



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**SUSSEX HOUSE SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Sussex House School

Full Name of School	<b>Sussex House School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>207/6096</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>1035806</b>		
Address	<b>Sussex House School 68 Cadogan Square London SW1X 0EA</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>020 75841741</b>		
Fax Number	<b>020 75892300</b>		
Email Address	<b>registrar@sussexhouseschool.co.uk</b>		
Headmaster	<b>Mr Nicholas Kaye</b>		
Chairman of Governors	<b>Mr John Crewe</b>		
Age Range	<b>8 to 13</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>187</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Boys</b>		
Numbers by Age	<b>8-11:</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>11-13: 73</b>
Number of Day Pupils	<b>Total:</b>	<b>187</b>	
Inspection dates	<b>12 Oct 2010 to 13 Oct 2010</b> <b>08 Nov 2010 to 10 Nov 2010</b>		

## 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 November 2004.

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.

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(a) Main findings</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(b) Action points</b>	<b>3</b>
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	3
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>4</b>
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills	4
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c) The contribution of teaching	6
<b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>7</b>
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	7
(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	8
<b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>9</b>
(a) The quality of governance	9
(b) The quality of leadership and management	9
(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians	10
<b>INSPECTION EVIDENCE</b>	<b>12</b>

## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Sussex House is a selective preparatory day school for boys from the ages of eight to thirteen. The school was founded in 1952 and since 1994, when the current headmaster was appointed, has been an independent charity, administered by trustees supported by a board of governors. The main school is situated in the heart of Chelsea in a restored five-storey town house overlooking a garden square. The music school and gymnasium are housed close by in the Nicholls Hall, a converted mission hall in Cadogan Street. The school has no outdoor space available on site, but makes almost daily use of various other sporting facilities in the area and occasional use of the square's gardens for lessons such as art.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection, there were 187 boys on the roll, 114 boys in Years 4 to 6 and 73 in Years 7 and 8. Approximately one out of every eight boys comes from a family of an ethnic minority background, but no boy currently needs support with learning English as an additional language. Thirteen boys have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), and none has a statement of special educational needs. Generally boys come from professional families. The ability profile of the school is above the national average, with most boys being of either above or far above average ability. Boys continue their senior school education in a wide range of day and boarding schools, most of which have high academic standards of entry.
- 1.3 The school aims to create an inspirational environment in which there is a sense of striving for learning, creativity and sporting achievement and in which boys can feel a strong sense of belonging and personal involvement. It seeks to provide a traditional yet highly imaginative family atmosphere, endeavours to discern ability and talent and meet the needs of the boys, whatever those needs may be. The school aims to achieve outstanding levels of entry to the country's most demanding senior schools whilst never letting the striving for success lead to over-intensity or a set of values only based on a boy's academic profile. The school has a Church of England affiliation and a Christian ethos, and its motto is, *'Lead me to the rock that is Higher than I'*. (Psalm 61).
- 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 table.

School	NC name
Form 2	Year 4
Form 3	Year 5
Form 4	Year 6
Form 5	Year 7
Form 6	Year 8

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 Sussex House School successfully fulfils its aims. Pupils' achievements are excellent and they make very good progress across academic and extra-curricular activities, with an extremely wide range of pursuits available through clubs, visits and residential trips. These achievements are supported by the high standard of boys' behaviour, their outstanding attitudes to learning and their own commitment to developing their knowledge, understanding and skills across all subjects. Of particular note are the extremely high standards attained in music concerts and art. Although a good curriculum is provided, planning is of varying quality, and timetabling issues affect the volume of work covered in some subjects. Effective teaching overall enables boys to satisfy their high levels of curiosity and particularly develop their strong literacy, numeracy and creative skills. In a few lessons, the style of teaching reduces the opportunity for boys to interact with their peers and share ideas. The recommendations from the previous inspection, to ensure that all staff know, understand and use the characteristics of good teaching and marking within the school, have not yet been fully achieved.
- 2.2 The personal development of boys is excellent and is supported by exceptional levels of pastoral care and effective attention to their welfare, health and safety. This represents a significant step forward since the previous inspection. Boys are confident, very articulate and mature. Their spiritual, moral and social development is high and their relationships with each other and with staff are outstanding. They have a strong awareness of their responsibilities to others less fortunate and they fully appreciate their own cultural heritage. Whilst few boys responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, those who did were very positive about their school experiences, and these views were confirmed in formal and informal discussions during the inspection.
- 2.3 Governance, leadership and management are good, ensuring that the school's aims are fulfilled. Governors and trustees are well informed about the challenges and successes of school life and are appropriately involved in the strategic development plan for the future. Whilst all recent staff have been correctly recruited, in the past the school has been less rigorous in carefully following its recruitment processes. Senior leadership is strongly committed to the pupils' excellent achievement and personal development, and this vision is expressed in a clear academic development plan, as was recommended at the previous inspection. Some management processes, at middle management level, are inconsistently carried out, particularly systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Links with parents are excellent. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that parents are overwhelmingly supportive of all aspects of school life, particularly the running of the school, the curriculum and extra-curricular activities, the progress their children make and the help given to those boys with LDD. Inspectors agree with these positive views. No significant issues were raised.

