

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS COUNCIL
(ISC)**

INSPECTION OF

KING EDWARD'S SENIOR SCHOOL

by the

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE
(ISI)**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

King Edward's Senior School

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

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Full Name of the School | King Edward's Senior School |
| DCSF Number | 800/6010 |
| Registered Charity Number | 1115875 |
| Address | North Road, Bath BA2 6HU. |
| Telephone Number | 01225 464313 |
| Fax Number | 01225 442178 |
| Email Address | headmaster@kesbath.com |
| Head | Mr Martin Boden |
| Chairman of Governors | Mr Andrew Greening |
| Age Range | 11 to 18 |
| Gender | Mixed |
| Inspection Dates | 24th to 27th November 2008 |

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 162A(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002 as amended by the Education Act 2005, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills 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 as amended with effect from January 2005 and May 2007.

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

CONTENTS

| | | |
|----|---|----|
| 1. | INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| | Characteristics of the School | 1 |
| 2. | THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION | 3 |
| | The Educational Experience Provided | 3 |
| | Pupils' Learning and Achievements..... | 4 |
| | Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils | 6 |
| | The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)..... | 7 |
| 3. | THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS | 10 |
| | The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils..... | 10 |
| | The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community | 11 |
| 4. | THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT | 13 |
| | The Quality of Governance | 13 |
| | The Quality of Leadership and Management | 13 |
| 5. | CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS..... | 16 |
| | Overall Conclusions | 16 |
| | Next Steps..... | 16 |
| 6. | SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE | 17 |
| | List of Inspectors | 17 |

1. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 King Edward's Senior School, Bath, was founded by Royal Charter in 1552. Originally a grammar school, the school was fully independent until 1920, when it accepted Direct Grant status, reverting to full independence in 1976. Girls were admitted into the sixth form in 1986, and from 1997 they were admitted into Years 7 to 11. It is now a fully co-educational, selective, independent day school for pupils between the ages of eleven and eighteen. It is part of King Edward's School for boys and girls between the ages of three and eighteen.
- 1.2 The school is a limited company with the board of governors acting as trustees. Individuals are invited to join the governing body to add to the range of expertise available for the governance of the school. The pre-preparatory and the junior schools, educating pupils between the ages of three to eleven, are part of King Edward's School (KES). They are managed and led by the governing body of King Edward's School. Each of the three sections of the whole school is led and managed by a headteacher, with the headmaster of the senior school carrying ultimate responsibility for leadership and management of education across the three schools.
- 1.3 The senior school is set in its own grounds within the boundaries of the city of Bath, on the eastern side of the city. The school is housed in a variety of buildings offering general purpose classrooms and specialist accommodation. Along with the specialist teaching areas there is a range of amenities for sport, music, drama, games and recreation. On-site playing fields and hard surface play areas give pupils opportunities for outdoor recreation. The main games pitches are situated a short drive from the school.
- 1.4 The intention of the school is summed up in the aspiration to develop the uniqueness of each pupil. To achieve this outcome the school aims: to provide a distinctive and stimulating environment for talented children from a variety of backgrounds, in which each individual is encouraged to strive for excellence and to acquire a lifelong passion for knowledge, discovery and adventure; to enable each pupil to fulfil his or her own personal academic, sporting, creative and cultural potential; to cultivate in each pupil alongside intellectual development a strong sense of the moral and spiritual, the difference between right and wrong and an awareness of their rights and responsibilities; to promote and develop in each pupil the qualities of honesty, integrity, duty, loyalty, courtesy, tolerance and compassion; to offer a strong, caring and supportive pastoral framework, working closely with parents to ensure that pupils are safe and happy and that all members of the school community feel respected and valued; to create an environment in which all members of the school community enjoy equality of opportunity; to provide opportunities both for leadership and teamwork, thereby nurturing pupils as confident, articulate, self-disciplined and socially responsible citizens and independent thinkers who respect the dignity of others; to prepare pupils fully for the challenges and opportunities of a rapidly changing world in the 21st century and to lay the foundations for KES pupils to lead honourable, worthwhile and fulfilled lives in the wider community; to foster a sense of community across the pre-preparatory, junior and senior sections of the school.
- 1.5 Pupils are grouped in tutor groups and year groups which provide the framework for pastoral care, guidance and tutor support. The school educates 476 pupils between the ages of eleven and sixteen in Years 7 to 11; 321 of these are boys and 155 girls. The sixth form educates 137 boys and 77 girls. One hundred and fifty-nine pupils benefit from bursaries and scholarships provided by the school.

