

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS COUNCIL
(ISC)**

INSPECTION OF

WAKEFIELD GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

By the

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE
(ISI)**

on

November 14th – 18th, 2005

MAIN REPORT

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Wakefield Girls' High School

The Junior School was inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of the School	Wakefield Girls' High School		
DfES Number	384/6114		
Address	Wentworth Street, Wakefield, West Yorkshire. WF1 2QS		
Telephone Number	01924 372490		
Fax Number	01924 231601		
E-mail Address	office@wghs.org.uk		
Name of Headmistress	Mrs P.A. Langham		
Spokesman (Chairman of Governors)	Mrs Megan Waugh		
Age Range	11 - 18	Gender	Girls
Number of Pupils	735	Number of Boarders	Nil
Inspection Dates	November 14th - 18th, 2005		

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

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

CONTENTS

	Page no.
1 MAIN FINDINGS	1
2 MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS	5
3 INTRODUCTION	6
Characteristics of the School	6
Key Indicators	7
4 EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Attainment and Progress	8
Quality of Learning, Attitudes and Behaviour	9
Attendance	9
5 QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED	10
Teaching	10
Assessment and Recording	11
Curriculum	11
Teaching and Non-teaching Staff	12
Resources for Learning	13
Libraries	14
Premises and Accommodation	14
Links with Parents and the Community	15
6 PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PASTORAL CARE	17
Pupils' Personal Development	17
Pastoral Care, including Welfare and Health & Safety	18
7 THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL	20
Governance and Management	20
8 ACHIEVEMENT AND QUALITY IN SUBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES	21
Achievement and Quality in Subjects	21
Achievement and Quality in Activities	32
9 SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE	34
LIST OF THE INSPECTORS	34

1. MAIN FINDINGS

Overall Summary

- 1.1 Wakefield Girls' High School provides a very good quality of education for all its pupils. They achieve high academic standards as a result of very good teaching and excellent resources. The school provides very good pastoral care and the pupils are courteous, responsible young adults who are enthusiastic and very good learners. Prudent governance and the outstanding leadership of the headmistress are building successfully on the school's many strengths.

What the School Does Well

- 1.2 The school has many high qualities among which are the following:
- High levels of academic achievement are achieved in lessons and in public examinations.
 - The pupils receive very good pastoral care and respond by being very well behaved, and they are very good learners with excellent attitudes.
 - The school is very well provided with well-qualified teaching and non-teaching staff and the teaching is very good.
 - The provision for the pupils' spiritual and moral, social and cultural development is very good.
 - The school has a broad and well-balanced curriculum which is supported by very good activities.
 - The governance and management of the school are very good. With outstanding leadership from the headmistress they ensure, among other things, that excellent resources are provided and well used, and that the school has excellent links with parents and the community.

What the School Should Do Better

- 1.3 The school has no major weaknesses. The following areas, however, could be improved.
- The school library is not a sufficiently central to the work and life of the school.
 - The school collects a great deal of data about pupils, their abilities and progress but this is not always used effectively to benefit their education.
 - Most of the marking of the pupils' work is very good but some is perfunctory and less useful.

Standards of Attainment and Progress in Subjects

- 1.4 Pupils achieve very good standards throughout the school. Their attainment in national tests is good in relation to their abilities. The school does even better by its pupils than might be expected at both General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and Advanced (A) level. At GCSE, the school's results are far above the national average for all maintained schools and are even above the national average for all selective schools. At A level, the school's results are well above the national average for all maintained schools and are in line with the national average for all maintained selective schools. Attainment is very good in all subjects. Girls have a thorough grasp of the basics but go well beyond that to know, understand and, where appropriate, perform, at a high level. The girls speak clearly and articulately. They can read and write well in each subject. In mathematics, they have a very good standard and they can apply what they know throughout the curriculum. The school has outstanding ICT facilities and they are well

used by the pupils across the curriculum though most pupils do not have a systematic method of fingering the keyboard. Pupils' progress throughout the whole school is rapid. High, average and low attaining pupils, including those deemed by the school as requiring special provision, progress as well as, or better than, expected during their time in the school and in lessons.

The Quality of Pupils' Learning, Attitudes and their Behaviour

- 1.5 The quality of pupils' learning and attitudes is very good. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils are highly competent learners who respond very positively in lessons; are very well motivated and co-operative; show great interest and apply themselves to their work; are able to sustain concentration very well and develop their capacity for personal study. Behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the school. Girls are polite, well disciplined and very smart in their uniform.

The Quality of Teaching

- 1.6 The quality of teaching is very good. The teaching seen was mostly very good, often excellent and never less than satisfactory. Teachers know all their pupils well and vary their approaches to meet their individual requirements. The staff are well qualified specialists with a confident and secure knowledge of their subjects and a strong grasp of examination course requirements. The teachers respect their pupils and this is reciprocated. Teaching is characterised by high expectation often conveying a love of the subject.

Other Aspects of the School

Attendance

- 1.7 The level of pupils' attendance is excellent and enables them to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the school. Generally, staff and most pupils make every effort, on this scattered site, to arrive to lessons on time and are usually successful.

Assessment and Recording

- 1.8 Methods used for assessing and recording pupil performance, progress and needs are good overall and are generally accurate and consistent, but, while a great deal of data is produced, it is not always used effectively. The purpose and function of assessment needs to be reviewed along with the use to be made of it. Much but not all of the marking of pupils' work is good.

Curriculum

- 1.9 The curriculum provided by the school is very good and offers a very broad and balanced education suited to all girls across the full age and ability range. The curriculum is planned very well to provide continuity and progression of learning. The curriculum offers an especially good choice of three modern foreign languages while retaining classics. The options at each stage are wide.

Teaching and Non-teaching Staff

- 1.10 The staff are very well qualified and experienced for the roles that they are expected to undertake and are very efficiently deployed. The ratio of one teacher to eleven pupils is good and helps the teaching. Teachers are well supported by administrative and ancillary staff who are plentiful and have good experience.

Resources for Learning

- 1.11 The books, equipment and information and communication technology (ICT) which are needed to support the teaching, learning and recreation of the pupils at all levels are excellent in quantity, quality and organisation and are very effectively used. All subjects have all that they need in books and equipment and most have excellent facilities and use them very well.

Libraries

- 1.12 The quality of the library provision is sound. Library facilities offer some support for the curriculum but are not always used effectively. Despite a very generous budget, some shelves are empty and the space is not sufficiently welcoming. The library premises and stock are well managed from the point of view of looking after the materials but not from the point of view of promoting learning. The library serves as a limited resource for personal study and is only partly successful in encouraging pupils to read and research widely for information and pleasure. Girls certainly read widely, and can talk well about their reading, but the school library is not central to that experience.

Premises and Accommodation

- 1.13 The buildings, accommodation and other facilities are good for the numbers, abilities and ages of the pupils; they are very well used and maintained and enable the curriculum to be taught very effectively. The buildings and grounds, within a city centre site, are good for the purpose and plentiful in terms of provision; they are of very good quality and condition. Much of the specialist accommodation is very good.

Links with Parents and the Community

- 1.14 The school has developed an excellent partnership with parents and excellent links with the community. Over 440 parents, some 60%, replied to a questionnaire as part of the inspection and showed an outstanding degree of support for all features. Links with the local community are very strong. The school is very actively involved with the independent/state school partnership scheme and has forged closer links with local maintained schools.

Pupils' Personal Development

- 1.15 The school provides a wide range of very good opportunities through which its pupils can develop a system of spiritual beliefs and a moral code, as well as developing very well personally, socially and culturally. In lessons, pupils develop their spiritual awareness and frequently appreciate a feeling of something much greater than themselves. A prayer room is available at lunchtime and the uniform and physical education kit take account of different religious beliefs. The school's approach to rewards and sanctions is clear. Prefects and sixth formers have a keen sense of duty, assist with tutor times, games and activities. Pupils have a strong sense of belonging and are very proud of their school.

Pastoral Care

- 1.16 The school cares very well for all its pupils' well-being, development and safety through its very good arrangements for pastoral support, for guidance and for welfare, health and safety. Measures to promote good discipline and behaviour, including procedures to guard against harassment and bullying are effective and deal constructively with unacceptable behaviour when it occurs. Girls at every stage feel a shared sense of responsibility for implementing the robust anti-bullying policy, a policy which they helped to formulate, and have confidence in the school's ability to handle problems with sensitivity.

Governance and Management

- 1.17 The governance and management of the school ensure very well that the school's aims are met, that a high quality of education is provided and that there is efficient planning to secure excellent resources for teaching and learning. The headmistress provides outstanding leadership. She is dynamic and provides care, guidance and direction for the girls and staff. She personifies the values of the school and provides an excellent role model. At middle management level, head of year and head of department, the leadership and management is also generally good.

Achievement and Quality in Activities

- 1.18 Achievement and quality in the activities programme is very good for the ages, aptitudes and abilities of the pupils and the quality of provision results in pupils' very good personal development. The school offers a wide range of appropriate activities which cater for all levels of expertise and age. The activities include musical groups and ensembles, drama, sports squads, general clubs and societies. In the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme, 46 awards were achieved last year, including 13 gold, an outstanding achievement.

Progress Made by the School since its Last Inspection

- 1.19 The school was last inspected by ISI in October 1999. It was found to be a very good school but five recommendations were made. All these have been fully dealt with. For example, "the effective use of computers to support learning" was recommended and this is now something that the school does particularly well.

Compliance with the Regulations for Registration

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

Actions Required for Compliance with the Regulatory Requirements

- 1.20 No action is required but the school is asked to address the issues mentioned in *What the School Should Do Better* as set out as recommendations for the school in Section 2.

2. MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The school has no major weaknesses but has some areas in which it could make improvements. The most significant of these are set out below for ease of reference. The numbers in brackets refer to relevant paragraphs in the body of the report.
- R1 The school should consider how best to improve the role and working of the library so that it can contribute more to the education of the pupils (5.29; 5.30; 5.31; 5.32; 8.7).
- R2 The school should review the way in which it uses its assessment data in order to disseminate carefully relevant material about pupils for effective use (5.9; 5.10; 5.12; 8.13).
- R3 The school, especially at the head of department level, should monitor the marking of pupils' work to effect improvements (5.11; 8.13; 8.20; 5.41).

3. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 3.1 Wakefield Girls' High School was founded in 1878. It became an independent school in 1982, following the removal of its Direct Grant status. A Junior School is on the same site and is the subject of a separate report. The schools are part of the Wakefield Grammar School Foundation, a family of schools which also includes the Queen Elizabeth Grammar Senior and Junior Schools. All the schools, while maintaining individuality and autonomy, have the same governing body and, though finances are dealt with centrally, each school controls its own budget. The headmistress is the Principal of the whole Foundation. The school occupies an extensive "campus" site in a conservation area near the centre of Wakefield. In effect, it is a campus only by virtue of a number of buildings being loosely gathered together. The school has had extensive developments in the last few years.
- 3.2 At the time of the inspection, the school roll totalled 735. Of these, 176 are in the sixth form. The majority of girls (in 2005, 58%) enter from the Junior School; others come mainly from local maintained schools (31%) or other independent schools. Some girls travel considerable distances in what is still a mainly urban area. They come from families with a variety of backgrounds, though the school says most are from the "middle/professional classes". Most girls, about nine out of every ten, are white and the others are from mainly Asian ethnic backgrounds. The school used to be part of the government's assisted place scheme until it was ended; now it gives some scholarships and bursaries.
- 3.3 No girl has a local education authority statement of special need; the school itself has identified 64 girls - 9 % - whom it regards as needing special provision. Some 24 girls come from homes where English is not the first language.
- 3.4 Entry at 11+ is by an entrance examination comprising papers in mathematics and English and a verbal and non-verbal intelligence tests. The school says it is looking for an average IQ of around 110. Account is also taken of the school reference. Junior School candidates do not have to take the entrance examination but are expected to achieve similar standards and do take the intelligence tests. At 16+ a few pupils are accepted subject to interview and GCSE results with a minimum of 54 points and at least a B grade in a subject to be studied.
- 3.5 Given the information from the school's base line tests, the pupils' average ability is well above that of the national average. Where pupils are performing in line with their abilities their results are, therefore, expected to be well above the average of pupils in all maintained schools. This comparison will be the one used where the national statistics are available.
- 3.6 The majority of girls go on into the sixth form and thence to university or some other form of higher education – 98% in 2005. In the last three years, four girls, on average, obtained Oxbridge places.
- 3.7 In the prospectus the headmistress says this of its aims: "The school aims to give a good all round education to each pupil, encouraging academic excellence, nurturing talents, developing an individual's potential and emphasising traditional values in a modern context. This aim is pursued within a happy, stimulating and purposeful environment, governed by mutual respect and bounded by a framework of principles that are well understood. This educational experience encourages the personal and social development of the girls and enables them to acquire a wide range of study and independent learning skills. We seek to produce well-rounded pupils who are effectively supported and

encouraged to value the unique contribution that each individual can make. We want our school to be a place where each girl can gain a real sense of self-esteem by making the most of her talents, learning the value of responsibility and service to others and participating in a broad programme of extra-curricular activities. This is a friendly and caring school and together we form a warm and vibrant community in which all pupils can thrive.”

- 3.8 National Curriculum nomenclature is used by the school. It is also throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. Occasionally, the term sixth form is used for Years 12 and 13.

Key Indicators

- 3.9 GCSE

	Most recently completed Year 11	Average for the last <i>three</i> years
Entered for 5+ subjects (%)	100	100
Achieved 5+ @ A* - C (%)	100	100
Achieved 5+ @ A* - G (%)	100	100
Average score per candidate*	64.06	63.58
Average score per entry*	7.1	7.05

* Scoring is 8 for GCSE grade A*, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 for grades A – G.

- 3.10 A Level and AS

	Most recent Year 13	Average for the last <i>three</i> years
Average score per candidate	35.12	35.09
Average score per subject entry	6.96	7.05

Scoring is 10, 8, 6, 4, 2 for A level grades A – E, and 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 for AS grades A to E.

- 3.11 Attendance for First Half of Autumn Term 2005

	Authorised	Unauthorised
Percentage absence	0.02	nil

- 3.12 Exclusions Over the Previous 12 Months

Temporary exclusions	Permanent exclusions
nil	nil

4. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL.

Attainment and Progress

- 4.1 Pupils achieve very good standards throughout the school.
- 4.2 Pupils' attainment in national tests is good in relation to their abilities. As mentioned in Section 3, given the information from the school's base line tests, the pupils' average ability is well above that of the national average. Where pupils are performing in line with their abilities their results are expected to be well above all maintained schools, but not those of selective schools. In fact, the school does even better by its pupils than might be expected at both GCSE and A level. At GCSE, the school's results are far above the national average for all maintained schools and are even above the national average for all selective schools. At A level, the school's results are well above the national average for all maintained schools (where pupils entering sixth forms have appreciably higher GCSE qualifications than the maintained school average overall for GCSE) and are in line with the national average for all maintained selective schools. At the time when the report was written, no national examination comparative statistics for the year 2005 were available. Throughout the report, therefore, where school averages are compared with national ones, the years taken are from 2002 to 2004, unless otherwise stated. By the age of 19, pupils leave school with qualifications relevant to the next stage of education, training or employment. The vast majority go on to university or to some other form of higher education.
- 4.3 Attainment is very good in all subjects. In each of the subjects and activities inspected pupils attain standards at least commensurate with their age, abilities and circumstances. In no lesson seen was the attainment unsatisfactory and it was most often very good, on occasions excellent. Girls have a thorough grasp of the basics of each subjects but go well beyond that to know, understand and, where appropriate, perform, at a high level. It would be invidious to pick out individual subjects, since the overall standard is so high; details appear in subject reports. Use of English is very good across the curriculum. The girls speak clearly and articulately. They can read and write well in each subject. For instance, in a Year 8 food technology lesson, pupils demonstrated that they knew the term "adjective" and could supply adjectives to clarify nice shades of meaning and, literally, taste. In mathematics, they have a very good standard and they can apply what they know throughout the curriculum, as they showed, for example, in a Year 7 physics lesson on moments when they could rearrange the equation for the law of moments to determine forces or distances. The school has outstanding ICT facilities and they are well used by the pupils across the curriculum. In a Year 12 physics lesson, for example, pupils made accurate measurements of voltage and current in an experiment comparing different types of resistor and used ICT spreadsheets to calculate results and draw graphs. In art at Year 7, pupils had made intelligent use of the Internet to research and print examples of masks, such as those used in the carnivals at Venice. However, most pupils have not learned a consistent and effective method of fingering for the computer keyboard and so their use of it is not so fast or accurate as it could be.
- 4.4 Pupils' progress throughout the whole school is rapid in individual lessons and over a longer period of time. Progress was, without exception, at least satisfactory in all the lessons observed; most often it was very good and often excellent. High, average and low attaining pupils, including those deemed by the school as requiring special provision, progress as well as, or better than, expected during their time in the school and in lessons. The attainment and progress of pupils of different ethnicity and background, including those for whom English is an additional language, is comparable with others in the school.

Quality of Pupils' Learning, Attitudes and Behaviour

- 4.5 The quality of pupils' learning and attitudes is very good. Behaviour is excellent.
- 4.6 Pupils are highly competent learners who respond very positively in lessons; are very well motivated and co-operative; show great interest and apply themselves to their work; are able to sustain concentration very well and develop their capacity for personal study. Pupils arrive at lessons keen to learn and their concentration levels are very good. They respond extremely well to questioning and listen carefully to each other. In many lessons, girls show eagerness and enthusiasm about their work, for example demonstrating awe and wonder at cross-breeding drosophila to produce F1 hybrids. They approach new work confidently and methodically. They demonstrated this in a design and technology textiles lesson at GCSE standard where they were eager to try the machines available to them and to discover what they could do. Girls work well independently. For instance, Year 12 girls in art first made an intensive study of the work of a great painter, chosen by themselves, and then used this imaginatively as a stimulus for their own excellent work.
- 4.7 Pupils form very good constructive relationships with one another, with their teachers and with others in the school community. The level of pupils' co-operation with staff and each other is exemplary. In mathematics for example, pupils frequently helped each other and this benefited both those who understood easily and those who had a more shaky understanding of the problem. They readily ask questions and this benefits the learning of the whole class. They respond very well to encouragement and are sensitive to their teachers' judgments. When given ideas to discuss in groups and pairs they do so sensibly. Sixth form girls are keen to assume responsibility and take their duties seriously.
- 4.8 Girls have an intrinsic respect for others and are sensitive to their feelings. As a matter of course, pupils listen with sympathy to the views of their peers, including those identified by the school as having special needs. In form time, discussions about charity events were lively and showed a real sense of altruism.
- 4.9 Behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the school. It considerably helps learning. Movement around the school is extremely calm and orderly even without staff being visible. Girls are pleasant, naturally courteous and helpful to visitors. They are polite, well-disciplined pupils who are very smart in their uniform. They are happy and clearly value their education and want to do their very best. They are proud of their school and behave well in and around it. A group of sixth formers were seen who were not only working conscientiously as they got on with some practical work but singing while doing so.

