

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS COUNCIL
(ISC)**

INSPECTION OF

PRIORY SCHOOL

By the

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE
(ISI)**

On

27th - 30th November, 2006

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Priory School

Full Name of the School	Priory School
DfES Number	936/6002
Registered Charity Number	312035
Address	Bolters Lane, Banstead, Surrey SM7 2AJ.
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Headmaster	Graham Malcolm
Chairman of Governors	John Spalton
Age Range	2 - 13 years
Gender	Male
Inspection Dates	27th – 30th November, 2006

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

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

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1. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 Priory School is a day school for boys aged 2 to 13 years situated in an attractive residential district of Banstead in Surrey. Most pupils stay until 13+ before transferring to independent selective day schools. A few leave at 11+ after winning places at selective independent day schools or maintained grammar schools.
- 1.2 Founded in 1921, Priory School is now a charitable trust administered by a governing body. The education is founded on Christian principles and practice. Children of other faiths and of no faith are welcomed, though they and their parents are asked to support the school's ethos.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection in 2000, a new deputy head was appointed in 2006, the management structure has been modified, the leadership of mathematics, art and information and communication technology (ICT) has passed to newly appointed teachers, the library and the computer facilities have been upgraded, and much of the school has been refurbished.
- 1.4 There were 140 pupils in the school at the time of the inspection: 58 in the Pre-prep (Nursery to Year 2) and 82 in the Main School (Years 3 to 8). Pupils come from the surrounding area and most are from families in which one or both parents are engaged in professional or business occupations. The parents of 35 pupils have ethnic minority backgrounds.
- 1.5 Admission to the school is non-selective. The results of standardised tests show that pupils' average ability is above the national average and, if they are performing in line with their abilities, pupils' national test results at ages 7 and 11 would be above the average for all maintained primary schools.
- 1.6 Special needs teachers work with 16 pupils; there are no statemented pupils. One pupil with English as the second language receives appropriate support.
- 1.7 The school aims to combine the best of traditional and contemporary teaching methods in order to nurture the full potential of each child, to produce well-rounded and enthusiastic pupils, to provide a secure and caring community, and to prepare pupils for the next stage of their education. The school is proud of its academic record, the breadth of provision, and its reputation for art, drama, music and sport.
- 1.8 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 educational provision is good and the school successfully realises its aims to offer a wide range of academic, sporting, creative and cultural activities, to cater for the needs of all pupils, to foster excellence, and to provide a secure and happy environment. Substantial progress has been made since the last inspection.
- 2.2 The balanced curriculum contributes well to pupils' literacy and numeracy, and to investigative, physical and creative skills. Building on a strong start at the Foundation Stage, pupils are confident speakers, attentive listeners and expressive readers. Provision is equally strong in all subjects. Assemblies provide good opportunities for speaking, reading and performing music. Physical development is supported through well-structured physical education (PE) lessons. Science lessons have a high investigative and practical content. Art and music make strong expressive and creative contributions to the curriculum. Effective personal, social and health education (PSHE) and good pastoral care enable pupils to feel valued and confident in secure surroundings.
- 2.3 A wide range of enrichment activities is offered at lunchtimes and after lessons. The school successfully encourages all pupils to be much involved and clubs are well attended; it is a busy and purposeful place. Nearly half the pupils have instrumental lessons and they enjoy participating in the orchestra, choirs, and ensembles. Plays, often to scripts written by a teacher, are popular. Out of school visits, such as geography field trips, sports tours, and cultural expeditions to Jersey and Germany further extend the curriculum. Sporting provision is impressive, especially in gymnastics.
- 2.4 The curriculum is rigorously planned and together with appropriate examination preparation and carefully matched senior school choices, ensures that pupils are ready for the next stage of their education. The school has a perfect record of success in entrance examinations to senior independent schools and county grammar schools extending over many years, the academic standing of pupils is regarded well by local senior schools, and the number of scholarships and exhibitions won is impressive. Year 8 pupils reported in interviews that they felt well prepared for the next stage of their schooling and in the classroom they demonstrated through good presentational, organisational and self-evaluative skills that they have the right attributes to be successful. Self-esteem is high, built on responsibilities given to pupils as prefects, classroom captains and members of the school council. These roles are taken seriously.
- 2.5 Beginning with the Early Learning Goals at the Foundation Stage, progressing to the National Curriculum in Years 1 to 6, and culminating in preparation for Common Entrance examinations in Years 7 and 8, the curriculum is carefully chosen, well-matched to pupils' needs and offers a wide range of subjects. Thorough planning, regular reviews, annual analyses and focussed targeting are all effective. Careful consideration is given to the needs of pupils of all abilities. Teaching is supported by comprehensive documentation. Here the teachers make extensive use of ICT. The school is aware, however, that the potential of ICT in teaching is not fully realised and that the opportunities for pupils to learn through its use vary greatly. Library provision for literature is good, but more is needed to support research, extension studies and independent learning.
- 2.6 Curriculum planning has improved since the last inspection and now takes fuller account of the different abilities of pupils. The provision of extension tasks for the gifted and support for the less able is outstanding; the clinic and telephone help-line for mathematics are but two examples. By the time they enter Year 3, all pupils are screened for dyslexia, dyscalculia and

