

Appendix 6

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS COUNCIL
(ISC)**

INSPECTION OF

ELTHAM COLLEGE

By the

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE
(ISI)**

On

5th - 8th March, 2007

NB This document only contains those sections referring either to the whole school or the senior school. Sections referring to the junior school can be found on the web site.

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Eltham College

Full Name of the School	Eltham College
DfES Number	305/6074
Registered Charity Number	1058438
Address	Grove Park Road, Mottingham, London, SE9 4QF
Telephone Number	020 8857 1455
Fax Number	020 8885 1913
Email Address	mail@eltham-college.org.uk
Headmaster	Mr P Henderson
Chairman of Governors	Mr D Robins
Age Range	7 - 18 years
Gender	Boys (7 - 16) Mixed (16 - 18)
Inspection Dates	5th - 8th March, 2007

This inspection report follows the framework laid down by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The inspection was carried out under the arrangements of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. It was also carried out under Section 162A(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002, as amended by the Education Act 2005, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills has accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003.

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

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1. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 The school was founded in 1842 as a boarding school for the sons of missionaries. It moved to its present extensive site in Mottingham, to the south of London, in 1912. Girls were admitted to the sixth form in 1981 and the boarding section closed in 2004.
- 1.2 The school was last inspected in 2001. At that time there were 554 boys and 40 girls in the Senior School. There were 5 full-time and 2 weekly boarders. Now there are 556 boys and 65 girls in the Senior School. There are no plans at present to increase numbers significantly. On average some 8 pupils leave at the end of Year 11 to continue their education elsewhere, and approximately 40 now join the sixth form each year.
- 1.3 The school values its Christian heritage and aims to further the traditions of scholarship and service to others established at its foundation. The chapel is the spiritual heart of the school and community service is a key element in the education it offers. The concept of the school as a community is very important and within this it seeks to offer challenge for all pupils at levels appropriate to their talents and in as many areas as possible, and to instil in each pupil a sense of purpose and confidence to face the challenges of life beyond school.
- 1.4 The Senior School has improved vehicle access to the site, made improvements to the chapel, developed an all-weather pitch and a number of playing-fields for hockey, and enhanced provision for music, information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology (DT), modern languages, and economics and business studies.
- 1.7 The Senior School is also selective. Admission is by examinations in English, mathematics and verbal reasoning. Standardised national tests taken in Year 7 indicate that all the pupils' abilities are above the national average and some three-quarters of them are well above. If pupils are performing at their appropriate level in public examinations, therefore, their results should be similar to the average of pupils in maintained selective schools. Pupils come from professional, business and finance backgrounds, with a number from less wealthy families on bursaries.
- 1.8 Eighty-four pupils in the Senior School are on the learning support register, of whom eighteen are receiving help from the learning support teacher. Fifty-two pupils speak a language other than English at home. One of these receives learning support from the department and four receive extra help from the English department.
- 1.9 National curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to the year groups in the school.

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 The curricula in both sections of the school offer challenges appropriate to the high academic quality of the pupils, providing a core of essential subjects and a good diversity of choice. Pupils' experiences are enriched by very strong extra-curricular programmes.

Senior School

- 2.6 The school aims to challenge pupils and to enable them to discover where their strengths lie. Through the curriculum it aims to offer a balance of areas of learning, acquisition of knowledge and development of skills, which include literacy, numeracy, listening and speaking. The previous inspection found the curriculum good, with some restrictions relating to choice in the sciences and German but these have now been resolved. Parents expressed themselves very happy with the range of subjects offered. These cover linguistic, mathematical, scientific, human and social, physical and creative development, and within these areas there is a rich choice, which is tailored to the high abilities of the pupils. The previous inspection found the quality of extra-curricular provision very good. Now non-examined subjects and a very diverse extra-curricular programme contribute to the breadth of an outstanding educational experience. This view is fully shared by the parents.

