

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS COUNCIL  
(ISC)**

**\*\*\*\*\***

**INSPECTION OF**

**THE ROYAL HIGH SCHOOL, BATH**

**By the**

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE  
(ISI)**

**On**

**9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> October 2006**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## INSPECTION REPORT ON

### **The Royal High School, Bath**

Full Name of the School	<b>The Royal High School, Bath (GDST)</b>
DfES Number	<b>800/6002</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>(GDST) 306983</b>
Address	<b>Lansdown Road, Bath, BA1 5SZ</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01225 313877</b>
Fax Number	<b>01225 465446</b>
Email Address	<b>royalhigh@bat.gdst.net</b>
Headmaster	<b>Mr James Graham-Brown</b>
Proprietor	<b>Girls' Day School Trust</b>
Age Range	<b>3 -18</b>
Gender	<b>Female</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>October 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> 2006</b>

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 was carried out in conjunction with the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI). The CSCI report is available separately ([www.csci.org.uk](http://www.csci.org.uk)).

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.

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION</b>	<b>2</b>
The Educational Experience Provided	2
Pupils' Learning and Achievements	4
Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils	6
The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)	7
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS</b>	<b>9</b>
The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils	9
The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community	10
The Quality of Boarding Education	11
<b>4 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>12</b>
The Quality of Governance	12
The Quality of Leadership and Management	12
<b>5 CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS</b>	<b>14</b>
Overall Conclusions	14
Next Steps	14
<b>6 INSPECTION EVIDENCE</b>	<b>15</b>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 The school aims to foster a stimulating and dynamic community within which girls discover and develop their individual gifts and talents. It seeks to offer a broad academic and extra-curricular programme within a caring environment, aiming to encourage pupils to think for themselves and to develop a sense of social and moral responsibility in order to play their part fully in the wider community.
- 1.2 The Royal High School Bath came into being in September 1998 as a result of the merger of Bath High School (GDST) and the Royal School. The junior and senior schools are on separate sites, each in ample grounds, in an area of great historic interest. Uniquely within the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST) the school has a boarding section comprising two boarding houses. The headmaster of the senior school has overall responsibility for both schools. The headmistress of the junior school takes responsibility for its day-to-day operation. She was appointed in 2005, since the last inspection.
- 1.3 The Royal High School comprises a senior school with 609 pupils aged 11 to 18 (Years 7 to 13), including 127 girls in the sixth form, and a junior school that has 198 full-time pupils (reception to Year 6) and 18 part-time pupils (Nursery), aged from 3 to 11. The school has 88 boarders.
- 1.4 Entry to the senior school is by selective examination. Assessment of pupils applying to the junior school is either informal or more structured, according to the age of the child. Standardised tests in the junior school confirm that the majority of the school population is well above the average range of ability, with a quarter of pupils being in the top five per cent and a small minority being of average ability. Thus, where pupils are performing in line with their abilities, results in public examinations are expected to be well above the average for all maintained primary schools. A similar picture exists in the senior school where standardised tests confirm that three-quarters of pupils are well above the average range of ability nationally and only five per cent are of average ability. If pupils are performing in line with their abilities results in public examinations will be well above the national average. In the sixth form, if pupils are performing in line with their abilities their results will be above the national average.
- 1.5 Pupils come from a wide geographical area, with some travelling considerable distances to attend the school. Approximately four per cent are from families where English is not the principal language. Currently no pupils have a statement of special educational need. About 40 per cent of the intake at age 11 is from the junior school and others come from a variety of independent and maintained schools. Over three-quarters of junior school pupils continue into the senior school. At present three-quarters of pupils continue into the sixth form with leavers moving to one of the many and varied institutions in Bath which offer sixth-form education. With hardly any exceptions Year 13 students proceed to higher education.
- 1.6 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 experience provided by the school is of good quality and includes a wide range of educational opportunities suited to the interests, aptitudes and needs of all its pupils. The school's aim is to offer a broad academic and extra-curricular programme to its pupils and this is well met in both junior and senior schools. Since the last inspection curricular provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities has been substantially strengthened.

