



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

QUEEN MARGARET'S SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Queen Margaret's School

Full Name of School	Queen Margaret's School		
DfE Number	815/6035		
Registered Charity Number	517523		
Address	Queen Margaret's School Escrick Park York North Yorkshire YO19 6EU		
Telephone Number	01904 728 261		
Fax Number	01904 728 150		
Email Address	headmaster@queenmargarets.com		
Head	Dr Paul Silverwood		
Chair of Governors	Dame Eleanor King		
Age Range	11 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	302		
Gender of Pupils	Girls		
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	47	Capacity for flexi-boarding: 47
Number of Boarders	Total:	255	
	Full:	255	Weekly: 0
Inspection dates	01 Feb 2011 to 02 Feb 2011 02 Mar 2011 to 04 Mar 2011		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in May 2005.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government 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*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

*These Standards Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

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 boarding was not carried out in conjunction with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills, and the report does not contain specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education and development in general. The full Ofsted report refers to an inspection in November 2008 and can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Children's social care/Boarding school.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will 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.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Queen Margaret's School takes its name from Scotland's only female Saint, Margaret, Queen of Scotland (1070-1093). Established in 1901 in Scarborough by the Woodard Foundation, the school was evacuated to Pitlochry in the First World War and to Castle Howard in the Second, finally coming to Escrick, six miles south of York, in 1949. In 1986, following an initiative by parents and governors, the school left the Woodard Foundation and was re-established under a new company, limited by guarantee and registered with the Charities Commission. Its governing body includes former pupils of the school and parents of current and/or former pupils.
- 1.2 The school aims: that its pupils should achieve excellence inside and outside the classroom; that they should develop an enthusiasm for independent thought, learning and research; that they should grow with emotional maturity, social awareness and respect for individuality and difference; that they should forge special friendships which will stay with them for the rest of their lives; and that they should be interesting, well-informed, happy and confident members of the community.
- 1.3 There are 302 girls in the school, 114 of whom are in Years 12 and 13. Boarders number 255. English is an additional language (EAL) for 42 pupils, of whom 33 receive support for their English. The school has identified 60 pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) and 84 pupils receive specialist learning support from the school. About a sixth of the pupils come from abroad; of those from the United Kingdom roughly forty per cent live in Yorkshire and the others come from a wide area, stretching from Scotland to the Home Counties.
- 1.4 The ability profile of the school to GCSE level is above the national average, with most pupils demonstrating at least above average ability. The ability profile in Years 12 and 13 is slightly above the national average, with a slightly wider spread of abilities represented. Most of the Year 13 leavers proceed to their first-choice university degree courses.
- 1.5 National Curriculum 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 (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

School	NC name
Year I	Year 7
Year II	Year 8
Year III	Year 9
Year IV	Year 10
Year V	Year 11
Lower VI	Year 12
Upper VI	Year 13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The overall quality of the pupils' learning and achievement is excellent. The school successfully meets its aim to provide a broad-based education which enables all pupils to discover their strengths, develop their talents and grow in social maturity. Attainment in public examinations is high. Pupils who responded to the questionnaire were very pleased with their academic progress. Throughout the school, pupils display secure knowledge, skills and understanding of the material covered in their syllabuses. A positive attitude to study and exemplary classroom behaviour contribute to purposeful learning. The pupils' excellent progress and high attainment are promoted by teaching which is mostly excellent and scarcely ever less than good, although assessment data are not used consistently. The pupils reach good and often high standards across a wide range of activities. A broad curriculum enriches the pupils' educational experience and enables them to achieve personal fulfilment.
- 2.2 The quality of pupils' personal development, a central feature of the school's holistic educational aims, is outstanding. It is fostered by excellent pastoral care, with its highly effective emphasis on pupils' welfare, safeguarding and well-being. The caring and supportive example set by the staff is mirrored in the way pupils behave towards one another. They show genuine concern for each other's welfare and grow strongly in self-awareness and self-esteem. Relationships are excellent throughout the school, which is congenial and friendly, with pupils able to feel a strong sense of belonging. The pupils benefit from the many opportunities for leadership and service. The parents who responded to the questionnaire commended the high standards of behaviour, and evidence during the inspection fully supported this judgment.
- 2.3 The school's aims are being successfully realised, a strong testimony to the quality of governance, as well as to excellent leadership and clear direction from senior management. A strong focus on creative self-evaluation is exemplified by the five-year development plan and the many changes which have been made in recent months, to the benefit of the pupils' educational experience and personal development. Staff appraisal is not yet sufficiently comprehensive or systematic. Since the last inspection the deficiencies in information and communication technology (ICT) and library provision have been rectified. The school promotes excellent links with parents, who express great satisfaction with the education that their daughters are receiving and the way in which the school is being run.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Use assessment data consistently throughout the school for tracking pupils' progress and setting targets.
2. Apply staff appraisal comprehensively and systematically.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills

- 3.1 The overall quality of pupils' achievement is excellent, reflecting the school's aims. At every stage the overall standard of articulacy, literacy and numeracy is high. Throughout the school, the pupils display secure knowledge, skills and understanding of the material being covered in their lessons. In recent years about three-quarters of the sixth-form leavers have gone directly to university, almost all of them to their first-choice course; most of the others have begun a degree course after a 'gap' year and nearly all the rest have embarked on art foundation diplomas.
- 3.2 The following analysis uses the national data for 2007 to 2009: these are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results at GCSE level have been above the national average for girls in maintained schools and similar to the average for girls in maintained selective schools. Pupils averaged 63% grades A* or A, and 86% A*, A or B. Performance in IGCSE mathematics and sciences has been above international norms but below UK norms, where the benchmark is higher. Results at A level have been above the national average for girls in maintained schools and maintained selective schools, with, on average, 80% of the grades being A or B. Results at GCSE level have been good in relation to pupils' abilities, indicating that their progress in Years 9 to 11 is above the average for pupils of similar ability. Results at A level have been high in relation to pupils' abilities, indicating that their progress in the sixth form is exceptional when compared with the average for pupils of similar ability. The 2010 GCSE and A-level results were the best in the school's history. At GCSE level, 70% of the grades were A* or A, and 92% were A*, A or B. Of the A-level grades, 93% were A*, A or B; furthermore, in the first year of its award, 25% of the grades were A*, an outstanding achievement.
- 3.3 Pupils participate enthusiastically and successfully in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. In recent years they have won many individual awards and representative honours in science and mathematics olympiads, drama and dance, music and sport. Hockey, lacrosse and netball teams have won many tournaments, with the school producing numerous county hockey and lacrosse players. The tennis, squash, cross-country, show-jumping and skiing teams have been successful in national championships, as have quiz, business and Prince's Trust Challenge teams in regional competitions. The school has yearly achieved an excellent number of gold awards in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Pupils' high-quality artwork is displayed in local galleries and around the school. During the inspection the chapel choir performed with skill and élan.
- 3.4 Pupils have a very positive attitude to learning. Their behaviour in lessons is exemplary. Enthusiastic students, they are keen to do well, eager to be challenged, willing to contribute and prepared to think for themselves. They co-operate harmoniously in group work and listen appreciatively to each other's views. Pupils produce a substantial volume of work which is neat and well presented. Their use of ICT across the curriculum, criticised in the last inspection report as uneven, is now proficient and widespread. The pupils acknowledge that the school encourages them to do things for themselves and to take responsibility for their study and personal organisation.

3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)