dyspraxia, although the individual learning needs of many pupils will have been detected earlier. Individualised programmes for pupils with learning difficulties are devised by special needs staff and shared with all teachers, and support in class by teaching assistants and learning support specialists enables these pupils to make rapid progress. The recent appointment to the school of another teacher with strong learning support experience allows some pupils to be withdrawn from a lesson each week for valuable individual teaching. This matches the effective support already given in English as an additional language.

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

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.8 The school realises its aim to give all pupils a good level of knowledge, skills, understanding and application. The standards achieved have improved since the last inspection.
- 2.9 Pupils' learning and achievements in all areas of the curriculum are good and some are outstanding. Pupils are articulate speakers, attentive listeners, accurate in number work, expressive in the arts and logical in science investigations. Foundation Stage pupils showed sure cutting skills as they designed and made a letter for Father Christmas. Those in Year 2 sang with accuracy and enthusiasm. Pupils in Years 5 and 7 displayed good practical skills in the laboratory and showed an understanding of safety procedures. Extensive independent writing was achieved by pupils in a religious studies (RS) lesson in Year 6. Year 8 pupils excelled in a lesson spoken almost entirely in French.
- 2.10 Pupils throughout the school make good progress in all areas of the curriculum regardless of their age, ability, background or ethnicity. The attainment of pupils at the Foundation Stage, with its age group specialist teachers, and in Years 7 and 8, where all teaching is by subject specialists, was outstanding whilst in all other areas of the school it is consistently high. Able and gifted pupils are suitably challenged. Pupils who require learning support are recognised by teachers in every class and work is adjusted to accommodate them. Examples seen included a Year 7 English lesson where five pupils receiving learning support produced exciting creative writing, and in a Year 2 PE lesson pupils tackled tasks that were matched to their potential. This enabled them to achieve very well.
- 2.11 Pupils achieve well at the Foundation Stage and all are expected to attain the Early Learning Goals before the end of the Reception year. The school uses commercially produced tests to assess attainment and progress in Years 1 to 6 and compares the results with national norms. Their findings match the inspectors' judgement that both are good in relations to pupils' abilities. Marks in entrance examinations to senior schools at 11+ are high and even higher at 13+, although these are not nationally standardised. More than 20 pupils have won awards to senior schools since 2001, a commendable achievement for a small school.
- 2.12 The school is a strong community where individual and group achievements are encouraged and valued. Three choirs and the orchestra play in concerts at home and on tour abroad. Drama productions are eagerly anticipated by audiences of parents. Sports teams hold their own against larger schools, whilst several pupils have won local representative honours in chess, cricket, football and swimming. The gymnastics team has won the championship for small preparatory schools for seven years in succession.
- 2.13 Pupils' skills and attitudes for work and study are good. Standards have improved since the last inspection.
- 2.14 Pupils express themselves with confidence, listen attentively to teachers and their peers, and read and write fluently and effectively. Year 1 pupils displayed clear handwriting, whilst those in Year 2 showed secure sentence construction. Good quality written work was

