

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS COUNCIL
(ISC)**

INSPECTION OF

**KING'S ST ALBAN'S JUNIOR SCHOOL
WORCESTER**

By the

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE
(ISI)**

on

October 17th – 21st, 2005

MAIN REPORT

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

King's St Alban's Junior School

King's Senior School and King's Hawford School were inspected at the same time and separate reports published.

Full Name of the School	King's St Alban's Junior School		
DfES Number	123/2009		
Address	Mill Street, Worcester, WR1 2NJ		
Telephone Number	01905 354906		
Fax Number	01905 763075		
E-mail Address	ksa@ksw.org.uk		
Name of Headmaster	Mr Richard Bellfield		
Chairman of Governors	Mr Donald T Howell		
Age Range	7 to 11	Gender	Mixed
Number of Pupils	173	Number of Boarders	Nil
Inspection Dates	17th – 21st October 2005		

This inspection report follows the framework laid down by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The inspection was carried out under the arrangements of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. It was also carried out under Section 163(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills has accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003.

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

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1. MAIN FINDINGS

Overall Summary

- 1.1 King's St Alban's Junior School is a thriving, happy and industrious community. It has good leadership and management and benefits from the governors' wise stewardship. Pupils achieve well as a result of imaginative teaching; they are known as individuals and supported well throughout the school; they benefit from a broad curriculum and from the many extra-curricular activities provided. The school enjoys the full confidence of parents and has a strong family atmosphere. Currently, some operational aspects of the library, curriculum co-ordination and recording of assessments require attention.

What the School Does Well

- 1.2 The school has many strengths of which the following are the most important.
- The positive ethos, friendly atmosphere and very good relationships promote a strong sense of community, give pupils self-confidence and result in their excellent behaviour and attitude to learning.
 - The good and often very good quality of the teaching contributes directly to the good progress and high standards achieved by pupils throughout the school.
 - The leadership of the school engenders a strong sense of common purpose; it is fervently committed to the well-being and personal development of each pupil.
 - The school's setting, its buildings, facilities and resources contribute very positively to the pupils' achievements inside and outside the classroom.
 - The school has established excellent links with parents and the wider community.
 - The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is excellent and is further enhanced by the high quality of the extra-curricular activities.

What the School Should Do Better

- 1.3 The school has no noteworthy weaknesses but the following are areas where the school could make some improvement to its already good provision.
- At present, pupils make insufficient use of the very good library resources; the systems for monitoring the extent and nature of borrowing are insufficient.
 - In a number of subjects, other than English and mathematics, pupils' attainment and progress are not systematically recorded in relation to specified learning objectives.
 - Not all co-ordinators monitor in sufficient depth the teaching and learning in the subjects for which they are responsible.

Standards of Attainment and Progress in Subjects

- 1.4 Pupils achieve good standards at age 11 and throughout the school in relation to their ability both in lessons and in their written work. Almost all pupils are successful in the senior school entrance examination and a good proportion achieves scholarships. Pupils' progress is good and at age 11 it is well above the levels predicted by the standardised tests on entry. Pupils with special needs achieve well relative to their difficulties and the most able have the scope they need to show their mettle. Standards of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are good. Boys and girls achieve equally well.

The Quality of Pupils' Learning, Attitudes and their Behaviour

- 1.5 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in and outside the classroom are excellent, and they support the good and often very good quality of their learning. As a result, pupils take full advantage of all that the school offers. They have well-developed learning skills that enable them to tackle new work and ideas; they concentrate well; they co-operate with each other; they respect others' views and opinions. The environment for learning is calm and ordered.

The Quality of Teaching

- 1.6 The good and often very good quality of the teaching contributes productively to pupils' attainment and progress. In the lessons seen, it was always at least satisfactory and in eight out of ten of them it was never less than good; in almost half the lessons it was very good and sometimes excellent. Pupils' books reveal innovative approaches that promote very effective learning.

Other Aspects of the School

Attendance

- 1.7 The level of pupils' attendance is very good. It enables them to benefit from continuity in the teaching and learning, and to participate extensively in the activities provided. The school's admission and attendance registers comply in full with current requirements.

Assessment and Recording

- 1.8 The assessment and recording of pupils' attainment and progress is good overall. It has strengths in the monitoring of performance but inconsistencies exist in the day-to-day recording of attainment and progress in some subjects.

Curriculum

- 1.9 The curriculum provided by the school is very good. It is balanced and broadly based and contributes very effectively to pupils' intellectual, physical and personal attainment and development. It is appropriate for their age, ability, gender and ethnicity and all pupils have equal access to it. It prepares them very well for the next stage of their education and provides good continuity and progression in learning.

Teaching and Non-teaching Staff

- 1.10 The provision of teaching and non-teaching staff is good. Teachers are well qualified and experienced and are deployed to good effect. The school implements effective induction, appraisal and training policies. The subject co-ordinators' role is still developing: as yet they do not routinely monitor teaching and learning in their subjects throughout the school. Ancillary staff support the work of the teachers well. The school carries out all necessary checks.

Resources for Learning

- 1.11 The range, availability and accessibility of resources are very good throughout the school. They are appropriate for the ages and abilities of the pupils. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is good and it is widely used across the curriculum. The books, equipment and materials are sufficient in quantity and quality; they are organised appropriately and used effectively to enhance the teaching and learning.

Libraries

- 1.12 The range, availability, quality and accessibility of the library stock are good in relation to the number of pupils in the school. The non-fiction stock offers up-to-date support for the curriculum but it is not at present used as extensively or effectively as it could be. Good quality class libraries, mainly fiction, supplement the central library.

Premises and Accommodation

- 1.13 The accommodation and facilities are very good. Their range and quality support the curriculum effectively, promote good quality teaching and learning, and enhance pupils' personal development. The buildings help to maintain the ethos of good relationships and easy communication. The school benefits substantially from access to senior school facilities, such as those for sport, drama, music and outdoor education, and from the dining arrangements.

Links with Parents and the Community

- 1.14 The school has developed an excellent and effective partnership with parents and worthwhile links with the community. These are strengths of the school. Parents are kept well informed about events and their children's progress. In the pre-inspection survey of their views of the school, parents' responses recorded very high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of its provision and performance.

Pupils' Personal Development

- 1.15 Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, and one of the strengths of the school. The pupils feel well supported and develop confidence and self-esteem through the many opportunities to interact socially and take responsibility. The school encourages tolerance, understanding and respect for others' beliefs. It imparts strong moral values and explores the heritage and culture of Britain, Europe and the wider world.

Pastoral Care

- 1.16 The high quality of pastoral care, support and guidance stems from the teachers' knowledge of the pupils as individuals and the action taken to help them make the most of their talents. Arrangements to safeguard pupils' health, safety and well-being are very good.

Governance and Management

- 1.17 The school benefits from the very good quality governance and strategic guidance provided by the Foundation. The powers delegated to the headmaster enable the school to create its own distinctive ethos and character, and to meet its own and the Foundation's aims. The leadership is clear sighted and management is very good. Human and material resources are deployed to support teaching and learning very well. Communication and routine administration function efficiently; the school has a clear sense of purpose and direction focused on the welfare and achievement of the pupils. Together, these features underpin a very good quality of education.

Achievement and Quality in Activities

- 1.18 The school provides an excellent extra-curricular programme that is one of its strengths. The wide range of sporting, musical, cultural and other lunch-time and after-school clubs is well chosen to match the ages and aptitudes of the pupils. The activities attract a high level of involvement from pupils and staff alike, and the quality achieved is very good.

Progress Made by the School since its Last Inspection

- 1.19 The school was last inspected in 1999. It has dealt with each of the recommendations made then. It has allocated more time to core subjects and in-class support; it has clarified the role of subject co-ordinators so that they report to the director of studies; it has introduced setting by prior attainment and increased specialist teaching in English and mathematics in Years 5 and 6, and specialist teaching in science in Year 6; it has improved the accommodation for art/design/technology (ADT), and music; it did not re-configure the ICT suite because the cost outweighed the benefits. The school has made good progress since the last inspection.

Compliance with the Regulations for Registration

DfES Standard		Does the school meet the regulatory requirements?
1. Quality of education:	1. (2) Curriculum	Yes
	1. (3)-(5) Teaching	Yes
2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils		Yes
3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils		Yes
4. Suitability of proprietors and staff		Yes
5. Premises and accommodation		Yes
6. Provision of information		Yes
7. Manner in which complaints are to be handled		Yes

Actions Required for Compliance with the Regulatory Requirements

- 1.20 No action is required.
- 1.21 The school is, however, asked to deal with the matters highlighted in *What the School Should Do Better*. These are set out as recommendations for the school in Section 2 of the report.

2. MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The main body of the report contains a small number of points for action to aid the next stage of the school's development. The main recommendations are listed below; the numbers in brackets refer to the relevant paragraphs in the report.

R1 In order to encourage pupils to make greater use of the library, the school should:

- update the present checking system to enable pupils to borrow books simply and quickly, and to help staff monitor the extent and nature of borrowing;
- include, as a matter of course, library references in curricular plans.

(Paragraphs 4.8; 5.38; 8.7; 8.14; 8.20; 8.30)

R2 The school should use the learning objectives specified in its medium-term planning to record simply and efficiently pupils' attainment in those subjects that do not currently note it systematically.

(Paragraphs 5.4; 5.12; 8.19; 8.30; 8.42)

R3 In order to share good practice and maintain high quality in teaching and learning:

- all subject co-ordinators should have a clear remit to monitor and evaluate the teaching and quality of work for which they are responsible through the school;
- the school should provide the necessary training to enable the co-ordinators to carry out the monitoring role effectively.

(Paragraphs 5.4; 5.17; 5.21; 5.24; 7.6; 8.13; 8.30; 8.38)

3. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 3.1 The King's School, Worcester traces its history back to the school founded by Henry VIII in 1541 following the dissolution of the monastery on the site. The school continues to maintain close links with the cathedral whose choristers it has educated since 1943. Originally for boys, the school admitted girls into the sixth form from 1971 and became completely co-educational from 1991. The last boarding pupils left in 1999.
- 3.2 The senior school acquired its two co-educational junior schools, King's St Alban's and King's Hawford in 1951 and 1996 respectively and the three form the King's School Foundation. They share the same governing body, although each school runs as a distinct institution with delegated powers. The headmaster of King's St Alban's has been in post since 1999.
- 3.3 The King's School and King's St Alban's occupy, on the same site, buildings that stretch back respectively to the Middle Ages and Tudor times but which have been continuously adapted and extended to create specialist and general teaching areas and pastoral bases for co-educational day education. The sports ground is 15 minutes walk away.
- 3.4 King's St Alban's draws mainly from Worcester itself and from the surrounding areas within a radius of about 25 miles. About half the pupils enter from independent schools and half from maintained primary schools. Pupils' parents come largely from business, professional and academic backgrounds. Minority ethnic heritages constitute only a small proportion of the roll. The school is an Anglican foundation but welcomes pupils from other faiths or none.
- 3.5 At the time of the inspection, King's St Alban's Junior School had 173 pupils (100 boys and 73 girls) aged 7 to 11. Places are offered on the basis of performance in English, mathematics and reasoning. The school accepts pupils not only into Year 3 but also into other year groups, including an additional class in Years 5 and 6, so that about one-third of the school is new each academic year. Virtually all pupils proceed to the senior school at age 11 if they are successful in the entrance tests.
- 3.6 Internally administered, nationally standardised tests indicate that the ability of the majority of pupils is above the national average; a few pupils are below and some well above national norms. If pupils achieve standards in line with their abilities, their performance will be above the norms of all maintained primary schools nationally.
- 3.7 The aims of the King's Foundation are that all pupils should have a fulfilling experience of each stage of schooling and leave as balanced and confident individuals thoroughly equipped for what lies ahead. The Foundation seeks to enable pupils to establish good relationships with others; make the most of their talents; become well qualified through academic achievement and command a range of life skills, enriched by a variety of interests and activities. It also aims to provide responsive pastoral care within an ethos of spiritual awareness, tolerance and mutual respect rooted in Christian values and service to others.
- 3.8 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

Key Indicators

3.9 The school does not enter pupils for the National Curriculum Assessments at age 11 (Key Stage 2)

3.10 Attendance for First Half of Summer Term 2005

	Authorised	Unauthorised
Percentage absence	2.3	Nil

3.11 Exclusions Over the Previous 12 Months

Temporary exclusions	Permanent exclusions
Nil	Nil

4. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Attainment and Progress

- 4.1 Pupils achieve good standards at age 11 and throughout the school in relation to their ability both in lessons and in their written work. Almost all pupils are successful in the senior school entrance examination and a good proportion achieves scholarships. Pupils' progress is rarely less than good and at age 11 it is well above the levels predicted by the standardised tests on entry. Pupils with special needs achieve well relative to their difficulties and the most able have the scope they need to show their mettle. Standards of literacy, numeracy and ICT are good. Boys and girls achieve equally well.
- 4.2 Pupils' attainment is very good in English, mathematics and science, and in ADT. It is good in history. In the other work observed across the curriculum, whether in the lessons seen or in their books, pupils achieved standards that were never less than satisfactory and most often good. Pupils' work across the curriculum exhibits care in preparation and presentation, and pride in achievement.
- 4.3 Pupils have very good speaking and listening skills. Even the youngest explain complex matters clearly, for example when preparing to deliver weather forecasts in geography in Year 3. The standards in writing are high, especially in their own poetry and comprehension; their well-developed skills in role-play and drama enhance their work in English. Most pupils read at levels well beyond their chronological age and are thus well equipped to find out information for themselves.
- 4.4 Pupil's mental mathematics skills are good and they undertake a good range of investigative work. For example, one teaching group in mathematics in Year 6 devotes a lesson a week to solving practical mathematics and logic problems. Other subjects make good use of the pupils' mathematical skills, for example coordinates and gradient graphs in geography, and measurement and angular calculations in ADT, where they also show good craftsmanship and creativity.
- 4.5 Pupils achieve a good standard of practical skills and fair testing in science. They use their scientific knowledge in personal and social education (PSE) to discuss threats to health and in geography to the environment. Scientific skills in observing and recording are put to good use, for example in fieldwork in history. Pupils achieve good standards in their mastery of ICT skills and older pupils are beginning to apply these skills to the collection and interpretation of data as well as to the word processing and presentation of their work. The recent upgrading of the school's ICT provision and its linking to the senior school's intranet mark a major step on the road to pupils using ICT for independent learning across the curriculum. Standards are high in dance, physical education and representative sport.
- 4.6 Pupils make good progress; sometimes it is very good and, on occasions, excellent. On the basis of the baseline assessments carried out by the school, pupils make progress beyond and in some cases well beyond the levels predicted. Support for pupils with special needs is well targeted and unobtrusive. It enables them to make very good progress so that by Year 6 their performance is barely distinguishable from that of their peers. Pupils make best progress when the work is pitched just beyond where they are but within reach. Boys and girls make progress at broadly the same pace. Pupils make good progress when they are given time to discuss and absorb new material before writing; then, good understanding enables them to explore more complex ideas for themselves. Pupils make only sound progress when the whole class follows the same worksheet or the tasks, such as word searches, are undemanding.

Quality of Pupils' Learning, Attitudes and Behaviour

- 4.7 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in and outside the classroom are excellent, and they support the good and often very good quality of their learning. As a result, pupils take full advantage of all that the school offers. They have well-developed learning skills that enable them to tackle new work and ideas; they concentrate well; they co-operate with each other; they respect others' views and opinions. The environment for learning is calm and ordered.
- 4.8 Pupils acquire a good range of learning skills as they move through the school. They find out information from books, the internet and other sources, although the library is not used extensively at present. By age 11, they are skilled at marshalling information to present an argument. They write well, both for imaginative and instructional purposes; they order facts and figures logically and communicate their ideas in a variety of ways: through drama, illustration and, increasingly, through ICT. Pupils frequently evaluate their own and others' work, for example in English and ADT, so that they continuously seek ways to improve.
- 4.9 Pupils are very well motivated; they are keen to do well but are not destructively competitive. They listen carefully to their teachers and to each other. They concentrate well, often in 'double' periods and persevere when the going gets tough. Teachers' questions are usually greeted by a forest of hands and they are equally ready to ask questions when they do not understand. They accept that others have different beliefs and views, for example when discussing the rites and ceremonies of various religions.
- 4.10 Pupils work particularly well in pairs or small groups, where they willingly pool ideas and share expertise. They contribute well in French lessons. They readily participate in role-play: indeed, this is a major means by which pupils internalise new facts and ideas, for example in English, history and geography. These good levels of imagination and creativity transfer to other subjects, such as ADT, and help pupils to create solutions to design problems. Learning is only constrained when the teaching occupies too much of a lesson or the task precludes opportunities for pupils to express and explore their own ideas.
- 4.11 Behaviour is excellent. Pupils are invariably polite and courteous to adults and to each other. They are self-confident but not arrogant, and respond eagerly to opportunities to take responsibility. They behave well on formal occasions but have the self-discipline to do so when they are not directly supervised.

