

# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

## THE ARTS EDUCATIONAL SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

## INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

### The Arts Educational School

DfE Number 313/6064
Registered Charity Number 311087

Address The Arts Educational School

14 Bath Road Chiswick London W4 1LY

Telephone Number **020 8987 6600**Fax Number **020 8987 6601** 

Email Address pupils@artsed.co.uk

Interim Headteacher Mr Greg Beavis
Chair of Governors Mr Terry Malloy

Age Range 11 to 18
Total Number of Pupils 196

Gender of Pupils Mixed (55 boys; 141 girls)

Number of Day Pupils Total: 196

Inspection dates 07 Dec 2010 to 08 Dec 2010

17 Jan 2011 to 19 Jan 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 October 2006.

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

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.

<sup>\*</sup>These Standards Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

# **CONTENTS**

		Page
1	THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2	THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL	2
(a)	Main findings	2
(b)	Action points	3
	(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
	(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	3
3	THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	4
(a) (b)	The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills  The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including	4
(-)	community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c)	The contribution of teaching	6
4	THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	8
(a)	The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	8
(b)	The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	8
5	THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND	
	MANAGEMENT	10
(a)	The quality of governance	10
(b)	The quality of leadership and management	10
(c)	The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians	11
	INSPECTION EVIDENCE	12

#### 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The Arts Educational School is located in Chiswick, London, and is a specialist secondary performing arts school for boys and girls. It provides an academic education and a vocational training. The school is part of the Arts Educational Schools, a charitable trust, and has its own accommodation within the trust's building. A principal charged with the oversight of all the trust's operations in the building works under the board of trustees. Under the principal is the headteacher who is responsible for the management of the school, overseen by a school committee directly appointed by the trustees. This committee exercises the school governance.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide each pupil with the opportunity to achieve to the highest standards through a balanced academic, vocational, cultural and social curriculum. It aims for high quality and encourages its pupils to be confident and self-aware, yet also thoughtful, passionate about life and sensitive to their responsibilities to each other and to the world.
- 1.3 Since the last inspection a new principal and an interim headteacher have been appointed, the drama department has been expanded and the school has moved to greater alignment with the National Curriculum.
- 1.4 The school is attended by 196 pupils. Forty boys and ninety-one girls are in Years 7 to 11, and fifteen boys and fifty girls are in Years 12 and 13.
- 1.5 The ability profile of the senior school is in line with the national average. The school does not carry out ability testing of pupils entering the sixth form but the school considers the ability to be also close to the national average. Pupils are drawn from a wide geographical area, many have long journeys and some of the sixth form live in independent accommodation away from home. Year 13 leavers move on to drama or dance schools or to universities. Some take a gap year before moving on to the next stage of their education or training. The number of Year 11 pupils staying on varies considerably: leavers may decide to progress to other sixth-form colleges where they study subjects not available at the school.
- Twenty-one pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD), mainly dyslexia, and one has a statement of special educational needs (SEN). There are a number of pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) but only one of whom for whom the school makes special arrangements.
- 1.7 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

### 2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

## 2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Pupils excel in the performing arts and achieve well in academic studies. This is evident in their written academic work, the examples of art and photography on display in the school, and in the discipline and standard of its performances in drama and dance. Pupils are supported by excellent teaching, and an outstanding vocational curriculum, whilst pursuing a good academic curriculum. The curriculum has been significantly strengthened in mathematics and science since the last inspection. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities and the extensive range of additional activities in the performing arts is a special feature of the school. Teachers have a flair and enthusiasm which is infectious and inspires endeavour and interest among the pupils. The pupils' positive attitudes to their work, their teachers, and each other contribute to their academic and vocational achievement.
- 2.2 The personal development of pupils is excellent. In dedicating themselves to the pursuance of excellence in the performing arts, pupils commit themselves to long days of hard work out of which they derive satisfaction, happiness and self-esteem. This development is supported by excellent pastoral care. The support and guidance offered to pupils, including those with learning difficulties fully supports effective learning. Pupils' time in the school is safeguarded by provision for welfare, health and safety which is of a high standard, although there are shortcomings in the provision of washbasins for pupils.
- 2.3 The aims of the school are fulfilled and promoted by the school committee which exercises governance under the board of trustees, which exercises good oversight overall. The school is led and managed outstandingly well, and a strong and productive team spirit has been achieved which is having a direct and immediate impact on the pupils' learning. The management of the pupils' personal development and welfare is good, although there have been two areas where regulations had not been fully met, and one of these remains. The school had attended to all of the regulatory shortcomings identified at the last inspection by the time of the second visit and has responded positively to that report's other recommendations. Links with parents are good; the school is highly responsive to parents and communicates with them extensively.

