 8.51, 8.55, 8.67, 8.71)
 - R5 Comply fully with the Regulatory Requirements. (1.34, 5.32)

3. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 3.1 St Helen's College is a co-educational day school for pupils aged 3 to 11 years situated on two adjacent sites in a residential area of Hillingdon close to parkland. It was founded in 1920 and since then it has been a private proprietary school; the joint heads are the current proprietors. The school places a strong emphasis on family values and, although a Christian school, it welcomes children from all faiths and of no faith.
- 3.2 There were 338 pupils (176 girls and 162 boys) on roll at the time of the inspection: 139 in the Lower School, 86 in the Middle School, and 113 in the Upper School. Most live locally, and about half come from Asian, continental European, West Indian or African backgrounds. Informal support is provided in class for pupils who need help with the English language.
- 3.3 There is partial selection on entry to ensure that the pupils are well matched to the school's curriculum, but the range of ability on intake remains very broad. Non-verbal reasoning scores show, however, that by the time pupils leave the school, their average ability is well above that of the national average. If pupils are performing in line with their abilities, their results will be well above the average for all maintained primary schools. The special needs teachers work with 19 pupils; there are no statemented pupils. Almost all pupils win places at academically selective maintained schools or academically selective independent schools.
- 3.4 The school aims to promote a love of learning, to develop the full potential of each pupil, to foster talents and interests, and to instil the Christian virtues. It seeks to work closely with parents to create a family atmosphere.
- 3.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

Key Indicators

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

Subject		Most recent year, 2004		Average for the last three years, 2002-2004	
		Level 2 or higher (%)	Level 3 or higher (%)	Level 2 or higher (%)	Level 3 or higher (%)
Reading	Boys	100	72	100	65
	Girls	100	74	100	74
	All	100	73	100	70
Writing	Boys	100	20	100	13
	Girls	100	36	100	23
	All	100	29	100	19
Mathematics	Boys	100	76	100	67
	Girls	100	70	100	67
	All	100	73	100	67

- 3.7 Externally marked National Curriculum Assessments at age 11 (Key Stage 2):

Subject		Most recent year, 2004		Average for the last three years, 2002-2004	
		Level 4 or higher (%)	Level 5 or higher (%)	Level 4 or higher (%)	Level 5 or higher (%)
English	Boys	100	50	100	63
	Girls	95	63	98	74
	All	97	58	99	69
Mathematics	Boys	100	57	100	79
	Girls	89	63	96	70
	All	94	61	98	74
Science	Boys	100	86	100	84
	Girls	100	79	100	83
	All	100	82	100	84

3.8 Attendance for 2003/2004:

	Authorised	Unauthorised
Percentage absence	2.9	0.2

3.9 Exclusions Over the Previous 12 Months:

Temporary exclusions	Permanent exclusions
1	0

4. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and Progress

- 4.1 Pupils achieve good standards and their progress is good. All pupils do well whatever their background.
- 4.2 Attainment by the end of the Foundation Stage is good. Pupils make good progress and all are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the time they are 5 years of age. In Years 1 to 6, pupils' attainment and progress are good.
- 4.3 Attainment in national tests at age 7 and 11 is good. Results in national tests at age 7 over the last three years have been far above the average for all maintained primary schools. Standards in reading and mathematics have been particularly high. Results in national tests at age 11 over the last three years have been far above the average for all maintained primary schools. Standards in English, mathematics and science are all high. The school has a good record of results in entrance examinations at 11+ to academically selective senior schools. Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are good at all levels.
- 4.4 Attainment in current work is high in mathematics, French, music and in PE for Years 3 to 6. It is good at the Foundation Stage and in English, science, art & design, ICT, PE for Years 1 and 2, and religious education (RE). No assessments were made in geography, history, Spanish and special education needs (SEN) where there was insufficient evidence.
- 4.5 Progress in lessons and from year group to year group is rapid in mathematics, French, music and PE. It is good at the Foundation Stage and in English, art & design, ICT and RE, and sound in science. At its best, rapid progress is based on effective teaching and effective learning. Girls make equivalent progress to boys, as do pupils from minority backgrounds.
- 4.6 Pupils with particular learning needs achieve good standards and their progress is good. Beginning at the Foundation Stage, pupils with learning needs are identified by teachers and parents, are assessed by specialist teachers and, where appropriate, referred to an educational psychologist, and receive good individual and group tuition as and when necessary. Helpful individual education plans (IEPs) are prepared so that the information is shared with all teachers to guide their lesson preparation. Plans are in place to identify gifted and talented pupils, and to challenge them appropriately.

Quality of Pupils' Learning, Attitudes and Behaviour

- 4.7 The quality of pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour is very good throughout the whole school and contributes significantly to attainment and progress.
- 4.8 Pupils are very well motivated, and they respond positively and quickly to instructions. They listen well, but they are not simply passive learners; they ask relevant questions and have excellent communication skills. They are very competent learners who work effectively on their own at an early stage. Pupils concentrate fully and become engrossed in their work, often for extended periods. Learning is often seen as fun, and pupils are proud to share their work with others.
- 4.9 Pupils have good attitudes to their work. They take pride in completing it well, and take pleasure in co-operating with their peers and teachers. Examples of good collaboration were

evident when groups of pupils worked together to produce music, or when pupils in Year 6 investigated the effect of the angle of sunlight on the temperature of the earth's surface.

- 4.10 The behaviour of the pupils in lessons and around the school is very good; they are unfailingly polite and courteous, making visitors most welcome to their community. Pupils' conduct is very good at breaks, lunch-times and activity sessions. They arrive promptly for lessons and are neatly turned out. From an early age they are well organised and equipped so that no time is wasted. Pupils show very good consideration for the materials and the resources they use, and value and care for their environment.
- 4.11 Throughout the school, regardless of background or ethnic group, pupils relate well to each other. They respect the feelings of others and treat all opinions and views with consideration. Older pupils show great care and unprompted consideration for the younger ones and are happy to assume responsibility when required.

Attendance

- 4.12 The level of attendance in the school is good and very few unauthorised absences have occurred over the last year. Registration, morning and afternoon, is carried out efficiently. Both registration and the school's admission procedures fully satisfy regulatory requirements. The school day and all lessons start punctually and movement about the school is very orderly.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

- 5.1 The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Teaching observed was occasionally excellent, was very good or good in over three-quarters of the lessons, and was only rarely less than sound.
- 5.2 Teaching quality is very good at the Foundation Stage and in French, music, and PE in Years 3 to 6. The quality is good in English, mathematics, science, art & design, history, PE in Years 1 and 2, and RE. Teaching in geography and ICT is sound.
- 5.3 Teaching is appropriate to the needs of all pupils in all subjects, and it contributes particularly well to attainment and progress at the Foundation Stage and in English in Years 1 and 2, and SEN. Here able pupils are challenged effectively and those with learning needs are well supported. Teachers' knowledge is good overall, and is a strength in Foundation Stage class teaching and in mathematics, French, music, science, PE and RE. Most teachers, however, lack confidence to incorporate ICT in their lessons. Pupil management is always good, and is a strength of teaching. A very good rapport exists between teachers and pupils. Teachers' expectations of pupils are high, especially in English in Years 1 and 2, science in Years 1 and 2, and music, where stimulating teaching captures the pupils' attention. Planning and organisation are always good, and are particular strengths at the Foundation Stage and in English, mathematics, science, art & design and PE. Lessons in these subjects have clear direction and purpose. The use of time and resources is efficient, and is particularly effective at the Foundation Stage and in mathematics in Years 3 to 6, science, art & design, French, music, PE and SEN. Information from overall assessment is used at the Foundation Stage to plan teaching so that pupils can progress faster, but this is not general practice in most subjects.

Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for teaching?

- 5.4 Yes.

Assessment and Recording

- 5.5 The methods for assessing and recording of pupils' achievements, progress and needs are good, being thorough, consistent and accurate. The school has a detailed and effective system for monitoring the progress and levels of achievement of all its pupils but, although there are examples of very good practice, the use made of such information is not yet embedded across the whole school.
- 5.6 Assessment policies are thorough and appropriate, and practice is based on efficient and detailed collating and recording on a spreadsheet that is updated by teachers and accessible to all staff. Assessment is on three levels; short-term from lessons and homework; medium-term includes frequent class tests, end of unit tests and regular grading; and long-term from National Curriculum tests and commercial programmes. This produces copious data that is accurately recorded and used by some, but by no means all, teachers and subject co-ordinators to plan teaching and the curriculum. The process is monitored by the deputy head.
- 5.7 Standards of marking are generally good, with almost all teachers adopting the school policy, and helps pupils to make good progress. However, the policy is not uniformly applied in English, and neither is it monitored in many subjects. Pupils have a good understanding of the

assessment criteria. Stickers for good work and effort are regularly awarded. Written and oral feedback on work is positive, encouraging and constructive, and helps pupils to make progress. Most teachers mark regularly and thoroughly, giving pupils a pride in their work and a desire to produce their best. There are particularly good examples of helpful marking in Year 3 for geography. In PE, pupils are encouraged to assess their own performance and that of others in order to identify strengths and weaknesses for future informal target-setting.

- 5.8 Teachers of SEN and in the Foundation Stage make effective use of assessment to set targets for individuals and groups, to plan curriculum development, and to inform future lesson plans and IEPs. It is also used to place pupils in appropriate sets for mathematics in Years 3 to 6. The progress of all pupils is tracked and compared with national norms: this is helpful in highlighting problems and successes for individuals and whole forms. Target-setting for individuals is particularly good in the Lower School but this is not yet common practice for older pupils. IEPs for those in need of learning support are detailed and helpful.

Curriculum

- 5.9 The curriculum provided by the school is sound. The broad education is well suited to all pupils across the school's full age and ability ranges, but the balance of the curriculum is uneven.
- 5.10 The curriculum at the Foundation Stage is very good. It is broad and balanced and contributes effectively to the attainment and progress of the pupils as they approach the early learning goals. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 is based on the National Curriculum. RE, French and some Spanish add breadth. Personal, social and health education is addressed in subject teaching and through Circle Time, Golden Time, assemblies and cross-curricular activities. However, the curriculum is insufficiently balanced. English dominates teaching time at the expense of other subjects, notably science, drama and ICT. Most subjects are taught by class teachers, with the addition of specialists for drama, French, music, PE, science and Spanish. This arrangement is appropriate and effective.
- 5.11 The curriculum is generally well planned and provides effective continuity of work and progression of learning. Policies and schemes of work for each subject cater for the requirements of pupils with different abilities. Subject co-ordinators' responsibilities extend throughout the school but heavy work-loads limit their contributions on strategic planning to informal discussions at staff meetings and representations to team leaders for transmission to senior management. This reduces their effectiveness.
- 5.12 All pupils have equality of access and opportunity. Pupils with learning needs are well supported, and plans are in place to introduce extension work in all subjects for the gifted and talented. Well chosen English programmes of study and setting in mathematics from Year 3 lead the way, allowing the more able to be challenged and the weaker to be taught in smaller classes. Links between the two school sites are minimal, though the experience of some staff in teaching all ages of pupils contributes to continuity of the curriculum. Teachers meet annually to discuss the pupils they are handing over and all assessments are recorded centrally.
- 5.13 Activities in the generous break at lunch-time and after school enrich the curriculum, though the choice on offer excludes activities based on ICT, mathematics and science.

Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the curriculum?

- 5.14 Yes.

Teaching and Non-teaching Staff

- 5.15 The quality of the teaching and non-teaching staff is very good and is a strength of the school. Their numbers are sufficient and all are suitably qualified and experienced for the roles they undertake. They are effectively deployed.
- 5.16 Teachers communicate and work well together and are dedicated to the education, care and welfare of their pupils. They are well qualified for their class teaching roles and have a good balance of age and experience. Subject specialists at the Foundation Stage and in drama, French, music, PE and Spanish make a very good contribution to the quality of education pupils receive.
- 5.17 All members of staff are very good role models for pupils and this positively aids the educational standards achieved. Teaching assistants add significantly to the overall quality of provision. A wealth of support staff is employed - administrative, financial, maintenance, catering, playground supervision, welfare and after-school care – and all make a highly valued contribution to the effective smooth running of the school. The planned appointment of technical support in ICT and administrative support in the Lower School will strengthen the team appropriately.
- 5.18 The staffing ratios for pupils under five years of age fully comply with government guidelines and requisite background checks have been made on all adults working at the school. Checks with the Criminal Records Bureau have also been initiated for parent-helpers in line with the schools' policy.
- 5.19 Appointment procedures are good. Relevant contracts, clear job descriptions and a helpful staff handbook aid effective employment. The induction policy is carefully constructed and welcoming policies and practice work well, but subsequent mentoring of new staff is inconsistent. The principles of the new appraisal programme are sound.
- 5.20 Professional development arrangements are sound. The provision of in-service training linked to welfare is very good. Programmes are in place to develop several aspects of effective staff development, but fewer opportunities are provided for subject specific training and in the use of ICT across the curriculum. The budget for training has been increased and a well-structured programme links training needs to the school's development plans.

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

- 5.21 Yes.

Resources for Learning

- 5.22 The quality of resources for learning is sound. Books, equipment and materials to support teaching and learning are adequate in quality and quantity and, in general, used effectively.
- 5.23 ICT resources are sound. There are 25 laptops based in the science room, together with an interactive whiteboard. One classroom has an interactive whiteboard. ICT lessons take place in the science room, and the computers are well used on those occasions. The laptops can be transferred to other rooms and used on a wireless connection, but the difficulties of arranging and setting up the system mean that ICT is little used across the curriculum other than at the Foundation Stage. There are 5 networked computers in the Upper School and 6 stand-alone machines in the Lower School; the latter are mainly used for word processing, and displays of

work are suitably enhanced. A scanner and a digital camera are available. All pupils in the Upper School have supervised access to the internet. There are no ICT facilities for research in the library nor any CD-ROMs or DVDs. A data-logger cannot be used as it has yet to be connected.

- 5.24 Provision of other resources is sound. Textbooks are up to date and support learning. English, mathematics and science, for example, have benefited from the purchase of a number of published schemes, and mathematics has a range of practical apparatus. Resources for PE are very good, and well used. The science room is well resourced with appropriate equipment, including a TV and VCR; music has a wide range of instruments, particularly percussion; and French and music make good use of tape recorders. Provision of resources for art and design is good. There is a wide range of suitable resources at the Foundation Stage, including construction toys, sand and water, reading areas, playhouses, large outdoor toys and role-play areas. Equipment in the Lower School hall is sound.
- 5.25 Subject co-ordinators are required to make a case to the heads to justify any request for additional resources to be purchased, and to date this has not caused a problem. The lack of delegated budgets does, however, hinder forward planning.

