

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS
INSPECTORATE**

**Report following the Inspection of
ROSE HILL SCHOOL**

8th to 12th October 2001

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Rose Hill School

Full Name of the School	Rose Hill School		
DFES Number	886/6013		
Address	Culverden Down, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN4 9SY		
Telephone Number	01892 525591		
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E-mail Address	<u>headmaster@rosehillschool.co.uk</u>		
Name of Principal	Mr. David Westcombe		
Chairman of Governors	Captain Peter Smith		
Age Range	2-13	Gender	Mixed
Number of Pupils	311	Number of Boarders	None

This inspection report is based on a framework laid down by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) and agreed with the DFES and OFSTED for the purposes of ensuring that standards are maintained and that the school complies with relevant legal requirements. Recommendations are included to help the school improve. The report will be lodged with the ISI, the Head of the School, the Proprietors, the DFES and OFSTED. A summary will be provided by the school for all parents free of charge and the full report on request. Other interested parties may have the summary or full report, subject to a charge for copying and postage. The report may not be selectively quoted in the school prospectus or other promotional literature but may be used selectively within the school.

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.

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1. MAIN FINDINGS

Overall Summary

- 1.1. Rose Hill is a very happy and successful school. It caters very well for pupils with a range of abilities and aptitudes. Pupils make very good progress and reach high standards during their time at the school. Personal qualities are valued as highly as achievement in the curricular aspects of learning and this development of the whole child is a key factor in the school's success. The many strengths of the school greatly outweigh the few aspects that need improvement. Nevertheless, very effective governance and management continually seeks further improvement, even in aspects of the school that are already considerable strengths, such as teaching.

What the School Does Well

- 1.2. The school's main strengths are:
- standards are high and pupils of all abilities achieve considerable success in external tests and examinations;
 - the quality of teaching contributes strongly to the very good progress made by pupils;
 - pupils' personal development is a very positive feature of the school, which is a happy and orderly community;
 - the governance and management of the school is very effective and the whole staff works exceptionally well as a team;
 - the school continues to develop its facilities and resources and uses them effectively to support learning.

What the School Should Do Better

- 1.3. The school's strengths greatly outweigh its weaknesses, the most significant of which are:
- the library is too small, but is due to be improved as part of the school development plan;
 - despite recent improvements in the number of support staff, the provision is still insufficient, especially in the pre-prep department.

Standards of Attainment and Progress in Subjects

- 1.4. In the context of pupils' different ages and wide range of abilities and aptitudes, attainment and progress are very good. Throughout the school, pupils reach standards overall that are well above those expected nationally and similar to those seen in comparable schools. Pupils of all abilities and ages make very good progress overall. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, rising to whatever challenges they face. More able pupils are suitably extended and so achieve success at a high level.
- 1.5. Children make very good progress in the early years and attain good standards by the end of Reception, especially in the depth of understanding and range of skills that they acquire. Their achievements form a very solid foundation for their future success. Older pupils reach good standards in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and French. These standards are well above those expected nationally. Results in the national tests for Year 2 are well above national averages and above average for similar schools. At the end of Year 6, results are very high when compared with national averages and well above those for

similar schools. Pupils who leave from Year 8 achieve success in entry to senior schools, based on successful results in Common Entrance examinations or other selective tests. Some pupils achieve particular success and win scholarships.

The Quality of Pupils' Learning, Attitudes and their Behaviour

- 1.6. Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are very good, and are excellent in some lessons. They are competent learners who respond very well to the challenging teaching. Throughout the school, pupils are very well motivated, and concentrate hard for sustained periods. Pupils enjoy developing their own ideas and taking responsibility for their own learning, but also work well together and are happy to help each other.
- 1.7. Behaviour is very good in lessons and around the school. During the inspection, pupils were consistently courteous, charming and very well mannered, and maintained strong enthusiasm. Pupils and adults respect each other, and pupils are very friendly and responsive, both in lessons and in their free time.
- 1.8. Overall, attendance is excellent. Punctuality of pupils to lessons and other activities was excellent throughout the period of inspection.

The Quality of Teaching

- 1.9. The quality of teaching is very good overall. In a very high proportion of the lessons seen, teaching was judged to be at least good. It was very good or better in over half and excellent in one in ten. The impact of this consistently effective teaching is that pupils of all abilities make very good progress during their time at the school and reach standards that are well above national expectations.
- 1.10. Strong subject knowledge enables teachers to give clear explanations and guidance, and to ask searching questions that reinforce, check and extend pupils' understanding. Expectations of behaviour are high and this, together with the very good relationships teachers have with pupils, ensures very good standards of discipline. Pupils of all ages are highly motivated and concentrate well because teachers make lessons interesting and are enthusiastic about what they teach. A mixture of praise and constructive criticism engenders in pupils a strong desire to succeed and improve. Resources are generally used well to support learning. Where support staff are available, they work very well with teachers. On the whole, pupils receive good support from adults so that they can succeed even though the work is challenging.
- 1.11. The lessons seen were well planned and organised. Work is set at levels that challenge pupils of different abilities, usually based on a thorough knowledge of what pupils need to revise and move on to. Series of lessons are designed to build pupils' knowledge and skills systematically, in line with the subject schemes of work. Occasionally, lesson planning does not manage an appropriate balance between moving through the schemes of work and basing work on what pupils have previously achieved. This sometimes leads to work that is, for instance, too hard for pupils who have recently arrived in the school. In a few lessons, the way that pupils were asked to record work limited their use of literacy skills. Some worksheets also reduced the chance for them to explain their reasoning and so to deepen their understanding.

Other Aspects of the School

- 1.12. The methods used for assessing pupils' development are very good. They are accurate, consistent and effective. The marking of pupils' work is very good

throughout the school. Assessment information is used well to plan work and improve the curriculum.

- 1.13. The curriculum provides a very good breadth of experience. It is well balanced and contributes very effectively to pupils' all-round development and attainment. It is well planned to prepare them for the next stage of their education. Planning for the needs of the most able and those with special educational needs is very effective. The curriculum is enriched successfully by the very broad range of extra-curricular activities.
- 1.14. The range of qualifications, experience and number of teaching staff and their effective deployment contribute very positively to the quality of education provided and standards achieved. The effective recruitment of staff from a wide variety of schools has attracted teachers who bring a range of approaches and ideas to the school. The induction and appraisal programmes and policies contribute very effectively to the very good quality of teaching and learning.
- 1.15. Overall, the range and quantity of resources are good, and they are well deployed and utilised. The provision of computers in the information and communication technology suite is very good. Classroom computers are not networked, which limits opportunities to use information and communication technology. The buildings, accommodation and other facilities are good overall. They are well used and enable the curriculum to be taught effectively. The library is too small, as the school has recognised in its school development plan.
- 1.16. The school has developed a very good partnership with parents, which is reflected in the high percentage who returned the questionnaire and in the ready acknowledgement they made of the school's strengths. Links with the community are good.
- 1.17. The school's ethos leads to children developing well personally and relating very positively to each other and adults. Staff provide very good role models for the pupils. The school provides good structures through which its pupils can develop a system of personal and spiritual beliefs.
- 1.18. The school provides very effective support, guidance and advice for all of its pupils. Appropriate policies are used effectively to monitor the academic progress and personal development of pupils. Pupils value the system of rewards and understand the sanctions. These are very effective and contribute to the very good discipline and behaviour in lessons and around the school. Successful measures are taken to safeguard and promote pupils' health and welfare. The school has effective systems for dealing with bullying, should it arise. Child protection procedures are clear and health and safety measures meet statutory requirements.
- 1.19. Strong leadership at all levels ensures effective decision-making. The headmaster is highly respected by pupils, staff and governors, and the senior management team and whole staff work together exceptionally well. The governors provide very good support and the chairman has given excellent leadership over many years. The school has a clear mission statement, which is at the heart of everything it does. The school development plan, to which all staff contribute, provides a clear and focused direction for the work of the school and is a good tool for bringing about improvement. Routine administration, organisation and the systems of communication within the school are very efficient and effective, and ensure that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis.

2. MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. In the list of recommendations which follows, the numbers in brackets refer to the relevant paragraphs in the body of the report. The school should now:

- R1 expedite the planned improvement of the library facilities (5.24);
- R2 increase the provision of support staff, especially in the pre-prep department (5.18).

3. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 3.1. Founded in 1832, the school moved to its present site in 1966 and became a co-educational school for day pupils only in the 1980s. It has grown both in numbers and accommodation since then. The school is a charitable trust run by a board of governors. It aims to provide a high quality all-round education that caters for pupils with different abilities. It sets out to encourage children to meet new challenges with confidence, within an ethos that is based on Christian principles.
- 3.2. At the time of the inspection, there were 311 pupils on the school roll aged between 2½ and 13 years: 144 pupils in the pre-prep, with 79 in Reception or younger classes and 65 in Years 1 and 2; 129 pupils in Years 3 to 6; 38 pupils in Years 7 and 8. Boys outnumber girls significantly in Years 3 to 8, although the balance is evening out year on year. Pupils enter the pre-prep without formal assessment and so the intake is of mixed ability, although overall attainment is above average. Entry to the main school for new pupils involves an entrance assessment in literacy and numeracy skills. The range of ability, however, remains wide.
- 3.3. Recent improvements have included the addition of new dining facilities. This was the first step in a long-term development plan that includes new classrooms, a music centre, changing rooms, an art and design centre, library and theatre. Other recent developments include the purchase of new computers to create a suite, the introduction of a code of behaviour, improved play areas for younger pupils and an increase in the level of support staff.

Key Indicators

3.4. National Curriculum Assessments at Age 7 (Key Stage 1)

Subject		Level 2		Level 3 or higher	
		Externally marked	Teacher assessed	Externally marked	Teacher assessed
Reading	Boys	100	100	44	56
	Girls	100	100	44	56
Writing	Boys	100	100	29	15
	Girls	100	100	29	15
Mathematics	Boys	100	100	44	32
	Girls	100	100	44	32
Science	Boys	-	100	-	18
	Girls	-	100	-	18

3.5. National Curriculum Assessments at Age 11 (Key Stage 2)

Subject		Level 4		Level 5 or higher	
		Externally marked	Teacher assessed	Externally marked	Teacher assessed
English	Boys	100	100	80	80
	Girls	100	100	80	80
Mathematics	Boys	100	100	69	75
	Girls	100	100	69	75
Science	Boys	100	100	83	82
	Girls	100	100	83	82

3.6. Attendance for First Half of Summer Term 2001

	Authorised	Unauthorised
Percentage absence	4.2	0

3.7. Exclusions Over the Previous 12 Months

Temporary exclusions	Permanent exclusions
2	0

4. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and Progress

- 4.1. In the context of pupils' different ages, abilities and aptitudes, attainment and progress are very good. Throughout the school, pupils reach standards overall that are well above those expected nationally and similar to those seen in comparable schools. Pupils of all abilities and ages make very good progress. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, rising to whatever challenges they face. More able pupils are suitably extended and so achieve success at a high level.
- 4.2. Results in the national tests for Year 2 were well above the national averages in 2000, the last year for which there is up-to-date comparable data for schools of the same type. Results were above the average for similar schools. At the end of Year 6, results were very high when compared with national averages and were well above those for similar schools. The school has maintained these high standards in tests for a number of years. Most pupils gain places at their first-choice senior schools at the end of Year 6. Those who leave from Year 8 also achieve success in entry to senior schools, based on successful results in Common Entrance examinations or other selective tests. Some pupils achieve particular success and win scholarships.
- 4.3. In the work seen, children attained good standards by the end of Reception. Children make very good progress in all the areas of learning for the early years, especially in the depth of understanding and range of skills that they acquire. Their achievements form a very solid foundation for their future success.
- 4.4. Older pupils reached good standards in the work seen in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and French. These standards were well above those expected nationally. In English, the standards of speaking and listening are especially high because teachers constantly challenge pupils to listen, consider and think carefully, then express themselves clearly. This helps pupils to make very good progress in English and other subjects. In mathematics, pupils gain a very good understanding of basic concepts, their mental arithmetic is good, and they are well prepared for national tests and school entrance exams. Pupils make good progress in science and their understanding develops well. In information and communication technology, pupils make very good progress over time as well as in many individual lessons. From Year 1, when pupils start to learn French, they make rapid progress in the subject.

Quality of Pupils' Learning, Attitudes and Behaviour

- 4.5. Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are very good and are excellent in some lessons. They are competent learners who respond very well to the challenging teaching. Throughout the school, pupils are very well motivated, and concentrate hard for sustained periods. They know what is expected of them, are keen to answer questions, and prepared to ask them. In science, they are keen to volunteer information, and use their initiative when undertaking practical work. Pupils enjoy developing their own ideas and taking responsibility for their own learning. In information and communication technology lessons, for example, pupils developed their own ideas through discussion and used the computers independently.
- 4.6. Pupils work well together and are happy to help their peers. Children in Reception helped and cared for each other, and this co-operative approach was evident throughout the school. Year 3 pupils collaborated very effectively on projects in art.

In physical education, some pupils helped those who were less successful. This had the additional benefit of deepening their own understanding of the activity.

- 4.7. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. During the inspection, pupils were consistently courteous, charming and very well mannered, and maintained strong enthusiasm. In one history lesson, there were many excited responses when engaged in role-play, but their behaviour remained excellent. The atmosphere was very calm when the pupils moved about the school, when queuing up for lunch and entering assembly. Pupils and adults respect each other, and pupils are very friendly and responsive, both in lessons and in their free time.

Attendance

- 4.8. The attendance rate of 96 percent is very good and there were no unauthorised absences in the last reported year. Punctuality of pupils and teachers to lessons and other activities was excellent throughout the period of inspection.
- 4.9. The school complies in full with the legal requirements for keeping admissions and attendance registers. The headmaster's secretary maintains both on computer. When pupils are late for school or have to leave early this is recorded, and a daily list of absentees is published in the staff room.
- 4.10. Form tutors and class teachers carry out the registration of their forms in the morning and afternoon, and form monitors in the main school take registers to the office. In the pre-prep department, class teachers keep the registers on their desks. It is recommended that, where registers are not gathered in a central place, they should be taken with the class when lessons are out of the form room.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