### 2.(b) Action points

### (i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school did not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it was required to:
  - increase the number of washbasins for staff and pupils [Part 5, paragraph 23(j), under Premises and accommodation];
  - devise a three-year accessibility plan [under The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001].
- 2.5 At the time of the final team visit, the school had rectified the second of the above shortcomings, as noted in the text of the report. However, the following requirement remains unresolved, and therefore the school must:
  - increase the number of washbasins for staff and pupils [Part 5, paragraph 23(j), under Premises and accommodation].

### (ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action point, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
  - 1. Further develop marking and assessment, including baseline assessment, and implement the system of grading pupils' work consistently.
  - 2. Share existing good practice in order to develop consistency in lesson planning across all teaching.
  - Improve the operation of the infrastructure and systems of information and communications technology (ICT) in order to better support learning and administration.
  - 4. Consider how best to expand opportunities for outdoor recreational exercise.

### 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 pupils are well educated from entry to the school up to the sixth form. The progress that they make in both academic and vocational activities fulfils the school's aim to approach learning in a disciplined, rigorous and enthusiastic manner, and to aim high and achieve good academic results. Pupils excel in the performing arts and achieve well in the other subjects.
- 3.2 Pupils are very co-operative and listen well, and are adept at reasoning and arguing, as for example in a sixth-form philosophy lesson where they confidently used its specialist terminology. In the laboratory they follow instructions diligently and carefully. Most have good literacy and numeracy skills and some have developed these skills to a very high standard. An assembly led by Year 7 pupils showed outstanding competence in speaking in public. Work is copious and its presentation and organisation are good. Many pupils show great neatness and care in this aspect. Some pupils, however, fail to complete work, even when omissions have been pointed out. In many subjects pupils carry out logical and independent work confidently. Creative work in the arts is excellent: a Year 12 photography pupil had synthesised an event from her own life with that of an American photographer, showing both personal insight and a willingness to take risks as an artist. Pupils are very competent in the use of ICT in many different ways. A striking example was the work of a Year 10 class drafting and redrafting drama reviews. In drama and dance all pupils show perseverance to improve physically, and take fitness very seriously.
- 3.3 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2007 to 2009. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in GCSE have been good in relation to the national average for maintained schools, and in 2007 and 2008 were similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. In 2008 pupils gained an average of nine passes each and 96% of these were A\* to C grades. A-level results have been generally in line with the national average for maintained schools. There was an improvement in overall results in 2010 with a considerably enlarged cohort and when three-quarters of passes were in the range A\* to B. Outstanding standards are attained in externally assessed and graded examinations in dance and drama, and in musical theatre. In the latter at grade 8 all Year 12 and 13 pupils entered gained distinctions and in ballet at grade 7 three-quarters of the recent grades were distinctions. One pupil has recently represented Great Britain in acrobatic gymnastics and several have had the required levels of competence in dance and drama to enable them to perform at national theatres.
- 3.4 The level of attainment indicates that pupils overall make at least good progress to GCSE level relative to the average for pupils of similar ability, as shown by standardised measures of progress, and exceptional progress is made by some cohorts. In the absence of sixth-form ability profile data judgements of progress based on examination results cannot be made. Nevertheless, abundant evidence in the art work on display, pupils' performance in drama and dance, and the range of successful destinations achieved in higher education indicates outstanding progress.
- 3.5 Such successful achievement is supported by the pupils' good attitudes to learning, their exemplary behaviour, and the very good relationships enjoyed between

themselves and staff members. They enjoy school immensely. Pupils are well-motivated, concentrate and persevere with their work and show dedication to their studies. They develop very good study skills.

