

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Halliford School

Full Name of the School	Halliford School
DCSF Number	936/6503
Early Years Number	N/A
Registered Charity Number	312090
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Headmaster	Mr P V Cottam
Chair of Governors	Mr J White-Jones
Age Range	11 to 18
Gender	Boys 11 to 16, Mixed 16 to 18
Inspection Dates	5th to 8th May, 2009

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 162A(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002 as amended by the Education Act 2005, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills 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 as amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009.

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. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 Halliford School was founded in 1921 and is a small day school for boys aged eleven to eighteen, but also includes a small and growing number of girls in the sixth form. The previous consortium arrangement in the sixth form with St David's School for girls in Ashford ended in 2007. Numbers have increased by a sixth since 2003 to 401, so that the number of boys in each year is between 60 and 70 up to GCSE, with 71 students (64 boys and 7 girls) in the sixth form.
- 1.2 The school is situated on the edge of Shepperton in West London. The original large and attractive town house remains at the centre of the school, with a number of separate, well-appointed buildings added over the school's life; these include, since the previous inspection, a sports hall complex with adjacent sixth-form accommodation and the school library. Space on the main site remains at a premium. Pupils come from the surrounding area, largely from families with a professional or commercial background.
- 1.3 Over the same period, the ability of pupils entering the school at age eleven has risen in recent years. The ability profile of the school is now in line with the national average for the sixth form, above the national average for Years 10 to 11 but well above the national average for Years 7 to 9. If pupils are performing in line with their abilities their results at GCSE currently will be above the average for all maintained secondary schools and at A level will be in line with the average for all maintained secondary schools with a sixth form.
- 1.4 The school has identified 65 pupils at present who have learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD). None of these has a statement of special educational need and none receives specialist support from the school. The school does not follow the detailed Code of Practice for LDD, but it may compile individual education plans where appropriate and parents may pay for extra support. Two pupils have English as a second language but no formal extra support is required. Financial support in the form of bursaries is provided for around an eighth of the school's pupils.
- 1.5 The school seeks to prepare all its pupils academically, socially and morally for the challenges they will encounter in a rapidly changing world. It seeks to challenge the most able, to nurture the late developer and to help all pupils to discover and develop their particular talents and pursue their particular interests. The school aims to provide a sound, liberal education; a balanced and wide-ranging extra-curricular activities programme; a warm family ethos where every pupil is known and valued; a clear moral framework accessible to all pupils; and a high level of individual attention and pastoral care. In its new development plan the school sets out its intention 'to make a good school better'.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 In line with its aims to offer a sound liberal education which will challenge and nurture pupils of all abilities, the school provides a broad, well-balanced curriculum, suited to the interests and aptitudes of its pupils. Since the last inspection, the range of extra-curricular activities and the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) have been greatly increased; and the headmaster and director of studies now carry out a curriculum audit annually.
- 2.2 The curriculum contributes effectively to pupils' linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, social, aesthetic and creative development, and provides for the acquisition of skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy. Increased staffing has been provided for ICT, together with much improved resources, which include interactive white boards in nearly all classrooms. ICT is taught to all pupils through to Years 10 and 11, where the Diploma in Digital Applications is being introduced. In modern foreign languages, pupils in Year 7 sample three languages as well as Latin, and the provision is enhanced by the presence of a native speaker for each modern language. The provision for most subject areas is good, and particularly strong for physical education (PE) and the sciences. Music is not yet well provided for and accommodation for art and the sixth form is also quite cramped. In the sixth form, all pupils take a course in critical thinking and undertake an extended project. The timetable is being reviewed to make improvements where possible in its overall structure and to deal with a small number of current anomalies.
- 2.3 A well-planned personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is taught by form tutors, mainly in a weekly dedicated period in Years 7 to 11, but supported by cross-curricular input and by the contribution of a number of outside speakers, including a drugs education team. The programme includes topics on citizenship, as well as work on study skills and preparation for GCSE choices and A levels. The focus in the sixth form is on examination preparation and entrance to higher education, although a further programme of outside speakers is arranged, covering a variety of topics, one of which is 'safe driving'.
- 2.4 The range of extra-curricular activities has been increased to offer social, aesthetic and creative opportunities as well as sport and academic options. Extra-curricular provision in sport is excellent, the rest of the activities programme is strong and staff give generously of their time to support this area of the life of the school. The senior and junior academic societies offer an intellectual challenge to the more able pupils, and both cooperation and team work are encouraged in house competitions such as house singing, in the climbing club and in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. A number of other community service activities are available, ranging from sixth form help at a local school for children with disabilities to library monitoring. Many pupils spend time raising money for charity.
- 2.5 An unusually large number of trips outside school are arranged during the year. Visits to Roman sites are carefully linked to the topics covered in the classics department. An annual visit to Ypres provides background for study of the war poets and every other year a trip is taken to Pompeii and Naples. Modern foreign language exchanges are arranged and occasional trips go all over the world for sport or cultural purposes, recently to New York and China.
- 2.6 Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education and for adult life. Appropriate support and guidance are given to pupils when they make GCSE subject choices and again for AS and A2 courses in the sixth form. The school is careful to involve parents in this