- 5.1. The quality of teaching is very good overall. In a very high proportion of the lessons seen, teaching was judged to be at least good. It was very good or better in over half and excellent in one in ten. The impact of this consistently effective teaching is that pupils of all abilities make very good progress during their time at the school and reach standards that are well above national expectations.
- 5.2. Strong subject knowledge enables teachers to give clear explanations and guidance, and to ask searching questions that reinforce, check and extend pupils' understanding. Teachers consistently ask open questions such as, 'What do you think about...?' and 'Why do you say that?' This was noted in a high percentage of lessons throughout the school. The result of this effective questioning was seen in the willingness of pupils to put forward their reasons and to think for themselves. In some science lessons, the teacher was able to pick on the right questions and guidance to enable pupils to describe events in their own words. This helped them to understand what was happening, for example in chemical reactions. In the pre-prep department, the staff's knowledge and understanding of how young children learn enables them to lay very solid foundations for their later development. Staff who specialise in helping pupils with special educational needs use their knowledge and experience well to support learning. Pupils also benefit from teachers' expertise outside lessons. For instance, musical and dramatic productions are often written by staff.
- 5.3. Expectations of behaviour are high and this, together with the very good relationships teachers have with pupils, ensures very good standards of discipline. Even the youngest children are taught helpful routines that encourage good behaviour and co-operative working habits. In a physical education lesson, some boys channelled their considerable energy into the activities, responding to the teacher's expectations and good humour. Pupils of all ages are highly motivated and concentrate well because teachers make lessons interesting and are enthusiastic about what they teach. In an art lesson for older pupils, pupils were engrossed in the initial discussion about a famous artist's background and influence. When they began individual work, the teacher's constant questioning and guidance helped them to maintain an exceptional level of involvement and so they made excellent progress. A mixture of praise and constructive criticism engenders in pupils a strong desire to succeed and improve. This desire is well illustrated by the effort pupils make to use literacy skills accurately across the curriculum. They try hard to spell correctly and write neatly, strongly encouraged by teachers from all departments. In a few lessons, the way that pupils were asked to record work limited their use of literacy skills. Some worksheets also reduced the chance to explain their reasoning and so to deepen their understanding.
- 5.4. The lessons seen were well planned and organised. Work is set at levels that challenge pupils of different abilities, usually based on a thorough knowledge of what pupils need to revise and move on to. Series of lessons are designed to build pupils' knowledge and skills systematically, in line with the subject schemes of work. Occasionally, lesson planning does not manage an appropriate balance between moving through the schemes of work and basing work on what pupils have previously achieved. This sometimes leads to work that is, for instance, too hard for pupils who have recently arrived in the school. Many lessons are planned to include a range of approaches – whole class discussions, group and individual activities, oral and recorded work, and some sections that are longer than others. This variety helps to

keep pupils alert and maintains their interest and involvement. Teachers are good at planning which methods will work best in different lessons.

- 5.5. Resources are generally used well to support learning. Where support staff are available, they work very well with teachers. On the whole, pupils receive good support from adults so that they can succeed even though the work is challenging. In the pre-prep, this is not always the case. In some mathematics lessons, for example, despite their best efforts, staff were unable to give all pupils as much attention as they needed.

Assessment and Recording

- 5.6. The methods used for assessing pupils' development are very good. They are accurate, consistent and effective. The national tests for Years 2 and 6 are supplemented by nationally used tests for English and mathematics in Years 3 to 5. A range of other standard assessments is used across the school. The Kent selection process, at 11+, and the Common Entrance examinations to senior independent schools, at 13+, are key benchmarks in the assessment procedures. Preparation for these tests is thorough, and the very good results demonstrate its success.
- 5.7. Assessments take place from Years 1 to 8 after each unit of work in all subjects. In Years 1 and 2 science, for example, pupils are assessed closely against National Curriculum levels using a well-designed recording system. The number of tests increases appropriately across the age range. Assessment information is stored centrally on computer, using a good database. Access to this is easy and teachers enter their own sets of data. The system enables form tutors to write interim reports, based on solid evidence.
- 5.8. In the pre-prep, a particularly effective system of screening for literacy has recently been implemented. A careful analysis of this leads to the development of individual learning programmes. The assessment of special educational needs is also detailed and effective, and enables support to be offered where it is most needed.
- 5.9. The marking of pupils' work is very good throughout the school. The clear policy is consistently adhered to and teachers take time to make comments on pupils' work. They use praise and encouragement well, and marking is particularly effective when targets are set. In history, for example, pupils responded very positively to their targets, stating that it helped them to know on what they should concentrate. Subsequent work in their books showed improvement. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own performance, which is effective.
- 5.10. Teachers analyse and evaluate their own teaching in the light of assessment information, which is used to prepare for further lessons. Information is also used to identify where the curriculum needs to be improved. The use of assessment in these ways makes a significant contribution to the culture of continuous improvement that is so evident in the school.

Curriculum

- 5.11. The curriculum provides a very good breadth of experience. It is well balanced and contributes very effectively to pupils' all-round development and attainment. It is well planned to prepare them for the next stage of their education. The allocation of lessons to information and communication technology is generous, but there is a lack of educational drama in Key Stage 3. However, many pupils are involved in drama productions. Within subjects, the balance is good between the different strands, for

example between design, making and evaluation in design and technology. In mathematics and science, the range of activities is good.

- 5.12. Recent changes, such as the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, reflect current educational thinking whilst maintaining existing strengths. The organisation of the curriculum is good. Continuity between the key stages is evident in the schemes of work. Some of these are based on nationally recognised schemes, adapted to reflect the school's high expectations. Heads of department in the main school meet with the subject co-ordinators in the pre-prep to ensure a smooth transition from Year 2 to Year 3. Policies on handwriting, spelling and presentation are effectively used to ensure that literacy skills are developed and used across the curriculum.
- 5.13. Planning for the needs of the most able and those with special educational needs is very effective and teachers provide individual support outside lessons for pupils who need this. Screening processes are evident throughout the school and individual support is available for those pupils who need it. The curriculum is challenging whilst providing for the needs of all pupils and preparing them for the various entrance examinations for which they are entered.
- 5.14. The curriculum is enriched successfully by the very broad range of extra-curricular activities. This is evident in a wide variety of activities such as: the choir and school orchestra; trips to places of interest; on the games field; in the art room; the school plays; the French Day; the annual science lectures; and sponsored walks. The merit of pupils' work is acknowledged in displays and in the excellent school magazine.

Teaching and Non-teaching Staff

- 5.15. The range of qualifications, experience and number of teaching staff contribute very positively to the quality of education provided and standards achieved. The effective recruitment of staff has attracted teachers from a wide variety of schools, and they bring a range of approaches and ideas to the school. The school has good systems for vetting and appointing appropriate staff and meets statutory requirements.
- 5.16. Most teachers are qualified in the subject for which they are predominantly responsible. Where this is not the case, strong interest, ability and experience are the criteria for allocating staff to subjects. This has proved very successful, as seen in information and communication technology. Heads of department teach their subject mainly across Key Stages 2 and 3. For younger pupils, there is a broader and more appropriate spread of teaching responsibilities, with specialist teaching being gradually increased with age.
- 5.17. The balance between young and mature staff is very good. Mutual respect and open dialogue between all staff are very good. They share ideas and are willing to give and receive advice. Responsibilities are distributed well, and teaching loads are allocated as fairly as possible within normal timetable restrictions.
- 5.18. The adult to pupil ratio for children under five complies with regulations. In the pre-prep overall, an increase in the number of support staff would be very beneficial. During lessons, pupils made better progress when the teacher had help from a teaching assistant. Teachers and assistants worked together particularly effectively in Reception, Kindergarten and the Nursery. In the main school, the lack of technical support staff especially affects the science and information and communication technology departments. The very efficient, well-trained team of administrative and financial staff contributes effectively to the smooth running of the school.

- 5.19. The induction and appraisal programmes and policies contribute very effectively to the very good quality of teaching and learning. This is evident in the smooth integration of new staff, who settle in quickly. When new staff arrive, they are encouraged to introduce new ideas and approaches so that the school is continuously improving, while maintaining its ethos and overall approach. This is a strength of the school. Clear guidelines in the staff handbook also help those joining the school. The appraisal process is helpful and fair, and is valued by staff. It sometimes leads to useful training. Staff attend external courses, but the school also uses in-house expertise well.