## **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 written references are carried out on all staff before appointment, and that checks with the Criminal Records Bureau are undertaken on trustees before, or as soon as practicable after, appointment [Part 4, paragraph 21(6)(a) and (b)(i), under Suitability of staff and proprietors; and, for the same reason, Part 3, paragraph 7(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety].
- 2.5 All correct procedures are now being followed and the register is in order as far as possible.

### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action point, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Bring all teaching and marking up to the highest standards by sharing current best practice.
  2. Formally monitor the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that all middle managers regularly scrutinise pupils' books and observe lessons.
  3. Review the timetable and the length of lessons in order to improve the allocation of time to some subjects, particularly music and physical education.
  4. Ensure that all subjects use a common format for medium-term planning.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills are excellent. They are well educated in accordance with the school's aim to provide an environment in which there is a striving for learning, creativity and sporting achievement and which meets the needs of the boys, whatever those needs may be. In all subject areas and in the many extra-curricular activities, boys develop their understanding, knowledge and skills extremely well.
- 3.2 Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are outstanding and these skills are applied in many areas of academic life. They are highly articulate and can converse most eloquently on many topics. They listen exceedingly well to each other with great respect, and their reading and writing skills are outstanding. Opportunities abound for them to express their creativity in the very high quality of work seen in several departments, but particularly in art. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills are strong and boys' reasoning skills are extremely well developed, as was demonstrated in a lesson discussing the definition of science. Opportunities to fully develop their independent learning skills are restricted in some lessons due to the style of teaching, but boys demonstrate high levels of curiosity, debating skills and general knowledge. Their physical skills are also well developed.
- 3.3 As they leave the school, the pupils' high level of achievement enables them to gain entry to some of the schools with the most demanding entry requirements, with an average of four pupils a year over the last three years achieving scholarships in music and one per year gaining an academic scholarship. Considerable success is experienced across a broad range of activities. A general knowledge team came fourth in a national preparatory schools' competition and boys have been national fencing champions for the last 25 years at under-12 and under-14 levels. They achieve extremely well in music, with nearly all boys who enter for examinations gaining merits or distinctions over the last three years, including four at grade 8, and some perform at a very high level individually or as a choir with professional musicians. On the sports field, they win a very high percentage of their matches with other schools.
- 3.4 The school has not entered pupils for national tests in mathematics and science at the age of eleven since 2009. The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2007 to 2009. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national tests at the age of eleven have been excellent in relation to the national average for maintained primary schools. The level of attainment, and as judged in lessons, boys' written work and curriculum interviews with them, indicates that boys make exceptional progress in relation to pupils of similar ability.
- 3.5 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent and support their achievements very strongly. The behaviour of the pupils is exemplary, especially in light of the lack of outdoor space, and they clearly enjoy their learning. The high-quality relationships that the pupils share with each other and with their teachers have a very positive impact on their achievement. They concentrate very well and show great application and perseverance in lessons when the tasks set require this. The presentation of their work is consistently neat.

