

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Amesbury School

Full Name of the School	Amesbury School
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Registered Charity Number	312058
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Age Range	2 - 13 years
Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	1st – 4th October 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 accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended with effect from January 2005 and May 2007.

The inspection was not carried out in conjunction with Ofsted, Children's Directorate, and the report does not contain specific judgements on the National Minimum Boarding Standards. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education and development in general. The full Ofsted report can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Inspection reports/Boarding schools.

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 Amesbury School caters for day boys and girls aged 2-13, with a boarding option for pupils in Years 7 and 8. It was founded in 1870 in Redhill and moved to its present site in Hindhead in 1917. The main building was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens and the premises stand on a 30-acre estate in the Surrey countryside. The school is established as a charitable trust administered by a board of governors.
- 1.2 The school's principal purposes are stated to be 'wanting every child to enjoy his or her time at school; to feel valued as individuals, in an environment where their talents can prosper to the benefit of the community. So when the time comes to leave, each will do so with their confidence high, skills sharpened and personalities rounded.' The school lists its aims as being: to develop in every child the necessary skills, aptitudes and abilities to enable them to move on to senior school as emotionally resilient, autonomous learners; to develop a caring community within the school by encouraging commitment, courtesy, co-operation, tolerance and compassion towards one another whilst understanding that each individual is a member of a wider community; to promote and nurture a close relationship between home and school in the partnership of education; to provide pupils with a model of how an excellent organisation is run, one in which there is a culture of high achievement, a willingness to adapt and a propensity for innovation; and to create the circumstances in which all members of staff feel able to make the fullest contribution to school life.
- 1.3 Changes since the last inspection in 2001 include the opening of a pre-nursery for pupils aged 2+, and a major review of the admissions policy, curriculum and pastoral arrangements. The school has made considerable investment in its premises, with particular emphasis on the quality of classroom space, information and communication technology (ICT), performing arts and additional sports facilities. Staff changes include the appointment of a director of studies in 2002.
- 1.4 The school roll consists of 307 full-time and 29 part-time pupils: 200 boys and 136 girls. There are 54 pupils below Year 1; 58 in Years 1 and 2; 165 in Years 3 to 6; and 59 in Years 7 and 8. The majority of pupils come from the local area and professional families. Their ability and attainment on entry is broad. National tests are not used by the school, but scores from other nationally recognised tests indicate that the pupils' ability is above average overall. No pupils receive support for English as an additional language or have a statement of special educational needs. The school has identified 31 pupils who receive learning support. Pupils leave at ages 11 and 13 to continue their education in a range of independent senior schools.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 The education experience offered to the pupils is very successful in reflecting the school's aims. The school provides many opportunities for them to develop their skills and ability across a good breadth of subjects. The curriculum has improved well since the last inspection, for example the place of performing arts has been strengthened. Responses to the parents' pre-inspection questionnaires were very positive about the range of subjects offered to pupils.
- 2.2 The school provides a broad education that is successful in fostering the pupils' all-round development. The curriculum is relevant to the ages and interests of the pupils, and is based on the National Curriculum guidelines and Common Entrance syllabuses. Foundation Stage pupils enjoy a wide range of activities that cover all of the six areas of learning that are pertinent to their age and ability. Older pupils now experience an improved balance of academic work, sport and the performing arts than was reported at the last inspection. All the subjects offered are covered well with the exception of design and technology, where a more limited programme of study is provided because of the time allocated to the subject.
- 2.3 The education provided contributes effectively to the pupils' overall academic development and their acquisition of skills. Careful planning of the curriculum in the short-, medium-, and long-term ensures that pupils' learning is built on year-by-year and at progressively higher levels. Progress is aided by the use of group work and by the setting of pupils according to their ability in some subjects. Such arrangements provide well for the development of speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills. The improved ICT facilities are used regularly to build pupils' skills and for the use of these skills in other subjects, for example when completing project work. Sporting and creative skills are fostered effectively by the many opportunities provided for the pupils to exercise their capabilities in these aspects of learning.
- 2.4 An extensive array of extra-curricular activities is offered, with a particular emphasis on the performing arts. These include a swing band, chapel choir, a string ensemble and a drama club for the pre-preparatory pupils. Parents' questionnaire responses were very positive about the breadth and range of activities being offered. Considerable care is taken by teachers to ensure that the pupils do neither too many, nor too few activities. Many of the activities provide links with the local and wider community and, as a result, make a positive contribution to the pupils' personal development. After-school care is registered with the appropriate authority and overseen by senior members of staff.
- 2.5 Pupils are very well prepared as they move from one stage of their education to the next. The school has improved liaison between Years 2 and 3. Useful reports and records of pupils' work are passed from class to class, and staff discuss the needs of each pupil. Pupils are prepared thoroughly for the transfer to senior schools. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme contributes well to the confident way that pupils tackle school life. The introduction of boarding on a flexible basis in Years 7 and 8 helps pupils to become more independent, as well as preparing them for boarding in senior schools.
- 2.6 Curriculum planning is good. Policies and schemes of work have been revised and improved over time. Opportunities are taken to link work from one subject to another so that, for example, pupils have opportunities to use their numeracy skills in science. The school provides very effectively for the equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. All pupils have many opportunities to take part in a wide range of activities and interests.

