



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

ROYAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL, GUILDFORD

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Royal Grammar School

Full Name of School	Royal Grammar School, Guildford	
DfE Number	936/6534	
Registered Charity Number	312028	
Address	Royal Grammar School, Guildford High Street Guildford Surrey GU1 3BB	
Telephone Number	01483 880600	
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Email Address	headmaster@rgs-guildford.co.uk	
Headmaster	Dr Jon Cox	
Chair of Governors	Cllr Mrs Sarah Creedy	
Age Range	11 to 18	
Total Number of Pupils	898	
Gender of Pupils	Boys	
Numbers by Age:	11-18:	898
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	898
Inspection dates	26 Nov 2013 to 29 Nov 2013	

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in November 2007.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr John Dunston	Reporting Inspector
Ms Eleni Conidaris	Team Inspector (Head of Lower School, HMC school)
Mr Alan Cooper	Team Inspector (Senior Professional Tutor, HMC school)
Mrs Sarah Evans	Team Inspector (Former Head, GSA school)
Mrs Val Fogarty	Team Inspector (Head of Middle School, HMC school)
Mr Peter Hamilton	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Mr Graham Letley	Team Inspector (Director of Studies, HMC school)
Dr Tracey Martin	Team Inspector (Senior Teacher, HMC school)
Mr Kevin Riley	Team Inspector (Head, HMC school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The Royal Grammar School, Guildford is a day school for boys aged from 11 to 18. The school aims to enable pupils to enjoy education and see it as a life-long experience: encouraging the development in every pupil of self-discipline, responsibility, spiritual values and a personal moral code, leading to the highest standard of behaviour, consideration for others and a pride in himself and the school. The ethos of the school is intended to encourage the growth of intellectual curiosity and creativity, enabling each pupil to achieve the best possible public examination results, an awareness of the world outside the school, and a sense of service to the local and wider community. The school is a registered charity of which the Trustee is the Royal Grammar School, Guildford. Its trustees are also the governors of the school, whose work is supported by sub-committees concerned with financial and general purposes, estates and academic matters.
- 1.2 The grammar school was founded in 1509 under the will of Robert Becket and received its royal charter in 1552 under King Edward VI. Having been an independent school, it became the county grammar school after the Second World War before reverting to independent status in 1977. The school buildings, in the centre of Guildford, date mostly from the twentieth century, although a number of original buildings date from the sixteenth century. Additions since the previous inspection include enhanced access to the school, an art school, a music school, two science laboratories and a sixth form centre. The playing fields are located at a separate site.
- 1.3 The school has 898 pupils in Years 7 to 13, including 274 pupils in Years 12 and 13. The pupils come from both independent and maintained schools. Most pupils come from professional family backgrounds, often where both parents are working. Approximately one-seventh of the pupils are of non-white ethnic origin.
- 1.4 The ability profile of the school is well above the national average, with all pupils having ability that is above average and most pupils having well above average ability. Seventy-eight pupils have been identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom one has a statement of special educational needs. Specialist learning support is provided for twenty-six pupils. Sixty-three pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) though none is identified as needing specialist support for their English.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