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

- 3.6 The school offers a broad curriculum which supports the school's aims and has a positive impact on achievement and boys' personal development. It enables boys to extend their learning across a wide range of subjects which cover all the required areas of educational experience. In particular, boys have the opportunity to study Latin and some also learn Greek. The curriculum is strongly focused on the Common Entrance syllabi, but there are many additional opportunities for the boys to develop their creativity. The short length of the lessons within the timetable raises some difficulties for subjects which have a practical element, particularly physical education (PE) and music, and, in these lessons, the amount of work covered is substantially reduced. A comprehensive programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) reflects the school's aims and ethos, and is generally provided through an assembly time which is followed by class discussions that consolidate the issues raised.
- 3.7 Although the school intends the curriculum to be planned to ensure continuity of education and progress across the years, planning is inconsistent. It is expressed in variable formats, ranging from basic details to comprehensive statements of learning objectives, which are well matched to boys' abilities. The best indicates how the needs of boys will be met and which assessments will be undertaken. Those pupils with LDD receive the strong support they need to enable them to benefit from the curriculum and they make excellent progress according to their ability, in line with their peers. They all receive help from teachers within the classroom, and some benefit from extremely good tuition from specialists in withdrawal lessons. Their education plans are well-known to staff and contain targets relevant to the needs of individual boys. These are reviewed on a regular basis. Provision for gifted and talented boys is catered for in a scholarship group in Year 8, an extension group in Year 7 and mathematics clubs for younger boys, all of which seek to encourage greater challenge for these pupils.
- 3.8 Boys participate in an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities, many of which are organised during the lunchtime period each day, when approximately half the school are unable to enjoy outdoor space because of the school's location. The provision of extra-curricular activities is excellent and nearly all staff contribute to these with enthusiasm. Boys may join a variety of clubs ranging from architecture to tapestry, film club to logic. The extension of the curriculum through trips and visits is also outstanding, with trips organised abroad to go skiing, to enjoy French culture in Brittany and to study architecture in Venice. Closer to home, trips have been made to Battle Abbey and Hampton Court and boys participate in an annual geography field trip to Juniper Hall. Valuable links with the community include the weekly use of the local church and boys' presentation of instrumental and choral concerts in and around this area of London. The boys enjoy the many matches which are organised against other schools. Through the headmaster, the school has a global link that supports a primary school in Ethiopia and encourages the boys to think far beyond themselves and develop a greater understanding of their responsibilities for others.

### **3.(c) The contribution of teaching**

- 3.9 Teaching is of a good quality overall. Some is excellent and contributes to the fact that boys generally make extremely good progress and give of their best. The school is working towards its aim of encouraging high academic achievement. The recommendations of the previous inspection concerning strategies for improving the quality of teaching and learning have not yet had a sufficient impact on raising all teaching to a high standard.
- 3.10 Teachers have strong subject knowledge and know the boys very well. Throughout their time in the school, teaching offers the individual support boys need, within classes and in specialist lessons, to enable them to make continuous progress. Teaching encourages them to apply themselves to all tasks with concentration and perseverance, and this is supported by very high standards of behaviour. In the best lessons, a variety of stimulating teaching methods keeps the boys interested and they include a high level of questioning, giving rise to effective opportunities for assessment of the boys' progress. These lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, with activities which have been well planned and which contain opportunities for boys to interact extremely well with each other and with the teacher. For example, in an English lesson, boys displayed an excellent understanding of writing techniques and styles through being given the opportunity to put forward their own ideas of strong headlines concerning crime at night in Victorian times. In the less successful lessons, time is not managed well because over-long teacher exposition limits the opportunities for the boys to interact and discuss their own ideas and opinions. This sometimes means that the more able boys are not sufficiently challenged. Resources are used well and, whilst the interactive whiteboards are relatively new, some staff use them effectively to cater for different learning styles.
- 3.11 Marking is inconsistent. Some marking is cursory and some contains words of encouragement; the best gives helpful comments on how to improve, which boys like and find helpful. Some teachers also give verbal feedback designed to encourage and inform the boys for future tasks. New assessment procedures have been designed recently which are effective in helping to identify at an early stage any boy who may be under-achieving. Nationally standardised tests along with examination results are used to monitor pupils' individual progress over their time in the school, enabling staff to ensure that boys are well prepared for the entrance examinations to their senior schools.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the boys is excellent and has a strong impact on their achievement. Pupils' personal qualities are developed extremely well and in accordance with the aims of the school, supported by a high level of pastoral care from all staff. Boys are thoughtful and sensitive and have a positive understanding about right and wrong.
- 4.2 Pupils' spiritual development is outstanding. They have high levels of self-esteem, yet they are also considerate and respectful towards each other. They value each other's views and are sensitive towards the feelings of other people. For example, the boys were visibly moved by a video shown in assembly, highlighting a UK charity which removes the facial disfigurement of children in under-developed countries. Within a strongly creative community, they appreciate each other's skills and abilities and this was experienced in an excellent concert performed during the inspection. A strong awareness of what is beautiful and boys' well-developed spiritual ethos is fostered by the fine building in which they work and the many inspirational paintings on the walls. Boys reflect very well on issues raised in assemblies and church services, held at the local church which is an uplifting environment for worship. Senior boys participate in these services with enjoyment.
- 4.3 Pupils' moral development is extremely strong. They know and understand the school rules and believe them to be fair. Boys are confident and outgoing and the behaviour throughout the school is exemplary. Boys and staff share positive relationships in a somewhat confined indoor environment. Good manners and courtesy are noticeable and boys show an excellent respect for their working environment. They embrace the reward system and accept the sanctions used, although these are rare. They are involved in charity work, particularly for the link school in Ethiopia and they understand the difference that that support makes to the lives of those less fortunate than themselves. They have strong but well-balanced and mature opinions on fairness and injustice.
- 4.4 Pupils' social awareness is excellent. They are given responsibilities which are taken seriously but are confined to Year 8, from which a head and vice-head of the school, prefects and heads of houses are chosen. During break times, senior boys assist by looking after the younger ones in their classrooms. Most boys believe that their views are listened to and they feel valued within the school. They work together extremely well in lessons and activities. Boys' knowledge of services and institutions in England is very strong. The programme for PSHE makes use of a wide range of speakers, from members of the House of Lords to Chelsea Pensioners, lawyers and police. Even the youngest boys have a notable working knowledge of government and current affairs.
- 4.5 Pupils' cultural development is good. Their knowledge of their own culture is excellent, fostered by the cultural heritage of the school which is very rich. Music, art and drama are particularly strong features of school life and play an important part in the overall development of the boys. Their general knowledge is outstanding and this is developed well by trips to art galleries, museums and the theatre. However, whilst boys from different backgrounds work and play extremely well together, their multi-cultural knowledge is less strong. Visits to Europe make an effective contribution, but their awareness of other faiths and places of worship is not extensive. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, the few boys who responded were