Attendance

- 4.12 The level of pupils' attendance is very good. It enables them to benefit from continuity in the teaching and learning, and to participate extensively in the activities provided. The school's admission and attendance registers comply in full with current requirements.
- 4.13 Attendance registers are completed correctly at the start of each morning and afternoon session. On their return, the school office follows up unexplained absences promptly. Parents invariably write to explain absences. The registers are completed and analysed correctly.
- 4.14 Most pupils arrive punctually at school. When they are late, they have valid reasons, such as traffic congestion, particularly in the immediate vicinity. Procedures for late arrivals are clear and are followed by pupils. Pupils are also punctual to lessons even though some facilities are at a distance in the senior school section of the site.
- 4.15 The admission register is held in electronic and printed form with back-up copies held separately. It is completed correctly and is up to date.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

- 5.1 The good and often very good quality of the teaching contributes productively to pupils' attainment and progress. In the lessons seen, it was always at least satisfactory and in eight out of ten of them it was never less than good; in almost half the lessons it was very good and sometimes excellent. Pupils' books reveal innovative approaches that promote very effective learning.
- 5.2 Relationships between pupils and teachers are excellent and lessons have an open, cheerful and positive atmosphere. The teaching is thus able to set high expectations and ambitious goals based on close knowledge of individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses derived from regular assessment and marking. Much of the work is carefully matched to pupils' abilities either by gearing it to small groups within classes at different levels of challenge or by placing pupils in ability sets, as in mathematics in Years 5 and 6.
- 5.3 The teaching gives good support to pupils with learning difficulties on the basis of their defined needs. It stimulates those of medium ability by imaginative teaching. The most able are suitably stretched either by the open-ended nature of some of the work, for example projects and individual studies, or by extension work that deepens their understanding.
- 5.4 Although class teachers teach much of the curriculum even in older year groups, their subject knowledge is very good. As a result, the teaching explains new ideas and introduces subject-specific skills effectively. Lessons are well constructed. Pupils understand what is expected of them; the methods chosen often create memorable experiences; probing questions at the end confirm what has been learnt. Co-ordinators are in place for most subjects; their medium-term planning is good; most plans specify the learning objectives for each section of the work. However, co-ordinators do not yet exercise to the full their monitoring role to evaluate the teaching relative to these objectives and share best practice.
- 5.5 The teaching makes very effective use of the time and resources available. The teaching is already making good use in innovative ways of the interactive whiteboards only recently introduced in many rooms, for example to access pictures in the National Gallery, use video clips in geography, revise collectively drafts of writing in English and explore three-dimensional figures in mathematics. Weekly meetings of the teams of teachers in each year help to disseminate good practice. Lessons run to time without the need for intrusive bells. Most have a variety of activities that enable pupils with different styles of learning to gain access to and understanding of the work.
- 5.6 On the occasions when the teaching is no more than sound, exposition goes on too long or worksheets fail to stimulate depth in pupils' thinking. Homework is usually used appropriately either to reinforce or extend work covered in class, or to promote skills of independent learning by setting research or investigations. Occasionally, tasks are undemanding and time filling.

Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for teaching?

- 5.7 Yes.

Assessment and Recording

- 5.8 The assessment and recording of pupils' attainment and progress is good overall. It has strengths in the monitoring of performance but inconsistencies exist in the day-to-day recording of attainment and progress in some subjects.
- 5.9 The systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress are very good. They are efficient, thorough and appropriate for the ages of the pupils, their particular needs and their stage of development. Comprehensive systems of predictive and diagnostic testing, as well as school examinations, give accurate information on pupil achievement, which enables the school to discern patterns of performance and to give particular support or enrichment to individuals or groups of pupils. These systems are well organised, thorough and well matched to pupils' ages and stages of development. They provide valid data on which teachers base their reports to parents.
- 5.10 Assessment procedures are good; testing is regular, accurate, consistent and effective in assisting pupils to make progress. The school also uses national tests, marked internally, to ascertain pupils' attainment in relation to national norms. Outcomes are closely analysed by the head and senior team and used to plan future learning to meet pupils' needs. During lessons, teachers are very good at informing pupils of the progress they are making and they offer guidance to direct pupils' efforts towards successful achievement.
- 5.11 The assessment regime enables the school to identify pupils with particular learning difficulties, mostly associated with dyslexia, and plan appropriate support. The few pupils involved are withdrawn for one-to-one tuition from specific lessons that do not disadvantage their mainstream work. Informal individual education plans direct additional in-class support as necessary. The system works well and most pupils achieve standards in line with their peers by the time they leave.
- 5.12 Pupils' work is marked regularly, thoroughly and accurately; much marking contains positive feedback to encourage pupils. The best marking indicates clearly how work could be improved in future and sets targets for pupils. However, apart from English and mathematics, a wide variety of practice exists amongst staff in recording day-to-day attainment and progress, for example whether individual pupils have mastered the specified learning objectives for each section of work and understood particular concepts and skills.
- 5.13 Assessment information is used effectively to influence curriculum development and planning. The team of teachers in each year group take note of how successful in practice the content of the schemes of work has been in each subject each half term, and note how much curricular adaptation is required for the next academic year. Each July, class teachers assiduously communicate to their successors, in writing and verbally, pupils' strengths and weaknesses to enable progress to resume quickly in the new class from September.

Curriculum

- 5.14 The curriculum provided by the school is very good. It is balanced and broadly based and contributes very effectively to pupils' intellectual, physical and personal attainment and development. It is appropriate for their age, ability, gender and ethnicity and all pupils have equal access to it. It prepares them very well for the next stage of their education and provides good continuity and progression in learning.
- 5.15 The curriculum is broadly based; it encompasses the National Curriculum and additional subjects provide a good overall balance between creative, physical, practical and academic activities. French from Year 3, Latin in a lunchtime club and dance provide further breadth.

All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and the opportunity to learn and make progress. A well-planned and taught PSE programme makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development.

- 5.16 The curriculum is well organised and the size of teaching groups enables it to be taught effectively. Each subject has an appropriate allocation of time and the length of the teaching week and the school year enable the curriculum to be covered thoroughly. Well-planned schemes of work and associated medium-term plans guide judiciously the implementation of the curriculum in most subjects, and ensure continuity in the work and progression in learning. Not all the schemes at present specify the skills and ideas to be taught but teachers use their medium-term plans as working documents and note successful approaches and where further development is required.
- 5.17 The directors of studies of the three Foundation schools meet regularly to discuss curricular continuity. Meetings between subject co-ordinators and heads of department in the senior school have begun to take place in some subjects, but practice varies and contact for others is scant. Subject co-ordinators review pupils' written work with the class teachers annually, which helps to set standards and expectations and prompts curricular development, but they rarely observe lessons.
- 5.18 The school ensures that the small number of pupils receiving extra learning support have unimpaired access to the curriculum and are suitably supported. The teaching strategies used ensure that the school meets the curricular requirements of all its pupils, including those of different ages, abilities, gender, and ethnicity, very well.
- 5.19 The curriculum is enriched by an excellent programme throughout the year of well-targeted educational visits that are incorporated effectively into the teaching, for example visits to museums and the study visit to France. These extend and give practical relevance to the work in the classroom and enhance pupils' skills and understanding significantly. The school makes very good use of residential experience at its outdoor centre in the Black Mountains. Year 6 pupils have whole-week science and ICT projects in the summer term that allow for extended practical work and contribute very positively to pupils' social development.

Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the curriculum?

- 5.20 Yes.

Teaching and Non-teaching Staff

- 5.21 The provision of teaching and non-teaching staff is good. Teachers are well qualified and experienced and are deployed to good effect. The school implements effective induction, appraisal and training policies. The subject co-ordinator role is still developing: as yet they do not routinely monitor teaching and learning in their subjects throughout the school. Ancillary staff support the work of the teachers well. The school carries out all necessary checks.
- 5.22 The number, qualifications and experience of teaching and non-teaching staff are very well aligned to the curriculum and the needs of the school. The good balance of age and experience and generous staffing ratios contribute effectively to the quality of education. The school makes good use of part-time staff and job sharing, for example to provide specialist teaching in a number of subjects. All other staff are suitably deployed. The senior management team is efficient and supports staff well. Non-contact time for preparation and marking is generous but the deputy head and the director of studies have quite heavy teaching commitments in relation to their management responsibilities.

