



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
CITY OF LONDON SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

City of London School for Girls

Full Name of School	City of London School for Girls
DfE Number	201/6005
Registered Charity Number	N/A
Address	City of London School for Girls St Giles' Terrace Barbican London EC2Y 8BB
Telephone Number	0207 8475500
Fax Number	020 76383212
Email Address	headpa@clsq.org.uk
Headmistress	Ms Ena Harrop
Chair of Governors	Sir Michael Snyder
Age Range	7 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	734
Gender of Pupils	Girls
Numbers by Age	7-11: 91 11-18: 643 :
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 734
Inspection Dates	20 to 23 Jan 2015

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in January 2009.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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, although inspectors 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.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgements.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors and two other members of the governing body, 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

Honoree Gordon	Reporting Inspector (Former HMI)
Paula Burgess	Team Inspector (Headmistress, IAPS)
Rosemary Chapman	Team Inspector (Head of Department, GSA)
Jackie Gill	Team Inspector (Head of Department, HMC)
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CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL	2
(a) Main findings	2
(b) Action points	2
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	2
(ii) Recommendation(s) for further improvement	2
3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	4
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning	4
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	6
(c) The contribution of teaching	7
4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	10
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	10
(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care	11
(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	12
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	14
(a) The quality of governance	14
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	14

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The City of London School for Girls is a non-denominational, academically selective, independent day school for girls aged 7 to 18 based in the centre of the City of London. The school was founded in 1894 and is one of three schools within the City over which the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and the Common Council exercise general control, whilst all matters concerned with its educational provision are dealt with by a board of governors. The school moved to its present site in the Barbican in 1969. Since the previous inspection, a new headmistress has been appointed and took up post in April 2014.
- 1.2 There are 734 pupils in all, of whom 91 are aged 7 to 11, forming the Preparatory Department (“the Prep”) with Years 3 to 6. The Lower School contains 211 pupils in Years 7 and 8, while 267 are in the Senior School, consisting of Years 9 to 11. A further 163 pupils are in Years 12 and 13, forming the Sixth Form. Pupils mostly come from within the metropolis of London. The pupils reflect the wide range of cultural heritages seen in London. There are 127 pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL); only one of these is at an early stage of learning English. The school lists 52 pupils as receiving support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). One pupil has a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.3 The school’s mission statement is: ‘Aiming for excellence in education and development of young women’. The school’s stated values are: ‘Respect, Resilience and Responsibility’. The school has recently redrafted its aims into four main groups, summarised as: fostering a love of learning; capitalising on London to offer a broad co-curriculum and forward-thinking careers education; respect and care for all; and embracing the world.
- 1.4 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' achievement is exceptional. The school equips its pupils to proceed successfully to higher educational establishments. The range and quality of pupils' achievements are consistently high over time and across both sections of the school, including in the Sixth Form. The outstanding taught curriculum, together with an extensive personal education programme (PSHCEE) and a remarkable range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities, provides an environment where pupils' personal qualities and skills flourish, their leadership skills blossom and their enjoyment in learning grows and endures. Pupils' talents are developed in a mutually supportive community. Parents are overwhelmingly satisfied with the school, commenting particularly on the range of activities in which pupils can participate and be successful: there is something for everyone, not just those who are the most talented or gifted. Pupils are delighted with the progress they make and value highly the part their teachers play in this. The quality of teaching is excellent and facilitates the pupils' exceptionally high achievement. Imaginative, stimulating and challenging lessons help pupils to develop a love of learning and the girls are eager to go beyond the taught syllabus. Only very rarely do lessons fall below this high standard, but the school's leaders are aware of where next to focus their efforts to effect improvement.