Libraries

- 5.26 Library provision is sound throughout the school. Libraries are well used and support many areas of the curriculum effectively, but this is in spite of rather than because of the quality of facilities.
- 5.27 Pupils in Years 2 to 6 have access to books in the Upper School library and in classrooms. The number and range of books is limited, but the quality is good and there is ease of access for all the pupils. Books in some areas – mathematics, PE and science, for example – are in short supply. There are 12 sets of class-readers, allowing three books for each pupil during each year. The room housing the library is small, lacks working areas, has no seating for quiet reading, and lacks all resources associated with ICT and audiovisual aids. Colour coding, rather than formal indexing, is used. Plans are in place to move the library to a recently purchased building. Pupils in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 use the Lower School library and classroom collections.
- 5.28 Good use is made of the libraries, with relatively high levels of borrowing. There is a strong culture of reading throughout the school, well supported by teachers and good management by librarians. Year 6 pupils act as the librarians, with the English subject co-ordinator overseeing their work, buying stock and planning development. The library is open at lunch-times for fiction borrowing for pupils in Year 5 and below, and for more senior pupils at all times. Class teachers also take their pupils to the library. Pupils in Reception and Year 1 take home each week a book from the library, alternating fiction with non-fiction. This very good practice helps to inculcate a love for books from an early age.

Premises and Accommodation

- 5.29 The quality of premises and accommodation is sound, and is appropriate for the number of pupils, their abilities, ages and gender. The facilities are used well and enable the curriculum to be taught effectively.
- 5.30 The very best use is made of the available space on the two sites to maximise their potential. The buildings have been carefully adapted to provide suitable accommodation, and all are in

good decorative order with adequate furnishings. Buildings and grounds are well maintained, and colourful and imaginative displays in classrooms and corridors enhance learning. The new Lower School hall has made a good impact on the quality of provision. Many facilities for PE are provided off-site but these are very close and suitable for their purpose. Recently acquired property will enable the school to further develop its curriculum provision.

- 5.31 The playground facilities, although small on both sites, are effectively managed and make a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. Awnings for use in sun or rain ensure that pupils benefit from outdoor activity in all seasons.

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

- 5.32 The school meets almost all of the regulatory requirements. In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:

- (a) provide an additional toilet for girls in the Upper School and two additional washbasins. [Regulation 5.(k)];
- (b) install a washbasin in the medical room and provide toilet facilities in or reasonably near the medical room. [Regulation 5.(l)]

Links with Parents and the Community

- 5.33 The quality of links with parents and the community is very good. The school has developed effective partnerships with parents and good links with the community that enrich pupils' experiences.
- 5.34 Parents are kept very well informed about the progress made by their children. Written reports are sent twice a year. Reports inform parents of the levels of achievement and progress of pupils and suggest ways to improve. Formal evenings for parents to meet staff are held twice yearly and parents may always make an appointment to see staff should they have any particular concern. An excellent response to the parental questionnaire, completed prior to the inspection, showed that parents are strongly supportive of the school. 193 questionnaires were returned, representing two-thirds of families at the school. A very small minority of parents commented on too demanding homework. The inspectors found that clear guidelines on the time pupils should spend on homework were given to all parents. Pupils are told to stop working when they have reached the allotted time. This was confirmed in pupil interviews.
- 5.35 Parents are kept very well informed about the school by regular newsletters which can also be found on the website. Many opportunities exist for parents to be involved in activities in the school, by assisting in class with art, reading and the like, and on educational visits. A Parent Helper Policy gives clear guidelines and reinforces the school's ethos that parental help enriches the experience of children. The school is meticulous in ensuring that any parent helping in school is checked with the Criminal Records Bureau for safe access to children. Homework diaries provide an effective and well used resource for communication between staff and parents. Links with the parents of children in the Foundation Stage are very good. The Parents Association runs fun events for pupils and parents which, in addition, raise funds for specific projects.
- 5.36 A Parents Forum consisting of two representatives from each class meets termly. Prior to the meeting the heads send out a letter to parents asking for suggestions for the agenda. Minutes are taken which are circulated to staff and the representatives on the forum and displayed to parents. The heads are very keen to involve parents in school decisions. They listen to their

views, some of which were included in the development plan. For example, at the parents' suggestion, post boxes have been installed on both school sites. The school has a complaints procedure which meets regulatory requirements.

- 5.37 The school's work and pupils' experiences are greatly enriched by very good links with the community. The school makes very effective use of local facilities. Assemblies are sometimes held in the adjacent Methodist Church Hall and Harvest Festival and Christmas are celebrated in the local church. The produce from Harvest Festival is given to local hostels and charities. Although the school's main charity is Barnados, it also supports many other charities such as the Tsunami appeal and Comic Relief Red Nose Day. Visiting speakers inform pupils of their work and the needs of disadvantaged groups. Senior citizens are invited to the Year 6 play and the choir sings at an old people's home. The school is involved in sports matches against other schools and in competitions within the local borough and county. Further afield, the school has established a link with a school in South Africa and intends to provide support on a regular basis.

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

- 5.38 Yes.

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

- 5.39 Yes.

6. PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PASTORAL CARE

Pupils' Personal Development

- 6.1 The provision for pupils' personal development is very good. The school provides a broad range of opportunities for social and cultural development and to help pupils consolidate a system of spiritual beliefs and a moral code
- 6.2 Opportunities for spiritual development are good. Through regular and inclusive assemblies, pupils are helped to develop an understanding of their own and others' beliefs. Assemblies are well planned around themes, and comprise singing, prayers and an address. No time is given however for silent reflection. Grace is said before lunch. Opportunities for pupils to develop spiritual awareness are encouraged in music, art and poetry. Performances by individual musicians in an Upper School assembly, for example, added a spiritual dimension to the occasion.
- 6.3 Pupils' moral development is very good. A strong emphasis is placed on personal responsibility and pupils are encouraged to make the right moral choices. Teachers and non-teaching staff lead by example, and in assemblies and many other areas of the curriculum a discussion of moral issues arises. Circle Time is well structured and offers planned opportunities to discuss moral issues associated with personal, social and health education. The need for rules is well understood and classes contributed to agreed school rules. Pupils are encouraged to use the internet sensibly and they understand the dangers of misuse.
- 6.4 Social development is very good. Displays of work reflect the importance placed on this element of the curriculum: a Friendship Wall, a Being Kind project and the Golden Rules are all prominent. One class whiteboard welcomed back a pupil who had been absent for some time. Year 6 pupils hold positions of responsibility, and pupils in Years 3 to 6 can be playground listeners: there are friendship stops and benches in both playgrounds. Pupils willingly take on various duties in their classrooms. The School Council for Years 2 to 6 is a useful forum for discussion where, through representatives, pupils can put forward suggestions and feel involved in decision making. Assemblies allow pupils to share news; birthdays are acknowledged; and awards are celebrated. Independence, self-confidence and teamwork are developed in older pupils through day and residential trips and in the production of the magazine; whilst the after school 'Funtasia' aids the social development of younger ones. Pupils take responsibility for charitable support: they eagerly participated in Red Nose Day during the week of inspection.
- 6.5 Opportunities to enhance pupils' cultural development are also very good. The whole school contributed art and poetry to displays on the recent tsunami. Parents from many cultures talk to pupils in classes and assemblies, and have led work on Eid, Divali and Chinese New Year. Pupils learn about major world faiths in RE. In music, pupils in Years 1 and 2 played and listened to Indian and African instruments, and Year 3 studied *Hip Hop Boy*. Year 2 class registers are called in the home languages of the pupils, and their class displays showed work on the rainforest. Pupils in a Year 3 class listened to and discussed the story of *Anansi* and have studied aboriginal art. A range of extra-curricular visits at home and abroad enhances pupils' cultural awareness.

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

- 6.6 Yes.