#### *Junior School*

- 2.2 The junior school's principal goal is to provide a wealth of learning experiences for its pupils. It fulfils its objectives with considerable success. This is particularly true of provision for creative subjects and the performing arts, which has been a focus of recent curricular and staffing changes within the school. A wide-ranging curriculum, under constant review, is combined with many opportunities for pupils to develop outside the classroom in an extensive extra-curricular programme.
- 2.3 The pupils in the Foundation Stage work towards the six Early Learning Goals and those in Years 3 to 6 study a range of subjects similar to the National Curriculum, which contribute to the linguistic, mathematical, scientific and technological development of pupils. This provision is enhanced by opportunities to enjoy specialist teaching in areas such as French, which is taught from Nursery level, and creative subjects such as physical education, dance, drama and music.
- 2.4 A timetabled programme of activities under the general heading of enrichment is linked to a good range of extra-curricular activities in sporting, aesthetic and creative subjects including pottery and judo amongst many others. Participation in local music and drama festivals and charitable events ensure that pupils have opportunities to participate in life in the local community.
- 2.5 Due attention is given to preparing junior school pupils for their next stage in education. Links between the junior and senior schools are well planned and work effectively, with Years 5 and 6 pupils making visits to the senior school to participate in lessons and events, so that they are well prepared for a new environment in Year 7.
- 2.6 The curriculum is planned well and allows suitable time for the broad range of subjects offered. New measures to strengthen the planning of the timetable, initiated in September 2006, were observed to be working well. Clear schemes of work ensure that pupils' studies develop appropriately as they move through different stages of the school. Curricular provision for those with learning difficulties or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language is good. Teaching assistants provide structured support within lessons and specialist teaching is available outside the classroom.

**Senior School**

- 2.7 The curriculum in the senior school is wide-ranging, and extra-curricular activities allow for participation in a generous array of sports and in the performing arts. These combine to produce an environment which fosters the school's aim to encourage pupils to develop as well-rounded individuals.
- 2.8 Continuity and breadth in the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 have been achieved since the last inspection by a rearrangement of technical subjects and music in Year 9. Balance is assured at GCSE by the core of six subjects which are taken by all pupils. These subjects contribute to pupils' development mathematically, linguistically, scientifically and in the area of technology. The other three choices made by pupils allow for individual preferences to be followed under the guidance of teachers. Adequate time is allowed for all subjects although lesson time for physical education is restricted to one hour per week after Year 9. Pupils in the sixth form enjoy a wide range of courses although at present it is difficult to study further mathematics to A level within timetabled time.
- 2.9 Pupils' experiences are much enriched by extra-curricular activities. A good range of sporting and cultural activities is on offer at lunchtimes and before and after school. Several opportunities are provided each year for trips abroad in contexts such as modern language study, choral concerts and through World Challenge. Links with the local community and opportunities for service are provided by participation in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, Young Enterprise, work experience, and by mutually beneficial arrangements with local sports clubs.
- 2.10 A full careers education programme, beginning in Year 9, is provided. Tutor time and personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons are used for guidance given by the head of careers and for pupils to discuss career issues individually with the head of middle school. In the sixth form, work experience, talks by outside speakers, practice for interviews and access to the school's own high quality careers intranet information form significant elements of a well-planned and executed provision.
- 2.11 The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is planned well to introduce girls to an imaginative array of subjects, especially in modern foreign languages where, for example, the study of Mandarin is a recent introduction. Some aspects of the curriculum, such as the opportunity to study resistant materials in design and technology (DT) help to fulfil the school's aim of encouraging subjects not traditionally followed by girls. Flexible planning and the generous provision of small sets allow virtually all sixth-form pupils to study their chosen subjects without timetable clashes. The newly established Sixth-Form Society offers considerably increased opportunities for cultural and intellectual pursuits. Easy access to public speaking opportunities for pupils is a significant feature of sixth-form provision.
- 2.12 Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are well provided for in the curriculum arrangements for all subjects. Suitable provision for the more able is made in some subjects, for example in modern foreign languages, where those taking two languages at GCSE take one of these a year early. Such provision is less well developed in other areas of the curriculum. Appropriate tuition and support is provided for those for whom English is an additional language.

