

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## INSPECTION REPORT ON

### Davenies School

Full Name of the School	<b>Davenies School</b>		
DfES Number	<b>825/6004</b>		
Address	<b>Station Road, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, HP9 1AA</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01494 685400</b>		
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E-mail Address	<a href="mailto:headmaster@davenies.co.uk"><b>headmaster@davenies.co.uk</b></a>		
Name of Headmaster	<b>Andrew Nott</b>		
Chairman of Governors	<b>Chris Woodwark</b>		
Age Range	<b>4 – 13</b>	Gender	<b>Male</b>
Number of Pupils	<b>323</b>	Number of Boarders	<b>Nil</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>November 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>, 2004</b>		

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.

## 1. MAIN FINDINGS

### Overall Summary

- 1.1 The school community is well led by the governors, headmaster and senior managers; they have built and sustain a strong and supportive ethos in which pupils flourish and achieve good academic and personal standards. The high quality of pastoral care ensures that pupils grow into caring and courteous young people. The curriculum lacks some balance and the use of information and communication technology in other subjects is limited, but good teaching, based on the effective analysis of assessment data, enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make good progress. The library's contribution to learning is limited by its lack of space for comprehensive collections of non-fiction books. The school maintains very good links with the parents and with the local community. The quality, quantity and range of activities significantly enhance pupils' personal development.

### What the School Does Well

- 1.2 The school has a number of distinct strengths. The most significant of these which were identified by the inspection are:
- The strong leadership within the school provides vision and purpose to all it undertakes and the strength of management ensures that all aspects of the school are well organised and monitored.

- The quality of pastoral care is very good; it makes a significant contribution to the development of the pupils.
- Good teaching enables pupils to achieve good standards and make good progress.
- The high quality of the systems developed for the assessment, analysis and recording of the pupils' work, and their consistent implementation, enable the school to monitor the progress of individual pupils and identify trends well. They form a good basis for planning.
- Links with parents and the local community are very good.
- The quality, range and number of activities undertaken by the pupils greatly enhance their personal development.

### **What the School Should Do Better**

- 1.3 The school has very few weaknesses. The only significant weaknesses identified were:
- The curriculum lacks some balance. In particular, it affords insufficient time for the development of the performing arts.
  - Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) across the wider curriculum.
  - The library lacks sufficient space for it to become a fully effective centre for personal study, to extend its small collections of non-fiction books to support teaching and learning and to display books to best effect.

### **Standards of Attainment and Progress in Subjects**

- 1.4 Pupils achieve good standards and make good progress throughout the school and in all subjects. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and attain well. Standards of literacy, numeracy and in ICT are good. Pupils are successful in their applications to senior schools, both at 11 and at 13.

### **The Quality of Pupils' Learning, Attitudes and their Behaviour**

- 1.5 The quality of pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour is good. Pupils are skilful learners. They behave well, both in the classrooms and around the school. They relate well to their teachers and to each other. They respect the feelings of others and collaborate effectively. The high quality of pupils' learning and behaviour contributes well to their attainment and progress.

### **The Quality of Teaching**

- 1.6 The quality of teaching is good. It is rooted in good subject knowledge, well-planned, is usually well-matched to pupils' abilities and makes good use of a variety of teaching styles. It draws effectively on the support given by the special educational needs department and the classroom assistants. Teachers maintain very good discipline through a combination of high expectations and natural authority. They make good use of homework for pupils to consolidate their learning and skills, though, too sharp an increase in the amount of homework set for Year 5 leaves pupils ill-prepared for what is expected of them.

### **Other Aspects of the School**

#### **Attendance**

- 1.7 Levels of attendance are very good. They allow pupils to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the school. There is no unauthorised absence. Pupils arrive at school promptly, but lessons do not always begin on time.

#### **Assessment and Recording**

- 1.8 Assessment and recording procedures throughout the school are very good. The methods used for assessing and recording pupils' achievements, progress and needs are regular, accurate, consistent and

very effective. They are very good in the special needs department. All assessments inform curriculum planning and a good system of target setting enables individual pupils to make good progress.

### **Curriculum**

- 1.9 The curriculum is good and contributes well to the intellectual, physical and personal development of the pupils. It is broadly based and largely balanced. The time allocation for most subjects is appropriate, but there is too little science teaching in Year 2; in addition personal, social and health education and citizenship, religious studies and the performing arts in Years 7 and 8 are under-represented. Games is over represented within the curriculum. The rich programme of extra-curricular activities contributes well to pupils' personal development.

### **Teaching and Non-teaching Staff**

- 1.10 The provision of teaching and non-teaching staff is good. The number, qualifications and experience of the teaching and non-teaching staff are good and contribute well to the quality of education provided and the educational standards achieved. Staff are deployed well. The work of the non-teaching staff is effective, supportive and highly regarded. Staffing ratios for pupils under the age of five are in line with current guidance. The professional development of staff is good and is strongly linked to whole school and subject development.

### **Resources for Learning**

- 1.11 Provision of resources for learning is good. The books and materials which are needed to support the teaching, learning, study and recreation of the pupils at all levels are of good quantity, quality and organisation. They are in good condition and effective use is made of them to support pupils' learning. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is very good, but limited use is made of ICT across the wider curriculum. The range, availability and accessibility of subject resources are good.

### **Libraries**

- 1.12 The library offers satisfactory support for the curriculum; staff and pupils use it well. It is well sited in the centre of the school and offers easy access to pupils and staff, but affords limited space for personal study. It provides a good range and number of fiction books, but a small number of non-fiction books in some curriculum areas. Classroom libraries, and the use of a loan service, remedy this deficiency to a limited extent. The main library makes appropriate specific provision for younger readers. It is well managed.

### **Premises and Accommodation**

- 1.13 The premises and accommodation provide satisfactorily for teaching and learning and for pupils' welfare throughout the school and exceptionally well for information and communication technology and physical education. The recent completion of an extensive building and refurbishment programme provides greatly improved facilities which support curriculum provision, teaching and learning and also contribute considerably to the development and wellbeing of the pupils. However, the library lacks sufficient space for it to fully provide an effective centre for personal research.

### **Links with Parents and the Community**

- 1.14 Links with parents and the community are very good; they are a strength of the school. Parents are provided with very good information about the school and about the attainment and progress of their children. They appreciate the school's provision. Links with schools in the maintained sector are especially good.

### **Pupils' Personal Development**

- 1.15 Provision for pupils' personal development is good. Opportunities for spiritual and social development are good, for moral development they are very good and for cultural development they are satisfactory, with some good features. Pupils grow into courteous and sensitive young people. The school is successful in fulfilling its stated aims to be a school in which different personalities are valued, where a real sense of community spirit exists and genuine attention is paid to basic Christian principles.

### Pastoral Care

- 1.16 The quality of provision for pupils' pastoral care, support and guidance is very good. It makes a very positive contribution to the high educational standards and the significant personal development achieved by pupils. The consistent observance and implementation of a comprehensive range of school policies effectively promote the pupils' welfare. Provision for health and safety is very good. The supervision of pupils is good and appropriate arrangements are made for child protection and the access of disabled pupils.

### Governance and Management

- 1.17 The governance and management of the school are very good. The school is very well managed and led; this is strength of the school. The governors, the headmaster, the senior management team (SMT) and all the staff take pride in their school and fulfil their several roles very effectively. They ensure that the school's aims are met and promote high educational standards. They further ensure that planning is thoroughly efficient to provide good resources for teaching and learning.

### Achievement and Quality in Activities

- 1.18 The quality and achievement in activities is very good. Activities form an integral part of life at the school and greatly enhance opportunities for pupils' personal development. The wide variety of activities available to pupils and the policy of enabling as many pupils as possible to represent their school in sporting teams ensure that a significant proportion of the pupils benefit from the school's provision.

### Progress Made by the School since its Last Inspection

- 1.19 The school has made very good progress since its inspection in 1997. A new building, opened in 1999, increased the accommodation for teaching and a recently opened sports and performing arts centre provides a versatile indoor facility to provide for swimming, indoor games and physical education (PE), drama and music. The recommendations of risk assessment and fire inspection reports have been implemented and good systems have been developed for monitoring health and safety. The school has added to and upgraded its resources and now provides a good range of books, audio-visual and ICT resources. A head of the pre-preparatory department was appointed in 1997. This appointment has strengthened the leadership of this section of the school and provided the senior management team with professional guidance on educational issues specific to pupils under the age of seven. The appointment of curriculum co-ordinators within the pre-preparatory department and the institution of regular departmental meetings and consultations have produced more coherent schemes of work which provide more effectively for planned progression in the pupils' learning. The school has developed a whole-school policy on ICT and monitors its effectiveness. It continues to review the opportunities the curriculum provides for initiative and creativity.
- 1.20 The last OFSTED nursery inspection in 2000 made only one recommendation for improvement: 'children have few regular opportunities to role play, and express their independent creative ideas and imagination.' The school has taken satisfactory measures to remedy this situation.

### 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	Yes
6.	Provision of information	Yes
7.	Manner in which complaints are to be handled	Yes

### Actions Required for Compliance with the Regulatory Requirements

- 1.22 No action is required.
- 1.21 The school is asked to address the 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 recommendations arising from this inspection that are considered the most important in respect of the school's continuing development are set out below.
- R1 The school should build on recent curriculum development by reviewing its balance to better provide for personal, social, health and citizenship education, religious studies, and the performing arts, whilst retaining the strong contribution made by sport.
- R2 The school should pursue its development of ICT to enable it to serve the wider curriculum more effectively.
- R3 The school should investigate ways to make the library a more effective centre for personal research and extend its collections of non-fiction to better support teaching and learning.

## 3. INTRODUCTION

### Characteristics of the School

- 3.1 Davenies School provides day education for boys between the ages of four and thirteen. The school was founded as a privately owned, boarding preparatory school in 1940. In the early 1960s, a group of parents established a limited company and charitable trust to run the school. The current headmaster was appointed in January, 2000.
- 3.2 The school is situated in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, a town of Georgian origins, which is close enough to London to be very attractive to commuters who seek more space in which to raise their families. Originally housed in a farmhouse, the school has progressively extended and rebuilt its facilities. Over the last ten years, it has built new pre-preparatory and senior classroom blocks. In September 2004, it opened a new performing arts centre, indoor swimming pool and sports hall. This development released space for a new music block. Recent improvements have included wireless networking across the school, considerable investment in information and communication technology and the construction of a covered outside play area for the Reception class. The school has no further schemes for major building, but plans to continue small scale extension and redevelopment of its site to maximise its use of space and facilities.
- 3.3 At the time of the inspection, there were 323 pupils at the school, all of whom attended full time. Pupils come from Beaconsfield and a radius of some five miles from the town. Most come from families where parents commute to London to work. Reflecting the social nature of the area, a very small minority of pupils come from homes where English is not the first language.
- 3.4 The school admits pupils with a wide range of abilities and aptitudes. It does not make assessments of ability on entry, though when a pupil enters the school after the Reception Year, it administers tests of English and mathematics, or makes use of suitably similar assessment data from the feeder school, to establish his level of attainment.
- 3.5 The school conducts nationally recognised assessments of cognitive ability, reading, spelling and mathematics. The spread of scores shows that pupils have a wide range of ability, but, overall, pupils' average ability is above that of the national average. The ability of a substantial minority of pupils is well above the national average. No pupils have statements of special educational needs, (SEN), but the school includes the names of nearly one-third of its pupils on its own SEN register. Half of these pupils are at the second stage of provision. If pupils are performing in line with their abilities, their results in the national tests will be above the average for all maintained primary schools. .
- 3.6 A substantial number of pupils leave at the age of 11, when they move on to the selective maintained

schools in Buckinghamshire. Pupils who remain at the school until the end of Year 8 move on to a wide range of independent senior schools, some with academic and other scholarships.