- 2.7 Provision for pupils requiring additional support for their learning is good. Their needs are identified early and a well-documented system is followed for dealing with any specific learning difficulties. If necessary, a detailed individual plan is drawn up to guide a pupil's work and the input provided by teachers and parents. In-class support for these pupils is good overall, but varies across the age ranges. Guidance to staff on how to meet the needs of the most able pupils, by ensuring that tasks are well matched to their ability, is of an inconsistent quality. Good enrichment is offered in some lessons, with the best providing a number of ways for enhancing the learning experience. However, the chief means of providing support is through setting by ability. The school is aware of the need to further develop this aspect of its work and has recently appointed a teacher to co-ordinate the provision for the most able pupils.
- 2.8 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.9 Pupils learn and achieve well. They apply themselves effectively to their work so that they achieve good levels of knowledge, skills, and develop critical and creative understanding in a wide range of subjects and in all areas of learning. Good progress has been made in addressing the areas highlighted in the last inspection report with particular regard to the achievement of the less able pupils. The school's aims are being met well. The current focus on helping the pupils to become more autonomous learners is beginning to bring about improvements in this aspect of the school's work.
- 2.10 By the end of the Foundation Stage, pupils' learning and achievement is good in all six areas of learning. In Years 1 to 8, pupils' literacy skills become progressively well developed and they learn to read and write with confidence, enjoyment and good accuracy. Numeracy skills are developed effectively so that, for example, Year 6 pupils complete mental arithmetic problems with few errors and at good speed. Good scientific knowledge and skills are achieved by the time pupils leave the school. ICT skills are developed effectively through their use in other subjects, for example in English. Pupils frequently learn well and produce some high standards of work in creative and physical activities such as drama, music, art and games. Outside the classroom, results from speaking competitions, music examinations and sporting competitions indicate that high standards are often being achieved. Different subjects and curriculum areas reveal no significant differences in relative attainment between groups of pupils.
- 2.11 Pupils perform well in public examinations and when completing tests. They gain entry to the senior school of their parents' choice. In recent years, there has been a healthy increase in the number and range of scholarships being obtained. Significant team and individual performances have included success at national level in sailing, and at county level in netball, tennis, hockey, gymnastics and cricket. At the same time, good care is taken to provide opportunities for less talented pupils to compete at a level commensurate with their ability.
- 2.12 Pupils' attitudes to work and study are good in all age groups due to the overall high expectations for their learning and behaviour. Pupils study effectively both on their own and co-operatively with others, in groups and teams. They settle quickly at the start of lessons and apply themselves well, particularly when their interest is engaged by the lesson content or by the teaching methods used.
- 2.13 Across the age range, pupils read fluently and with good expression. They write coherently and neatly. Pupils listen attentively to teachers and to each other, for example during practical activities in design and technology and science. Many pupils are very articulate and express themselves clearly when expressing their views: for example, Year 8 pupils used

their literacy skills very effectively to present arguments for, and against, alternative energy sources.