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

- 3.6 There is a good academic curriculum, supported by an appropriate range of extracurricular activities. The vocational curriculum is excellent. Together these meet the aspirations of pupils and their families and the school's aim to provide a balanced academic, vocational cultural and social curriculum.
- 3.7 Between Year 7 and Year 9 all pupils follow a curriculum based on the National Curriculum including personal, social and health education (PHSE). ICT is taught across the curriculum in an integrated manner. In addition every pupil has vocational lessons every day. These are either dance or acting, depending upon which course is being followed, but there are regular opportunities for the dancers to participate in drama and the actors to dance. In addition, pupils in Year 9 study GCSE expressive arts, which is examined in Year 10 alongside external examinations in both dance and drama. In Years 10 and 11 all pupils continue to study a core curriculum as well as either drama or dance GCSE. In addition they select three other subjects from French, history, geography, music, photography, media studies and art. Given timetable pressures, this element of choice at this level is reasonable. PHSE continues with an emphasis on study and thinking skills. Careers advice is given in form time by tutors well versed in the career paths pupils are likely to choose. Much vocational teaching observed during the inspection also had careers advice embedded in the planning and delivery.
- 3.8 The PHSE programme is supplemented by the use of form time to include citizenship. The curriculum is suitable for the range of pupils attending the school and its planning includes high quality support for those pupils with LDD and/or EAL, and for those with SEN. This meets the recommendations of the previous inspection. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education and the school does a great deal to help those pupils who in mid-school career wish to change direction and go elsewhere. Significant and positive changes to the provision since the last inspection include a broader science curriculum, achieved by adding chemistry to its subjects and the teaching of physics off-timetable, and an increase in the time given to mathematics. These changes also meet the recommendations of that inspection.
- 3.9 The sixth-form curriculum provides pupils with an inspiring and challenging education, specialising in the creative and performing arts. It successfully meets the school's aim of refining the pupils' skills acquired at GCSE whilst offering high level training in the arts. It offers pupils ten arts subjects at A2 level together with mathematics at AS level, and the BTEC extended diploma in the performing arts. In addition, pupils are expected to attend a number of compulsory non-examination classes in dance and music in order to extend their performance skills and expose them to performance areas they might not have considered.
- 3.10 The extra-curricular activities provided for the performing arts are outstanding and enhance the education of the pupils who take part, which is the majority. However, extra-curricular activities not focused on the performing arts are more limited and a small minority of parents expressed some concerns about this. Inspectors judged that this provision is satisfactory, given the long school day, long journeys undertaken by some pupils, and rehearsals for the many school productions, which

limit the time available for extra-curricular activities. Sport in the form of football, netball and tennis options has usefully been introduced and this goes some way to respond to the previous inspection's recommendations, although opportunities for basic outdoor recreational exercise remain limited.

## 3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.11 Teaching is excellent. In the lessons observed the quality of teaching was consistently good, and a significant proportion was outstanding. The school meets its aim of providing high quality professional and academic experiences. The teaching is a principal factor in the high levels of the pupils' achievement at all levels.
- 3.12 Teachers are sufficient in number, and have suitable qualifications and experience and very good subject knowledge. The small class sizes allow teachers to gain a good knowledge of their pupils and their needs and potential. This, coupled with good subject knowledge, enables them to plan to meet pupils' needs. The flair and enthusiasm apparent in much of the teaching proves infectious and sparks endeavour and interest in the pupils. Books, the internet and computers are all well used in supporting exciting approaches to learning. The school has an active programme of reviewing and renewing practice in teaching and learning, the impact of which in terms of innovative approaches to the pupils' learning was seen in many lessons. The aims of lessons are very clear, a feature strongly corroborated by pupils. The extent to which other aspects of planning are productively detailed varies significantly between teachers and subjects. Behaviour issues seldom emerge.
- 3.13 The teaching shows a good variety of approaches. In science pupils say that they learn in many different ways, which include: a diversity of experimental work, for different purposes; good teacher-led demonstrations; watching selected clips using ICT; simulations; and preparing presentations on the interactive whiteboard. Scrutiny of books and portfolios shows this variety to be common to many subjects. Pupils use skills acquired across the curriculum in varied ways, for example, in the production of attractive anti-smoking posters aimed at teenagers or in using techniques acquired in 'learning to learn' sessions in other subjects. Much of the sixth-form work is in small groups where the lessons are more like university tutorials, for example, discussing the philosophy of Plato or preparing portfolios in photography.
- 3.14 The school is sufficiently resourced and resources are used to good effect. The school benefits immensely from the wider resources in the building, notably for drama, and including a specialist library. The use of ICT is extensive. Most teachers are adept at the use of interactive whiteboards. In French, recorded material is used to increase familiarity with native speakers, and specialist software is used in music lessons. However, some of the infrastructure supporting ICT has insufficient data transfer capacity, restricting the effectiveness of its use.
- 3.15 Homework is set regularly and taken seriously by pupils, and it encourages independent learning. In the questionnaire some parents expressed concern about the amount and quality of homework set but inspectors found no substantial evidence of pupils being overworked or of tasks being of an inappropriate quality.
- 3.16 Marking and assessment are generally of a very high standard. Marking is formative and helpful and teachers often write extended and painstaking comments on what

pupils should do to improve. However, the system of grading the pupils' work is open to misunderstanding by pupils. The absence of baseline ability data on sixth-form pupils prevents objective judgements from being made on the overall progress of pupils in this part of the school.