3.7 The school sets out to provide a warm, friendly, family atmosphere in which genuine attention is paid to basic Christian principles. It places a central emphasis on the needs of the individual. The school aims to encourage 'the pursuit of excellence and high achievement, and the development of the whole person in a caring, supportive environment.'

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

### Key Indicators

3.9 Externally audited National Curriculum Assessments at age 7 (Key Stage 1)

Subject	Most recent year		Average for the last three years	
	Level 2 or higher (%)	Level 3 or higher (%)	Level 2 or higher (%)	Level 3 or higher (%)
Reading	100	53	100	56
Writing	98	25	99	40
Mathematics	100	55	100	58

3.10 Externally marked National Curriculum Assessments at age 11 (Key Stage 2)

Subject	Most recent year		Average for the last three years	
	Level 4 or higher (%)	Level 5 or higher (%)	Level 4 or higher (%)	Level 5 or higher (%)
English	100	66	96	49
Mathematics	97	74	94	49
Science	100	100	100	82

3.11 Attendance for First Half of Autumn Term 2004

	Authorised	Unauthorised
Percentage absence	1.82	0

3.12 Exclusions Over the Previous 12 Months

Temporary exclusions	Permanent exclusions
0	0

## 4. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

### Attainment and Progress

4.1 Pupils achieve good standards and make good progress throughout the school and in all subjects. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and attain well. Standards of literacy, numeracy and in ICT are good. Pupils are successful in their applications to senior schools, both at 11 and at 13.

4.2 By the age of five, pupils reach good levels of attainment in all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They are on track to meet all the early learning goals by the time they reach the end of their Reception Year. They reach good standards in personal and social education; they are confident, respectful, well behaved, know right from wrong and work well, whether in groups or independently.

- 4.3 Pupils' attainment in the national tests at the age of seven is high in relation to their abilities. Results in reading, writing and mathematics over the last three years have been far above the national average.
- 4.4 Pupils' attainment in the national tests at the age of 11 is good in relation to their abilities. Over the last three years, results in English and mathematics have been well above, and in science they have been far above, the national average for all maintained primary schools. Results in all three subjects have improved, and mathematics results have improved significantly, since 2002. A substantial majority of pupils is successful in the academic selection procedures for the grammar schools in the area.
- 4.5 At the age of 13, pupils are successful in their Common Entrance examinations and gain places at a range of independent schools, most of which are academically selective; a small minority of pupils win academic or other scholarships.
- 4.6 High levels of attainment occur in almost every age group and subject. High levels of attainment were seen in science, in mathematics in Years 7 and 8 and occasionally in English. Standards of literacy are good. Pupils express ideas articulately and confidently, using a mature vocabulary. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson, pupils explored ideas in depth, used an extensive vocabulary eloquently and wrote with originality on the topic of a new world. In Year 4, pupils used analytical language appropriately in their discussion of the styles and organisation of poems on the subject of grandparents.
- 4.7 The standard of work in books is almost invariably good across all age groups and subjects. Written work is fluent and well tailored for different purposes. The presentation of written work is neat. Pupils make good use of opportunities to draft work to achieve a high quality in their finished work.
- 4.8 Progress in knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of learning at the Foundation Stage is good. All pupils are on course to attain the early learning goals during the course of their Reception Year.
- 4.9 Progress remains good throughout the school. Pupils make good progress in their development of skills and understanding. For example, in English, by Year 8, pupils have made sufficient progress in their understanding of characterisation to make an effective study of 'Macbeth'. Very rapid progress occurs when pupils are active in their learning and tackle a range of tasks within lessons.
- 4.10 Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress and reach good standards. They strengthen their reading, writing and listening skills so that they can follow the school's curriculum effectively. They make effective use of their individual and group teaching and of the targeted support they receive in lessons.

### **Quality of Pupils' Learning, Attitudes and Behaviour**

- 4.11 The quality of pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour is good. Pupils are skilful learners. They behave well, both in the classrooms and around the school. They relate well to their teachers and to each other. They respect the feelings of others and collaborate effectively. The high quality of pupils' learning and behaviour contributes well to their attainment and progress.
- 4.12 Pupils respond well in lessons, are co-operative, enthusiastic and well-motivated. In the Foundation Stage, the positive attitudes and exemplary behaviour of the children contribute greatly to their learning. Pupils in Years 1 to 4 are encouraged by the setting of targets. For example, pupils in a Year 3 mathematics lesson responded well to being set specific targets for their work on adding and subtracting multiples of 10. Pupils work well as a whole class, in groups, and individually. They show a good level of interest in lessons and respond positively to their teaching and to the tasks they are set.
- 4.13 Behaviour around the school premises is good. Pupils are very helpful and courteous; they show respect for people and property. The excellent condition and tidiness of the premises bear testimony to the pupils' positive attitudes. They are proud of their school and appreciate its ethos.
- 4.14 Throughout the school, and regardless of background or ethnic group, pupils relate well and are supportive of one another. For example, during a Year 5 PE lesson, pupils marked the success of their

class-mates with spontaneous applause. A good rapport exists between teachers and pupils.

- 4.15 Pupils respect the feelings of others and treat all opinions and views with consideration. They form very constructive relationships with each other and readily collaborate in a range of ways, from participation in sports, to group work for a school assembly and playing together.

### **Attendance**

- 4.16 Levels of attendance are very good. They allow pupils to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the school. There is no unauthorised absence. Pupils arrive at school promptly, but lessons do not always begin on time.
- 4.17 The completion of attendance registers meets statutory requirements. Registers are completed appropriately in accordance with school policy at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. They record absences according to recognised codes. All absences which have not previously been notified are followed up. The school office displays lists of absent pupils.
- 4.18 Pupils arrive punctually at school. However, the identical start and finish times of lessons leaves no time for moving between lessons. This results in some lessons starting late.
- 4.19 The admission register is kept in line with statutory requirements.

## **5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### **Teaching**

- 5.1 The quality of teaching is good. It is rooted in good subject knowledge, well-planned, well-matched to pupils' abilities and makes good use of a variety of teaching styles. It draws effectively on the support given by the special educational needs department and the classroom assistants. Teachers maintain very good discipline through a combination of high expectations and natural authority. They make good use of homework for pupils to consolidate their learning and skills, though, too sharp an increase in the amount of homework set for Year 5 leaves pupils ill-prepared for what is expected of them.
- 5.2 Examples of good teaching are found in all sections of the school and in every subject. Teaching was very good in more than one-quarter of the lessons observed and in only a very small minority was it unsatisfactory.
- 5.3 Teaching is almost invariably appropriate to the needs of the pupils. Planning takes good account of the pupils' varying abilities, both through closely matching questions asked and tasks set to pupils' standards and by looking for a range of outcomes when the work set is identical. Open-ended tasks in some subjects, such as design and technology, enable gifted pupils to explore topics in appropriate depth. Much teaching employs probing, open-ended questioning techniques and deals well with challenging questions from pupils. Setting and streaming arrangements, and the small sets thereby achieved at the top of the school, enable teachers to pitch their general class teaching appropriately.
- 5.4 Many of the best lessons observed occurred when confident teaching allowed the pupils to influence the course of activities, as, for example, in science lessons in Years 7 and 8 on the purification of rock salt and investigating the effects of a salt on metal.
- 5.5 Very good support is provided by the special educational needs department and by the classroom assistants in the pre-preparatory department. Subject specialists and form teachers draw on individual learning plans (ILPs) and individual education plans (IEPs) profitably to ensure that they employ suitable strategies in their class teaching to best suit the learning styles of individual pupils. For example, visual, kinaesthetic, auditory and visual learning activities characterise lessons in French and German.
- 5.6 Teachers' subject knowledge is almost invariably good and is particularly strong amongst the subject specialist teachers. Teachers in the pre-preparatory department and in Years 3 to 6 have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and primary curricula.
- 5.7 The maintenance of discipline is very good. Discipline is achieved with a light touch, through high

expectations, natural authority and appropriate reminders, with little need for recourse to the school's systems of sanctions. This is particularly impressive in the Foundation Stage. Relationships between staff and pupils are based on trust and respect. Teaching stimulates interest well and takes advantage of opportunities provided by the pupils, as for example in a Year 2 English lesson on Remembrance Day on the topic of questions, when excellent use was made of a grandfather's war medals to stimulate relevant questioning from the pupils.

- 5.8 In the majority of lessons, high expectations, well matched to pupils' abilities, motivate pupils well and enable them to deepen their knowledge and understanding at a suitable pace. Lessons contain a variety of tasks which keep pupils' motivation high and concentration good. However, in some lessons, challenge lacked sufficient depth to motivate the most able pupils and to maximise their progress.
- 5.9 Teachers' planning is generally very good; it is detailed, clear and well matched to appropriate curriculum objectives. The aims of lessons are made clear to pupils at the outset and are displayed as effective visual reminders throughout. Appropriate reference is made to prior work at the outset of lessons, sometimes with startling results, as, for example when pupils in a Year 2 science lesson recalled in detail a project from the previous half term about seeds. Many, but not all, lessons are effectively planned to meet the wide range of individual needs, including those of SEN pupils. In most, but not all subjects, assessment of previous work is used constructively.
- 5.10 Very good use of time is made in the Foundation Stage and in some subjects. In other sections of the school and subjects, time is mostly used well, though the late arrival of pupils for some of their lessons results in work planned not always being completed and in some hurried ends to lessons. Prompt arrival at lessons is made difficult by identical end and starting points to lessons. Books and equipment are used very effectively at the Foundation Stage and effectively across all sections and subjects of the school. ICT is well used in geography, but is underused in many other subjects. The increased use of ICT is published as a target in several subject development plans, including French and German and useful exploration of appropriate software has been undertaken in design and technology.
- 5.11 Homework is used effectively, though the steep increase in the amounts set in Year 5 causes some concern amongst some parents and faces pupils with too large a volume of work to complete.

***Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for teaching?***

- 5.12 Yes.

**Assessment and Recording**

- 5.13 Assessment and recording procedures throughout the school are very good. The methods used for assessing and recording pupils' achievements, progress and needs are regular, accurate, consistent and very effective. They are very good in the special needs department. All assessments inform curriculum planning and a good system of target setting enables individual pupils to make good progress.
- 5.14 The system of recording pupils' results is good; an effective and informative tracking system enables teachers to monitor individual progress and identify trends accurately. Comprehensive, regular assessment procedures provide valuable information about pupils' learning and contribute effectively to the development and planning of the curriculum. All subjects make effective use of informative and manageable systems, appropriate for the ages, needs and stages of development of the pupils. Assessment opportunities are clearly identified in all subject policies and are observed consistently by teachers.
- 5.15 Systems for assessment and recording in the Foundation Stage support learning well in all areas of learning. Effective weekly observations in the Reception classes enable teachers to update Foundation Stage profiles regularly and accurately, and to plan work so that it is closely matched to individual children's needs.
- 5.16 Assessment remains effective throughout the pre-preparatory department. In Years 1 and 2, assessments include teachers' observations in the form of pupil notes and cumulative records, science assessments and standardised assessments of reading, spelling and mathematics. The head of the pre-

preparatory department monitors these assessments. In Year 2, pupils take part in the national tests for seven year olds.