Pastoral Care, including Welfare and Health & Safety

- 6.7 The school's provision for pastoral care, support and guidance is very good. It enhances the pupils' personal and academic development. In addition, after school care and the holiday club provide a very good environment.
- 6.8 Pupils' academic progress and personal development are monitored carefully. The pastoral care structure operates efficiently through class teachers who are the initial point of contact for pupils. Pupils interviewed said that one of the things that made their school special was the teachers, who would always take time to help them if they had a personal or academic problem. Older pupils also take on a responsibility of care for other pupils, and they quickly look after any pupil waiting by the Friendship Wall for someone to play with. Pupils understand their marks and grades and enjoy winning team points for their house. The very good, mutually respectful relationships that exist between teachers and pupils are a significant factor in the trust pupils place on staff.
- 6.9 Measures to promote good discipline and behaviour, and to support the school's aims, are clearly understood by pupils and shared with parents. All parents receive a copy of the code of conduct which they are expected to read and support. Pupils understand classroom rules and think them fair. Serious behaviour problems are recorded in an incident book, and Lower School playground assistants also record any incident that has occurred. The school's anti-bullying policy is very effective; pupils interviewed said there was very little bullying, and any observed or reported was dealt with quickly by staff.
- 6.10 The school's provision for welfare, health and safety is very good. The deputy head is the Health and Safety Officer. All necessary documents are in place, and thorough measures safeguard and promote pupils' welfare and well being. Medical care on both sites is supervised by a qualified school nurse supported by two welfare assistants and a sufficient number of staff who are qualified first aiders. Dedicated rooms for pupils who are unwell are on both sites. Teachers and non-teaching staff receive annual in-service training from the local authority unit on asthma and the use of inhalers, and on anaphylaxis. Pupils suffering from any medical condition are made known to all staff. Medicine is stored appropriately and only administered by the nurse or welfare assistants, who record the dosage and time in a medical book. Any accidents to pupils are recorded and a letter is sent home to parents: bumps to the head prompt phone calls to parents. Procedures for dealing with accidents and emergencies are clearly understood by staff. First aid boxes, regularly checked, are located around the school and taken to games lessons and outings. Teachers also carry mobile phones and, when necessary, inhalers and epi-pens.
- 6.11 The school nurse, supported by the heads, is the Child Protection Officer. She leads in-service training on child protection for the staff. Appropriate measures are taken to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards and arrangements to ensure a healthy, safe environment are effective. School policies meet the requirements of Special Educational Needs Act and the Disability Act. All procedures required to ensure health and safety are thorough, clear and comprehensively documented. Fire protection equipment and electrical appliances are checked regularly, fire practices are held and recorded correctly, and fire notices are displayed in appropriate places. Cleaning materials are kept in a locked cupboard. Regular minibus checks are recorded by the school caretaker.
- 6.12 Pupils have the option of bringing packed lunches or ordering a hot meal sent in from a local school. This innovation has been well received.

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

6.13 Yes.

7. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Governance and Management

- 7.1 The leadership and management of the school are good. Leadership by the two heads is very good. Leadership at other levels is good, and management is good.
- 7.2 The two heads share joint roles as proprietors and headteachers. A well defined management grid and clear job descriptions assist effective management. The senior management team of the two heads and the three team leaders meets fortnightly, acts as conduits for information and opinion to and from all staff, and shares in decision-making. The team leaders run their own year-group meetings, and the heads chair regular full staff meetings. All have agenda and minutes.
- 7.3 The two heads act decisively, swiftly and with due sensitivity. They share leadership on certain matters with the team leaders to increasing effect. Middle tier leadership is by subject and aspect co-ordinators: there is a good team spirit and all are willing to work for the common good, but high work loads make great demands on their time and energy.
- 7.4 The school has a strong sense of purpose. It promotes the all-round development of its pupils from the Nursery to Year 6, sets high expectations and encourages a love of learning. Honesty and integrity are valued, and confidence and self-esteem are nurtured. The school is a warm, friendly and caring community in which pupils of many races, creeds and backgrounds flourish. It is a haven of harmony.
- 7.5 A planning culture pervades the school. Whole school strategic planning, utilising professional advice and consultation with parents, is thorough and effective. Development planning through subject and aspect co-ordinators is clear and constructive, consistent with whole school aims, and well supported by senior managers. Many subject co-ordinators plan to incorporate greater use of ICT.
- 7.6 Routine administration is effective. The heads and the finance officer run a tight ship, with appropriate checks and balances in place. Support for pupils, teachers and parents by staff in the office, in welfare and in maintenance is well regarded. This is a well oiled machine.
- 7.7 Communication is excellent. All in the community feel that they can bring concerns directly to the heads. In addition to meetings for teachers, there are opportunities for the views of support staff, parents and pupils to be heard.
- 7.8 Monitoring of the school is effective. Ample in-service training is linked to appraisal, observation of teaching and target-setting, all managed by the heads. Team leaders monitor resources and planning, and some monitor pupils' work and maintain portfolios of work samples. Detailed assessment is recorded, and plans are in place to use this rich data to inform teachers, to monitor teaching and to aid curriculum planning.

8. ACHIEVEMENT AND QUALITY IN SUBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Achievement and Quality in Subjects

The Foundation Stage

- 8.1 Pupils achieve good standards overall and high standards in personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy, and in creative development. The curriculum offers an appropriate start to school life and pupils make good and sometimes rapid progress. Almost all children are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the time they are five years of age.
- 8.2 Children enter the Nursery from the age of three. Provision is offered in two classes taught by a teacher and a nursery nurse supported by seven teaching assistants, followed by two full-time Reception classes, where each teacher is supported by a teaching assistant.
- 8.3 Attainment is high in personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy, and in creative development. It is good in mathematical development, in knowledge and understanding of the world, and in physical development.
- 8.4 Progress is rapid in personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy, and in creative development. It is good in mathematical development, in knowledge and understanding of the world, and in physical development.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- 8.5 Children's attainment is high and they make rapid progress. Children listen to and follow instructions and co-operate very well together: for example, Reception children take turns when playing a post-van game with dice. They manage their own personal needs and care for each other and their environment. They spontaneously sweep up sand that is spilt and tuck their chairs in before going to the carpet. Nursery children share and negotiate when using the wheeled ride-on toys and push one another safely in the car. They listen well to one another and maintain concentration: for example, when learning to recognise and hear letter sounds. Children meet a diversity of cultures and beliefs, and learn about celebrations in several religions.

Communication, Language and Literacy

- 8.6 Attainment is high and progress is rapid. Children speak clearly and articulately, explaining themselves well using good vocabularies. They use their imaginations when participating in role-play activities: for example, they explore the prop box in the Nursery and run post offices in the Reception classes to re-enact familiar stories or situations. Firm foundations are laid in reading and children respond enthusiastically to stories and poems. Reading readiness is carefully assessed, and subsequent progress is rapid because each child's motivation is confirmed prior to formal teaching. Children recognise and write their names in the Nursery classes. A display of names, written in gold paint using a syringe, was most attractive and included some written in children's home languages. Reception children write independently with increasing confidence: for example, text for a 999 display was completed on the computer.

Mathematical Development

- 8.7 Attainment and progress are good. Mathematical language and concepts are being well established. Almost all Reception children recognise, count and write numbers to ten, and some well beyond. They make repeating patterns with beads or when printing shapes for wrapping paper designs. They understand the concept of subtraction through practical activities with a postbag. Some Nursery children have an awareness of measures stimulated through looking at a weather station, and they compare their heights using bricks as non-standard measures. Money is handled during role-play in the florist's shop and children recognise that it has value.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

- 8.8 Attainment and progress are good. Nursery children visited a dental surgery whilst in Reception they explore items found in a first aid box. Reception children can state what plants need to make them grow. In both years, children are beginning to understand the features and patterns of the seasons. Nursery children make inventions from wood, selecting appropriate tools and techniques to shape and join the material. They operate the computer and use suitable software to support their learning.