- 1.6 Since the last inspection, two headmasters have been appointed. The current headmaster took up his post in July 2008. The numbers of pupils have increased. Extensive building, refurbishment of specialist teaching areas and the sixth form centre, together with the extension of the library to include a learning resource centre have taken place.
- 1.7 Entry to the school at age eleven is based on selection tests administered by the school. Entry into the sixth form is based on performance in GCSE with pupils required to show a good level of performance as an indication of their ability to cope with the demands of A-level work. Standardised test results show that the ability range of the pupils varies between those who are far above average to those who are of average ability. Overall, the average ability of the pupils is well above the national average. If pupils are performing in line with their abilities, their results in national tests will be in line with the average for all maintained selective secondary schools.
- 1.8 About half the pupils live in Bath and half travel from a wide radius in the countryside around the city. There are no pupils with a statement of educational need. All pupils have English as their first language. Fifty-five pupils have been identified with some learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) requiring some learning support. Twelve of these pupils are given special support by the school.
- 1.9 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 King Edward's School creates an outstanding range of educational opportunities, suited to the interests, aptitudes and needs of its pupils. In so doing, the school successfully achieves its declared aim to provide a distinctive and stimulating environment for talented children from a variety of backgrounds, in which each individual is encouraged to strive for excellence and to acquire a lifelong passion for knowledge, discovery and adventure. In the last inspection the curriculum was considered to be broad and balanced. This continues to be the case.
- 2.2 The education as a whole is consistent with the school's underlying intention to develop unique individuals, who are confident and proactive. This intention influences every aspect of, and activity in, the school. The well-structured and rich variety of educational opportunities, both formal and informal, promotes growth in learning and personal development, increases self-awareness and self-confidence and develops the acceptance of responsibility for the service of others.
- 2.3 All pupils have access to this broad range of educational experiences. Linguistic, mathematical, scientific and technological abilities are very well developed through the teaching of the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and in information and communication technology (ICT). Specific ICT skills are promoted and put to good use throughout the school. The wide spectrum of other subjects extends and refines the education on offer. The acquisition of subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills broadens and deepens pupils' educational experiences and contributes significantly to their human, social, physical, aesthetic and creative development. Pupils are given ample opportunities across many lessons to listen, to voice opinions and to consider the opinions of others.
- 2.4 The education provided has been broadened in recent years giving pupils even more opportunities for development. The new timetable has extended lesson times, increasing the amount of taught time by twenty minutes per day. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 have more time available for ICT. All year groups benefit from extended time for games. The extra option choices in Year 9 give pupils the possibility to select a learning programme that closely meets their needs. The introduction of Greek into Year 9 has proved very popular with pupils and it will shortly be permanently available at GCSE level. Time allocations to individual subjects have been increased at both GCSE and A-level. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is now incorporated into the normal timetable and into tutors' normal teaching time allocation. The sixth-form curriculum has been enriched by the introduction of A-level subjects in sports studies, psychology, photography, classical civilisation and politics. An expanded range of expert outside coaches across all the major sports, together with the growing provision for individual music tuition, demonstrates the commitment of the school to give pupils the widest possible range of educational experiences. New or refurbished departmental teaching rooms, the new fitness suite, the theatre, the new teaching rooms, the exhibition rooms in art and photography and the generous increase in ICT facilities across all teaching areas allow for flexibility in teaching and promote a wide range of activities.
- 2.5 Pupils' educational experience is greatly enhanced by the wide reach and the excellent quality of extra-curricular activities. The highly successful programmes of outdoor pursuits, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DoE) and the combined cadet force (CCF) make a significant contribution to pupils' development by placing them in situations where

- leadership, team working and personal responsibility are key elements, and where self-confidence and support for others are developed. The extra-curricular drama clubs and activities, the wide range of sports, expeditions, trips abroad, residential and outward-bound experiences round out an outstanding educational experience. The variety and quality of visiting speakers adds to the rich educational experience on offer.
- 2.6 Preparation for examinations and for application to universities and colleges is thorough and offered in a way that meets the aims of the school. The annual careers convention supported by many parents and other outside experts, of whom a good number are past pupils of the school, is a key event in the careers calendar. The high quality of advice and support provided by the careers staff, as well as the contribution made by sixth-form tutors, are acknowledged by pupils. The high quality of the support for pupils in selecting the next step in their education gives pupils an excellent bridge to their future.
- 2.7 The curriculum prepares pupils well for adult life. Pupils develop understanding of key social and personal issues as part of the excellent PSHE programme which has been developed in-house. The leadership and the structure of the programme are of a high standard. The delivery of the programme by form tutors affords teachers a real chance to contribute to pupils' personal development and to explore the underlying values and principles on which the school is founded.
- 2.8 Pupils of all abilities benefit from access to the broad range of subjects and activities and from the good quality of teaching. Support for pupils with learning needs has been restructured to provide part-time specialist support for a small number of pupils with dyslexia. The teaching and the techniques being put in place are of a high quality. This response by the school is still new and currently is offered to only a few pupils. As a result, the support for most pupils who need help with their learning is mainly the responsibility of class teachers. The quality of that support is variable between those teachers who respond with carefully focused support and those who offer a more general response that does not appear to take account of the particular needs of these pupils.
- 2.9 Provision for gifted and talented pupils is embedded in the general teaching of the school. The curriculum provides the basic framework for learning, but all departments are encouraged to go beyond this framework with a view to enriching the learning experience for pupils at all levels. The appointment of a teacher with responsibility for enrichment will coordinate and give a framework for this extension that the school seeks for its pupils.
- 2.10 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.11 Pupils are very well educated and reach outstanding levels of achievement. They are well grounded in knowledge, skills and understanding in the subjects and activities provided, can apply these effectively and develop the essential skills and attitudes for work and study. The school successfully meets its aim to enable each pupil to fulfil his or her own personal academic, sporting, creative and cultural potential. The high standards of attainment noted in the last inspection have been maintained.