- 5.17 Classroom observation remains a feature of assessment in the preparatory department, but, from Year 3, increasing use is made of more formal assessment procedures. Optional national curriculum tests in English and mathematics and subject examinations are held yearly. Tests of reasoning ability are administered each autumn and reading and spelling tests are conducted twice a year. Pupils are entered for the national tests at the end of Year 6. The data from all these assessments influence decisions about streaming and setting pupils and help teachers to plan work to match pupils' needs. The school uses assessment as an effective tool for reviewing progress and for deciding which pupils should be referred for learning support or for inclusion in the enrichment groups which have been established to provide extended levels of challenge for the most able pupils.
- 5.18 Teachers' marking is frequent, accurate and consistent. It is very well used as a pointer for future teaching. All marks and assessments are recorded and used to produce effort and attainment grades. The completed grids of grades are used very well to produce running records of pupils who are causing concern. Heads of department monitor mark books regularly. Teachers use marks to report attainment and progress to parents and colleagues and to refine their planning. Teachers generally adhere to the school marking policy, but instances of bland and cursory marking mean that marking is not always fully effective in assisting pupils to make the best progress.
- 5.19 Heads of department regularly scrutinise pupils' exercise books to monitor the implementation of the curriculum. They return books with informative and constructive comments for the teaching staff.
- 5.20 Teachers make effective use of target setting to improve pupils' attainment. Targets are set by form teachers with advice from subject teachers. They are agreed by teachers and pupils and recorded on the pupils' reports. The regular monitoring of targets and the comments written in pupils' 'School Books' for parents to see promote good progress. .
- 5.21 The records of assessment and individual learning plans (ILPs), for all the pupils on the school's special education needs (SEN) register, and the individual education plans (IEPs), for pupils who have been diagnosed as having specific educational needs, are very good. They inform planning within the department and are circulated to all teachers who take good account of them in planning lessons.
- 5.22 The management and development of assessment is highly developed. A very effective assessment group, which meets regularly, has reviewed all the procedures for assessment and recording. The group has taken an innovative approach to its remit and has implemented a range of valuable new systems and methods. The group has published a very comprehensive and effective assessment and recording policy document to ensure that all teachers are well informed of the school's procedures and practices.

## **Curriculum**

- 5.23 The curriculum is good and contributes well to the intellectual, physical and personal development of the pupils. It is broadly based and largely balanced. The time allocation for most subjects is appropriate, but there is too little science teaching in Year 2; in addition, personal, social and health education and citizenship, religious studies and the performing arts in Years 7 and 8 are under-represented. Games is over represented in the curriculum. The rich programme of extra-curricular activities contributes well to pupils' personal development.
- 5.24 The curriculum for children up to the age of five, which is based on the Early Learning Goals, achieves a good balance between the six areas of learning and provides a wide range of activities appropriate to children's age and abilities. The curriculum from Years 1 to 6 is based on the National Curriculum guidelines and, whilst it places a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy, includes all the national curriculum subjects. In addition, it is enriched by the inclusion of French, German and Latin. The curriculum for Years 7 and 8 prepares pupils well for their Common Entrance examinations and for their senior schools.
- 5.25 The school implements a clear and comprehensive policy on homework. The tasks pupils complete make a valuable contribution to their learning. Homework is a requirement from Year 1, when pupils take home their reading books. Subject homework is set from Year 3. Assignments increase in length and complexity as pupils get older. The increase in demands on the pupils is generally well graded,

but becomes steep between Years 4 and 5.

- 5.26 In all subjects, curricular planning is meticulous and ensures that pupils make good progress in their learning. Medium- and long-term planning is detailed and effective; it ensures that pupils acquire knowledge and skills in a considered sequence which maximises progress.
- 5.27 The school's arrangements for the teaching of the curriculum ensure that it is accessible to all the pupils. In Years 4, 5 and 6, pupils are set for English and mathematics. In Year 7 and 8 pupils are streamed in two ability sets in preparation for the Common Entrance examinations. The arrangements for setting and streaming in Years 4 to 8 meet the needs of the pupils well. They promote effective learning by providing appropriate challenge for able pupils and supporting those who need to consolidate their learning.
- 5.28 The school does not have any pupils with statements of special educational need. However, it makes very good arrangements for the significant number of pupils on its own special needs register. Special needs teachers work in close liaison with form and subject teachers. The very good support they provide, both within lessons and on an individual basis, ensures that the curriculum is accessible to pupils with special needs. Individual learning and individual education plans provide effective, detailed and regularly reviewed guidance and support to the teaching staff. The classroom assistants offer very beneficial additional support in the younger classes.
- 5.29 The curriculum is enlivened and enriched by an extensive extra-curricular programme of activities, field trips and visits to museums and centres of interest, both in England and abroad. Pupils enjoy a rich programme of sport. Fixtures against many schools in a wide range of sporting activities provide opportunities for the less able as well as the talented pupils to represent their school. Extra-curricular activities contribute well to pupils' personal development.

*Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the curriculum?*

- 5.30 Yes.

**Teaching and Non-teaching Staff**

- 5.31 The provision of teaching and non-teaching staff is good. The number, qualifications and experience of the teaching and non-teaching staff are good and contribute well to the quality of education provided and the educational standards achieved. Staff are deployed well. The work of the non-teaching staff is effective, supportive and highly regarded. Staffing ratios for pupils under the age of five are in line with current guidance. The professional development of staff is good and is strongly linked to whole school and subject development.
- 5.32 The quality of the teaching staff is good. The staff are sufficiently qualified and experienced for the roles they are required to undertake and are effectively deployed. All teachers are formally qualified and many are highly experienced. They make a good contribution to the quality of education provided and to the educational standards achieved. They are well supported by the classroom assistants.
- 5.33 The quality of the non-teaching staff is also good. Their work is effective, supportive and highly regarded. The bursar provides excellent support for the work of the school. The school office deals effectively with a heavy workload. The nurse provides well for medical welfare and the catering staff ensure that meals are nutritious. The grounds staff maintain the school's outdoor facilities well and the site is effectively managed.
- 5.34 The deployment of teaching and learning support staff is good. Teachers have appropriate knowledge and experience to undertake the roles assigned to them. The school arranges for a generous allowance of non-contact time. Heads of department have appropriate time to monitor teaching and learning and to develop policies and schemes of work. They work well with the subject coordinators in the pre-preparatory department and, through good communication, ensure a smooth transition through the curriculum at each stage of the school.
- 5.35 The training and professional development programme is good. Staff training needs are identified through appraisal and by teachers themselves. Training is well matched to both school and subject development. A well-established and effective annual appraisal system for the teaching staff and the

pre-preparatory classroom assistants contributes significantly to staff development.

- 5.36 The school is registered for the Independent Schools Newly Qualified Teacher's scheme and the induction procedure for new staff is appropriate, supportive and informative. Newly qualified teachers are provided with suitable mentors and registered for training. The induction programme for newly appointed staff is effective. During an induction day, which is held before a new teacher takes up appointment, the school's policies and procedures are thoroughly explained and examined. All the appropriate checks are carried out on teaching and non-teaching staff. Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau clearance is obtained

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

- 5.37 Yes.

### **Resources for Learning**

- 5.38 Provision of resources for learning is good. The books and materials which are needed to support the teaching, learning, study and recreation of the pupils at all levels are of good quantity, quality and organisation. They are in good condition and effective use is made of them to support pupils' learning. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is very good, but limited use is made of ICT across the wider curriculum. The range, availability and accessibility of subject resources are good.
- 5.39 The provision for ICT is very good and the newly created suite is an exciting and useful resource. The range, availability, quality and accessibility of ICT are very good and well managed, but do not fully support pupils' attainment, progress and quality of learning in some subject areas. Classrooms have computers that are accessible to the pupils. The newly purchased inter-active white boards are a very good additional resource.
- 5.40 A good range of resources can be found, in good condition and well maintained in all departments of the school. All departments enjoy an appropriate supply of textbooks in acceptable condition. Departments such as mathematics, art, science, ICT, geography, music and modern languages are well resourced. The teaching staff utilise resources fully and use them effectively to promote learning through discussions and practical activities.
- 5.41 Resources are well organised and, in most classrooms and subjects, a good range of storage ensures that resources are accessible to pupils. The Foundation Stage is particularly well resourced with suitable equipment for both learning and play. The school has an adequate number of televisions with videos or DVDs, which are used effectively to support learning
- 5.42 The school provides a good range of central resources. Four minibuses cater well for transport for games fixtures, school visits and trips. The school grounds provide a valuable resource for fieldwork as well as space for playing, both in lessons and for recreation. The newly opened performing arts and sports complex provides an excellent resource for drama, physical education and games.

### **Libraries**

- 5.43 The library offers satisfactory support for the curriculum; staff and pupils use it well. It is well sited in the centre of the school and offers easy access to pupils and staff, but affords limited space for personal study. It provides a good range and number of fiction books, but a small number of non-fiction books in some curriculum areas. Classroom libraries, and the use of a loan service, remedy this deficiency to a limited extent. The main library makes appropriate specific provision for younger readers. It is well managed.
- 5.44 The library holds sufficient stock for the number of pupils. Many books have been purchased in the past two years, following a major cull of redundant titles and investment in new books and materials. The school's provision is augmented by use of the local authority library service which provides a valuable loan collection each term. Borrowing is at a steady level. Small classroom libraries throughout the school support reading, topic and subject based learning.
- 5.45 The range, availability, quality and accessibility of the library stock are sufficient in most areas, but the number of books is limited for mathematics, design and technology and art. The school has

identified the non-fiction section as an area for development.

- 5.46 The library is welcoming and attractive. It is decorated with colourful posters and offers journals, magazines and displays of interest in addition to books. Story bags and tapes provide well for younger pupils and a small section is designed specifically for pupils in the pre-preparatory department. A networked computer with intranet access provides for research.
- 5.47 Library management is good. The library is open for pupils at morning and lunch break times when the library monitors from Year 7 assist and help with day to day management. The librarian catalogues the stock efficiently and makes good use of the small room at her disposal and the limited space available for the storage and display of books and journals. She supports pupils' learning well by providing reading lists, which are published on the school website, and lists of topic and specialist books for staff to support their teaching. A generous and flexible budget allows for continuous upgrading and expansion of the library's resources.