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development and the quality of pastoral care provided for pupils are excellent. The girls become reflective young adults who are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Arrangements for health, safety and welfare are excellent. However, the school needs to re-consider the risk posed by the proximity of a play area to surrounding pools of water.
- 2.3 Governance, leadership and management, including links with parents, are excellent and have improved since the previous inspection. The governors play an active part in the school's development. All requirements are met, and governors monitor the effectiveness of the school's policies and procedures. The new headmistress and team of senior managers have adopted an ambitious plan for the next few years, which embraces a rapidly-changing world and drives independent learning. The school has responded very effectively to the recommendations of the previous inspection: the skills of middle managers have been strengthened; the provision for those pupils whom the school considers to be especially able, gifted or talented has been enhanced, and the marking of pupils' work is more helpful.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Strengthen the risk assessment for the Prep play areas to better address the risk posed by the immediate proximity of water.
2. Implement and monitor the initiatives to eliminate the very few remaining examples of less secure practice in teaching.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic achievement is exceptional.
- 3.2 Pupils are extremely well educated in line with the school's aims. They consistently perform highly in public examinations at GCSE, IGCSE, AS and A level. There are numerous examples of individual pupils' exceptional attainment. Such examples include the top student nationally in English for an A-level examination board.
- 3.3 As a direct result of their very high standards of attainment, virtually all pupils proceed into higher education, successfully gaining places at universities or colleges in the UK and abroad, many with high entrance requirements. In many cases, their higher education leads on to professional qualifications after graduation.
- 3.4 Pupils of all ages have very high levels of oracy and literacy. Excellent foundations are laid in the Prep. By the time pupils leave the Prep they are reaching standards in English that are at least one year above national expectations. These skills are developed systematically as pupils move through the Junior and Senior Schools, through the extensive range of subjects, activities and opportunities offered by the outstanding curriculum. The pupils' eloquent skills are reflected in the numerous prizes and awards that teams and individual pupils gain every year in competitions at national and international levels. These include prestigious national essay-writing competitions in a number of subjects such as English, history and classics.
- 3.5 Standards of numeracy throughout the school are very high. In all sections of the school pupils make excellent use of their mathematical skills in work across the curriculum. In both the Senior School and the Prep, pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) routinely and effectively as part of their studies, including for personal research, notably in Year 9, following an initiative with tablet computers. Pupils' skills in ICT are securely based through the taught programmes of computer studies in both the Prep and the Senior School, and through extensive opportunities to present information to their peers and, in the Sixth Form, at events beyond the school.
- 3.6 The girls' achievement in creative skills, such as music and art is also exceptional, reflecting the emphasis given to these subjects as an integral part of pupils' broader education, and through the extensive opportunities the extra-curricular programme affords for many pupils to develop these skills to a high level. This was illustrated, for example, by a Senior School orchestra rehearsal of Vivaldi's 4th Violin Concerto, notable for its fine tuning, tone and sense of ensemble. This was music-making at a professional level, very ably directed. Pupils take part in over 16 extra-curricular music groups and one-quarter of instrumental examination entries are regularly graded at distinction level. In 2012, one pupil reached the final of the national Young Musician of the Year competition.
- 3.7 Pupils excel in many other fields. For example, in 2013 a Lower School pupil was World Youth Chess champion. Pupils of all ages stage school plays at regular intervals and Sixth Form pupils organise public conferences. Recent productions have included 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' at the Globe Theatre and 'The Sound

