

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## INSPECTION REPORT ON

### Christ's Hospital

Full Name of the School	<b>Christ's Hospital</b>
DCSF Number	<b>938/6011</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>1120090</b>
Address	<b>Horsham, West Sussex RH13 0LJ.</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01403 247432</b>
Fax Number	<b>01403 255283</b>
Email Address	<b>enquiries@christs-hospital.org.uk</b>
Headmaster	<b>Mr John Franklin</b>
Chairman of Governors	<b>Professor Lance Lanyon</b>
Age Range	<b>11 to 18</b>
Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> September 2009</b>

This inspection report follows the framework laid down by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The inspection was carried out under the arrangements of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. It was also carried out under Section 162A(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002 as amended by the Education Act 2005, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009.

The inspection was carried out in conjunction with Ofsted, Children's Directorate. The Ofsted report is available separately at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) under Inspection reports/Boarding schools.

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

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 Christ's Hospital was founded by Royal Charter in 1552 to provide a full boarding education for children from families who could not normally afford it. The school occupied Grey Friars Priory in Newgate, London as its primary site for 350 years. Girls were educated at a site in Hertford from 1707, and the boys moved to its current purpose-built site near Horsham in 1902. The girls' school in Hertford merged with the boys in 1985. The financial support of the City of London Corporation and twenty livery companies of the city enables considerable subsidy of school fees for the majority of pupils. Throughout its history, the school has been managed and administered by the Christ's Hospital Foundation but, in 2007, the school became a charitable company in its own right, with its own board of governors. The previous ISI inspection took place in 2003.
- 1.2 The school occupies a 1200-acre site, with the majority of its buildings arranged symmetrically around the central courtyard, and its main boarding houses situated along the long central avenue. Recent additions include sports pitches, a sports hall complex with swimming pool, and a theatre.
- 1.3 The school currently educates 850 pupils (430 boys and 420 girls), including 275 in the sixth form. All are boarders except a small number of children of members of staff. Pupils come from a very wide range of backgrounds, with a majority coming from the greater London area, and are selected on the basis of competitive entrance examinations, interviews and a boarding 'taster' visit. Nearly all enter the school at age eleven into Year 7; a small number enter the sixth form on the basis of GCSE results and interview. After A levels, almost all pupils proceed to a wide variety of American and UK universities, including Oxford and Cambridge, Harvard and Yale.
- 1.4 Pupils take a range of nationally standardised aptitude and ability tests shortly after entering the school. These indicate that their average ability has been well above the national average. If they perform in line with their ability, pupils will achieve results at GCSE and A level that are well above the average for all maintained secondary schools, and approaching or in line with the average for selective maintained secondary schools. Nine pupils have English as an additional language but do not require additional language support. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs, and the school has identified a further 90 with varying degrees of learning difficulty or disability (LDD). Of these, 30 receive additional support with their learning.
- 1.5 For over 450 years, the school has remained faithful to its founding principle which is to provide a high quality education for children who would not otherwise have the chance in life that their potential deserves. The school's stated objective is to enable every boy and girl to achieve their full academic potential and develop their talents and interests in a caring boarding community which fosters respect for others, self-confidence, a sense of service and a love of learning. This is underpinned by a series of over forty aims outlining the school's expectations and provision, among which are the desire to provide a structured academic environment in which pupils are encouraged to learn and make progress; to enable pupils to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally; to develop integrity, judgement, loyalty and leadership skills; and to develop links with parents through effective and regular communication.