- observed in RS in Years 5 and 6 and in English in Years 7 and 8. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 displayed in English lessons the ability to write in various genres, ranging from play-scripts and poetry to narrative and instructions. All who took part in pupil interviews were very articulate.
- 2.15 Mathematical skills are applied effectively throughout the school. Nursery pupils in a music lesson counted to eight and back on a scale. Mental arithmetic skills were strong in Reception. Written solutions in mathematics lessons for pupils in Years 3 and 4 were both correct and neat. Year 7 pupils read ammeter scales accurately when measuring electric current in science. The efficient layout of work in mathematics by Year 8 pupils helped them to tackle complex problems logically.
- 2.16 Young pupils show a growing confidence and competence in their use of ICT. Reception pupils used a free-drawing program and filmed each other with a digital camera. Those in Year 1 could log on independently to their computers and find the program they were going to use. Some evidence of the use of ICT was seen in the work of pupils in Years 5 to 8, including graphs in mathematics and science and displays in corridors and classrooms, but little practical use of ICT was observed during the inspection. The school is aware that many teachers have yet to utilise the full potential that ICT offers, whether as a teaching aid or through skills that pupils need to learn.
- 2.17 Pupils are comfortable in discussion, both with their teachers and their peers. They debate issues constructively and display good reasoning skills. Nursery pupils appreciated why 'Horrid Henry' was being so unpleasant on the arrival of a new baby in the family. Those in Year 2 pooled ideas in a science lesson as they carried out a census on favourite foods. Geography pupils in Year 6 explained the link between trees and oxygen in the atmosphere. Good reasoning was seen by Year 7 pupils in science as they explained the behaviour of electric currents in different circuits.
- 2.18 Pupils throughout the school can work independently and only in a few classes was there evidence of an over-dependence on teachers' notes or commercially produced worksheets. Nursery pupils used a task-board to add their names to photographs of activities. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 organised themselves during registration to prepare for the day ahead. Year 3 pupils consulted a thesaurus when working independently in English. Effective free note-taking was seen in history books in Year 4, but was less evident in geography. Pupils in Years 5 and 7 set up science apparatus with due care, whilst those in Year 8 showed outstanding planning skills for a piece of English creative writing.
- 2.19 Pupils work sensibly as individuals and in groups. Structured play at the Foundation Stage enabled pupils to share 'fire fighting' and 'tree lopping' roles with due consideration for each other. Pupils in all PE lessons observed worked effectively on the own, in pairs and in small teams. Year 6 pupils worked diligently on their own projects in art, whilst pairs set up experiments constructively in a Year 7 science lesson.
- 2.20 The school maintains a good work ethic. The calm of assembly sets the business-like tone for the day. Pupils work hard. Lessons are much enjoyed by pupils, whether through the challenge presented to Year 6 to produce abstract art based on brightly coloured sweets or in keeping up with the pace in Year 7 French.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.21 The overall quality of pupils' personal development is good and some features are outstanding. The high quality found at the previous inspection has been maintained. The aim to develop self-esteem is evident in all areas of school life.
- 2.22 Great care is taken to make assemblies valuable. Sensitive spiritual development is enhanced through well-chosen themes, active participation by pupils, and occasional visits by guest speakers. The inspectors witnessed a half-termly visit by the local vicar who contributed to the week's theme on relationships. His homily on harmony, tolerance and saying sorry kept the audience spellbound and provided ample food for thought for the reflection time that followed. Year 3 pupils in a lesson of RS were encouraged through role play to empathise with the three wise men as they presented their gifts to Jesus. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 demonstrated during interviews confident self-esteem, a belief in their own abilities, and high regard for the achievements of their peers.
- 2.23 Pupils give careful consideration to moral issues in PSHE lessons and are able to distinguish right from wrong. Interviews with pupils revealed strong moral standpoints: a Year 1 pupil reported that "no one wants to be in the wrong" whilst his senior in Year 5 advocated "put others before yourself." Prefects in Year 8 showed a mature response to dealing with any unhappy youngsters, and their approach was confirmed by a Year 3 pupil who referred to prefects as "young parents to call on if needed." Several pupils regarded PSHE as their favourite subject. Fair play was observed in the playground and in sports matches against other schools. One team member reported that "it does not matter if you win or lose, as long as you have fun" as he and his team mates applauded the opposition as their minibus departed. Moral development is outstanding.