The school teaches 45 periods per week and in Years 7 to 9 the pupils study the core subjects, with the three sciences taught separately from the start. ICT is offered in Year 7 only, in order to teach basic skills. French and Latin are started in Year 7, German in Year 8, and in Year 9 pupils choose three languages from French, Latin, German or Spanish. In Years 10 and 11 the bulk of the pupils study three sciences leading to the international GCSE. Religious studies (RS) and ICT are studied for one year, and Russian is added as a fourth foreign language option. PSHE takes place in a tutor period from Years 7 to 11. All of this offers able pupils very good breadth and challenge. In the sixth form pupils study four AS levels, and either three or four A-levels in their final year. Geology is offered at this level as an additional science, and other subjects to broaden the sixth-form choice include economics, government and politics, and philosophy and ethics. Pupils appreciate the range of curricular opportunities which enable them to develop their individual talents, self-expression and confidence, and parents expressed a very high level of appreciation of the curriculum in the questionnaires.

- 2.8 To emphasise the importance attached to service and breadth of education beyond examined courses, community service is a compulsory component of Year 12 and liberal studies of Year 13. The liberal studies programme offers a broad range of seven-week courses, a series of lectures by outside speakers and cultural trips to the theatre or museums. These elements enhance the curriculum in a unique and imaginative way.
- 2.9 The education provided is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which include sports and the arts, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (which is very popular), an extensive choice of trips and visits, and opportunities to perform and represent the school in teams. The house system, much appreciated by the pupils, provides further opportunities to play competitive sport or sing in a choir to those who do not represent the school. The college society provides lectures on a wide diversity of subjects from hypnosis to politics. Academic societies, available to all, stretch and challenge the more able and are well attended by pupils and staff.

Virtually all pupils go on to higher education, and the careers programme reflects this. Curricular time in Year 9 and a series of evening meetings in Years 10 to 13 prepare pupils for the next

stage of their education. Professionals from the community and parents come and talk to pupils about specific careers over a series of evenings. Recent careers covered in these evenings include medicine, law and engineering. All Year 11 pupils take part in a two-week period of work experience after their GCSE examinations.

- 2.11 All subjects have comprehensive schemes of work. The recently formed academic committee reviews the curriculum and plans for the future. Since its inception, it has considered such issues as the introduction of the international GCSE examinations in specific subjects and the relevance of the Cambridge pre-university examination. It has also discussed the non-examined curriculum with a view to refining and improving the provision.
- 2.12 Good provision is made for pupils requiring learning support. IEPs are circulated to all staff clearly stating the nature of the learning difficulty as well as offering strategies for teachers to use with the pupils. These are greatly appreciated by members of staff. Extension work is provided for gifted and talented pupils within departments and, for example, by participating in local orchestras and the school's Oxford and Cambridge Union debating competitions.

Whole School

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

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.14 The school provides high expectations and a strong work ethic and expects its pupils to perform at the highest levels in relation to their abilities. Its pupils respond well and this results in good study habits and high achievements in their work and in the many other activities they undertake.

Senior School

The school aims to encourage enquiring minds and to foster commitment. This ethos is reflected in the effectiveness of the pupils' learning and the good standards they achieve in their academic and wider education. The previous inspection found the pupils' achievements good or very good, and their attitudes to learning good for the most part. These high standards have been maintained. In the subjects they study and the activities they undertake pupils' learning and levels of achievement are of high quality. They can apply their knowledge and think and act creatively. During a Year 13 physics class, for example, one student independently devised and used an alternative method to achieve the aims of a practical investigation into the discharge of capacitors. The PSHE and citizenship course has clear aims that include the encouragement of personal integrity and consideration for others. It seeks to enable pupils to make informed decisions about their lives and to become responsible and caring citizens.

- 2.21 Levels of attainment between subjects, different groups of pupils and curricular areas are consistent throughout the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and those who speak a language other than English at home make good progress, aided by the close liaison between the learning support teacher and the subject teachers, and the availability of IEPs. Gifted and talented pupils respond well to the opportunities provided, such as the sixth-term examination paper and the senior mathematics society, which provides a forum for discussion of topics that go far beyond the A-level syllabus.
- 2.22 Over the last three years pupils' performance at GCSE has been above the national average for maintained selective schools and at A level it has been well above. This represents good

and very good achievement respectively, in relation to the pupils' abilities. The quality of results was highly rated in the last inspection and has improved since then. This has been achieved by creating a greater focus on the monitoring of achievement throughout the year and on the quality of teaching. At the same time, there has been no reduction in the level or quality of activity outside the classroom: the vigorous rivalry between the houses has increased with the addition of singing, drama and hockey competitions, and extra-curricular music has led to the formation of additional bands and ensembles.

