



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

CITY OF LONDON SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

City of London School

Full Name of School	City of London School		
DfE Number	201/6007		
Registered Charity Number	N/A		
Address	City of London School 107 Queen Victoria Street London EC4V 3AL		
Telephone Number	020 7489 0291		
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Email Address	headmaster@clsb.org.uk		
Headmaster	Mr David Levin		
Chairman of Governors	The Revd Stephen Haines		
Age Range	10 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	924		
Gender of Pupils	Boys		
Numbers by Age	10-11:	48	11-18: 876
Inspection dates	29 Mar 2011 to 30 Mar 2011 04 May 2011 to 06 May 2011		

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 City of London School has a large site in the City by the Thames. It has over twenty acres of sports pitches, in south east London. The school's origins lie in a bequest by the Town Clerk of London in the reign of Henry V. It was established by Act of Parliament in 1834 and moved to the present site in 1986. The school is governed by a board of governors and also by the City of London Corporation, which appoints the governors. Since the previous inspection, the school has changed its systems for financial and human resource management.
- 1.2 The school's main aims are to welcome talented boys from a diversity of backgrounds into a tolerant, harmonious community in which they achieve the highest academic standards, and to make full use of their potential and develop towards responsible adulthood. It is intended that boys will be academically fulfilled and qualified, with a wide range of skills and interests outside the curriculum, sensitive to the needs of others and tolerant of others' beliefs, outward looking and compassionate and responsive to the wider community, leaving socially confident and civilised.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, the number of pupils on roll was 924, of whom 48 were in Year 6 and 269 were in the sixth form. The pupils' ability is far above the national average up to the sixth form, where the school has a wider intake, but it is still above the national average at this stage. Boys come from a wide variety of maintained and independent schools from all over London. Almost half of the pupils are of minority ethnic descent; 40 different nationalities are represented. Over two-fifths receive some form of fee remission, with 95 pupils having free places on means-tested sponsored awards. Choristers of the Chapel Royal and the Temple Church are usually pupils with scholarships. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The school has 120 pupils on the learning support register, identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and a further 9 receive support for English as an additional language.
- 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
Old Grammar	Year 6
First Form	Year 7
Second Form	Year 8
Third Form	Year 9
Fourth Form	Year 10
Fifth Form	Year 11
Junior Sixth	Year 12
Senior Sixth	Year 13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 City of London School is exceptionally successful. The pupils' achievements are high and they make outstanding progress, doing justice to their very high ability, which is far above the national average. Attainment is high at GCSE and A level, and pupils meet with outstanding success in applying for the most highly competitive university courses. They follow an excellent and challenging curriculum, and with an exceptionally wide range of high quality extra-curricular activities, are well rounded and balanced, secure in a very supportive framework that allows them to be happy at school. Sound discipline and good order are present throughout, and boys express appreciation of the school's atmosphere. All this is achieved by excellent teaching that stimulates in the pupils intellectual curiosity, critical enquiry and a determination to succeed. The marking is usually excellent, but on a very few occasions is less effective in providing helpful guidance.
- 2.2 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school is an exceptional intellectual and cultural community. The pupils benefit from the high standards of care and the example set by the staff. The school provides excellent arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils.
- 2.3 The leadership and management of the school are exceptional, and they are supported by an excellent governing body that is well informed and effective in its planning and monitoring. The ethos of the school is clearly evident and maintained by the governors and senior leadership team, who ensure that the school's high aims are achieved. The school has responded with energy to the recommendations of the previous inspection by initiating successful systems of monitoring.

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 met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
1. Ensure that all work is marked thoroughly and in a way that is most helpful to pupils, drawing upon the widespread excellent practice already in place.