- 2.14 When opportunities and sufficient challenge are provided in their lessons, pupils apply the knowledge, understanding and skills learnt in subjects, such as mathematics, to other work. For example, Reception pupils applied their counting skills to the building of towers and threading beads. Pupils of all ages demonstrate well-developed ICT skills in a good number of subjects. Nursery pupils can use a digital camera to good effect when recording shapes and patterns for their mathematics work. Year 5 pupils display their work effectively by using an electronic presentation for showing correct examples of French vocabulary and phrases.
- 2.15 Pupils demonstrate a good ability to reason and think for themselves, when provided with the opportunity to do so. Many are good at taking notes, recording results and working independently, as seen in the religious education (RE) booklets produced by Year 7 pupils. Pupils welcome the many opportunities they have for group and team work, especially in physical education and games activities. They work together successfully and show good levels of consideration for others. Pupils are keen to please their teachers by completing the tasks they that are set with good determination and concentration. As a result, pupils frequently enjoy their work.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.16 Pupils have a well-developed spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness which goes a long way towards meeting the school's aims of developing in individuals emotional resilience, tolerance and compassion, as part of a caring community. The good standards achieved at the time of the last inspection have been developed further with the introduction of a formal PSHE programme, and philosophy studies for pupils aged 7 to 13 years.
- 2.17 Pupils develop a good sense of spiritual awareness and high levels of self-esteem and confidence. They enjoy a range of spiritual experiences, such as Christian worship in the chapel, where in an atmosphere conducive to an appreciation of the intangible, they reflect on values such as 'Who is my neighbour?' Pupils' understanding about differing faiths is reinforced well by displays that contain the key facts about a range of religions. Pupils feel valued and are provided with many opportunities to be successful and to have their success recognised. This recognition results in them having a clear idea of their own achievements. Pupils grow in self-confidence through frequent participation in concerts and plays and through representing the school in various sporting activities. They speak of how this 'helps them to grow' as individuals.
- 2.18 Pupils have a well-developed moral awareness from an early age. They know and respect the school rules and can explain how they benefit the school community. Pupils can also distinguish right from wrong and accept that there are consequences for breaking a moral code. For example, Year 3 pupils expressed the view that it was right to be punished for breaking rules, but could not recall this happening very frequently in their school life. In PSHE, RE and philosophy lessons, pupils develop self-knowledge and critical thinking skills as they discuss issues such as prejudice and discrimination, and how to make correct choices in life.
- 2.19 Pupils develop a very strong social awareness. Social co-operation and positive relationships are a consistent feature of the school's work. Pupils of all ages represent their house teams in competitions, learning the value of teamwork well. Senior pupils develop leadership skills by taking turns to be house representatives and working with teachers to organise inter-house activities. Pupils have a developing knowledge of public institutions and services which is

reinforced by their involvement in making the right choices for themselves and others. For example, focus groups for senior pupils provide a constructive forum for discussion with staff in which pertinent issues, such as the introduction of training in study techniques, to help pupils prepare for public examinations, can be raised and action recommended. Pupils' participation in charity fundraising develops their insights into the plight of others and how they can make a meaningful contribution to bring about improvements. They show a strong sense of community and a developing awareness of their responsibility for the environment.