- 5.23 The school has an effective appraisal system in place. The two-year cycle includes the setting of targets and helps to determine training priorities for individuals and for the school. The comprehensive staff development policy and subsequent training are good and organised in consultation with the senior school to make best use of money and resources. Teachers benefit from at least one whole-staff training session each term and most have attended a wide range of courses outside the school.
- 5.24 The staff handbook is comprehensive and very helpful. Schemes of work and medium-term plans, some of which are still being developed, provide good outlines of the courses to be followed but do not always indicate how a specific topic can be taught. Subject co-ordinators do not routinely monitor teaching and learning in their subjects. At present, the school has no newly qualified teachers but a Foundation induction policy is in place should any be appointed.
- 5.25 Teachers and pupils benefit from the efficient support of the well-qualified and hard-working non-teaching staff. The post of matron is central to the life of the school and carries particular responsibilities for the well-being of the choristers. The secretarial and the maintenance and catering staff make a significant contribution to the success of the school. They ensure its smooth running and thereby support the teaching and learning in the classroom.
- 5.26 The senior school carries out the necessary checks with the Criminal Records Bureau and other agencies on all junior school teaching and non-teaching staff.

Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff?

- 5.27 Yes.

Resources for Learning

- 5.28 The range, availability and accessibility of resources are very good throughout the school. They are appropriate for the ages and abilities of the pupils. Provision for ICT is good and it is widely used across the curriculum. The books, equipment and materials are sufficient in quantity and quality; they are organised appropriately and used effectively to enhance the teaching and learning.
- 5.29 ICT resources throughout the school are good; the recently networked ICT room has 20 computers and a further 12 computers are housed in classrooms. Five rooms have interactive whiteboards that are used to good effect but, despite the visual nature of the subject, the ADT room lacks direct access to one. A computer and projection system in the library facilitates the use of CD-ROM and DVD-based resources.
- 5.30 Textbooks and other learning materials for each subject are relevant, modern and in good condition. The science laboratory is well equipped with appropriate materials and consumable resources. If necessary, other items can be borrowed from the senior school. ADT has no shortage of materials for the projects undertaken but some equipment is reaching the end of its useful life. Resources for music and PE and games are good and well-chosen new geography textbooks are being introduced and will be fully in place for next academic year. English has a good selection of textbooks, dictionaries and thesauruses, play scripts, poetry books and shared reading texts suitable for the ages and interests of the pupils. Class library books enhance pupils' choice of reading. Mathematics is well resourced with appropriate practical equipment; it makes good use of ICT and benefits from new textbook schemes.

- 5.31 The school's year-by-year cycle of major reviews of the syllabus and resources in each subject in turn continuously refreshes the curriculum: for example, that for history is early in the current schedule.
- 5.32 Pupils benefit academically and in sport from access to four minibuses for transport to sports fixtures, fieldwork and educational sites in small groups.

Libraries

- 5.33 The range, availability, quality and accessibility of the library stock are good in relation to the number of pupils in the school. The non-fiction stock offers up-to-date support for the curriculum but it is not at present used as extensively or effectively as it could be. Good quality class libraries, mainly fiction, supplement the central library.
- 5.34 Non-fiction stocks are modern and well chosen, and in most subjects provision is good. In some, it is very good, for example in science, history, geography and religious education, but the number and range of books for ICT and mathematics are unsatisfactory.
- 5.35 The resources are readily available throughout the day and a simple room booking system enables teachers to conduct library lessons or allows pupils to undertake research. A digital projection system and a growing and well-selected collection of software and audiotapes usefully supplement the book stock.
- 5.36 Pupils are well trained in library skills. Class and specialist subject teachers take responsibility for introducing pupils to the library and extend their skills over time. Some teachers have small collections of relevant reference books in the classrooms that are put to good use, for example in ADT and geography.
- 5.37 The library is a light and attractive room with comfortable seating for study or browsing. Colourful photographs of recent school activities and projects add to its attractiveness. Shelves are of an appropriate height for the pupils and are clearly labelled. Non-fiction books are classified on the same system as that for public libraries and in addition have helpful colour-coded labels on the spine to signal the level of reading required. Subject areas are usefully divided into labelled subsections. Class fiction libraries augment effectively the stock of non-fiction and reference books in the main library.
- 5.38 A member of staff, assisted by pupils in Year 6, acts as librarian. In addition to displays of books, the winning entries of the recent *Design a Book Cover* competition encourage pupils to use the library resources. At the time of the inspection, these strategies had not been effective in increasing borrowing. Checking books in and out requires pupils to write the title, author and borrower in a book. Most pupils find it laborious; some do not bother. The lack of a quick and effective checking system makes it impossible for staff to monitor the level and nature of borrowing and devise strategies to increase use. Subject planning rarely refers to relevant books in the library.

Premises and Accommodation

- 5.39 The accommodation and facilities are very good. Their range and quality support the curriculum effectively, promote good quality teaching and learning, and enhance pupils' personal development. The buildings help to maintain the ethos of good relationships and easy communication. The school benefits substantially from access to senior school facilities, such as those for sport, drama, music and outdoor education, and from the dining arrangements.

- 5.40 The school's location on the same site as the senior school gives it ready access to a range of very good facilities. For example, the use of the school theatre enriches pupils' drama experience. The dance studio is large, light and airy with a mirrored wall; the sports hall and indoor swimming pool are modern and well equipped; changing rooms there and in the junior school building are of a good size. The junior school has well-maintained, designated pitches and courts at the nearby senior sports field. The recreational facilities in the junior playground, to which boys and girls have equal access, are popular and used well. The outside areas are attractive and well maintained.
- 5.41 The accommodation for teaching and learning is mostly very good. Classrooms are light and spacious, and provide pupils with very good places in which to learn. Good use is made of an awkwardly shaped space for ICT. The chapel is used extensively for a range of activities, for example assemblies and drama, and as an additional teaching area when needed. A well-equipped laboratory facilitates teaching and learning in science. The area for ADT is satisfactory. The workshop is good in terms of space but somewhat inflexible in layout and no more than satisfactorily equipped. The music room does not lend itself to small group music making or creative composition: pupils have to use other areas for these activities. However, spaces for instrumental tuition and practice are good. Storage space in classrooms is sufficient and furniture easily moved, allowing flexibility for practical work and role-play.
- 5.42 Displays of pupils' work around the school are vibrant and arresting, and reflect their many talents. Working conditions benefit from the regular and well-executed maintenance and cleaning.

Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for premises and accommodation?

- 5.43 Yes.

Links with Parents and the Community

- 5.44 The school has developed an excellent and effective partnership with parents and worthwhile links with the community. These are strengths of the school. Parents are kept well informed about events and their children's progress. In the pre-inspection survey of their views of the school, parents' responses recorded very high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of its provision and performance.
- 5.45 Those parents responding to the questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the life and work of the school. They expressed particular satisfaction with the standards achieved, the quality of the pastoral care, the ready access to the head and staff, and the attitudes and values promoted. With one or two exceptions, responses indicated satisfaction with homework. Inspection evidence is that the homework set is mostly appropriate for the age and ability of the pupils.
- 5.46 Communication with parents and carers is excellent. The school has a clear, informative and attractive prospectus that contains information about admission and states the aims of the school. Twice-termly newsletters and weekly website bulletins provide information about activities, plans for the coming weeks and also celebrate pupils' successes. A notice-board in the playground and an electronic notice-board near the pupils' entrance remind parents and carers of matters of current interest.
- 5.47 Parents and carers are very well informed about their children's work and progress. Parents' evenings are held termly to enable them to discuss their children's progress; class teachers telephone each family within the first 10 days of the academic year to check how pupils are settling in. The school operates an open-door policy and contact with class teachers and the

head at the beginning and end of each day enables immediate issues to be dealt with promptly.