- 3.5 The excellent academic curriculum is broad and well balanced. Covering all of the required areas of learning, it is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs. The range of languages is extensive. All pupils study two modern foreign languages and Latin from Year 7, with Greek as an option later. There are Italian and Arabic clubs and taster lessons in Mandarin. The curriculum offers a wide choice of subjects at GCSE level and a very wide choice at A level, and gives pupils scope to opt for subjects in which they can excel, thus supporting one of the main academic aims of the school. The academic extension lessons include aspects of an excellent programme of careers education, as well as very good material on politics, the law and personal well-being. Pupils gain a broad general knowledge of the public institutions and services of England from sections of the academic extension course and elsewhere, but these topics are not sequentially incorporated in the curriculum.
- 3.6 The previous inspection report stated that the library was underused as a resource area and the ICT provision was uneven. The school now has a group of rooms at its heart which are well used and are conducive to study and to recreational reading. In addition to the reference and fiction libraries, there is a room for private study and another room imaginatively devoted to collaborative study. Nearby, the ICT study rooms are very popular facilities. Indeed, the overall provision of ICT is now good.
- 3.7 The King Society provides valuable weekly debate and thinking exercises for academic scholars. Sixth-formers' personal tutors work with them on specific challenging academic activities and supports their university applications.
- 3.8 All pupils are screened on entry and the school's awareness of and support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good indeed. Pupils' individual education plans are excellent: they are of practical value to classroom teachers because they tell them exactly what they need to know and do, straightforwardly and concisely.
- 3.9 The range of extra-curricular opportunities is wide and the provision is excellent. In addition to the performing and creative arts and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, pupils enjoy a wide range of sports; there is a busy programme of inter-school fixtures and talented sportswomen are given every encouragement to perform at as high a level as they can. There is wide participation in inter-house competitions and house-based activities. During the inspection, the junior ensemble played with verve and gusto. These extra-curricular pursuits foster teamwork and teach new skills. The pupils' educational experience is further enriched by the programme of presentations by visiting speakers and by trips to events of cultural interest. Recent holiday ventures have included a World Challenge visit to Morocco, a science expedition to Indonesia and a classics trip to Rome and Pompeii.
- 3.10 The school's close links with the village of Escrick are promoted through the Escrick Liaison Committee and pupils help at the local primary school. Senior pupils help individuals and organisations as their service element of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. There is a busy but uncoordinated programme of fund-raising for local and national charities, and specific help is being given to a school in Kenya and to a girl in Sri Lanka.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.11 The overall quality of teaching is excellent: in over half of the lessons observed, the teaching was of this high standard, and in the other lessons it was scarcely ever less than good. The teaching makes a central contribution to the pupils' progress and attainment, and to the school's fulfilment of its academic aims. Teachers are well qualified; the level of their knowledge and expertise is high. Behaviour is managed outstandingly well, to the benefit of effective learning. The teachers' rapport with their students is excellent. Responses to the questionnaire show that pupils at all levels find their teachers helpful and appreciate their willingness to help them with their work outside the timetabled lessons.
- 3.12 Throughout the school the lessons are carefully planned, and in many cases scope for flexibility and improvisation is maintained. Almost all lessons observed were taken at a brisk pace, with many imaginative and varied approaches to the work in hand. Teaching provides very well for the needs of pupils with LDD and of those whose first language is not English. Appropriate use was made of ICT as a teaching resource. Lively, enthusiastic exposition and effective questioning techniques engage the pupils' interest and attention. Central to the best lessons observed was the teacher's communication of a real passion for his or her subject. The overwhelming majority of pupils said that they found their lessons interesting. In modern foreign language lessons there is a good mixture of English and the foreign language. The teaching is characterised by high expectations of all pupils' performances and friendly but firm encouragement of all pupils to extend themselves. Teachers stimulate a spirit of enquiry and, among the oldest pupils, discussion which is often sophisticated and maturely developed. In their questionnaire responses, the pupils acknowledged that they were encouraged to do things for themselves and to think independently, and, on the whole, this was confirmed during the period of the inspection.
- 3.13 Most of the marking of books and files is extremely good. It is regular, thorough and contains much useful advice for improvement. Throughout the school, there is informative day-to-day liaison between staff on pupils' academic progress, and remedial action is taken where required. Ability is assessed at three stages during pupils' careers, using standardised tests which are used nationally. The data thus obtained are not, however, applied consistently or systematically to track progress and set examination targets.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The pupils' personal qualities are developing excellently in accordance with the aims of the school. In this relatively small school each pupil is well known as an individual: the school is successful in generating self-assurance and self-esteem, building on strengths and presenting opportunities for personal fulfilment. This was evident at many times during the period of the inspection: pupils spoke well in class, they displayed assurance in the performing arts, they conversed confidently and articulately, and they conducted tours of the school with evident pride and affection for it. Uplifting and inspiring experiences include chapel worship, the creative and performing arts, and visits out of school in this country and abroad. Pupils and staff acknowledge that they live and work in surroundings of exceptional quality.
- 4.2 A strong sense of friendly co-operation permeates school life in this Christian foundation. Pupils have a secure sense of right and wrong, which is reflected in their considerate behaviour towards one another. Their social conduct is exceptionally good. Whether in small or large groups, the pupils enjoy their free time in a pleasant and civilised manner. All the parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school achieves high standards of behaviour and that it promotes worthwhile attitudes and views. The pupils themselves appreciate the kind, family ethos which leads to friendly, positive and supportive relationships.
- 4.3 In accordance with its aims, the school encourages pupils to take responsibility and to develop their social awareness. They help one another in many contexts, for instance as Year 10 monitors, older pupils organising reading clubs for younger ones, and as members of the boarding houses. At school, department and house levels, prefects organise a substantial number of activities. The opportunities for leadership and service include captaincy of teams, the community service element of Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, and membership of the school council, and the pupils take these responsibilities seriously. The fund-raising initiatives, supporting local, national and international causes, are chosen and organised by the pupils themselves. The 'horizontal' boarding system, whereby all boarders in a particular year group are accommodated together, creates challenges for whole-school social cohesion and this is being addressed by enhancement of the management and organisation of the houses, in each of which all year groups are represented.
- 4.4 About a sixth of the pupils come from a variety of foreign countries, giving the school some racial and cultural diversity. The pupils co-exist in complete harmony and respect each other's cultures and traditions. The study of languages, including Mandarin and Arabic, as well as aspects of the academic extension programme, visits abroad and links with foreign schools and individuals, give the pupils insights into the wider world and global issues.