Physical Development

- 8.9 Attainment and progress are good. Their involvement in a wide range of activities develops increasing competence in gross and fine motor skills. They show good control and co-ordination and move around both within and outside their buildings with confidence. Physical education lessons provide opportunities to practise skills such as jumping, throwing and catching. The outdoor activity area promotes balance and climbing. A wide range of classroom activities helps children to develop dexterity and manipulative skills; handling tools, construction toys and malleable materials safely and with increasing control.

Creative Development

- 8.10 Attainment is high and progress is rapid. Children make colourful pictures using many different media: for example, pictures in Reception on the theme of a fire. Nursery children respond well to music, and make water pictures using self-chosen implements. They enjoy specialist music teaching and sing some time in every day. They respond to the work of artists: Paul Klee inspired their own paintings of local buildings. Reasons for making greetings cards are suggested by the children, and they construct these with skill and imagination. They use role-play areas enthusiastically.

Other Aspects of the Foundation Stage

- 8.11 The children's attitude to learning and their behaviour are very good. A consistent approach to discipline, with appropriate role models from the staff, encourages children to work and play in a responsible and caring manner. Children are polite to one another and to adults. They are enthusiastic about learning and busily involved, with good concentration. In outside play, as well as during lesson times, they learn to share, make choices and take turns.
- 8.12 The quality of teaching is very good in all areas of learning. Teachers plan effectively and provide rich opportunities to learn. Teaching almost always meets the needs of the different ages and abilities of children and contributes effectively to their progress. All of the staff have a thorough knowledge of the early learning goals. Planning is very good, lessons are well organised, and tasks are varied and appropriate. The range of activities is well suited to the

development of physical, cognitive, creative and social skills. A wide range of resources makes an effective support to children's work and progress. The contribution of teaching assistants is greatly valued. The classrooms are bright and attractive with very good displays of children's work.

- 8.13 Assessment and recording are very good. Assessments on entry are made in conjunction with parents, thereby acknowledging them as partners. An effective and comprehensive system of assessment and recording of attainment and progress is employed throughout the Foundation Stage. Each child in the Nursery classes is assigned a key worker who collates information from observations. Targets are set in all classes, shared with children and parents, and regularly reviewed. Parents and staff meet formally three times a year, and may discuss progress more regularly should the need arise.
- 8.14 Very good curriculum planning and content make a significant contribution to attainment and progress. The early learning goals give children opportunities rooted in first hand experiences. Good use is made of the adjacent outdoor area. Children of all ages and abilities, irrespective of gender and ethnicity, have equality of access to all activities, and the pattern of the day is well suited to their needs.
- 8.15 Teachers and their assistants, together with welfare and support staff, work well as a team. . All are suitably qualified or experienced, and staffing ratios are in line with recommended guidelines. Arrangements for the induction of new staff are in place together with a new system of appraisal. Required checks are made on staff prior to employment, and opportunities are provided for professional development.
- 8.16 The Foundation Stage is well resourced, and new equipment is provided when needed. Classrooms are spacious and the addition of the new hall has broadened the range of group activities: it is also home to 'Funtasia', the excellent after school club.
- 8.17 Leadership and management are good, and the school's aims are achieved with clarity of direction. Continuous updating of policy and practice has resulted in consistently good planning and effective implementation of comprehensive schemes of work by a committed team of teachers and teaching assistants.

English

- 8.18 Attainment is good. Pupils achieve high standards in Years 1 and 2 and good standards in Years 3 to 6. In national tests, pupils' attainment at age 7 is satisfactory and at age 11 it is good. Results over the last three years at age 7 have consistently been well above the national average for all maintained primary schools, and at age 11 far above.
- 8.19 Pupils' attainment in current work is high in Years 1 and 2, and good in Years 3 to 6. By Year 2, pupils write in sentences and use paragraphs. They have an extensive vocabulary. For example, pupils in Year 1 weighed carefully the use and effect of words such as 'independent', 'frustrated' and 'furious'. Year 2 pupils can search text for information and use it effectively to answer questions. Extended writing is developed from a very early stage. Pupils can draft, spell and layout their work well. They pay attention to the development of their story, illustrating with a good selection of adjectives. By Year 6, pupils' attainment is good and all pupils consistently reach standards above those which could be expected for their ages and abilities. Pupils in Year 3 recognised and used the imperative verb. Those in Year 5 developed the use of rhymes and began to write lyrics for a song, which they then performed with musical accompaniment. Year 6 pupils were very adept at setting the scene, giving stage

directions and writing play scripts. An examination of work completed demonstrated that pupils with learning needs reach standards above that expected of their ability.

- 8.20 Progress is good. Year 2 pupils could write a story with a moral and incorporate direct speech. They then presented their work for constructive criticism; whilst in comprehension they demonstrated efficient retrieval of knowledge from the text and answered questions in full sentences. Pupils in Year 3 use the imperative verb to give logical instructions about making a cheese and tomato sandwich. By Year 6 pupils can brainstorm and develop ideas, and in a short time produce a piece of extended writing to be shared with the class. They improved their play scripts by the use of 'asides' to inform the audience of a character's feelings.
- 8.21 The quality of pupils' learning attitudes and behaviour is good and often very good. Pupils are self-motivated and anxious to do well. They are courteous and value the contributions of others. They are nearly always on task and trying their best, and they have good constructive relationships with their peers and teachers. Work in the best lessons was presented in a very mature way and pupils demonstrated their abilities orally without shyness. In some rare instances, younger pupils lacked concentration and had an immature attitude.
- 8.22 The quality of teaching is good, and on occasion very good or excellent. Most lessons are well planned, and pupils appropriately challenged. Younger pupils are occasionally given differentiated work, whilst those with learning needs are well supported. The best lessons are characterised by clear explicit targets, a brisker pace, open-ended questions, and challenging targets set under tight time controls. In some cases progress is hindered by little variety of teaching strategies, underuse of audio-visual aids, and minimal ICT input.
- 8.23 Management by an experienced practitioner is good, with effective leadership and appropriate documentation. Programmes of study are based on a number of published schemes of work which are modified or adapted by teachers as necessary. However, in a key subject taught by almost all teachers, some lack of co-ordination in planning, in the moderation of work set, and in the monitoring of attainment and progress, combine to reduce the opportunities to share good practice and raise standards. The overall curriculum is suitably enriched by well-produced drama staged in a local theatre, though only pupils in Year 1 have lessons allocated to drama. Recent productions include *Twelfth Night* and *Oliver*. CD-ROMs and videotapes record the high standards attained. Little drama, however, is taught in lessons.

Mathematics

- 8.24 Pupils achieve good standards. Standards in national tests are good at age 7 and good at age 11. Results over the last three years at age 7 and 11 are far above the national average for all maintained schools.
- 8.25 Attainment by Year 2 is good. Year 1 pupils understand ordinal numbers. In a line of objects they can name the position of different toys. Their mental skills in Year 2 are good, with some pupils adding and subtracting two-digit numbers. They understand doubling of numbers and know that they have to double 40 to get 80. By Year 6 attainment is high. Year 5 pupils understand that a perpendicular line bisects parallel lines and can explain the properties of parallel and perpendicular lines. Year 3 can explain clearly the different strategies for mentally working out ways of subtracting two digit numbers, for example 70-35.
- 8.26 The progress made by pupils during lessons and over time is rapid. It is consistent throughout the school. Year 2 pupils made rapid progress describing the number of faces and the shapes of faces on 3D models. Those in Year 6 made rapid progress in constructing a polygon with

various number of sides, measuring the internal angles and side lengths, and investigating the resulting patterns to establish an overall hypothesis.