Attendance

- 4.10 The level of pupils' attendance is excellent and enables them to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the school.
- 4.11 Generally, staff and most pupils make every effort to arrive at lessons on time but, with the scattered nature of the site, some arrived late during the week of inspection.
- 4.12 The school maintains an admission register and attendance registers in accordance with legal requirements. Tutors register pupils twice daily and registers are accurately kept. There is no unauthorised absence and the school has a clear process of recording and investigating absence and lateness.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

- 5.1 The quality of teaching is very good.
- 5.2 The teaching meets the needs of all pupils very well. In all the lessons seen the teaching was never less than satisfactory; mostly it was very good and often excellent. Teachers know all their pupils well and vary their approaches to meet their individual requirements: for example, in science lessons, use of computer presentations, spreadsheets, practical work and challenging question and answer sessions were all observed. In a Year 9 textiles lesson, those pupils not quite so good at the skills were given a special template from which to work. The teaching of those pupils deemed by the school to need learning support or for whom English is an additional language are carefully catered for within the Learning Support Department and are given suitable and very good assistance within individual subjects.
- 5.3 The staff are well-qualified specialists with a confident and secure knowledge of their subjects and a strong grasp of examination course requirements. The sciences, for example, are all staffed by specialists in the different scientific disciplines who co-operate for GCSE science. Each of the three modern languages has specialists, as well as calling on native speakers. Teaching structures the learning of each subject to enable girls to learn very well.
- 5.4 Management of pupils is very good, and a warm reciprocal respect and liking exists between teachers and pupils making for an excellent classroom atmosphere. Pupils spontaneously mentioned how teachers are willing to give extra help when they ask.
- 5.5 Teaching is characterised by high expectations. Pupils are consistently challenged and extended academically – expectations are high and usually met, particularly with regard to the presentation and organisation of written work, as was notably evident in chemistry and English. In art and DT textiles, among others, the teachers constantly, but pleasantly, ensured that the pupils pursued excellence and were not satisfied with standards less than the best for each pupil. Teachers often convey their love of their own subject.
- 5.6 Planning and organisation are usually very good and sometimes exemplary as in art, chemistry, classics, design and technology, English and modern languages. Tasks are suitably set in all subjects and objectives are clear to the pupils. Time is used carefully and pupils often accomplish a variety of tasks in lessons. Highly effective use of excellent resources was noticeable in art, design and technology, music and science. ICT is used very well by almost all subjects.

Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for teaching?

- 5.7 Yes.

Assessment and Recording

- 5.8 Methods used for assessing and recording pupil performance, progress and needs are good overall and are generally accurate and consistent, but, while a great deal of data is produced, it is not always used effectively.
- 5.9 The systems for assessment are comprehensive and thorough for the age of the pupils, their particular needs and their stage of development. Senior managers and some teachers are beginning to use standardised test data to set targets for pupils and to analyse outcomes at GCSE and A-level but the system requires further development. Baseline

assessment on entry to the school includes results of national tests taken in the junior schools, the 11+ entrance examination and Middle Years Information Service tests (MidYIS) which are taken at the beginning of Year 7. This information is given to teachers so that they can match work to the needs of individual pupils but the practice lacks consistency. At the time of the inspection, the benchmarking data was not linked to further assessment although the facility for doing so is being developed through the academic database. Benchmarking data for the sixth form has been entered into the new system and is linked to subsequent assessment so that the progress of pupils can be tracked throughout their A-level course. Girls report, however, that this information is not always being used in a constructive way. Some said they were discouraged by “predicted” grades based on their past performance.

- 5.10 Assessment procedures and teachers’ marking are frequent and accurate and are often very effective in assisting pupils to make progress. The relatively new whole school policy for assessment sets out a good framework for the general principles of assessing. Teachers are only just beginning to understand the aims and purpose of the policy and to adapt it appropriately to fit the demands of their subject criteria. This information is relayed to pupils and parents through some very helpful literature so that all understand the structure of assessment and the criteria for each subject, which relate to the booklet *WGHS Standards*. Some departments, notably mathematics, physics, biology, ICT and DT, have set up their own databases for recording assessment information. Pupils with special needs such as dyslexia are identified on entry to the school. Annual examination results for these pupils are monitored carefully to determine progress. Individual Educational Profiles are issued to assist teachers in planning work.
- 5.11 The school has a very clear policy for marking pupils’ work. Although departments have developed their own systems of grading, they relate to the overall *WGHS High School Standards* and these are well understood by pupils. Although much of the marking of pupils’ work is good, this is not always the case. Teachers are encouraged to mark work regularly against a prepared mark scheme. Some teachers provide useful and constructive comments and where this happens, the learning process is significantly enhanced, for example, in English where teachers made substantial and helpful comments. The school policy gives importance to the correction of spelling and grammatical errors, and the expectation that pupils will complete corrections, but not all teachers implement this to good effect and so a lack of consistency exists both in and between departments. Marking was inconsistent and not always as helpful as it could have been in some subjects including mathematics and science.
- 5.12 Assessment information is used to contribute to curriculum development and planning to a certain extent in some subjects. Good instances were seen in biology and history where assessment is carried out regularly across year groups, and subsequent discussion within the departments leads to changes in schemes of work. Similarly the English department has adjusted its focus in the GCSE course in order to achieve more of the higher grades. However, much of the data available in the school is not made use of. Data exists in abundance: some teachers thought that too much testing and recording takes place. The inspectors did not agree with this but did agree that the purpose and function of assessment needed to be reviewed along with the use to be made of it.

Curriculum

- 5.13 The curriculum provided by the school is very good and offers a very broad and balanced education suited to all girls across the schools’ full age and ability range.
- 5.14 The school provides a very good curriculum, which is fully suitable for its girls. It offers a very good core curriculum and enhances this with subject opportunities such as Latin, Greek and classical civilisation, and a full extra-curricular programme. The curriculum

contributes highly to pupils' intellectual, physical and personal attainment and development. It prepares them well for the next stage of their education, for training or for employment.

- 5.15 The curriculum is planned very well to provide continuity and progression of learning. Regular meetings and effective consultation between teachers in the Junior and Senior Schools ensure continuity between Years 6 and 7. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 has very good breadth and balance and is well organised to provide a good foundation for subsequent subject choice. Most subjects are taught within form groups. Games and a carousel of technological subjects are taught in two parallel bands within the year group. This banding arrangement is used in Year 8 to introduce both German and Spanish in rotation for half a year each. The three separate sciences of biology, chemistry and physics are also introduced at this stage. In Year 9, pupils may choose between Latin and classical civilisation. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are offered a compulsory core, consisting of English, mathematics and French and science, together with three other subjects from a choice of 18 optional subjects. A general programme, which includes ICT, games and religious studies, supplements the course of nine GCSE subjects. In the sixth form, most girls choose four subjects from a range of 31 subjects. Co-operation with Queen Elizabeth Grammar School has extended pupil choice and protected minority subjects such as PE, business studies, classics, economics and psychology. All girls in Year 13 take three subjects to A2 level plus general studies.
- 5.16 Those pupils who have been identified by the school as needing educational support are offered special lessons on a weekly basis. Individual Educational Profiles are issued at the beginning of the academic year to assist subject teachers in their lesson planning and these were used to good effect, for example, in science and PE. The learning support department also offers good guidance to teachers on targeting work to meet the needs of individual girls. In this way all pupils have access to the curriculum.
- 5.17 Whilst the school does not have a separate policy of identifying gifted and talented pupils, many departments provide very good opportunities to extend the curriculum where appropriate. Mathematics and science have partnerships with Pontefract schools and, in addition, the mathematics department provides extended tuition for able girls. Most subjects offer opportunities through suitable adapted work schemes and particularly good examples were seen in geography. The music department provides many opportunities for pupils to perform at the highest level, including a partnership with Wakefield local authority schools. The modern foreign languages department provides taster courses in Russian and Japanese.
- 5.18 A wide variety of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum and these courses are greatly appreciated by pupils. All subjects offer enrichment opportunities, with visiting speakers and good quality educational visits, including residential experiences at home and abroad, and all these activities support the curriculum and enable pupils to achieve personal success.

Does the school meet the regulatory requirements for the curriculum?

- 5.19 Yes.

Teaching and Non-teaching Staff

- 5.20 The staff are very well qualified and experienced for the roles that they are expected to undertake and are very efficiently deployed.
- 5.21 The number, qualifications and experience of the teaching and non-teaching staff are very good and contribute to the quality of education and the high standards achieved. The ratio of one teacher to eleven pupils is good and helps good teaching. The teaching

staff is predominantly female with 45 full-time and 7 part-time women teachers and 18 men. It is a highly experienced staff: only twenty-two of the sixty-nine staff are under forty.

- 5.22 The deployment of teaching and non-teaching staff is very well done. Teachers are well supported by administrative and ancillary staff who are plentiful and have good experience.
- 5.23 Policies and procedures for induction, appraisal, training and professional development contribute very well to the effectiveness of staff and are well monitored. The school has a well-structured and valued induction policy and implements properly the national scheme for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs). Arrangements for in-service training work well and a training budget of £20,000 per annum is judiciously spent. In the past academic year all the teaching staff attended courses which were strategically determined by the individual needs of professional development and not merely examination related. The school organises internal training days on a whole school or departmental basis as need arises. The performance management scheme, now in its fourth cycle, operates well. It provides for each teacher in the school and contributes to an informed judgement. The aim of the scheme is to set a high standard of classroom teaching. A system of appraisal also operates for all non-teaching staff apart from cleaners. The school has meticulously made the necessary checks on all staff, teaching and non-teaching, before appointment.

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

- 5.24 Yes.

Resources for Learning

- 5.25 The books, equipment and ICT which are needed to support the teaching, learning and recreation of the pupils at all levels are excellent in quantity, quality and organisation and are very effectively used.
- 5.26 Provision of the ICT resources is excellent and provide excellent opportunities to boost pupils' learning both in lessons and through independent learning. The school has four computer rooms used for the teaching of ICT as well as suites of computers in music, modern languages, design and technology (DT), English and the library, as well as two other suites of computers available for senior girls to use for their individual work. Girls of all ages have access to computers at lunchtime and after school. Most of these suites can be used by other departments if they are not required for teaching. Most rooms have a desktop computer and multi-media projectors and several have interactive whiteboards. Some subjects have only just begun to develop their software resources. However, design software and computerised machines are used in textiles, and the range of computers, latest notational software and keyboards in music enhance the range of activities undertaken.
- 5.27 Other equipment and materials are also in excellent supply. Overhead projectors, television and video are used to add variety to learning in a number of departments. Textbooks are always in good supply in all departments. In English, for example, each classroom has its own well-stocked resource room and the stock of texts is continually being refreshed. While in PE video recording is used to analyse technique, and fitness and performance are monitored using heart monitors. All age groups use the language laboratories well in modern foreign languages. In science, supply of apparatus is generous allowing pupils at examination level to perform individual experiments. The DT facilities are outstanding in their number, range and quality and are well used, especially in

textiles. Year 11 girls combined computer programmes with their own artistic skills, and then used computerised sewing machines to complete individual designs.