**Whole School**

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

## **Pupils' Learning and Achievements**

- 2.14 Pupils in both junior and senior schools achieve high standards in lessons and good standards in public examinations in relation to their abilities and perform well in a wide range of activities. This reflects well the school's aim of enabling pupils to fulfil their potential in all areas of life. Since the last inspection pupils' levels of achievement in creative activities such as art and drama have become notably high.

### ***Junior School***

- 2.15 In the Foundation Stage, pupils are effectively working towards the Early Learning Goals. Children develop a number of competencies, skills and understanding across the six areas of learning. In this way they lay secure foundations for their future development. Some pupils can already recognize and order numbers up to ten. At registration, pupils were able to recognize their own name in writing and used their motor skills and co-ordination to move the name around the board. Pupils demonstrated creativity in free-structured play, for example designing a house using construction toys.
- 2.16 Pupils in the junior school achieve high standards of literacy and numeracy across all ability levels, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, and their understanding and knowledge of science is strong. There is a high level of achievement across all subjects. Pupils' work throughout the junior school shows consistently high standards in mathematics in basic numeracy skills, in handling data and in problem-solving. In science, pupils are adept in drawing conclusions from observations, evaluating experiments and applying their knowledge to new situations, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Writing, spelling and reading are strong across the junior school with evidence of particularly advanced use of vocabulary in Year 6. In creative subjects pupils achieve high standards for their age and abilities. Pupils sing well and show a good sense of rhythm, art work is imaginative and pupils in Year 6 showed good technical drawing skills. Pupils develop appropriate skills in sports, with pupils in a hockey lesson developing ball control skills during the course of a lesson.
- 2.17 Pupils' attainment in national tests at ages 7 and 11 are good in relation to their abilities. Results in national tests at age 7 show pupils achieving far above the national average for all maintained primary schools, with reading and writing levels far above the national average and mathematics well above. At age 11 pupils achieve far above the national average for all maintained primary schools in English, mathematics and science. The school's aim to increase the number of pupils achieving level 5 in mathematics has been met, as seen in the published results for 2006.
- 2.18 Pupils listen carefully in lessons, to good effect, and are able to articulate their ideas clearly. A high level of competence in literacy skills was shown in a Year 1 lesson when pupils read aloud and showed good levels of comprehension. Displays around the school and workbooks illustrate a good level of written skills.
- 2.19 Pupils' mathematical skills are developed well and pupils apply them with success in a number of subjects. In a science lesson in Year 6, pupils were able to give an accurate interpretation of line graphs about the speed of dissolving sugar. Pupils are well grounded in information and communication technology (ICT) skills and can use these effectively when called upon, although these skills were not demanded extensively in lessons seen.
- 2.20 Pupils construct coherent arguments and reason successfully and confidently using information they are given. A good example was seen in a Year 6 history lesson where pupils discussed the role of women in war, making their views clear. Pupils are well behaved and pursue their activities with a sense of purpose. They settle quickly and apply themselves

enthusiastically. Pupils in an ICT lesson in Year 5 showed perseverance and good attention to detail, using object-based graphics to design a classroom. Pupils study and work effectively on their own when asked to do so. This is a skill that the school is developing at present, with signs of success. Displays seen showed independent work on a variety of topics. Pupils work well in co-operation with each other, for example in a lesson in reception class where pupils worked together in pairs, with one wearing a blindfold while the other gave instructions to point out things in a poster about homes. Note-taking in all subjects is well-organised and presented, as are workbooks.