- 2.12 Standards in numeracy and literacy are high, as is the development of essential skills for work and study. Pupils make excellent use of their mathematical understanding to apply concepts, and to use their knowledge and mathematical skills across a range of subjects. Pupils' work and displays in classrooms showed a good grasp of mathematical understanding and application.
- 2.13 Pupils develop as articulate and persuasive communicators. In interviews, they proved to be good listeners, taking the point of questions and addressing precisely the issues raised. In lessons they engaged actively in debate with teachers, exploring ideas and offering suggestions and opinions. Pupils' ability in critical and creative thinking is evident in many aspects of their work. The contribution of the extra-curricular activities such as the Socrates club, the drama club and the work of the CCF and the DoE to developing creative and critical thinking is significant and of an outstanding quality. Very good examples were seen of pupils applying their prior knowledge, understanding and skills to support their learning. In a Year 10 geography lesson, pupils' ability to apply their knowledge of the demographic transition model to the construction of population pyramids to countries at different stages of development was a highlight of the lesson.
- 2.14 Pupils' make effective use of ICT. The development of ICT skills and the application of pupils' understanding of a broad range of software make them competent in using the range of equipment available to further their learning.
- 2.15 In lessons and in other activities, boys and girls of all ages and abilities reach good levels of attainment and make rapid progress. Frequently their attainment is outstanding. The same is true for pupils with dyslexia and other learning difficulties as well as more able pupils.
- 2.16 Results in GCSE for the three years 2005 to 2007 have been above the national average for all maintained selective schools. Pupils' attainment in GCSE is therefore good in relation to their abilities and they make good progress. Results in A-level examinations over the same three years have been well above the national average for all maintained selective schools. Pupils' attainment by Year 13 is therefore high in relation to their abilities and they make rapid progress in the sixth form. The same high standards were achieved in GCSE and A-level examinations in 2008. On leaving the school, pupils are successful in gaining entry to a wide range of courses with most of them gaining entry to their first choice of university.
- 2.17 Pupils achieve outstanding success in many other areas. The strength of music in the school is reflected in the excellent levels of public performances, the considerable success in examinations and the regularity with which pupils gather honours at regional music festivals. The effectiveness of the drama department is seen in the quality of major school productions. Last year's Year 13 drama students took their practical examination piece to the Edinburgh Fringe, where they had three sell out performances. Notable success is achieved in mathematics across a wide range of local and national competitions. In physics, the school team was runner up in Birmingham University's Particle Physics National Competition. Members of the shooting team compete regularly at national and international level. Team sports bring their crop of achievements with girls' netball being especially successful over the last few years with unbeaten seasons in two age groups. In the past year, five pupils gained individual representative honours at county or national levels in a range of sports and activities including rugby, hockey, gymnastics, sailing, shooting and chess. The under-16 team completed the Ten Tors course in the fastest time in 2008. Each year sees numerous pupils achieving the required standard in the DoE Bronze Award with a very high number of pupils entered for the Gold Award this year. The high levels of achievement recorded across so many different disciplines reflect the success of the school in pursuing excellence for its pupils across a wide range of activities. Through their participation in these, pupils develop

leadership skills, work collaboratively, build self-discipline and learn to use their skills to the benefit of others.