- 8.27 The quality of learning and behaviour is very good throughout the school. Pupils are competent learners who work well together, are motivated and keen to succeed. A good example of their enthusiasm was in a Year 4 lesson on fractions, with the work reinforced by software on 3 computers, where the pupils were so enjoying the challenges that they 'groaned' when it was time to stop.
- 8.28 The quality of teaching is good. It is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives. The best lessons are conducted at a brisk pace with a good use made of practical resources to consolidate learning. Teachers' subject knowledge is good: they are aware of the individual abilities of their pupils. Support is given when needed and extension work provided to challenge the more able. Materials and resources are well organised and teachers make the best use of space to engage pupils in practical work and to consolidate their understanding. Work is marked regularly with corrections done. Homework is set regularly to reinforce classroom topics. The presentation of work is good throughout the school.
- 8.29 Other positive factors promote good progress. Assessment is detailed with records kept of all tests. Regular testing informs teachers of pupils' understanding of the work taught. Results of the national tests in Year 2 are used to set pupils in Years 3 to 6, enabling pupils to work at a pace suitable for their abilities. Resources are good, with each classroom having sufficient equipment. However, very little use was observed of ICT supporting pupils' learning. Reports to parents give a clear indication of what pupils have learnt, but test results are not used to set future individual targets. Pupils interviewed said they found the marking and reports helpful and that they understood the grades.
- 8.30 The leadership and management are sound but have many good features. Documentation is very good, with clear short-, medium- and long-term planning. Accurate records are kept: test results, whether the objectives of the lesson have been achieved, and notes of any pupils meeting problems. The co-ordinator, new in post, has started monitoring pupils' attainment and progress, but a heavy work load spares little time to monitor teaching and evaluate strategies to raise standards.

Science

- 8.31 The attainment of the pupils is good. Standards in national tests at age 11 are good. Results over the last three years are far above the national average for all maintained primary schools. Pupils at all levels are encouraged to make predictions, to compare and contrast results, and to draw conclusions from investigative data. Work on factors influencing plant growth in a Year 1 lesson drew not only interest and excitement from pupils but also a good level of understanding and an appropriate use of vocabulary. Pupils in Year 6 devised hypotheses and understood the concept of a fair test. They could elucidate problems inherent within a procedure, and suggest possible improvements.
- 8.32 Progress is generally sound, although less able pupils sometimes struggle to keep up or to meet time constraints. Extension work assists progress for the more able or for faster workers, and adapted worksheets support the weaker. Many pupils rely heavily on the teacher and upon the teaching scheme for their instructions. Pupils in Year 1, however, suggested ideas for continuing investigations that were accepted and followed. No difference in progress was detected between genders, or between different ethnic groups.

- 8.33 The quality of learning is good. Pupils are well motivated and demonstrate good concentration. They contribute readily in class and co-operate with each other and with the teacher. They work well in groups, as was seen when Year 6 pupils investigated the effect of the angle of sunlight on the temperature of the earth's surface. Pupils are safety-conscious and careful during practical work, as witnessed when Year 4 pupils looked at different materials dissolving in water, and not a drop was spilt all lesson. Pupils are punctual, purposeful and listen to instructions well.
- 8.34 Teaching is generally good. Teachers demonstrate a good grasp of the subject, and are fully able to answer questions. Planning of lessons and management of practical work are very good, and teachers maintain good control by insisting that pupils listen intently and follow instructions carefully. Teachers' enthusiasm generally reflects in the response of pupils; Year 1 pupils' interest was caught in an investigation into plant growth which stimulated suspense and excitement. However, this approach is not always extended to Years 3 to 6. Pupils with learning needs are not automatically provided with tasks appropriate to their needs, though this occurs on some occasions, nor are able pupils always sufficiently challenged.
- 8.35 Leadership and management of the subject are good, with clear vision and purpose. Health and safety arrangements are effective, and all practical work is preceded by cautionary advice. Plans, schemes of work and other documents are in place, and policies are adhered to effectively. Development planning is imaginative and appropriate. Programmes of study that follow the National Curriculum are comprehensive, consistent and continuous throughout Years 1 to 6, though time is short in Years 1 and 2. Resources in the science room, including ICT, are used effectively by teachers. Most teachers use assessment and recording procedures consistently to monitor pupils' progress and to plan future tasks. Regular end of unit tests enable teachers to assess progress and to recognise problem areas. Marking is frequent, consistent and in line with school policy. Constructive comments are used sparingly, but pupils have a good understanding of the criteria used. However, time constraints result in insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning. School trips linked to science are few, and no extra-curricular activities are science-based.

Art & Design

- 8.36 Pupils achieve good standards. This standard is consistent for all age groups, and attainment in lessons indicates that pupils are working to their full potential. Pupils in Year 4 show good draughtsmanship, using grid-lines to achieve accurate scaling. Those in Year 5 accurately express emotions in their collages, and interpret the work of their fellows. The standard of pupils' work in sketch books, portfolios and on display throughout the school is always good.
- 8.37 The progress of pupils is good. Pupils in Year 3 exhibit dexterity and their choice of shape, colour, space, pattern and texture is developing well. Those in Year 6 pool their artistic skills in collaborative work, producing high quality collages of the recent tsunami. At the Foundation Stage and throughout Years 1 to 6, boys and girls make equivalent progress, as do pupils from the many different ethnic backgrounds.
- 8.38 The quality of learning is good. Pupils are attentive and enthusiastic, they work well individually and in small groups, and they overcome problems through perseverance. They move about the crowded classrooms with care and maintain tidiness in their own areas. Many groups were a hive of creative activity, and in all there was a purposeful buzz of concentration. Behaviour is very good, with a supportive collective rapport.

- 8.39 Teaching by class teachers is always good, and is often very good. Lessons are well planned and structured, high standards are set and maintained, and pupil management is sure and effective. Subject knowledge is secure, advice is tailored to the needs of individual pupils, and resources are chosen and organised well. Teachers of the youngest made effective use of classroom assistants, and the best teaching for the oldest was occasionally inspirational.
- 8.40 Leadership and management by the subject co-ordinator are good. Documentation is simple and effective. The curriculum contains much variety and challenge, including ingredients of design and technology. Monitoring of teaching is conducted informally. Resources are well organised. Assessment by individual teachers is positive and encouraging, and plans are in place to introduce an over-arching system to record attainment and progress. The huge range of work on display about the school promotes pupils' achievements and advertises their work to parents and the local community. The subject makes a strong contribution to spiritual and cultural development. All teaching is done in classrooms, with the inevitable shortcomings of time, space and large equipment. However, plans to build a studio are well advanced.

French

- 8.41 Pupils achieve high standards. Attainment is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and high in Years 3 to 6. Pupils have a firm grasp of basic French skills, understanding the target language when spoken at normal speed by the teacher. They listen and respond appropriately to questions and demonstrate their understanding and ability to convey meaning. Year 3 pupils can introduce themselves to the rest of the class and answer a variety of questions of increasing complexity. They understand the written language in a range of basic contexts such as numbers, homes, colours and clothes. For example, pupils in Year 5 used a variety of question sentences in preparation for their day trip to Boulogne, where they are expected to use their knowledge to find a particular building. Throughout the school, the least able pupils reach a good standard in relation to their abilities. A scrutiny of workbooks revealed that pupils can write simple words, phrases and dialogue from memory and are informed about the country and its customs.
- 8.42 Progress is rapid. Year 3 pupils demonstrated their knowledge of numbers, days and months built up over the last year by applying this to translation work. New vocabulary for pupils in Year 2 and Year 5 was learned and applied very quickly.
- 8.43 The quality of pupils' learning is very good. Pupils work hard even when they find the work challenging, as in the Year 5 lesson where they were asked to apply new vocabulary (*devant*, *derriere*, *entre* and *a cote de*) to various scenarios. Those in Year 2 were skilful in applying their cross-curricular knowledge to unfamiliar problems. Pupils show a good level of support for each other and a very positive relationship with the teachers.
- 8.44 Teaching is very good. In the best lessons, the target language was promoted as an intellectually challenging, stimulating and practical activity. Here the teaching meets the needs of all pupils, with effective and sensitive support for those of lower ability and challenging open-ended tasks for the more able. Knowledge of the subject is very good, as is the enthusiasm expressed and shared with pupils. Most lessons are well managed and a firm control is gently applied on the rare occasions when it is needed; however, one lesson lacked pace. Very high expectations are set in Years 3 to 6, and teaching there successfully motivates pupils to give of their best. Nearly all lessons are well planned, with the best using a variety of imaginative practical activities at pace and with a high degree of fun.