- 5.48 Parents and carers receive two reports a year that are clear and sufficiently detailed to be helpful to pupils and parents. Reports contain clear information on what pupils know and can do, and the progress made since the previous report. A few subject reports indicate what needs to be done to improve and make further progress. Reports do not include a section for a written response from parents. Very good documentation about school life is available for pupils and parents on joining the school and this helps them to talk together about what to expect in the school days that lie ahead. The well-written and informative annual magazine, made up entirely of pupils' work, is distributed to parents.
- 5.49 Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the school. The Parents' Committee is active socially and raises funds that provide extra resources for the school. Pupils complete homework diaries daily; they include useful information for parents about the help they can give with homework and what the curriculum covers. Parents do not help in classes but they give strong support in many other ways: in the uniform shop, on school visits, at sports fixtures, plays, concerts, open days, fetes, family walks and picnics, and at new parents' social evenings and coffee mornings. The school's complaints procedure is available for parents but it has never had to be invoked.
- 5.50 The school's work and curriculum and pupils' experience are enriched by links with the community, for example through the very good range of educational visits and the residential experience at the school's outdoor centre, especially for Years 5 and 6. These add a further dimension to pupils' social and academic experience. The choir sings at a residential care home at Christmas; good links exist with local schools and community groups who use school premises regularly; local and international charities, chosen by the pupils, benefit from the school's fund-raising, for example a centre for the homeless; a local children's hospice; the local Rotary Tsunami appeal; and regular support for a UNICEF Child Sponsorship. The Rhythms of Africa project last summer, linked to the Make Poverty History campaign, was a notable example of dance, drama, art and writing that brought together curricular and charitable aims. The school has developed productive links with the wider community of the diocese through its education of the cathedral choristers.

Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the provision of information?

- 5.51 Yes.

Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the manner in which complaints are to be handled?

- 5.52 Yes.

6. PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PASTORAL CARE

Pupils' Personal Development

- 6.1 Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, and one of the strengths of the school. The pupils feel well supported and develop confidence and self-esteem through the many opportunities to interact socially and take responsibility. The school encourages tolerance, understanding and respect for others' beliefs. It imparts strong moral values and explores the heritage and culture of Britain, Europe and the wider world.
- 6.2 Opportunities for spiritual development are excellent. The school is founded on Christian values. School assemblies in the school chapel take place four times a week and form assemblies are held on the other day. Services are also held in the cathedral at the start of each term and for special events. The head and senior staff conduct most of the assemblies, but sometimes classes take the lead, as observed on two memorable occasions. The presence of the cathedral choristers adds another musical and spiritual dimension to the life of the school. Commitment to Christian values pervades the curriculum but the school recognises and respects the festivals of other faiths. Customs and traditions of other faiths are also studied in religious education and discussed in PSE. For example, a lesson on costume led to a discussion on why it is the custom in some communities for women to be veiled.
- 6.3 Provision for moral development is excellent. Opportunities for development of a personal moral code occur across the curriculum; religious education and the weekly PSE lessons give explicit opportunities for topics of a moral or ethical nature to be discussed. For example, a Year 6 group had to put themselves in the position of a girl of their own age who faced the dilemma of doing something she knew to be wrong or being thought a coward by her friends. In discussing what she should have done, pupils learned how to handle such a situation themselves. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and respect each other's interests and feelings. The staff set an excellent example and a feeling of mutual respect and understanding exists between pupils and teachers.
- 6.4 The school provides an excellent range of opportunities through which all pupils learn to appreciate their own cultural traditions and the diversity and richness of others. Strongly influenced by its historic setting, the pupils are proud of their connection with the cathedral through the choristers. They study many other cultures, for example that of Africa last summer when much of the work of the whole school, particularly in art, drama and music, focused on the continent. The school supports a child in a Kenyan village. Annual visits to France give pupils an opportunity to practise their language skills as well as explore the customs and traditions of another part of Europe. Pupils regularly visit museums and historic houses, and see Royal Shakespeare Company productions for example.
- 6.5 Social development is excellent. The school encourages pupils to relate positively to one another, take responsibility and participate fully in the school community. Classes are re-constituted each year to ensure that pupils get to know as many of their contemporaries as possible. The four houses provide pupils with the opportunity to take responsibility as house captains and vice-captains. Friendly rivalry between the houses in a range of competitions promotes corporate and individual responsibility. Year 6 pupils act as prefects with responsibilities in the younger forms under the supervision of the class teacher.

Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils?

- 6.6 Yes.

Pastoral Care, including Welfare and Health & Safety

- 6.7 The high quality of pastoral care, support and guidance stems from the teachers' knowledge of the pupils as individuals and the action taken to help them make the most of their talents. Arrangements to safeguard pupils' health, safety and well-being are very good.
- 6.8 Class teachers monitor closely pupils' academic and social development and, because they teach much of the curriculum to their own classes, they know their pupils well. They use this knowledge to help and guide pupils academically and personally, and to keep parents well informed of their children's needs and development. A clear special needs policy ensures that pupils of all abilities receive the support they require. The head keeps close contact with parents as part of the continuous review of individual pupils' progress and, where necessary, provides even-handed advice to parents on the choice of senior school.
- 6.9 Form periods and PSE lessons provide opportunities for the discussion of pastoral matters. Well-designed measures promote good discipline and behaviour; policies are clear and parents understand them. Pupils accept and understand the code of conduct, and they make suggestions when the school modifies it from time to time. The school's system of rewards and punishments is simple but effective: house points for good behaviour and good work, but five minus points may lead to a detention. Pupils say they understand the system and feel it is fair. Incidents of bullying are very rare but, when they occur, they are dealt with expeditiously under a very appropriate anti-bullying policy; parents are aware of the procedures and are always fully involved.
- 6.10 The school takes all possible measures to promote healthy eating through lessons, such as PSE and science, and through the extensive choice and very high quality of the school meals. These are varied and nutritious and always include a vegetarian option. The catering staff are pleasant and friendly; the refectory is quiet and civilised; and dining at school is a pleasant social experience.
- 6.11 The school meets all current requirements for child protection. The second deputy in the senior school is the designated person for child protection, although day-to-day responsibility is devolved to the head of the junior school. All staff have received training in child protection matters; refresher training is organised on a cyclical basis.
- 6.12 Arrangements for promoting the pupils' welfare are very good. The school has its own medical room and a full-time matron; it can draw on the fully staffed senior school health centre as necessary. Sufficient school staff have first-aid qualifications and first-aid boxes are strategically placed. Matron and the registrar circulate information to staff about pupils' medical conditions on a need-to-know basis. Medicines are safely stored and records kept of accidents and injuries.
- 6.13 The school takes all reasonable precautions to protect pupils and staff from the risk of fire and other hazards. Fire drills take place regularly and are timed and logged. Risk assessments are made for all school journeys. However, those for work in the science laboratory lack formal codification.

6.14 The safety committee for the three King's schools meets termly and is chaired by a member of the governing body. The junior school's health and safety officer attends these meetings and tables any matters that arise from the regular reviews of its provision and procedures.

Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils?

6.15 Yes.

7. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Governance and Management

- 7.1 The school benefits from the very good quality governance and strategic guidance provided by the Foundation. The powers delegated to the headmaster enable the school to create its own distinctive ethos and character, and to meet its own and the Foundation's aims. The leadership is clear sighted and management is very good. Human and material resources are deployed to support teaching and learning very well. Communication and routine administration function efficiently; the school has a clear sense of purpose and direction focused on the welfare and achievement of the pupils. Together, these features underpin a very good quality of education.
- 7.2 The governors have established an effective framework within which the school manages its own affairs but is fully accountable to the Foundation. The head attends all governing body meetings and reports at least annually. The governors keep contact with the school through the regular visits of a designated governor and by governors' visits to concerts, speech days and events. So far, governors have not taken the opportunity to join classes and see the outcomes of their policies and planning at first hand. Even so, they know the school well.
- 7.3 The quality of the Foundation's strategic planning is very good. It is open and transparent. The school is well embedded in the cycle of development planning so that governors understand its short-, medium- and long-term needs, and allocate funds accordingly. As a result, the school benefits from a continuous programme of extension, adaptation and phased refurbishment. The school's planning is effective. Subject and class development plans specify needs, and these are refined by consultation with all staff. The senior management team then sifts and prioritises them into a school development plan within known financial parameters for the next three to five years; it revisits and updates it annually.
- 7.4 Suitable funding and efficient planning therefore secure levels of human and material resources that support teaching and learning well and enhance the quality of education and standards achieved. The energetic leadership and the clear educational direction benefits from the senior management team's strong support. All have clearly defined responsibilities and capably carry out their duties. Regular minuted meetings of this team, as well as the whole staff and year and subject teams, secure very effective two-way communication. Close links with the bursar ensure realistic planning.
- 7.5 The school has clear aims and realistic policies backed by workable systems to implement them. The broad curriculum provides plentiful opportunities for pupils, whatever their ability, to develop their academic, creative and sporting talents. The senior management team, strongly supported by all members of staff, creates an excellent ethos that permeates all that the school does. Staff commitment to the care and development of pupils makes a very positive contribution to their attainment and progress, and their personal development.
- 7.6 Arrangements for quality assurance are good. The senior team monitors closely standards through the periodic assessments, and teaching through appraisal and review. These help to set targets and identify and meet staff development needs. The process contributes strongly to the quality of teaching and learning. Subject co-ordinators have rather broadly drawn job descriptions. They take responsibility for curriculum planning and resource provision, but the extent to which they monitor standards and teaching quality throughout the school varies.
- 7.7 The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Administrative staff present a very positive and friendly image of the school to parents and visitors.