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

- 4.5 The quality of pastoral care is excellent, as parents affirmed in their pre-inspection questionnaires. The high-quality tutorial arrangements provide one of the cornerstones of the staff's support and guidance for the pupils. Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves are outstanding. Appropriate pastoral structures are monitored by the senior leadership committee and channels of communication are used effectively. The staff know their charges

very well, and frequent informal exchanges about pupils' welfare complement formal arrangements such as reports and regular timetabled meetings of pastoral teams. This close knowledge of each individual pupil means that their particular needs are addressed, thus contributing greatly to their personal development. There is a strong sense of belonging and a warm, friendly atmosphere pervades school life.

- 4.6 Parents agree that the school achieves high standards of behaviour and this view was fully borne out during the period of the inspection. Courteous and considerate, pupils conduct themselves extremely well. The school's behaviour policy is clear; a significant minority of pupils, however, feel that there is unfairness and inconsistency in the meting out of rewards and sanctions; senior management is reviewing this aspect of school practice. Pupils say that instances of bullying are extremely rare and that differences are resolved promptly and effectively.
- 4.7 Arrangements for health and safety are effective. Since the last inspection, there have been many improvements, such as the introduction of an e-safety policy and fire safety training for the pupils, pedestrian-only areas in the school grounds and enhanced staff safety induction training. The academic extension programme contains excellent material on personal well-being. The safeguarding policy is robust and implemented successfully. All staff receive regular child protection training. Appropriate measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards, and thorough risk assessments are carried out before school trips. The Medical Centre makes excellent provision for pupils who are unwell. The school has a detailed plan to improve further the educational access for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities.
- 4.8 Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits. Mealtimes are civilised, congenial occasions. Some pupils expressed misgivings about the quality of the food: during the inspection it was plentiful and nutritious, with a good choice on the menus. The curriculum incorporates a full programme of sport and exercise.
- 4.9 The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and correctly stored.

4.(c) The quality of boarding education

- 4.10 A boarding inspection was conducted by Ofsted in November 2008. The ISI inspection has considered boarding in a whole-school context. The boarding experience is good, with many excellent features, and it is a strong factor in promoting the overall personal development of the pupils in accordance with the aims of the school. The school has fully implemented the recommendations of the Ofsted inspection.
- 4.11 A distinctive feature of boarding at Queen Margaret's is its 'horizontal' structure, whereby all the boarders in a year group are accommodated under one roof and they move together to new premises each year. The pupils say that a great benefit of sharing accommodation with all of their boarding contemporaries throughout their time at the school is that it gives them a wide pool from which to develop friendships. Boarders state that close friendships with their peers in the houses make a major contribution to their enjoyment of boarding. An administrative and social advantage of 'horizontal' boarding is that all of the provision in a particular boarding house is geared specifically to the needs and interests of that year group. The houses are efficiently and sympathetically run, and some senior pupils help to supervise the juniors' bedtime routine. Boarders are afforded increasing independence according

to their age, with sixth-formers, for instance, being able to prepare and eat breakfast in their own houses.