- 2.24 Pupils develop confident social skills, helped by the warm and relaxed relationship with adults in the community. Provision in this area is excellent. Year 8 pupils assume responsibilities in houses, sports and as prefects. House assemblies are largely led by senior pupils who decide on awards, write the certificates and make the presentations. Younger pupils are keen to be 'helping hands' and sensibly perform tasks such as delivering registers. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 spoke favourably about the school council, regarding it as 'their voice'. Interviews with pupils in Years 7 and 8 demonstrated a good knowledge of current affairs, mentioning many political leaders by name. Responsibility for the environment is promoted through geography, in conservation work and by tree-planting.
- 2.25 The school promotes tolerance and harmony for pupils of all backgrounds and actively supports their cultural traditions. This begins at the Foundation Stage where attractive displays on Diwali were being joined by others depicting Christmas. Music, art, drama and sport all play important roles and school interests are seen as preparation for adult enthusiasms. Latin adds breadth to the curriculum, and pupils in Year 7 enjoy finding derivation links between the language and English. Trips to France and Germany broaden horizons. Current films provided conversation topics at lunchtime, whilst Year 6 pupils explored the purpose of abstract art through the life and work of Mondrian.
- 2.26 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.27 The quality of teaching is good. Much of it is of high quality and some is outstanding. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and now largely satisfies the school's aims.
- 2.28 The high quality of teaching enables pupils of all abilities, including those with learning needs, to acquire new knowledge, make good progress, increase understanding and develop learning skills. Teaching at its best, was seen in the Nursery and Reception, where the youngest pupils are given sure foundations on which they consistently build, and in Years 7 and 8, where subject specialists prepare pupils for the disciplines of their senior schools.
- 2.29 Teaching throughout the school fosters good learning habits. All classrooms radiate a business-like air and resound to the buzz of activity. Rigour was evident in the teaching of English and mathematics, where appropriate disciplines were instilled in pupils. In French and Latin lessons in Years 7 and 8 the teaching demanded and received prolonged concentration. Year 6 pupils in science were encouraged to think for themselves as they extended their knowledge of single-switch circuits to tackle those with multiple switches. Careful teaching and close co-operation with the learning support teachers ensures that less able pupils are particularly well helped.
- 2.30 Lessons are planned with suitable and well-chosen activities. Ample opportunities are provided for pupils to develop intellectually and creatively. Pupils in a Year 7 English lesson gathered information on *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* before offering creative suggestions of the poem's outcome. The structure of 'free flow' play at the Foundation Stage used stimulating activities to harness pupils' imaginations and to promote speaking and listening. Opportunities were missed, however, in some lessons in Years 3 to 8 to make effective use of pupils' acting and debating skills. Successful planning throughout the school encourages high levels of concentration, the desire to persevere and an attentive response to challenges set. Teaching is well focussed and objectives are clearly stated from the outset. Lessons are fast paced, as observed in games for Years 5 to 8 and PE for Year 2. All subjects have detailed and effective planning files and these are used well to plan and inform the teaching. Pupils are managed very well in lessons and, where available, teachers make good use of teaching assistants to provide support for pupils' learning.
- 2.31 Teaching is suitably adapted to the needs of all pupils. Spelling activities in English have word lists created to meet the level of each pupil in the class. Where teaching was outstanding, as in a Year 7 Latin lesson, the pace was rapid and the varied tasks accommodated all pupils. Good teaching in Year 8 science and Year 6 art used suitably chosen practical work and constant individual monitoring to maintain rapid progress. Strengths of teaching include early identification of pupils needing learning support, appropriate briefing of all teachers, and focussed teaching to build self-esteem and accelerate progress.
- 2.32 Teachers throughout the school demonstrate good subject knowledge and apply it appropriately for the different age groups. The quality of this specialist knowledge is particularly strong throughout the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, in English, mathematics and science for Years 3 to 6, and in the subject specialist teaching in Years 7 and 8. The mastery of knowledge displayed in the teaching of English, French, Latin and PE to the oldest pupils was exceptional.
- 2.33 Teaching is well supported by the good quality, number and range of resources – many made by teachers. Specialist facilities, including those for art, ICT, music, PE and science, contribute effectively to good teaching. The junior library is well stocked. The senior library has a good fiction collection, but lacks sufficient material for independent learning and