- 2.18 Independent research and note taking are key skills in which pupils excel in a range of subjects. An excellent example of these skills was in the work of many pupils in Year 12 and 13 where there was clear evidence of independent research using the library and the Internet. The note taking recorded their research, summarised their findings, and displayed their high level of understanding. Pupils' written work is well organised and they present their ideas in a cogent and persuasive manner. The use of developmental planning and experimentation in art is well developed, showing a high level of creative thinking.
- 2.19 Pupils' enjoyment is a feature of many lessons helping to create a positive atmosphere that supports learning. They settle quickly to class work and are eager to co-operate with their teachers. In an outstanding sport studies lesson with Year 12 pupils, the active participation of the pupils helped to illustrate the differences between aggression and assertiveness and the impact on motivation. Co-operative learning is standard practice in all modern foreign language lessons where the activities of the pupils contribute significantly to the success of the lessons. In both lessons and activities, pupils are comfortable working alone, in small groups or in pairs in pursuit of the learning objectives set.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.20 The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is outstanding. The school meets its aims to cultivate in each pupil, alongside their intellectual development, a strong sense of the moral and spiritual, the difference between right and wrong, and awareness of their rights and responsibilities and to promote and develop in each pupil the qualities of honesty, integrity, duty, loyalty, courtesy, tolerance and compassion.
- 2.21 At the time of the last inspection pupils' personal development was judged to be successfully nurtured in both formal and informal ways throughout the school, but with gaps in provision and weaknesses in some areas. In the intervening years the school has remedied the weaknesses by developing programmes of support and education that enable pupils to achieve outstanding levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- 2.22 Pupils' spiritual development is outstanding. They combine confidence and a strong sense of self-worth with concern and care for others. Their spiritual development is nurtured by a well-developed sense of community, by supportive relationships and by the vital contribution of their tutors. Pupils learn to reflect, to listen, to show respect and to be aware of the needs of those around them. They relate confidently to the adults they meet each day. They are eager to ask questions and to explore the wider aspects of who they are. Through participation in the wide range of activities as well as in lessons, through interactions with staff who challenge them to be independent and confident they develop self-confidence, acquire a sense of responsibility and develop leadership skills. Pupils gain insights into values and beliefs and into the way in which religious belief affects peoples' lives through the work of the chaplain, through the PSHE programme and through teaching in religious studies. The religious studies departmental handbook sums up the contribution the department makes to pupils' developing understanding with the slogan 'Belief determines behaviour'. Pupils themselves recognise the impact being at King Edward's has on their development. Among their comments was a reflection by a pupil that "the adult I become will be in no small part due to my time at King Edward's".
- 2.23 Pupils' moral awareness is strong. The behaviour of older pupils is exemplary. They contribute to the smooth running of the school. They act as role models and give practical support to younger pupils. In interview, pupils said they understood the school's code of

conduct and felt it was fair. Misbehaviour is treated fairly and positively in their experience. Pupils' orderly movement around the school and the high standards of behaviour showed how well they understood the need to respect rules and behave in a responsible manner. Moral awareness is developed through debates in clubs and activities as well as through contact with visiting speakers who present a range of moral stances.

- 2.24 The generosity of pupils in supporting a broad range of charities reflects their high level of moral awareness. Outreach programmes to the local community, for instance through the DoE Award scheme, and through the sixth-form community services programme, allow practical acts of service that make personal demands on pupils. Extensive fundraising encourages pupils' practical involvement in many projects designed to assist the needy. Their commitment to the building of a school as part of their Kenya project is strong; considerable fundraising was undertaken to pay for the building of three classrooms at the school. Twice the funding required for the first phase of the project was raised and both pupils and staff are now busy collecting for the next phase. The success of the project was brought about by the personal and practical involvement of staff and pupils. Volunteers willing to travel on the next phase of the project far outnumber the places available.
- 2.25 Pupils' social development is also outstanding. They respond very well to the many opportunities they have to take responsibility, for instance appreciating selection as a prefect. Pupils respond positively to the encouragement they are given to contribute to the community of the school. They welcome opportunities to represent the school in the wider community through games, music and drama, as well as through participation in charities working for the sick and the needy. Pupils show an awareness of social issues beyond the school. The active Environmental Action Group last year secured the Eco Schools green flag award and is actively involved with supporting similar groups in local schools. Citizenship issues are covered well in the PSHE programme and in a range of subjects. In addition, contact with outside speakers from a wide range of backgrounds, occupations and professions gives pupils a developing awareness of the wider society in which they live and of the public institutions and services available. Pupils take great pride in their school.
- 2.26 Cultural development is strong. In the teaching of the religious studies department and the PSHE programme, and through topics covered in other subjects, pupils are brought to recognise and accept differences between cultures and peoples in a way that fosters understanding and harmony. The comprehensive programme of educational visits, including trips to the theatre, places of worship, art galleries and historical sites, builds pupils' appreciation of and respect for their own traditions and cultures. The many, unique and high quality contributions of the music, art and drama departments add great depth to their cultural experiences. Lessons across a range of subjects and the opportunities for overseas trips deepen pupils' appreciation of differences between peoples.
- 2.27 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.28 The quality of teaching is good with many outstanding features. The school achieves its aim to provide a distinctive and stimulating environment for talented children from a variety of backgrounds, in which each individual is encouraged to strive for excellence and to acquire a lifelong passion for knowledge, discovery and adventure. The quality of teaching remains at the high level identified in the last inspection.