very positive about their overall school experiences and these views were confirmed in formal and informal discussions during the inspection.

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

- 4.6 The quality of the provision for welfare, health and safety of the boys is good overall. The level of pastoral care shown to them is excellent, with the staff providing very effective support and guidance for the boys in accordance with the school's aim that the boys should feel a strong sense of belonging and personal involvement. The high quality of care supports the outstanding personal development of the boys. Strong systems of communication between staff and the boys ensure that extra help and support are given to those boys that need it. In particular, much support is given to parents and boys when they are choosing their senior schools. A great deal of informal discussion between the staff ensures that all are aware of any personal or academic difficulties a boy may be facing. The boys enjoy very positive relationships with, and are supportive of, each other and well established systems are used when relationships falter. Staff know the boys very well and are widely liked and respected. The boys also have strong relationships with staff. They are extremely well cared for and feel safe. When they arrive at school in the morning they are welcomed at the door by a smiling and cheerful face, and within school were seen to be dealt with very compassionately.
- 4.7 The school has effective procedures for promoting excellent behaviour, guarding against bullying and dealing with any unacceptable behaviour. A thorough and effective anti-bullying policy is implemented and the boys themselves state that bullying is extremely rare due to the small and tight community. However, they say that if they do have a problem they are sure that the staff will deal with it constructively. The safeguarding policy is appropriate, but its implementation as far as recruitment checks are concerned has not been robust enough in the past. Training in all aspects of safeguarding is effectively undertaken by the staff according to their various levels of responsibility.
- 4.8 Health and safety policies and procedures are suitable and their implementation has improved since the previous inspection. All necessary measures have been taken to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. Fire practices are held regularly and a fire risk assessment has been carried out. Further risk assessments have been undertaken in all areas of school life, including visits. The provision for those boys who are ill or injured is suitable. An accessibility plan has been written to improve educational access for boys with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The boys bring their own packed lunches and the school encourages healthy food such as fruit and vegetables, discouraging such things as fizzy drinks and crisps. The boys are aware of the importance of physical activity and there are many opportunities for them to be involved in several different individual and team sports. The attendance and admission registers are properly maintained and stored.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) The quality of governance**

- 5.1 The trustees and the governing body oversee the work of the school well, enabling the school's aims to be fulfilled in terms of pupils' academic achievements and personal development. They bring to their roles a range of expertise from different walks of life, although currently there is no-one from an educational leadership background. Through the two separate bodies, who work together but have distinct remits, governors and trustees ensure that high educational standards are maintained. The trustees are responsible for strategic and financial decisions, but in coming to those decisions they seek advice from the governors. The trustees have responded to the previous inspection by creating a strategic development plan which is forward-looking in consideration of accommodation and financial planning, ensuring that material and human resources are used to best advantage to meet the needs of the boys.
- 5.2 Regular reports provided by the headmaster and the bursar inform the governors and trustees of the work of the school and give them a good insight into the school's successes and challenges. They frequently attend school events such as concerts, open days and fund-raising activities. In addition, the governors and trustees have each recently taken on responsibility for particular aspects or subjects of the school and are thus developing closer links with the school community and giving greater support. One governor takes a major role in overseeing health and safety and child protection, and the governors and trustees have reviewed the safeguarding policy and the discharge of the related duties. They endeavour to keep abreast of their legal responsibilities; however, their oversight and monitoring of the undertaking of recruitment checks has not been sufficiently rigorous in the past.