of Music' in the Senior School; and 'Medea', involving both Senior School and Prep pupils. Pupils have gained Arkwright Engineering scholarships and school teams regularly gain top prizes in science and mathematics Olympiads. Many students sit the linguistics Olympiad examinations. School teams are regularly highly successful also in Young Enterprise competitive programmes, at both local and regional level, with one pupil named as Young Economist of the Year. Pupils have represented the UK at the European Youth Parliament debating competitions. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are twice world champions on the World Kids' Literary Quiz. The school lists many similar examples of team and individual successes in academic fields, including in the Prep.

- 3.8 Pupils achieve very highly also in physical activity. Successes abound in extra-curricular activities, and this picture is maintained over time. For example, 37 sporting activities are offered and the Prep's swimming team and the Senior School's netball teams are highly successful at both city and county level respectively. Rounders, gymnastics and karate boast similar individual or team successes, and one pupil gained a silver medal for table-tennis in the Commonwealth Games. A large number of pupils undertake The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) scheme; one in ten Sixth Formers has embarked on the Silver award.
- 3.9 In the Prep, pupils are not entered for National Curriculum tests but sit standardised tests in reading and mathematics, where their results are high in relation to national norms. Together with inspection evidence from the school's own analyses, scrutiny of pupils' work, lesson observation and discussions with the pupils, these results show that the pupils make excellent progress.
- 3.10 The following analyses use the national data for the years 2011 to 2013. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. At GCSE, performance has been exceptional in relation to the national average for girls in maintained schools, and above that for girls in maintained selective schools for girls. Results in IGCSE have been higher than worldwide and UK norms. The results for 2014 show similar patterns to those of earlier years. In the Sixth Form, A-level results have been exceptional in relation to the national average for girls in maintained schools, and above that for girls in maintained selective schools. Virtually all A-level examination entry results in the past four years were at grades A* to B and the average proportion of entries graded A* grades has been 35 per cent.
- 3.11 At both GCSE and A level, pupils make excellent progress in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. This is supported by inspection evidence and the school's own analyses of the rate at which the pupils' attainment changes over time. This level of progress is a reflection of the pupils' exceptional attitudes to learning and, in particular, the high quality of teaching. Pupils' work testifies to the high standards of their learning. The volume and depth covered are highly appropriate for their level of ability and aptitudes.
- 3.12 At all levels of the school, pupils who have SEND or are identified as having EAL attain in line with their peers, and demonstrate excellent progress. Through its successful identification of needs and the support provided, the school successfully helps to remove the barriers to learning that those pupils might otherwise experience. Teachers instil the confidence to achieve highly, providing the encouragement and support pupils need.

- 3.13 In this highly selective school, all the pupils are able, gifted, or talented but the school can demonstrate from benchmarked data from national organisations that even its most able pupils do better than would be expected from the national picture. The school additionally identifies those pupils it considers to be especially gifted or talented. Since the previous inspection, provision in the classroom for those pupils has improved, notably through changed approaches to teaching. Teachers are successfully enabling those pupils to show initiative, independence and leadership, thereby fostering their personal development and achievement. These teaching approaches also raise the level of challenge for all pupils, inviting them to go further in their learning.
- 3.14 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent: a love of learning is apparent throughout the school. Pupils engage with their studies well beyond what is required of them. They give of their best, whether working independently or in collaboration with others. The extent of pupils' participation and their individual and team successes make a major contribution to their educational experience, helping to create young women who can face the challenges of a fast-changing, wider world.

3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision

- 3.15 The curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.16 Provision is well matched to pupils of all ages, abilities and needs. The curriculum is highly successful in meeting the school's aim of aspiring to excellence in all aspects, fostering learning and debate within a caring environment.
- 3.17 Within the Prep, the curriculum is strongly academically based, together with a wide-ranging programme of subjects such as art, music and drama that develop pupils' creative and other skills, swiftly building their confidence and enjoyment of learning.
- 3.18 Since the previous inspection, the curriculum across the school has been expanded to include computer science, 'Global Perspectives' and Mandarin. In the Prep, four languages are now taught and 'challenge' lessons have been introduced. The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) has been introduced to the Sixth Form. These initiatives have raised further the level of challenge offered to pupils, throughout the school, and extended their horizons. This reflects the Headmistress' vision to offer pupils the broadest possible education.
- 3.19 In Years 7 to 9 the core curriculum comprises English, mathematics, humanities subjects and a course in religion, philosophy and ethics (RPE). This is enhanced by the addition of two foreign languages (from a choice of four), and three separate sciences. Creative and technological subjects, physical education (PE) and sport, Latin and Greek are also taught.
- 3.20 At GCSE level, pupils study English, English literature, mathematics and three sciences, at least one modern foreign language and one humanities subject, chosen from a wide range of options, plus two further optional subjects. To extend the level of intellectual challenge offered, pupils are entered for the IGCSE qualification in some subjects.
- 3.21 The Sixth Form curriculum is highly suitable for able pupils aiming for demanding courses at university. Pupils choose from a wide range of subjects and follow an enrichment scheme to prepare them for highly competitive entry to university. Pupils have weekly Enrichment sessions which explore the syllabi beyond the

curriculum and prepare them for entry examinations to Oxford or Cambridge including STEP papers. They also have mock interviews and undertake an in-depth study of subjects beyond the examination syllabus. Through the general studies programme, pupils pursue personal interests, choosing from a list including physical activities, political ideology and German film club.