### **Premises and Accommodation**

- 5.48 The premises and accommodation provide satisfactorily for teaching and learning and for pupils' welfare throughout the school and exceptionally well for information and communication technology and physical education. The recent completion of an extensive building and refurbishment programme provides greatly improved facilities which support curriculum provision, teaching and learning and also contribute considerably to the development and wellbeing of the pupils. However, the library lacks sufficient space for it to fully provide an effective centre for personal research.
- 5.49 The school occupies a well maintained, attractive and secure site in the centre of Beaconsfield. The buildings are well arranged and equipped for teaching and learning and the grounds contain appropriate areas for play and good sports fields. The offices of the headmaster and bursar are sited within the original part-timbered farmhouse. This area of the school also houses a welcoming reception area, the school office, library, dining room, medical room and staff rooms and offices. An attractive glass-fronted walkway links this building to the main preparatory school teaching rooms.
- 5.50 The newly opened sports and performing arts centre, incorporating an indoor swimming pool, provides an excellent facility for drama, sport and indoor activities. Further excellent provision includes the information, communication and technology room.
- 5.51 The accommodation for the Early Years is suitable for the delivery of all aspects of the curriculum. Areas are safe, secure and stimulating, and offer immediate access to the outside. The Dell provides an exciting and challenging environment for physical activity and imaginative play.
- 5.52 Where practicable, teaching rooms are grouped by subject or year group. However, the accommodation for Year 1 places them at some distance from other pre-preparatory classes. This arrangement diminishes the sense of community within the pre-preparatory department. Access to the Year 3 classrooms is by means of an external stairway to first floor level, but this arrangement enables classes of younger pupils to be accommodated on the ground floor.
- 5.53 Classrooms are generally of adequate size. The art studio is very spacious. However, a classroom used for teaching both modern languages and Latin is large enough to accommodate only very small groups satisfactorily. The awkward shape of the design and technology room makes teaching there difficult. Difficulties have been partly addressed through a combination of team teaching arrangements and the installation of a CCTV system to ensure that pupils can be monitored at all times.
- 5.54 Classrooms are well decorated, clean and well maintained. They are generally light and bright. However, the general level of lighting in the art studio, where light is directed by spot lights at the tables, is low.
- 5.55 Provision for storage is generally good, though the lack of storage space for musical instruments in the performing arts centre puts constraints on its use for music lessons. The science department restricts access to the separate prep and storage rooms to staff and complies with health and safety regulations for the storage and safe disposal of substances hazardous to health.
- 5.56 Suitable furniture is provided in all areas of the school. Attractive displays of artefacts and pupils'

completed work contribute to the positive learning environment and promote the self-esteem of the pupils.

- 5.57 The dining room is light and well equipped for the serving of food. The kitchens are clean and the facilities for hygienic preparation of food are adequate. However, medical facilities are constrained by a lack of space. It is unsatisfactory that the medical room can only appropriately accommodate one pupil lying down at a time.

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

- 5.58 Yes.

### **Links with Parents and the Community**

- 5.59 Links with parents and the community are very good; they are a strength of the school. Parents are provided with very good information about the school and about the attainment and progress of their children. They appreciate the school's provision. Links with schools in the maintained sector are especially good.
- 5.60 Almost three-quarters of the parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Of these, the overwhelming majority are either well satisfied or very well satisfied with the education the school provides. Very few common concerns were raised by more than a small minority of parents. However, comments were made about the volume of work to be done at home, particularly by Year 5 parents. The inspection found a basis for these concerns in the relatively sharp rise in the amount of homework set in Year 5. A small minority of parents reported that the school does not encourage them to be involved and a similarly small proportion reported that the school had not handled their concerns well. The inspection found no justification for these complaints. The school affords many opportunities for parents to be involved in its life and work and handles concerns promptly and sensitively.
- 5.61 The attractive school prospectus accurately reflects the ethos and aims of the school. The parents' handbook is very comprehensive and easy to use; it provides details on a full range of important matters. An additional handbook gives useful information to parents about life in the pre-preparatory department. Other publications for parents, such as weekly and monthly newsletters, give valuable information on school activities and the annual magazine provides a digest of the year and a forum for pupils' work.
- 5.62 Curriculum briefings are held annually for parents of pupils in the pre-preparatory department, and curriculum evenings are being developed for the preparatory department. The regularly updated school website is designed for parents' use and displays a wealth of information, including curriculum notes.
- 5.63 Regular information is provided for parents about their child's work and progress. Reports are clear and useful; communication with parents about their child's academic performance is good and constructive. Two parents' evenings, a full written report and half-termly assessment sheets give parents a clear picture of their child's performance and progress.
- 5.64 The 'Home/School Book' in the pre-preparatory department and the 'School Book' in the preparatory department provide well for communication between home and school on a daily basis, as necessary. The latter also records information for parents regarding achievements and the reward system of stars and headmaster's awards. Open evenings about senior schools are arranged twice a year and an information afternoon for feeder nurseries is staged by the pre-preparatory department. The headmaster's written annual report to parents provides a review of many aspects of school life and informs parents of recent and planned developments.
- 5.65 The school involves parents well in its life and work. Parents listen to readers, help with a range of clubs and organise special programmes such as the cycling proficiency course. They are invited to watch matches, assemblies and concerts. A 'Friends of Davenies Association' organises a number of social events and others are arranged by the school. Parental complaints are dealt with promptly. The school follows a published complaints procedure which fulfils all regulatory requirements.
- 5.66 The school has forged a number of strong links with the local community, including partnerships with a local state school over the use of sports facilities, fixtures with maintained sector schools,

arrangements with the local council over building a path across common land adjacent to the school, and with a local business over parking arrangements. Pupils help in the locality by raising money for local charities, by entertaining local groups and helping at local events. For example, the hand-bells group play at local old peoples' homes and the cub pack plays a role in the community.

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

5.67 Yes.

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

5.68 Yes.

## **6. PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PASTORAL CARE**

### **Pupils' Personal Development**

- 6.1 The overall provision for pupils' personal development is good. Opportunities for spiritual and social development are good, for moral development they are very good and for cultural development they are satisfactory, with some good features. The pupils grow into courteous and sensitive young people. The school is successful in fulfilling its stated aims to be a school in which different personalities are valued, where a real sense of community spirit exists and genuine attention is paid to basic Christian principles
- 6.2 The school makes good provision for spiritual development. It has a Christian ethos, but welcomes pupils from all faiths, and takes due notice of their traditions, values and beliefs. School assemblies follow suitable themes, such as courage, which are developed through separate assemblies for the preparatory and pre-preparatory departments. Local church leaders take special assemblies; for example, the local parish priest celebrates harvest festival.
- 6.3 The religious studies curriculum covers the beliefs and practices of six world religions and pupils are given suitable opportunities to explore their own values and beliefs. Teaching styles promote spiritual development by valuing pupils' questions and giving time for pupils' own thoughts and concerns. For example, Year 3 pupils write stories, feelings, prayers and poems in a 'Thought Book' which they then share with other pupils.
- 6.4 Questions of morality are specifically addressed in personal, social and health education [PSHE] and religious studies lessons, where pupils are encouraged to explore issues openly and to question values. Models of moral virtue are given through literature, religious studies, history, art and in assemblies and teachers make valuable use of the opportunities their subjects provide to debate moral issues. For example, in a Year 8 history lesson on King Charles I, pupils discussed the morality of the death sentence. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and property and to look after one another. Pupils trust the staff; they are confident that, when they raise concerns, issues will be dealt with effectively.
- 6.5 Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have opportunities to visit museums, attend concerts and the theatre. For example, Year 3 pupils visit the British Museum, the pre-preparatory department go to the Barbican and Year 5 pupils go to the Globe. Pupils enjoy taking part in and attending dramatic performances and music concerts. The school's recently opened performing arts facility affords further opportunities to enhance cultural development.
- 6.6 The small number of pupils who come from non-British cultural backgrounds are valued and their major cultural festivals are recognised. During the inspection week, assemblies were held on Remembrance and Divali.
- 6.7 Cultural awareness is satisfactorily promoted through the curriculum. For example, in geography, Year 7 pupils have studied the fair trading of footballs made in less economically developed countries. In design and technology, pupils construct igloos, totem poles and castles.
- 6.8 Provision for social development is good. A sense of community permeates the school. For

example, the site manager knows the name of all of the pupils. The school supports a number of charities and often invites visiting speakers to assemblies. Team spirit is effectively promoted throughout a wide range of subjects, music, activities and in the games programme, where sportsmanship is very effectively promoted.

- 6.9 Good opportunities are provided for pupils to take on responsibility through positions such as captains of houses and sports teams, library monitors and playtime leaders. All Year 7 pupils are offered a leadership training course run by the headmaster. At the end of Year 7, leaders are selected to take on a range of responsibilities within the school.
- 6.10 The teaching staff build the pupils' self esteem and sense of personal achievement by setting high standards, and giving pupils achievable targets. Teaching exploits good opportunities for social development through including collaborative work in lessons. The experience of residential trips, such as the modern language department visits to Europe, greatly enhances the pupils' experience of living together.
- 6.11 The democratically elected school council, with representatives from each Years 3 to 8, gives pupils a forum in which to express their ideas. Pupils know that their views are considered and that their ideas, where practicable, are adopted. For example, the suggestion to establish a club for those wanting to play a particular card game was implemented.
- 6.12 Social development is enhanced through the significant element of citizenship within the PSHE course. This provision gives pupils good opportunities to explore topics such as human rights, minorities, democratic elections and the making and policing of laws.

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

- 6.13 Yes.

**Pastoral Care, including Welfare and Health & Safety**

- 6.14 The quality of provision for pupils' pastoral care, support and guidance is very good. It makes a very positive contribution to the high educational standards and the significant personal development achieved by pupils. The consistent observance and implementation of a comprehensive range of school policies effectively promote the pupils' welfare. Provision for health and safety is very good. The supervision of pupils is good and appropriate arrangements are made for child protection and the access of disabled pupils.
- 6.15 All staff share responsibility for the pastoral care of all pupils, but the form teacher has the central role. Form teachers follow the good guidance in the staff handbook and fulfil their pastoral responsibilities well. The head of pastoral care monitors provision effectively. She liaises closely with the matron, form teachers and the headmaster and ensures that staff are aware of pupils who are experiencing difficulties. Records are kept of all incidents and meetings with parents. Pupils and parents know who to contact and raise concerns with confidence.
- 6.16 Very good discipline is maintained by systems of positive reinforcement which are appropriately designed for pupils of different ages. The pre-preparatory department uses 'Golden Rules' to develop good behaviour, and gives 'Golden Time' as a reward on a weekly basis. Preparatory department pupils observe a code of conduct comprising 15 simple rules. Effective systems of sanctions complement rewards, but the final sanctions of suspension and expulsion have not been invoked in the past five years. The house system contributes well to the maintenance of good standards of behaviour and discipline. Pupils' 'pluses' and 'minuses' contribute to keenly contested house totals.
- 6.17 The school implements an effective policy to prevent bullying and to deal with it on the rare occasions when it occurs. Pupils report that little bullying takes place and that infrequent incidents are swiftly dealt with, either by the pupils themselves or by staff.
- 6.18 The school monitors the academic progress of pupils effectively. It prepares pupils appropriately for the next stage in their education through the Year 8 leavers' programme, as part of which, parents and other adults are invited in to school to talk to the pupils about their jobs.

