



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

SOLIHULL SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Solihull School

Full Name of School	Solihull School		
DfE Number	334/6003		
Registered Charity Number	1120597		
Address	Solihull School Warwick Road Solihull West Midlands B91 3DJ		
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Email Address	lloyd@solsch.org.uk		
Head	Mr David EJJ Lloyd		
Chair of Governors	Mr Mark Hopton		
Age Range	7 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	994		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (629 boys; 365 girls)		
Numbers by Age	5-11:	170	11-18: 824
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	994	
Inspection dates	12 Jan 2011 to 13 Jan 2011		
	07 Feb 2011 to 09 Feb 2011		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in January 2005.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

*These Standards Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Solihull School is an academically selective day school for boys and girls aged 7 to 18, located in the suburbs of Solihull. Originally founded in 1560 as a Free Grammar School for boys, it moved to its current site in 1882 and became independent in 1946. Girls first joined the sixth form in 1973. The junior school is located on the same site as the senior school. The school has a religious character in accordance with tenets of the Church of England but welcomes pupils of all faiths. The board of governors are trustees of the school. The school aims to give its pupils a rich educational experience, so that school life is a time of fulfilment and happiness, and a suitable preparation for life as a responsible adult contributing to society. It aims to provide inspiring academic, intellectual and extra-curricular lives for pupils, whilst teaching them to care for others.
- 1.2 Since the last inspection, the school has become fully co-educational. There has been considerable investment in facilities, including the creation of a new sports pavilion, departmental classrooms and pupils' social areas, a new music school, a performing arts centre, a food technology suite and the refurbishment and extension of the junior school. The current head took up post in September 2010.
- 1.3 There are currently 994 pupils enrolled, of whom 365 are girls and 629 boys. Junior school pupils number 170 and sixth-form pupils 263. Standardised tests indicate that the ability profile of the pupils is above the national average. There are no pupils with statements of special educational needs (SEN). The school has identified 95 pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD); all receive extra help within the school. In the junior school, two children receive support for English as an additional language (EAL). Virtually all junior school pupils progress to the senior school. There is a sizeable intake of new pupils into the sixth form, many of them girls. Pupils come from a wide geographical area, covering Solihull, Sutton Coldfield, Edgbaston and Warwickshire. Pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds; approximately 88% are white European with the remainder reflecting the cultural composition of the area.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

Junior School

School	NC name
J1	Year 3
J2	Year 4
J3	Year 5
J4	Year 6

Senior School

School	NC name
Third Form	Year 7
Shell Form	Year 8
Fourth Form	Year 9
Lower Fifth	Year 10
Upper Fifth	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Solihull School is outstandingly successful in educating pupils in accordance with its aims. Junior school pupils make excellent progress relative to their above average ability. At GCSE and A level results are consistently above the average for maintained selective schools. Good provision is made for those with LDD. Pupils are articulate; they discuss with lively interest, argue cogently, manipulate numbers well, show a good understanding of scientific concepts, use information and communication technology (ICT) confidently and enthusiastically participate in numerous sporting activities. Pupils' creativity is strongly encouraged, resulting in art work of superb quality and exceptional standards being achieved in music and drama. Pupils throughout are engaged and curious learners and, when given the opportunity by their teachers, actively enjoy challenge. Sixth-form pupils are mature and organised, well able to take responsibility for their own learning. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy all aspects of their work and achieve very high levels of success in sporting and academic competitions.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent. The school's wide curriculum and wealth of extra-curricular opportunities result in pupils who are self confident without being arrogant and are well prepared for life as responsible adults. They are well-balanced individuals with a good sense of their own and others' worth. They show respect and sensitivity to others and take evident pleasure in others' success. Their excellent, mature behaviour helps create a highly civilised school environment. Prefects, known as 'Benchers', approach their roles seriously; they and the sixth formers understand their responsibility to act as role models for their peers. Pupils are fiercely proud of their school and highly appreciative of the numerous opportunities open to them.
- 2.3 The governance, leadership and management of the school are good with many excellent elements. Governors have a good oversight of the school and their presence in the school, more visible since the last inspection, is supporting their sound knowledge of its everyday life. Senior leadership is strong and ensures that each individual's potential is encouraged; pastoral care is excellent and regulatory failings were swiftly corrected. The newly appointed head is putting in place a restructured management team, which is intended to facilitate a more efficient oversight of all aspects of the school's life. At all levels there is an open-minded willingness to embrace change and to ensure the school's continued development. While there were some adverse comments in questionnaire responses concerning the degree of educational challenge for the most able, which inspection evidence supported, parents and pupils alike expressed very high levels of satisfaction with the school; many pupils, from juniors to sixth form, told inspectors that they, "feel privileged to be at such a fantastic school."