- 2.29 The good quality of teaching enables all pupils, both boys and girls, to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability, increase their understanding and develop their skills. In some lessons teachers are careful in supporting those with learning difficulties so that these pupils make good progress according to their ability. In the few cases when the support is not available these pupils struggle and their progress is not as good as it should be. The more able pupils respond very well to challenging teaching and they make rapid progress.
- 2.30 In the majority of lessons, teachers foster the application of intellectual, physical or creative effort required to engage pupils in their work. In the outstanding lessons, pupils are prompted to think and learn for themselves. In a Year 9 English lesson, pupils were led to use poetry to explore the cultural issues of the American Deep South and compare them with issues in England. The lesson was well-planned using a variety of teaching techniques that made skilful use of resources. Role play and drama added to the opportunities for pupils' involvement so that they made connections between the issues in both countries and went on to discuss wider literary techniques as well as aspects of racism. In a Year 10 geography lesson on constructing population pyramids, the teaching was characterised by a wide variety of teaching approaches together with an excellent questioning style that prompted the use of independent learning skills. In a coaching session in the Shooting Club the clear explanation of techniques and the encouragement of pupils to apply the techniques in a precise manner using appropriate physical and mental effort gave pupils the platform on which to build their skills.
- 2.31 In the best of the lessons, careful planning in the use of resources, in the selection of teaching techniques, and in the imaginative use of activities were key elements in successfully prompting learning of the highest order. In addition, precise and well-structured presentations by teachers, clear statement of tasks and learning outcomes, and the expectation that pupils would take responsibility for their learning, engaged pupils and allowed them the freedom to develop independent learning skills that were used to very good effect. The active participation of pupils in critical evaluation of each other's performance in many lessons is marked by a positive use of evaluation techniques. For instance in a Year 9 religious studies lesson pupils showed very high level evaluation skills in exploring project work produced by older pupils. The skilful questioning and the adroit way the teacher then built on pupils' responses to promote their understanding and learning were features of the lesson. Pupils' willingness to express openly their personal opinions and insights reflected the level of confidence they had in their teacher and in their peers. These features occur in many lessons across most subjects across the age range in the school.
- 2.32 Teachers display high levels of subject knowledge and expertise. When this is allied with their thorough understanding of their pupils they are able to give high level of focused support to individuals. As a result, carefully sequenced activities in lessons make allowances for the different levels of ability and allow teachers to adapt their teaching to the needs of individuals, enabling rapid progress to be made.
- 2.33 The use of humour and teachers' calm approach create an atmosphere of enjoyment that fully engages pupils in their learning. Pupils respond enthusiastically to positive teaching that requires them to argue cogently and present their views coherently. In lessons where pupils are required to carry out practical activities, they show an eagerness to think for themselves. The good-natured interaction with individual pupils, the variety of activities and the brisk pace of the best lessons promotes outstanding learning.
- 2.34 The exemplary behaviour of pupils in lessons is a consequence of good teaching and of the outstanding relationships between teachers and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves. It

is evidence of the sense of responsibility that pupils acquire as they mature. In this atmosphere, teachers promote learning at the highest level.

- 2.35 The wide variety of materials and equipment and the quality and quantity of resources provided are well used. As a result teachers have a wide range of options as to how they present their lessons and involve pupils.
- 2.36 Evaluation of performance against national norms is carried out each year on the publication of examination results. Analysis of performances by the director of studies and heads of departments, which was used to acknowledge how well the school had done in the past, is now mainly used to plan for greater achievement in the future. Regular assessment of pupils' performance in lessons, in activities and in tests provides a comprehensive profile of their progress. The information gathered is monitored by both senior staff and tutors and made available to all staff. As a result, in the best lessons, styles of teaching, lesson content and specialised support are adapted to ensure rapid progress by pupils. Teachers now have available to them the specialised expertise available in the learning support department. Currently the opportunity to use this expertise is limited by the amount of time the learning support specialist is able to give.
- 2.37 The quality of marking is good. In some subjects detailed written comments and targets are given. When this is allied with good oral feedback on performance pupils have all the guidance they need to move forward in their learning. Pupils confirmed they understand and benefit from the responses of teachers to their work.
- 2.38 The school meets the regulatory requirements for teaching [Standard 1].