- 3.22 The excellent PHSCEE programme, delivered with integrity and panache across the school, is very much enjoyed by the pupils and highly effectively promotes their social and cultural awareness, self-esteem and confidence. The community service scheme, undertaken by all Year 12 pupils comprises a wide range of activities, such as mentoring younger pupils and helping elderly people in the neighbourhood. These activities provide excellent opportunities to develop pupils' qualities of leadership and foster their empathy.
- 3.23 Pupils develop keen economic awareness through curricular opportunities, such as a lesson on fish-farming discussed with Year 11 pupils in which they had considered the costs of food production; external speakers on business start-up schemes; and the Young Enterprise programme. Teaching about public institutions and services of England is included appropriately, and coverage of political matters is even-handed.
- 3.24 All subjects throughout the school actively promote independence in learning, with pupils in Year 7 learning about the various strategies they can use. Since the previous inspection pupils have grown more skilled in taking responsibility for their own learning. Teachers have been trained to facilitate this. Inspectors observed an increasing emphasis from the Prep upwards on pupils being assessed by their peers, as part of this school-wide impetus to learning.
- 3.25 The high quality of the extra-curricular provision across the school ensures the strong personal development of all pupils. The programme is well organised and carefully balanced across sporting, cultural and recreational activities. Extraordinary in its breadth and variety, ranging from the feminist society to touch rugby, and led by senior pupils or teachers, it adds richness and diversity to the curriculum. The school monitors attendance to check that pupils do not take on too much. Pupils organise charitable giving on their own initiative, raising large sums of money.
- 3.26 Highly effective careers guidance underpins the choices pupils make for the next stage of their education. The extensive programme across the years includes a Science Day in Year 8, geared towards available jobs in the sciences, and in Years 9 to 13 'Life after City' sees speakers from outside giving talks on a range of careers, along the lines of 'How I got into...'. In Year 10, a very popular day called 'City Girls in the City' leads pupils into areas around the city, dealing with law, finance and the arts. In the Sixth Form, pupils attend higher education evenings and careers fairs.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.27 The quality of teaching throughout the school is excellent.
- 3.28 Teaching makes a very significant contribution to the exceptionally high level of the pupils' achievements, enabling the school to successfully meet its aim to prepare pupils for higher education and a professional career. A large proportion of the teaching observed at all levels of the school, but especially in the Senior School, was excellent, enabling pupils of all abilities to make rapid progress. The

school's leaders show good awareness of those areas where initiatives to improve teaching are not yet fully embedded.

- 3.29 Highly-committed teachers display excellent subject knowledge, delivered with a skill and enthusiasm that inspires the pupils. Pupils in Year 6, in discussion with inspectors, showed sensitive understanding of the issues and complexities in 'The Lord of the Flies', showing a sophistication beyond what might be expected. Teachers create a relaxed but highly purposeful ambiance in which pupils are fully involved in the learning process. In a Year 12 economics lesson, for example, the class worked together co-operatively to get to grips with a difficult mathematical concept they had encountered in their mock examination.
- 3.30 Lessons are very well planned, but not rigidly so. Teachers' flexibility allows pupils to experiment and explore ideas or interesting avenues as these arise, following on from their interests or questions. This was evident in a fast-moving AS mathematics lesson on quadratic graphs, where work was finely matched to individuals' needs to suit the pupils' different paces of learning. The teacher presented various ideas for the pupils to try out, driven by their thirst for understanding, rather than just telling them what to do.
- 3.31 Lessons are normally conducted at a brisk pace, with clear explanations. Pupils have frequent opportunities to develop their collaborative skills through group and pair-work exercises, particularly in modern foreign language lessons observed. Teachers deploy a wide range of strategies: excellent use is made of question and answer techniques and lively discussions are a prominent feature of many lessons, as typically seen in the probing questions to pupils in Year 11 history, and in Year 8 discussing crime and punishment in relation to Charles 1st.
- 3.32 Teachers help pupils to develop creative, reasoning and thinking skills of an exceptionally high order, enabling them to become highly proficient independent learners. Opportunities for independent learning abound. Teachers and pupils are encouraged to pursue personal research beyond the taught syllabus.
- 3.33 Academic departments are generously funded and well equipped. An attractive library, containing a broad range of resources, further enhances pupils' learning. Teachers make good use of ICT to promote learning. The recent introduction of tablet computers is proving to be effective in fostering pupils' independence and enjoyment, as seen in a Year 9 Latin lesson where pupils completed an online vocabulary test allowing for quick personal feedback on any gaps. They then applied their knowledge of the imperative mood to drawing imaginary signs on the tablets, with accompanying captions such as 'Do not annoy the crocodiles'. Twice as much work was covered as would normally have been possible, with the teacher easily able to check individual learning, and all with an added element of fun.
- 3.34 Teachers throughout the school have very high expectations. They know their pupils very well and ensure that lessons, at their best, cater for all abilities. Teachers are now successfully challenging able pupils through extension tasks in class, and by encouraging them to undertake additional study beyond the examination requirements. Pupils who have SEND or EAL receive extra support, such as a classroom assistant, or specific resources tailored to their needs, though almost all happily work on a par with their peers. Teachers have clear information about the needs of individual pupils and, where appropriate, use this effectively in lessons to foster their progress.