- 2.23 Eltham College has a fine record of individual and team achievements that attest to its encouragement and nurturing of talent and participation across a wide range of musical, dramatic, artistic, philanthropic and sporting activities. Two pupils gained the highest marks in A-level computing and geology nationally, whilst two reached the British Mathematics Olympiad, and younger pupils went through to the intermediate Mathematics Olympiad. Pupils have also been winners and runners-up in the Royal Society of Chemistry competitions and festivals and of the Arkwright Scholarship in 2006, a very prestigious award in design and technology. Individual pupils from the school have represented their national teams in rugby, sailing and weight lifting, and participate in the National Youth Choir.

Pupils' attitudes to work were found to be very good in the last inspection, and this remains a notable feature of the school. New strategies in classroom management and an emphasis on a variety of teaching methods have been introduced to encourage pupils to aim higher, to think for themselves and to develop their own learning styles. Many departments have found ways to engage fully the interest of the pupils by fostering mature attitudes and independent learning. For example, during the inspection a large number of pupils were involved in a life-drawing class in the art department for two hours after school, going far beyond examination expectations.

- 2.25 Pupils are confident, articulate and courteous. They listen attentively to their peers and teachers, and work well on their own and in groups. Pupils write fluently and effectively, often reaching high levels of sophistication, as seen, for example, in a set of sixth-form essays on American prose writing of the twentieth century. They reason and argue cogently, and persistence in understanding was evident in a Year 10 Russian lesson in which pupils doggedly worked out the complexities of numbers, cases, and irregular plurals involved in describing one's family.
- 2.26 Recent innovations have been introduced to improve further pupils' skills in thinking for themselves, including the option to study AS level critical thinking within the upper sixth liberal studies course. Pupils develop their reading skills intelligently; in the English department pupils in Years 7 to 9 complete reading logs and Year 10 pupils set up on-line book reviews. The library is well stocked as a valuable resource for research and personal reading, and it is well used as an area for private study. Pupils are directed to the library to venture beyond the usual curriculum.

Pupils apply mathematics and mathematical concepts effectively. A Year 9 class showed good understanding of graphs in a biology lesson, and a Year 13 group used their mathematical skills to understand exponential decay in a physics lesson. Pupils also make effective use of ICT skills. All Year 7 pupils take (and pass) the European Computer Driving Licence tests; in a Year 10 competition they confidently gave presentations using ICT, and they study an interactive Latin course in Years 7 to 11.

- 2.28 Pupils are able to take notes, study and organise their work independently. In all subjects, exercise books are well presented and pupils take great pride in their work, which they enjoy. The displays of artwork around the school are outstanding. Pupils' willingness to undertake

tasks, to begin group and pair work without fuss and then work co-operatively, is a feature of the school. The extra-curricular programme of activities enriches the pupils' learning. An example of this is community service, which develops their social skills and awareness of others.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.29 The quality of provision for spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is outstanding in both sections of the school, and this reflects the importance the school places on this aspect of education.

Senior School

The spiritual dimension is a strength of the school and underpins its aims. Pupils' spiritual awareness is readily apparent, not least in the ethos of the school and in the atmosphere in assemblies and services. The previous inspection found this aspect to be strong and it has continued to develop. As they pass through the school pupils are nurtured and encouraged, so that they develop self-esteem and self-confidence; this is reflected in the unselfconscious way in which they help each other in practical work in the sciences. The incorporation of musical performance in chapel services on a regular basis offers spiritual experience of another kind for both performers and listeners. The warm reception accorded to the chamber choir by younger members of the school was evidence of their appreciation of an exciting and accomplished performance by the older pupils. The quality and variety of the aesthetic studies both within and beyond the curriculum in music, art and drama greatly enhance the spiritual experience for all members of the community, as do the displays of fine art and sculpture in many areas of the school, both inside and out.