Libraries

- 5.28 The quality of the library provision is sound.
- 5.29 Library facilities offer some support for the curriculum but are not always used effectively. The range, availability, quality and accessibility of library stock and facilities are sufficient and to some extent support pupils' attainment, progress and quality of learning. The school library is housed in three large interconnecting rooms furnished with tables for private study, a reading area with comfortable new chairs as well as bean bags and a suite of eight networked computers. The library is no longer used for class teaching and following the installation of computers for accessing the catalogue and websites to which the school subscribes, the space is in the process of being reordered. Despite a very generous budget allocation, some shelves are empty and, on the whole, the space is not sufficiently welcoming. A good range of periodicals and newspapers exists as well as books for borrowing and reference, but too few books of current curricular interest are provided, as in sixth form languages for example. On the other hand, the small selection of mathematics books has been well chosen and English has a small but useful collection of critical texts. The book selection, generally, has the appearance of having been very well carried out over the years - the library has, for instance, most usefully, the full Oxford English Dictionary in all its volumes - but several subject areas are now deficient. The library seems unrelated to the pulsing intellectual vitality that inspectors found in the classrooms and laboratories.
- 5.30 The library premises and stock are well managed from the point of view of looking after the materials but not from that of promoting learning. The full-time and well-qualified Learning Centre Manager is a member of the academic staff as well as being on the heads of department committee, and is guided by some but not all departments on the purchase of subject-related books. Year 7 pupils spend one lesson per cycle in the first half term learning how to research and use the library.
- 5.31 Pupils and staff make frequent but limited use of the library. Pupils avail themselves of the library at break and lunchtimes and after school. Some subjects, for example English, history and psychology, employ the library increasingly for coursework research. Currently a "wider reading project" is targeted at Year 7 and although this has had some success in increasing use of the library, figures show that the majority of all pupils are not active borrowers and the encouragement for the reading of books is currently limited. The number of issues, however, has increased in the first two months of this academic year compared with the same period last year, from 637 to 1088.
- 5.32 The library serves as a limited resource for personal study and is only partially successful in encouraging pupils to read and research widely for information and pleasure. Girls certainly read widely, and can talk well about their reading, but the school library is not central to that experience.

Premises and Accommodation

- 5.33 The buildings, accommodation and other facilities are good for the numbers, abilities and ages of the pupils; they are very well used and maintained and enable the curriculum to be taught very effectively.
- 5.34 The buildings and grounds, within a city centre site, are good for their purpose and plentiful in terms of provision; they are of very good quality and condition. The buildings are of mixed age; some adapted from housing stock, some listed and the latest is a state-of-the-art creative arts block. They are spread out over a number of

neighbouring sites. This means that pupils need to move from building to building and cross a lightly used public road. Wide corridors in most of the buildings make for easy movement. In some of the modern buildings, the daylight is always insufficient for visibility and artificial lighting has to be switched on permanently. Curtains soften windows in some rooms. Display boards with their high quality work enhance the already attractive accommodation and set high expectations for teaching and learning. The standard of maintenance, cleaning and decoration is very good, although one or two rooms await refurbishment.

- 5.35 The premises and accommodation support the curriculum provision, teaching and learning, very well and make a positive contribution to pupils' development, behaviour and welfare. Subjects have their own suites of rooms with workrooms close by for staff. The classrooms are mostly light and airy with good lighting and blackout facilities where necessary and adequate storage space. Much of the specialist accommodation is very good, as with science, art and music, and that for DT outstanding. Provision for PE is very good with good facilities on site and the playing fields themselves being a 10-minute walk from the school. Very good provision is made for social areas. Senior years have their own areas and seating areas such as the one called "Cushions" which allows pupils to sit and hold impromptu meetings.

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

- 5.36 Yes.

Links with Parents and the Community

- 5.37 The school has developed an excellent partnership with parents and excellent links with the community.
- 5.38 The quality of information provided for parents about the school and their children's progress is excellent. It includes a detailed prospectus, and an attractive website which provides up-to-date information for parents, prospective parents and pupils. Throughout the year parents also receive, when appropriate, additional information concerning aspects of the school, various year groups, GCSE and sixth form choices. The reports sent to parents are clear and provide information on the aspects of the curriculum covered. Teachers' comments about the progress, performance and potential of pupils are thorough and informative. They show very good knowledge of individual pupils and contain encouraging comments and advice for improvement. Information about pupils' effort, participation in class, organisation and meeting homework deadlines is also provided.
- 5.39 As part of the inspection, an anonymous questionnaire was sent to all parents. Over 440 replied to this demonstrating an outstanding degree of support for all features of the school. No matter of general concern was raised by the replies to the questionnaire. The only subject on which a number of parents made comments was on the outstanding work of the headmistress and, from what is written elsewhere, it will be clear that the inspectors agree.
- 5.40 The school provides excellent opportunities for parents to be involved in activities in the school and these contribute to the girls' learning and progress. Regular newsletters containing information about charity events, Parents and School Association activities and the achievements of pupils in sport and the arts are provided for parents. A high quality school magazine summarises the life of the school over a calendar year. Parents contribute effectively to the life of the school. Some parents accompany school visits, give lectures, conduct mock interviews or assist at functions. The very active Parents and School Association organises a number of well-supported fund-raising activities to

raise money for projects such as the new recording studio. Parents are welcomed at a range of school events, including sport fixtures, concerts and plays.

- 5.41 The school's work and curriculum and pupils' experiences are enriched by excellent links with parents and the community, including employers, and provision for voluntary service and work experience. Links with the local community are very strong and the premises are often loaned for charitable events, concerts and other meetings. Pupils' experiences are enriched by their involvement in a variety of projects outside of school. Opportunities for voluntary service are available at lunchtimes or after school with pupils making visits to the elderly, acting as volunteer helpers at the local hospital or participating in 'Operation Christmas Child', which prepares and sends presents to disadvantaged children in Eastern Europe. In collaboration with the Ogden Trust the school has sponsored two maintained schools in achieving specialist status in mathematics and science and it regularly holds master classes and other mathematics and science events. The school also sponsors and is involved in the life of the Issenye Secondary School in Tanzania, which allows sixth formers to experience life in Africa. The Old Girls' Association maintains strong links.
- 5.42 The school is very actively involved with the national independent/state school partnership scheme. This has forged closer links with local maintained schools through activities such as jazz improvisation workshops, language immersion days and the recently completed project, in conjunction with local sports clubs, which analysed the sporting potential of junior school pupils from a variety of local schools. Pupils from all age groups have gained valuable experience through their participation in the scheme.
- 5.43 The school handles parental concerns with due care and in accordance with regulations. The published procedure for complaints and appeals is in line with regulatory requirements and is applied properly.

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

- 5.44 Yes.

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

- 5.45 Yes.

6. PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PASTORAL CARE

Pupils' Personal Development

- 6.1 The school provides a wide range of very good opportunities through which its pupils can develop a system of spiritual beliefs and a moral code, as well as developing very well personally, socially and culturally.
- 6.2 The range and quality of opportunities offered through the curriculum and activities help pupils to develop very well their spiritual awareness and knowledge of self at a level commensurate with their age and stage of development. Pupils' spiritual development is very good across the curriculum as a whole. In lessons, pupils develop their spiritual awareness and self-knowledge very well for their age and stage of development: they frequently appreciate a feeling of something much greater than themselves. Pupils' personal faiths are supported and provided for by the school in assemblies and in special services at Wakefield Cathedral. A prayer room is available at lunchtime, and the uniform and PE kit take account of girls' religious beliefs.
- 6.3 The school's provision for the moral development of pupils is also very good through the curriculum, extended curriculum and other aspects of school life. Moral issues are very well explored through assemblies and the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. The school's approach to rewards and sanctions is clear; pupils develop a strong moral code and make reasoned judgements on moral and ethical issues. In PE, right and wrong are taught through sportsmanship and rules of the game. Pupils are aware of the needs of others and promote honesty and integrity. In Year 10, for example, religious education pupils study crime and punishment and consider Christian views on reform and retribution. Pupils willingly and enthusiastically support a variety of charitable causes and a charity committee coordinates activities.
- 6.4 The school provides a very good range of opportunities for pupils to learn to appreciate their own cultural traditions and the diversity and richness of others. The school hosts visitors from China, Japan and Germany and pupils have the opportunity to travel worldwide with regular visits to Issenye Secondary School in Tanzania, with whom it has forged strong links between both staff and pupils. World Challenge expeditions to Costa Rica, overseas language visits and work experience opportunities in France, ensure pupils are able to widen their horizons. The busy programme of music and drama contributes significantly to the cultural life of the school; theatre visits, concerts and artwork provide valuable enrichment.
- 6.5 The provision for the social development of pupils is very good. The school encourages pupils to relate positively to one another, take responsibility and participate fully in the school community. Year 7 girls feel you always have a friend at their school. The wide range of extra-curricular activities encourages collaboration, leadership, and the formation of positive team relationships. Prefects and sixth form have a keen sense of duty, assist with tutor times, games and activities. The school council provides an excellent forum for exchanges of views and for pupils to contribute to the well-being of the community as a whole. All pupils have a strong sense of belonging and pupils are very proud of their school.

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

- 6.6 Yes.