Senior School

School	NC name
First form	Year 7
Second form	Year 8
Third form	Year 9
Fourth form	Year 10
Fifth form	Year 11
Lower sixth	Year 12
Upper sixth	Year 13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school is highly successful in fulfilling its ambitious aim to set the highest possible standards in its educational provision by academic excellence, extra-curricular opportunity, personal development and service to others. Pupils benefit from a wide-ranging and challenging curriculum and from an exceptional extra-curricular programme which includes many activities related to their academic study. Examination results over time and evidence gathered during the inspection show that pupils achieve at an exceptionally high level and make outstanding progress including in the sixth form. Pupils' achievements in creative, physical and performance skills are exceptional. Pupils are attentive listeners and articulate debaters. They show excellent independent learning and research skills and intellectual curiosity and use information and communication technology (ICT) competently. The quality of teaching is excellent, showing passion and commitment, extensive subject knowledge and a keen desire to meet the needs of all pupils, including by the sharing of good practice to ensure consistently high standards across the curriculum, but this is not yet fully implemented across all subjects. It is supported by excellent governance, leadership and management, which ensures that all appropriate policies are in place and implemented.
- 2.2 The personal development of pupils is excellent, reflecting the aims of the school to encourage the development of self-discipline, responsibility, spiritual values and a personal moral code. Pupils show spiritual and aesthetic awareness, emotional maturity and a strong sense of right and wrong, as well as a marked sense of social responsibility for their own community and the wider world. These qualities are reflected in the way that older pupils look after the younger ones. The pastoral care from which pupils benefit is excellent, offering outstanding support and leading to exemplary standards of behaviour and open, warm relationships. Pupils feel safe. They feel that there is always someone they can turn to. They are encouraged to express their views and feel that these are listened to.
- 2.3 The school meets the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations. In response to recommendations from the previous inspection, more space has been created for teaching and learning and the library; steps have been taken to improve the use made of a further developed database and the monitoring of marking and assessment; to encourage more teaching to go beyond the examination curriculum; to improve the quality of report writing; to reduce the administrative burden on teachers; and to develop the appraisal system in order to support teachers' professional development. Parents are extremely supportive of the school and the opportunities it provides for their children, as well as of the quality of pastoral care, and the curriculum and wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils overwhelmingly enjoy being at the school. They feel well supported by their teachers and tutors and express a consistent pride in their school.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Establish a more formal mechanism to ensure that the excellent practice in teaching that exists already in most areas is more consistently shared across the whole curriculum.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is exceptional.
- 3.2 The school fulfils its stated aim of encouraging the growth of intellectual curiosity, creativity and habits of learning which prepare boys for the best possible examination results. This is reflected in the very high quality of pupils' written work and their eager and well-informed contributions to lessons where their intellectual confidence and high levels of knowledge are evident. Pupils communicate effectively in their own and other languages as reflected in a Year 13 Spanish lesson on solar energy and a Year 10 French lesson on school life, in both of which they used complex sentence structures with fluency in oral and written work. Written work is presented with accuracy and pride, illustrative of the pupils' pragmatic desire to retain and reproduce what they have learned with efficiency.
- 3.3 Pupils show the capacity to listen attentively in class and are keen to engage in articulate debate. Mutual respect for the views of others is common, as seen in the many pupil-led societies, in a Medics Society talk on 'An End to Humanity' which was as engaging as it was well researched and delivered, and in an impressive presentation on 'Truth' at a meeting of the Philosophy Society. Pupils work very well both independently and collaboratively as was evident in a Year 13 biology practical lesson on the extraction of chlorophyll and a Year 12 chemistry lesson exploring alkanes and alkenes, in both of which pupils worked well together, and in a Year 8 drama lesson in which pupils explored each other's concepts of status as projected through body language. The Year 12 independent learning assignment and the many high-quality pupil journals such as the *Guildfordian*, the *Ricardian* (Economics) and the *Clio Miscellany* (History) show outstanding creativity, scholarly research, and the development of intellectual curiosity. Pupils use ICT competently. Pupils' mathematical skills are outstanding and they relish complex challenges. The numeracy demands of a Year 13 physics lesson on ideal gas behaviour were handled with ease and effective teamwork. Pupils enjoy participation and considerable success in a wide range of national, regional and local sporting activities illustrative of their highly developed physical skills, as well as taking part successfully in the many artistic, dramatic and musical opportunities that are on offer.
- 3.4 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2010 to 2012. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. Results at GCSE have been exceptional in relation to the national average for boys in maintained schools, and also above the national average for boys in maintained selective schools. Almost all grades at GCSE in 2013 were at A* or A. At IGCSE pupils' achievement is exceptional against national and international norms, and in the last three years, almost all grades were at A* and A. A level results have been exceptional in relation to the national average for boys in maintained schools, and also well above the national average for boys in maintained selective schools. An extremely high percentage of boys gained grades A* to B in 2013.
- 3.5 Pupils achieve at a very high level in an exceptional range of events, activities and competitions such as the online Cambridge Chemistry Challenge, the UK Mathematics Challenge, the National Science Olympiads, the Student Investor Challenge, the National Youth Orchestra and other activities as wide-ranging as