- 1.6 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
Second Form	Year 7
Third Form	Year 8
Little Erasmus	Year 9
Upper Fourth	Year 10
Great Erasmus	Year 11
Deputy Grecians	Year 12
Grecians	Year 13

## **2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

### **The Educational Experience Provided**

- 2.1 The school provides an overall educational experience of good quality, which meets the school's objective of enabling all pupils to achieve their full academic potential and to develop their individual talents, ideas and interests. Since the previous inspection, good progress has been made in strengthening and developing the curriculum. In Year 9, provision to reduce by one the number of examination courses followed has released time to broaden the curriculum by the introduction of information and communication technology (ICT), personal, social and health education (PSHE) and a school-devised course to enhance pupils' thinking and learning skills. Opportunity has also been provided to offer a more rigorous international GCSE in mathematics and ICT and, for some, a chance to take this examination early and to start a mathematics AS-level module in Year 11. The extra-curricular programme has been revised and re-scheduled to make more effective use of both staff and physical resources.
- 2.2 In Years 7 and 8, the curriculum is broad and well balanced and gives experience of all areas of educational development. Pupils select their GCSE options towards the end of Year 8 and this leads to a degree of specialisation not often encountered at this stage. A good choice of GCSE subjects is offered to pupils and, in the sixth form, the excellent range of 23 A-level course options includes music technology, art history and archaeology. The taught curriculum, supported by the comprehensive extra-curricular programme and the experience of living in a close, supportive community, is very effective in enabling pupils to develop intellectually, physically, creatively and aesthetically. All pupils learn about and use a range of technological applications, although the provision and use of ICT is not consistent across subjects. Pupils have many opportunities to use and improve their speaking and listening skills.
- 2.3 The importance of pupils' personal development is recognised within the PSHE programme, which is adequate for the aims and ethos of the school. Time available for the teaching of this subject is not generous and, in the sixth form, no timetabled provision is made. The work done within the formal PSHE curriculum is supported by the contribution of boarding staff on a more informal basis. The current PSHE programme lacks continuity and coherence. Outside the formal programme, pupils have other opportunities to broaden their education in, for example, the sixth-form lecture programme, and the very good involvement of older pupils in service activities and in community work. The school organises limited work experience for pupils in the holidays, both within the UK and in Europe. The breadth and range of the extra-curricular activities available are praised by both parents and pupils. This excellent provision includes the combined cadet force (CCF), Scouts and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.
- 2.4 Pupils receive effective help and guidance when decisions have to be made about the subjects to study, firstly in Year 8 when GCSE options are chosen, and then when decisions are made about AS- and A-level options. This guidance is provided by the careers department, houseparents, tutors and subject teachers, and parents are also involved. Pupils in Year 10 take a range of specialised careers and aptitude tests which lead to a personal report that makes suggestions about possible career paths. In Year 11, a subject fair is held so that pupils can talk to teachers about the subjects they plan to study, and also find out more about those which were not offered at GCSE. Considerable time and care is devoted to helping sixth-form pupils with applications to universities. Pupils are well prepared for moving on to the next stage of their education and into their adult lives, but the focus of this activity is

almost entirely aimed at university entrance. The profile of careers education and guidance within the school is not uniformly high, and is not helped by the lack of a permanent base.

- 2.5 The school has drawn up an appropriate curriculum policy and the curriculum itself is well planned to enable pupils to benefit from the education provided. Overall, this experience serves the needs of pupils very well. Underpinned by the recent comprehensive academic development plan, subject documentation and schemes of work, curriculum planning is focused clearly on raising standards and responding to pupils' changing academic needs. The director of studies and heads of department, together with the academic review committee, enable the curriculum to develop and remain at the heart of the school's life.
- 2.6 The school recognises the important requirements of those who have LDD and those with special educational needs, and education is provided appropriately for them. A member of staff is designated to co-ordinate this area. Written policy statements and procedures give details of the help available to pupils, and who is responsible for implementing the necessary support. The details of the ninety pupils identified by the school as requiring learning support are accessible to all staff, but teachers are not always clear as to the level of subject-specific support needed. The learning support co-ordinator has insufficient time and resources to support fully the education and learning of those pupils identified, and the school is working to address this. The English language expertise of the few pupils for whom English is an additional language is considered to be sufficiently well developed not to warrant additional support.
- 2.7 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