### ***Senior School***

- 2.21 Pupils show a good level of understanding and develop appropriate skills to a high, and sometimes to an outstanding, standard. Pupils acquire a considerable depth and breadth of knowledge. There are some areas of outstanding achievement in activities, particularly in sport and the arts. In all that they do pupils show good attitudes towards work and study which they display with confidence.
- 2.22 Pupils apply their skills and understanding effectively and with great confidence. Pupils show a good grasp of appropriate terminology, as was seen in business studies. They demonstrate an ability to think and act critically and articulate their ideas; in philosophy pupils contributed constructively to a challenging discussion on phenomenism. These qualities were particularly apparent in assembly debates. The highly creative artwork which is displayed all around the school testifies to pupils' highly developed skills in the arts, and these are matched by their achievements in drama, as seen in a rehearsal for *The Mikado*.
- 2.23 Pupils of all ability levels within the school achieve well across the curriculum including those with learning difficulties or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language. Able pupils demonstrated outstanding levels of achievement, for example in some history and English lessons, and in a geography lesson in Year 8, where able pupils showed excellent application of interpretative skills in reading new climate graphs. Such achievement by able pupils was not always consistent in all lessons.
- 2.24 Pupils' attainment in GCSE is good: results over the last three years have been far above the national average for all maintained schools in many subjects, including English, mathematics, history, geography and French. In most sciences it is well above the average. At A level, pupils' attainments in the majority of subjects are good in relation to their abilities; their results over the last three years have been well above the average for all maintained schools, including in art, biology, geography and physics. Results in history have been far above the average for all maintained schools.
- 2.25 Pupils from the school play a significant part in drama outside the school, with many pupils participating in the National Youth Theatre. Pupils achieve well at international level in diving, swimming and gymnastics, and at county level in hockey and netball. The school's link with another school in Kenya was the result of the enterprise of a pupil whose enthusiasm and organisational skills led to the successful development of a school-wide project.
- 2.26 Pupils are articulate; they talk fluently about academic subjects and on general topics. They listen attentively and effectively and their reading skills enhance their progress. They make good use of the well-resourced library and read for pleasure as well as for study purposes. Their written work is generally good in all subjects, and showed particular distinction in English and religious education (RE).

- 2.27 Pupils' grasp of mathematics is secure even though in some, a lack of confidence sometimes hinders their enjoyment of the subject. Scrutiny of their work showed mathematical skills being used well by pupils in other subjects, such as science. Pupils show an excellent grounding in ICT skills and can use these skills when called upon to do so in subjects such as science and modern foreign languages, although evidence of this was limited in the lessons seen in other subjects.
- 2.28 Pupils are adept at reasoning and arguing their point of view. They do this with confidence and success in most lessons, particularly in subjects such as economics and, in the case of older pupils, in mathematics.
- 2.29 There is a general air of purposefulness in lessons and a tangible enjoyment of learning. Pupils settle quickly to work and apply themselves to the tasks set. In most subjects, pupils are confident and competent in taking notes, studying and organizing their work; this is particularly evident in English and was notable in a Year 7 geography lesson on flooding. Pupils can work independently when called upon to do so, for example in GCSE history and A-level mathematics, English and geography. Lessons seen in modern foreign languages highlighted the pupils' ability to work collaboratively and the ease with which they do so, particularly in oral work. This is further reflected in the highly effective way pupils support each other in class work and in the boarding houses, where pupils willingly help each other when issues arise in homework.

### **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils**

- 2.30 The school's aim of fostering a supportive community, where girls develop spiritual and cultural interests alongside a sense of social and moral responsibility, is pursued with great integrity and achieved with great success. Pupils' development in these areas is strong and shows much improvement upon the picture reflected in the last inspection.
- 2.31 Pupils' spiritual awareness is well developed. Although the school is non-denominational, opportunities are provided in both senior and junior schools for pupils to explore the spiritual dimension alongside faith systems. These opportunities have been greatly enhanced since the last inspection, through provision in the curriculum, particularly in RE lessons, in assemblies, and through aesthetic and creative activities such as art and drama. Pupils' development in these areas is marked in many cases, as was evident in a Year 11 drama lesson on the seven ages of man where pupils articulated their thoughts in depth on the purpose of life. 'The Space', a room in the senior school set aside for personal reflection is imaginatively laid out and well used, as is evident from writings left there by pupils.
- 2.32 Morally pupils develop well in both junior and senior schools. Pupils' behaviour demonstrates a profound sense of right and wrong, and distinctive moral judgments were evident in lessons such as in history in Year 10, where pupils discussed the fairness of the Treaty of Versailles. The house point system in the junior school is used well to support pupils' moral development.
- 2.33 Pupils' social development is good. The many sporting opportunities in both senior and junior schools enable pupils to grow in self-esteem and confidence as well as develop a sense of being part of a team. This sense of working together was underlined by pupils in presentations to a junior assembly on the subject of sharing. Pupils' social skills are highly developed in most cases. They are welcoming to visitors, and patient in the lunch queue, but they also show their enjoyment of work and activities, and of life. The Sixth-Form Society enables pupils to debate and to reflect upon current issues and to explore the social fabric of their own country. In this they are ably led by challenging presentations by staff such as in an assembly which focussed on issues of dress within different ethnic groups.