8. ACHIEVEMENT AND QUALITY IN SUBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Achievement and Quality in Subjects

English

- 8.1 Pupils' attainment in English throughout the school is good. In the lessons observed, pupils' attainment was always at least sound and in some lessons it was very good. Evaluation of the work in pupils' books, observation of reading and writing in class, and pupils' use of vocabulary in discussion confirm that attainment and progress is above that predicted by the nationally standardised tests that the school uses.
- 8.2 Pupils achieve consistently good standards in writing. Handwriting and presentation also mostly reach a good standard. By Year 6, pupils write accurately and pay due attention to grammar and spelling. They write thoughtfully in a variety of styles. Their creative writing is usually good and some of it is very good: for example, Year 6 poems based upon the witches' spell from *Macbeth* used modern ingredients creatively, and the writing of alliterative poetry in Year 5 demonstrated very good command not only of vocabulary but also expression.
- 8.3 Pupils make good progress throughout the school in developing their skills in speaking and listening and in reading and writing. They create clear structures to their stories that grow in complexity as they move through the school; they master a good range of grammatical and syntactical skills and in reading they cope with sophisticated materials for their age. They make good progress in comprehension. For example, the work linked to the 'all the world's a stage' speech in *As You Like It* revealed that they understood metaphor and related it to their own observations of life.
- 8.4 Regular individual support for pupils with identified learning difficulties in reading and writing focuses effectively on overcoming their specific problems. Considerate planning by class teachers ensures that pupils are not disadvantaged by withdrawal from English lessons. In mainstream lessons, they are well supported by their class teachers and, on occasions, by additional in-class help. These pupils make good progress in relation to their difficulties. From time to time, more able pupils receive additional appropriate challenge through well-planned extension tasks.
- 8.5 The quality of pupils' learning and behaviour is mostly good; in some lessons it is very good; it is always at least sound. Pupils listen attentively, settle to tasks quickly and are keen to learn: for example in a Year 5 lesson on prefixes, pupils gamely forecast the meaning of unfamiliar words that began with familiar prefixes. Pupils work hard and collaborate well with partners or groups when asked to do so. They are considerate towards each other and take an interest in each other's work. Most pupils take a pride in their work.
- 8.6 The quality of teaching is never less than sound; it is frequently good and, on occasions, it is very good. When the teaching is very good, it is imaginative and caters for the needs of the full range of pupils in the class. For example, pupils in Year 4 unscrambled muddled instructional writing of various levels of complexity carefully matched to their abilities. Teachers use opportunities for self-evaluation productively, for example in a Year 3 handwriting lesson pupils had to choose the letter they felt they had formed the best and compare it with those of others. The teaching extends pupils' knowledge through skilful questioning. Teachers know their pupils well and manage their classes accordingly. Lessons are well prepared and the work achieves a balance between speaking, listening, reading and writing. High expectations, even for the less able, result in well-motivated and interested

pupils who want to do their best. Clear objectives, brisk pace and useful consolidation and evaluation are features of the best teaching. All teachers have secure subject knowledge and make good use of homework to promote independent learning.

- 8.7 The subject is well led, managed and motivated. Curriculum planning is detailed and thorough. Although pupils' books show little evidence of target setting, the marking of pupils' work is thorough and supports the pupils' progress. Assessments are recorded carefully. A very good range of resources is used effectively especially the ICT facilities, for example to display on the whiteboard screen creative writing suggestions from the class. Pupils know how to use the library but few references were made to it in the work seen.

Mathematics

- 8.8 Pupils' attainment is good in relation to their abilities in both mental and written mathematics. From Year 3 onwards, pupils use successfully a range of techniques for addition and subtraction; the youngest pupils know their number bonds and apply their knowledge to solve simple problems. They recognise and name shapes and differentiate between them. For instance, Year 4 pupils explained the differences between equilateral, isosceles and scalene triangles. By Year 6, pupils apply their skills to more complex problems, such as those concerning area or probability, and are beginning to learn the basics of algebra. They show a good understanding of percentages, fractions and decimals. Most pupils use ICT successfully, for example to plan and draw graphs; their data-handling skills are good. Pupils understand and use correct mathematical terms.
- 8.9 The progress made by pupils, including those with special needs over time and in lessons is good. Pupils of all abilities, make good progress in the knowledge and understanding of a wide range of mathematical concepts. In Year 3 and Year 4, well-planned group work ensures that pupils of all abilities work at the pace most suited to their abilities: as a result, the least able often make rapid progress. The use of grouping by mathematical ability in Years 5 and 6 benefits all pupils; the most able are introduced to more advanced mathematical processes while practice of skills by those who find the subject more difficult ensures that they have a firm understanding before they tackle more complex problems.
- 8.10 The quality of learning and behaviour is good; sometimes it is very good and occasionally excellent. Pupils demonstrate good powers of concentration; they respond well to questions and work well whether on their own or in a group. They listen well and discuss their ideas with each other and with their teacher. They are keen to ask questions and will query anything they do not understand.
- 8.11 The quality of teaching is good and often very good. The best teaching maintains a brisk pace, with clear explanations of what is required. Good use of questions ensures that pupils of all abilities have the chance to succeed. Several classes use warm-up mental exercises to good effect but they are not used as regularly as they could usefully be in others. Year 5 pupils found that playing Tables Bingo was a painless way of revising their multiplication tables. Teachers are knowledgeable and their lessons are well planned and appropriately resourced. High expectations ensure that the majority of pupils give of their best.
- 8.12 The scheme of work is well structured and ensures continuity in the work and the progression of skills from one year to the next. The teachers are, at present, evaluating the use of a recently introduced textbook series before making further adjustments to the syllabus. ICT is used well in some classes but, without further staff development, not all pupils can benefit from this important resource. The co-ordinator is working hard to help all staff make full use of the good ICT facilities and thereby extend pupils' mathematical experience.

- 8.13 Leadership of the department is good, although no monitoring of class teaching takes place at present. However, the co-ordinator is readily available for help or advice. The junior and senior schools have held discussions to improve continuity in learning for the pupils.
- 8.14 The marking of books is up to date, words of praise are frequently added and in some classes targets are set. Occasionally, written suggestions indicate how work can be improved and act as a useful reminder to the pupils when beginning a new piece of work. A good range of resources supports pupils' learning but the subject has very few books in the library.

Science

- 8.15 Pupils' attainment in lessons and in their workbooks is high throughout the school. Their early skills of scientific enquiry are developed well: for example, Year 3 pupils learned to measure the speed and amount of water absorbed by different types of paper and logged their results accurately. In Year 4, pupils suggested sensible hypotheses as to which factors influenced how quickly chocolate buttons would melt. Pupils in Year 5 made very good suggestions about how to adapt an experiment but still retain it as a fair test when the breaking point of 'concrete' beams proved to be stronger than expected. Year 6 pupils understood the terms 'evaporation', 'dissolving', 'soluble' and 'insoluble', and used them appropriately when devising a way to separate sand from salt in a mixture.
- 8.16 Pupils' progress in lessons and over longer periods is rapid. The carefully planned scheme of work ensures that previous knowledge and skills are built upon and gradually increased. For example, Year 3 began to write a report in a scientific manner and by Year 6 most pupils record and report a scientific investigation effectively and with little help from teachers.
- 8.17 Pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils are interested, listen well and respond to the teacher by offering observations, and answering and asking questions. They have good relationships with each other and with their teachers. They collaborate well when experimenting in pairs and small groups, for example when Year 6 pupils observed how different materials burn. Pupils communicate their thoughts clearly and respond well to each other's ideas and suggestions, skills that make a valuable contribution to their attainment.
- 8.18 The quality of teaching is very good and caters well for pupils' varying needs. Lessons have clear objectives and move at a good pace. Well-planned demonstrations and practical work contribute to pupils' understanding and enthusiasm for the subject. The teaching encourages pupils to think about their experiments, contribute to the planning and to write well-structured accounts of their work. Most teaching shows very secure subject knowledge and most teachers use effective questioning that challenges pupils to think more deeply about their observations. Practical work is well organised and managed; good use is made of time and resources. ICT is used only occasionally but then very well. The school is currently sourcing new science software compatible with the new hardware to extend ICT use. Currently, the laboratory has no interactive whiteboard. Teachers underline the safety awareness in lessons but no written risk assessments for the use of equipment are in place.
- 8.19 The marking of pupils' work is good; it is frequent and accurate. It contains much positive comment to encourage pupils to persist but only occasional helpful explanations to show them how to improve their work. A wide variety of practice exists in the recording of day-to-day attainment and progress, for example whether individual pupils have reached specified objectives and mastered and understood particular concepts and skills.
- 8.20 The subject is well led and managed, but it has some way to go to implement regular monitoring of classroom teaching and sharing of good practice between teachers, although the weekly meetings of year teachers help. The curriculum is well constructed and much

enhanced by the Year 6 science week that enables pupils to gain valuable experience in extended practical fieldwork. Staff note the strengths and weaknesses of the scheme of work regularly so that the curriculum is periodically amended and developed. The well-lit, airy, modern laboratory has good levels of equipment, resources and textbooks; a very good range of library books is also available to support learning in science when the teaching refers pupils to them.