3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS

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

- 3.1 The quality of pastoral care, support and guidance is outstanding and the provision is well supported by an effective management structure. As a result, staff care effectively for pupils' well-being and development. The school meets its aim to offer a strong, caring and supportive pastoral framework, working closely with parents to ensure that pupils are safe and happy and that all members of the school community feel respected and valued. The excellent levels of pastoral care identified in the last inspection have been enhanced.
- 3.2 The school provides outstanding care for pupils throughout the school. At key points of transition, specialist staff advise and guide pupils. Induction procedures are comprehensive and well implemented for pupils entering Years 7 and 12. Careers advice in making option choices addresses the needs of individuals. The contribution of the school counsellor, the chaplain and the development of the role of the school nurse to include contributions to PSHE adds to the programme of pastoral support. Tutors and pastoral leaders understand and are committed to fulfilling their responsibilities towards the full development of all pupils in their care. The channels of support are clearly defined, well understood and effective. Parents are happy with the quality of care and guidance given to their children. Pupils like being at the school, and feel they are known to staff and are valued and supported. The excellent pastoral care is a major contributor not only to the happy atmosphere of the school, but also to the high standards achieved in academic results and in all areas of achievement.
- 3.3 Staff are assisted by effective pastoral arrangements. The tutor system is the structure through which most pastoral care is delivered. Each tutor group is part of a year group that is then part of one of the three sections of the school. As a result, tutors have several levels of support on which they can draw in carrying out their work. The appointments of a deputy headteacher responsible for pastoral care and of extra heads of year since the last inspection have strengthened pastoral provision. Senior staff provide the backup and guidance that staff need in discharging their duties. The PSHE co-ordinator gives the support and guidance that tutors need to deliver a high quality PSHE programme. Regular pastoral meetings enable the sharing of information and ensure a consistency of approach. The role of the form tutor is clearly defined in the staff handbook. The various school councils give pupils many opportunities to contribute to a system of pastoral care that meets their needs. The role of the head boy and head girl leading teams of prefects are opportunities for pupils to play an active role in the pastoral care structures of the school. All the required policies for the pastoral care of pupils are in place and give guidance to staff on how best to serve pupils' needs.
- 3.4 The outstanding quality of relationships between staff and pupils is a key element in creating and sustaining the ethos of the school. The relaxed rapport between staff and pupils in lessons and around the school speaks of positive and supportive relationships. Pupils and staff show a high level of respect towards each other. Pupils are considerate and tolerant and act responsibly. They enjoy friendly relationships with each other.
- 3.5 Pupils are aware of their responsibility to behave considerately. They are well aware of the anti-bullying stance of the school. They are familiar with the procedures to follow should bullying occur, a rare event in their view. They expressed confidence that the school would deal effectively with bullying. The school's stance on anti-bullying is reinforced by excellent work on relationships and conflict resolution in the PSHE programme. Positive teaching in the pastoral programme and practical advice given to pupils highlight the dangers

of unwise use of the Internet. This advice is backed up by robust and comprehensive monitoring of Internet usage and by careful screening of equipment used by staff and pupils. The well-organised programme of checks and supervision by dedicated ICT staff is of a high quality. Parents have been informed through meetings in the school of the key role they play in promoting sensible Internet use.

- 3.6 Measures to safeguard and promote pupils' health and well-being are successful. Child protection arrangements are well documented in the staff handbook, expressed in the school policies, known by staff and carefully observed and monitored. All necessary measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards have been taken. Arrangements to ensure health and safety are good. Admissions and attendance registers are correctly kept. High levels of attendance allow pupils to benefit from the many experiences the school provides.
- 3.7 A full-time on-site nurse is available to treat any pupil taken ill. Suitably qualified first aiders are at hand throughout the school. The names and locations of these first aiders are clearly posted around the school. The use of medical prefects who assist the first aiders extends the cover for illness and accidents at any time during the school day. Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits and to take regular exercise. The food provided in the school dining room is of good quality and gives pupils a very good choice of healthy eating options. The kitchen staff know the pupils well and encourage healthy eating. The needs of pupils with physical disability have been well catered for in the new buildings and in the refurbished sections of the school. The school has taken all reasonable steps to ensure that all parts of the school are accessible to pupils whatever their needs.
- 3.8 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3].

The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community

- 3.9 The school has established an outstanding and effective partnership with parents and worthwhile links with the wider community, which benefit pupils. In so doing the school achieves its aims of working closely with parents. The high levels of effective partnership with parents and worthwhile links with the community observed in the last inspection are still in place.
- 3.10 The responses to the parents' questionnaire, completed before the inspection, reflected very high parental satisfaction with the education and the support given to their children. Parents were strongly appreciative of the teaching that helped pupils make such good progress. There was an almost universal acceptance that the school promoted worthwhile attitudes and views and that a good range of extra-curricular activities were provided. Among the positive comments, the most frequently mentioned were the caring nature of the school, the good behaviour of pupils, the pastoral system and the dedicated staff. The inspection team found ample evidence to support these observations by the parents.
- 3.11 A small number of parents commented on the lack of effective support for pupils experiencing learning problems. This issue is now being addressed by the school and a positive start has been made to resolve any difficulties. A very few parents felt the school should communicate better and should encourage parents to be more involved in the life and work of the school. The inspectors found no evidence to support these concerns. On the contrary, inspectors found that the school takes this part of its work very seriously and fulfils its stated aims in this respect. Parents are given ready access to staff and the many invitations to parents to support and participate in school activities would suggest that the school welcomes the active participation of parents in their children's education.