process. A careers programme, initially part of the PSHE course, starts in Year 8 and offers a work experience week at the end of the spring term in Year 10.

- 2.7 The curriculum is well planned to provide continuity and appropriate progression from year to year. Longer term planning by departments is now an annual event, providing input to the school's development plan. This planning, as reflected in subject handbooks, varies considerably in quality and in the depth of consideration given to the best approaches to teaching and learning. Nonetheless, some examples are impressive and it is clear that the curriculum contributes effectively to the physical, intellectual and personal attainment of pupils at each stage.
- 2.8 Provision for pupils with LDD has been limited in the past but is now being further developed. All pupils are now assessed on entry and their progress monitored. Those needing some extra support are identified and teachers know of any such pupils in their class. Discussion with parents may lead to extra help being obtained outside the school. The school is aware that more support for those with LLD is desirable and has strategies in place to improve provision in the future. The LDD coordinator and two other members of staff are being trained, all teachers have had in-service training and in future the school will provide professional extra support to pupils on a one-to-one basis at school or in the classroom. A similar arrangement is available for the occasional pupil for whom English is a second language. The two current pupils whose first or home language is not English require no more support than that given in the normal course of teaching. Those pupils identified as potential high achievers, in addition to extra challenge provided by departments, are invited to attend the academic societies providing suitable extension activities outside the classroom.
- 2.9 Assessment also identifies potential high achievers and their progress too is monitored by tutors and at the half term grade review. Departments are encouraged to provide extra challenge for these pupils and this is now happening in a variety of ways: more open ended tasks are being set; individual programmes apply in PE and sport, and in music; setting in mathematics and science enables teachers to focus on a particular ability group; and opportunities such as the academic societies and Maths Challenges are part of the activities programme.
- 2.10 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.11 Pupils' achievements and the quality of their learning are good, as was apparent from their written work, in lessons and from public examination results. No differences in attainment relative to ability were noted between different groups of pupils, so that the progress over time made by pupils of all abilities is good. The success noted in the last report has been maintained and the school meets its aims for pupils' achievement.
- 2.12 Knowledge gained in lessons was often good. For example, a Year 7 group showed a detailed understanding of how mediaeval ships were built and worked. A Year 9 science set demonstrated well-developed practical skills and applied their theoretical knowledge to practical situations. Some high-quality creative work was seen in pupils' art work, at all levels in the school, and independent learning in a Year 8 classics lesson led pupils to a considerable depth of understanding in their language work. Pupils' good understanding and skills development are apparent in their written work. In some lessons however, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to engage in critical thinking in respect of their own and others' work. In mathematics, pupils preparing for A-level examinations in Year 13 showed an ability to apply their knowledge of techniques to a variety of problems.