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 the pupils' overall achievement is outstanding. Pupils are exceptionally well educated, and the school is successful in achieving its aims of being a community in which boys achieve the highest academic standards, make full use of their potential and are academically fulfilled and qualified.
- 3.2 At all levels, pupils show high levels of knowledge, skills and understanding. They frequently demonstrate their ability to think critically and creatively. They write fluently and accurately for a wide range of purposes and their extended writing skills are well developed. Pupils reason and argue cogently and can explain abstract concepts clearly. Pupils use mathematics confidently in subjects across the curriculum, for example in the evaluation of statistics in biology. In modern foreign languages, the boys have authentic accents, as well as a thorough grasp of grammar and syntax, as they do in English. Pupils apply information and communication technology (ICT) confidently and relevantly across the curriculum, and most use a helpful system of keyboarding which enables them to be quick and accurate. They are articulate and fluent, speaking effectively and with grace in formal and informal situations. They are creative, as shown especially in the arts, music and literature, and they also develop well their physical abilities.
- 3.3 The school has achieved many exceptional successes in recent years in national and international competitions for debating, essay writing, mathematics and translations, and in other fields. Boys have won international sporting honours in fencing, table tennis, chess, running and football, and county representation in water-polo, cross-country and indoor rowing. Pupils have been awarded many high grade musical certificates on several instruments and have achieved considerable success in such varied activities as football academy membership; the National Youth Orchestra and English National Opera; and the BBC Young Choristers of the Year. The choristers of the Chapel Royal sang at the recent royal wedding.
- 3.4 As at the previous inspection, the boys, at all levels, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those for whom English is an additional language, make excellent progress, doing full justice to their very high ability. Results at GCSE over the last three years for which comparative data is available, 2008 to 2010, have been excellent when compared with those in maintained selective schools. International GCSE (IGCSE) performance has been above international and UK norms. Results at A level are exceptionally high, well above the national average for boys in maintained selective schools. Pupils are highly successful in gaining places to their first choice of university, achieving entry at the most competitive establishments, and winning academic and music scholarships.
- 3.5 The pupils are sophisticated learners who are inquiring and eager to learn. Boys are often required to take notes and can do so efficiently. They are good at defining concepts. They relish the opportunity to undertake independent research, as in topics such as world literature. Boys work well together in groups in classes, in teams and in extra-curricular activities. They are able to have an effective dialogue with teachers. They make effective use of the school's excellent library, which has over 30,000 books, and the bookshop. Boys normally have a book with them that they are reading for their own enjoyment, even when waiting outside a lesson.