sailing, kayaking, fencing, shooting, athletics, rugby, fencing and chess. Pupils progress to the most competitive courses and universities in the UK.

- 3.6 Pupils' progress is outstanding at all stages including in the sixth form and reflects both their avid enthusiasm for learning and the highly structured lesson planning from which they benefit, which enables pupils with SEND and the most able, gifted and talented pupils to achieve at a very high level. Since the previous inspection, the development of a flexible and efficient tracking system plays a major role in enabling all boys to achieve their rapid progress by allowing teachers to identify promptly when intervention might be needed. Pupils make excellent progress both within lessons and over time. Pupils absorb new material quickly and enjoy developing it to a complex level. It is clear that pupils enjoy their learning and relish challenge, being driven by intellectual curiosity and ambition allied to a desire to explore their subjects in depth with their teachers and each other.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 The broad, challenging curriculum promotes excellent learning, contributing significantly to pupils' high achievements and reflecting the school's aim to set the highest standards in its educational provision of academic excellence. It encourages the growth of intellectual curiosity, creativity and excellent habits of learning within a scholarly community. It is kept under review in order to develop a questioning, imaginative, logical and informed mind and to help pupils use language effectively and creatively. It also enables pupils to acquire mathematical, scientific and technical knowledge and skills.
- 3.9 Since the previous inspection, the curriculum has broadened further. Pupils now take both drama and thinking and reasoning skills in Year 8 and have the choice of taking Spanish or French in Year 7. Integrated science is taught in Year 7 and separate sciences in Years 8 and 9. The demanding ICT training in Year 7 leads to an additional qualification in Year 9. All pupils take at least ten subjects at GCSE or IGCSE, including either one or two additional foreign languages. The most able pupils have the opportunity to extend their work beyond the syllabus, which deepens their knowledge and understanding.
- 3.10 A balanced course of personal, social, health and moral education (PSHME) covering life skills and health care is provided by specialist teachers and by form tutors; this also includes critical thinking, study and revision skills. The curriculum offers excellent careers advice from Year 9 until Year 13, including guidance on subject choices and support to guide each pupil through the university application process.
- 3.11 At A level, pupils are offered a wide choice of subjects in addition to physical education, general studies and religious education. A pilot Pre-U scheme is being trialled with the most able chemistry students. An independent learning assignment has been introduced in Year 12. The curriculum is further enhanced by talks from outside speakers and visits, many of which are organised by sixth formers themselves.
- 3.12 The curriculum is appropriate for pupils of all ages. Timely identification of the learning needs of pupils with SEND leads to the provision of appropriate support for their specific needs. They follow a full programme of study. The work and progress

of pupils with SEND are carefully monitored. The needs of any pupil with a statement of special educational needs are fully met.