- 6.19 Provision for the welfare of pupils is generally good. The well qualified school matron supervises medical provision effectively; she oversees a regular first aid training programme for the teaching staff, most of whom have a basic qualification. Records and medication are stored securely. A comprehensive document for staff lists pupils' medical problems. First aid provision on match days, through ready access to supplies and immediate contact with the matron, is very good. The matron's room is centrally located, but is only sufficient in size to accommodate one pupil at a time. This level of provision is unsatisfactory.
- 6.20 School meals are satisfactory. They offer a choice of main course, including salad, and dessert. Although school policy requires staff to ensure that pupils have a balanced and healthy diet, during the inspection a small number of pupils were allowed to eat unbalanced meals of little nutritional value.
- 6.21 Good arrangements are in place for child protection. The school policy follows the statutory codes of practice, provides guidance on the signs of abuse and details procedures to be followed if staff suspect a problem. The designated teacher has been trained and organises appropriate staff training. Pupils know which members of staff to approach for help and trust the school to respond positively.
- 6.22 The provision made to safeguard health and safety is very good; it is effectively managed and monitored by the bursar. The comprehensive school policy is backed up by extensive documentation and risk assessments. The school employs an external agency to check its health and safety documentation, observe practice and identify potential hazards. An appropriately constituted health and safety committee meets once a term to consider issues. All observed hazards are dealt with as quickly as possible.
- 6.23 The health and safety policy is keenly observed. In lessons, teachers regularly rehearse health and safety guidance with pupils, as appropriate. They observe clear policies and procedures for all educational visits and complete detailed risk assessments. Outside the classrooms, the pupils move safely around the site and queue in an orderly fashion; staff maintain good levels of supervision during breaks throughout the day. Electrical items are regularly tested. Potential hazards are reduced through good maintenance of the site and buildings; for example, non-slip steps have been recently installed in the Dell.
- 6.24 Fire practices are conducted at least once a term and always early in the school year; the details are logged and evaluated. Clear evacuation notices are displayed throughout the school. The school is compliant with fire protection and prevention regulations.
- 6.25 The school complies with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act and has an appropriate accessibility plan.

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

- 6.26 Yes.

## **7. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### **Governance and Management**

- 7.1 The governance and management of the school are very good. The school is very well managed and led; this is strength of the school. The governors, the headmaster, the senior management team (SMT) and all the staff take pride in their school and fulfil their several roles very effectively. They ensure that the school's aims are met and promote high educational standards. They further ensure that planning is thoroughly efficient to provide good resources for teaching and learning.
- 7.2 The governing body leads the school well. It draws on an appropriate range of expertise for its membership. Through a suitable structure of sub committees, the board monitors the work of the school, formulates policy, directs strategic management and manages major building projects. Governors fully fulfil their obligations for such matters as health and safety, child protection and promoting the welfare of children. They exercise prudent responsibility for the school's future and its developments. They support the headmaster in realising the school's aims and in promoting its ethos.

- 7.3 The headmaster and the senior management team lead the school with vision and energy. They articulate and promulgate the school's aims and purposes consistently and effectively, and provide clear educational direction to support effective teaching and learning. They create a purposeful and supportive ethos. The leadership given by the headmaster and his deputy is reflected in the school's commitment to academic success, high standards of pastoral care and the good behaviour of the pupils. The school values achievement in many fields of endeavour and celebrates pupils' successes both in the classroom and at assemblies.
- 7.4 The headmaster is well supported by his deputy and by the SMT. The SMT, which consists of the headmaster, the deputy headmaster, the director of studies, the director of pastoral care, the head of middle school, the head of pre-preparatory department and the bursar, makes a strong contribution to the educational standards of the school. Members of the SMT liaise and plan through weekly management meetings, oversee all matters of curricular development and pastoral care, and manage current issues very effectively. Individual members of the SMT provide very thorough management of their areas of responsibility. Communication channels between staff and the SMT work well. Staff are dedicated and committed; they know what is expected of them and feel confident in the support that they receive from the headmaster and the management team.
- 7.5 Heads of department liaise well with curriculum co-ordinators in the pre-preparatory department. They manage their subjects effectively and ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of the pupils.
- 7.6 Comprehensive management structures involve all the staff in collaborative debate about major changes and initiatives. Communication is good and a strong sense of teamwork pervades the school. Regular, minuted staff and departmental meetings provide very good channels for the communication of strategy and direction at all levels and opportunities for all staff to engage in discussion.
- 7.7 A range of comprehensive policies guide the work of the school very effectively. The school is highly effective in analysing and prioritising its needs. Development planning is consistently comprehensive and effective at all levels. The teaching staff are fully involved in the processes of planning, prioritising and drawing up action plans for their subjects and areas of responsibility. The wide involvement of staff in the development planning process ensures that the resultant plans are used well. The whole-school development plan draws appropriately on subject planning and provides an effective and wide-ranging plan for the school's future.
- 7.8 Routine administration is very good. The bursar, secretarial and ancillary staff provide the school with very competent and dedicated support. Effective systems ensure that communication within the school and with the wider community is good, for example the headmaster's annual report sent to parents about the school's achievements through the year.
- 7.9 The management team monitors and evaluates human and material resources well. The headmaster appraises all the academic staff on an eighteen month cycle. The teaching staff is suitably deployed and teachers are offered appropriate training to meet their development needs. Heads of department, and curriculum co-ordinators in the pre-preparatory department, review resources regularly; they ensure that resources support teaching and learning effectively and use their budgets wisely.

## **8. ACHIEVEMENT AND QUALITY IN SUBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES**

### **Achievement and Quality in Subjects**

#### **The Foundation Stage**

- 8.1 All children in the Reception classes attend full time. The curriculum in Reception is organised according to the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage.
- 8.2 Attainment and progress is good in all six areas of learning: personal and social development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. Children are very likely to achieve the early learning goals at the end of the Foundation Stage and some will have exceeded the early learning goals and will be tackling the national curriculum prior to the commencement of the Year 1.

***Personal, Social and Emotional Development***

- 8.3 Children's personal, social and emotional development is very good; this is an area of strength. Children are happy to say farewell to their parents when they arrive at school and show independence when joining in early morning activities. They work collaboratively in pairs or small groups, and also independently. They are highly motivated and keen to receive praise. They listen attentively and follow instructions well.
- 8.4 Children's behaviour is exemplary, and the warmth of the relationships between staff and children is an outstanding feature of the department. Pupils show respect for each other, are polite and considerate, and readily praise each other's achievements. For example, a round of spontaneous applause broke out in a music lesson when a child correctly identified the sound effect that characterised one of the three bears in an action rhyme.
- 8.5 Children wash their hands and go to the toilet by themselves, take off and put on their coats independently, and make a very good attempt at changing their clothing for outside play and for physical education sessions. .

***Communication, Language and Literacy***

- 8.6 The development of communication, language and literacy is good. Children speak clearly and articulately; they ask questions and use good vocabulary. Following a visit of an owl to the classroom, for example, one child said that he was 'hungry for his night-time prey, fat, juicy and scrumptious!' whilst pretending to be an owl in flight.
- 8.7 Firm foundations are laid in reading and children respond enthusiastically to the multi-sensory approach to phonics. They can recall 14 sounds and identify these sounds in written words. They enjoy listening to stories and looking at books, both in their classroom and in the school library. Children have good pencil control and produce well developed emergent writing in the writing and role play areas of the classrooms.

***Mathematical Development***

- 8.8 Mathematical development is good. Most children recognise and count numbers to 20 and can answer simple questions such as 'what number comes before nine?' and 'what number comes after 16?' They recognise two-dimensional shapes such as 'square', 'triangle' and 'hexagon'.

***Knowledge and Understanding of the World***

- 8.9 Good opportunities promote development of knowledge and understanding of the world well. During the inspection, children discussed and retained a great deal of information about owls, such as their eating habits, nocturnal nature and simple features of their anatomy, such as their eyes, beaks and ears. In role-play, they tended the park grounds, planted imaginary seeds and swept up the leaves

***Physical Development***

- 8.10 Children's physical development is good. Children participate enthusiastically in physical education lessons and demonstrate good gross motor control skills with small balls and bats. Children climb and run freely in the well-equipped outdoor play area known as 'the Dell'. In their classrooms, the children demonstrate good fine motor control skills when using scissors, creating pictures on pegboards and making jam sandwiches for their mid-morning snack.

***Creative Development***

- 8.11 Children participate in a wide range of opportunities to encourage creative development and make good progress. During the inspection, children made owls out of clay, and created pictures of owls with glue and paper feathers. They drew detailed pictures in their 'f' sound book and coloured them carefully. They used musical instruments to accompany a poem in assembly, and, in a music lesson, participated enthusiastically with an action rhyme about the three bears involving pitch and rhythm patterns.

***Other Aspects of the Foundation Stage***

- 8.12 Children have a very good attitude to learning. Their behaviour is exceptional and they co-operate fully with their peers and their teachers. They demonstrate good concentration when working both independently and collaboratively.
- 8.13 Teaching is never less than good, sometimes very good and occasionally excellent. Where teaching is very good, it is characterised by good preparation of an interesting and challenging range of tasks appropriate for the age and ability range of the children, a clear explanation of the activities on offer and regular reinforcement of the objectives of the tasks. Teachers and assistants are patient; they allow time for the children to express their opinions and always respond positively. They are sympathetic to individual needs and make regular use of praise and encouragement to ensure that children feel valued. They have a secure knowledge of the early learning goals and successfully use the Foundation Stage Profile to record children's progress over the year.
- 8.14 The Foundation Stage is appropriately staffed with two qualified teachers and two full-time classroom assistants; staff pupil ratios are in line with current guidelines for this age group. Foundation Stage teachers meet regularly to create weekly plans. Clear long- and medium-term plans, based on the Foundation Stage documentation, guide the work of the department appropriately. Staff work well together as a team and very effective use is made of the teaching assistants, gap students and specialist teachers for music, physical education and French.
- 8.15 Links with parents are good. Daily liaison is encouraged, written information is detailed and of great practical help, and formal opportunities to meet teachers are appropriate.
- 8.16 Classroom equipment is good and children have easy access to a wide range of resources. Good quality books stimulate interest in reading. A good selection of games, jig-saws, construction materials and small world equipment, promotes the development of fine motor skills and reasoning. Role-play equipment stimulates creative development. Computers are used effectively to support the curriculum.
- 8.17 The classrooms are adequate in size with designated areas for specific activities such as a writing corner, computer area and painting area. They are full of vibrant displays of children's work and topic-related artefacts. A covered awning enables children to work and play outside in wet weather. The swimming pool, gymnasium and performing arts hall provide excellent facilities for physical and creative development.
- 8.18 Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. The range of learning experiences provided and the dedicated support given by the staff provide the children with an excellent start to their school careers and prepare them well for the demands of the next stage in their education.

### **English**

- 8.19 Pupils achieve good and occasionally high standards in English.
- 8.20 By the age of seven, standards of reading and writing are good. Pupils' attainment in the national tests at age seven is good in relation to their abilities. Results in the national tests at age seven over the past three years have been well above the national average for all maintained primary schools in reading and writing.
- 8.21 By the age of 11, standards are also good. Pupils' attainment in the national tests at age 11 is good in relation to their abilities. Results in the national tests at age 11 over the last three years have been well above the national average for all maintained primary schools. They show a steady improvement, particularly in the numbers of pupils achieving level 5.
- 8.22 By the age of 13, standards are again good. Pupils do well in the Common Entrance examinations each year and are offered places at the senior schools of their choice, most of which are academically selective.
- 8.23 During lessons and in their book-work, pupils' standards are generally very good. Pupils achieve very good standards in reading, writing and comprehension relative to their abilities. Speaking and listening skills are high. Pupils clearly enjoy debating and expanding on ideas. For example, in a Year 4 class discussion on styles of poetry, pupils showed an impressive knowledge of structure including

alliteration and similes.