### **5.(b) The quality of leadership and management**

- 5.3 Overall the leadership and management of the school are effective, in accordance with the aims of the school in ensuring that there is an atmosphere that develops a strong sense of striving for learning amongst the boys. The school is also successful in its aim to encourage the boys to achieve places at senior schools which have demanding entry requirements.
- 5.4 The headmaster and his senior team have a clear vision in terms of educational aspirations, and this is reflected in the strong quality of education provided and the excellent personal development of the boys. They are particularly mindful of their responsibilities in terms of day-to-day safeguarding and health and safety provision. The senior leadership has undertaken an evaluation of its current position and, in response to the previous inspection, has expressed its vision within a good academic development plan, although the timescale is relatively short-term and the plan lacks costings.
- 5.5 The roles and responsibilities of middle managers have recently been more clearly defined, but their application by the staff concerned is inconsistent. Heads of department are beginning to undertake some monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning through examining the boys' books, and a few carry out lesson observations of colleagues, in response to the previous inspection. However, these are fairly new processes and have not been carried out formally by all middle managers with sufficient rigour or regularly enough to have a positive impact on

achievement. The library and ICT facilities were areas for improvement at the time of the previous inspection. Whilst progress has been made, particularly in improving the hardware in the ICT room, the provision of interactive whiteboards and a greater stock of books in classrooms, the school is aware that these issues are still not fully resolved.

- 5.6 All staff implement appropriately the policies and procedures which cover most aspects of school life, and all have been suitably trained for their responsibilities in safeguarding and welfare, health and safety. Staff are well qualified and deployed effectively, making a significant contribution to the pupils' learning and welfare, including those boys with LDD. A sound appraisal system is carried out on all staff on a two-yearly basis, and satisfactory opportunities are given for staff to participate in in-service training.
- 5.7 Non-teaching staff make an important and strong contribution to boys' academic and personal development through their support roles within the school community. Whilst the recruitment checks on all staff, trustees and governors have now been satisfactorily completed as far as possible and those on the staff appointed this term have been carried out rigorously, checks on references for sports staff were not always done before appointment in the past and some trustees' checks with the Criminal Records Bureau have been undertaken considerably late. Best use is made of all available accommodation. The 'extended family' ethos of the school is enhanced by the striking architectural features of the building, the beautiful art and the displays of the boys' own work and achievements, contributing to the inspirational environment, an aim of the school, in which the boys are proud to be educated.

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

- 5.8 Links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent. The school promotes a constructive relationship with parents in accordance with its aims, by developing a family atmosphere in which parents play an important part. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. All who replied agreed that they are pleased with the progress their child is making, the curriculum, the help given to those boys with LDD, the range of extra-curricular activities and the management and running of the school. They were also pleased with the quality of the communication they have with the school. Inspectors agree with these positive views. No significant issues were raised.
- 5.9 The school strongly encourages parents to be involved in the work and progress of their children. One formal and two informal evenings a year are organised for parents to discuss their children's progress with staff. Homework diaries are used effectively as a message book between home and school. Parents are welcome at all matches, at major church services and at concerts and drama productions. Form parties are held so that staff, parents and boys can get to know each other better. The activities' committee organises a number of fund-raising events, including the summer auction and the Christmas fair. Money raised from these events supports the arts and sports fund which helps finance a wide range of extra-curricular activities and special projects.
- 5.10 Parents of current pupils and of prospective pupils are provided with relevant school information, much of it on the school website and in the prospectus. The school's successes and activities during the course of a year are recorded in an excellent

school magazine. In addition, *The Young Cadogan* is a record of creative writing from the younger boys. Weekly newsletters are produced, keeping the parents informed of the boys' successes and of future events. Parents receive detailed termly reports on their children's progress which they are asked to sign and return at the beginning of the following term. The reports also include targets for future improvement in some subject areas. In addition, helpful assessment cards detailing each boy's progress are sent out twice a term.

- 5.11 The school operates an open door policy. The headmaster and staff are available to speak to parents whenever it is convenient and parents appreciate their accessibility. The school handles the concerns of parents with care and follows its published procedures.

**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 chair of governors, the trustees and other 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 Elizabeth Coley

Mr Graham Malcolm

Mr Henry Riches

Reporting Inspector

Headmaster, IAPS school

Director of Studies, IAPS school