- 2.13 The pupils are literate, reading from a range of sources and writing fluently. In English, good progress is made up to GCSE in pupils' imaginative writing and in the sophistication of their use of language. In some subjects, the range of written tasks is too restricted; in other areas, pupils' responses are personal and imaginative, for example in an exceptionally well-directed consideration of Truffaut's films. Mathematical and numeracy skills are generally good. Scientific skills, including practical skills, are well developed. Individual ICT skills are mainly strong, but the use of ICT by pupils across the curriculum is largely limited to word processing and internet searches.
- 2.14 In public examinations, pupils achieve results at GCSE that are well above the national average for maintained boys' schools; at A level, their results are in line with or marginally above the national average. Pupils' results in the IGCSE science and mathematics examinations in 2008 were particularly impressive. Taken as a whole, these results are good in relation to pupils' abilities.
- 2.15 More widely, the school encourages in pupils' other successes, including a number of Nuffield bursaries and individual sporting honours. These achievements illustrate the school's aim to help all pupils to develop their particular talents and fulfil their potential; pupils are proud of their participation and clearly enjoy the range of activities on offer. The school has enjoyed sporting success at many representative levels. Pupils with other interests are catered for and pupils do well in a range of activities, the scope of which has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- 2.16 Most of the time pupils settle well to the tasks set in lessons; in some cases, the beginning of lessons lacks purpose or adequate focus. Most pupils are enthusiastic learners and are well grounded in the knowledge required in each subject; when presented with the opportunity, they clearly enjoy creative work, some of which is displayed to good effect. Pupils are keen to offer opinions, are articulate and find no difficulty in seeking clarification from teachers. However, pupils are not always offered a sufficient range of open-ended tasks where they might show greater ability to think through problems for themselves. Independent learning is therefore sometimes limited, although strong personal application was seen in mathematics, for example, in a Year 11 class. A particularly striking example of independent learning was also provided in media studies where a short film, dealing with racism, had led to a spontaneous and wide-ranging discussion amongst the pupils. Across the curriculum, pupils have well developed analytical skills, though expectations across departments are not always demanding enough to provide challenging experiences for all.
- 2.17 Good independent note taking was seen in a Year 8 religious studies class, and, in biology for example, revision for examinations was well planned. This is not always the case and sometimes notes and support materials, often of good quality in themselves, are untidily kept and poorly organised. Nevertheless, most pupils show a good ability to study for themselves.
- 2.18 In most lessons, pupils listen carefully and on many occasions during the inspection they showed curiosity and strong personal motivation, for example in a listening exercise in a Year 11 music class and in paired work in Year 7 modern languages. As they learn, most pupils value the contributions of their peers, and respect their efforts. Co-operative learning was seen, for example in a most effective Year 7 PE lesson. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the many sporting opportunities they are offered and are proud of and committed to their teams. In a small minority of classes, poor behaviour impeded effective learning. More generally, an over reliance upon dictated notes and worksheets denies pupils the opportunity to engage in constructive criticism of the topic under discussion and prevents full exploitation of the prepared materials. However, a number of departments are aware of the need to promote different learning styles as well as greater use of ICT by pupils in lessons, although these developments are not always reflected in departmental schemes of work.

- 2.19 The school has succeeded in creating an environment where the individual is valued and personal development is very much at the heart of what the school seeks to do. The pupils have a straightforward approach to their studies and the warmth of the relationships between staff and pupils significantly enhances their learning. The programme of visits, trips and exchanges provides a highly valued, additional dimension to the education offered, which the pupils and their teachers wholeheartedly support.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.20 The spiritual and moral development of the pupils is excellent and their social and cultural development is good. The school aims, to provide a clear moral framework and an ethos in which all are known and valued, are fully achieved and this area remains one of the school's strengths.
- 2.21 Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. The ethos of the school successfully promotes the self-worth of the individual. As they grow in confidence, pupils develop a sense of the value of each individual, as well as a strong sense of purpose in their lives. This area was highlighted by parents in their questionnaire responses with very positive comments on the attitudes and ethos of the school. Although school assemblies are largely Christian in content, speakers from other faiths have been asked to contribute and the allegiance of some staff and pupils to other faiths is recognised through prayers and readings from other cultures. The Rector of Shepperton acts as school chaplain and takes three assemblies each term, as well as hosting a full school Easter service in his church. A carol service is held each year in December. The religious studies (RS) syllabus offers an excellent introduction to religious beliefs and their effect on people's lives. A Christian Union meets weekly attended by pupils and staff, and representatives of other faiths are welcomed to contribute.
- 2.22 Pupils' moral development is also strong. Pupils have a growing awareness of ethical issues and develop their own moral guidelines. Staff provide a positive lead and are good role models, widely respected by the pupils, who develop a clear sense of right and wrong. A comprehensive programme for PSHE takes place for Years 7 to 11 in tutor periods. The topic base is broad and includes health issues, internet safety, human rights, drug education and bullying. Pupils readily engage in charity work. Support for the school rules is widespread amongst pupils, staff and parents.
- 2.23 Pupils' social development is good. Pupils learn to value their role in the school community. Prefects are selected from pupils in Years 11 and 13, those in Year 11 being given responsibilities for practical tasks. Year 13 prefects are invited for an informal breakfast meeting with the headmaster on an occasional basis, with opportunities to give feedback on current school issues. However, the role of the prefects is not as widely developed as it might be and too few areas for responsibility identified. Some other opportunities for responsibility occur in the houses, in sport and in the library. The school council is well run with representation from all year groups and is an important feature of the school through which pupils' voices are heard and, when appropriate, acted upon; however, older pupils are not sufficiently involved in its organisation. A variety of opportunities exists for service in the community. Citizenship features in the PSHE programme in the sixth form, and in other subjects in the curriculum. Pupils have a sound awareness of public institutions and services. Year 7 demonstrated a clear understanding of the English judicial system and the academic societies regularly debate current affairs issues.
- 2.24 Pupils' cultural development is also good. The pupils' tolerance of different cultures and traditions reflects well the cultural diversity in the school. The RS scheme of work gives a positive and balanced view of different world religions. Pupils have a mature attitude to equality issues such as racism. Culturally stimulating trips abroad have included visits to