- 2.34 Pupils' cultural awareness is good and has much to do with opportunities within and outside the curriculum for pupils to develop their understanding of their own and other cultures. Recent initiatives to address the school's concern to promote awareness of creative arts in the senior school have met with great success. Applications to join trips to opera and drama have exceeded expectations. A senior school pupil's initiative to set up a link with a school in Kenya has led to a significant opportunity to experience more directly life in another culture, and pupils appreciate this. Pupils in a Year 5 lesson sang and played African songs with evident enjoyment of a culture unlike their own. Considerable enterprise is shown in charitable activities related to HIV/AIDS and the environment in the senior school and in aid of local charities in the junior school. .
- 2.35 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

### **The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)**

- 2.36 The quality of teaching in both the junior and senior schools is good, typified by the high expectations staff have of pupils. This encourages and enables pupils to develop in all areas of the curriculum and in activities in accordance with the school's aims. The high quality of teaching observed at the last inspection has been maintained and strengthened. The quality of staff is high and this is recognised by pupils and parents alike. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection and a significant proportion of teaching seen was outstanding.
- 2.37 Teachers are aware of pupils' potential and teaching ensures that they make progress in line with and often beyond their level of ability. In a numeracy lesson in Year 6 an investigation of measuring was structured in an open-ended way to allow more able pupils to make greater progress than the initial task demanded. Sometimes in science more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently. Excellent co-operation occurs between teachers and the co-ordinators of provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and those pupils for whom English is an additional language. This ensures that all pupils increase understanding and skills appropriately, enabling them to acquire new knowledge.
- 2.38 Teaching successfully encourages pupils to apply themselves intellectually, physically and creatively. Many lessons observed showed that teachers were actively pursuing strategies to encourage pupils to develop the ability to think and work creatively for themselves. This was as evident in the organisation of creative play in the Foundation Stage as it was in a drama lesson in Year 12 where the teacher encouraged groups of pupils to develop their own ideas for practical work.
- 2.39 Management of class time is excellent. Lessons seen showed well-planned and varied activities balanced throughout lessons to promote sustained learning. In a Year 1 science lesson the presence of a teaching assistant was capitalised upon to allow a variety of activities for pupils to take place within the lesson in order to sustain their interest. The teaching in a Year 7 RE lesson mixed a question and answer session with video material and games to provide pupils with a variety of approaches to understanding Judaism. Departmental handbooks in the senior school and the staff handbook in the junior school provide advice on effective teaching strategies which teachers follow with great success. The revised management structure in the junior school since the last inspection has allowed co-ordinators to monitor teaching more effectively and identify areas where more consistent practice is needed.
- 2.40 Teaching shows a good understanding of pupils' needs. The prior attainments of pupils assist teachers in their planning of lessons. Key Stage co-ordinators in the junior school and

heads of department in the senior school work closely together with teachers to plan teaching to suit individual pupils' needs, although planning for more able pupils is still developing.

- 2.41 In many lessons seen teachers showed outstanding subject knowledge, particularly in art, geography, history, mathematics and philosophy in the senior school. Teachers provide pupils with both breadth and depth of knowledge and present lessons with an enthusiasm which stimulates interest in the pupils.
- 2.42 Teaching is well supported by a wide range of good quality resources that are in good supply and that are very well used by the teachers. Both schools are careful to provide up-to-date resources, especially in the field of ICT, as part of an evolving programme to enhance teaching. In a chemistry lesson in Year 11 on hard water the use of projected images enabled pupils to make good progress in understanding the processes being discussed.
- 2.43 Thorough and regular assessment by most teachers enables pupils to make good progress. Excellent examples of marking in the Foundation Stage and in geography and English in the senior school showed teachers identifying strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work through detailed and pertinent comments. In some areas of the junior school this practice is not consistently applied at present. The school is aware of this, and recent initiatives, including teachers observing each other work, are designed to address the issue by encouraging teachers to share good practice in assessment. In both the junior and senior schools, arrangements for the evaluation of pupils' work and progress against national standards have recently been revised. These arrangements, which include using standardised tests as benchmarks for progress are effective but the information is not yet used to its fullest extent.
- 2.44 The school meets the regulatory requirements for teaching [Standard 1].