- 2.37 The school has a strong non-conformist Christian tradition, with the chapel at the centre of school life. There are short morning gatherings four times each week with other services on occasions, such as *Songs of Praise*, all of which relate matters of faith and spiritual issues to the daily lives and experiences of the pupils. These corporate acts at the start of the school day offer opportunities for reflection on aspects of the human condition. The pupils join in the singing of the hymns and in the prayers without self-consciousness. Shortly after a visit to Corrymeela in Northern Ireland, two sixth-form pupils spoke movingly to the school about their experiences and were warmly received. The Christian ethic is reflected in the way in which pupils acknowledge and respect each other and the adult members of the community. RS is a core subject, all pupils taking a short course leading to GCSE in Year 10. As part of this work pupils learn about spiritual beliefs and religious practices other than their own. There is a small Christian Union led by the chapel wardens, and pupils are encouraged to take an active part in services. These overtly Christian activities and the wider spiritual compass of the chapel and its work help in achieving the school's aim to ensure that young people can discover the meaning of the Christian faith and spiritual values.
- 2.38 Pupils develop a strong moral sense, and they are clear in their understanding of what they believe to be right and wrong. Personal integrity and consideration for others is evident throughout the school, and the tone for this is set by the staff. On public occasions pupils know how to behave; they are respectfully quiet in chapel; in class they co-operate cheerfully but observe the codes of conduct which give all the right to speak and to be heard; around the school they communicate easily with each other and with the adults they meet; they welcome visitors with unfeigned courtesy. The curriculum provides opportunities to explore moral and ethical issues in a broad range of subjects exemplified by a discussion of anti-Semitism as an aspect of a novel being read in a Year 8 English class. In PSHE pupils are encouraged to consider moral and ethical issues in such topics as abortion and sexism in society. Inclusion of personal matters such as drugs awareness in this programme gives pupils the

opportunity to discuss different viewpoints in the company of their peers. They learn to think for themselves, basing their views on considered information and moral values. The challenging and exciting community service programme undertaken by all pupils in Year 12 provides many opportunities to work selflessly for the benefit of others, often in situations quite unfamiliar to the pupils. Support for charities is an important aspect of school life. Parents were very appreciative of the views, attitudes and behaviour of the pupils engendered by the school.

Pupils develop good social skills, and social issues are considered in many subjects, as was seen in a Year 12 English lesson on '*Jane Eyre*' where matters of class and gender were explored. Pupils communicate their ideas clearly and confidently. Differing views and opinions are expressed, considered and debated without rancour or disdain. The house system and many of the extra-curricular activities help pupils of all ages to interact in a positive and friendly manner. The first string orchestra involves both senior and more junior musicians; the college choir, rehearsing for one of its many concerts, included the head prefect and boys from the Junior School. Senior pupils learn to accept responsibility, and the prefects take their roles seriously, working together co-operatively and to good purpose. With poise they help staff to ensure an ordered entry to and exit from chapel; they undertake supervisory duties in the dining hall. They report that the natural good behaviour of the pupils makes such tasks easy to fulfil. A rich variety of extra-curricular activities encourages the development of personal and social skills. The strong tradition of music and drama fosters a co-operative work ethic; The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme nurtures self-reliance and provides opportunities for leadership; the school council encourages debate about matters of concern to all.

- 2.40 The relationships that exist between pupils are excellent. Respect for each other's cultural traditions is shown at all times. The chaplain and headmaster enabled Muslim pupils to use the chapel for private prayer during Ramadan. Regular trips to Europe, the exchange visits to France and Germany, and the study trip to Spain, allow linguists to immerse themselves in life in their host country.

Whole School

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

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

The school is concentrating resources to improve further the quality of teaching, and attempts to vary methods and to encourage pupils to take responsibility for their learning have had a positive impact in both sections of the school.