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school did not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it was required to:
- ensure that references are received and checked before staff take up appointment [Part 3, paragraph 7 (a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety];
 - ensure that both sick rooms contain a wash basin [Part 5, paragraph 25 (k), under Premises and Accommodation].
- 2.5 At the time of the final team visit, the school had rectified both of the above shortcomings, as noted in the text of the report.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that all pupils, including the most able, are fully extended by better provision of suitable challenge and opportunities for independent learning for all pupils.
 2. Take further steps to share the good practice in marking, use of assessment data and of ICT evident in some departments.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills

- 3.1 Standards throughout Solihull School are excellent and the school is highly successful in educating its pupils in accordance with its aims. Their overall achievements throughout the school are outstanding.
- 3.2 Pupils develop their knowledge, understanding and skills extremely well. They read aloud confidently, volunteering willingly to do so; they write fluently, use a wide vocabulary and take pride in the presentation of their work. They are articulate in discussion and explain their thinking well. When given the opportunity, they show an excellent ability to think for themselves and to make good deductions. They have well-developed numeracy skills and are confident users of ICT. Many are very creative, resulting in striking displays around the school, frequent drama productions, numerous musical groups and sporting teams.
- 3.3 High levels of extra-curricular achievements are a strong feature of the school. Pupils compete successfully in the Biology and Mathematics challenges, some going on to Olympiad standard. Successes are also gained in drama, dance and music examinations. The chapel choir, which is of exceptionally high standard, includes pupils from junior school to sixth form. Senior pupils' achievements include 'Youth Parliament' success, debating competitions for which the school is seeded top in central England, and successful involvement in the Engineering in Education scheme with Jaguar Cars. Four senior pupils currently hold Arkwright scholarships. Young Enterprise teams thrive, reaching regional rounds. Each year large numbers of pupils succeed at all levels in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (D of E). Pupils are energetic and highly successful sportsmen and women. Juniors experience considerable success in football, cross country, hockey, athletics, swimming, netball and cricket, with some pupils competing at district level. Sporting achievement in the senior school is exceptional. At the time of inspection, the U15 XV rugby team had reached the last sixteen, and the U18s the semi-finals, of a national competition. Both the 1st XI girls' and boys' hockey teams are current West Midlands and Warwickshire champions respectively. Many pupils play county level rugby, netball, hockey, cricket or athletics. Current pupils have attained representative national honours for rugby, hockey, ice hockey, fencing, tennis and skiing. In addition, the school currently has on roll a World Irish Dance Champion, European Golf Champion and National Vertical Jump Champion.
- 3.4 Attainment overall is excellent. Junior school pupils do not take national tests but, on the evidence available, their attainment is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related norms. Standardised tests indicate that junior pupils make excellent progress over time in relation to their ability, which is above average. Results in GCSE and A level between 2007 and 2009, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available, were consistently above the national average for maintained selective schools. Results in 2010 were the school's best ever. Standardised measures of progress indicate that senior school pupils make progress greater than that expected nationally of pupils of similar above average abilities. As a result, the majority of older pupils succeed in their applications to their first choice universities to pursue demanding courses with high entry requirements. There is no evidence of a difference in attainment between girls and boys, both achieving equally well.