China, Krakow, and the battlefields at Ypres, and a wide range of visits in this country broadens pupils' awareness of their own culture and heritage.

- 2.25 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.26 The quality of teaching was mostly good and occasionally excellent. Very few less than satisfactory lessons were seen. The school therefore very largely achieves its aim to challenge and support pupils of all abilities. Since the last inspection, considerable advances have been made in the use of ICT, including interactive boards and support for teaching across the curriculum. Considerable development has also taken place in baseline testing and assessment and in the use of the resulting data to support pupils' learning.
- 2.27 Teachers' mark books show that all are aware of those pupils whose specific learning needs might cause them some difficulty; rarely, however, were teaching approaches within the classroom adapted accordingly. Although, in some subjects, setting caters well for varied levels of ability, in most cases teachers rely on their expectations of pupils' work rather than providing different tasks for pupils of different abilities. However, the best lessons were structured to provide suitably challenging and thought provoking work for all, including the most able, so that all make progress according to their ability and develop the necessary subject skills.
- 2.28 Most teaching encourages pupils to make sustained effort in their work. In a Year 10 art class, boys made maximum use of limited time to work on their own, highly individual, projects. Artwork on display is in a wide range of media and is the result of sustained, absorbed effort and carefully guided developing skills. In some lessons, pupils were given the opportunity to formulate their own ideas and think for themselves; then they were able to articulate their independent judgements with a good degree of fluency. Particularly good examples of this were seen in history, religious studies and in English, where a Year 10 essay following the trip to Ypres encouraged the application of sophisticated vocabulary control and sentence structure to perceptive writing.
- 2.29 Most teachers keep control with a light, humorous touch and adopt a lively pace that maintains momentum and interest. As a result, in most lessons, pupils behave with courtesy and common sense, listening to each other well and meeting their teacher's high expectations; this was particularly evident in sports, biology, history and RS. In a minority of lessons, when the pace was too slow, interest waned and inappropriate behaviour, which was not sufficiently challenged, further impeded progress.
- 2.30 Lessons generally are well planned, although the length of some language lessons is not conducive to sustained concentration for younger pupils. A variety of teaching strategies and techniques is used, particularly in science and modern languages, where varied activities ensured pupils' engagement. Occasionally, teachers placed more emphasis on pupils working quickly than on working thoughtfully, resulting in inadequate responses that some pupils found frustrating. When lessons were less successful, the organisation of activities was not as good, so that momentum was lost and time wasted. The encouragement in some subjects of pupils engaging in constructive criticism of their own and others' work in some subjects could usefully be more widespread.
- 2.31 Teachers know their pupils well, as is evident in the classroom and in formal reports. Relationships are notably relaxed and friendly; pupils seek extra help willingly and teachers are committed, giving of their time freely to support both during and outside lessons. The

teaching of a carousel of taster lessons in modern languages in Year 7 shows an awareness of the differing experiences of pupils prior to their joining the school. Teachers' academic expertise is trusted and admired by pupils – as one Year 7 pupil put it, “You can tell they are experienced and you can believe what they tell you.” Teachers' enthusiasm and confident knowledge engages pupils' interest. Most teachers are skilled in finding approaches that engage pupils' attention and relate learning to their interests.