- 2.20 Pupils develop a good awareness of their own and other cultures. Many areas of the curriculum contribute to their cultural development. Pupils increase their cultural understanding by studying about many countries of the world, for example in Africa, and in finding out how people live. They express their knowledge in many ways, through art activities, by performing songs and by speaking in a foreign language. Year 8 pupils discussed the Vietnam War, prompted by their dramatic production of 'Miss Saigon'. Pupils speak of educational visits and charity work having an element of fun, as well as increasing their knowledge and understanding of local traditions and those from further afield. Visits abroad, such as those made by the chapel choir and modern foreign language pupils enable them to experience other cultures on a first-hand basis.
- 2.21 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.22 The overall quality of teaching supports the school's aims well and enables pupils to acquire new knowledge, make good progress according to their ability, increase their understanding and develop their skills. The quality of teaching has strengthened since the last inspection. Teaching contains many positive attributes that are underpinned strongly by the very positive relationships that exist between teachers and pupils. Inconsistent use is made of assessment information and of specific teaching methods to foster pupils' independent learning.
- 2.23 Overall, teaching fosters the pupils' application and interest in a wide range of subjects. For example, in a Year 8 drama lesson the high quality of feedback resulted in an extended effort being made by the pupils. Intellectual participation was encouraged in many lessons. Physical and creative effort was stimulated in games and drama activities. For example, Year 6 boys showed high levels of perseverance when faced with challenging football activities. The positive relationship between pupils and teachers is the heartbeat of the school. As a result, the encouragement that teaching almost invariably gives to pupils to behave responsibly ensures that behaviour is very often of a high standard.
- 2.24 Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects and the age groups that they teach. This helps to ensure that the teaching is well planned and contains suitable activities. Class time is frequently used wisely. Effective teaching methods are employed in most lessons. The best lessons contain a good variety of ways by which pupils' learning is extended, such as by setting challenging tasks and by asking probing questions. Some lessons achieve this less well because, for example, the use of questioning is not utilised to its full effect.
- 2.25 Teaching is effective and promotes learning because teachers frequently know their pupils well and make appropriate use of the good range of assessment information that is available to them. Effective use is often made of individual education plans to guide specific support for those pupils requiring help with their learning. Lessons are supported by a good quality, quantity and range of available resources and teaching very often makes effective use of them.

- 2.26 The best lessons provide suitable opportunities for pupils to think and learn for themselves. This was seen in a good range of subjects and age groups. For example, the youngest pupils were encouraged to be independent in changing their shoes and choosing their dance movements, and this enhanced the pace of the lesson and the quality of the pupils' movement. However, a minority of lessons rely too much on giving all pupils the same task and afford little, or no, opportunity for pupils to make individual contributions. Such lessons, which are often also characterised by the use of a limited range of teaching methods, miss opportunities to encourage pupils to become more independent in their learning, which is a current focus for the school.
- 2.27 Pupils' learning is assessed regularly. Marking is accurate and regular. The best examples provide good indications to the pupils about how their work may be improved, as seen in a number of English lessons. The consistency of providing this feedback to pupils is improving but not yet achieved completely in all subjects and year groups.
- 2.28 Teaching includes regular and thorough assessment of pupils' work. The use of assessment information to plan the teaching is usually good so, for example, the pupils are grouped appropriately and the activities and methods used match their needs well. A minority of lessons are less successful because although the planning may contain particular ways in which pupils' learning is to be supported or challenged, such planning is not always used effectively.
- 2.29 The school uses a comprehensive variety of methods for assessing pupils' work. These include nationally recognised tests which provide a comparison to a wider pupil population, and school-devised testing which supports the school's aim of developing in pupils the necessary skills, aptitudes and abilities, by helping to measure them. For example, these include Foundation Stage profiles, standardised tests in English, mathematics and science and subject tests that are administered at the end of series of lessons to check the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the work covered. This information, combined with some self-assessment by the pupils, provides a comprehensive picture of their progress and achievement.
- 2.30 The school meets the regulatory requirements for teaching [Standard 1].