Pastoral Care, including Welfare and Health & Safety

- 6.7 The school cares very well for all its pupils' well-being, development and safety through its very good arrangements for pastoral support, for guidance and for welfare, health and safety.
- 6.8 The school's pastoral, tutorial, and other support and guidance systems make a positive and strong contribution to the educational standards and personal growth achieved by pupils. Form tutors and year heads keep careful records of pupils' needs and interests. Pupils expressed a willingness to approach their form tutors, in particular, with any problems arising in or out of school and feel that their concerns are very well dealt with. Year heads are thorough and energetic in their support of the tutorial system, including the induction of staff new to their role. The sixth form girls and the sixth form boys of Queen Elizabeth Grammar School have reciprocal common-room sharing at lunchtimes.
- 6.9 The school provides very good support, advice and guidance for all its pupils based on the monitoring of their academic progress and personal development. Very good liaison between a girl's form tutor, the heads of year and the deputy head ensures that each girl's academic progress is regularly and carefully tracked and her overall well-being maintained. Homework planners provide a quick and effective means of alerting parents to any problems with work and enlisting their support.
- 6.10 The range and quality of provision for careers education and guidance are effective in preparing pupils to make decisions about adult and working life including employment and higher education. Provision for careers education through modules in the PSHE programme is good. A range of aptitude tests helps careers staff to develop a programme of talks geared to girls' interests. Work experience and a well-equipped, accessible careers room help girls to make well-informed and positive choices, underpinned by individual interviews and guidance at important stages of their school career.
- 6.11 Measures to promote good discipline and behaviour, including procedures to guard against harassment and bullying deal constructively with unacceptable behaviour when it occurs. Girls at every stage feel a shared sense of responsibility for implementing the robust anti-bullying policy, a policy which they helped to formulate, and have confidence in the school's ability to handle problems with sensitivity. The school rules are seen to be fair and practical with nothing that is arbitrary or peremptory. For instance, the girls understand that the total ban on chewing gum within the school - a ban totally enforced and kept as far as the inspectors observed - is partly because of the idea that it is not cultivated behaviour to chew when talking to someone but also because chewing gum makes difficulties for cleaning staff. All sixth formers take on the responsibility of being a prefect and they then elect, without any outside veto, ten senior prefects, a head girl and her deputy. At the form level the form "sergeant" (the term came into use for the form captain in the school in the First World War), undertakes appropriate duties.
- 6.12 Measures to safeguard and promote all pupils' health and well-being are successful. PSHE modules give comprehensive information, advice and guidance on health matters. The School is currently collaborating in a healthy food drive with the support of the catering department. Nutritious lunches are cooked on the premises. The school has several dining halls and often, with high bar stools and pop music, the atmosphere is not that of a school. The wide range and availability of sporting activities promote fitness. The school's characteristic buoyant and cheerful atmosphere engenders well-being.
- 6.13 Child protection procedures are in place and are effective. The guidance available in the staff handbook and recent training ensure that staff know what action to take in the case of suspected abuse. Girls know where to seek help within the school, which can call on the support of external agencies.

- 6.14 The school has taken all necessary measures to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. Fire notices and evacuation procedures are displayed in all rooms and proper checks are made on fire fighting equipment, alarms and all other electrical equipment. Practices are frequently held and recorded.
- 6.15 Arrangements to ensure a healthy, safe environment are effective and the school complies fully with health and safety regulations. The security of the site is closely monitored by the Foundation Health and Safety Adviser, with an ongoing programme of improvements. Safety rules are applied in laboratories and practical areas and hazardous substances are properly stored. The schools' health and safety committee meets regularly to identify hazards and arrange for remedial action. Well-prepared risk assessments ensure the safety and well being of girls on all off-site visits and activities. Welfare health and safety procedures are well documented and effectively implemented.

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

- 6.16 Yes.

7. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Governance and Management

- 7.1 The governance and management of the school ensure very well that the school's aims are met, that a high quality of education is provided and that there is efficient planning to secure excellent resources for teaching and learning.
- 7.2 The structure and management arrangements relating to the governors, headmistress, and others with management responsibilities are well defined and provide a framework which supports successful management. The school is part of a foundation of four schools and the headmistress is principal of the whole foundation.
- 7.3 Governance, management and leadership at all levels, provide clear educational direction for the work of the school, which is reflected in the quality and the high standards achieved by all its pupils. The headmistress provides outstanding leadership which has met with strong support from parents. She is dynamic and provides care, guidance and direction for the girls and staff; she personifies the values of the school and provides an excellent role model. She is supported by a senior management team of deputies and assistant heads. At middle management level, head of year and head of department, the leadership and management is also generally good. The heads of year, uniformly very good, are given specific in-service training within the school. The management team monitor and evaluate the people at the school and the material resources to ensure that they are sufficient, appropriate and suitably deployed.
- 7.4 The governors and managers create an ethos and sense of purpose in the school which are conducive to very good teaching and learning and place value on a wide range of pupil achievement including that which is academic, creative and sporting. The "spokesman" (in effect, chairman of governors) of the foundation has excellent relations with the headmistress and the governing body are supportive and provide clear strategic direction. The co-operation with other schools in the same foundation, the Junior Schools and Queen Elizabeth Grammar School for Boys, is a strength, adding extra-curricular and social possibilities together with certain economies of scale.
- 7.5 The school has aims, values and policies which are reflected though all of its work and supported by short- and long-term development planning. This development planning is effective in analysing and prioritising the school's needs. Staff at all levels have an input into this planning, including material from some useful departmental development plans. The School's *Strategic Plan* was formulated in 2002 but it is reviewed annually.
- 7.6 The routine administration and organisation work well. The school office staff and the headmistress's personal assistant provide efficient, helpful and cheerful service. There are very effective systems for communication within the school and with the wide community.

8. ACHIEVEMENT AND QUALITY IN SUBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Achievement and Quality in Subjects

English

- 8.1 Pupils achieve high standards at all ages.
- 8.2 Pupils' attainment in public examinations is good in relation to their abilities. Results at GCSE are far above the average for pupils in all maintained schools in English Language and well above in English Literature. At A Level the results in English Language and English Literature are well above the national average for all maintained schools.
- 8.3 Attainment is high throughout the school. Written work is thoroughly executed and presented with great care. The pupils' knowledge of carefully progressive grammar books lay firm foundations of linguistic understanding. The high quality of writing at GCSE is as evident in a study of TV soap operas as it is in exploring the ironical outcome of Darcy's pride and Elizabeth's prejudice. At AS and A2 systematic note taking underpins precise analysis in English Language; literature essays are often characterised by a firm sense of structured argument and mature critical insight.
- 8.4 Pupils' progress at all stages is rapid. A clear sense of their building upon previous work leads towards a greater sophistication of understanding, whether it was in Year 7's developing understanding of arresting openings to novels; Year 11's discovery of thematic continuities in *Of Mice and Men* or an AS Literature group's gradual unravelling of the complexities involved in the representation of Prospero. Numerous examples in Years 7, 8 and 9 were seen where exciting original writing emerged from dramatic or literary studies such as Year 8's versions of *Puck's Diary* or Year 9's examinations of the corruptions of power in *Animal Farm*. Pupils that the school deems to have need of extra help and also EAL pupils develop good reading and writing skills.
- 8.5 The quality of pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour is very good. The girls concentrate in lessons and are highly motivated to learn as individuals, in pairs or in groups. Especially noteworthy is their capacity to collaborate efficiently in the production of work and in its subsequent critical evaluation. They are often perceptive and articulate as, for example, were members of a Year 10 class analysing informative and persuasive techniques in a range of non-fiction texts which included the advertising strategies employed on a paper bag. The pupils' liking and respect for their teachers and classmates are reflected in a collective endeavour to succeed. In all year groups, intellectual curiosity and a willingness to learn strongly characterise English classes.
- 8.6 The quality of teaching, always done by subject specialists, is very good and sometimes excellent. Lessons are carefully planned and paced. Tasks are set to secure knowledge and to promote learning whilst taking into account different levels of ability. The teachers know their pupils very well and are especially sensitive to the needs of those requiring learning support. Well-conceived schemes of work and assessment policies are securely in place. Highly conscientious marking offers substantial advice and encouragement. It is detailed, constructive and consistent.
- 8.7 The enlightened and visionary management and leadership of the department by the two joint Heads of English is very effective. The overall aim of the department, as stated in a useful departmental handbook, to foster in the pupils the love of language and literature for life is linked to a vigorous pursuit of academic excellence. Some devolution of responsibility and relevant in-service training help promote professional development, and weekly departmental meetings ensure the full airing of views. The department has

been recently rehoused in a new set of purpose-built rooms incorporating an ICT suite; ICT and audio-visual facilities are consequently excellent and are well used. Displays are of very high quality. However, the department has no library of its own and the English stock in the main library is limited, especially at sixth form level. The department supports the Year 7, 8 and 9 drama clubs and the joint productions with Queen Elizabeth Grammar School. In addition, the pupils derive great benefit from debating, the Upper School Reading Group, poetry, and public speaking competitions – in one of which a pupil was recently a national winner. Numerous theatre trips and lecture visits are arranged. In conjunction with a paired local education authority school, the pupils are addressed annually by the Chief Examiner for GCSE English, and pupils from Year 9 onwards help with children's reading in a local primary school as well as in the Junior School. No pupil journalism takes place, though, beyond contributions to the school magazine.

Mathematics

- 8.8 Standards are high throughout the school.
- 8.9 Pupils' attainment in public examinations is good in relation to their abilities. GCSE results are far above and A -level results well above the national average for all maintained schools.
- 8.10 Attainment in written work and in lessons is good. Pupils achieve high or good standards in Years 12 and 13, and good standards in Years 7 to 11. Pupils in a Year 12 A-Level class for example were able to analyse an awkward mechanics problem involving boxes placed on top of each other; they then applied the appropriate techniques to solve the problem.
- 8.11 Progress is good overall and sometimes rapid. It is aided by the setting arrangements, the additional help given by the head of department at the mathematics clinic and the willingness of members of the department to offer assistance at lunchtimes. A clear progression in both the depth and quality of written work can be seen as pupils move from Year 7 to Year 11. The pace was rather slow in a few of the lessons observed and this restricted the progress of the pupils because they were unable to explore the more challenging questions at the end of an exercise. Those in the weaker mathematics groups are suitably challenged; in a Year 8 lesson, pupils solved equations and wrote their answers with all the necessary working with increasing expertise as the lesson progressed.
- 8.12 The quality of pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour is good. Pupils display very good levels of concentration, involvement and interest. They are happy to ask questions and to continue asking if they are still unsure. In all lessons, pupils readily volunteer answers and are not afraid of being wrong. In a Year 8 class, for example, those who had finished were delighted to be asked to help their colleagues who were struggling and good clear explanations were heard. Pupils of all ages and abilities work well in pairs and groups showing sensitivity and support for each other. The relations between staff and pupils are excellent. The girls are polite and friendly towards staff and each other.
- 8.13 Teaching is usually good and on occasion very good. The best teaching challenged pupils and gave the more able the opportunity for independent learning through extension material. All lessons were prepared thoroughly with clear objectives. Books and resources are used well. The five specialist mathematics rooms have digital projectors and these are used effectively. In a Year 10 lesson, for example, the general equation of a straight line was introduced very successfully using an animated presentation. Care is taken in lessons to ensure that all pupils understood the vocabulary used. Homework is set where appropriate. The department has an assessment policy based on the school policy but this is in its infancy. Regular end-of-topic tests are held throughout Years 7 to 11 and into the sixth form and the results recorded centrally. The marking of work in

books is, however, inconsistent leading to some books containing work which is not presented properly and containing uncorrected errors. In other books marking was seen to have been done regularly with helpful comments from staff. In the sixth form all work had been marked regularly and mostly contained good guidance for pupils where necessary.