- 2.32 Departments are well resourced, with data projectors and computers or interactive whiteboards in all classrooms; texts are plentiful and in good condition and science laboratories are well equipped. The library provides a bright, pleasant space in which to study, with computers linked to the internet and books covering all areas of the curriculum, although the selection is sometimes limited in scope; for example there are many anthologies of poetry and drama texts but comparatively little literary criticism. The librarian employs a variety of strategies to encourage reading but only a small proportion of pupils regularly use the library beyond the Year 7 library lessons; borrowing rates are low. Many teachers have a low expectation of the use of the library by their pupils. Considerable progress has been made in ICT since the last inspection and provision is now generally good. However, teachers are not as imaginative in their use of ICT as they might be, although most use the interactive boards and computer linked projectors in classrooms well. Although resources for music have also improved, facilities and overall provision remain limited.
- 2.33 Work scrutinised during the inspection showed that, while some teachers insist on high standards, in other cases skimpy, poorly presented work with minimal answers is accepted. Some marking is thorough, following the school's policies and providing useful targets to help pupils improve. Other marking, however, is perfunctory and in some subjects little work had been formally marked during the course of the year. Instructions to repeat or correct work sometimes appear to be ignored and some pupils repeat the same mistakes, with little evidence of intervention to correct important errors such as mis-spelt technical terms in science. At sixth-form level, there is a heavy reliance on photocopied notes in some subjects, which the students find of little help. There is insufficient oversight of pupils' files which, in some cases, are poorly organised and contain large gaps, providing little support for examination revision.
- 2.34 The school's system of half-termly grades and annual examinations ensures that there is frequent assessment of pupils' work and that staff are given information on baseline testing in Year 7 and Year 9, as well as data comparing the school's performance against national norms. Senior management are using this information effectively as are some heads of department. Increasingly tutors and subject teachers have the information on which to base their work with pupils and to help set targets. Best practice in the use of assessment data to help evaluate future teaching strategies and so improve academic standards still further has not yet been widely shared between departments.
- 2.35 The school meets the regulatory requirements for teaching [Standard 1].

3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS

The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils

- 3.1 The school provides outstanding pastoral support and guidance for its pupils and takes full and effective responsibility for their welfare, health and safety. Pupils of all ages feel listened to, well cared for and valued as individuals. The school continues to be successful in its aim to provide a warm, friendly ethos in which every pupil is known and valued. Parents and pupils are very appreciative of the care and support provided, a view endorsed by the pupils during interviews and in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire.
- 3.2 Tutors are central to the pastoral care system, successfully monitoring pupils' academic progress and supporting their personal development. Pupils joining the school in Year 7 are allocated to one of three tutor and house groups; an arrangement that enables them to settle quickly and establish a strong house identity. At the end of the year, pupils move to one of four mixed house tutor groups, enabling them to integrate fully across the year group and providing them with more individual tutor contact time. Tutors know their tutees well and take their pastoral and academic responsibilities seriously. Specialist tutors in the sixth form advise on specific AS and A level study skills, and provide detailed guidance and support for university applications. Pupils speak highly of the approachability and accessibility of their tutors.
- 3.3 The senior tutor has overall responsibility for pastoral care in the school, with senior house tutors managing the tutors attached to each house and liaising with the form tutors of all pupils in the house. The head of sixth form provides strong pastoral leadership for the senior part of the school, and has the confidence of the pupils and his tutor team. Currently responsibility for the welfare of the small number of girls in the sixth form falls to the head of sixth form and the tutors. The number of girls is set to increase and the school has plans to develop these pastoral arrangements appropriately in the future.
- 3.4 The pastoral committee, consisting of the senior tutor as chairman, headmaster, deputy head, matron and the three senior house tutors, meets every half term and is effective in identifying the needs of individual pupils and in reviewing pastoral systems. In addition, the headmaster meets the tutors from each year group on a termly basis; these meetings complement the work of the committee; issues to do with pupils are followed up quickly and action plans implemented. The matron is a pivotal figure in the success of these pastoral arrangements. She has full responsibility for all medical matters, including first aid training for staff, and makes a valued contribution to pastoral committee meetings. She is approachable and accessible to pupils and staff throughout the working day.
- 3.5 The quality of relationships between staff and pupils, and among the pupils, is excellent. Pupils respond readily to the school's encouragement to care for and show respect for others. They speak highly of the support offered by their teachers and believe that their teachers genuinely care about their well-being. Appropriate policies encourage high standards of behaviour, although occasionally some pupils fail to meet these expectations and find themselves subject to the sanctions clearly set out in the policies. The comprehensive anti-bullying policy works well in practice. Measures to prevent anti-social behaviour are successful; instances of bullying are rare and pupils are confident that any incidents will be dealt with quickly and sensitively. The merit and censures system rewards good behaviour and is an effective means of promoting mutual understanding and tolerance. Pupils have respect for each other as individuals, whatever their background, and understand and accept the school rules.