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

- 3.6 The quality of the curriculum and the provision of extra-curricular activities are excellent, in accordance with the school's aims for pupils to be academically fulfilled and qualified, with a wide range of skills and interests outside the curriculum. The school has a rich blend of the traditional with the best of modern technology.
- 3.7 The broad curriculum is of exceptional quality and effective in its coverage of different areas of learning. Pupils in Year 6 benefit from a broad and deep curriculum, concentrating on core areas but with due attention to other enriching subjects. This continues until the end of Year 9, when pupils, while mainly following the same core, can choose from a stimulating and intellectually challenging group of subjects that includes four modern foreign languages, with two others available for study outside the main timetable, Latin, Greek and the three separate sciences. To provide additional challenges for pupils, some departments enter them for the IGCSE examination, and pupils have the option of studying additional mathematics. Sixth-form pupils have a wide range of subjects from which to choose and almost any combination is possible, thereby maximising the choice available to them. Pupils frequently choose both science and arts subjects.
- 3.8 Pupils have an exceptionally wide range of sporting and extra-curricular activities from which to choose, and they support these well. These complement and extend pupils' academic study, to their benefit. Sport features well. In total, fourteen competitive sports are available. Pupils enjoy high standards of specialist coaching in several sports and make good use of the school's excellent facilities. Music and drama are of a very high standard, and both often include girls from the sister school, The City of London School for Girls, as in a recent performance of Mozart's *Requiem*. Pupils can select from some 38 societies or they can choose to start their own. These currently include such interests as cheese appreciation, comedy, law, model railways, lunchtime talks from prominent visiting speakers and the Barnes/Amis Society, a literary club named after two renowned novelists who were former pupils of the school. Pupils gain valuable experience from running most clubs and societies themselves, with little staff supervision.
- 3.9 Pupils benefit from varied and excellent links with the community. Over 100 pupils are members of the school's Community Service Organisation, which supports an after-school club for children from south London, as well as fifteen other projects in the local area. The Combined Cadet Force (CCF) is strong and has a partnership arrangement with a maintained school, with cadets sharing parades and camps. Pupils are involved with a local university scheme, helping to reduce street violence in London. Through these, boys have valuable experiences with organisations and learn much about other people and themselves.
- 3.10 Pupils' experiences are widened by around 200 trips that take place each year. For example, geographers travel to Namibia and classicists to Pompeii, while a visit to South Africa for the Model United Nations is organised, along with regular trips to France and Germany. The school makes full use of the facilities of London.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.11 Teaching is outstanding and effective in promoting pupils' progress; it supports the aims of the school for them to achieve the highest academic standards. The high quality of teaching reported at the last inspection has been maintained and continues to enable boys to develop intellectually and to acquire a love of learning.
- 3.12 Teachers set high standards. Lessons are carefully planned, purposeful and productive, encouraging enthusiastic learning and rapid progress by all pupils in all areas of their curricular and extra-curricular life at school. Teachers know and understand the needs of their pupils and this builds up a sense of mutual trust. Pupils report that their teachers are approachable, and they appreciate the time willingly given outside lessons to support their learning or to extend those eager to take a topic further. Individual specialist lessons, together with the help provided in mainstream classes, enable all pupils to make excellent progress, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those for whom English is an additional language. Extension work is frequently given: extra more demanding work is on offer for those pupils who easily cope with the general class work. Teaching uses ICT where appropriate, to help learning.
- 3.13 Teachers are very well qualified and possess excellent knowledge of their subject; they draw on this effectively to foster an atmosphere of academic aspiration among the boys, who respond well and see themselves as the intellectual equals of their teachers. Teaching is adept in communicating complex ideas and concepts. Nearly all teaching goes far beyond the confines of preparation for examination and boys consequently have a clear sense of intellectual discovery and exploration, and of the value of academic learning for its own sake. For example, a philosophy lesson with sixth formers challenged their excellent knowledge and understanding of the moral positions of Aquinas, Freud, Bentham and Mill, and their relevance to modern times. The calm atmosphere which teachers encourage leads to boys' enjoyment of their learning and to their high standards of behaviour. Teachers set very high intellectual standards for pupils. Boys tackle work at a level that would usually be expected from older pupils. Teachers make links between subjects. Boys were shown how to use their knowledge of Latin vocabulary to understand difficult words in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.
- 3.14 From Year 6 onwards, teachers set a great deal of challenging work as homework, relevant to the different ages of the boys. Pupils' progress is very effectively recorded and monitored through regular assessment. Marking is generally of high quality, with the best examples of practice showing detailed, diagnostic comments, providing valuable constructive feedback to pupils. However, in a very few instances, marking is either cursory or provides little evidence of such feedback to pupils.