- 3.13 There is an extensive programme of additional opportunities reflecting the school's aim to offer a wide range of extra-curricular activities through which boys can develop their social, sporting and cultural abilities.
- 3.14 Pupils are able to develop their interests and talents and to explore new challenges. Provision for sport is a strong feature of the school and pupils achieve regular success at the highest level locally, regionally and nationally. The range of musical opportunities is outstanding and pupils take part in events of a high standard both in and out of school. In a pre-inspection questionnaire, pupils expressed strong satisfaction with the range of extra-curricular activities. Participation is widespread. Since the previous inspection, the combined cadet force (CCF) has developed in scale and achievement. Participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award is also very successful, with pupils achieving over one hundred gold awards in the past six years. All pupils in Years 9 and 10 take part in the CCF, scouts or outdoor education. The wide range of societies includes Amnesty, chess, classics, journalism, science, philosophy, Model United Nations and the Ricardian Society. Senior pupils give well-researched talks to the Medics Society. Societies enable pupils to develop their oratory and other skills.
- 3.15 There are strong links with the local community, for example through pupils' work in charity shops, supporting children in local primary and secondary schools and visiting the elderly in Guildford. Foreign links include partner schools in Nepal, a scheme which has recently been awarded a British Council International Schools Award. The annual Charity Day and regular volunteering raise money for different charities chosen by pupils.
- 3.16 A rich programme of international academic, sports and cultural tours helps to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world. Recent visits have included the Black Country Museum, Cern in Switzerland, other European destinations, Turkey, Cambodia and the WW1 battlefields. Sporting trips have included sailing, skiing, surfing, cycling, hockey and rugby tours.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.17 The quality of teaching in the school is excellent.
- 3.18 Teaching reflects the school's aim to nurture a love of learning and enables pupils to make outstanding progress. Pupils are frequently given the opportunity to explore ideas and concepts far beyond the demands of the examination syllabus, in response to a recommendation from the previous inspection. Provision for pupils with SEND is excellent, enabling them to receive appropriate support and to make rapid progress.
- 3.19 Lessons throughout the school are well-planned and use material that is thought-provoking and stimulating. In the most successful lessons, conducted at an appropriately challenging pace, topics are introduced in a manner that allows pupils to fully engage with the material through discussion and debate with both teachers and their peers. Teachers are skilled at drawing out pupils' ideas and helping them to develop them coherently. When they are given the opportunity, pupils successfully enhance their own learning through keen questioning and a desire for intellectual stimulation. The standard of questioning by teachers is extremely high and provides appropriate challenge for pupils of all abilities throughout the school.

Independent learning was observed in some lessons, but in a small minority of lessons, teaching gave pupils little opportunity for this. Double periods are well utilised to enable topics to be developed in a detailed and sophisticated manner. Teachers create an environment in which pupils are motivated to make notes without prompting, to annotate their own work and to consider carefully the comments made on their work. Pupils in a mathematics lesson used the whiteboard interactively to reinforce their learning. Pupils in an English lesson engaged in a sophisticated analysis of 19th century short stories. Information and communication technology (ICT) is utilised effectively in some lessons.