- 8.24 Progress is good in relation to pupils' abilities. They develop their skills consistently from year to year. Pupils are quick to grasp of new information and skills and their good recall enables them to apply their learning to new situations. By Year 2, they have developed an understanding of the structure of different kinds of sentences. For example, in a Year 2 grammar lesson on questions, progress was very rapid when a grandfather's war medals were shown, stimulating a lively and perceptive range of questions on the topic which promoted pupils' understanding of how questions are asked. Pupils make good progress in analytical discussions and through encountering different styles of written expression. By Year 4, pupils are beginning to write with a level of growing independence and by Year 8, they can handle complex ideas. For example, during a Year 8 role play lesson on 'Macbeth', pupils explored with maturity the evolution of Macbeth's personal reactions.
- 8.25 Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress. They attain good standards because of the very good support that they receive.
- 8.26 The quality of pupils' learning is very good. They show interest in their lessons, work hard and co-operate well. Pupils enjoy good relationships with each other and with their teachers, whom they find helpful and approachable. They are focused, keen to do well and have a clear sense of what is expected of them. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils listened attentively and were alert and responsive during the story 'The Scarecrow's Hat' and sustained their interest during the practical activities which followed. They listen to the views of others respectfully and are keen to contribute ideas. Their behaviour is generally good.
- 8.27 The quality of teaching is very good. During the inspection, it was very good or excellent in three-quarters of the lessons observed and never less than sound. The high standard of teaching contributes very effectively to pupils' attainment and progress. Teachers have a very good command of their subject; they are knowledgeable, prepare carefully and make good arrangements to support the needs of individual pupils. Teachers expect high standards of their pupils. A brisk pace characterises most lessons. Teachers afford pupils time to develop and discuss their own ideas, as seen when a Year 7 class were planning a descriptive passage about a room. They give a great deal of encouragement and praise and so ensure that pupils of all abilities develop self esteem and a feeling of pride in their achievements. However, during the inspection, limited use was made of paired or group work, to enable pupils to develop their ideas collaboratively, and no opportunities were provided for open-ended investigation. On the other hand, role play is used in some lessons to bring subjects and ideas to life.
- 8.28 Assessment is very good. Regular, appropriate assessment tracks the progress of individual pupils and identifies trends. Pupils' work is conscientiously marked in a constructive, helpful and informative manner, which enables them to understand their errors and maximises their progress. In the pre-preparatory department, teachers identify individual targets for improvement and display these clearly on each pupil's table. Targets are regularly reviewed and updated.
- 8.29 The curriculum is good. It prepares pupils well for their national tests and Common Entrance examinations. The allocation of time to the subject is generous. Schemes of work use the National Literacy Strategy as a basis for development of the programme of learning. An appropriate balance is achieved between the elements of reading, comprehension, handwriting, spelling, grammar, punctuation, speaking and listening skills and writing for a range of audiences. The schemes of work also provide opportunities for pupils to act out their ideas when appropriate. Further forums for drama are provided by assemblies and the school's programme of plays. Pupils have opportunities to visit the professional theatre. A weekly after-school English scholarship club provides those interested in discussing novels, and the complex ideas arising from them, with an imaginative and open-ended activity.
- 8.30 The provision of resources is good. The department has recently purchased many new reading schemes, contemporary texts and big books for the very young. Some use is made of ICT for research. Computers are available in each classroom, but, during the inspection, these were used only to a limited extent. Wall displays in the English room are attractive and reflect the range and quality of pupils' work.
- 8.31 Leadership and management are good. The subject is very well organised and clearly documented.

The department constantly develops new approaches to effective teaching and revises its handbook so that it accurately reflects current practice. Detailed records are kept and passed on between teachers to ensure that the pupils' progress is well tracked. Collaborative planning ensures that the programme of study introduces learning in an ordered progression.

### **Mathematics**

- 8.32 Pupils achieve good standards in Years 1 to 6 and high standards in Year 7 and Year 8.
- 8.33 At the age of seven, pupils' attainment is good. Pupils' attainment in national tests at age seven is good in relation to their abilities. Results in national tests at age seven have been well above the national average for all maintained primary schools.
- 8.34 At the age of eleven, pupils' attainment is also good. Pupils' attainment in national tests at age 11 is good in relation to their abilities. Results in national tests at age 11 over the last three years have been well above the national average for all maintained primary schools. They have shown a steady improvement since 2002.
- 8.35 At the age of thirteen, pupils achieve good results in their Common Entrance examinations and gain places at academically selective senior schools.
- 8.36 In lessons, pupils' attainment is good in Years 1 to 6 and high in Years 7 and 8. In Year 1, most pupils are competent in the use of number bonds to 10. In class discussion, the most able show by their questions and observations the capacity to extend beyond the level of work that might be expected at this age. In Year 2, pupils have a very clear understanding of the properties of geometrical shapes and utilise mature mathematical vocabulary and terminology. In Year 4, pupils confidently manipulate negative numbers and, within group activities, relate their knowledge and skills readily to practical everyday activities such as ambient temperature. Attainment in Years 7 and 8 is high and some pupils are working well above the level expected for their ability. They complete algebraic solution of simultaneous equations with confidence and use information and communications technology to portray the results graphically. Pupils show skill in mental number manipulation and have a good grasp of shape, area, volume and the properties of angles.
- 8.37 Pupils' progress is good. They make the progress required to achieve good results in the national tests and in the Common Entrance examination. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils rapidly mastered the means to convert from 12 hour to 24 hour clock times and then computed the difference between times written in 24 hour clock mode. In a Year 8 lesson, pupils used previously acquired skills to determine the size of angles. Pupils with special educational needs reach good standards in relation to their abilities. In Year 7, for example, SEN pupils accurately multiplied out a simple bracket in algebra making effective use of appropriate assistance from the learning support teacher present in the class.
- 8.38 The quality of pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour is good. They participate actively in lessons and strive to improve. Pupils are positively involved in classes, as for example in a Year 5 lesson where they enjoyed the challenge of reading reverse clock face times. Younger pupils sustain concentration and respond to teaching well. They are motivated to work hard, both by the setting and display of targets, which are well matched to their abilities, and by the award of bonuses. Older pupils work with enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment. For example, Year 7 pupils congratulated the success of one another on achieving the correct response to questions concerning the volume of solids.
- 8.39 The quality of teaching is never less than sound and it is very good in a minority of lessons, particularly in Years 7 and 8, where lessons are particularly well planned and organised. In these years, teachers are very confident and exude an enthusiasm for the subject, which is imitated by the pupils. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge. The best teaching combines a sense of fun and challenge, which successfully motivates pupils to work hard. It makes good use of carefully planned extension work to provide a challenge for more able pupils and makes effective use of support staff to provide considerate support for the less able pupils. Where lessons were less effective, teaching was less successful in firing the imagination of their pupils and did not fully exploit opportunities to challenge the thinking of the more able pupils.
- 8.40 Systems for assessment are good; they provide teachers with regular and appropriate information on which to base their teaching. The use of nationally recognised tests of attainment and progress from Year 1 and the optional national tests from Year 3 enable teachers to track the progress of individual

pupils and identify trends effectively.

- 8.41 Marking is regular and accurate. Comments encourage pupils for the accuracy of their computation and for presentation, but lack detailed identification of the improvements needed for progress. However, marks are followed by good review sessions in class.
- 8.42 The curriculum is good; it is well designed to prepare pupils for the national tests at seven and 11 and for the Common Entrance examination. It provides a good balance between the strands of mathematics and encourages practical applications. Sufficient time is allocated to the subject on the timetable. Resources are good. They enable the subject to be taught effectively at all ages.
- 8.43 The department is well led and managed. Good liaison between the subject co-ordinator in the pre-preparatory department and the head of department ensures that the curriculum is appropriately planned across the age groups and that topics are introduced in a well ordered progression. Regular meetings and comprehensive subject documentation guide the work of the department effectively. Judicious monitoring of teaching and learning maintains good standards.

### Science

- 8.44 Pupils generally achieve high standards of attainment in knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to their abilities.
- 8.45 By the age of seven, standards are very good. Pupils discuss previously taught work knowledgeably and show high levels of retention. At the age of 11, pupils' standards are high. Pupils' attainment in national tests at age 11 is high in relation to their abilities. Results in national tests over the last three years have been far above the national average for all maintained primary schools.
- 8.46 By the age of thirteen, when a significant proportion of able pupils have left the school to join grammar schools in the area, standards are good. Pupils have acquired a good body of knowledge and handle apparatus confidently and safely. They are successful in their Common Entrance examinations.
- 8.47 During the inspection, attainment in lessons was good, and it was very good in the pre-preparatory department. For example, Year 2 pupils explained in great detail their previous topic on growing seeds. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils used appropriate terminology to describe the design of electrical circuits and knew the effects of adding to or removing components from the circuits.
- 8.48 Pupils make good progress in Years 1 to 6, and in Years 7 and 8, when new pupils join the school, progress is very good. All pupils acquire good levels of knowledge and understanding in a variety of suitable topics. They show increasing confidence in tackling scientific concepts. Pupils take increasing responsibility for planning and recording their work. Good thinking skills develop and practical skills are refined. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress in relation to their abilities.
- 8.49 Pupils' learning and behaviour are good. Learning is at its best where lessons include practical experience, high learning expectations and pupils take responsibility for their own work. Very good examples were seen in a Year 2 class working on healthy living, a Year 7 class who were purifying rock salt and a Year 6 class who were varying circuits. In these lessons, pupils' fascination and enthusiasm stimulated useful discussion and learning. Pupils are keen to do well and work collaboratively. In lessons where pupils were allowed to use their initiative, their learning accelerated significantly.
- 8.50 The quality of teaching is generally at least sound. During the inspection, one-quarter of the lessons observed were sound, one-quarter were good, one-quarter were excellent, but one-quarter were unsatisfactory. The excellent teaching observed in Years 1 and 6 was characterised by a brisk pace and high expectations for pupils' learning. It offered an opportunity for the pupils to make hypotheses and the chance to predict and test. Teachers explain the activities well, make learning objectives clear and most show suitable subject knowledge. Teachers generally plan activities well to match pupils' differing needs. However, some teaching gives pupils too few opportunities to contribute to lessons and provides limited challenge for the more able pupils. Medium- and long-term planning is of a high quality and provides the detail to guide teachers' work fully. However, teaching makes limited use of ICT and, in lessons in the pre-preparatory department and middle school, an over-reliance on

worksheets diminishes the pupils' opportunities to write up their findings independently.

- 8.51 Assessment procedures are excellent and are used regularly to inform curriculum planning at all stages of the school. Pupils' progress is monitored fully and to a high standard. The quality of their work is systematically evaluated. Clear targets are set for pupils' improvement.
- 8.52 Marking is regular and up to date. It picks up on detail and places a regular insistence on good presentation. In some instances it offers support and advice for the pupils, but on occasions it is bland and cursory and does not give pupils clear indications about how to improve their work.
- 8.53 The curriculum is good. It prepares pupils well for the national tests at the ages of seven and 11 and for the Common Entrance examination. It achieves a good balance between the elements of the subject and is well planned. The time afforded for teaching is adequate for all year groups, although not generous in the pre-preparatory department.
- 8.54 The department is very well resourced; resources are managed and stored well. An effective audit of resources and chemicals informs teachers about what is available for their use. Great attention is paid to health and safety in the laboratory.
- 8.55 Leadership and management are very good. The head of department has been in post for three years and has made very good progress during this time in managing the subject. A very well written and devised policy document and scheme of work ensures consistency between members of the department. Appropriate in-service training is provided for teachers. A good monitoring process provides suitable opportunities to evaluate teaching and learning.