- 3.6 The school has an appropriate and effective child protection policy. The headmaster is the designated child protection liaison officer and the school has forged strong links with the local authority, which provides individual training for the senior staff, and in-service training for both teaching and non-teaching staff. Medical arrangements meet the needs of all pupils, providing a confidential and practical service. Registration is carried out efficiently twice a day and often backed up during lessons. The admissions register is stored electronically and contains all the necessary information.
- 3.7 The bursar diligently oversees implementation of the comprehensive health and safety policy. The school pays due regard to its statutory obligations and regular meetings of the health and safety committee ensure that the policy is effective in practice and frequently reviewed. Risk assessments are comprehensive and meticulously completed. The school makes very good use of outside consultants for risk assessment and fire safety. A governor is delegated to each of child protection and health and safety, and the governing body review both these areas annually. Regular fire drills take place and the school has implemented all of the changes recommended following the most recent fire officer's visit. The school has an appropriate plan to improve physical access to the school as well as access to the curriculum for pupils with disabilities.
- 3.8 All pupils are encouraged to exercise regularly and the extensive programme of games and activities ensures that they value being active. Healthy eating is given a high priority in the PSHE programme and pupils are discerning in identifying their dietary needs. Arrangements for lunch are adequate although the lack of space in the dining hall means that meals are rushed with little time for socialising. Fresh fruit and vegetables are available every day, together with a vegetarian option but the restricted serving counter space limits choice. In their responses to the questionnaire and during interview, pupils indicated that, although the food was often nutritious and appetising, the quality and quantity varied from day to day. The school has plans to improve the dining hall provision.
- 3.9 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3].

The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community

- 3.10 The school has a very positive partnership with its parents and worthwhile links with the community. The quality and extent of communications between school and home have been further raised since the last inspection.
- 3.11 From the pre-inspection questionnaire and from conversation during the inspection, it is clear that parents are very satisfied with the overall education provided by the school. Parents believe that the school caters well for pupils of all abilities, and that teaching in the school helps their children to make good progress. They perceive real strengths in the pastoral care provided, believe that staff know pupils personally and are confident in the leadership of the school. Apart from some concerns about the provision for pupils with LDD already being dealt with by the school, and a feeling that lower down the school insufficient homework was being set, no significant concerns were expressed. Pupils, in their questionnaire, confirm all these strengths as well as praising the extra-curricular activities and sport provision. Their view on homework is that sometimes too much is set. The inspection team agreed that some inconsistency in the setting of homework did exist lower down the school.