Art/Design/Technology

- 8.21 Pupils' attainment is good throughout the school and some individuals achieve very high standards in their work in both the art and technology aspects. By age 11 in art, pupils have a good understanding of the different styles of painting and selected artists from the Renaissance to the present day. Pupils acquire a love of art and design and know that their work is valued. In technology, they understand and practise the design process of research, testing, fabrication and evaluation. Pupils' artwork on display reflects a wide range of good quality expressive and interpretive work in various media. Equally good work in technology encompasses designing and making skills in both resistant and compliant materials that display innovation and care in their construction and are fit for the purpose intended.
- 8.22 The progress of pupils, including those with special needs, is good in Year 3 and rises to very good by Year 6. They build up levels of skill, experience and understanding as they move through the school and benefit from the increasing scope they have to experiment and find their own solutions to the assignments set. Self and peer evaluation aids progress substantially: pupils benefit from constructive comments and seeing how others resolved the difficulties. Pupils acquire a love of art and design and know that their work is valued. However, the lack of sketchbooks in Years 5 and 6 deprives pupils of useful evidence of progress as well as the means to extend their ideas and build up visual references.
- 8.23 The quality of pupils' learning, attitude and behaviour is very good and sometimes excellent. They concentrate hard, work well together, show considerable enthusiasm for creative work and have the confidence to tackle ambitious projects. For example, Year 4 pupils were using the National Gallery's Take One Picture Project to reinterpret in mixed media Mignard's portrait of Madame de Seignelay and Two of Her Sons. As a result, pupils made substantial learning gains in handling sky, landscape and the human figure as well as in understanding classical symbolism. Last year's Year 5 met the challenge of painting splintered ice in the style of Wilhelmina Barns-Graham superbly well. Technology projects are equally challenging: for example, innovative egg holders in Year 6 had to meet tight specifications for practicality.
- 8.24 The quality of teaching is always at least good and frequently very good. Specialist expertise infuses the work in Years 4 to 6, and guides the work in Year 3. Appropriately high expectations stretch pupils whatever their capability and the wide range of projects allows a variety of solutions that enable pupils to make good progress, for example in Year 6 creating the designs and suitable surface textures on tiles in the style of William Morris. The teaching has clear objectives communicated to pupils in the round table discussions at the start of lessons. Helpful prompts keep pupils on track and maintain momentum. Lessons invariably end with group evaluation of the work achieved.
- 8.25 Leadership of the subject and management of the workshop and resources are very good. The curriculum is well planned and, in effect, achieves coverage of two disciplines in the time normally allotted to one. Most topics combine aspects of art and technology, though some place more emphasis on one than the other. Coverage of non-European art is very good, for example Japanese origami and Native American textiles. Consumable resources and workshop space and light are good. However, the one large work surface makes small group

work difficult; the room lacks workstations and fixed vices; some equipment, such as mitre blocks, are worn and inhibit precision. Other equipment, for example pillar drills and the band saw, are reaching the end of their useful lives. The National Gallery Project and the visual aspects of art argue strongly for digital projection and direct access to the internet.

History

- 8.26 Attainment in history is good throughout the school. Pupils achieve consistently good standards within the current programme of study and, in addition to the Ancient Egyptians and Greeks, have a very good grasp of the main events of British history from the Romans to the 20th century. For example, pupils in Year 3 demonstrated detailed knowledge of the way of life in Egypt, reinforced by their artwork in the style of wall paintings and funerary goods. Pupils in a Year 5 class understood clearly the impact of the dissolution of the monasteries through role-play in a building where such events happened in the 1530s. However, exploration of cause and effect in this way is relatively rare because pupils spend insufficient time on historical skills and concepts.
- 8.27 Progress is good in each age group. Pupils acquire a good sense of chronology as indicated by the detailed timelines they have created to record events and personalities. Their work shows good progress in terms of the detail they master as they move through the school, for example in Year 6 on the arguments for and against the building of canals and railways. Pupils in Year 4 made particularly good progress when they assembled as Roman legionaries on the playground, drilled to Latin commands, manoeuvred as a *cuneus* and *testudo*, and realised how formidable a fighting machine the Roman army was. On the other hand, opportunities are relatively few for pupils to analyse sources and for older pupils to determine their partiality and bias. Progress is steady rather than rapid in these aspects.
- 8.28 Pupils' learning is very good and sometimes excellent. They concentrate well, are keen to learn and listen intently even when teachers' explanations are lengthy. They work well together in pairs and small groups, especially for role-plays. Behaviour is excellent even when pupils are excited, for example when Year 6 dramatised the trial and acquittal of the highwayman Nevison. Pupils are adept at finding out information from books, the internet and the library; they communicate competently orally and in writing. Visits to historic sites extend and reinforce their learning very effectively.
- 8.29 The quality of teaching is good; it is sometimes very good and occasionally excellent. It demonstrates good knowledge of the topics studied. The many teaching and learning approaches used convey information and understanding in lively and memorable ways. For example, pupils in a Year 3 class acted as archaeologists when the chapel was converted into Tutankhamun's tomb and they evaluated and recorded the artefacts they uncovered. Planning is good: each lesson sets out what is to be done; has appropriate activities; and gives time for consolidation at the end. Occasionally, worksheets and routine homework tasks place artificially low ceilings on what pupils can achieve.
- 8.30 Leadership and management, pending the designation of a co-ordinator, are satisfactory but classroom observation to share good practice is rare. Textbook and video resources are good, but pupils are rarely referred to the library. Prompt marking and helpful comments enable pupils to improve, but their attainment of objectives in the medium-term planning is not routinely recorded. This planning is good as far as it goes, but lessons stress what happened in the past rather than why. Some topics are too long and preclude short investigations using primary sources or local case studies, for example Worcester in the Civil War. The only non-European study is Ancient Egypt and older pupils lack the opportunity to explore another one, for example the Aztecs or Incas. Links with the senior school are slender. Most

opportune, the school has scheduled the subject for a major review shortly and it is well placed to build on the substantial strengths already secured.

Short Subject Reports

Short subject reports contain concise evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning and of provision in the school.

French

- 8.31 Two lessons were observed, one in Year 3 and one in Year 6. Departmental documentation and a sample of pupils' books were scrutinised.
- 8.32 The quality of the teaching observed was very good and sometimes excellent. The lessons were well planned with very clear learning objectives and were conducted at a lively pace. The teaching combined enthusiasm and a sense of fun with rigorous insistence on accuracy in both pronunciation and sentence construction. Very good use was made of the French language whenever possible. Tape recordings, flash cards, games and song-and-dance routines supported pupils' learning very effectively. Care was taken to ensure appropriate practice and development in all the four skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing.
- 8.33 Pupils' attitudes, learning and behaviour were very good. They responded in the lessons with genuine enthusiasm. They eagerly volunteered to speak in French and acted out role-plays very confidently. They concentrated very well and listened very carefully. Pupils of all ages worked well in pairs. They had an excellent rapport with one another and with their teacher.
- 8.34 The provision for French is very good. The department is well equipped with up-to-date resources, including a modern textbook used with the older pupils.