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

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

- 4.1 The personal development of all pupils is excellent. In line with the school's aims, they become confident, thoughtful and mutually supportive. They show growing self-awareness and develop in their understanding of their responsibilities to those in the wider world.
- 4.2 Pupils develop spiritually in its broadest sense. They have confidence in themselves and embrace aspiration and hope in everything they do. The pupils are proud of their school and proud of their membership of it. In dedicating their energies to the pursuance of excellence in the performing arts, pupils commit to a school career of effort and hard work from which they derive a great deal of satisfaction and self-esteem. They are aware that their education at this school is not just vocational and that they are also learning about the virtues of perseverance and determination. These qualities are in abundance in their personalities.
- 4.3 Pupils develop a clear sense of right and wrong. Their moral awareness of issues such as tolerance and social inclusion, as discussed and explored in the PHSE programme and in form time, is very evident, as for example in a Year 8 discussion of conflict with one's parents. Through the pupil council, pupils raise money for causes throughout the world and learn about the plight of others in doing so. Expectations of behaviour are made clear and are largely met with pupils taking responsibility for their actions and focusing on their studies. Attempts to introduce a prefect system have been resisted by the pupils, who prefer to support a communal culture of co-operation.
- 4.4 Pupils are socially adept and are polite, articulate and well-mannered. They learn in a spirit of co-operation with each other and with their teachers. Through form time pupils learn what it means to be a citizen and develop the knowledge they need to have of institutions such as the police, the political system and the criminal justice system. They also learn about personal well-being, safety in using electronic communications, and the complexities of relationships. In the week of the inspection pupils contributed to an assembly which launched a consideration across the school of issues of personal identity.
- 4.5 Pupils' cultural awareness is good and is fostered by the varied cultural backgrounds of the pupil body. Pupils respect one another's cultures and learn about other faiths and cultures as part of the form time programme. Cultural education is further enhanced in the humanities subjects, media studies and drama where specific cultural topics are explored using a number of different media.

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

- 4.6 The excellent pastoral care of pupils is a strength of the school. It is successful in the wish espoused in its health and safety policy to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its pupils.
- 4.7 Pupils are very well supported and guided by their teachers, who know them well and cater for their specific needs. Pupils reported that they can and do take up the offer of pastoral and academic support whenever needed. Dedicated 'academic access' time every day, when pupils can meet form teachers, is well used. Pupils

- commented that they knew there was always someone they could talk to amongst the staff should the need arise.
- 4.8 Relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils, are very strong, with powerful trust demonstrated in many of the lessons observed. Pupils are both self-aware and appreciative of teachers and mentors who, in turn, show real commitment to the welfare and education of the pupils. In response to a pre-inspection questionnaire some pupils said they felt that teachers were not always even-handed in the way they treated pupils, but no evidence of this was found. There are appropriate written policies for anti-bullying, rewards and sanctions, which reflect the caring ethos of the school.
- 4.9 The school gives strong attention to the pupils' safety and has improved in this respect since the previous inspection. Procedures for safeguarding and child protection, including those for staff recruitment, are good. Staff are appropriately trained in these matters. Arrangements to ensure the pupils' health and safety are effective and include provision for pupils who are ill, injured or have LDD. The provision of facilities for those who fall ill is good and meets the requirements of the previous report. There is effective liaison with appropriate safeguarding authorities. Premises, safety routines and other aspects of health and safety requirements are properly attended to. This includes all necessary measures to reduce risk from fire hazards.
- 4.10 The school now has a suitably written three-year accessibility plan meeting the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, thus addressing the requirement of the previous inspection. However, it has insufficient washbasins for the number of urinals/WCs in the school.
- 4.11 Pupils are strongly encouraged to be healthy through developing healthy eating habits and taking regular exercise. The cafeteria provides nutritious food and pupils learn about the importance of a balanced diet in science lessons.
- 4.12 The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained, and correctly stored.