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 and awareness of the boys are excellent. The pupils are sensitive to the needs and beliefs of others, outward looking and compassionate and responsive to the wider community, fulfilling the aims of the school. The school is a tolerant and humane community. Every boy has a pocket sized homework diary and this practical booklet is appreciated not just for its inclusion of school rules but also for school standards, including honesty, courtesy, loyalty and teamwork, commitment to work, dress and self-discipline; all values which the boys integrate into their daily lives. In pre-inspection questionnaires and interviews, boys were appreciative of such values, especially the school's good order and discipline.
- 4.2 Boys have a well-developed awareness of the spiritual dimension. They are confident and possess self-respect; the cosmopolitan composition of the school helps to bring about a firm respect for others, religious tolerance and a genuine interest in other faiths. Boys openly display signs of their own faith commitments. They use the opportunities to choose which assembly to attend; although the school is non-denominational, separate religious assemblies, frequently led by boys, are held regularly for all the major faiths represented in the school. Pupils are at ease with abstract concepts and ideas about metaphysical matters.
- 4.3 Boys show a very well-developed moral awareness. Good manners and courtesy are evident at all times, and strong, positive relationships exist between boys and staff, and amongst the boys themselves. Boys appreciate the school's reward systems. They understand and accept the school's firm rules on discipline. Genuine and practical moral concern for the wider world and the needs of others is shown in the notable charity work within the school. The boys themselves choose a charity to support, currently for teenagers with cancer, and organise fund-raising activities, resulting in a total of £50,000 in 2010. Pupils volunteer to assist in a wide range of community organisations.
- 4.4 Pupils' social development and awareness are excellent. Boys are secure, and are well aware of their own place in the school. In the well-supported CCF, boys show the ability to lead and to follow, and demonstrate their understanding of the value of order and discipline. Boys show very good awareness of current affairs, for example with regard to tensions and developments in ongoing global conflicts. They debate and evaluate the strength of each other's views. Collaboration between pupils of all ages is a noticeable feature, for example in the Aero Society, which was instigated by pupils and is run by senior ones, with enthusiastic support from younger pupils.
- 4.5 Pupils' cultural awareness is strongly developed, and is reinforced by their participation in a large number and range of trips within England and abroad. The boys make full use of the school's location, and visits to an inspiring range of locations and institutions are integrated into their educational experience, while an excellent variety of guest speakers and performers visit the school regularly. Music and drama are very strong features, and in lessons and interviews, pupils made reference on a number of occasions to theatre trips that had developed their insight and cultural understanding.

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

- 4.6 The quality of pastoral care, welfare, health and safety is outstanding throughout, and fully supports the school's aims. Well-designed pastoral structures are tailored to the needs of pupils of different ages and provide valuable guidance that enables them to become confident and increasingly self-reliant.
- 4.7 Relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and staff are extremely strong. Staff know the boys well as individuals and so ensure that they are looked after well. Boys commented warmly on the friendly atmosphere in the school, which is also very clear to visitors.
- 4.8 Pastoral staff throughout the school liaise closely and effectively to monitor the academic progress and personal development of individual pupils. Heads of year, with their deputies, and form tutors work closely together, liaising well with boys and parents. Pupils are confident to speak to staff if they have any concerns and know to whom they can turn. In Year 9, an effective system of sixth-form mentors is in place to help support any pupils who may have been identified as struggling. In the sixth form, boys enjoy and benefit from mixed-year form groups, arranged around subject specialism rather than age. They are also especially appreciative of the mixed-year house system, which enables boys of different ages to work together. A particular strength, much appreciated by the boys, is the regular Student Day, where every pupil receives individual time with his tutor to discuss a wide range of issues, from academic grades through to more pastoral matters, with the academic and pastoral systems clearly integrated. Targets are set, such as for pupils to be more involved with extra-curricular activities, and careers advice is given, for example about subject option choices. Additional advice is available through the school's two counsellors and a comment box enables pupils to pass on anonymously concerns or requests for help.
- 4.9 The school's high expectations of behaviour successfully encourage mutual respect and a mature attitude to relationships across the community, and a system of commendations, culminating in a certificate presented by the chairman of governors, helps to reinforce good behaviour. The school has effective procedures for promoting good behaviour and guarding against harassment and bullying, and for dealing constructively with any unacceptable behaviour. Boys mentioned the lack of bullying. They report that they feel very safe and have confidence that any concerns will be dealt with quickly.
- 4.10 The safeguarding policy meets requirements and is implemented successfully. All staff receive suitable training. All necessary measures are taken to reduce risks from fire and other hazards. Arrangements to ensure health and safety are effective and include good provision for boys who are ill. The school has a suitable plan to improve access for those with disabilities. The admission and attendance registers are meticulously maintained. Boys learn about being healthy in their science lessons, and by taking regular physical exercise as part of the curriculum, and benefit from taking part in the exceptional range of extra-curricular sports and games. School lunches offer nutritional choices.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The governing body provides excellent oversight of the school, guards its aims, and discharges effectively all responsibilities for standards, financial planning, and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. It has a clear sense of its responsibilities to the Corporation of London, the school, the parents and the pupils. Sub-committees have key functions and report to the full governing body, which has taken active steps to ensure relevant expertise within its membership. The governing body exercises effectively its monitoring role, and provides support, challenge and stimulus for growth and improvement. Communications between the governors and senior management are excellent and frequent. Working with the staff, the governors have produced a precise and comprehensive development plan, containing the level of detail recommended in the previous inspection report.
- 5.2 The governing body is highly effective in discharging its responsibilities for child protection, welfare, health and safety throughout the school. All necessary checks are carried out and carefully recorded. All the required policies are in place, implemented and regularly reviewed.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.3 At all levels, leadership and management are excellent, in accordance with the aims of the school. Their clear educational direction is reflected in the high quality of the pupils' education and the standard of their personal development. The senior leadership is particularly successful in conveying to the pupils the main aims of the school, setting ideals, promoting a culture of intellectual discovery within a civilised ambience, and maintaining very high standards. The school is effective in self-evaluation, setting priorities and ensuring that they are achieved. The leadership, working with the heads of department, has introduced systems that have improved on the monitoring and support of teachers, identified at the previous inspection as needing attention; these are now excellent. Heads of department now observe lessons and scrutinise the books of pupils, and senior staff sit with pupils in lessons and shadow them in order to monitor their educational experience. The school is aware of some unevenness in marking and is taking steps to effect improvements.
- 5.4 Inspirational senior leadership, strongly supported by a highly effective team, is committed to the values of the school and well aware of how to achieve them. Leadership is self-critical, seeking constantly for improvement. All members of the leadership team are easily accessible to the whole school community and know the pupils as individuals.
- 5.5 Management at all levels is successful in securing, supporting, developing and motivating exceptionally well-qualified staff, and ensuring that they are suitably trained for their roles in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. The school has thorough arrangements for checking the suitability of staff, including volunteers, supply staff and governors.
- 5.6 Administration is efficient and supports well the high quality of education provided for the pupils; it reflects, in its courtesy and helpfulness, the tone of the school. Support staff are well led and managed. All teaching and support staff serve the school very well and uphold its ethos. Buildings and grounds are carefully maintained. All staff,