- 8.14 The department is well led and managed. The head of department aims to present mathematics as an accessible subject in which all can achieve high standards and which all can enjoy. The rooms are light and airy and the pupils' work on display in rooms and the adjacent corridors enhance the working environment and help inspire pupils to higher standards. Pupils are encouraged to take part in Mathematics Challenges; a weekly mathematics puzzle with questions is aimed at particular age groups. Special sessions are held for those identified as especially gifted and talented. The school library contains a small selection of up-to-date general mathematics books as well as copies of text books.

Science

- 8.15 Pupils achieve good standards in all year groups.
- 8.16 Pupils' attainment in public examinations is good in relation to their abilities. The aggregated results in GCSE science subjects are far above the national average and biology, chemistry and physics are well above the average. Results in double award science are far above relevant national averages. A-level results in biology and chemistry are above national averages and in physics well above national averages.
- 8.17 Pupils' attainment is good overall but many aspects were high. The written work is good throughout, particularly in Years 7 to 9 where exercise books are kept neatly with a good combination of notes and reports of practical work. Pupils often record their observations well in tabular form. Measurements are made accurately and used to draw graphs, sometimes using computer software. In Year 13, biology, coursework about the size of limpets on exposed shores used sophisticated experimental techniques and excellent application of statistics. In a Year 10 physics lesson, pupils were able to spot the pattern of voltage across light bulbs in series and parallel circuits.
- 8.18 The progress of pupils at all stages is good. The depth of knowledge and understanding increases significantly from Years 7 to 13. In Year 8 chemistry, pupils are beginning to write word equations when elements burn in air, and by Year 10 they understand precipitation reactions in terms of ions. Pupils in Year 13 physics can clearly describe the discharge of a capacitor and convert the equation for capacitance to a logarithmic scale. Knowledge of scientific terms improves from Year 7, where pupils can describe a solution in terms of solute and solvent, to Year 13 where biologists describe crossbred fruit flies in terms of the "genotype and phenotype". Pupils become more confident in using ICT. Analytical powers develop well through years 10 to 13.
- 8.19 The learning, attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good and often very good. Pupils listen carefully, remaining concentrated throughout lessons. They show real interest and enthusiasm for their work. In practical work, pupils work collaboratively and share ideas and tasks. In Year 13 chemistry, pupils enthusiastically investigated the chemical properties of the hydrogel polymer extracted from a disposable nappy. They listen sympathetically to the views of others.
- 8.20 Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Some very good and excellent examples were observed. All teachers have a secure knowledge and are effectively deployed. Lessons are well planned and use a variety of different techniques to sustain pupil interest and promote good learning. Teachers relate well to their pupils and use relevant material to bring vitality to their lessons. Teachers have high expectations and all lessons involved

pace and challenge. Assessment and marking policies are based upon the whole school policies and have been adapted to suit the needs of the different subjects. They are clearly understood by pupils. Assessment is regular, and records are kept rigorously on databases in physics and biology. The standard of marking is inconsistent across the department. Homework exercises are marked regularly but routine notes are not and this means that incorrect spellings of scientific terms are missed. Pupils do not always complete corrections. Teachers are sympathetic to the needs of pupils whom the school deems to need extra help, and they support them well.

- 8.21 The science department is well led and managed, and the heads of biology, chemistry and physics contribute highly to the good standards achieved. Documentation is very good but good practice is not always shared. Schemes of work are excellent, ensuring a consistent approach and highlighting lesson objectives and opportunities for practical work, ICT and assessment. Health and safety are strong features of the department and risk assessment has been carried out rigorously for all practical work. Laboratories, however, are not locked between lessons. Middle managers give good support to their colleagues, especially the junior members. All teachers enjoy the support of loyal and competent laboratory technicians. At GCSE, pupils may choose between the separate sciences and the double award course, taken by most. The curriculum is very good and enriched by a range of visits. Most teachers contribute to the extra-curricular programme, which features a chemistry club, a chemistry of art club, the hamster club and the clinical club for those sixth form pupils who are hoping to study medicine or nursing. The accommodation for science is very good and the newer laboratories are excellent. Resources throughout are excellent and very well used.

Geography

- 8.22 Pupils achieve high standards at all stages.
- 8.23 Pupils' attainment in public examinations is good in relation to their abilities. Results at GCSE and A level are well above the national average for all maintained schools.
- 8.24 Pupils' attainment in lessons and in their written work is good in Years 7 to 9 and is high in Years 10 to 13. Pupils demonstrate a precise knowledge of geographical principles and confidently use correct vocabulary. Pupils in Year 7 enthusiastically discuss and suggest factors affecting the siting of settlements, whilst those in Year 11 use previous knowledge to explain in detail the main features of a desert climate.
- 8.25 Pupils' progress in geography is rapid at all stages. They develop good skills when applying basic concepts to new situations and are adept at decision making exercises. Pupils in a Year 10 lesson put forward a variety of reasons to explain why an industry should move from the northeast of the United States to Phoenix, Arizona. As pupils' factual knowledge develops in the sixth form, pupils are able to use their detailed understanding of hydrological processes to explain the different responses rivers make to rain storm events.
- 8.26 The quality of pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour is very good. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils listen attentively to each other and the teacher. They settle down quickly to work and show good powers of concentration. Pupils show respect for others' points of view and work well singly or in groups. They are eager to answer questions and ask for clarification if something is not understood. Written work is carefully presented and pupils take pride in their work.
- 8.27 The quality of teaching is very good and sometimes excellent. Teachers have a detailed knowledge of their subject and communicate it well. Explanations are clear and skilful questioning makes pupils think. Teachers plan their lessons carefully, with clear aims, which are shared with the pupils. However, pupils' learning experience is limited by the

lack of fieldwork opportunities in Years 7 to 9. A variety of teaching activities and resources are used to stimulate pupils' interest, but further opportunities for the use of ICT are limited. Homework is set regularly and marked conscientiously, but occasionally lacks helpful comments to direct pupils towards improvement.

- 8.28 Leadership and management are good and teachers have effectively maintained standards during the prolonged absence of the head of department. They work well as a team and are supportive of each other. Department policies and procedures are sound and the introduction of an appropriate assessment policy is making a good impact on departmental planning.

History

- 8.29 Pupils achieve very good standards throughout.
- 8.30 Pupils' attainment in public examinations is good in relation to their abilities. Results in GCSE are well above the national average for all maintained schools and in line with those of maintained selective schools. Results in A Level are above the national average for all maintained schools and also in line with those of maintained selective schools.
- 8.31 Attainment at every level is always sound, but mainly very good and sometimes excellent. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are secure. They can evaluate and extrapolate information and they have good analytical ability. They have good ICT skills. A Year 9 group had a very good understanding of abstract concepts such as the divine right of kings. Year 13 could evaluate and explain where power lay in Elizabethan England. Year 10 had a good grasp of the complex international relationships in pre-1939 Europe. Year 7 were able to pick out and record the salient points in the character of Henry II.
- 8.32 Pupils make good and often rapid progress. They develop a mature understanding of causation in history and sophisticated research techniques. By Year 11 they can interpret evidence, detect bias, evaluate controversy and empathise with characters and classes from the past. Year 12 detected the role of propaganda in the demonisation of Marie Antoinette. Year 10 capably analysed the reasons for the failure of the League of Nations. Pupils' study skills keep pace with the demands of public examinations, and the planning and writing of coherent essays is a strength.
- 8.33 The quality of learning, attitudes and behaviour is very good. Pupils are skilled in both collaborative and independent learning. Year 8 completed speeches in groups, championing one of Henry VIII's wives, using the Internet, their textbook and the documents provided as research resources. Pupils take responsibility for their own learning, annotating duplicated notes and asking as well as answering questions. They listen to the views of others with deep interest and respond with alacrity to challenging tasks. They are articulate in discussion and have excellent powers of concentration.
- 8.34 The quality of teaching is very good overall and sometimes excellent. It caters well for all abilities. In the best lessons, girls are challenged and inspired by a wide range of inventive teaching strategies, engendering a real interest in, and enthusiasm for, the subject. Intellectual rigour and factual accuracy are promoted, as in an exciting Year 10 lesson in which groups wrote accounts of the causes of the French Revolution in styles varying from that of a Hollywood movie to Homer, in the course of which they learnt to distinguish between social, economic and political forces in history. However, on occasions, teachers said too much before pupils had had a chance to think, depriving them of the opportunity to arrive at their own conclusions. Assessment is secure and used as a tool to further learning and progress. Work is regularly marked according to the good school and departmental policies.

- 8.35 The department is well led and managed. The comprehensive departmental handbook is a valuable tool for professional development. The history staff make a valuable contribution to extra-curricular activities and regularly organise outstanding trips abroad such as the recent visit to Auschwitz.