Resources for Learning

- 5.20. Overall, the range and quantity of resources is good and they are well deployed and utilised. Departmental budgets enable the purchase of up-to-date books and teaching aids.
- 5.21. The pre-prep department is well resourced, with a good range of books, mathematics apparatus and various kinds of play equipment. In the main school, resources are well deployed for most subjects, enabling staff to teach the curriculum effectively and pupils to achieve good standards. The French department, for example, has good up-to-date text books as well as good audio-visual equipment and a computer in each classroom. Careful consideration is given to the continuing improvement of resources. For example, the history department is collecting an archive of artefacts for pupils to handle and a good range of videos and suitable text books.
- 5.22. The provision of computers in the information and communication technology suite is very good, with a managed network of high quality machines and teaching-management software. Although most classrooms have computers they are not networked, which limits opportunities to use information and communication technology. Planning for the regular use of classroom computers is insufficient. Although the library has a budget for stock and is well maintained, the number of books it can hold is limited by the size of the room. This lack of space means that opportunities for research are inadequate and the provision of reference books is insufficient for the educational needs of the pupils. Other book resources are good, however, and pupils make good use of them. The two mini-buses are well used both for providing a means for some pupils to get to school and also for extending learning beyond the classroom.

Premises and Accommodation

- 5.23. The buildings, accommodation and other facilities are good. They are well used and enable the curriculum to be taught effectively.
- 5.24. Buildings are kept in good condition. The few temporary classrooms are adequate for the purpose. The plans for developing new classrooms to replace these are a good way forward. Plans to develop a new library are also positive as the present library is too small. Many classrooms are rather small but teachers use the space creatively so that pupils have room to carry out their work well. Attractive wall displays make the school a stimulating and pleasant environment.
- 5.25. The sports hall is a very good facility and, together with the extensive playing fields, greatly enhances the quality of learning in physical education and games. Hard play areas are used well and the outside environment is very attractive, with well maintained flower beds and shrubs. These facilities and the pond, woodland and other environmental areas, contribute to the positive ethos in the school and to learning, for example in science.

Links with Parents and the Community

- 5.26. The school has developed a very good partnership with parents, which is reflected in the high percentage who returned the questionnaire and in the ready acknowledgement they made of the school's strengths. There were no significant concerns.
- 5.27. The school provides parents with very good information about the school before they start. A 'Welcome to pre-prep' handbook is sent and a parents' handbook for the whole school is about to be published. Information about pupils' work and progress is very good. Written reports, parents' evenings, assessment cards and homework diaries give a very good record of attainment and progress. A weekly newsletter keeps parents well informed about school events and an annual school magazine provides a comprehensive record of the year's events and achievements.
- 5.28. The school offers parents many opportunities to be involved in its activities. Parents help with school productions, outings and a range of activities, such as Brownies. Social events such as coffee mornings and regular get-togethers organised by the Parents' Association are popular. Parents are made very welcome to watch matches and enjoy tea with staff and other parents afterwards. Form representatives meet with the headmaster twice a term and he greatly values parents' views.
- 5.29. The school maintains good links with the community. Clubs and other schools use its facilities, and pupils play against local teams. A programme of talks and lectures involves pupils at Rose Hill and others invited from nearby schools. Pupils take part in a range of local events such as art exhibitions, choral performances and charitable collections. Some of these lead to good publicity in the local media, which is enjoyable for pupils and valuable for the continuing success of the school.

6. PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PASTORAL CARE

Personal Development

- 6.1. The school's mission statement is central to daily life and provides an ethos, which leads children to develop well personally and relate very positively to each other and adults. Staff provide very good role models for the pupils. The school provides good structures through which its pupils can develop a system of personal and spiritual beliefs. Assemblies give opportunity for staff and pupils to worship together and to consider pastoral issues. Pupils' spiritual awareness is promoted through religious education and other subjects, particularly art and music. Younger pupils especially are constantly encouraged to appreciate the wonder and uniqueness of the natural world and man-made artefacts.
- 6.2. Moral education is supported by a behaviour code agreed and signed by the pupils and their parents. Reference to this code makes pupils aware of their personal responsibility to order their lives. Along with the no-blame bullying policy, it is used to counter any anti-social behaviour, incidences of which are rare. Pupils of all ages are encouraged to consider why behaviour is right or wrong, and older pupils are good at evaluating their actions. Form and subject teachers play a key role in this, taking opportunities as they arise to reinforce a positive moral code. A good example was seen in Year 8 when pupils were asked to write about 'The bully in the playground'.
- 6.3. The prefect system, much respected, provides very good opportunities for senior pupils to take personal responsibility as house or school prefects. There are also form captains and librarians. Pupils are awarded 'plus points' for good work, effort and behaviour and are responsible for collecting and collating them. The house system encourages corporate responsibility, and initiative and enterprise are encouraged and valued. Any pupil who wants to take part in a school production may do so. Participation in sporting events is acknowledged, whether the team has been successful or not. This is successful in fostering positive attitudes to school and learning.
- 6.4. Lunch time, when pupils and staff congenially eat together, inculcates sociability and good manners. Family service for the pre-prep children sets the pattern of good behaviour which continues into the cafeteria system for the older pupils. Grace during each session gives an opportunity for all to give thanks. During the inspection, children made polite conversation and were attentive to visitors' needs during lunch. This illustrated well the school's success in teaching courtesy and thoughtfulness.
- 6.5. The new syllabus for personal, health and social education shows an awareness of the need to improve pupils' understanding of the cultural diversity of to-day's society. In the pre-prep department and in some subjects, such as art, pupils are encouraged to take an interest a range of cultural traditions and this broadens their understanding of the world. The study of a range of faiths usefully takes place in the first half of the school, but religious education concentrates on Christianity leading up to the Common Entrance examination. The Western cultural tradition is covered well, especially through art, music and English. By studying the works of famous artists, composers, authors and poets, pupils gain a well-rounded perspective of the arts. This perspective is extended through opportunities to exhibit and perform.

Pastoral Care, Support and Guidance

- 6.6. The school provides very effective support, guidance and advice for all of its pupils. Appropriate policies are used effectively to monitor the academic progress and personal development of pupils. The clearly defined role of form tutors makes a marked contribution to the educational standards and personal growth achieved by the pupils. Staff are accessible to pupils and relationships are supportive and caring.
- 6.7. Staff attend weekly meetings to discuss any issues of concern of a social or educational nature. The deputy head is responsible for pastoral issues, monitors their effectiveness and ensures that all staff are made aware of relevant information. The policy for personal, social and health education, and the tutorial and house systems are effective. Assemblies are used in a positive way to reinforce the school's positive values.
- 6.8. Pupils value the system of rewards and understand the sanctions. These are very effective and contribute to the very good discipline and behaviour in lessons and around the school. The school has clear guidelines for dealing with any bullying, should it arise. Pupils and staff understand the no-blame policy and it is effective.

Pupils' Welfare, including Health & Safety

- 6.9. Successful measures are taken to safeguard and promote pupils' health and welfare. The school surgery is adequately managed and equipped, but is small and provides insufficient privacy. Health records are kept up to date and the accident register is carefully completed. Medical matters are followed up efficiently and first aid procedures are good. The matron and other staff with first aid qualifications ensure that the pupils and staff receive prompt and suitable medical attention. The child protection policy and effective procedures are detailed in the staff manual. School meals are nutritious and well-balanced with a good choice of main courses and desserts. The school is clean and movement around the school is well organised and managed.
- 6.10. Arrangements for ensuring a healthy, safe environment are under the direction of the headmaster, and legal requirements are met. The effectiveness of the health and safety policy was evident in the science laboratory and in physical education lessons, where pupils understood and used good safety rules. Risk assessments and fire checks and practices are carried out regularly and records kept appropriately. The school's adventure playground is checked regularly and one section was recently closed until its safety could be ensured. The policy on the qualifications needed for supervising the swimming pool is not clear, and should be improved. New staff are tested by a local driving school before driving the school minibuses and the bursar also monitors the quality of the driving. The flow of traffic through the school is controlled with suitable arrangements.

7. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Governance and Management

- 7.1. Strong leadership at all levels ensures effective decision-making. The headmaster is highly respected by pupils, staff and governors. He has made key appointments that have ensured very good teaching and high standards. The senior management team and whole staff work together exceptionally well. Staff feel valued and heads of departments make good use of the independence conferred on them in matters such as control of their own budgets. The school's management structure ensures that all sections of the school are represented. Job descriptions are clear and specific and the senior management team have well defined responsibilities, conducive to good management. The governors provide very good support and the chairman has given excellent leadership over many years.
- 7.2. The school has a clear mission statement, which is at the heart of everything it does. It is strongly supported by all the staff, and this not only contributes to the very good teaching and learning but also places great value on human qualities. Emphasis is placed on praise and encouragement and it is clear from the interaction of pupils and staff that there is a great deal of mutual respect. It is noticeable how often teachers put themselves at the same physical level as pupils in order to be able to make eye contact and not seem threatening. The school's aims, values and policies are clearly stated, and evidence of the importance attached to them is seen in the very good behaviour and responsive attitude of the pupils, who feel valued and speak openly of their enjoyment of school.
- 7.3. The school development plan, to which all staff contribute, provides a clear and focused direction for the work of the school and is a good tool for bringing about improvement. It is reviewed regularly, and the headmaster strongly encourages open-mindedness and the sharing of ideas. Routine administration, organisation and the systems of communication within the school are very efficient and effective, and ensure that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The links between the different sections of the school are maintained effectively by regular curricular and administrative meetings. Notice boards are well positioned and used, which helps pupils know when and where events will take place. A daily briefing of staff by the headmaster and the opportunity for staff to give out notices at the end of assemblies provide further good means of communication. Parents' involvement is valued and they are kept well informed by the weekly newsletter. The overall effect of such good communication is that there is a strong consistency in the work of the school, which makes a very significant contribution to its success.
- 7.4. The school is a very happy community and relationships between pupils, staff, governors and parents are very good. This is very successfully fostered by the headmaster and senior management team who, despite their very busy teaching programme, fulfil their roles most effectively.

8. ACHIEVEMENT AND QUALITY IN SUBJECTS & ACTIVITIES

Achievement and Quality in Subjects

Areas of learning for children up to the end of Reception

- 8.1. By the end of Reception, attainment is well above national expectations in all six areas of learning for this age group. Children are achieving good standards in relation to their abilities and their starting points when they enter the school. They make very good progress overall, and especially in the depth of understanding and range of skills that they acquire. This lays a very solid foundation for their future success. The findings of this inspection agree with those from the most recent OFSTED inspection of this age group.
- 8.2. Children are very well behaved, concentrate hard for extended periods of time and show strong motivation to learn. In the Kindergarten, some children showed considerable persistence when playing with the sand and small construction equipment. Children get on well together and with adults, and are co-operative. In one lesson, children helped each other by holding pieces that needed sticking together. They worked with very little adult intervention, following the guidance they had been given earlier. Even the very youngest children, in the Nursery, show some degree of independence. They are learning successfully to take turns and to show consideration for others. Reception children move between activities purposefully and choose appropriate resources when they need them. Children's learning skills and behaviour contribute significantly to the progress they make.
- 8.3. The quality of teaching is very good and is a particular strength in the Foundation Stage. An outstanding feature of many lessons was the way that planning linked the different areas of learning. Although each activity focused on a specific learning outcome, the links made them enjoyable, exciting and meaningful. Some Reception children used word cards to reinforce their knowledge of the letter *f*. This was linked to their knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development when *feeling* objects, making *flags* and curing *flu* in the role play area, which was set up as a doctor's surgery. Teachers and support staff work together very well. Assistants were able to help children most successfully when they understood clearly what the learning intentions were. This helped them to ask the most effective questions and provide precise guidance for children. Teachers set high expectations of behaviour and learning, and provide the necessary support to enable children to reach them. Praise is used very effectively to reward success and encourage effort. Children are sometimes taught to sound consonants incorrectly, such as a long *tuh* instead of a short *t*. It would help them if this was improved.
- 8.4. Attendance and admissions arrangements meet the needs of children of different ages. The gradual increase in time at school helps children to settle in well. The level of care is very good. Children know that they can rely on adults to be kind and supportive, and are happy to ask for help.
- 8.5. Children's progress is assessed effectively and this helps teachers to plan work that is closely matched to their needs. The information gathered is also used well to report progress to parents. The curriculum is planned well to ensure that knowledge and skills are developed systematically, and to make learning relevant to children's experiences and interests. Classrooms are generally well organised, with plenty of opportunities for structured, purposeful play that supports all areas of learning. Resources are plentiful and used effectively. The outside area is not readily accessible

to all classes, but children have ample opportunities to develop large physical skills in other ways. The considerable strengths seen in the provision for children at the start of their schooling are a reflection of the very good management.

English

- 8.6. Attainment in English is very high. The results of the national tests for Years 2 and 6 in 2000 were within the top five per cent nationally and above comparable schools. Results for 2001 were broadly similar at the end of both key stages. Inspection findings confirmed this and that pupils in Year 8 are working at a comparable level to that found in the best IAPS schools. The school has implemented much of the National Literacy Strategy, particularly from years 1 to 3 and this has had a positive impact on standards.
- 8.7. Boys and girls of all abilities make very good progress throughout. This is particularly apparent in speaking and listening skills, which are highly developed. The pupils are constantly challenged to listen, consider and think carefully, then express themselves clearly. Individual contributions to lessons are valued by the teacher and by other pupils.
- 8.8. The standard of reading is good. In Key Stage 1 pupils read individually and in pairs from a range of commercial schemes. Staff are planning to use an assessment programme in order to monitor progress more carefully, and to identify earlier, pupils who are ready for further challenge. In Key Stage 2, pupils are encouraged to read aloud in class, whenever it is appropriate, from text books and their own work. Year 6 pupils thoroughly enjoyed hearing each other's limericks which had been prepared for homework. Reading at home is carefully monitored and parents sign a diary in which reading is recorded. Pupils can and do borrow books from the library on a trust basis. There is insufficient room in the library for a class to read together and so one of the evening prep periods is given to silent reading. The school has a range of sets of books so that pupils can share reading experiences.
- 8.9. Standards of handwriting are variable, but most is of a good standard. Particular care is taken in the pre-prep department to ensure good pencil grip and letter formation and this lays good foundations for later development. Older pupils are able to develop their own style but always with attention to neatness and legibility. The content is very good. Initially, the amount of finished work sometimes seems less than might be expected, but much time is given profitably to drafting and editing so that the finished pieces are of a high standard. This is an effective approach, and creative writing at the top of the school is particularly impressive, with spontaneous use of metaphor. One Year 8 pupils wrote a very descriptive passage in which a storm became a tiger.
- 8.10. Learning and behaviour are very good. The pupils settle very quickly to work and obviously expect that they will be challenged and stimulated. This positive attitude towards the subject means that their learning is particularly effective. In a Year 5 comprehension lesson, competent use of literal, inferential and evaluative skills were applied. As the library is too small for whole-class teaching, there is restricted opportunity for research or reference work. Nevertheless, pupils make good use of dictionaries and thesauruses.
- 8.11. The high standards and pupils' positive response are the result of teaching that is very good overall, and in some cases excellent. High expectations, appropriate pace, challenging vocabulary and a variety of approaches are notable features of teaching. Only the head of department is an English specialist, and several staff only teach a little English since they specialise in other subjects. However, all the teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic and employ a variety of approaches, from highly

animated to quiet and gently probing. In all cases, the aim of lessons is clear, questioning is open and challenging and a final recapitulation leave pupils with the point of the lesson paramount in their minds.