Senior School

The high quality of teaching enables pupils of all ages and all abilities, including those with learning difficulties, to acquire new skills, make good progress, increase their knowledge and develop their skills. Teachers set high standards themselves and expect no less of their pupils. The quality of teaching was rated as good in the previous inspection and, as a result of the school's concentration of time and resources here, it has improved. Teachers are intellectually able and very well qualified in their knowledge and understanding of their subject. Mutual respect and good relationships between pupils and their teachers are central to pupils' positive experience in the classroom. Expectations of good behaviour are high and pupils respond positively: the working atmosphere is happy and purposeful. Parents and pupils expressed very high levels of satisfaction with the quality of teaching at the school.

- 2.49 There is much good teaching and some that is outstanding. One Spanish lesson, for example, combined, at a brisk pace, clear exposition of a new grammar point, checking of understanding and use by the pupils, further practice in pair-work, a listening comprehension to reinforce understanding and a homework to develop what had been learnt. The teachers' high expectations encourage pupils to take a pride in their work and to think and learn for themselves. In all areas of study the quality of the pupils' response is evident in their books and files, in the many displays around the school, in plays and concerts, and on the sports fields. Pupils are encouraged to be actively involved in their work, take responsibility for it and to enjoy it.
- 2.50 Lessons are carefully planned, optimum use is made of the 35-minute period and most lessons are conducted at a brisk pace. Recent initiatives to develop a broad range of teaching approaches across departments and to spread best practice are bearing fruit, and pupils are involved in a good range of activities. These include debate, discussion, presentations, research and practical assignments. Group and pair work is employed to very good effect in many subjects, for example in an English lesson pairs of pupils produced a news report about anti-Semitism based on their work in the novel '*Friedrich*'. The quality of teaching has also benefited from the experience of heads of department who have been involved in mentoring newly qualified teachers and trainee teachers in the school. Where the school's appraisal system operates at its best there is a positive effect on the development of teaching styles. The departments' response to the expectation of peer observation has, however, been inconsistent.

Teachers know their pupils very well and plan their teaching to meet the needs of all in the group. They give willingly of their time to those requesting extra help or encountering difficulties. Pupils who need learning support are known to their teachers. IEPs, which are produced after careful screening by the learning support teacher, are used to very good effect in planning teaching and responding to the needs of individual pupils. Teachers respect their pupils; consequently they are themselves respected and pupils feel confident to express their ideas and opinions in lessons.

- 2.52 A wide range of resources, including computers, is available in all areas of the school and this contributes well to the variety in teaching methods. Recent investment and training in the use of interactive whiteboards is beginning to have a positive effect on the quality of teaching. In a Year 9 biology class a lesson on photosynthesis was made exciting and accessible to all pupils, by excellent use of this technology. In Latin the use of ICT is fully integrated into planning and teaching. This good practice is not followed in all subjects, and the lack of formal monitoring of the use or effectiveness of technology in teaching, inhibits further development in this area.
- 2.53 Teaching at every level includes frequent assessment within lessons, through tests and in written homework. The best marking is detailed with helpful and constructive comments, and is used by departments in reviewing their courses regularly. However, standards of marking, both across and between subjects and departments, are variable and are insufficiently monitored to ensure consistency of practice. Good use is made of national data to monitor achievement in examination results, with high expectations in view of the pupils' abilities. Since the last inspection good progress has been made in developing a more informative system of interim reporting.

Whole School

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

3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS

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

- 3.1 The sense of community is apparent throughout the school and one of the reasons for this is the excellent relationship between staff and pupils. This in turn stems from the excellent pastoral care which is a major strength in both sections of the school. The arrangements for pupils' health, welfare and safety are first-rate. In appointing staff the appropriate checks are made with the Criminal Records Bureau and care has been taken to comply with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act.

Senior School

The school aims to create good staff-pupil relationships based on co-operation, good humour and courtesy, as well as to provide a safe and healthy environment. The quality of the pastoral care was described as "high" in the last inspection and it is apparent from the parents' responses to the questionnaires that they still greatly appreciate the help and guidance offered by the school. A very high proportion of the pupils professed to be happy in the school and felt there was an adult they could turn to if they had a problem. It is clear that the pastoral work is outstanding and an area of strength in the school. In addition, the flaws identified in the 2001 report have been rectified.