3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS

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

- 3.1 The quality of pastoral care is outstanding. The school is very successful in ensuring the welfare, health and safety of the pupils, and this provides an environment in which the school's aims can be met. This strong feature of the school's work has been maintained well since the last inspection.
- 3.2 The school provides extremely effective care for the pupils' well-being. It is very successful in meeting its aim of developing a caring community. Pupils are happy and speak of the staff providing a great deal of care for them. They can give many personal examples of this happening at various times during their school life. For example, several Year 7 pupils reported that they were very happy with the support they receive for their work and during times when they may have a problem. Parental responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very positive about this part of the school's work.
- 3.3 The staff are assisted by very effective pastoral arrangements and written guidance. Policies provide good guidance to staff. The conscientious oversight of the deputy headmaster, who leads and manages all aspects of pastoral care, ensures that this guidance is put into practice effectively. Staff take their pastoral responsibilities very seriously. They are supported by a clear structure of responsibility whereby positive comments and concerns can be channelled through to the head of pastoral care. One outcome of this system is that pupil matters feature highly in staff meetings and can be addressed rapidly.
- 3.4 Many teachers have a very comprehensive knowledge of the pupils and their individual circumstances. Pupils speak of being valued and how this helps them to develop good levels of confidence, in line with the school's aims. The school's caring ethos is reflected in the very positive relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils and their peers. For example, a nursery-aged pupil was shown much kindness by her teachers, which helped her to overcome a difficulty with her work. Year 8 boys paused naturally on the way to their game of football, to support the girls' netball team who were playing against a visiting school.
- 3.5 Effective measures are in place to promote good discipline and behaviour. These include sufficiently-detailed procedures that help to guard against possible harassment and bullying. Policy statements and the high quality of relationships between staff and pupils deal constructively with unacceptable behaviour when it occurs. These foster a good degree of self-discipline amongst the pupils that is appropriate to their maturity. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and at break times frequently demonstrated the success of these policies and the approach of staff. Pupils speak of the system for rewards and sanctions being fair. They appreciate that their achievements are celebrated, and understand that unacceptable behaviour will be sanctioned.
- 3.6 Child protection measures are in place and effective. The designated officers receive regular training and this is then shared with the rest of the staff. Sufficient guidance is provided to staff on child protection matters. Procedures for the recruitment and checking of staff prior to appointment are thorough. Registration and admission routines meet statutory obligations.
- 3.7 The school has a high regard for the safety of its pupils and arrangements to ensure health and safety are effective. For example, the necessary measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards are in place, and documented appropriately. Clear evacuation procedures exist and regular fire drills are held and recorded. Health matters are managed well. First-aid

training is provided regularly. Risk assessments are in place and updated, as required. Healthy living and environmental issues are promoted well. Meals are of a good standard. Catering staff are aware of any pupils' special dietary requirements and provide suitable food upon request.

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

The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community

- 3.9 The quality of links with parents is very high and remains a very strong feature of the school since the last inspection. The parents are very satisfied with the education and support provided for their children. Their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire showed a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the school's work.
- 3.10 Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the activities of the school and in the work and progress of their children. They are invited to take part in educational visits and help with after school clubs, such as the Amesbury Art Club. They are invited to discuss their work with the pupils, so that children learn about being a fireman or a doctor. Seminars for parents are organised on many different aspects of school life. These have included the topics of revision, study skills, cyber-bullying and computer game addiction, often in response to parental interest in these matters.
- 3.11 The Friends of Amesbury (FOA) is successful in helping to support new parents and in ensuring all parents have a voice. A considerable amount of fund-raising also takes place. The FOA has two parent representatives in each year group who meet formally twice a term. The beginning of these meetings is attended by the headmaster and the head of the pre-preparatory section of the school. The school is responsive to the parental voice. As a result, many new initiatives have taken place, including the holding of induction evenings and 'What I wish I knew' meetings.
- 3.12 Parents are provided with a comprehensive amount of high quality information about the school. They receive clear and useful reports about their child's work and progress. Parents have an appropriate opportunity to discuss academic reports at the start of the next term with their child's form teacher. Newsletters and parent handbooks contain much useful information. The school website is being developed to facilitate an even greater sharing of information.
- 3.13 The school handles the concerns of parents with due care and attention. Accurate records are kept of all the formal complaints on the rare occasion that these occur, in line with the school's policy. Parents are frequently made aware of opportunities to discuss matters with members of the staff and the governing body.
- 3.14 The school promotes strong and positive links with the local and wider community through a wide range of activities. The curriculum is used extensively to generate events that add to the pupils' experience and awareness of wider community life. For example, choir tours have visited a number of European cities. Other occasions, such as the annual Founders Day dinner, allow people from the local community to come together to discuss issues of mutual interest. Community use of the grounds and buildings includes local sports teams benefiting from the cricket facilities. The school makes use of local churches for visits and to conduct carol services. Visits are undertaken to a unit for young adults with severe disabilities who have enjoyed an impromptu recital from musicians in Years 7 and 8 and mobile decorations made by other pupils. A distinctive feature of the school's substantial fund-raising for good