### **3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS**

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

- 3.1 The school provides outstanding pastoral support and guidance for its pupils in both senior and junior schools. Arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils, including boarders, are good. Judged to be a strength of the school at the last inspection, the school's provision in this area has continued to improve in furtherance of its aim to provide an environment where pupils can develop with confidence and security.
- 3.2 The staff in both the junior and senior school provide support and guidance of outstanding quality for all pupils. The commitment and professionalism of all staff involved in pastoral care allow pupils to develop in a friendly, caring atmosphere where their needs are understood and met. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is outstanding. Pupils approach staff freely throughout the school and consider that their concerns are listened to with great care. Many teachers provide significant amounts of time in addition to those provided for within the timetable to assist with individual pupils' concerns. The outstanding level of care for pupils is assisted by the effective pastoral arrangements provided by the school for pupils in all parts of the school. In the junior school, class teachers, co-ordinators and teaching assistants combine to provide a highly fruitful system of care. This is replicated in the senior school in the system of tutors working under the direction of heads of year, with the deputy head providing careful and effective oversight.
- 3.3 The quality of relationships among pupils is outstanding; pupils respect and help each other both within and across year groups. In the junior school, prefects assist and encourage the younger pupils. Sixth-form pupils in the senior school have a clearly defined and visible role in supporting Year 7 through attendance at their registration periods. Their interest and friendship is appreciated by the younger pupils. School councils exist in both schools; these meet regularly and pupils' representatives are able to bring suggestions, which they present with great clarity. These are listened to, and acted upon where this is practicable. Pupils in both schools are aware of the school rules and consider them to be fair and appropriate. Teachers are thought by pupils to be even handed in their treatment where there are cases of unacceptable behaviour. The system of rewards is considered to be positive and administered impartially. A comprehensive anti-bullying policy is in place throughout both schools. It is used effectively when necessary.
- 3.4 Child protection measures are in place and training is given to staff with positions of responsibility in this area and to the staff as a whole, and updated at appropriate intervals. Pupils know and understand the arrangements and are confident that they know who to turn to if necessary.
- 3.5 The required arrangements to reduce risk from fire and other hazards are in place and are overseen with a keen eye by the school's health and safety co-ordinator. The school fulfils well its responsibilities to review arrangements for access for those with disabilities despite the practical problems posed by the buildings' original design. In both these areas the school makes good use of the expertise, scrutiny and support it receives from GDST. Arrangements for registering pupils are good, with clear instructions for marking registers given to, and carried out by, staff.
- 3.6 Both junior and senior schools provide excellent medical care to support the health of pupils, both day and boarding. A dedicated health centre in the senior school and a first aid room in the junior school both have qualified staff in attendance. First aid equipment is readily

available throughout the extended sites of the two schools and is clearly identified. In both schools supervision at breaks and in the dining room is good. Improved arrangements at drop-off and pick-up times in the junior school have greatly enhanced the safety of children. An appetising selection of healthy food is provided at mealtimes throughout the day, including those for boarders, and pupils are given guidance on healthy eating through various lessons in the PSHE programme of both junior and senior schools.