- 3.6 Pastoral arrangements are extremely thorough, and the school plans to include the work of form tutors in the appraisal scheme, with the aim of emphasising the importance of this part of their job. The form tutor is the first point of contact for parents with concerns, and the whole pastoral structure involves the deputy head, heads of section and of year, their deputies and the school nurse. Regular meetings ensure that every pupil's progress and welfare are monitored, and support is provided when necessary. In addition, the newly formed pastoral committee meets to review practice and to look at long-term issues, such as training for tutors.
- 3.7 Plenty of evidence from lesson observations highlights the warmth of relationships between teacher and pupil, and the ease with which the pupils work in a co-operative manner reflects this. There is no evidence of a male-dominated climate that was briefly commented upon in the 2001 report; indeed girls settle into the Eltham sixth form very quickly. "There is no place for bullying in the Eltham community" is the message given out at every level by the school, and it is a message that is clearly heard. Pupils of all ages felt that bullying is at most minimal, and that the national anti-bullying campaign which was closely followed at school with numerous PSHE, form and year assemblies stressing the *Don't suffer in silence* theme has succeeded. Detentions are closely monitored, and results from the questionnaires and pupil interviews show that pupils and parents are happy with the procedures used to deal with unacceptable behaviour.

Health and safety issues are thoroughly covered. Weekly meetings are held to discuss such issues as fire drills, and to ensure that health and safety obligations are being met. Strategic issues are examined at the meeting of the health and safety committee held once a term. Its findings are given to the headmaster, who is the safety officer. The child protection officer, along with several members of staff with pastoral responsibilities, has been appropriately trained. Staff in-service training and regular talks given by the deputy head and the school nurse, who is a qualified counsellor, to staff and parents of pupils in Years 10 and 12 ensure that the whole Eltham community are fully aware of child protection issues.

Procedures to reduce risk from fire are in operation, and staff have had a recent training session on the use of fire extinguishers. Procedures for fire drills are published in all areas, and risk assessments are carried out for all potentially dangerous activities and school trips. Admission and attendance registers are kept in compliance with statutory duties. All records concerning the welfare of pupils at the school are kept and monitored.

Whole School

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

The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community

The answers to the questionnaires from both sections of the school indicated a very high level of satisfaction with the education provided. In particular the quality of information was highly valued. In addition, the school has very good links with the local community to great mutual benefit.

Senior School

Parents expressed a very high level of satisfaction with the education of their children and with the quality and dedication of the staff. The school aims to involve the parents as partners in education and many opportunities exist for them to become involved in the activities and work of their children. Regular reports, six-weekly grades and two parents' evenings a year provide information to parents concerning their children's progress academically and socially, and offer advice to pupils on the way forward. This is enhanced by the pupils' self-evaluation, which also appears on the report. The weekly bulletin keeps parents apprised of school events, and the termly newsletter informs them of pupil achievements.

- 3.16 Relationships with parents are strong. The PTA organises various events throughout the year such as Burns night in January and a summer ball in June. Parent representatives from every form in the school meet the headmaster in open forums once a term to discuss non-academic matters and two parent governors represent parents on the board. Help with drama, the library and the various sports tours, and support of the numerous school events enable parents to get to know the staff and the school.
- 3.17 The school encourages parents to raise concerns and the formal complaints procedure is clear and available on demand. It has not been invoked in the Senior School in the past year. Parents expressed some slight dissatisfaction about the school's handling of concerns but the inspection team found that the arrangements were secure.
- 3.18 The school believes strongly in service, and aims to promote it, reaching out to the local community to create better understanding. The quality of the programme the pupils undertake is outstanding and includes working in local primary schools, special needs schools, care homes or charity shops. All of this provides genuine breadth of experience for the pupils, whilst bringing the school into the community.
- 3.19 Involvement in the South London Teaching Consortium of schools provides opportunities for initial teacher training and for staff development in mentoring. The school also looks beyond the immediate community and enjoys links with schools in Australia, South Africa, France and Germany. Considerable pupil interest has been expressed in new green initiatives by the school's 'Green Society'. This is one way that the school is developing both parental and pupil awareness in environmental issues. The community makes good use of the school's

sports facilities for numerous activities such as football training, swimming and fitness sessions.