3.5 Pupils have an exemplary approach to their studies. They are mature and conscientious learners who work happily together and co-operate willingly, thoroughly engaging themselves with all that the school has to offer. They listen carefully to their teachers and to each other, settling to work quickly. Lessons are often characterised by an involved buzz of intrigued and focused discussion. A well-developed sense of mutual respect throughout the school fosters pupils' interest, application, reasoning and understanding.

3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)

3.6 Curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent. The school is outstandingly successful in meeting its aim of educating the whole person. The range of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities contributes positively to the pupils' achievements and has a significant impact on their personal development.

3.7 The junior school curriculum more than covers all the required areas and is extended by the introduction of French at Year 3 and the French, Spanish and German language carousel in Years 5 and 6. Specialist teaching in languages, physical education (PE), music and swimming further enhances provision. The development of excellent skills in numeracy and literacy is at the core of the junior school, and a recent focus on creative writing has significantly enriched the pupils' learning in this area. Imaginative and well-planned schemes of work ensure pupils' swift progress. The senior school curriculum likewise offers a wide range of academic subjects in Years 7 to 9. This is supported by a commitment to outdoor education via the outstanding "Terriers" programme for Year 7 and by Year 8's time at the school's cottage in Snowdonia. There is a broad range of option choices for GCSE and A level. The sixth-form enrichment programme is outstanding, for example enabling pupils to gain additional qualifications, work in local primary schools and act as role models for their juniors by working with them in sports and "Terriers".

3.8 The curriculum is suited to all ages and includes high quality personal, social and health education (PSHE). This provides careers education for younger pupils which is supplemented by excellent guidance for pupils making decisions about options and university choices. The learning support department has effective systems for identifying pupils with LDD and provides them with excellent strategies to support their progress. However, while particularly able pupils are clearly identified, they are not always provided with sufficient challenge in their academic work.

3.9 The extra-curricular programme is a great strength of the school, providing pupils with an outstanding range of opportunities which they thoroughly enjoy. Cultural, intellectual, aesthetic, sporting, charitable and outdoor interests are all catered for. Drama, Combined Cadet Force (CCF) activities, D of E and sports play key parts in school life. Music pervades the school, with numerous groups and ensembles and a prestigious chapel choir which sings regularly in the school chapel as well as in nearby churches and cathedrals. The curriculum is imaginatively extended by trips, exchanges and ambitious tours, most recently to South Africa, Malaysia, India, America and Russia.

3.10 Strong links exist with the local community, including the parish church. The school's facilities are used for local orchestras and community sporting activities. Especially valuable to pupils are the art, mathematics and modern foreign languages

links with local maintained primary schools, including a school for disabled children. Sixth-form pupils benefit considerably from their active involvement with these activities.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.11 Teaching is virtually always at least good and frequently excellent. It is effective in promoting swift progress, providing pupils with the support and guidance that encourage them to fulfil their potential. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and are dedicated and caring. Good use of praise and encouragement is a common feature in lessons. The most effective lessons are characterised by detailed planning, clear learning objectives and activities which promote independent learning, challenge and thinking skills. This was seen, for example, in a history lesson where students worked collaboratively to develop a map of 19th century Europe, accurately predicting Prussian strategy. The small minority of less effective lessons are those which are too teacher-dominated and which do not let pupils think for themselves or take charge of their learning. Teachers know their pupils well and the atmosphere in classrooms is friendly and purposeful. Pupils respect and trust their teachers, with whom they have an excellent relationship.
- 3.12 When opportunities are provided for independent learning pupils respond enthusiastically. For example, in one lesson pupils were set to classify social, economic and physical features from the Indian sub-continent using a range of different strategies. As a result, pupils were fully absorbed in thinking independently and progress was rapid. While teachers are usually conscious of which pupils have LDD or of those identified as highly able, planning of class work does not always sufficiently take into account individual pupils' differing needs and abilities. The school is rich in prior attainment information and standardised data is widely available to aid the monitoring and tracking of pupil progress. Effective use of this information in the planning of teaching and learning, however, is not yet fully developed. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and excellent opportunities are provided for them to enhance their learning beyond the classroom.
- 3.13 Much of the marking of pupils' work is very good, giving clear, detailed and specific guidance for improvement. Such practice is common in the sixth form and the junior school; however it is not uniform throughout the school and teachers' comments vary in quality. On occasion, work is conscientiously corrected but does not provide adequate guidance for improvement and so is of limited value to the pupils.
- 3.14 Classrooms are well resourced with plentiful access to data projectors and the internet. In some instances teachers use ICT effectively to support learning; for example, one lesson used a video clip of a capsized sailor and slides of salt pans as inspirational stimulus material and another used illustrations from a medieval psalter. However, the interactive capabilities of technology are not yet being fully exploited by teachers, especially when working with senior school pupils. Teachers mount colourful and stimulating classroom displays, often highlighting pupils' work and achievement and powerfully reinforcing behavioural and subject expectations.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