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

### **The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community**

- 3.8 The school has strong links with parents and with the wider community, providing fertile ground for meeting its aim that pupils should develop the skills to enable them to play their part in that community. The school has built upon the firm foundations outlined in the previous report.
- 3.9 A high level of satisfaction amongst parents with the provision of education and support by the school was apparent in questionnaires returned by parents, and in the manner in which parents speak with pride of 'our school'. A small number of parents who responded to the questionnaire were not satisfied with the number of opportunities available to become involved in the life and work of their daughters in the school, or were critical of the amount of information they received about the school. No evidence was found during the inspection to support these views. Parents have numerous opportunities to become involved in a wide range of activities at frequent and regular intervals; these opportunities are well publicised, in particular via a weekly newsletter, received by a large majority of senior school parents via email. Typical of such opportunities are the invitation for parents to visit the Foundation Stage classrooms daily, structured links, such as a committee of staff and parents to advise on school lunches, and opportunities to work alongside teachers and pupils in charitable activities and careers education.
- 3.10 Information on pupils' work and progress is good, with high quality and thorough written reports being sent to parents, backed up by parents' evenings on academic and pastoral matters.
- 3.11 The school provides an excellent structure by which parents may make concerns known and it handles these with great care, providing feedback and action if appropriate with due speed. Responses by some parents in the parental questionnaire expressed limited satisfaction with the way concerns have been handled but no evidence was found to support this view during the inspection. The school's complaints procedure is appropriate and is given added weight by the resources available through GDST to ensure that complaints are dealt with rigorously. The procedure has not been invoked recently.
- 3.12 The school provides highly positive links with the wider community and encourages and enables pupils to play their part within it through an extensive variety of initiatives. These are particularly well developed in the senior school. Strong links exist with a neighbouring church, with Bath Chamber of Commerce and with local sporting groups. Sixth formers work with Year 5 and Year 8 pupils in local schools to help them with literacy and numeracy and there are similar links between the school's own senior and junior sections. The school's commitment to fulfilling this aspect of its aims for pupils' development is underlined by the designation of three members of staff with particular responsibilities for charitable and community work and communication, roles which are performed to good effect.

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

### **The Quality of Boarding Education**

- 3.14 Boarding at the school is characterised by a noticeable sense of community. The school's aim to provide a homely, boarding environment is met successfully. Since the last inspection a plan for renovating both boarding houses has been initiated, as recommended on that occasion.
- 3.15 Provision for boarding is well organised with good structures in place to ensure communication between staff and pupils is smooth-running and productive. Relations between staff and pupils are good. Pupils feel valued and well supported by staff and gain confidence from this. Boarders get on well and respect each other, although there are occasionally issues of full integration between groups of pupils. The school is aware of these issues and is working sensitively to resolve them. Boarding pupils develop close and rewarding friendships with day pupils.
- 3.16 A varied and appropriate programme of activities is provided after school and at weekends for boarders, with particularly good opportunities provided for sporting activity.
- 3.17 Boarders live in accommodation that is suited to their respective ages. A programme of renovation is underway in both boarding houses, as recommended at the last inspection, and has already included the replacement of carpets and bedroom furniture. This has resulted in considerable improvement in accommodation but the work is not yet complete.

## **4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

### **The Quality of Governance**

- 4.1 Effective oversight of the school is provided by GDST in key educational and financial areas. The school is well supported by a local governing body which provides scrutiny of other areas of school life and offers guidance on forward planning. The distinctive roles of the two bodies are clearly defined but they also work together co-operatively and successfully to the benefit of the pupils, particularly with regard to planning for the future.
- 4.2 The local governing body includes a range of educational, business and pastoral experience in its membership and governors have clear understanding of their responsibilities. Rigorous financial oversight by GDST ensures that accommodation and resources in the school are generous and are used effectively. GDST ensures that policies with regard to Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks, the induction of newly qualified teachers and child protection are put into practice by the school. The local body takes a keen interest in curriculum provision and pastoral care.
- 4.3 The senior and junior schools each have contact with a designated member of the local body who visits them regularly, spending time with individual departments and reporting back to the governors' meetings. These visits, well established in the senior school but a new initiative in the junior school, are welcomed and found useful by both teachers and governors. They enable the local governing body to assist in overseeing the school's aim to provide a good, all-round education for its pupils.