Whole School

- 3.20 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the provision of information and the manner in which complaints are handled [Standards 6 and 7].

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 The governing body is carefully constituted and provides effective oversight of the whole school. At the same time both sections receive the interest and personal support they require from individual governors.

Senior School

- 4.6 The high quality of the work of the governors can readily be seen in the breadth of education the school offers, the high standard of the facilities and grounds, and the strong sense of purpose evident amongst staff and pupils.
- 4.7 The board is very well managed. The governors have a full range of expertise, confirmed by a recent audit, and all are required to undertake a training session at least once every two years. A recent self-evaluation of performance indicated some concerns about communication between governors and their ability to work as a team. As a result the board has planned an 'away day' conference with the senior managers, supported by the Association of Governing Bodies of Independent Schools, to look at priorities and development together. Three sub-committees, with clear terms of reference, report to the board on finance and general purposes, development, and the Junior School. The headmaster and the master of the Junior School report regularly on performance. The full board are thus well informed about the school's priorities, achievements and needs, and well placed to make decisions.
- 4.8 They are also well aware of the challenges they face in the next few years, such as the continued recruitment of highly qualified staff. Named governors have specific responsibilities for child protection and health and safety, and the governors' concern for their legal responsibilities can be seen in the care taken within the school to ensure that these are fully met. In addition, certain governors support the school in specific areas, such as care for the environment and ICT development, meeting the staff concerned and taking a special interest in their work.
- 4.9 The tight controls kept on the school's finances ensure that funds are spent in line with the school's priorities. Since the last inspection significant improvements have been made to the school's facilities over many areas. These include the major building developments in the Junior School, vehicle access (now very efficient), investments in the chapel, an all-weather pitch and additional playing-fields for hockey, as well the extensive facilities in the newly created music school, and improved accommodation for DT, modern languages and economics and business studies. All of these have greatly enhanced the quality of education offered. In addition, the governors greatly value the school's traditional ethos and its social mix, and are seeking, through the development office, to provide a bursary fund to preserve this.

- 4.10 A strategic review, prepared by the senior management team and approved by the governors, outlines development plans until 2008 covering every aspect of the school's provision. It is an anomaly that the development of the Junior School does not feature equally with the Senior School within this plan.
- 4.11 The governors are very proud of the school, in particular the friendly community spirit and the well rounded, articulate young people it develops. They are happy to support the many school events, such as plays, concerts, sport, prize-giving and speech day.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

Senior School

- 4.21 Evidence of strong leadership and effective management can be seen in the good quality of teaching, the academic achievements, beyond the demands of public examinations, and the relaxed and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils are encouraged, as part of the school's aims, to accept challenges in as many areas as possible. An example of this is the component of compulsory community service in the sixth form. Pupils admit to some early misgivings in undertaking this but speak highly of its benefits.
- 4.22 The last inspection report recommended a review of the senior management structure to identify responsibilities more clearly. This has been carried out and the headmaster has established a structure which includes two newly formed academic and pastoral committees to support strategic planning. This enables views to be taken from a range of sources, as seen in the preparation of the strategic plan to 2008, which is based on extensive consultation by working parties. The implementation of the plan is guided by the newly established committees. At the same time the structure of the senior management team has been altered to provide specific new roles covering the curriculum, whole-school assessment and staff development. There is no director of studies, and this leads to problems in the monitoring of the work of the departments. The school is aware of this and the appointment of the new director of assessment has been made to address quality assurance in marking within and between departments.
- 4.23 Recently a number of initiatives have been put in place to develop the use of ICT and more generally to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The variety of teaching styles used in some subjects is evidence of the effectiveness of these initiatives in certain areas, but the management of academic departments is variable and practice is inconsistent. Marking policies and peer observation, for example, are not uniformly carried out. The school has clear policies and expectations in place but lacks a system to ensure that they are met.
- 4.24 The school's awareness of the need to appoint and retain high quality staff is evident in the standards set by the members of the current staff. They give readily of their time and expertise for the pupils both in and outside the classroom and their work is greatly appreciated by parents and pupils. New members of staff are carefully inducted and supported. Newly qualified teachers are mentored in accordance with statutory guidelines, and good use is made of them and of initial teacher training students as a source of new ideas. Before new staff are appointed all undergo the required checks for suitability. Appraisal of the teaching staff takes place every year by the senior master and the headmaster in alternate years. Targets are set and extreme care is taken to make expectations clear and to provide support where problems arise. The appraisal of the non-teaching staff, recommended in the last inspection, remains inconsistent.