- 4.1 The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils have a very well-developed sense of the spiritual, fostered by assemblies and regular services in the chapel. Members of the chapel choir learn the pattern of the liturgical year and at the time of inspection were preparing to sing Evensong in Worcester Cathedral. A recent talk by one of the rescued Chilean miners inspired the whole school by his account of his ordeal and his assertion that God had been the 34th miner. Younger children have developed clear concepts of God; a Year 3 pupil wrote that, "God is like a bright flaming candle that never goes out." Pupils' understanding of and respect for other faiths is very evident. Their sense of the beauty of the non-material is demonstrated in their sensitive creative work and response to the environment. Pupils grow in self-confidence and self-respect, developing a strong set of values from an early age to become mature individuals at ease with themselves and with adults.
- 4.2 Pupils' demeanour is characterised by mutual respect and tolerance, which they identify as core moral values of the school. One Year 7 pupil defined intelligence as "being aware of other people's needs," and juniors cite helping others and "being nice to people" as vital. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong, owning up to mistakes. Older pupils have a very good awareness of ethical issues and discuss these keenly in lessons and in the debating society, where a recent motion was a consideration of whether religion is a force for good. Behaviour is excellent and pupils are invariably helpful, respectful and sensitive to each other.
- 4.3 Pupils have a highly developed sense of social responsibility. They take pride in keeping their excellent school environment tidy and free from litter. They take full advantage of the ample opportunities to assume responsibilities within the school and Benchers are well respected, younger pupils aspiring to these posts. Since the last inspection, more roles of responsibility have been created for juniors and a junior school council is now well established. Pupil heads of this council meet with their senior equivalents and their joint views are carefully considered by the school. Benchers and sixth-formers value and enjoy their work with their juniors in sports, in "Terriers" and on the Snowdonia trips as well as with local primary schools. Pupils are proud of their commitment to charity work, much of which they initiate themselves. Each year considerable amounts of money are raised by pupils for a wide range of local and international good causes.
- 4.4 Pupils from all social and cultural backgrounds live and work together harmoniously. Displays throughout the school reflect a variety of cultures and pupils enjoy activities such as the celebration of the Chinese New Year. Pupils' understanding is further enhanced by cross-curricular activities; for example, a Year 11 French class has been introduced to West African culture. Pupils enjoy the opportunities created by the school's links with schools in Chile and Sri Lanka as well as exchanges to Europe. They responded with compassion to a talk by the sponsor of a Latin American charity. Pupils have a well-founded appreciation of Western and other cultural traditions in music, art and literature. They leave Solihull School well prepared for life as exceptionally well-informed young adults.