- 8.12. The schemes of work are clear and the well-planned lessons are delivered at a brisk pace, which reflects the enjoyment and commitment of the staff to their pupils and the subject. Where there are parallel classes, discussion between the teachers ensures that pupils learn the same things. For example, both classes in Year 1 were working on phonics and the sound of the week was the short *u*. In one class there were reading games while, in the other, a letter in poster format for class teaching had many words with the same letter-sound. Pupils are aware of writing for different audiences and purposes, and of different structures and forms. For example, one young pupil pointed out, "That isn't a list, it's a letter." Work is matched well to the needs of individual pupils, not only in different ability-sets but also within the sets. Pupils rise to the challenging work well and even in the lower sets attainment is consistently very good. The lower Year 6 set, for example, was successfully looking at humour in verse as a basis for revising imagery in poetry. At the same time, the top set used computers to sort out an extended metaphor. Many opportunities are taken to reinforce basic skills. For example punctuation and grammar rules were noted by pupils in a poetry lesson and their observation applauded. Spelling is corrected consistently when pupils write in other subjects. The encouragement to use literacy skills across the curriculum is an important factor in the standards achieved in English. It also has a positive effect on learning in other subjects, where high comprehension skills, accurate reading and good understanding of relevant technical vocabulary were noted during the inspection.
- 8.13. The subject is well led and managed, and the result is continuing improvement in provision and standards. Procedures for assessment are good. The department conforms to the school's policy for marking and assessment in general, but individual teachers keep their own careful records too. They know the pupils well and assessment information is used effectively to help plan lessons. Each pupil writes a piece of work in controlled conditions at the beginning of the school year, and this is an effective way of tracking pupils' progress. The range of resources is good and they are of good quality. Even though the library is small, the range of books has been chosen carefully and provides sufficient opportunities for pupils to read widely.

Mathematics

- 8.14. Levels of attainment are high overall and excellent in some sets, and well above national expectations. In the national tests for Year 2, results have been very high for the past three years, with an increasing percentage achieving the higher Level 3. Nearly two thirds reached this level in 2001. In the Year 6 tests, standards are well above average when compared with similar schools. Set against national results, the school was in the top five per cent in 2000, and results were similar in 2001. Well over half the pupils reached the higher Level 5. In Key Stage 3, the standards achieved by all the pupils are well above national expectations with some pupils in Year 8 working at a very high level in some topics. This applies especially to the most able pupils as they prepare for the scholarship exams to public schools. Pupils have a very good understanding of basic concepts, mental arithmetic is good, and they were well prepared for national tests and school entrance exams.
- 8.15. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress. In the only lesson observed where progress was less than satisfactory, the tasks set were too challenging for a significant proportion of the pupils. In most lessons, the pupils were set tasks that had developed out of previous work and so the level of challenge was right. More rapid progress was made when the pupils were set clearly focused investigative tasks that made them

think hard before they were able to proceed. In Key Stage 1, pupils made better progress when the teacher was supported by a teaching assistant. An improved allocation of teaching assistants is recommended in order to raise standards further.

- 8.16. Pupils of all ages behave and learn very well. The quality of learning in most of the lessons observed was good and it was very good in a significant proportion. Pupils are attentive, competent and productive learners. They concentrate well and answer with enthusiasm, showing a positive attitude to the subject. Some pupils are prepared to challenge ideas expressed by their teachers and ask questions of their own. The pupils work co-operatively and have formed good relationships with each other. Throughout the school, pupils were seen to help their peers or seek their advice when the need arose.
- 8.17. The quality of teaching overall was good. It was very good in several lessons and excellent in some. Lessons were well planned, with clear objectives that followed the scheme of work, and the teachers expected high standards from the pupils. Activities were well chosen to promote learning, with well-prepared resources that were easily available in the well-equipped classrooms. The teaching involved clear explanations, appropriately targeted questions and, in the best lessons, the teacher's questions led to very rapid progress. In Key Stage 1, pupils have been taught good strategies for solving problems and these were used effectively during lessons.
- 8.18. Throughout the school, work is usually well matched to the different needs of pupils, and lessons are structured so that pupils benefit from a range of approaches. This often involves whole-class teaching, followed by practical work that is appropriate for different ability groups, and finally, by a class session when appropriate questions are asked to test and extend understanding. When necessary, pupils having difficulty are referred to the learning support teacher who gives individual lessons. Teachers also give individual support after lessons, when pupils have missed a lesson or are seen to be struggling.
- 8.19. The quality of assessment is good overall and teachers keep careful records of pupils' progress. During lessons, teachers are very good at assessing pupils' understanding. Pupils are practised users of individual white boards and teachers often ask them to hold them up so their work can be easily checked. Marking is regular and encourages pupils to work hard and improve. Displays of pupils' work are generally interesting, although some classrooms would benefit from more mathematical displays, and some that showed work other than of shapes.
- 8.20. The department is soundly led. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented and a detailed scheme of work helps teachers when planning lessons. The scheme of work ensures progression over time and aims to exceed national expectations. Regular meetings are held between the head of department and the subject co-ordinator in the pre-prep department, which helps ensure continuity of learning. Meetings of the whole department are irregular, mainly because they are not timetabled. The head of department has few opportunities to observe lessons, which would enable him to identify ways of making further improvements in provision and standards. More time for monitoring would be a useful development.

Science

- 8.21. At the end of Year 6, results in the 2000 tests were well above the national average and also well above those of comparable schools. During enquiry work pupils use scientific knowledge and understanding to identify the appropriate approach. At the conclusion of Year 8, attainment is above national expectations and is commensurate

with standards in similar schools. In the work seen, pupils made realistic predictions and demonstrated a clear understanding of a fair test.

- 8.22. Pupils' understanding develops well, helped by the effective teaching of subject vocabulary, which enables them to explain their ideas clearly. Some Year 3 pupils, for example, explained their work on the properties of materials and used terms such as transparent, translucent and opaque. Pupils make good progress overall, and it was sometimes very good in the lessons observed. Well-designed recording sheets enabled pupils to write down their findings carefully and, from Year 3 onwards, they produce well-structured reports on their investigation and include suitable comments in conclusion.
- 8.23. The quality of learning was good in the lessons seen. Pupils made accurate observations, identified patterns and communicated their ideas effectively. When working in groups, they recounted part of their method to others, which deepened their own understanding. When they began to write up the method, they were able to do so with confidence and the minimum of help. Behaviour was good in all lessons. Pupils were attentive and responded positively. They enjoy science and are enthusiastic about the subject. An experiment in a Year 7 class produced lots of excitement and expressions of wonder.
- 8.24. The teaching observed was good overall, and it was very good and excellent in some lessons. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and this enables them to ask questions that extend pupils' understanding. Effective questioning helped Year 7 pupils to understand what was happening during a chemical reaction, because they had to explain it in their own words. The consistently good use of open-ended questions challenges pupils and maintains their interest and concentration. Teachers maintain good discipline and ensure that all pupils are aware of safety requirements. The lessons observed were generally well paced and the resources available were used effectively. In one lesson, the pace of learning dropped when the teacher had to distribute chemicals. The lack of technical support led to the teacher's time being used less effectively than it could have been. Non-specialist teachers receive good support from the head of department and subject co-ordinator, and the detailed scheme of work helps them to plan lessons.
- 8.25. The marking of pupils' work is regular and comments are supportive. It is particularly effective when individual, constructive comments are made and corrections completed. Pupils in Key Stages 2 and 3 understand the grades they are awarded and find them encouraging. Satisfactory records of achievement are maintained, and teachers make good use of tests and examinations.
- 8.26. The curriculum is very well planned, and the scheme of work sets out how pupils should systematically develop their skills and knowledge. Field trips, an annual lecture by a member of The Royal Institute, the use of the school pond and the other environmental areas enhances the class-based activities. The curriculum is appropriately linked to the programme for pupils' personal, social and health education and to the information and communication technology curriculum.
- 8.27. The management of the department is good. Detailed self-evaluation ensures that the department functions very effectively. The aims and values are clear, all members of the department share in the planning of policies and work towards common goals. The quality of staffing, the accommodation and resources contribute positively to the standards achieved.