- 3.12 Parental involvement with activities includes attendance at sports matches, concerts and plays. Many parents are involved in the work of the parents' association (PA), supporting the school in fund raising and providing social functions. The three main annual events are the Quiz Night, the Ball and the Summer Fair; last year a figure of £28,000 was raised for school funds. Two of the teaching staff are on the PA and it is appreciated that teaching staff support these social functions. Some parents are also involved in organising Year 10 work experience and others help with school open days. Parents feel the academic diary system is useful in monitoring pupils' work, and gives an opportunity to check the homework set and to communicate with teachers.
- 3.13 Much has been done since the previous inspection to give parents more information about the school and to improve the quality of communication. Parents are pleased with the communications they receive, which include a comprehensive Parents' Handbook, booklets setting out GCSE and sixth-form options as well as newsletters and a diary of school events. They appreciate copies being posted to them rather than given to pupils to pass on. The website is being developed as a source of relevant and current information. At present, the website displays the regulatory school policies but other areas are still under construction. The school magazine is published annually and provides an illustrated summary of the breadth of activity across the whole school.
- 3.14 Reports to parents are issued three times each year, usually at the end of each term, and grade cards are sent out every half term. These are clear in layout and include grades for effort, achievement and target setting as well as detailed comments from individual teachers. The report card, which is used to monitor academic work where necessary or deal with issues of behaviour, is sent to parents to sign.
- 3.15 The complaints procedure is appropriate and known to parents, who expressed satisfaction with the way the school deals with any concerns they may have. A large proportion felt the school handles concerns well, and the parents interviewed appreciated the fact that they can telephone, email or visit the school and receive a prompt and appropriate response.
- 3.16 The school has worked hard to develop its links with the wider community. At present, the school runs The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme at Bronze and Silver levels, which includes aspects of community service. The community service programme for Years 12 and 13 includes links with Manor Mead Special School nearby and a variety of local charity work. Year 9 pupils sponsor a local park and help with litter clearance. Pupils have been involved in fund raising for a school in Ethiopia and a number have had the opportunity to visit the school. Produce from the Harvest assembly is distributed to a local centre for the elderly with whom more contact is being made. Links have been established with a local primary school, whose pupils have visited the school for a session in science. The school cricket team makes use of facilities at the Shepperton Cricket Club and in return the club uses the school nets.
- 3.17 School facilities are also used by outside organisations; the sports hall is used for their youth programmes by local rugby, cricket and rowing clubs, and the theatre by local drama groups, the Historical Society, the Rotary Club, and for charity functions hosted by the Mayor and town council. The school's reputation in the local community is increasingly strong.
- 3.18 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the provision of information and the manner in which complaints are to be handled [Standards 6 and 7].

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 The school is excellently governed. The arrangements for the governance of the school are well defined and support effective oversight of the school.
- 4.2 The work of the governors is managed through a number of committees, covering areas such as finance, marketing, building, staffing and academic matters. The last two of these, in particular, includes a mix of governors and senior staff. The groundwork is undertaken by these committees, incorporating the particular expertise of individual governors, who then report and make recommendations to the full board at its termly meetings. These arrangements work well and enable the governors as a whole to maintain close touch with the school and its workings, to ensure that their aims for the school are achieved and that the appropriate human, financial and physical resources are available. The chairman has excellent relationships with the headmaster and the bursar and so is able to support their running of the school with confidence.
- 4.3 The governors are very aware of their responsibilities, both general and particular, and especially for financial management and support for educational provision. Through the committees, they are closely involved in establishing and reviewing the school's development plan, currently entering a new three to five year phase. With the headmaster and the school's senior management, they share a challenging and exciting vision for the future progress of the school. They are appreciative and fully supportive of the work of the senior management in its running of the school and in taking the school forward.
- 4.4 The governing body fully discharges its responsibilities for the welfare of the pupils, notably concerning child protection, and in assuring the health and safety of all who work in the school community.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.5 The school continues to benefit from strong leadership and sound management. The new senior leadership team is increasingly effective, although the quality and effectiveness of the management of some departments are more variable.
- 4.6 The school is led with purpose and an ambitious vision for its future, which is shared by the governors and communicated clearly to all staff. The senior leadership team, relatively newly formed, is fully committed to the aims set out in the new development plan and to the school's mission to 'make this good school better'. Much of the running of the school is delegated to the members of this team who successfully transmit the leadership goals to staff in the management of their areas of responsibility. Whether in finance and administration, in academic matters, in school discipline and routine, or in the provision of pastoral care and ensuring pupils' welfare, much has been achieved and improved since the last inspection; a clear determination exists that progress will continue in the years ahead.
- 4.7 The structure of management and the responsibilities clearly set out in job descriptions at all levels are effective in supporting the initiatives and direction set out for the school in detail in the new school development plan. This plan is the carefully considered result of review and discussion across the whole school community and, with annual review and revision, provides a very helpful template for the implementation of the changes and developments needed for the school to achieve its purpose.