- 3.20 Pupils are eager learners who both appreciate and respect the high academic quality of their teaching. They are very appreciative of the feedback received from teachers. Marking of work is thorough and detailed. Feedback to pupils, both written and oral, enables them to make excellent progress and improve further the quality of their work.
- 3.21 Teaching is well supported by a newly-established teaching and learning committee within which good practice is shared. This is helping to raise teachers' understanding of different learning styles and to increase the variety of teaching methods and practice which pupils encounter in lessons. The impact of this group has been to enhance the quality of teaching of those involved in it. Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent and, with their passion and enthusiasm, contributes much to the intellectual life of the school.
- 3.22 Teachers have an excellent understanding of pupils' needs. Since the previous inspection, much more regular use has been made of the extensive data available. The monitoring of pupils' progress is thorough and enables teachers to have a detailed understanding of pupils' progress over time. This includes pupils with SEND. Opportunities are taken to enhance pupils' skills and knowledge outside the classroom which enable them to increase their enjoyment of education and provide excellent examples of independent learning fostered by committed, imaginative and skilful teaching.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The school is extremely successful in fulfilling its aim to encourage the development in every boy of self-discipline, responsibility, spiritual values and a personal moral code, leading to the highest possible standard of behaviour, consideration for others and a pride in himself and the school.
- 4.3 The spiritual life of the pupils is actively fostered. Pupils are confident in the feeling of security which is engendered by the well-ordered and calm environment. Their self-esteem is strengthened by the school's emphasis on valuing each pupil as an individual. Pupils' art work on display, much of it of an abstract nature, shows their aesthetic awareness. Pupils experience a strong sense of belonging and are able to develop their insight into religious and philosophical beliefs. Pupils explore the origins of life and the tenuous nature of scientific evidence in science lessons. In English, pupils show a sophisticated understanding of the horrors of war; in drama they develop empathy. Pupils lead assemblies with confidence, demonstrating an understanding of the Christian tradition. Pupils show considerable emotional maturity.
- 4.4 Pupils' moral development is excellent. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and fully appreciate the purpose of school sanctions and their proportionate nature. They develop further their moral awareness through talks on human rights and overseas aid and through the PSHME programme. The vibrant politics noticeboard is both entertaining and challenging, reflecting pupils' awareness of important issues of the day.
- 4.5 The social development of pupils is excellent. Pupils are extremely loyal to the school and proud to be part of it. They are consistently polite and courteous. Pupils are friendly and at ease in one another's company. Excellent interaction takes place between pupils of all age groups and many outstanding working relationships exist between teachers and pupils. Pupils readily accept the wide range of responsibilities offered to them, including form representation in Year 7, school council representation from every year group, and appointment as house captains, school prefects and senior prefects. The introduction of the senior and academic mentoring schemes has already had a positive impact on pupils and is looked upon most favourably by younger and older pupils alike. Sixth form pupils lead many clubs and societies. Pupils show a commitment to the wider community by raising funds for local, national and international charities. The annual Nepal Day raises significant funds for the Nepal partnership schools and pupils speak enthusiastically about this venture. The popular Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme provides opportunities for voluntary service, and pupils contribute further to the local community through the work they carry out for local residents.
- 4.6 Pupils' cultural development is excellent. They understand the realities of other cultures and faiths through foreign exchanges and study visits to Europe and beyond. The school's overseas links with the Nepal partnership schools and the recent trip to Cambodia with its emphasis on teaching in the local community, serve to broaden pupils' minds and their openness to other cultures and values, further enhancing their appreciation of cultural diversity. The visit by the local Imam during the inspection afforded pupils the opportunity to explore a faith different from their

own. Successful participation in the Model United Nations further demonstrates their strong cultural awareness.

- 4.7 Pupils have an excellent standard of personal development by the time they leave the school, shown, for example, by the willingness of pupils to lead, the exemplary behaviour they show at all times and the outstanding level of their achievement across a wide ranging co-curricular programme.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 Staff provide excellent pastoral support and guidance for the pupils in accordance with the aim of the school for boys to have the highest standards of behaviour and consideration for others. Since the previous inspection, the organisation of pastoral care has been further developed to improve the quality of care and support of the pupils. The creation of the posts of head of upper and lower school has allowed more time for the monitoring and support of pupils, records of which are now logged electronically, strengthening the continuity of care by making the information available to all relevant staff. Pupils commented on the excellent support they receive and on the relationships between themselves and staff. Pupils in Year 12, for example, praised the guidance and support they received in preparation for university and Year 7 pupils appreciated the extensive induction programme they received, including mentoring by older pupils.
- 4.10 Relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are excellent. Sixth form mentors work with junior pupils to offer support and guidance both on an individual basis and within tutor groups. Additional support is available from the school counsellor. There are high levels of mutual respect between staff and pupils. Pupils from different year groups work on activities together, for example in a Year 9 tutor group where boys worked with sixth form mentors on a current affairs quiz.
- 4.11 Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles, for example through participation in the many sporting activities on offer. Specific issues concerning healthy lifestyles are covered in talks on subjects such as the use of healthy food supplements in physical training programmes. Healthy lifestyles and nutrition are also covered in biology lessons and the PSHME programme. A food committee with pupil representatives provides a forum to discuss matters relating to healthy eating. A wide range of tasty and nutritious food is available in the school. Older pupils are given guidance about healthy eating options when visiting town during lunchtimes.
- 4.12 The school is very effective in promoting excellent behaviour. Pupils are aware of the high expectations of the school regarding good behaviour, and they conduct themselves in an exemplary fashion, which was seen in lessons, extra-curricular activities and at all other times during the school day. The school has a robust anti-bullying policy of which pupils are reminded at the start of every term. The school deals swiftly with any failure of pupils to live up to the standards of behaviour expected, although if these occur at all, they are almost always of a very minor nature. The school has appropriate arrangements in place to improve access for pupils with special needs or a disability.
- 4.13 Pupils' views are listened to and taken into account through junior and senior school councils throughout the school. One example of change instigated as a result of a suggestion from pupils is the trial of new lunchtime arrangements for sixth formers. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small number of pupils felt that their views