Information and Communication Technology

- 8.28. Attainment by Year 6 is high compared with national expectations, largely because skills are specifically taught from an early age. Pupils of all capabilities achieve standards above the national average by the end of Year 8. Pupils make very good progress over time as well as in many individual lessons. Some Year 7 pupils, who were new to the school and had not used Power Point before, made presentations quickly and effectively.
- 8.29. In all lessons observed, the quality of learning and behaviour was very good with evidence of mutual respect between teachers and pupils. Year 1 are encouraged to think for themselves and ask questions such as, "How do I do it?" leading to, "Let me try this." A Year 5 class survey was conducted in a very orderly yet enthusiastic manner. Pupils are encouraged to work and discuss collaboratively when appropriate, and do so in a responsible manner.
- 8.30. The quality of teaching is very good. Clear learning intentions are set and checked at the end of each lesson. The organisation and preparation of the lessons seen were clear, but left room for adaptation when the need arose. One pupil began to fall behind because his typing was slow, but was quickly given support to achieve the goal of the lesson. Extension work is prepared for more able pupils so that they are challenged appropriately. Work is displayed on the computer room walls showing progression through the skills of information and communication technology. Teachers have very good knowledge of their subject, enabling them to give clear guidance. Monitoring and feedback to pupils during lessons are very good and occur constantly. Marking of work is regular and helpful. Pupils' progress is recorded in mark books. A system of self -assessment and evaluation of skills is being developed, which is a good development.
- 8.31. Specialist teaching, alongside the class teachers, is a very successful way of conducting training. For younger pupils, for example in Year 1, this joint teaching is especially important as the class teachers are so well aware of their needs. The generous allocation of time in Years 3 to 5 ensures that skills are taught well, ready for more cross-curricular teaching in Years 6 to 8. Some subjects make good use of information and communication technology, but this needs to be developed further by analysing the long-term plans of each subject. Greater cross-curricular use could be made of classroom computers if they were networked and had access to the Internet.
- 8.32. The head of department and his staff are well qualified and play an important role in training and supporting teachers in other departments. The department is well managed with a clear structure and excellent documentation. Support is given to the head of department through the information and communication technology committee, which deals with whole-school issues and decision-making across the school. Although technical support for the computer network is centralised through an external support system, the lack of an in-house technician reduces the head of department's already small allocation of management time.
- 8.33. The school's policy for the use of the Internet and e-mail includes the signing of an agreement form by parents and pupils, and appropriate filtering software is also installed. A time switch switches off the Internet at certain times of the day. These procedures show careful consideration of pupils' welfare.

Art

- 8.34. Excellent teaching and a well-planned curriculum ensure that pupils make exceptional progress, especially from Years 3 to 8. The solid foundations laid in pre-prep enable

pupils to work creatively and develop skills and understanding to a high level by the time they leave the school. Year 7 pupils made excellent progress while studying pop art. They reinforced and increased their knowledge of artists and the relevant vocabulary, their understanding of light and shadows, and skills in observation and shading. Questioning was used very effectively to help pupils' understanding, for example, "What do I mean by 'an illusion?'" When pupils found a skill especially hard, support was swift and guidance very clear. Pupils responded very well to the mixture of praise and constructive criticism and to the teacher's very high expectations.

- 8.35. The subject makes a very significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. Pupils learn to express their emotions and to recognise beauty and creativity beyond normal human achievement. They appreciate a wide range of cultural traditions and value creative achievement. They share ideas and expertise, and help each other. Skills of self-evaluation are developed very successfully. Success in lessons and acknowledgement gained through public exhibitions have an important impact on pupils' self-esteem and love of the subject.

Design & Technology

- 8.36. The quality of teaching in design and technology is good. The curriculum ensures that the skills and understanding of design, making and evaluation are developed systematically. An appropriate emphasis is placed on the quality of finish and this is seen in the attractive products. Pupils work hard to ensure that their designs are neat and properly labelled, and think carefully about how to adapt them as they get into the making stages. When some Year 6 pupils were designing shelters they drew on their knowledge of rigid structures, such as triangles, and also thought about the cost and aesthetic and practical considerations. They were realistic about the probable need to adapt their plans later on. Work often develops well over a series of lessons and this helps pupils to extend their planning and organisational skills. Work in design and technology often supports learning in mathematics and science. For example, pupils apply measuring and number skills and their knowledge of forces. Some good use is made of information technology. The accommodation needs improvement, which is recognised in the school's plans for development.

French

- 8.37. The overall level of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is above what one would expect for the pupils' ages and abilities. Although many pupils enter the school in Year 7, who have not studied French before, the standard reached by the end of Year 8 is similarly above expectations. From Year 2, when the children start to learn French, the pupils make rapid progress and, although this inevitably slows at the beginning of Year 7, it soon picks up again and the pupils currently in Year 8 have made much progress in one year. In lessons observed, the response of all pupils was very good, they were enthusiastic, listened well and eagerly volunteered to answer questions. From scrutiny of written work, there was clear evidence that pupils take pride in their work and are keen to do well in French.
- 8.38. The quality of teaching in all lessons observed was very good. It was lively and varied, with a good mixture of oral and written work. Teachers set challenging work; more able pupils were given extension work and beginners or less able pupils were given plenty of support and encouragement. All teachers spoke French fluently and with a good accent, and the consistency in their patterns of speech helped children to become very familiar with them. Teaching was in keeping with the school's ethos in the way children were addressed, supported and encouraged: the relationship between teachers and pupils was friendly and respectful.

- 8.39. The planning of the curriculum is very good; the department's scheme of work is clear and thorough, and is followed closely by all teachers. Teachers are well aware of pupils' standards and abilities and set realistic and challenging targets. In Year 7, good systems enable teachers to help beginners learn at pace. The department's resources are very good and well used. The computer in the French room is linked to the Internet and plans are underway to develop pupils' opportunities to practise listening and speaking in the information and communication technology suite. The French Day (in the summer) and trips to France are very popular and enhance the pupils' awareness of French culture but also. When organised jointly with other departments they also provide good cross-curricular links. The department is very well managed, with good communication and strong commitment to continuing improvement.

Geography

- 8.40. In the lessons seen, the teacher's strong subject knowledge and carefully planned curriculum helped pupils to make sound progress. Pupils complete an appropriate amount of work over time. They make suitable use of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills when carrying out research and investigating, and when recording their work. Some projects are well presented and pupils draw good conclusions from their studies. Many of the river studies carried out by older pupils show good attention to detail and a solid use of geographical skills. In some lessons, pupils are expected to copy text. This limits opportunities to explain ideas in their own words and so to deepen their understanding. In one lesson, the teacher's very good subject knowledge enabled effective questioning and very clear explanations. Pupils enjoyed the lesson, rising appropriately to the teacher's use of humour. They responded well when asked to settle quietly to record work, having been set a time target and challenged to gain good marks.