research. The provision of ICT has increased since the last inspection, though not all staff make as sufficient use of it. Some teachers lack the skills to use interactive whiteboards effectively. A GAP year student provides enthusiastic support in PE and games lessons.

- 2.34 Policies guide teachers on presentation, correction and marking of pupils' work, and these are generally applied consistently. Written work is marked regularly and thoroughly. Errors are corrected and helpful evaluative comments give pupils clear guidance for improvement. In a few cases, however, marking is more cursory and some work scrutinised was not marked at all. Comprehensive assessment data are stored electronically, enabling all teachers to have ready access. Regular analyses of the data are made by the three directors of studies. Detailed pupil profiles are initiated at the Foundation Stage, where they are the focus of weekly meetings, and they follow pupils as they progress through the school.
- 2.35 All the lessons are business-like and purposeful. Standards of behaviour throughout the school are high, with orderly movement between lessons. Calm prevails throughout the school. Pupils show great respect for each other and their teachers. Resources and apparatus are used thoughtfully.
- 2.36 Effective procedures are in place for recording attainment and progress. The school does not take part in national tests for pupils at ages 7 and 11; instead a wide range of commercially produced standardised tests is used to assess standards in English and mathematics, and tests on verbal and non-verbal reasoning trace pupils' development. Other systems are used by subject specialists or age group teachers to provide an overview of the progress and achievement of every pupil: these include pupil profiles, regular staff meetings and access to the electronically stored assessment data. Wise use is made of this information by the directors of studies to aid planning, direct teaching and create targets.
- 2.37 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 In accordance with the school's aims, the arrangements for pupils' pastoral care and welfare are of a high quality and the attention given to their health and safety is good. Current provision has built on the good standards highlighted at the previous inspection.
- 3.2 The quality of care shown to pupils is a notable feature of the school. Teachers and non-teaching staff demonstrate a high degree of concern and interest in the well-being of their pupils, often giving extra time and attention when needed. Adults present good role models and the rapport between teachers and pupils is strong. Time allocated to class teachers before morning assembly is used effectively for pastoral and organisational tasks. Registration is efficient: this satisfies a recommendation of the previous inspection. Guidance for pupils preparing to move on to senior schools is particularly good.
- 3.3 All members of staff play an important part in the pastoral care of pupils. Overall responsibility lies with the deputy head. Pupils at the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 are well supported by their class teachers and classroom assistants. The arrangements for pupils in Years 3 to 8 provide twin supports: class teachers for day-to-day contact and housemasters to engender team spirit across the ages. Pupils in all classes reported in interviews that they appreciate the care they receive and they know who to turn to when help is needed. Prefects in Year 8 also effectively carry out a pastoral role with younger pupils.
- 3.4 The school can be proud of the outstanding quality of relationships between staff and pupils. Teachers know their pupils well, and pupils in interviews were complimentary about them. All are able to share a sense of humour in their dealings with each other. House structures are particularly strong and house assemblies play a valuable role. Senior pupils take a pride in their posts of responsibility and run many meetings alongside their teachers.
- 3.5 Clear policies and effective systems are properly implemented by teachers to promote good discipline and behaviour. High standards are expected and achieved. Pupils act considerately towards one another, movement between lessons is calm, and property is treated with respect. One pupil reported in interview: "if we didn't have rules, everything would fall apart." Several mentioned that bullying is rare and that their concerns are dealt with promptly. This was supported by the findings of a pupil questionnaire. Pupils also reported that they value the encouragement they receive and value the award scheme within the house system.
- 3.6 Measures to protect pupils are in place and effectively monitored. All employees are screened for their suitability to work with children by background checks, and appropriate child protection training is due for completion in February 2007. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 praised the security at the start and end of the day, and reported that they felt safe when in school. Secure measures ensure that all arrivals and departures are noted. All necessary measures have been taken to minimise the risk of fire. Regular tests and practices are undertaken termly. Risk assessments are properly conducted on all educational activities with the exception of journeys to and from outside visits; this oversight is receiving urgent attention. Most members of staff have received first aid training and the school secretary is the designated first-aider. The accident notification system and its record-keeping are efficient. The school lacks a properly equipped room to accommodate pupils when they are unwell, though plans are in place to restore an earlier provision. Frequent health and safety meetings are held, with minutes forwarded to the governors. Lunches provided are nutritious and pupils enjoy the variety of choice on offer.