Geography

- 8.35 Five lessons were observed, at least one in each year group; work from the current and previous academic year was scrutinised and evaluated; a discussion was held with the co-ordinator; and account was taken of pupils' work in classroom displays.
- 8.36 The quality of teaching was nearly always good and on occasions it was very good. Clear expositions, often supported by excellent slides and visual sources, catered well for pupils' different learning styles. Good use of interactive whiteboards provided access to high quality weather charts and the latest maps and statistical information. Expectations were appropriately high and pupils learnt well when the tasks and materials were geared to their capabilities, for example open assignments and projects enabled the most able to extend their knowledge and understanding. Sensitive questioning probed pupils' knowledge and understanding, and marking often indicated how they could improve. Teaching occasionally spoon-fed pupils, for example when they copied notes from the board.
- 8.37 The quality of learning, attitudes and behaviour was frequently very good and occasionally excellent. Pupils have developed good geographical skills, for example fieldwork related to river studies, Ordnance Survey map work and weather observations, and have produced some first-class models of Ironbridge Gorge. Pupils worked well independently and in small groups. Behaviour was never less than very good.
- 8.38 The curriculum is soundly based on the National Curriculum and builds in effective continuity and progression. Resources are very good. They are up to date and attractive and support the curriculum well. Planning is sound but monitoring of non-specialist class teachers by the co-ordinator is not routinely undertaken.

Information and Communication Technology

- 8.39 Three ICT lessons in Years 3 and 6 were observed as well as the use of ICT in other subjects. Saved pupils' work and a sample of projects were scrutinised and discussions held with the subject co-ordinator.
- 8.40 The quality of teaching was good and on occasions very good. It demonstrates very good subject knowledge. The teaching objectives were clearly understood by pupils so that they settled quickly to work on arrival in the ICT room. Teachers circulated continuously around the workstations to check on pupils' understanding, give encouragement and ensure that the more able pupils received tasks with a suitable level of challenge. Lessons were well planned, organised and managed.
- 8.41 Pupils' learning and attitudes were good, and their behaviour very good. They were well motivated, attentive to their teacher and settled quickly to their work. They showed high levels of concentration when working individually and co-operated well when required.
- 8.42 The structure of the scheme of work results in a good coverage of a wide range of skills by the pupils. A weeklong project in Year 6 enhances the day-to-day work. Assessment of pupils is informal: no marks are given and no records are kept. ICT is not included as a separate subject in the twice-yearly reports. Good use is made of the potentially awkward space in the ICT room. It is well equipped and resourced with modern computers now connected to the senior school intranet. Each pupil has the use of an individual computer. In addition, all classrooms have their own computer and these and the ICT suite constitute good facilities across the curriculum. Teachers make very good use of interactive whiteboards where they are available.

Music

- 8.43 Three lessons were observed, one each in Years 4, 5 and 6, and the work displayed was scrutinised.
- 8.44 Teaching was good in the lessons seen. Teachers were very knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and lessons taken at a fast pace. The teaching kept all pupils involved whether singing or playing percussion instruments. The wide range of musical ability made this quite difficult. However, very good use was made of the talents of the most musical pupils who were, for instance, asked to sing from lines of music written on the board for the others to listen to and identify which line was being sung.
- 8.45 The quality of pupils' learning and attitude was good. Most of the pupils behaved well in class, although a few became bored through one long 'double period'. Others were reluctant to sing because they did not like the original choice of song. However, *Messing About on the River* proved popular and was sung with more enthusiasm. Pupils were keen to perform their own music and enjoyed developing and writing their own compositions for percussion.

Personal and Social Education

- 8.46 Two lessons of PSE were observed one each in Years 5 and 6, and a discussion was held with the co-ordinator.
- 8.47 The teaching of PSE was very good. Lessons were well planned and organised. For example, Year 5 pupils discussed how the clothes people wear are dictated by tradition, religion and climate, thus increasing their understanding of different cultures. Pupils were well motivated because they related lessons to their personal experiences, for example a

discussion of the problems of peer pressure made pupils think and discuss among themselves how they would handle a moral dilemma.

- 8.48 Pupils were very responsive; they related well to their teachers and were keen to express their opinions. Whether in groups or on their own, they behaved well in class and were sufficiently confident in their relationships to talk about quite personal matters very openly.

Physical Education and Games

- 8.49 Three lessons, one each in Years 4, 5 and 6, and one of dance in Year 4 were observed.
- 8.50 The teaching of physical education and games was consistently very good and excellent in dance. Lessons were well planned and organised by experienced staff committed to getting the best from the pupils. They showed sensitivity in helping the less able yet set challenging tasks for the more talented pupils. The teaching used discussion to good effect to probe pupils' knowledge of tactical play, previously taught skills and how to improve performance.
- 8.51 The pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour were excellent. They were very responsive and aesthetically sensitive in dance. They persevered when practising new skills; they encouraged each other and offered hints on how to improve. Pupils' behaviour and interaction, both as individuals and in groups, were very productive. They worked hard with good results to acquire the necessary skills and apply them tactically and enthusiastically in games, and to produce expressive sequences of movements in dance.
- 8.52 Sport and physical education are very popular. The pupils achieve a good measure of success in a range of competitive fixtures, often against much larger schools.

Religious Education

- 8.53 Two lessons were observed, one in Year 4 and the other in Year 6; a discussion was held with the co-ordinator.
- 8.54 The teaching in lessons was good. Lessons were well planned and good use was made of the time available. Stories were told in a lively manner and encouraged the pupils to become involved. Good use of a video resource was made in a Year 4 lesson that enabled pupils to understand the connection between David's skill with his sling when protecting his flock and his eventual defeat of Goliath.
- 8.55 The quality of pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour were good. In all lessons, pupils were interested, keen and wanted to know more. Most of the Year 3 pupils already knew the story of Noah but became interested in discussing how he must have felt when he was asked to build the ark: 'scared' and 'angry' were two suggestions. Some pupils were particularly anxious about the fate of the animals not taken into the ark. Pupils behaved well in class and listened well, motivated by the enthusiasm of their teachers.
- 8.56 The scheme of work is straightforward and ensures that pupils learn something of the main characters and stories of Christianity, as well as the elements of Judaism and Islam.

Achievement and Quality in Activities

- 8.57 The school provides an excellent extra-curricular programme that is one of its strengths. The wide range of sporting, musical, cultural and other lunch-time and after-school clubs is well chosen to match the ages and aptitudes of the pupils. The activities attract a high level of involvement from pupils and staff alike, and the quality achieved is very good.

- 8.58 The school offers a wide and eclectic programme that includes sports, cultural and recreational activities. The autumn term includes, for example science club, glass painting, digital photography, fantasy games, heartbeat fitness, face painting, art club and Latin. Pupils benefit from indoor and outdoor seasonal sports as well as swimming, and all are well attended. All pupils are encouraged to participate in a variety of activities over the year by their class teachers, the head and those who run the clubs. It is exceptional if a pupil does not take part in at least one activity. Over 100 pupils learn a musical instrument; pupils in Year 6 take part in a visit to France; the choristers thrive on their busy schedule; and Years 5 and 6 enjoy residential experiences at the school's outdoor centre. The high level and extent of pupil participation adds significantly to developing pupils' talents, broadening their interests, extending their skills and achieving personal success.
- 8.59 The quality achieved is very good. Teachers record pupils' involvement in activities. All pupil participation in clubs and inter-house activities is listed in the twice-yearly reports but levels of achievement are not always reported. Successes are celebrated in assembly and in newsletters. Examples over the last year include pupils who achieved British Association of Young Scientists' awards; who gained instrumental music awards up to and including Grade 8; who qualified for the national IAPS swimming finals and swam for the county; cricketers who have played for Worcestershire at Under 10 and Under 11; orienteers who took part in the national schools championships; and a pupil who reached the final round of the Royal Ballet Company auditions. This comprehensive programme enhances pupils' interests and self-confidence, and thereby contributes positively to their personal development and their learning across the curriculum.

9. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 9.1 The inspection was carried out from 17th to 21st October. All subjects of the curriculum were inspected and all members of the teaching staff were observed teaching. However, the size of the team did not permit all subjects to be reported on in full. The following subjects do not have full reports in Section 8: French, geography, ICT, music, physical education, PSE and religious education. The inspectors visited 71 lessons or parts of lessons, examined extensive samples of work by pupils of different abilities in each year and held formal discussions with these pupils as well as informal discussions with other pupils. They attended three assemblies and 10 registration sessions. They observed eight extra-curricular and sporting activities. They held 22 planned discussions with 15 teaching and non-teaching staff at various levels in the school. They analysed the responses of 102 parents to a questionnaire distributed in advance of the inspection. They examined a wide range of documentation made available by the school.

List of Inspectors

Brian Chaplin	Reporting Inspector, HMI (Retired)
Mary Burridge	Former Head, GSA junior school
Nicola Gan	Deputy Head, IAPS school
Jane Jenkins	Former Head, IAPS school