- 3.35 The particularly warm relationships between teachers and pupils, based on mutual respect and trust, provide a nurturing environment highly conducive to productive learning. This underpins the pupils' exemplary behaviour. Pupils greatly value the extensive extra academic support their teachers give. A small proportion of the pre-inspection questionnaire responses implied that pupils have too much homework. Inspection evidence did not support this concern.
- 3.36 Systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are rigorous. Academic concerns are identified and addressed promptly. In response to a recommendation from the previous inspection, marking procedures have been improved. Marking is thorough and, at its best, includes helpful suggestions to enable pupils to develop their knowledge and skills further. Pupils say they also greatly appreciate the written comments, passed on to them orally. An innovative system of self and peer-assessment adds to pupils' awareness of their next steps in learning.
- 3.37 The school relentlessly focuses on further developing the quality of teaching. Teachers are currently working across departments, with a local university and with other schools to explore areas of subject knowledge and teaching methodologies. Teachers regularly observe each other's lessons and undertake team-teaching, particularly in the Prep, to share good practice further.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The school is highly successful in meeting its aim to encourage positive and responsible attitudes to self, health, social and moral issues, taking an active role in the personal development of the pupils. By the time they leave the school pupils are articulate and confident, without being arrogant. They have well-rounded personalities and highly-developed social skills. By the end of Years 6, 11, as well as at the end of the Sixth Form, they are ready for the next stage in their education and equipped to take a full part in the changing world around them.
- 4.3 Pupils in the Prep, as throughout the school, openly uphold the school's 'three Rs' values. Pupils in the Prep are confident and articulate from a very early age. They listen attentively to one another and they spoke fluently and enthusiastically with inspectors. Logical and independent thought is fostered from an early age, with girls in the Prep confidently able to express the reasoning behind the choices they make. The school consciously promotes younger pupils' awareness of the wider world. For example, all girls have the opportunity to participate in the in-house AACC scheme (Activity, Adventure, Culture and Community Award). This involves attending Archaeology Club at the Museum of London amongst many other activities.
- 4.4 Pupils in the Senior School are unassumingly confident, self-aware and emotionally mature as a result of the many opportunities that they have to learn who they are and to set high levels of challenge for themselves. As they move through the school, they develop an independence that allows them to question those things that might limit their development. Their spiritual development is strong, supported by the school's ethos and furthered by the reflective content of assemblies, class discussion, the 'Habits of Mind' and the 'Growth Mindsets' courses in Years 7 to 9. Pupils clearly appreciate the non-material aspects of life: they are fully involved in the numerous opportunities available for hearing and playing music, studying literature and art, and frequently take advantage of the rich cultural opportunities that the school's central London location affords.
- 4.5 Respect for the school's values and the norms of good behaviour underpin the strong sense of right and wrong that pupils demonstrate. The school's ethos embodies the ideals of justice, respect for the law and an understanding of democracy, as well as the over-arching nature of the civil and criminal law of England. These are also aspects of the RPE, PSCH EE and Global Perspectives courses for pupils in the Prep and Senior Schools. Pupils in both the Prep and the Senior School experience democracy in action when they elect the head girl and vote for which charity to support each year. At all levels from Year 3 onwards, pupils elect form captains, who represent them on the school councils, the outcomes of which are reported to pupils after meetings. Pupils are highly reflective in their views on a wide range of moral and ethical issues, such as poverty, racism and the arguments for and against foreign aid. Through the taught curriculum and through a wealth of debating opportunities throughout the school, pupils become accustomed to hearing all sides of a question. They are

highly respectful of the opinions and beliefs of others, and understand the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination.