- 3.7 The school meets almost all of the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3]. In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:
- (a) ensure that there are appropriate risk assessments for all journeys from school [Regulation 3.(2)(c)].

The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community

- 3.8 The school has an effective partnership with parents and very worthwhile links with the local community. These fully match the school's aims and maintain the standards noted at the previous inspection.
- 3.9 Parents returned 104 questionnaires before the inspection. Almost all responses were positive, indicating a very high level of satisfaction. These included universal approval for the quality of teaching and learning and for the standards of behaviour. Some concern was expressed about the level of support for children with learning difficulties; the inspectors found, however, that this is already being addressed by the school with the inclusion of more one-to-one tuition. Parents who met an inspector spoke highly of the level of confidence that pupils display, the all-round education provided, and the opportunities for all to partake in activities, the arts, music and sport. They also commented on the strong sense of community and they found the headmaster and teachers extremely approachable. No major concerns or weaknesses were identified, though they would like to be able to contact staff directly by email.
- 3.10 The parents' association encourages a healthy partnership between home and school through its social and fund-raising events. The summer ball is an annual highlight. A good range of opportunities enables parents to be involved with the school and in the work and progress of their children. Examples include regular woodland conservation, learning about structured play activities at the Foundation Stage, guidance on the curriculum for the year ahead, and accompanying pupils on trips at home and abroad. Grandparents' days have also proved very popular. Parents and friends of the school keenly support sports matches, concerts and plays, and assemblies and services.
- 3.11 Parents are provided with helpful publications about the school. The prospectus and website are attractive. Comprehensive fortnightly newsletters and termly calendars keep parents fully apprised of events and activities. Full and well-presented written reports contain helpful and realistic information about subject matter taught, skills acquired, and an evaluation of attainment and progress. A few parents would like to receive more information on progress at parents' evenings, with better time-keeping so that the meetings do not over-run.
- 3.12 Parental concerns are addressed appropriately, and are dealt with quickly and sensitively. Parents who met an inspector were very comfortable about raising any matters with the most appropriate member of staff. This confirmed the findings reported in the questionnaire. The school's complaints procedure is exemplary and is properly followed in practice.
- 3.13 The school has forged extensive links with the local community and neighbours spoke well of its reputation. Work with the Countryside Commission, visits to homes for the elderly, and carol singing in the High Street are examples of pupils' involvement in community activities. The school's facilities are used by local sports, music and dance groups, and the headmaster regularly presents prizes at outside events.
- 3.14 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].

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 The governance of the school is outstanding. Governors meet their declared aims and the quality of governance has improved since the last inspection.
- 4.2 Management arrangements are clearly defined. Meetings of governors and sub-groups are regular and suitably recorded. Governors represent a wide range of professional skills and several governors have experience of educational leadership.
- 4.3 Governors are fully aware of the legal, financial and educational responsibilities. They work in close harmony with the headmaster to devise, implement and monitor overall strategies and development plans. Close liaison with the bursar ensures sound financial planning and effective budgetary control.
- 4.4 Systems to inform governors are used effectively. Communication between the chairman and headmaster is regular and open. Appraisal of the headmaster is thorough and constructive. Governors visit the school regularly and meet staff and pupils occasionally. Teachers and non-teaching staff welcome the encouragement they receive and appreciate the trust given to them to manage their responsibilities without undue interference.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.5 Leadership of the school is strong. Management has successfully introduced policies and practice to raise standards. The quality of both meets the school's aims and has improved since the last inspection.
- 4.6 The headmaster has a clear vision for the school's direction, his influence is extensive and he gives a firm yet sensitive lead. Management roles are well-defined, responsibilities are accepted willingly, and support from the senior management team is committed and effective. Consultation is extensive and purposeful which ensures decisions are fully informed. Communication to staff and to parents is swift, accurate and informative.
- 4.7 Job descriptions make responsibilities clear; this satisfies a recommendation of the previous inspection. The commitment to train all teachers in the use of ICT across the curriculum is beginning to bear fruit, though the school is aware that much more needs to be done. Teachers are self-evaluative and their ambition for improvement is clearly evident. Commitment to planning is whole-hearted and effective.
- 4.8 Managers successfully form, implement and review policies and practice. Development planning is effective. Senior managers work well as a team and effectively strive for smooth transition across the stages of the school. Subject heads have well defined roles and feel that their contributions are valued. Teachers are increasingly willing to share good practice and be open to new ideas. Policies have been compiled after consultation, implemented with enthusiasm, and reviewed regularly: this satisfies a recommendation of the previous inspection. Appropriate management strategies ensure that analysis and evaluation of procedures and systems for pupil care are effective; this also meets a requirement of the previous inspection. Record-keeping of attainment and progress is well established, and this information is used to guide planning and direct teaching. Managers ensure that the supervision of pupils is good, satisfying a recommendation of the previous inspection.