- 8.45 The subject is well led and efficiently managed. Attainment and progress are enhanced by extra-curricular language activities for Year 2 and Year 6, by a one-day visit to Boulogne for Year 5 and by a residential visit for Year 6. Time and resources in teaching are well used, although single lessons do not allow themes to be explored at any depth.
- 8.46 One lesson of Spanish was observed in Year 6 and pupils' work was scrutinised. The quality of teaching is very good. Good practice was evident when pupils were encouraged to relate their own literacy knowledge to new vocabulary. Pupils have opportunities to engage in a variety of tasks and the pace is brisk. The quality of learning is very good. Pupils respond well, showing keen interest. They demonstrate a firm grasp of basic skills, understanding the target language when spoken at normal speed by the teacher. They were able to answer a variety of questions of increasing complexity.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

- 8.47 The attainment of pupils is good. Pupils in Year 3 have a sound grasp of the use and benefit of simulations, and in Year 4 they are able to use commands effectively.
- 8.48 Progress is good, irrespective of gender or ethnic background. For example, pupils in Year 6 quickly grasped the concepts of databases and spreadsheets for modelling
- 8.49 The quality of the pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour is good. Pupils are competent learners, responding well to the work and to their teachers. Levels of concentration are good, and there are positive examples of collaborative behaviour. They are keen to progress and eager to achieve. Pupils behave well in class, showing a clear enthusiasm in and enjoyment for the subject. They work constructively together when appropriate, but in the main are content to work independently and at the appropriate pace.
- 8.50 Teaching is sound. The subject co-ordinator teaches Years 1 and 4, and class teachers the other years. Knowledge, confidence and competence of the non-specialist teachers are variable, for most lack appropriate training and experience. Time constraints limit the help available from the subject co-ordinator. However, teaching objectives are clearly expressed and lessons are planned well, showing good pace. Tasks are matched to pupils' differing levels of ability, with the more competent pupils challenged.
- 8.51 Leadership and management are good, with direction and purpose. Planning for future development throughout the school is clear. The curriculum is broad, balanced and varied, but fortnightly lessons in Years 4 to 6 are insufficient. The use of ICT in all subjects is successful at the Foundation Stage, but this is not matched in Year 1 and above. It is, however, used well in extra-curricular activities and in communications to parents. Assessment and recording are adequate, but do not as yet inform planning. Portfolios of pupils' work are kept in files. Resources are generally good, and improving. The subject co-ordinator manages planning and purchasing, assists with staff development and training, but does not monitor teaching or the use made of ICT in other subjects.

Music

- 8.52 Pupils' attainment is high throughout Years 1 to 6. Standards achieved by all pupils, including those with learning needs, are high in both theory and practical work. Year 2 pupils know the difference between long and short sounds, demonstrate them on a wide range of musical instruments, and have a good knowledge of rhythmic patterns. They explain terms such as *timbre*, *tempo* and *pitch*. Pupils in Year 6 could construct their own *rap* and identify

- ostinato* patterns. Using a wide range of musical instruments, they compose, practise, and perform at a high standard. They also explain how their contributions can be improved.
- 8.53 Progress is rapid. Year 2 pupils learned how to play instruments slowly and then more quickly to obtain different effects, and were able to respond to ideas of how to improve their performance. Those in Year 6 were able to perform their own contributions individually or in groups and, after discussion, incorporate new ideas to improve their performance noticeably.
- 8.54 The quality of the pupils' learning is very good, as are their attitudes and behaviour in lessons. Pupils work very hard and remain on task at all times. They listen carefully to instructions and work very well as a class, as soloists or as performers in small groups. Instruments were given out quietly and without fuss. All pupils are happy to contribute to lessons and their offerings are valued and respected by their peers. Pupils engage in much independent learning, both in the preparation and performance of music.
- 8.55 Teaching is very good and occasionally excellent. Lessons are well planned with expectations set high. A wide variety of teaching strategies ensures that pupils learn at a very brisk pace. Short timed tasks are set and pupils rise to the challenge. Work within lessons is varied, usually with theory as well as playing of instruments or singing. Pupils are encouraged to give of their best regardless of ability. Ideas are shared and contributions valued to encourage all abilities. Teaching is lively and supportive. Choirs and instrumentalists perform at a high standard. Time and resources are managed well, and the cramped accommodation is used to the full; however, no ICT was incorporated in the lessons observed.
- 8.56 Teachers are led and managed well, with enthusiasm and efficiency, and the quality of staffing ensures breadth and depth to the music offered. Opportunities are taken in assemblies for musicians to share their success, and they perform outside school. Pupils participate in a wide range of musical activities; such as instrumental tuition, choirs, and recorder groups.

Physical Education (PE)

- 8.57 The standards achieved by pupils are good. By Year 2 attainment is good. Pupils have good co-ordination and an awareness of space. Year 1 pupils combined making different body shapes with moving at different speeds and in different directions, without bumping into each other. By Year 6 attainment is high. In netball, pupils in Years 5 and 6 demonstrated swift footwork and improved their tactical skills using a variety of passes between team members. Those in Years 3 and 4 have good ball control both in tag rugby and football. Pupils work skilfully in pairs and in small groups and have a grasp of the roles and strategies of the particular game they are playing. The good results of matches and competitions show that pupils can transfer the skills learnt in lessons into actual games.
- 8.58 Pupils' progress is rapid. They grow in confidence building on good foundations. In both hockey and football, good progress was made in dribbling and stopping the ball. Rapid progress was made in tag rugby in kicking the ball accurately, and excellent progress was made with ground stroke accuracy in tennis and in keeping a rally going.
- 8.59 Pupils' behaviour is very good. Their attitudes to learning and behaviour are a significant factor of the good standards they achieve. They are enthusiastic and competent learners who enjoy their lessons. They have constructive relationships with each other and with their teachers.
- 8.60 The quality of the teaching is good, and very good in Years 3 to 6. The subject is taught mainly by specialist teachers who are well organised, enthusiastic and motivate pupils

effectively. They demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the subject, introduce a wide variety of activities, and give pupils the opportunity to participate in many sports. Lessons are very well planned and conducted at a brisk pace. Pupils are taught the importance of looking after their bodies, with all lessons starting with a warm up and finishing with a cool down.

- 8.61 Whilst resources in the school grounds are limited, very good use is made of them to maximise their potential. The lower school hall is well suited to movement and gymnastics in Year 1, and the main school playground is used for uni-hoc, mini-tennis, netball and basketball. An adjacent park plays host to athletics, cricket, cross country, football, hockey, orienteering, rounders, rugby and tennis. A local church hall is used for badminton and indoor athletics, and an activity centre provides outdoor pursuits. Pupils in Year 5 have swimming lessons in a local pool, and they also attend a residential activity week. Ski-ing is taught as an extra-curricular activity.
- 8.62 The subject is very well led and managed, and documentation to guide and support the curriculum is very clear and well structured. The co-ordinator organises a very detailed teaching programme giving pupils the opportunities to experience many different sports. This is supported by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, both at lunch-time and after school. The organisation and monitoring of so many different sites demonstrates the high priority the school gives to ensuring a broad and balanced physical education for its pupils.