- 3.12 Parents are given every opportunity to be involved in the life of the school and they are kept in touch with the work and progress of their children. Many parents respond generously to invitations to share their experience and expertise with pupils, particularly as part of the careers programme. Attendance at exhibitions, performances and festivals as well as at sports events and games provide parents with opportunities to meet staff and to show their support for the work of the school. The parallel Ladies' and Fathers' Committees are successful in developing links among the parents, supporting the school and raising extra funds for the school.
- 3.13 Parents are provided with information about the school on a regular basis and through a variety of channels. These include newsletters, the school website, handbooks, routine letters on activities, trips and visits, and annual magazines. The music department's termly newsletter is a good example of keeping parents informed of the many activities and achievements for which the department is responsible. Reports and parents' evenings give full, detailed and helpful information so that parents know how well their children are performing and developing. The governors lead by example in producing attractive information materials detailing their roles, professional expertise and experience and the nature of their links with the school.
- 3.14 The school handles the concerns of parents well. Staff are easily available to take concerns and deal with them at an early stage. Parents take up offers to meet with staff and discuss in some detail the issues that trouble them about their children. The formal complaints procedure is in place and is properly observed.
- 3.15 The high quality of partnership achieved with parents is matched by the worthwhile links the school has developed with the local community. These links are promoted and actively pursued for the benefit of pupils and the general good of the school. A flourishing range of sporting, musical, educational links exist with sections of the community and with local schools and organisations. Outreach work into the community by the sixth form and by those involved in DoE give pupils the chance to offer service in the community in which many of them live. Contacts with the junior and pre-preparatory schools through music, modern foreign languages and sport have proved of benefit to the pupils and to the staff in each school. Equally beneficial have been the contacts established through the CCF, trips to Europe and to Australasia, the many sporting links at county, regional and national level and involvement with the high profile school building and development project in Kenya.
- 3.16 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the provision of information and the manner in which complaints are to be handled [Standards 6 and 7].

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 The quality of governance is good. The board of governors has set appropriate aims and values for the school, provides comprehensive oversight and good guidance and has enabled the school to continue to meet its aims and to build on its achievements. In the last inspection the governing body was judged to be conscientious and supportive of the quality of education, but with some aspects of their work that needed to be addressed. The governors have responded positively to each of the recommendations made in the last report. They now work strategically and systematically. They have prepared a collective vision for the future of the school. A detailed development plan has been drawn up to achieve that vision.
- 4.2 Governors' breadth of expertise makes them a valuable resource from whom the school draws considerable benefits. They are capable and experienced people with appropriate expertise across a wide range of professions who work hard for, and are strongly committed to, the success of the school. They give clear educational direction, sound financial planning and effective strategic direction. They are successful in securing investment in human and material resources to the benefit of the school. The structure and management arrangements related to the governing body are well organised and operate effectively. The network of committees with clearly defined briefs is an asset to the school and enables governors to provide effective oversight and guidance. There is a clear demarcation between the role of the governors in the strategic direction of the school and the management responsibilities of the headmaster that allows him to exercise his role properly.
- 4.3 Governors are well informed about the school and are given the information they require to be fully conversant with its operation and successes and to carry out their responsibilities appropriately. They have a key role in the preparation and review of all policies and monitor the implementation of their plans. A comprehensive development plan prioritises the key elements for future growth allowing the governors to play a strategic role in the development of the school.
- 4.4 The governing body is aware of its legal obligations and meets them, in particular for child protection and health and safety, but also for the quality of education the school provides; they give appropriate attention to pupils' welfare. Individual governors are assigned responsibilities in key areas, such as child protection, which they carry out in a purposeful manner. They are actively involved with staff leading those areas within the school.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.5 The quality of leadership and management of the headmaster and the senior management team and others with delegated responsibilities is outstanding. The leaders and managers are instrumental in helping the school to meet its aims. In the last inspection it was remarked that the school lacked explicit aims and detailed plans for its development, educational priorities were unclear and management was not properly coordinated. These weaknesses in leadership have been remedied by the work of the current headmaster and that of the former headmaster who was appointed since the last inspection. As a result the quality of leadership and management is now of the highest quality.
- 4.6 Clear educational direction and leadership are provided by those with management responsibilities, as reflected in the quality of education, the care of pupils and the

achievement of the school's aims. The future direction and development of the school, as expressed in the school development plan, are based on a clear understanding of the school's key strengths and identified areas for development.