causes is its long-term support of charities. These include a local children's hospice and an organisation which sponsors poor children in southern India.

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

The Quality of Boarding Education

- 3.16 The school aims to broaden pupils' educational experience by enabling them to take advantage of flexible boarding arrangements. It does this successfully, in the context of boarding being an option for Year 7 and 8 pupils. Although no pupils were boarding during the week of the inspection, boys and girls reported that they thoroughly enjoyed their past boarding experience.
- 3.17 Boarding education was inspected in 2005 by the Commission for Social Care Inspection. All of the recommendations from this inspection have been met satisfactorily.
- 3.18 Relationships within boarding are very positive. Pupils who have boarded previously speak about being very happy with the provision made for them, and of having positive relationships with boarding staff. "It's great to be able to get to know your teachers better" was one comment from a Year 8 girl. A boy from the same year group stated that "it's just like having your Mum around."
- 3.19 The school offers the boarders a wide range of activities out of school time. Good resources are available. Frequent use is made of the extensive facilities offered by the art, music, and ICT rooms. When weather permits, pupils speak enthusiastically about their use of the school's beautiful grounds and of the enjoyment it brings them.
- 3.20 Accommodation consists of two small dormitories, a play room and a bathroom. The overall quality of accommodation is adequate and suitable for its purpose.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 Governance is effective in setting and securing appropriate aims and values for the school. The structure and management arrangements related to governance are well defined. The governing body meets regularly and its work is facilitated by the use of sub-committees for several aspects, for example regarding educational, building and financial matters. They bring recommendations to full governing body meetings, based on their deliberations. The governing body also receives a good amount and quality of information from the headmaster and members of the senior leadership team (SLT), which aids its decision-making positively. These arrangements support a good oversight of the school, which has been maintained well since the last inspection.
- 4.2 The governors are well aware of their responsibilities. The governing body is involved fully and appropriately in educational development, child protection matters and financial planning, in consultation with the headmaster and members of his staff team. It operates well at both a tactical and strategic level so that the school benefits from effective educational provision, and a carefully-considered investment in resources. The recent sports hall development and the increased focus on developing performing arts in the curriculum are tangible examples of this involvement.
- 4.3 The governing body has a positive relationship with the school and its staff. This has been strengthened in recent times by the more frequent formal contact between governors and members of the SLT at the termly meetings. Governors also visit the school to look around and to take part in special events. These actions and the positive relationship enable them to gain a good insight into the school's workings, sometimes from first-hand experience. The governing body is very supportive of the school. The considerable breadth of expertise and experience of governors is used to good effect. They offer advice and appropriate challenge, for example, about legal and human resources matters, as needed.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.4 The school is led and managed successfully. The overall quality of leadership and management has strengthened since the last inspection and supports the school's aims well. This is clearly shown, for example, in the success of pupils in entrance examinations, in the close attention to the pupils' care and in the general quality of what the school provides.
- 4.5 The headmaster provides outstanding leadership and management that have had a very positive effect on the school: for example, in maintaining and developing the direction of its work, its adherence to agreed aims, and as part of a continuing programme of improvement. The senior leadership team provides consistently high quality support to the headmaster and to colleagues. The effectiveness of their work has improved significantly since the last inspection. Heads of department and other post holders manage their responsibilities well. The school has correctly identified the need to develop the leadership capabilities and opportunities of these staff and, to this end, is in the process of drafting subject improvement plans that have very clear links to the school's aims. These plans will form the basis of a new whole-school development plan, to replace both the content and format of the previous plan that has expired.
- 4.6 Management at all levels is effective in drawing up and implementing appropriate procedures and policies. The headmaster has led successfully a recent analysis of the school values and