Religious Education (RE)

- 8.63 Pupils' attainment is good. The standard is consistent at all year groups. Good attainment in written work is based on strong literacy, imaginative writing, good illustrations and attractive presentation. Pupils in Year 1 are knowledgeable about Christian practice and draw on their knowledge of comparable customs in other religions. Those in Year 5 were articulate, recalling facts quickly and accurately, and mature in their understanding of spiritual concepts.
- 8.64 Pupils' progress is good. Year 2 pupils showed good illustrative skills from past learning, and picked up new knowledge quickly. Those in Year 3 made faster progress when they exchanged bland worksheets for free writing. Throughout the school, boys and girls make equivalent progress, and the fact that there are pupils from the many different ethnic and religious backgrounds makes a very positive contribution to their progress.
- 8.65 The quality of learning and behaviour is good. Pupils are quiet and attentive, they move quickly to their tasks, and they work well both independently and in groups. For example, Year 3 pupils were keen as mustard, but all maintained good hands-up discipline as they participated in question and answer work. Those in Year 1 were always willing to respond, to share their own religious experiences, and to listen attentively to the views of others.
- 8.66 Teaching is always at least good. Subject knowledge is secure, classroom atmospheres are varied to match the topic, artefacts are appropriately chosen, and pupil management is effective yet sensitive. Lessons contain good pace, much variety, and occasional elements of spirituality. Language is well chosen to match pupils' abilities, though some dialogues were too demanding on the concentration of the less able.
- 8.67 Leadership and management by the subject co-ordinator are effective, and clear documentation helps the non-specialist team of class teachers. The Christian basis of the curriculum reflects the school's founding aims, but due weight is given to the contribution of other major religions. Marking of pupils' work is positive, and reflects the school's policy; assessment at the end of topics is simple and appropriate. Resources in classrooms and the library are adequate, though time constraints limit the effective use of ICT. Teaching in class and through assemblies makes

a strong contribution to pupils' personal development, and the celebration of religious festivals promotes strong links with parents and the local community.

Short Subject Reports

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

Geography

- 8.68 Three lessons were observed, and a sample of pupils' work and displays in the classrooms were scrutinised. A discussion was held with the subject co-ordinator.
- 8.69 The quality of teaching was sound, but ranged from good to unsatisfactory. Some lessons lacked sufficient structure and focus. The best teaching was characterised by enthusiasm and good subject knowledge. In a lesson on Struay, pupils compared job opportunities for two locations and offered reasons for the differences. Written tasks in pupils' books showed good variety. However, in some cases, the use of textbooks directs lesson content too rigidly.
- 8.70 Pupils' attitudes to learning were good. They concentrated well in lessons, listening attentively. Pupils in Year 3 were able to explain changes to the environment over time and to describe types of pollution. Good positive relationships exist between teachers and pupils.
- 8.71 Planning documents are thorough and provide a balanced programme of work. Good opportunities for fieldwork promote pupils' learning. Resources are used effectively, except in the area of ICT.

History

- 8.72 Two lessons were observed in Years 3 and 4 and pupils' work was scrutinised. High quality displays were seen. Discussions were held with teaching staff and the subject co-ordinator.
- 8.73 The quality of teaching was good. Teachers showed good knowledge and their lessons were well planned. Good practice was evident when historical topics were related to modern day situations. There were opportunities for pupils to engage in a variety of tasks and brisk pace was evident.
- 8.74 The quality of learning was good. Pupils responded well to the lessons, showing interest. They were keen to discover more. Year 3 pupils were beginning to develop a sense of chronology, debating about the history that people would study in the future. Good powers of concentration were observed, linking back to work previously learned. The pupils took pride in the presentation of their work.
- 8.75 A broad scheme of work and comprehensive lesson plans underpin the teaching, although no local history is taught. The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' literacy skills.

Special Education Needs (SEN)

- 8.76 Three lessons were observed in Years 1, 2 and 4 and a discussion was held with the subject co-ordinators.
- 8.77 Teaching was good. Lessons were well planned and resourced, contained challenge and high expectations, and were well matched to the needs of the pupils. Aims were clearly expressed, the tone was encouraging and supportive, and all specialist and subject knowledge was secure.

- 8.78 The quality of pupils' learning and behaviour was very good. Pupils were enthusiastic and co-operative, they worked well individually and as groups, and they persevered with their tasks. There was a happy rapport with teachers, and pupils wanted to please.
- 8.79 The roles of the two co-ordinators are carefully defined, and liaison with other specialist teachers and classroom teachers is very effective. Documentation is clear and helpful, and the process from identification of pupils needing support to reporting on their progress is very thorough. The register is efficient, assessment records are updated each half-term, and excellently presented individual education plans (IEPs) inform classroom teachers of pupils' needs. Plans are now in place to review support for pupils with English as the second language. The teaching makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development and to their overall attainment and progress.

Achievement and Quality in Activities

- 8.80 The overall achievement and quality in activities are good for the ages, aptitudes and abilities of the pupils concerned. The programme contributes well to their personal development.
- 8.81 Games and athletic activities are a positive feature of the school. They are seen as important and teams compete successfully, but room is made for enjoyment as well as rigour. Matches are reported orally in assemblies, awards are celebrated, and parents often support matches and see for themselves the levels of attainment reached. Music provides many pupils with a range of experiences that they value. Performances and concerts challenge and engage the pupils involved and bring pleasure to pupils and parents who attend. Drama is extremely popular and the school mounts several productions a year. Some activities, such as the choir, promote good links with the community.
- 8.82 A wide range of sports clubs and activities is offered and this contributes significantly to the sporting success of the school. A good range of musical and drama activities is also offered and this enriches the curriculum. Fewer activities of other kinds are available at present, but feedback through School Council suggests a wide interest in extending the programme. The range of activities is suitable for the ages of the pupils, and the after school 'Funtasia' makes a significant positive contribution to the social development of the pupils. A good programme of day and residential visits, and the experience and expertise of a number of visitors, are used well to enrich the curriculum.
- 8.83 Information about the availability of extra-curricular activities is circulated to parents and many pupils are involved in at least two activities. Where numbers are limited for an activity, pupils unable to take part one term will be put onto a rota for inclusion in a forthcoming term.
- 8.84 Participation in the activities is highest in Lower School, but the levels of enjoyment in both sections are high. Some teachers contribute very strongly to the activities programme and they are supported by other colleagues. Attendance at activities is recorded in Lower School but not in Upper School. There is no formal reporting.

9. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 9.1 The inspection was carried out from March 7th to 11th 2005. All subjects of the curriculum were inspected and all members of the teaching staff were observed teaching. However, the size of the team did not permit all subjects to be reported on in full. The following subjects do not have full reports in Section 8: geography, history, and special education needs (SEN). The inspectors visited 100 lessons or parts of lessons, examined extensive samples of work by pupils of different abilities in each year and held formal discussions with these pupils as well as informal discussions with other pupils. They attended assemblies and registration sessions. They observed extra-curricular and sporting activities. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff at various levels in the school. They analysed the responses of 193 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

Linda Burgess	Head of Junior Years, IAPS school
Terry Fawell	Former Head, ISA school
Martin Morris	Head, SHMIS school
Barbara Risk	Head of Junior Department, GSA school
Malcolm Tozer	Former Head, IAPS school (Reporting Inspector)
Shirley Winson	Former Head, ISA school