- 4.7 The active and purposeful involvement of leaders and managers at all levels in pursuing the aims of the school is a striking feature of the school. Equally significant is the strong commitment of staff to developing the individuality of pupils balanced by responsibility for others. The unanimity of purpose among all staff in pursuing the aims of the school is an outstanding achievement of the work of the headmaster, senior leaders and others with delegated responsibilities throughout the school.
- 4.8 The school has a clear view of its strengths and of its areas for development. Focused planning is based on the rigorous analysis of performance and the wide discussion of proposals by all staff. Carefully elaborated strategies ensure delivery of the objectives set for development. Sound and prudent financial advice and control, effectively led by the bursar, underpin the development process. Formal and informal whole school monitoring takes place, with careful analysis of pupils' performance, scrutiny of tests and formal assessments. The active involvement of teachers and tutors in this activity gives the process of monitoring the breadth and substance needed to be of benefit to the pupils. Senior staff lead reviews of the impact of all policies and procedures.
- 4.9 The quality of leadership and management at middle management level is of a very high standard with comprehensive planning and support for teaching and learning. In some subject areas the needs of pupils who require learning support are identified and a considered response is established that meets their requirements. Guidance and support for teachers is clearly expressed in departmental handbooks that are useful reference points. Structured training and development are provided that enrich teachers' professional development and support the requirements of the school development plan.
- 4.10 Management at all levels is successful in drawing up and implementing appropriate procedures and policies and in checking and reviewing their effectiveness. Departmental handbooks and policies give suitable guidance to staff and support them in their work. Pastoral and academic leadership are clear and successful; roles and responsibilities are well defined and support positive team working. Detailed information about pupils' ability, performance and aptitudes are collected by senior managers who use it in their planning, monitoring and evaluating activities.
- 4.11 Managers are successful in securing, supporting, developing and motivating high-quality staff. The school has a rigorous system for checking the suitability of staff, supply staff, governors and anyone involved in the education of pupils. The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers. The programme is very well administered and is of a high standard. It is effective in meeting the needs of the school and the requirements of those teachers starting their career. Performance management review is still in its early stages.
- 4.12 Finances are very well managed so that appropriate resources are provided. The criticisms of the last inspection have been overturned to the point that the school is now superbly suited to the demands of education in a modern setting. The recent addition of high quality specialist teaching accommodation and the refurbishment and high level of maintenance of the older buildings have provided pupils with an attractive and stimulating environment, an observation regularly made by appreciative pupils. Teaching resources are generous and suited to the needs of good teaching. The library, with its resource centre is a valuable asset for private research and study as well as providing a quiet haven for personal reading.

-
- 4.13 The administration of the school is very good. The administrative, catering, maintenance and cleaning staff contribute to achieving the aims of the school by the range and quality of their work. Their pride in the school and their commitment to its success make a real contribution to the positive atmosphere of the school.
- 4.14 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].
- 4.15 The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers and meets its requirements.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall Conclusions

- 5.1 The school is outstandingly successful in meeting its aims. The rich educational experience enables pupils of all abilities and interests to find success and personal achievement. Their educational experience is greatly enhanced by the considerable benefit they receive from the range and the quality of the extra-curricular activities on offer. Pupils make rapid progress in all aspects of their learning and development and achieve high levels of attainment in public examinations and in a wide range of activities. Pupils' personal development is outstanding so that they themselves are equipped to make a positive contribution to the vibrant life of the school. The strong leadership and management of the school create an outstanding educational experience that meets the aims of the school. Staff are most generous in giving their time and expertise outside formal lessons to enhance the learning and the development of pupils. The quality of pastoral care is outstanding. The unanimity of purpose and the strong commitment of staff to achieving the aims of the school are key elements in its success. Worthwhile partnership with parents and positive links with the wider community enhance pupils' education. Governors work cooperatively with the leadership of the school to give a strategic perspective that is taking the school forward.
- 5.2 The issues raised at the last inspection have been successfully addressed. The school development plan now addresses educational objectives and declared priorities. Staff at all levels have been involved in setting up the plan. Effective leadership and management at all levels have replaced a structure that lacked cohesion. Refurbishments and new buildings, including the development of the library as a resource centre and the generous provision of ICT facilities, have improved greatly the environment in which staff and pupils work. Governors work strategically and systematically. They have prepared a collective vision for the future of the school with a detailed development plan to achieve that vision.
- 5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

- 5.4 To continue to improve the quality of education it already provides, the school should:
1. continue to develop and extend the provision for pupils requiring learning support.
- 5.5 No action is required in respect of regulatory requirements.

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 24th November to 27th November 2008. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff, with pupils and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.

List of Inspectors

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Mr Edward Dunphy | Reporting Inspector |
| Mr Andrew Boggis | Headmaster, HMC school |
| Mr Chris Compton | Director of Studies, HMC school |
| Mrs Lynda Corry | Headteacher, ISA school |
| Mr Anthony Duffield | Head of Department, HMC school |
| Dr Jennette Jefferies | Deputy Head, HMC school |
| Dr Jonathan Tribbick | Headmaster, HMC school |