Modern Foreign Languages

- 8.36 Pupils achieve high standards throughout the school in the three foreign languages of French, German and Spanish.
- 8.37 Pupils' attainment in public examinations in all three languages is good in relation to their abilities. GCSE results are far above the average of all maintained schools. At A level, they are above those of pupils in all maintained schools, though numbers taking German average less than two a year and do not allow for worthwhile comparison to be made.
- 8.38 Pupils' attainment in all modern languages lessons is high at all stages. In Years 7 to 9 pupils acquire a good foundation: a range of grammar and vocabulary and a very good knowledge of structures. They are tested regularly in speaking, listening, reading and writing and demonstrate their competence. In Years 10 and 11 pupils are slightly more reluctant than the younger ones in responding in the language being learned and only occasionally were these older pupils heard to make spontaneous utterances in the language. Girls organise their work in exercise books for vocabulary, exercises and more extensive writing and the best of those seen provide a very complete resource for success at GCSE. At A level, pupils were observed in discussion of a novel, which produced some good, extended responses, showing fluency and subtlety of expression. The progress of pupils at all stages is mostly rapid and is never less than satisfactory. In Years 7 to 9, progression from individual words to phrases, sometimes using song and mime, is especially rapid. By GCSE level, pupils can manipulate complex sentences relevant to the topic under study with some ease, using a variety of correct tenses.
- 8.39 In lessons containing pupils identified by the school as having special needs, these pupils were making progress equivalent to that of the other pupils.
- 8.40 The quality of learning, attitudes and behaviour is mostly very good and at times, excellent. Pupils are competent learners who are motivated and keen to contribute. Concentration in the best lessons is exemplary. Pupils readily work in pairs and groups and they collaborate well, treating others and their ideas with respect. Pupils write notes assiduously. They make excellent use of the multimedia language laboratory equipment. Most exercise books and folders are well kept and pride in the work is evident.
- 8.41 The quality of teaching is very good, never less than sound and occasionally excellent. Teachers are all language graduates who are experienced practitioners, and have a very good command of their languages. Most staff demonstrate a high level of oral fluency and enthusiasm for their subjects. They show an ability to foresee pupils' difficulties and cope sensitively with questions. Pupils are supported and encouraged. Gifted pupils are set challenging tasks based on the needs of examinations, but taking them beyond their requirements. All lessons showed careful preparation which contributed to the generally good pace. Assessment is regular and comprehensive and where applicable, across the year testing of the four skills informs reporting and advice in Years 9 to 11. Marking is regular and usually thorough, in line with the school policy on marking. Comments are sometimes lacking, as is advice on how pupils might improve, although this may be given orally to aid the whole class.
- 8.42 The department is very well led and managed. The head of modern languages is also head of French, and teachers of all three languages work well together. The regular trips to Germany, France and Spain organised by the department enhance pupils' learning and

demonstrate teachers' commitment to their subjects and indeed, their pupils. The work experience trips are particularly enriching for sixth form pupils. The quality of accommodation for the department is excellent: a suite of rooms on two floors, a study for the head of department and a staff and sixth form resources room. All classrooms are welcoming, well furnished and have an overhead projector, tape and video or DVD facilities. Audio cassettes, CDs, the overhead projector, interactive whiteboards, the audio and multimedia laboratories were all observed in good use in almost every lesson and these clearly help keep to motivate the pupils. A very competent technician serves the department and this allows any technical problems with the two laboratories to be dealt with quickly so that learning is not compromised. Other resources are plentiful and well deployed. The department has two part-time language assistants, one of whom is shared with QEGS and a native speaker who is a teacher, who also acts as assistant for Spanish.

Music

- 8.43 Pupils achieve high standards at all levels.
- 8.44 Their attainment in public examinations is good in relation to their ability. GCSE and A-level results are well above the national average for all maintained schools. However, at A level numbers are small, averaging only two girls a year.
- 8.45 In lessons, pupils' attainment at all stages is always high, sometimes excellent. Pupils produce compositions of high musical quality and accurate, expressive performances.
- 8.46 Pupils' make rapid and often excellent progress in Years 7 to 11, and excellent progress is made at A level. Pupils are able to reflect on, and analyse, their own compositions and the work of others competently, and apply previously gained technical knowledge when appraising music.
- 8.47 The quality of learning, attitudes and behaviour is very good and often excellent in Years 7 to 9, very good or excellent at GCSE and excellent at A-level. Pupils are motivated and competent learners and come to classes ready to learn. Learning in the sixth form is scholarly with pupils enjoying many opportunities to work independently. Relations between pupils and staff are unfailingly convivial and promote good discipline at all times. Girls share the teachers' enthusiasm, are at ease contributing in lessons and have sensitivity and openness to the teachers' and other pupils' musical ideas and judgements. The pupils' effective use of IT in notating their compositions is excellent.
- 8.48 Teaching at each stage is always very good, sometimes excellent: it is characterised by high expectations and challenges the girls of all abilities. Clear lesson objectives are realised through well-chosen activities that often brought together composing, listening and appraising, and by using resources effectively. For example, Year 11 pupils, when embarking on their integrated assignment, were able to enjoy audiovisual facilities and the latest music technology. Teachers have an excellent knowledge and understanding of their subject and use their considerable personal musical accomplishment to promote pupil progress. Assessment of pupils' progress is accurate and takes account of attainment within and beyond music lessons.
- 8.49 The music department is very well led and managed. The Foundation Director of Music is developing excellent links with external bodies and takes seriously his role as a manager, overseeing a team of three full time staff and 25 instrumental and vocal teachers who together teach over 460 lessons each week. Music staff work collaboratively, and readily give of their time to the department. The music department offers a very broad musical education, both in and out of the classroom providing a balance between composing, listening and performing. The music curriculum, extended curriculum and budget are very well managed. The school has been awarded an

independent state school partnership award for a programme of projects to enhance the delivery of music in partnership schools. The varied programme of musical activities offered within the school is excellent and appropriate to the age and ability of pupils. The levels of achievement in the many musical activities exceed expectation in relation to pupils' age and aptitude with many of the groups enjoying national acclaim. Productions, concerts, in school and in the community, enjoy a fine local reputation and are central to the cultural life of the school, helping pupils who participate to develop a sense of social cohesion. The Music School, 'Willows', supports the curriculum, teaching and learning very well at all levels. Teaching space is designed and employed imaginatively to maximise use of excellent facilities for recording, listening, improvisation and composition though soundproofing is currently inadequate between classrooms and between the floors of the building.

Physical Education

- 8.50 Pupils of all ages achieve high standards.
- 8.51 An examination course in GCSE physical education was introduced in 2004 with the first candidates due to sit the examination in 2006. A-level physical education is a joint venture with Queen Elizabeth Grammar School for Boys.
- 8.52 Pupils' attainment in all aspects is high. They develop a wide range of skills, particularly in ball games and a good understanding of movement at all ages. Pupils in a Year 11 GCSE lesson showed a very good practical knowledge of the factors affecting performance in a variety of sports. Written work at A level and GCSE is thorough and pupils' files show good organisation and presentation.
- 8.53 Pupils make rapid progress. Their knowledge, understanding and skills develop well. Year 8 pupils quickly learned new dance sequences from each other in order to increase their movement vocabulary. In a Year 9 gymnastics lesson pupils increasingly became more confident when attempting increasingly complex balances with a partner. Leadership is developed amongst those pupils in Year 12 who have opted to train for the Community Sports Leaders' Award.
- 8.54 The quality of pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour is very good. Girls are motivated, enthusiastic about their work and keen to master new skills. They confidently answer questions and work equally well individually or in groups. In a Year 11 dance lesson, all pupils worked with enthusiasm and enjoyment when choreographing their own ideas to present to the rest of the group. Very good relations are a feature of all lessons with pupils supportive of one another and respectful of their teachers. Despite the distance of the sports pitches from the school, pupils make every effort to be punctual to lessons and participate in the activities on offer with obvious enjoyment.
- 8.55 The quality of teaching in both practical and theoretical lessons is very good, often excellent. Teachers are very knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subject. Well-planned lessons challenge and inspire progress in pupils of all abilities including those whom the school deems to be in need of special help. Pupils' contributions are valued and supportive feedback and praise help pupils improve their performance.
- 8.56 Leadership and management are very good in a department with a shared sense of purpose and commitment. The department is well organised and the developing assessment of pupil progress is effective, accurate and used to plan future work. In 2000 the department was awarded a Sportsmark, a national recognition of high quality physical education provision. Teachers willingly organise a range of extra-curricular activities, which enrich the broad and balanced curriculum. A proposed sports tour to Singapore, Australia and Hong Kong will enhance pupils' cultural and sporting life.

- 8.57 The quality and range of resources and accommodation for physical education are very good. The recently improved sports facilities makes a significant contribution to teaching and learning, whilst the recently completed all-weather pitch will contribute much to the further development of pupils' modern hockey skills.

Short Subject Reports

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

Art and Design

- 8.58 Parts of six lessons were seen, in Years 7 (two), 8, 10, 11, and 12. A discussion was held with the head of department. Pupils' work was observed in the art rooms and in displays and folders.
- 8.59 The quality of the teaching observed was very good, on occasions excellent. All teachers displayed a keen interest in the subject and in their pupils' progress, and they insisted on high standards in all things. They encouraged individuality but did not neglect directly to teach technique. Always, they saw the subject as contributing to an all-round education. For instance, they insisted on a high standard of English and helped to teach English, and some mathematics, by expecting correct definitions of such words as "proportion; "regularity"; "ellipse" and "symmetry".
- 8.60 The learning, attitudes and behaviour of the pupils were very good, frequently excellent. They concentrated and worked hard, and responded very well to the advice given. They rightly took a pride in their work. Their behaviour was always excellent: they even cleared up with a will.
- 8.61 The subject is taken by all girls until the end of Year 9 but attracts good numbers as an option for GCSE and A level. The department has excellent resources that are used very well. The subject is vibrant, and makes its impact on the school with outstanding displays. Well-attended and supervised art club sessions stimulate further interest as well as the visits to the galleries of London and elsewhere. The department benefits from the part-time services of a technician.

Business Studies and Economics

- 8.62 Four lessons were observed, two in each of Years 12 and 13. Pupils' written work was scrutinised along with departmental documents, and discussion was held with the head of department.
- 8.63 The quality of teaching observed was always sound, often good and in one lesson excellent. Good-humoured discussion engendered genuine interest, though on occasion a lack of pace and variety did not sufficiently challenge able pupils.
- 8.64 The quality of learning, attitudes and behaviour was always satisfactory, often good and, on occasion, very good. Pupils were able to think independently and apply the skills they had acquired, including those of ICT. They discussed freely, and initiated discussion.
- 8.65 Fieldwork is a strength of the department. A recent trip to a big local shopping complex gave pupils the opportunity to analyse market segmentation and niche marketing and to construct a questionnaire for market research. Outside speakers make a valuable contribution to pupils' understanding.