### **The Quality of Leadership and Management**

- 4.4 The headmaster, together with the headmistress of the junior school, provides outstanding leadership and is backed by a dedicated and well-focussed senior management team. All lead by example in pursuing the school's aims. The strength of leadership identified at the last inspection has been consolidated by recent changes to the management structure of the junior school which allows co-ordinators to monitor aspects of teaching and learning more closely.
- 4.5 The headmaster and the headmistress of the junior school work closely and to good effect together to bring to fruition a clear vision of the school's future which has regard for pupils' education and pastoral care and which is imaginative yet realistic. They embody the school's ethos in that they show equal regard for academic excellence, sporting achievement and creative endeavour whilst encouraging each pupil to see herself with confidence as an individual. They have high expectations of teachers and pupils alike.
- 4.6 Productive meetings and regular communication between staff and within and between the senior and junior schools ensure that the needs of the school are analysed with clarity. Planning to meet these needs is methodical and realistic in terms of financial requirements and educational and pastoral priorities. The deputy head of the senior school successfully fulfils a clearly defined role to promote links between the junior and senior schools and to develop consistency within curriculum planning in Years 5 and 6 and Years 7 and 8. The school development plan looks far ahead into the future and has regard to possible future directions which the school might take in response to social and educational developments as well as planning efficiently on a year by year basis. A number of groups have been set up across departments in the senior school to allow heads of departments to plan consistently in areas such as assessment and teaching styles. Heads of department in the senior school and co-ordinators in the junior school retain the responsibility to put policies into practice. In

both schools, policies and procedures are thorough and detailed. In general these are put into practice well, and recent initiatives to encourage more engagement in the creative arts in both schools were observed to be already having a positive effect, led by staff with specific responsibility in this area. Some policies in the junior school, such as that to standardise approaches to marking, have only recently been introduced and complete consistency in their implementation has not yet been achieved.

- 4.7 The school secures highly motivated, professional teaching and support teachers who are themselves supported by a strong staff development programme generated by GDST. Issues arising from this process are used to identify needs for training, which is organised and carried out effectively. CRB checks are carried out appropriately on all new staff and arrangements for the induction of new teachers are good. Arrangements are in place for newly qualified teachers to be monitored and trained under an appropriate scheme administered by GDST which meets designated standards.
- 4.8 Financial planning in the school is good, with suitably detailed and realistic financial assessments for future plans being presented to GDST. The resulting financial resources are allocated with clear educational benefit to the pupils in mind, particularly in the area of ICT. An ongoing programme of renovation is pursued alongside new building projects, such as the refurbishment and redesign of the former chapel, which will become a centre for the arts.
- 4.9 The smooth-running of the school owes much to the hard-working members of the secretarial and support staff who show commitment to the school's ethos and an interest and pride in the pupils.
- 4.10 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].

## **5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS**

### **Overall Conclusions**

- 5.1 The clear and dynamic leadership of the headmaster, together with the headmistress of the junior school, supported by the local governing body and by the managerial resources of GDST, ensures that the school is successful in meeting its aims and in enabling pupils to achieve good standards of achievement academically and in a wide range of activities. Enthusiastic teaching by highly informed staff makes a very significant contribution to pupils' success. The high level of commitment that teachers show to the pastoral care of pupils and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development gives pupils the confidence to develop as well-rounded individuals who are articulate and personable.
- 5.2 Since the last inspection in November 2000 the school has made substantial progress, particularly in its provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Provision for activities, within the curriculum and outside it has been improved, particularly in the creative arts. The approach to provision for pupils' particular needs has developed significantly across both schools, especially that for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, although provision for the most able pupils is not yet as consistent. Management structures in the junior school have been revised, ensuring that co-ordinators are able to monitor teaching and learning more effectively. The renovation of boarding accommodation has begun but is still ongoing.
- 5.3 The school complies with all of the regulatory requirements.

### **Next Steps**

- 5.4 No major aspect of the school is weak, but in order to improve its provision further it should:
1. take steps to ensure that existing good practice in marking in the junior school is adopted by all teachers.
- 5.5 No action in respect of regulatory requirements is required.

## 6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> October 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 and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the medical centre. 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.
- 6.2 National Minimum Boarding Standards were inspected by a team of three Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) inspectors over 2 days.

### List of Inspectors

M Bussey	Reporting Inspector
C Richmond	Assistant Reporting Inspector
J Carroll	Headmaster, IAPS School
C Delo	Head of Science, IAPS School
R Nichol	Head of Section, French Government School
D Parkman	Deputy Head, GSA School
S Ross	Head, GSA School
S Sowden	Retired Head, GSA School
G Sykes	Director of Studies, HMC School
G Ward	Teacher, SHMIS School