- 4.6 Pupils appreciate the value of learning for its own sake and are not driven by material or competitive ideals. Sense of service to others is purposefully developed and channelled within the school community, for example as pupil mentors, and into the wider community. As they move through the school they develop a good knowledge of the public services and institutions of England. For many, service to others, through the school's community service programme in Year 12, or as part of the DofE, is immensely satisfying in itself and is often continued voluntarily in Year 13. Pupils' leadership qualities flourish. Many older pupils manage extra-curricular clubs, using their initiative and enthusiasm to set up new activities: pupils lead over one-third of societies and clubs. Senior and Sixth Form pupils also take assemblies, organise events and conferences, produce the school magazine and act as form prefects.
- 4.7 A very small minority of pupils indicated in their questionnaire responses that they felt they did not get enough responsibility. There are, indeed, fewer opportunities in the Lower School to exercise responsibility beyond those of form captains, but the school is addressing this appropriately. For example, the school encourages pupils of this age, and in the Prep, to take on the roles of 'plenary prefects': pupils lead short parts of lessons to summarise the learning for their peers. Through the work of the charity committee, pupils throughout the school consider those beyond the school boundaries by raising large sums each year for a chosen charity.
- 4.8 Pupils develop a very good appreciation of and value of the achievements of other traditions, alongside those of Western cultures. Pupils openly respect and value difference. The school's multicultural, multi-faith community offers many opportunities for pupils to make lasting friendships with pupils from different cultural and religious backgrounds. Tolerance is a hallmark of the school, aided by learning in RPE lessons, which cover the practices and beliefs of all major faiths. Pupils from the Prep have produced a 'What it means to be British' wall, covering a wide range of attributes and values. Assemblies are based on many different faiths and cultural celebrations, and the menus from other cultures, served in the dining room, all help to bring the richness of different cultures and faiths to the forefront of pupils' experience, promoting tolerance and understanding.

4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care

- 4.9 The arrangements for pastoral care are excellent.
- 4.10 Staff provide excellent pastoral support and guidance and are highly effective in promoting pupils' academic and personal development. In their questionnaires a very small minority of pupils replied that they felt their views were not sought or listened to. Inspectors did not find evidence to substantiate this concern. In their discussions with inspectors, pupils from all sections of the school said that they felt safe, valued, listened to and cared for, in line with the school's aims. The school councils provide an effective formal channel for pupils to express views and pupils were able to give examples of how this was so. The mentoring system provides a further, more informal means of expressing concerns or opinions and pupils commented very positively on the approachability of the two school counsellors.

- 4.11 Staff monitor pupils' well-being closely and deal effectively with any issues that arise. Teachers expect and achieve high standards of behaviour, but have clear systems to deal with any disciplinary issues that might arise. Serious disciplinary offences are rare but are dealt with promptly. Girls generally consider the school rules to be fair.
- 4.12 The policy to promote good behaviour and safeguard against bullying is comprehensive and up to date. Any such instances are dealt with promptly and sensitively. Inspectors found that the school's system of rewards and sanctions operates very effectively to encourage high standards of behaviour. The rewards system acts as an effective spur to hard work and achievement over and above the girls' evident self-motivation.
- 4.13 Pastoral systems are well organised: roles and lines of communication, starting with the form tutor, are clear. Pastoral staff, including two counsellors and a nurse, are appropriately trained in their duties. Pupils speak very positively about the care they receive and are confident that anyone in the school community would take time to help them. The Sixth Form receive personally-tailored support, particularly for university applications.
- 4.14 Relationships amongst pupils and with staff throughout the school are excellent, based on 'the 3Rs'. Pupils are tolerant, supportive and protective of each other, taking pride in one another's achievements. Members of the Sixth Form enjoy relaxed relationships with their teachers.
- 4.15 Participation in sports and input from the PSCHEE courses help pupils throughout the school to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The school's leaders are increasingly emphasising pupils' mental health and well-being. Pupils appreciate the wide choice of nutritious food offered at school.
- 4.16 The accessibility plan is up to date and meets regulations.