### **Geography**

- 8.56 Pupils achieve good standards in relation to their abilities.
- 8.57 Standards of attainment are good in Year 2. In Years 1 and 2, work is effectively linked with other subjects; for example, Year 2 pupils were undertaking a project on dinosaurs in which aspects of both geography and history were covered.
- 8.58 Standards of attainment are also good in Year 6. By the end of Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of the processes of world weather, geomorphology, settlement, sustainability, the hydrological cycle and biomes. They have developed a range of skills including map reading and geographical enquiry. For example, Year 6 pupils effectively used their knowledge of coastal processes to apply them to the question on the management of cliff erosion.
- 8.59 Standards of attainment are again good in Year 8. In Years 7 and 8 pupils have a good understanding of both human and physical geography topics. For example, in Year 7, pupils discussed in depth the causes and effects of earthquakes in Japan and in Year 8, pupils developed their skills and their understanding of economic activity through group presentations. Pupils further develop their enquiry skills by tackling an extended individual project.
- 8.60 Progress is good in relation to pupils' abilities. For example, Year 3 pupils enhance their skills of enquiry with individual research projects on countries of the world. Good progress is made in individual lessons. For example, a Year 6 role play activity on coastal management sharpened pupils' understanding of the problems of cliff stabilisation. Pupils make good progress over time in both the theoretical and practical aspects of the subject. For example, a Year 5 project on world sport effectively used and developed Year 4 studies on less economically developed countries and ecological development. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and also make good progress.
- 8.61 The quality of pupils' learning and behaviour is good. The pupils are keen to learn and contribute to lessons. They are not afraid to make mistakes and learn from them in class and they support one another in paired and group work. They listen attentively and work well independently.
- 8.62 The quality of teaching is good. Teaching staff have good knowledge of the subject. Lessons are well planned and have very clear objectives. Discipline is firm, but it is maintained with a light touch. Teachers successfully use a wide range of teaching methods including quizzes, presentations by pupils, group discussion, practical work and flash cards, to suit a variety of learning styles. Effective

use is made of ICT to enhance teaching and learning; for example, in a Year 7 lesson, images of the Kobe earthquake were used in a memory quiz. Worksheets and source material are varied to provide appropriate levels of challenge to pupils of different abilities.

8.63 Assessment procedures are regular and appropriate; they support effective planning and inform report writing. End of year examinations, which pupils take from Year 6, contribute to assessment of their success in the Common Entrance examination.

8.64 Pupils' work is marked regularly according to the school's marking policy. Targets are set and then self assessed; these are recorded on the reports sent home to parents. Marking is very regular, positive and helpful in the preparatory department. It takes good note of pupils' special needs by only denoting the correct spelling of essential terms. In the pre-preparatory department, marking builds self esteem through the use of ticks and rewards.

8.65 The curriculum is good. Comprehensive schemes of work, based on the National Curriculum, are well balanced and are enhanced by a number of well chosen fieldwork trips. The curriculum prepares pupils well for the Common Entrance examination and provides a good balance between human and physical geography. The inclusion of project work and the effective use of ICT promotes the development of pupils' general study skills. An appropriate allocation of lessons is provided by the timetable.

8.66 Both resources and accommodation are satisfactory and the budget is adequate. The geography section of the library provides sufficient books, relevant to the topics studied, but few were out on loan at the time of the inspection.

8.67 The leadership and management of the department is good. The school has made effective arrangements for the transfer of leadership to a new member of staff in the near future.

### **Learning Support**

8.68 The school's provision for learning support is very good. The department makes very good arrangements for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs (SEN) which effectively promotes their educational attainment and progress.

8.69 Levels of attainment seen in individual lessons and support in class lessons are good in relation to pupils' specific difficulties of all ages and abilities. Pupils achieve the standards required to tackle their class-work with success.

8.70 Pupils make good progress within individual and group lessons, and within class lessons. Over time, many pupils make sufficient progress to learn effectively without specialist support, and all make the progress required to address the school's curriculum with confidence.

8.71 Pupils respond positively in their lessons to the supportive nature of the teaching, managing well in relation to their ability. The good relationships built up with their teachers are of positive benefit to pupils' learning and progress. Pupils respond actively and work conscientiously to achieve the objectives and targets they are set.

8.72 The quality of individual teaching is excellent. In the lessons seen, it was never less than good and in the majority of lessons it was excellent. Teachers have a thorough understanding of their field and real enthusiasm for the work that they do. The teaching is sensitive and shows a very good understanding of the range of short- and long-term problems that pupils experience. In general class lessons, pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and their assistants so that they can address the same topics as other members of their classes. The good support that they receive enables them to follow the curriculum successfully.

8.73 The assessment of pupils' needs is thorough. There are no pupils with statements of special educational needs in the school, but a significant proportion of pupils have been identified by the school as needing special support. Pupils' SEN needs are identified early on following their admittance to the school at whatever stage and a specific programme of support is discussed with staff and parents before being put in place. Short- and long-term one to one and group tuition is provided as required. If external assessment is thought necessary, it is organised with an appropriate agency. Individual education plans (IEPs) provide an overview of the programme of learning to be undertaken

and highlight the reasons for additional help, and individual learning plans (ILPs) list the short term targets to be covered. Both plans are regularly reviewed and are of significant benefit to the teaching staff. The close working relationship between the learning support staff and the teaching staff and the partnership with parents involves all those responsible for pupils' learning at the planning stage and in monitoring progress.

8.74 The department is housed in a convenient, centrally-sited room and operates an open door policy. On days when all the learning support specialists are in school, additional accommodation for teaching is provided in suitable rooms such as the library. The department has built up a wide range of resources which are relevant and appropriate for the diverse needs of the pupils. Resources are well used and good use is made of computers in the specialist room.

8.75 The leadership and management of special needs education throughout the school is very good; it is effective in promoting good learning amongst the significant number of pupils who receive additional support. The school's special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) leads the school community in its understanding of special needs and manages the work of the two part time specialists who support pupils' learning in literacy. Good documentation guides the department's work and the quality of planning and preparation is very good. The school considers in-service training to be important to inform the working practices of those specialising in the field. The SENCO encourages training, which is up to date and has been well targeted to address the range of special needs within the school.

### **Short Subject Reports**

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

#### ***Art***

8.76 Four lessons were observed, work on display was scrutinised and discussions were held with the head of art and the art co-ordinator for the pre-preparatory department.

8.77 In these lessons, the quality of pupils' learning was sound. Pupils were generally well motivated and keen to explore different techniques. They demonstrated attention to detail, for example, when a Year 3 class made firework pictures using sharpened sticks on scraperboards. Although pupils' behaviour was generally good, they were not always attentive to instructions and did not persist with their tasks with sustained concentration. Behaviour tended to deteriorate towards the end of lessons, when pupils became increasingly noisy and less focused on their work.

8.78 The quality of teaching was almost always at least satisfactory and in a minority of lessons, it was good. Teaching generally made objectives clear, and techniques were discussed and modelled at the start of lessons. When teaching was good, teachers planned effectively for pupils to explore a range of styles and techniques. When teaching was less than satisfactory, teachers did not demand sufficient attention from pupils when instructions were being given and failed to focus effectively on pupils' needs.

8.79 The curriculum is broad and challenging. The art room is spacious. It has an attractive mezzanine level that houses the kiln. Modern spot lighting provides good opportunities for displaying work, but does not serve well for general lighting. Displays show a range of techniques and styles. Good resources, including a library of artists' works, provide well for two-dimensional creative work, but the department makes little use of three dimensional artefacts or sculptures.

#### ***Design and Technology***

8.80 Six lessons of design and technology were observed; discussions were held with the head of department and the co-ordinator for the pre-preparatory department, and examples of work and photographic records were examined.

8.81 The quality of pupils' learning and behaviour was good. They were well motivated and concentrated steadily throughout double lessons. They extended their interest beyond the lessons; for example, a Year 3 pupil had made an effective model of a shaduf at home. Pupils listened attentively to instructions. They worked co-operatively in pairs and reflectively when working independently. They behaved sensibly, observing safety advice. For example, in a Year 8 lesson on the construction of

powered boats, pupils remained behind a yellow line on the floor when the jigsaw was in use.

8.82 Teaching was good. Teachers gave clear expositions, were well organised and planned effectively. They afforded pupils independence in the way in which they designed and realised their projects. For example, pupils in Year 2 selected from recycled materials to construct a dinosaur of their choice. Teaching challenged pupils to think both laterally and realistically. Team teaching was particularly effective. Teachers managed pupils with natural authority, patience and humour.

8.83 The curriculum exploits many cross curricular links, particularly with history. Though the department lacks appropriate facilities for food technology, simple food-related projects are included in the pre-preparatory department and older pupils are offered cookery clubs. In the preparatory department, lessons take place in a very awkwardly shaped room, but arrangements have been made so that teachers can always see all of the pupils. Health and safety rules are prominently displayed and rehearsed in all lessons.

### *Drama*

8.84 Four lessons were observed, a meeting was held with the head of department and photograph albums were scrutinised.

8.85 The learning and behaviour of the pupils was good. Pupils responded spontaneously and were not self-conscious. They expressed ideas clearly and remained focused throughout the lessons. They worked co-operatively and showed appreciation for the work of others. They responded well to teaching.

8.86 The quality of teaching was never less than satisfactory; it was generally very good and in one lesson it was excellent. Learning objectives were clearly explained and expectations were well matched to the pupils' abilities. Lessons were well planned and included a range of activities to stimulate creativity. Activities involved every pupil and all contributions were valued. Excellent teaching was displayed where the teacher modelled performance first and motivated the pupils to produce their own performances. In Years 3 to 8, high quality teaching gave the pupils opportunities to include characterisation and mime in their work.

8.87 The curriculum is good and recent amendments have improved the quality of learning. The time allocation is adequate, although the pre-preparatory department only have one lesson a fortnight. The schemes of work are good and are enhanced by regular theatre trips and visits from performance groups. Good assessment arrangements provide effective means of evaluating and recording pupils' strengths and weaknesses. However, the absence of grades on the assessment grids and on reports diminishes the status that this subject deserves. Resources for performance poetry are adequate, but the department lacks sufficient play scripts. The accommodation is excellent.

### *French*

8.88 Five lessons were observed, a French club visited, discussions were held with the head of department and a sample of pupils' work was scrutinised.

8.89 In these lessons, the quality of pupils' learning was never less than satisfactory; in Years 5 and 6, it was very good. Pupils usually settled quickly, concentrated steadfastly and answered questions confidently. They were well motivated, showed an interest in acquiring proficiency in the language and respected both the teacher and each other. When behaviour was very good, pupils worked productively with partners, responded quickly to instructions and volunteered ideas.

8.90 Teaching was generally good; in a minority of lessons it was very good. Teaching made very effective use of the target language which promoted good pronunciation. Lessons followed clearly published objectives and made very effective use of resources, especially the overhead projector. Time was used effectively, balancing listening, oral, mime, action and written work. Teachers' enthusiastic attitudes created a very positive atmosphere within the classroom and raised pupils' self esteem. When teaching was very good, it also provided a large measure of individual attention.

8.91 The curriculum is very well planned. It achieves a good balance between oral communication, the structure of the language and the culture of France. A weekly French club makes effective use of software to accelerate the learning of pupils who join the school with no prior knowledge of the

language. Visits to France enhance the scope of the curriculum.