4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety

- 4.5 The school's arrangements for promoting the welfare, health and safety of pupils are excellent. They strongly underpin the school's aim of promoting the pupils' fulfilment and happiness in a rich educational experience.
- 4.6 The procedures to promote pupil welfare are excellent, as is the keeping of welfare records. The school rapidly rectified the minor regulatory failings identified during the initial visit and its current systems for safe recruitment are robust. Staff safeguarding training is excellent, supported by the deputy head's strong links with the local safeguarding board. The school's health and safety procedures and policies are excellent. All necessary measures to reduce risk from fire are in place. Risk assessments for activities within the school and for trips are exemplary. Teachers, especially in PE, games and science, are thoroughly conscious of safety requirements. Good provision is made for pupils who are sick or injured, and both sick rooms now contain wash basins. The good accessibility plan demonstrates how the school provides access and education for pupils with disabilities. Admissions and attendance registers are properly maintained and stored. The refectory provides a wide range of appetizing food, including fruit and salads, although individual pupils' choices are not always monitored to encourage healthy eating. An outstanding programme of sport and outdoor activities strongly promotes health and fitness.
- 4.7 The school is wholeheartedly committed to its pupils' welfare. The school council provides an effective channel of communication about pupils' concerns and the staff pastoral committee provides excellent oversight of pupils' welfare. The well-developed form system is the backbone of pastoral care. The close relationships that develop over time as tutors move up the school with their form mean that each pupil is well understood and offered first class individual care and guidance. Tutors and heads of year also maintain good links with parents. The school has highly effective procedures for promoting good behaviour, countering bullying and promoting cyber-safety. A clearly understood and well-organised pastoral hierarchy monitors the pupils closely and excellent communication ensures that any problems are dealt with rapidly and sensitively. Pastoral staff provide excellent additional support. The pupils say that staff are approachable and accessible. They trust their teachers and feel confident to turn to them for academic and personal support. There are warm, happy and trusting relationships between pupils. An ethos of teamwork, given excellent acknowledgement by the award in assembly of the 'Team of the Week' certificates, promotes strong mutual support.
- 4.8 This atmosphere of mutual respect, trust and friendship characterises the school community. Openness is fostered and pupils encouraged to raise queries, which receive effective responses. The 'Samaritan box' allows junior school pupils to raise concerns quickly and discreetly. In the senior school, the very effective deployment of Benchers inculcates a feeling of responsibility for younger pupils and serves very effectively to integrate age groups. The highly successful development of co-education has further deepened the sensitivity and openness of the school's atmosphere and procedures.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The governance of the school is good overall and in many respects excellent. A wide range of expertise and experience is represented on the board. The induction of new governors is good, ensuring that all are aware of their responsibilities, and all governors have attended appropriate training sessions. The governors' vigorous, committed approach has strongly supported the school's educational direction and the highly successful introduction of full co-education. Astute financial management has enabled considerable investment in excellent facilities including imaginatively designed buildings. Strategic planning for further improvements is thorough. Weekly informal meetings between the head and chairman of governors, in addition to regular formal governors' meetings, ensure good support and advice for the head. Robust measures are in place to ensure that governors now discharge their legal responsibilities for child protection, welfare, health and safety assiduously.
- 5.2 Relationships between the staff and governors are good and heads of department are regularly invited to make presentations to the board. The introduction of an education committee, planned but not yet convened, is intended to enhance governors' growing understanding of the school's daily workings. Since the last inspection governors have taken active and successful steps to become more familiar figures to the staff and parents. They spend time in school during the day as well as attending functions regularly, thus visibly demonstrating their considerable loyalty to the school.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.3 Leadership and management are good overall and excellent at the highest levels. Strong leadership from an exceptionally committed senior team is ensuring that the school fully meets its aims of providing pupils with a happy, fulfilling school life in the course of which they can develop their own talents and abilities. Accommodation throughout is of a very high quality.
- 5.4 The junior and senior leadership teams are working hard and effectively to ensure that school policies are always fully implemented. Systems for monitoring the work of departments are now in place, with annual meetings between senior leaders and heads of department to discuss successes and aspirations for improvement. The school has good plans to ensure further support for departments in meeting their targets and in using the considerable amount of standardised assessment data available to support pupils' progress. At present teaching in the senior school makes limited use of this.
- 5.5 The school is in a transitional period with the current head in post for less than two terms. Senior leadership has wisely used this time to embark on a rigorous analysis of current procedures and the school's performance in all areas of its life. As a result a new senior leadership structure has been formulated for implementation in the near future; this is intended to ensure more effective routine monitoring. A far-reaching, thoughtful development plan has been created which prioritises raising the already good standard of teaching and learning in the school. Many but not all departmental development plans reflect whole school priorities; a few have a rather narrow inward focus. The leadership teams are committed to creating a sense of one school, uniting the junior and senior sections more fully, and good measures