were not listened to. However, during the inspection, no evidence was found to support this view. On the contrary, pupils overwhelmingly conveyed the opposite impression and were highly appreciative of the way in which their voice was heard.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.15 Thorough measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards, equipment is regularly checked, regular fire drills are held and staff receive appropriate training. Clear signage indicates emergency exits, safety procedures and the location of safety equipment. Comprehensive health and safety procedures are implemented around the school, during sports matches and in lessons. Appropriate risk assessments are carried out and detailed records kept.
- 4.16 Appropriate safeguarding arrangements are implemented effectively. The child protection officers are supported by several senior teachers and also by a designated governor, all of whom have undergone training at the appropriate level. Child protection training for all staff is regular and effective, and promptly undertaken by new staff. Arrangements are in place for volunteers and temporary staff to be made aware of relevant procedures. Pupils are happy and feel safe.
- 4.17 Arrangements to ensure the pupils' health and safety are excellent and have due regard to the nature of the school site. Pupils who are injured or feel unwell during the day are cared for in a suitably equipped and centrally located medical centre. The security of medicines is appropriate and record keeping is meticulous. Procedures and facilities are in place to ensure the health and safety of pupils with SEND. The policy for the provision of first aid is effective. Detailed records are kept.
- 4.18 Attendance and admission registers are suitably maintained electronically, backed up and correctly stored for the previous three years. Procedures for following up the whereabouts of missing pupils are robustly followed.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Governance strongly supports the aims and ethos of the school, and the long tradition of providing education for the local community. The members of the governing body bring a wide range of professional experience to their roles, including finance and the law, academe, medicine, and architecture; in addition, a number of governors are also parents of current or former pupils. The five sub-committees take specific responsibility for finance, estates, education, nominations and the Lanesborough prep school, to enable them to exercise appropriate oversight of these areas. Individual governors visit the school to inform themselves about particular aspects of its work or to monitor the implementation of specific policies. Governors receive regular training including in matters of safeguarding.
- 5.3 Board meetings are held each term, with reports from the head and senior staff. Minutes are used as a means of ensuring that decisions are appropriately implemented. Governors regularly review their performance and have a keen insight into the working of the school and the management of its finances, contributing directly to the strength of the school's strategic development, and to its long-term plan for the estate and for investment in staff and learning resources. Individual governors meet regularly with the head and senior staff, acting as critical friends and supporting the continuing development of their shared vision for the school. They are regularly consulted on a range of educational and other matters. Governors are highly effective in discharging their responsibilities for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils and carry out a thorough annual review of safeguarding.

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

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.5 The school is highly successful in fulfilling its aim to set the highest possible standards in its educational provision by academic excellence, extra-curricular opportunity, personal development and service to others, and to reflect its traditional grammar school ethos. Senior and middle managers work closely together to form a clear educational direction for the school, reflected in the school development plans which are regularly reviewed and updated. Leadership is characterised by a focus on excellence and by delegated responsibility which encourages the involvement of all, both in issues relating to the whole school and in department and year group matters. The curriculum and the range of extra-curricular activities are kept regularly under review.
- 5.6 The quality of pupils' education is enhanced through the monitoring of departments by senior managers, and increasingly of teaching and learning by heads of department, supported by analysis of the considerable amount of data available. The enlargement of the senior management team since the previous inspection has strengthened this process through the allocation of clearly defined responsibilities, enabling a closer monitoring of the implementation of policies. Teachers feel well supported by heads of department.