- 4.8 The senior team is well placed to support and monitor middle management, who in turn are directly responsible for much of the school's achievement. Already, very high quality pastoral care is being provided through the work of form and senior house tutors and other specialists. Many academic departments too are functioning with both professionalism and ambition to raise standards of teaching and learning in their subjects. Some departments, however, remain content with their current, albeit usually sound, performance and with the approaches to teaching and learning to which they have become accustomed. Thus, for example, a wide range exists in the quality of monitoring within departments, in the marking procedures used and in the depth and usefulness of planning displayed in department handbooks. The school is not yet taking full advantage of the opportunity to share more widely the good practice which is evident in almost all areas of curriculum provision.
- 4.9 The school takes great care in ensuring the suitability of staff to work with children. Teachers are well qualified and, supported by an effective induction programme, continuing appraisal and well-focused staff development, form a very motivated and well-knit team, fully committed to the welfare and best progress of each of their pupils. The school also runs a programme for newly qualified teachers, which satisfies the national guidelines and is much appreciated by those who have been through it. Communication between staff and management is direct and effective so that all staff share and feel part of a single enterprise.
- 4.10 The school's finances are well managed. The school site is well maintained, and educational resources are appropriate and sufficient. The development of the site, to further improve facilities and create more space for learning, in the first instance with regard to art, music and the sixth form, is under close consideration. The administration of the school is excellent and all non-teaching staff provide loyal and committed support to teachers and to the welfare of the pupils. Their contribution is greatly appreciated and the sense of a single community of all staff, management and pupils with a common purpose is a notable feature of the school. A strong emphasis is currently being put on marketing the school and raising its profile in the community.
- 4.11 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].
- 4.12 The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers and meets its requirements.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall Conclusions

- 5.1 The school successfully meets its aims to provide a well-planned liberal education in a community that embodies a family ethos, a clear moral framework and a high level of individual attention and pastoral care. It is well placed to achieve its goal of making a good school better. Pastoral care is excellent and the individual support pupils receive generates confidence, so that they achieve well according to their ability. Pupils' personal development is assured. Teachers are well qualified and strongly committed to pupils' welfare. Relationships between teachers and pupils, and amongst pupils themselves, are excellent. Administrative and other staff provide strong support and, together with teachers and pupils, form a united and purposeful community. The school is well led and governed, and senior management diligently promotes the school's aims. Some aspects of middle management and academic provision are more variable in quality, and expectations of pupils' achievement and behaviour in the classroom are not always sufficiently high; but many examples of excellent educational practice were seen in all areas, although these are yet to be widely shared to benefit teaching and learning across the school.
- 5.2 Since the last inspection, a wide range of extra-curricular activities and trips outside school has been introduced and resources for ICT and the library have been transformed, although the latter is still not widely used by the pupils. Considerable attention has been given to providing more support for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, and for potential high achievers. Plans exist to continue development in all these areas. The school site continues to be developed and improved, and educational resources are now mostly good. Plans are in hand to improve facilities for music art and the sixth form. Relationships with parents have been strengthened further and parents are very supportive of the education the school provides for their children.
- 5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

- 5.4 The school has no major weaknesses. In order to raise standards still further, attention should be given to the following matters.
1. As it becomes practicable to do so, the school should seek to implement its plans to provide new facilities for art, music and the sixth form.
 2. The school should continue its current development of:
 - support available for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities;
 - the use of ICT by pupils and staff across the curriculum;
 - the greater use by pupils of the library.
 3. Initiatives should be taken at whole school level to improve pupils' organisation of their work and their behaviour in class, where these fall below an acceptable standard.
 4. As a major step to raising further the standards of teaching and learning, the school should seek to recognise the very good practice in many aspects of the curriculum and find ways to share that good practice as widely as possible across the school.
- 5.5 No action is required in respect of regulatory requirements.

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 5th to 8th May 2009. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the sick bay. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.

List of Inspectors

Mr Michael Higginbottom	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Colette Culligan	Former Headmistress, GSA school
Mr Stephen Lea	Head of Department, GSA/SHMIS school
Mr Andrew McNeil	Head of Year, HMC school
Ms Laura Morrison	Deputy Head, GSA school
Mr Ian Power	Headmaster, SHMIS school