History

- 8.41. The quality of teaching was very good in the lessons seen, with teachers giving clear introductions and conclusions to lessons, based on good planning. Activities were challenging, interesting and motivating for all pupils. Teachers' questioning of pupils was particularly effective in guiding them to think for themselves. Strong foundations of historical enquiry were evident in a Year 3 lesson when the complex concept of bias was introduced very effectively. The correct use of key historical vocabulary and discussion of the meanings of words provide good support for literacy. A feature of all the lessons was the assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding. Quizzes at the end of lessons engendered new enthusiasm so that the pupils left wanting to know more. At the end of one lesson a pupil asked sadly, 'Do we have to go?'
- 8.42. The curriculum is well planned so that pupils' knowledge and skills increase steadily over time. Good use is made of opportunities for practical learning, both in lessons and through visits. Activity days in school are especially popular and informative, and pupils fully enter into the atmosphere of past times. Good quality resources are being bought to improve the largely outdated resources within the department. The subject is led very effectively.

Latin

- 8.43. Pupils make good progress in Latin. Years 5 and 6 have a sound understanding of concepts and Year 6 are able to cope comfortably with the demands of translating short sentences in a passage. Progress is slower in Year 7. Most new pupils have no experience of Latin and so the very wide range of attainment makes it hard to provide

work at appropriate levels. This is a problem for which the school has not yet found a solution.

- 8.44. The pupils' response in all lessons observed was good, they were enthusiastic and well-behaved, attentive and responsive. They were keen to answer, and asked intelligent questions. In Years 5 and 6 written work is well presented. The quality of teaching was good. Lessons were well organised, instructions were clear and the pace was brisk. Work was usually matched well to pupils' needs, and teachers checked constantly that concepts were understood. They used praise and encouragement a great deal and knew all the children well. Teachers made good use of labels to stick on the white-board to help children understand grammatical conventions. Marking is generally thorough, although some mistakes need to be followed up.
- 8.45. The Latin handbook needs to be reviewed. The amount of paperwork is excessive and not all of it relevant, much of it being notes and hand-outs. The scheme of work is useful for planning lessons and good text books are used.

Music

- 8.46. Music makes a full contribution to the life of the school and is a strength. The teaching of well planned lessons from a carefully structured syllabus was very good and the pupils made rapid progress with obvious enjoyment. The specialist room is well resourced. There are computers with good modern software, and they are used with competence and enthusiasm. More resources reflecting cultural diversity would be advantageous to broaden pupils' learning in the subject.
- 8.47. Particular interest in music starts in Year 1 with a voluntary ocarina club, attended by almost all the pupils, in which they gain a sense of pitch and rhythm. This continues in Year 2, where all pupils learn the recorder and begin to read standard notation. In the main school, standards are high and attainment is very well evaluated and monitored. There are choirs and an orchestra, and any pupil wishing to take part in musical productions is encouraged. Video evidence shows that productions, often written by the head of English and director of music, are performed to a very high standard. For assemblies, information about the 'composer of the week' is displayed on the hall door and music is played. This broadens pupils' knowledge and enthusiasm for music.
- 8.48. The school's music curriculum is well supported by specialist peripatetic teachers, who provide private lessons on brass, keyboard, percussion, string and woodwind instruments. A large proportion of the pupils take advantage of these opportunities. Examination passes are achieved in Associated Board and Trinity examinations and pupils regularly gain music scholarships to senior schools. The subject is very well led, with vitality, enthusiasm and proficiency.

Physical Education

- 8.49. The teaching of physical education was at least good in each of the few lessons observed, and some very good teaching was seen. Lessons were well planned to cater for the different ages and abilities of the pupils. They were characterised by a good introduction, a warm-up and then a clear explanation of the aims of the lesson. Discipline was well maintained, with potential lapses in concentration being quickly identified and dealt with calmly and effectively. Pupils were enthusiastic and well motivated, and made good progress. In one particularly good lesson, pupils worked with great concentration on developing the defensive ability to guide an attacker away from the danger area. They worked together very well and carefully analysed how

well they were doing and how to improve. The physical education department makes a valuable contribution to the personal and social development of pupils.

- 8.50. The head of department and ground staff have a good working relationship. The very good facilities are well maintained and prepared, and this contributes strongly to the success of the department. A large number of staff are involved in the teaching of games and many of them show considerable expertise. Non-specialist staff receive good support and this helps them to teach effectively.

Religious Studies

- 8.51. Teaching is sound overall and was good in some lessons. Pupils are competent, enthusiastic learners particularly when asked challenging questions and when Bible issues are related to the modern world. Teaching exhibits a good command of the subject and this helps teachers to plan appropriate work and ask questions that extend pupils understanding. In some lessons, progress is limited by the choice of activity. For example, written work is sometimes insufficiently challenging and alternative ways of giving notes could be considered. Behaviour was very good in all the lessons seen, and relationships with teachers were positive. Good teaching was evident in an assembly on the environment when this was linked to work in religious studies. Assessment is regular, although there is scope for more detailed feedback about written work. Good displays and enthusiasm for the subject were seen in the pre-prep and the lower school although pupils in Years 5 to 8 were not given enough opportunity to produce work for displays or to complete projects. The scheme of work is being updated and it is recommended that this process be speeded up. It is not followed closely by all teachers and the syllabus is sometimes not completed over the year.

Achievement and Quality in Activities

- 8.52. The very good quality of the activities provided is highly appropriate for the ages, aptitudes and abilities of the pupils. Levels of achievement in activities are high and they have a very positive effect on the personal development of the pupils. The implementation of the programme of activities is very effective and a high proportion of pupils takes part. The majority of the teaching staff contribute and use their varied skills and interests to best advantage. The achievements of pupils in activities are very well documented in the weekly newsletter, notice boards around school and in the annual magazine.
- 8.53. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in a range of school sporting fixtures. During the inspection, football and netball matches were played against another school. The games were keenly contested but played in a good spirit. The school has had considerable success in athletics, with a significant number of pupils reaching the national championships, some as county champions. Several pupils have also represented the county in cricket and hockey. The schools well-publicised policy on sporting behaviour is very successful.
- 8.54. Pupils are regularly successful at the Tunbridge Wells Arts Festival, and highly successful in competitions and awards across a wide range of interests, including drama, musical activities and examinations, and Bible and prose reading. Each year a major drama production takes place, often with words and music by members of staff. Pupils talked with enthusiasm and pride about their roles in this year's production of Panto, and the previous show, Me and My Gal. Pupils regularly undertake activities associated with a range of charities. A group of children reported on the success of their Panda Walk during an assembly.

9. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 9.1. The inspection was carried out from 8th to 12th October 2001. It was agreed with the school that, because of the size of the team and length of visit, only some subjects would be inspected and reported in depth. These were English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology. Other subjects have been reported briefly.
- 9.2. Before the inspection, the team leader visited the school and a substantial amount of information about the school was analysed by the team. A questionnaire was distributed to parents, after which 155 returned forms were analysed. Almost all teachers were seen teaching and 72 lessons, or parts of lessons, were observed. A representative sample of pupils' work was scrutinised. Discussions were held with the headmaster, key members of staff and pupils. At the end of the visit, the team discussed the outcome of the inspection with governors, the headmaster and the senior management team.

List of Inspectors

Mrs Anne Gould	Director of Studies, Ashford School
Mrs Annabelle Hancock	Former Headmistress, Halstead Preparatory School
Mr Leonard Robinson	Director of Studies, Windlesham House School
Mr Michael Till	Head of Department, Highgate Junior School
Mr John Tyler	Reporting inspector
Mr Garth Watson	Headmaster, Dumpton School