Classics

- 8.66 Four lessons were observed (one each of Years 11 and 12 Latin, Year 10 Greek and Year 11 classical civilisation), an interview with the head of department was conducted and scrutiny of pupils' work in all subjects and at all levels was carried out.
- 8.67 The teaching observed was very good and on occasion excellent. Pace in lessons was good and questioning was challenging but well judged. In all lessons the teachers' passion for the subjects contributed to the pupils' having a very demanding and valuable educational experience, enhanced by the trips organised to the classical world, most recently this year to Athens. The annual model Trojan horse competition caught the girls' imagination with very creative models on display round the school. Sixth form classes are taught jointly and include boys from QEGS.
- 8.68 Pupils displayed very good learning and attitudes, and in some lessons, their approach was excellent. Behaviour was uniformly excellent. They were enthusiastic, listened carefully to each other, answered well even to probing questioning and were happy to use grammatical terminology and display their knowledge. Pupils showed real engagement with Livy's message in classical civilisation and good insight.

Design and Technology

- 8.69 Parts of nine lessons were observed, in Years 8, 9 (two), 10, 11 (two) 12, and 13 (two). A discussion was held with the head of department. A sample of pupils' work was scrutinised. The teaching observed was very good. It ranged from good to excellent. Teachers know their pupils very well and strive for the best results from each.
- 8.70 The quality of the pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour was very good and often excellent. Pupils were immersed in what they were doing; prompt to ask advice and to take it. The older girls, in particular, were keen to find out reasons – to know the theory as well as the practice.
- 8.71 Up to the end of Year 9, the subject is taken by every girl. Then it is optional and, though it has attracted good numbers for GCSE, at A level the numbers in the three years under consideration average only one girl a year. Accommodation and resources for all areas of the subject, including food technology, are outstanding and are very well used. As well as specialist rooms, it has a computer room which is in constant and effective use. The textiles room has computerised sewing machines and embroidery machines that are excellently used. The main workshops have computerised design and manufacturing facilities and a very wide range of modern machines. The department benefits from a helpful full-time technician.

Drama

- 8.72 Three lessons were observed at Year 8, Year 10, 12, and a Year 7 Drama Club and a meeting of the stage and lighting crew were seen. A discussion was held with the head of department.
- 8.73 The teaching observed was very good. Teachers had carefully planned lessons involving performance and critical evaluation, which developed a range of dramatic skills.
- 8.74 The quality of pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour was very good. The pleasure the pupils took in learning, performance and other dramatic activity was palpable.
- 8.75 Drama is taught to all pupils in Years 7 and 8 as part of the English curriculum; in Year 9 it is taught in some English lessons and has been introduced as a curriculum subject at GCSE with 10 pupils in Year 11 and 14 in Year 10. It has been introduced as an AS subject with five pupils, three of whom are from Queen Elizabeth Grammar School for

Boys (QEGS). Drama clubs operate in Years 7, 8 and 9 with some joint production with QEGS. Joint productions for Years 10 to 13 also take place annually as does a drama competition for Years 7 to 9.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

- 8.76 Four lessons were observed in Years 7, 8, 9 and 13. The workbooks, files and marks of a sample of pupils scrutinised. A meeting was held with the head of department.
- 8.77 The teaching observed was good, sometimes very good. Lessons had been planned well and schemes of work show an increasing demand for greater skills and for pupils to think and work more independently as they move up the school.
- 8.78 Pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour were good. Pupils co-operated with each other, and concentrated well. Most were enthusiastic and keen to make progress.
- 8.79 All pupils study this subject until Year 11 and are entered for the European Computer Driving Licence. GCSE and A-level courses are also taught. Pupils are not taught a system of keyboard fingering and so were more hesitant than they might have been when using the keyboard.
- 8.80 The department is extremely well equipped and provides a pleasant working environment, with very attractive displays of pupils' work. The department has an excellent system for recording marks electronically.

Psychology

- 8.81 Two lessons were observed, one in each of Years 12 and 13. Work files, the departmental handbook and scheme of work were scrutinised and a discussion held with the teacher in charge.
- 8.82 The quality of teaching observed was good. Very good subject knowledge and skilful questioning challenged pupils to think. Well-planned lessons with a businesslike agenda built up pupils' confidence. The excellent organisation of their work files is a strength of the department, with well-documented case studies evaluating the nature versus nurture controversy and repressed memory syndrome.
- 8.83 Pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour were good. They worked well both individually and collaboratively. They showed a willingness to devise their own experiments.
- 8.84 The subject is offered to the sixth form only but makes a good contribution to the curriculum. About 18 girls a year choose to take psychology.

Religious Studies

- 8.85 Four lessons were observed in Years 7, 9 10 and 12, discussions were held with staff and a considerable amount of the pupils' work was seen.
- 8.86 The quality of the teaching was never less than good and often it was very good or even excellent. Teachers showed an excellent knowledge and understanding of the subject at all levels, which ensured pupils' questions were dealt with confidently. Teaching was well planned, stimulating and it challenged the pupils to improve. Teachers led discussions of religious and ethical issues with confidence and established an ethos of mutual respect, creating an atmosphere in which everyone felt confident to draw upon her own faith or beliefs to support learning and was very aware of the often sensitive or controversial nature of the issues being discussed.

- 8.87 The quality of learning, attitudes and behaviour, for all pupils, including those of different ethnicity, was always good, often very good. Relations between teachers and pupils were unfailingly good; standards of discipline were maintained with ease.
- 8.88 The department is well resourced and teachers made effective use of handouts to help concentration and learning.

Achievement and Quality in Activities

- 8.89 Achievement and quality in the activities programme provided is very good for the ages, aptitudes and abilities of the pupils and the quality of provision results in pupils' very good personal development.
- 8.90 Levels of achievement in activities observed, and achieved by pupils in awards and competitions are very good for their age and aptitude. The school offers a wide range of appropriate activities, which cater for all levels of expertise and age. This includes musical groups and ensembles, drama, sports squads, general clubs and societies. Activities take place at lunchtime, after school and at weekends. The curriculum is particularly enhanced by the activities provided in music, drama and sport and these benefit through collaboration with QEGS. Pupils of all ages have the opportunity to perform in musicals and plays and with the opening of the new theatre in QEGS grounds their prowess in this area is being extended. A strong interest in debating is maintained by both the junior and joint senior debating societies. Pupils in competitive situations have achieved considerable success. Last year 63 girls achieved grades in the Associated Board music examinations. In the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme, 46 awards were achieved last year, including 13 gold, an outstanding achievement. A Year 10 pupil came second in the discus at the English Schools Athletic Championships and another has been selected as a member of the British Sailing Team. Hockey teams in all age groups from Under 12s to Under 16s are Wakefield Metropolitan Area champions, with two pupils being selected as members of the North Under 15 hockey squad and four Under 13 pupils achieving selection for the North of England Assessment Group. The Under 14 netball team has just qualified for the regional round of the National Schools Cup.
- 8.91 The programme of activities offers a wide range of activities and is very good for the ages and abilities of the pupils. The wide range of activities on offer, as well as some mentioned above, include such diverse activities as Art Club, Gardening Club, The Clinical Club, for those in the sixth form wishing to pursue a career in nursing or medicine, and even a Year 7 Hamster Club. Some 460 pupils play a variety of musical instruments or perform in choirs and musical groups. Visits and trips abroad extend the activities programme. Two ski trips a year take place and an adventure holiday in France. Pupils entering the first year of the Senior School attend a residential adventure week to help them to get to know each other and their form staff. On the penultimate day of the summer term all pupils take part in a variety of expeditions to museums and historic houses. Many subjects enhance the curriculum by providing a number of trips and visits throughout the year. The school has an outstanding record of charity and community activities, which give pupils the chance to display responsibility and leadership. A paired readership scheme operates with a local primary school and pupils help with the local riding for the disabled programme. Many charity events, including a sponsored walk to raise funds for a local hospice, support a number of worthy causes.
- 8.92 Thus, the level and extent of pupils' participation in activities makes a very good contribution to their educational experience and achievement. The information pack for new girls and parents stresses the importance of extra-curricular activities and lists the choice available.
- 8.93 The programme of activities is implemented and managed effectively by the members of staff with particular responsibility for music, drama and games and is co-ordinated and

monitored by the deputy head. All departments make some contribution to the extra-curricular programme and the majority of staff give willingly of their time and expertise.

- 8.94 Participation and progress in activities is properly monitored and recorded by departments and on reports to parents. Success and achievement are celebrated in the school magazine, the termly newsletter, speech day programme on wall displays and in assemblies.

9. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 9.1 The inspection was carried out from 14th to 18th November, 2005. All subjects of the curriculum were inspected and all members of the teaching staff in school that week were observed teaching. However, the size of the team did not permit all subjects to be reported on in full. The following subjects do not have full reports in Section 8: art and design; business studies and economics; classics; DT; drama; ICT; psychology; and religious studies. The inspectors visited 124 lessons or parts of lessons, examined extensive samples of work by pupils of different abilities in each year and held formal discussions with some pupils as well as informal discussions with other pupils. They attended two assemblies and 35 registration sessions. They observed 22 extra-curricular and sporting activities. They held discussions with 30 teaching and non-teaching staff at various levels in the school. They analysed the responses of 442 parents to a questionnaire distributed in advance of the inspection. They examined a wide range of documentation made available by the school.

List of the Inspectors

Mr G.E. Hester	Retired Headmaster, HMC school. (Reporting Inspector).
Mr G. Bruce	Head of Department, HMC school.
Mrs P. Eames	Retired Deputy Head, GSA school.
Mrs E. Hodgskin	Head of Middle School, GSA school.
Mrs S. Hopkinson	Retired Headteacher, GSA school.
Mr A. Jones	Headteacher, GSA school.
Mrs J. Mills	Retired Headteacher, GSA school.
Mr A. Watson	Head of Department, HMC school.