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

- 4.17 The school's arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils are excellent.
- 4.18 Suitable provision is made for any pupils who are disabled or who have additional needs, and for pupils who fall ill.
- 4.19 Leaders and governors accord a high priority to health, welfare and safety. Procedures are clear and they are implemented effectively. Careful records are kept and the required checks, such as for the prevention of fire and for electrical safety, are undertaken on a regular basis.
- 4.20 The school's records and inspectors' observations show that staff implement the school's policies effectively. The premises manager and his team ensure that the premises are kept clean, tidy and in good order. All the policies required by the independent schools regulations are in place and are up to date.
- 4.21 Prior to the inspection, very minor errors were found in a small number of policies, but these posed no risk to the pupils. All points were cleared up before the end of the inspection.

- 4.22 The safeguarding (child protection) policy meets requirements and has regard for the latest guidance. Staff training in child protection is up to date. Governors and leaders ensure that rigorous recruitment practices are followed for the appointment of staff. All the checks currently required have been recorded correctly in the single central register of staff.
- 4.23 Admission and attendance registers are kept correctly. The policy for complaints meets requirements.
- 4.24 The new headmistress has inherited a plethora of policies and documents related to the various aspects of health, safety and welfare. These are needlessly complex and contain some duplication.
- 4.25 The Prep playground is immediately adjacent to a large expanse of shallow water, with no barrier, posing a risk of harm to younger pupils. The school's risk assessment has served well thus far but requires review. The school's leaders set this in motion with immediate effect.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5. (a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Governance has been strengthened since the previous inspection, when it was judged to be good. Governors' oversight of how effectively the school policies are implemented is more comprehensive. Governors ensure that leaders at all levels in the school are held accountable for sustaining and further improving outcomes for pupils.
- 5.3 Governance is strong, with the Headmistress and governors working co-operatively and strategically to move the school forward, drawing on the wide-ranging expertise within the governing body. Regular, highly-focused meetings and smooth channels of communication, including with the City of London and its associated boards and committees, support governors' roles well in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. Links with the City of London are used to good effect to further the stated aims of the school.
- 5.4 Governors show excellent insight into the work of the school, its priorities and needs. They have chosen a 'hands-on' role, but not obtrusively so. They regularly visit the school, supporting and challenging staff in equal measure. As a result of these excellent working relationships, they have a very good understanding and awareness of the school's needs.
- 5.5 Governors discharge their duties and responsibilities in an effective manner. They operate thorough safe recruitment practices, in conjunction with the City of London, and have conducted an annual review of safeguarding policy and the implementation of procedures in school. They actively check that lessons are learnt from any issues that have arisen. Governors have ensured that the school meets all the regulations specified for independent schools and that the achievement and personal development of pupils continue to flourish.

5. (b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.7 The way the school is led and managed meets the aims of the school, across both the Prep and the Senior Schools. Strategic planning to promote pupils' achievement and well-being is securely founded, providing the impetus for the school's continuous improvement. The Headmistress, governors, senior management and heads of department operate a clearly expressed, visionary plan to move the school forward. Rooted in the further development and improvement of teaching and learning, the school development plan provides an excellent, carefully constructed framework for the next five years. It sets out a thoughtful, wide-ranging vision with a clear direction to further enhance many areas of school life. The plan recognises that change is needed to drive further improvement and that the environment and market the school competes in is both challenging and changing. The plan also recognises the constraints faced by the school in relation to its historically-listed premises and accommodation.