- 4.9 The good quality of the teaching staff has a direct bearing on the quality of education provided: this satisfies a recommendation of the previous inspection. There is strong support for professional development and all employees are appraised. Monitoring of teaching and learning has been introduced; its worth should become increasingly effective in promoting high standards and good practice. The school provides a happy working environment for its employees.
- 4.10 Financial resources are well managed and budgetary arrangements generally meet teaching needs. Resources are used effectively and treated respectfully by pupils. Accommodation satisfies the school's current needs but not its longer term aspirations. The site is well maintained by a continuous programme of decoration and refurbishment; this satisfies a recommendation of the previous inspection.
- 4.11 The administration of the school is efficient and the reception team is welcoming to all. The quality of catering and cleanliness is high. The support given to teachers by teaching assistants, the GAP year student and other support staff is effective and valued greatly. Admissions and daily registers are now in order; this satisfies a recommendation of the previous inspection.
- 4.12 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff [Standard 4].
- 4.13 The school meets almost all of the regulatory requirements for premises and accommodation [Standard 5]. In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:
- (a) improve the facilities for pupils who are unwell [Regulation 5(1)].
- 4.14 The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers and meets its requirements.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall Conclusions

- 5.1 The school successfully achieves its aims and aspirations. It meets pupils' needs in providing good teaching, promoting valuable learning habits and nurturing all-round personal development. School leadership and governance are strong, senior managers are supportive, and teachers and non-teaching staff make a united team. Pastoral care is of high quality and the partnership with parents is very well developed. As a result of these positive aspects, pupils learn effectively and attain well in an organised community where long-established traditions foster family values and encourage emerging talents and developing personalities. Pupils are enthusiastic and motivated, smart and courteous, appreciative and discerning. Their behaviour is praiseworthy. Teaching is well matched to pupils' needs, building from excellent foundations to outstanding preparation for senior schools. Teachers are open to new ideas and the non-teaching staff promote friendliness in a homely environment. Weaknesses are very few: not all teachers use ICT effectively in their teaching, opportunities for pupils in Years 3 to 8 to use acting and debating skills in appropriate lessons are missed, and the arrangements for travel on outings and for pupils who are unwell are unsatisfactory.
- 5.2 Many improvements have been made since the last inspection. Better educational provision and teaching have improved pupils' attitudes and raised their attainment. Governance, leadership and management of the school have been strengthened. Improved supervision of pupils, better monitoring of policies and practice, more rigorous health and safety procedures, effective site management, job descriptions for all staff and properly maintained admissions and attendance registers all satisfy recommendations of the previous report.
- 5.3 The school complies with almost all of the regulatory requirements, but does not at present meet Standard 3 (welfare, health and safety) and Standard 5 (premises and accommodation).

Next Steps

- 5.4 There are no major concerns. The headmaster and senior managers are aware of improvements required and should consider the following points of action:
1. continue to develop the use of ICT by all teachers and across all subjects and stages;
 2. provide more opportunities for pupils to use their acting and debating skills in appropriate subjects in Year 3 and above.
- 5.5 In order to meet all the regulatory requirements, the school must:
- (1) ensure that there are appropriate risk assessments for all journeys from school [Regulation 3.(2)(c)];
 - (2) improve the facilities for pupils who are unwell [Regulation 5(1)].

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 27th - 30th November 2006. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff, with parents and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.

List of Inspectors

Malcolm Tozer	Reporting inspector
Douglas Buchanan	Deputy head, IAPS school
Deborah Buckenham	Head, IAPS school
Jeremy Gear	Head, IAPS school