aims in wide consultation with staff, pupils, governors, parents and senior schools. The culmination of this work has been a comprehensive review and a judicious re-writing of the school's aims. These aims are the heart of the next whole-school development plan which is in the process of being written, to provide a formal plan of the school's medium-term priorities.

- 4.7 The head and SLT form a cohesive unit to carry out the effective monitoring and evaluation of aspects of the school's work, and to provide appropriate feedback to colleagues. Within their remit, subject heads of department are involved soundly in this process. The school has identified the need to develop further the monitoring and evaluation role of these post holders across the school and the contribution that they can make to the self-evaluation process. This move forward, and the information already obtained from consultation, monitoring and evaluation are enabling the school to gauge its own performance with increasing clarity.
- 4.8 Management at all levels is effective in securing, supporting, developing and motivating sufficient high quality staff. Staff feel supported by the school and their colleagues. Induction procedures are thorough. Recently appointed staff speak positively of the comprehensive and supportive induction that they have been part of, and of the positive effects on their work. Staff development and performance management are taking place soundly. Links between whole-school needs and the professional and personal development of staff are established, but are not clearly defined. This area for development is already beginning to be addressed by the school.
- 4.9 Funds are well managed to secure appropriate resources, in support of educational aims, and to meet the needs of the school's pupils. Some of the most tangible outcomes that stem from this astute management include a programme of building projects and the good level of resourcing that is available for educational equipment and books. Buildings vary in age and size and are maintained to high standards. Many areas contain quality displays of pupils' work that enhance the environment.
- 4.10 The administration of the school is efficient. The administrative and other support staff provide valuable assistance to the school's work.
- 4.11 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].

5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall Conclusions

- 5.1 The school is led and managed successfully so that it meets its aims well, particularly with regard to the pupils enjoying their time at school and leaving with high levels of confidence. The pastoral care of pupils is outstanding and aided by very high quality of links with parents. The school provides the pupils with a good all-round education and thorough preparation for their next stage of education. However, in teaching, assessment information and methods which encourage independence of learning are not used consistently well. Staff are committed to the school and its aims. Pupils and parents are very pleased with what is provided for them.
- 5.2 The school has made good improvements since the last inspection. It is evaluating its own performance with greater certainty. The school's medium-term priorities are being set out in a formal, whole-school development plan, but the plan is not yet complete. The leadership role of subject post holders has been identified correctly as an area for improvement, and actions are underway to address this matter.
- 5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

- 5.4 In order to further develop the many good features of its work, the school should take the following steps.
1. Clarify and set out its medium-term priorities by completing the writing of a formal, whole-school development plan that is shared with staff, parents and governors.
 2. Improve the leadership of subject post holders by:
 - ensuring that they complete and implement development plans for their area of responsibility;
 - providing opportunities for them to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in their area of responsibility.
 3. Make sure that standards of all teaching match the best by:
 - improving the consistency in the use of assessment information and the quality of marking, to guide pupils' future learning;
 - ensuring the consistent use of specific teaching methods, to encourage pupils to become more independent in their learning.
- 5.5 No action in respect of regulatory requirements is required.

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 1st to 4th October 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 members of the board of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding accommodation and the sick bay. 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 Graham Haynes	Reporting Inspector
Mr Andrew Day	Director of Studies of an IAPS school
Mrs Susan Hulmes	Head of Department of an IAPS school
Mr Alan Laurent	Headmaster of an IAPS school
Mrs Jan Preece	Head of the Pre-Prep of an IAPS school