### ***German***

- 8.92 Three lessons of German were observed, a discussion was held with the head of department and a sample of pupils' work was scrutinised.
- 8.93 In these lessons, the quality of pupils' learning and behaviour was very good and on occasion, excellent. Pupils settled quickly on arrival in the classroom, concentrated steadily through oral work and were very keen to get on with written activities. Though beginners, they were confident learners, with high self esteem and very positive attitudes. They co-operated very well with their teachers and each other and took on the challenge of independent work with relish.
- 8.94 Teaching was very good. Pronunciation, grammatical structures and inflections were faultlessly modelled for pupils. A good range of activities and well-judged pace kept pupils highly motivated. Teaching made very effective use of resources, as, for example, in a Year 6 lesson, where pupils consolidated their knowledge of family names through reference to the language assistant's family tree. Assessment activities were integral to the teaching and provided teachers with appropriate information on which to base future learning. Teachers managed pupils very well with a good balance of humour and authority. Their infectious enthusiasm created a most effective learning environment.
- 8.95 The curriculum is very well planned. It achieves a good balance between oral and written work and includes a valuable proportion of cultural information. The visit to the Christmas market in Monschau is a highlight of the programme.

### ***History***

- 8.96 Six lessons were observed and discussions were held with the head of department and the subject co-ordinator in the pre-preparatory department and a representative sample of pupils' work was scrutinised.
- 8.97 Pupils were attentive and responsive learners. They particularly enjoyed being active and co-operated well with each other in group sessions. For example, Year 7 pupils were very animated when they took part in a role play activity on the lives of Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth I. Pupils responded well to their teachers and took pride in their work.
- 8.98 The quality of teaching was almost always satisfactory; in a minority of lessons, it was excellent. Teachers matched the pace of their lessons well to the abilities of the pupils. Teaching made effective use of a very good range of attractive and informative resources which included artefacts, videos and an ICT presentation. Teachers encouraged pupils to make good progress and to maintain high self esteem through thorough and positive marking.
- 8.99 A comprehensive department handbook and detailed schemes of work guide the work of the department effectively in the preparation of pupils for their Common Entrance examinations. The curriculum provides well for a chronological study of the subject. A range of appropriate off-site visits enhances pupils' learning experiences. Interesting and colourful classroom displays of an extensive range of pupils' work stimulate a keen level of interest in the subject.

### ***Information and Communication Technology***

- 8.100 Two lessons were observed, discussions were held with the head of department and work on disk and as printed copy was scrutinised.
- 8.101 The pupils worked with motivation and enthusiasm. They were well behaved and interested in the subject and the tasks they were set. They worked well individually and collaborated appropriately.
- 8.102 The quality of teaching was never less than satisfactory and at times it was good. Teaching was characterised by an obvious enjoyment for the subject, and was securely based upon good subject knowledge and a comprehensive departmental policy. It made good use of resources, as, for example, in a Year 5 lesson, when effective use was made of the interactive white board to instruct pupils how to add an image to a database. However, teaching failed to plan sufficiently well for the wide spread of ability amongst the pupils. For example, in a Year 4 class, no suitable extension work was offered

to a pupil who had completed the task set with considerable ease.

- 8.103 The very well resourced newly built information and communications technology suite is a positive addition to the school's facilities. It plays a good part in motivating the pupils.

#### *Latin*

- 8.104 Two lessons were observed, a discussion was held with the head of department and books from the three year groups who study the subject were scrutinised.
- 8.105 The quality of learning was good. Pupils were attentive and asked interesting questions. They worked well co-operatively and were supportive of one another. They concentrated steadily when engaged on individual tasks.
- 8.106 The quality of teaching was never less than satisfactory and on occasions it was very good. Teaching was well based in secure subject knowledge; informed responses to pupils' questions extended their understanding and knowledge. Teaching made effective use of word derivatives to enhance pupils' understanding of the relevance of the language to the modern world and explained grammar clearly. The best teaching catered effectively for the wide range of capabilities in the class, as, for example, in a Year 8 class exploring the comparison of adjectives. The maintenance of an ethos of encouragement within lessons and the frequent use of praise in marking and verbal assessment promoted good learning.
- 8.107 The subject does not have a designated teaching room. Resources, which are housed in a classroom, primarily used for history, are adequate and the room is suitable for teaching the subject. However, a Year 8 group is taught in a classroom which is very small and barely adequate for the number of pupils.

#### *Music*

- 8.108 Four lessons were observed and three extra-curricular activities were visited. Work in pupils' folders was scrutinised, a tape of pupils' compositions was listened to and an interview was held with the head of music.
- 8.109 The quality of pupils' learning and behaviour was good. Pupils were keen to participate in the activities planned for them. They listened carefully to instructions, acted on advice and settled to their work quickly and sensibly. They were keen to offer opinions. For example, good ideas were generated in a Year 5 lesson, when pupils discussed how to interpret a graphic score using body percussion.
- 8.110 The quality of teaching was good. Well planned lessons took good account of pupils' differing abilities. Teaching displayed sound subject knowledge and organised a good balance of activities. High expectations and regular reinforcement of the main teaching points helped pupils to learn effectively.
- 8.111 A good scheme of work covers all the required elements, but the time allocated for music in Years 6, 7 and especially Year 8 is insufficient for it to be implemented in depth. The opening of a new performing arts centre provides an excellent space for large-scale musical activities. However, the new music room is too small for instruments to be permanently set out for use in lessons. Three practice rooms provide very good accommodation for instrumental teaching. The installation of a networked computer provides an excellent opportunity for the integration of ICT into the music curriculum.

#### *Personal, Social and Health Education*

- 8.112 Three lessons were seen, documentation was scrutinised and a discussion was held with the head of department.
- 8.113 The quality of learning was good. Pupils responded well to the teaching; they were interested and keen to offer their own ideas, often in a thoughtful and sensitive manner. Pupils clearly believed that teachers listen to them, and answered questions honestly and openly. They worked co-operatively on group tasks and listened respectfully to one another.

- 8.114 The quality of teaching was never less than satisfactory and on occasion, it was very good. Lessons were well planned and held in an atmosphere conducive to the exploration and sharing of ideas, fears and feelings. Time was set aside at the beginning of lessons for pupils to disclose and share concerns, and pupils were ready to talk openly about recent school issues. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, the pupils and teacher discussed a school decision designed to ameliorate problems encountered in the playground.
- 8.115 Schemes of work are comprehensive and well resourced. The subject is well covered in the preparatory department and in most year groups within the preparatory department. However, the time allocated for lessons in Year 8 is very limited and does not provide for effective coverage of the subject.

### ***Physical Education and Games***

- 8.116 Five lessons were seen, documentation was scrutinised and discussions were held with the head of department.
- 8.117 The quality of learning was good. The pupils listened intently and were very co-operative when working in teams. They offered each other significant mutual support, regardless of ability. In a Year 4 lesson, the class spontaneously applauded advanced skills demonstrated by one pupil. Pupils were very enthusiastic and keen to make progress. They respected and had a good rapport with their teachers.
- 8.118 The quality of teaching was generally good; it was never less than satisfactory and in a minority of lessons, it was excellent. Lessons were well planned and a well judged range of teaching styles was employed. The teachers used their extensive subject knowledge very effectively. Teaching covered safety issues well through discussion and demonstration. In the lessons that most effectively challenged and interested the pupils, the pace was fast and pupils were active in practising skills a high percentage of the time. Enthusiastic teaching in many lessons motivated the pupils to make rapid progress. Positive comments about pupils' performances were based on individual ability rather than absolute standards and so, maintained high esteem amongst the pupils.
- 8.119 Schemes of work are comprehensive and appropriate, and resources have been enhanced by the new sports hall and swimming pool.

### ***Religious Education***

- 8.120 Six lessons were observed, a meeting was held with the head of department and a sample of pupils' work was scrutinised
- 8.121 The learning and behaviour of the pupils was usually sound. Pupils respected the values and beliefs of other cultures and to work independently. When open-ended questioning was used, pupils were challenged, focused, involved and co-operative. When pupils were given few opportunities to contribute, behaviour deteriorated.
- 8.122 The teaching observed was always at least satisfactory and sometimes better. The lessons were usually well planned with clear learning objectives and suitable activities. Pupils were encouraged to think for themselves and express their thoughts. For example, Year 3 pupils recorded their thoughts in 'Thought Books' which they shared with other pupils. Teaching made a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual development.
- 8.123 The curriculum is good; it includes a suitable range of topics which are well developed through effective medium- and long-term plans. However, it lacks opportunities to visit places of worship. The subject is generally well represented on the timetable, but Years 6 and 7 receive only one lesson each week. Books are marked regularly with helpful comments, although some marking does not best advise pupils on how to make progress. The department lacks a dedicated subject room. Some lessons are timetabled in the design and technology room which is inappropriately designed for religious studies teaching.

### **Achievement and Quality in Activities**

- 8.124 The quality and achievement in activities is very good. Activities form an integral part of life at the school and greatly enhance opportunities for pupils' personal development. The wide variety of activities available to pupils and the policy of enabling as many pupils as possible to represent their school in sporting teams ensure that a significant proportion of the pupils benefit from the school's provision.
- 8.125 The provision of after-school activities is very good; a varied and comprehensive programme is organised for pupils in the senior forms. For example, pupils can engage in games, cubs, skiing, first aid, cooking, ICT, construction, business games, street dancing and kite flying, amongst many other activities.
- 8.126 Participation levels are high. Last year, on average, pupils attended about three activities each week and more than four-fifths of eligible pupils were involved in the clubs' programme on any one evening. The activities are so popular that all the letters indicating choices are returned within 48 hours.
- 8.127 Games are a strong feature of the activities programme; the school prides itself on offering team sport to all pupils. The extensive fixture list includes many teams at each age level; for example, in some games it is possible to represent the school in a fifth team. Standards of achievement are high. The list of representative honours is extensive; many pupils play at county level or higher in rugby, football, cricket, athletics, tennis, squash, swimming and sailing.
- 8.128 The school has developed good sporting links with schools in the maintained sector. The school uses the local primary school's playing field and, in return, lends its pool for swimming sessions. The two schools also play each other in various sports and pupils from the primary school are invited to the athletics club in the summer. The school runs a local football tournament for up to 12 maintained schools.
- 8.129 Music caters for a wide range of ages and abilities with choirs and ensembles, including a hand bells group. Out of school visits extend and enhance the curriculum. They include a ski trip, camping for cubs, modern languages visits to Europe and residential outdoor activity trips.
- 8.130 The leavers' programme for the Year 8 pupils prepares them well for the next stage of their education. It includes an outward bound trip to France and local visits to the theatre, art galleries, museums and industry.
- 8.131 The activities programme is very well implemented. The staff are unstinting of their time and run games and activities with great enthusiasm.
- 8.132 Activities are reported in publications such as the school magazine and participation in team games is included in reports to parents.

## **9. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

- 9.1 The inspection was carried out from 8<sup>th</sup> November to 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2004. All subjects of the curriculum were inspected and all full-time 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: art, design and technology, drama, French, German, history, information and communication technology, Latin, music, personal, social and health education, physical education and religious studies. The inspectors visited 108 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 five assemblies and 18 registration sessions. They observed 18 extra-curricular and sporting activities. They held 50 discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff at various levels in the school. They analysed the responses of 239 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**

Bridget Weir

Reporting Inspector, Retired Head, IAPS/HMC school

Clive Ashby	Head, IAPS school
Franciska Bayliss	Head, ISA school
Wendy Bowring	Head, IAPS school
Paul Easterbrook	Head, IAPS school
David Livingstone	Head, IAPS school