- 4.25 Finance is well managed and academic departments are well resourced. This includes the systematic development of ICT in line with the school's aim to enhance the quality of teaching.
- 4.26 The school is very efficiently administered through extensive use of ICT to communicate with staff, parents and pupils. The administrative staff are most obliging and are proud to work in the school.

Whole School

- 4.27 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].
- 4.28 The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers and meets its requirements.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall Conclusions

- 5.1 The school meets its aims and aspirations very well. The Junior School provides a high quality education for its pupils. It has many strong features and is outstanding in some areas. It prepares pupils through a very good quality of education, good and sometimes excellent teaching, excellent pastoral care and outstanding links with parents. The development of ICT needs to be planned and the marking policy requires monitoring. Leadership is strong and positive, and relationships between staff and pupils are excellent, with a high degree of mutual respect that promotes good behaviour in the pupils. The school's ethos is underpinned by strong family and Christian values which contribute to the high quality of its links with the community and outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. The pupils are proud of their school and feel privileged to be members of it. The refurbishment of the original school building and the recent addition of an imaginative and spacious new wing have allowed the school to offer improved specialist teaching areas together with additional, very well equipped classrooms.
- 5.2 The Senior School provides a challenging, rounded education in a friendly, caring and supportive community where excellent relationships prevail. It is underpinned by strong Christian traditions and offers good opportunities for pupils to reflect on and develop their faiths. The strong emphasis on service is supported by the community service programme for the sixth form and the many opportunities for the pupils to serve the school community. Pupils achieve very good examination results and recent initiatives to improve further the quality of teaching have had a positive effect. More work is needed to ensure expectations are carried out consistently in academic departments.
- 5.4 The Senior School has responded to the recommendations of the last inspection by developing comprehensive assessment data for all pupils, so that their progress can be tracked by tutors. It has not yet improved the dining-hall, although plans for this are now in place. It has, however, significantly enhanced its facilities in many other areas. ICT has received heavy investment and a committee now oversees its further development. The management structure has been altered to good effect, although problems of monitoring performance in departments remain.
- 5.5 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

5.6 Neither section of the school has major weaknesses.

Senior School

5.8 In the process of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning the school is recommended to take the following action.

1. Ensure that expectations for academic development are met by:
 - clarifying the accountability of heads of department;
 - regular monitoring of progress, particularly in the carrying out of new initiatives.

Whole School

5.9 No action in respect of regulatory requirements is required.

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 5th – 8th March, 2007. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.

List of Inspectors

Mr Adrian Silcock	Reporting Inspector
Mr Frank Skipwith	Assistant Reporting Inspector
Mr James Burns	Head of Department, HMC School
Miss Karen Hollingdale	Deputy Head, HMC School
Mrs Linda Macfarlane	Retired Deputy Head, HMC School
Mr Gary Moss	Housemaster, HMC School
Mr Timothy Turvey	Headmaster, HMC School
Mrs Hilary Williams	Former Deputy Head, HMC School
Mrs Jeanette Adams	Deputy Head, IAPS School
Mr Christopher Richmond	Former Head of Department, IAPS School
Miss Sue Towndrow	Deputy Head, IAPS School