# 5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

## 5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The governance of the school is good. Governance is exercised by a committee, recently constituted in its current operational form, which operates under the board of trustees, the board carrying the broad and extensive responsibility for all the institutions operating on the site. Whilst the trust exercises control over matters of joint concern to all its institutions, the committee makes representations to the trust and its other committees on these matters as they arise. In doing so the working relationship between the committee and the trust is good: recent discussion has concerned resources such as ICT provision for the school and has resulted in improvements to the provision of electronic whiteboards. The committee provides the school with sufficient steer and effective oversight, and it has a clear strategic view of where the school should fit within the other institutions of the trust. The setting up of the committee forms a positive response to the recommendation of the previous inspection that governance, as at that time provided by the trust itself, was too distant from the school. The regulatory shortcomings at the end of the initial visit were on matters of technicality and do not in the view of inspectors represent a significant shortcoming in governance by the committee.
- 5.2 The committee meets termly and it terms of reference are suitable, with a degree of flexibility appropriate to it as a relatively new body exploring how best to both monitor and support the school. The members of the committee include trust members as well as representatives of the staff. Plans are advanced to include parents. The committee has extensive educational expertise, as well as that of high level policymaking and human resources. It can draw on the legal and financial expertise in other committees. Committee members are informed about the school through regular briefings by the interim headteacher and visits to school productions. The format of reporting has recently been strengthened and formalised in order to increase the monitoring role of the committee.
- 5.3 The committee is very well aware of its responsibilities, particularly in matters of child protection and in ensuring sufficient resources. The committee is usefully chaired by a serving local headteacher and one of its two trustee members has designated responsibility for child protection. The committee is working towards how best to carry out some of its functions, such as monitoring school outcomes and challenging the school as a 'critical friend.' Its work so far in these matters, as it begins to review performance data, is good. It has yet to consider how it might best review its own performance. On the other hand the committee and the trust are reviewing the training needs of their members.

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

5.4 Leadership and management is excellent. Central to this is the leadership of the interim headteacher who has made commendable progress in a short time since taking up his post. However, this excellence is repeated at all the other levels of management. There is cohesion and unity amongst staff, who are all focused on making the school the very best it can be. The work of the senior management team is characterised by decisiveness and collegiality. Senior staff all give of their time and care generously. The working relationship with the trust principal, who visits regularly, is also productive.

- The senior management team have provided a clear and achievable vision for the future of the school. Much progress has been made recently in creating a common framework for assessing the pupils' work and for promoting thinking and reasoning skills. The current policy initiative on improving practice in teaching is well-led and is being embraced by the staff. The school conducts effective self-review and has a clear view of where improvement is needed.
- 5.6 Heads of department and other middle leaders have clearly defined roles and feel supported by the management team. Recent changes have resulted in greater transparency relating to budgets, strategic and development planning and teachers generally feel involved and consulted.
- 5.7 There is an effective appraisal scheme in place and staff development meetings are held regularly in which topics are discussed relating to the further development of teaching styles and techniques. Staff are briefed weekly and share at that time information regarding pupils.
- There are robust systems in place for checking on the suitability of all staff and in ensuring that high quality appointments are made at all levels and that staff receive appropriate safeguarding, welfare, health and safety training. Checks on staff are recorded as required in a single central register.

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

- 5.9 The school fulfils its aims in keeping good links and relationships with parents, carers and guardians. Regular newsletters from the headteacher provide useful and up-to-date information about developments and events. Letters home are sent either in hard copy or electronically. The website has recently been upgraded and now is a useful source of information to both existing and prospective parents. The size of the school means that the headteacher and senior management team are familiar figures to the parents. Because they are all fully involved in the teaching and learning of the pupils they are able to address parental concerns rapidly and they do so. The system of communication is well supported by the school office, which provides an effective and trusted nexus between parents and the senior staff.
- 5.10 Parents of pupils and prospective pupils receive or can access on the internet all the necessary information. This meets the requirements of the previous inspection report.
- 5.11 In response to pre-inspection questionnaires parents expressed strong satisfaction with the school's educational and welfare provision. The inspection team agreed with these views. A small minority of parents indicated in the questionnaires that they did not feel that there were enough opportunities to be involved in the life of the school other than attending performances, but other responses did not indicate great enthusiasm to change the present situation and inspectors did not consider this to be a matter for urgent attention. Nevertheless, the school, mindful of parental concerns, is considering whether parents might be more involved, for example, in fund-raising.
- 5.12 Parents receive regular reports on academic and vocational progress. These reports are thorough and provide a useful way for parents to gauge progress and become involved in their children's education. The formal complaints procedure, although very rarely invoked, fully meets the regulatory requirements.

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, the chair of the trustees and the chair of the school committee, observed a sample of the extracurricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and an assembly. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Dr Stephen Grounds Reporting Inspector

Mrs Paula Cross Teaching and Learning Manager, HMC School

Mr Andrew Hampton Head, ISA School