- 4.12 During the evenings and weekends all of the school's facilities are available for recreation and study, and these are much appreciated. 'Cellars' has been developed into a social hub and meeting space for the older pupils. There is a good, varied programme of weekend activities, albeit more suited to the younger pupils who say that they are enthusiastic participants. The older pupils felt that little was provided for them, but a number said that they were happy to make their own arrangements.
- 4.13 The quality of accommodation and the standard of decoration in the houses range from satisfactory to excellent. The boarding house for Year 11 was built six years ago and the school has undertaken a rolling programme of refurbishment and modernisation of the other houses. In a number of houses the redesigning of bedrooms and communal spaces has created a more homely atmosphere. The pupils add distinctive decorations, such as collages of photographs, to their personal areas.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of the governance of the school is excellent. The governing body exercises effective oversight and is wholeheartedly committed to the ethos and aims of the school. Bringing to the table a wide range of expertise, the governors conscientiously discharge their responsibility for educational standards, financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. A few of the governors are former pupils of the school and most of them are parents of past and/or present pupils. Consequently they enjoy an intimate knowledge not only of the school's history but also of its current day-to-day life.
- 5.2 The governors give valued support and advice to the headmaster, with whom communication is frequent and fruitful. Governors have been actively involved in the extensive review of policies, practices and procedures which has taken place in recent months. The excellent short-term development plan is detailed, realistic and to the point. The comprehensive five-year strategic development plan reflects vision and determination. The succession committee has been set up in order to find new governors of high calibre, thus ensuring the continuity of strong governance.
- 5.3 Regular meetings of the main board and the executive committee ensure that the governors are kept up to date and fully informed. The governors are diligent and effective in discharging their responsibilities for child protection, safeguarding, welfare, health and safety, receiving and reviewing regular reports on these aspects of the school's provision. An advisory group of former governors has been established in order to retain their experience and expertise in specific areas. Links are also being forged between individual governors and aspects of school life such as academic departments.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.4 At all levels of responsibility, leadership and management are excellent and highly effective in furthering the aims of the school in terms of character and achievement. The senior leadership committee is dedicated and hard-working; the clarity of educational direction provided by leadership and management is reflected in the high quality of the pupils' education and their personal development.
- 5.5 Leadership is creative and constructively critical. During the past eighteen months many aspects of the school have been looked at afresh, with consequent changes and improvements, which advance the pupils' education and personal development. The rescheduled school day achieves a better balance of academic work, extra-curricular activities and free time. A strengthened tutor system is academically and pastorally beneficial. Reallocation of rooms in the main building encourages personal initiative and independent learning, as do the new expectations regarding homework. The social advantages of the re-launched house arrangements include better, albeit incomplete, integration of different year groups. The leadership of change has been careful and consultative, and its management has been efficient and effective.
- 5.6 The school is extremely well run. An engaging sense of friendly purposefulness characterises school life. The success of the school's management may be attributed in large measure to a happy mixture of the informal and the formal. All of

those in senior positions are easily accessible and approachable. A comprehensive programme of regular minuted meetings, including those of the senior leadership committee, ensures that all aspects of the education provided are constantly examined in a constructively self-critical way, to the benefit of the pupils' all-round development. The senior leadership committee clearly and effectively communicates its priorities and expectations to staff, and is aware of the few areas which need improvement. There is, for example, unevenness in the application by departmental management of assessment and tracking data, and the structure and outcomes of the staff appraisal process lack central cohesion.

- 5.7 The school ensures that rigorous procedures are followed concerning the recruitment of all staff and governors, and a centralised register of appointments is kept accurately. Newly qualified teachers are given appropriate induction and support. All staff are suitably trained and aware of the importance of their roles in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety.
- 5.8 In their responses to the questionnaire, parents expressed great satisfaction with the governance and management of the school.

5.(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians

- 5.9 Between the school and parents, as elsewhere, relationships are excellent. Communication from the school is frequent and informative. Parents of prospective and new pupils are provided with all the required information about the school. Parents receive an e-letter from the headmaster at the start of each half term. The termly newsletter reflects a busy, happy school, as does the annual magazine, with its strong focus on academic departments and enrichment activities.
- 5.10 Parents are kept abreast of their children's academic progress through clear and constructive end-of-term reports (with feedback forms), half-termly grade cards and annual parents' meetings for each year group. The school encourages parents to contact their daughter's housemistress or tutor with any matters of concern: both the school and parents say that the establishment of a more prominent role for the tutor has improved the quality of communication. Any significant parental concerns are brought to meetings of the senior leadership committee, so that comparisons may be made and records kept. A few parents expressed dissatisfaction with delays in the answering of e-mails, which is being addressed by senior management, but on the whole parents feel that information from the school is readily available, that they can communicate easily with the school and that any concerns are handled well.
- 5.11 The thriving parents' and friends' association promotes initiatives which include the provision of guest speakers, opportunities for work experience and support for a range of school events. Despite its widespread clientele, parents who live within easy reach of the school enthusiastically support their daughters on touchlines, at plays and concerts, and at other school functions.
- 5.12 Parents wholeheartedly subscribe to the ethos of the school and thoroughly approve of the education which their daughters are receiving.

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

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 two governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and 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 Paul Spillane	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Julia Burns	Head, GSA school
Mrs Lucy Elphinstone	Head of Sixth Form, GSA school
Mrs Denise Hammersley	Vice Principal, ISA school
Mr Andrew Williams	Deputy Head, HMC school