in both teaching and support capacities, work together for the manifest benefit of the pupils.

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

- 5.7 The quality of links between the school and parents, carers and guardians is outstanding and strongly supports the education of the pupils. Parental responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires indicated exceptionally strong support for the school. No items of concern were raised by a significant number of parents. They were particularly pleased with the progress their sons are making, the range of subjects available, extra-curricular activities and other areas of experiences offered, the quality of pastoral care, the values promoted, the quality of communication, and the governance and management of the school. They supported and endorsed the school's firm approach to disciplinary matters. Occasionally, the school organises its own surveys of parental views.
- 5.8 Communication between the school and parents is excellent. Regular formal links exist through weekly email messages, annual parents' evenings for each year group, grade cards, and informative end-of-term written reports that are posted together with the termly newsletter *City Lights* and the end-of-term letter. Homework diaries are used as a two-way means of communication. *The Citizen* newspaper, which is produced every Friday, largely by the boys, and which parents can receive electronically, provides information about school news. Informally, contact through telephone, email and impromptu meetings encourages close parental involvement with the school, and this partnership with parents is perceived to be productive for boys' development.
- 5.9 Parents have good opportunities to be actively involved in the work and progress of their children. They are warmly welcomed to school events such as concerts, plays and matches. The Friends of CLS is an organisation to which all parents belong and through which they can support the school and their sons, especially through social events.
- 5.10 Parents of current and prospective pupils are suitably provided with all required information. Comprehensive information about the school and its policies is easily accessible on its attractive website. The school handles the concerns of parents with care and follows its published procedures. The school is close to its parents and families, and listens to their views.

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 chairman of 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

Mr Eric Hester	Reporting Inspector
Mr John Parsonage	Former Head of Department, HMC school
Mrs Alison Bawden	Deputy Head, HMC school
Mr Andrew Green-Howard	Deputy Head, GSA school
Mr Patrick Lee-Browne	Headmaster, HMC school
Mr John Richley	Former Deputy Head, HMC school