- 5.7 Rigorous self-evaluation is a hallmark of the school's leadership and management. The plans of individual departments contribute to the whole school development plan. The senior management team is considered to be highly responsive to the views of staff, as seen, for example, in the process by which the long-term master plan has evolved. The new teaching and learning group is another initiative that allows interested members of staff to be involved in the creative exchange of ideas to support the development of a variety of teaching styles. The initiative has developed in response to the school's recognition that the best practice of most departments is not fully reflected across the curriculum. The school regularly seeks the views of parents and pupils, and encourages strong communication between teachers and parents.
- 5.8 A comprehensive range of handbooks sets out policies and procedures covering all aspects of the school. These underpin the work of both academic and pastoral leaders and are monitored effectively by the senior management team. In addition, the leadership and management of the school are well supported by the efficient and highly committed administrative and support departments.
- 5.9 The school is highly successful in recruiting and retaining well qualified staff. Since the previous inspection, the system of staff review has been significantly developed, enhancing the professional development of teachers. Contributions to the review are sought from all sections of the school. Formalised additional support through a process of mentoring and training in leadership skills has been of benefit to staff.
- 5.10 All appropriate recruitment checks on staff are carried out. The single central register of appointments is rigorously maintained. Health and safety practices are carefully monitored and staff receive appropriate training in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety.
- 5.11 The school has a close and highly effective relationship with parents and guardians, in support of its aims and ethos. In their response to a pre-inspection questionnaire, parents expressed overwhelming satisfaction with the academic standards attained by their children, the pastoral care they received, and the promotion of the school's worthwhile values. They value the strong commitment of staff and the help and guidance given to their sons, as well as the range of opportunities offered to them. There were no concerns raised by significant numbers of parents. Since the previous inspection, the school has established effective electronic communication links with parents, who appreciate the informative fortnightly and termly newsletters and the annual school journal and magazine.
- 5.12 Parents have good opportunities to be actively involved in the work and progress of their children and regularly attend school events, strengthening the sense of community. In addition, the school organises talks for parents on a variety of subjects including alcohol and substance abuse and internet safety. Parents of pupils and prospective pupils receive comprehensive information about the school, covering all that is required. An automated communication system has been introduced as the principal means of contacting parents in case of emergency, to supplement the recently-launched official social media account.
- 5.13 Parent consultation evenings are regularly held and provide a detailed reflection of their children's progress. All parents and pupils in Year 10 and above receive a fortnightly careers and higher education bulletin, part of the school's programme of ensuring that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

- 5.14 Parents receive regular, clear and useful reports about their children's work and progress, which also give specific and helpful information on the pupils' attitudes and their contribution to school life. In addition, parents receive twice-termly grade sheets. The effort and attainment or predicted grades are designed to encourage pupils to work hard and to promptly address perceived weaknesses. Parents expressed strong satisfaction at the openness of communication and welcome the daily contact with the school and the regular dialogue with staff who they feel genuinely know their children.
- 5.15 The parents' association, actively supported by members of the school's leadership team, is thriving. Besides organising numerous fund-raising and social events, it serves as a link between parents and the school and as a forum through which any relevant issues may be addressed.
- 5.16 The active RGS Foundation successfully promotes goodwill among Old Guildfordians and among the wider community of parents and staff, both current and former, to support all aspects of the school's activities, including the development and improvement of facilities and the provision of help in support of the school's charitable objectives.
- 5.17 The school maintains a positive relationship with parents and handles any concerns with care, sensitivity and in accordance with its published complaints policy. Appropriate records are kept.

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