- 5.8 Ambitious projects already under way are well managed. The tablet computer initiative, now in its second year, has been imaginatively implemented. Enthusiastic teachers and pupils are using tablet computers to good effect to promote independent learning. This directly reflects one of the school's stated aims: to develop young women ready for a rapidly changing world. Using pupils as staff mentors in this project has proved to be an inspired choice. Many members of the school community now use these tablets in a ubiquitous way, as envisaged in the school plan, to enhance learning and teaching. The school has taken great care to ensure that the ICT infrastructure supports this initiative and has appointed a middle leader with suitable expertise and skills to drive this forward, supporting staff on the way. Leaders recognise that blending new educational ideas with old, successful formulae is a difficult and potentially problematic course. They devise their plans accordingly, with great care and staff them well. As a result, these tablets are now the reference device of choice for many pupils and staff.
- 5.9 The Headmistress and senior team are reflective practitioners and leaders who continue to consult widely with all those who have an interest in the school. This includes pupils in both sections of the school, through consultative committees and other groupings; and parents, through surveys, questionnaires and information evenings. Adjustments to plans are thoughtfully made, responding appropriately to parents' views.
- 5.10 The school's leaders actively promote the well-being of the pupils. They strongly encourage respect for others, prominently upholding through their own example their school's '3Rs' values. The programmes for the personal development of the pupils, including their well-being, are led and managed in a co-ordinated way and have benefited from recent review. This has ensured that due weight is given to strengthening pupils' understanding of British values and the role of democracy. In their discussions with inspectors pupils commented that the ethos of the school community openly reflects these values and principles.
- 5.11 Leaders fulfil their responsibilities effectively. The appropriate governor or member of staff monitors the implementation of school policies and ensures that these are reviewed on a regular 'rolling programme', as necessary. Successful, well-qualified staff are recruited and properly inducted by the school and, where they have specific responsibilities, they are well trained to appropriate levels.
- 5.12 Leaders at all levels of the school demonstrate excellent skills and knowledge related to their roles, including members of the senior management team who are newly appointed to their posts. This team, including the Head of the Prep, meets regularly, with each having specific areas of responsibility. Channels of responsibility are clear. The team leads and manages the school highly effectively ensuring that the school is meeting all regulatory standards consistently.
- 5.13 The effectiveness of middle leaders is much improved since the previous inspection. The responsibilities of middle managers at heads of department level have been expanded and formalised. These middle managers show great enthusiasm, drive and determination to implement the Headmistress' initiatives. With additional management time, they support and challenge the teachers in their subject departments highly effectively through consistent appraisals, mutual lesson observations and an extensive training programme.

- 5.14 The visionary Headmistress and her team encourage staff to share the best practice already existing in the school. This open climate is becoming more established across the school. Opportunities for curriculum review are taken where benefits are clear. School-based 'Dawn' sessions and an extra scheduled day for professional development each year, together with externally-provided training, represent a significant investment in staff development. Professional development topics are wide-ranging and relevant to the school's curriculum and priorities.
- 5.15 The school's relationship with parents is excellent.
- 5.16 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents showed that they are extremely happy with what the school provides. They are particularly satisfied with the progress their children make. There were many glowing comments about the school's care and provision and only very occasional adverse remarks. On the rare occasions that concerns arise, the school handles these with care and in accordance with its clear complaints policy and procedures.
- 5.17 Parents are well-informed about the school, its life and work. The parents of present and prospective pupils are given all required information about the school. The school makes extensive use of various internet-based tools to communicate with parents. The e-portal, for example, is used by the vast majority of parents to obtain reports and other information about their daughters. Parents are kept well informed by a regular weekly e-newsletter in the senior school and a regular newsletter in the Prep. These carry both routine business and information on decisions the school is taking. Many departments embrace social media sites to communicate with parents and pupils, and parents routinely communicate with staff via e-mail. The school makes every effort to address concerns and meet expectations raised this way. Parents have easy access to school policies online.
- 5.18 Parents are given numerous opportunities to play an active part in the school. The Parent Forum, a relatively recent innovation, provides a formal channel for parents to discuss with the school approaches to their daughters' education and development. Parents are encouraged to attend evening events and to take a full part in the life of the school. A memorable recital of "Ode to a Haggis" by a parent in a Year 4 assembly during the inspection is a fine example. Parents also offer practical help, such as when pupils are preparing for interviews or seeking work experience placements.
- 5.19 Parents are given substantial information about their daughter's progress. The school maintains a minimum of three formal, timely contact points with parents each year: normally two written reports and one parents' evening. Reports are well written, informative and carefully produced. The Prep school provides sessions to prepare parents and children for the move to the senior school.

What the school should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.