have been established to give greater cohesion and ensure smooth progression of pupils from juniors into seniors.

- 5.6 The school is successful in recruiting well-qualified teachers and has a good combination of long-serving and new staff, providing an excellent balance of experience and new ideas. Procedures for checking the suitability of staff and governors and for ensuring the safeguarding of pupils are now excellent and rigorously applied. Staff are well trained and their further professional development is strongly encouraged. An opportunity has been created for middle managers to join the senior team for a period, providing them with valuable experience and demonstrating the school's commitment to developing the abilities and talents of all members of its community.
- 5.7 Staff at all levels welcome the changes being introduced and are keen to support the future development of the school. Strong leadership and the articulation of a clear vision for the future is combined with respect and affection for the school's traditions. Senior managers lead by example in their outstanding care for their pupils and their high expectations of them. As a result, the school is described by pupils as, "a lovely place to be, to learn and to play."

5.(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians

- 5.8 Links between the school and parents are excellent. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire show that parents are overwhelmingly appreciative of the education, opportunities and pastoral care provided by the school. Some parents and pupils felt that the most able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in their academic work; inspection findings support this view.
- 5.9 Parents expressed great satisfaction with the quality of communication with the school. An informative website provides access to all legally required policies and more. The parental handbooks, also on the website, give detailed information about school life and procedures. Great advances have been made in creating electronic means of communication with parents. The school ensures that hard copies of correspondence are sent by post to those parents who request this. An annual magazine provides a review of the school's vast array of activities and trips.
- 5.10 Some parents commented that they do not have opportunities to be involved in their child's school life; inspection evidence does not support these comments. The school offers numerous opportunities for parents to attend events; drama productions, sports fixtures, concerts and Sunday chapel services are frequent and well attended by parents. Parents give talks on their professional lives, accompany trips and hear junior school children read. An annual open afternoon enables parents of junior children to see them at work during a normal school day. An active Parents' Association organises a range of social and fund raising events. These generate a strong sense of community and enable the association to make generous contributions to the school.
- 5.11 Parents receive detailed and helpful reports about their children's work, progress and involvement in extra-curricular activities. At least one report each year contains a full set of subject comments. Parents are also regularly sent grade sheets which indicate attitudes to work, listening skills, completion of homework and current attainment levels. These supplement parents' evenings, held at least annually for each senior year and twice-yearly for juniors, which give a good opportunity for parents to discuss their child's work, progress and development directly with staff.

Helpful meetings for new parents take place at the start of each academic year. The school has a compliant and thorough complaints policy. Form tutors and heads of year are encouraged to keep in contact with parents and they respond readily to concerns so as to resolve problems at an early stage. There have been no formal complaints in the current academic year.

What the school should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Colette Culligan	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Mary Bradfield	Head, ISA school
Mr Andrew Chicken	Head, HMC school
Mr Raymond Crayton	Director of Studies, IAPS school
Mrs Alison Hewitt	Head, GSA school
Mr Roderick MacKinnon	Head, HMC school
Mr Jonathan Reddin	Deputy Head, HMC school
Dr Charles Runacres	Academic & Pastoral Head, SHMIS school