### **Pupils' Learning and Achievements**

- 2.8 Pupils' learning and achievement are good, and above the level expected for their age, ability and background. Boys and girls are well educated and are well grounded in knowledge, skills and understanding in their activities and in subjects studied. They apply these effectively, and develop the essential skills and attitudes for work and study very strongly. Thus, the school's aim to foster in pupils a love of learning, and to develop in them the independence of mind that will enable and motivate them to continue to educate themselves throughout their lives, is well met. Since the previous inspection, learning and achievement throughout the school have been maintained at a good standard in relation to pupils' abilities.
- 2.9 Pupils demonstrate very well-developed critical thinking skills and understanding, showing, for example, high-level ability to evaluate evidence, to use their evaluations to inform the direction of debate in class, and to give focused critiques of one another's performances. Their learning is enhanced by their very effective speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. These were demonstrated well in articulating an analysis of different learning experiences that they have encountered, in listening to one another in group and language work, in reading aloud expressively and accurately, and in producing excellent descriptive writing. They display a high degree of mathematical competence, which they apply not only in mathematics lessons but in their studies of other subjects, such as geography, technology and the sciences. Pupils' learning is enhanced by their generally good ICT skills, which enable them both to carry out independent research using the internet and to produce well-presented written work, to make effective use of presentation software, and to analyse data.
- 2.10 Pupils consistently demonstrate well-developed abilities to think logically and independently, to contribute new ideas, and to show reasoning ability by linking theory to practice and cause to effect. Their progress was usually good or better. Where it was less than that, pupils' learning styles had not been taken into account in teaching or they were not given opportunities to interact within lessons.

- 2.11 No significant differences were seen in work or lessons in the relative achievement of boys and girls, of pupils in different year groups within the school, of those receiving learning support, or in different subjects or curricular areas.
- 2.12 Pupils' attainment at both GCSE and A level is good in relation to their abilities, results over the last three years for which comparative data is available being well above the national average for all maintained secondary schools, and at GCSE being at least in line with that for selective maintained schools. At A level, results are above the selective schools' average. In 2009, just over two-fifths of boys' GCSEs were graded A\*, while for girls the proportion was over a half. Over three-quarters of passes at A level were at A or B. Over the longer term, nationally standardised measures of assessment indicate that pupils' progress to GCSE is above national norms for pupils of similar ability. The school does not currently use similar measures to assess progress in the sixth form from GCSE to A level.
- 2.13 Pupils' individual and group achievements in other areas of school life are comprehensive and of a high standard, with strong performances in the Advanced Extension Award, Associated Board music examinations, entry to national orchestras, choral scholarships, speech and drama results, and a variety of Olympiads and academic challenge competitions. Pupils have also performed very well in sport, and individuals have competed at international level in rugby and squash, and at national level in athletics. The school band has regularly been invited to play at Lords. These experiences make a significant contribution to the pupils' personal development.
- 2.14 As pupils develop over time, they become increasingly confident in studying and organising their work independently. They make steady progress in developing the ability to take their own notes during lessons, making this transition initially under the guidance of their teachers but, increasingly, as they move up through the school, taking full responsibility for the content and layout of their written work.
- 2.15 Pupils naturally and comfortably work together in pairs or groups, both within and outside lessons, supporting one another's learning and helping each other appropriately. Team spirit and co-operation are enhanced by participating in many team sporting fixtures, the lunchtime band parade and other music groups and ensembles, in house competitions, and in drama. Pupils' learning and progress are enhanced by the excellent levels of effort, commitment and perseverance that they show in relation to their studies and activities. They settle down quickly at the start of lessons, concentrate strongly on the task in hand and enjoy learning in its many forms, both in and out of class.

### **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils**

- 2.16 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and a major strength of the school. Spiritual life is at the centre of the school's daily activities, offering individuals many moments each day to reflect upon and share their developing sense of the non-material aspects of human being. The school successfully meets its aims to reflect its Christian foundation while recognising the beliefs and values of others and to ensure its pupils are fitted pre-eminently for work and service in society. The achievements noted in the previous inspection have been maintained and extended, with the result that harmony, openness and tolerance are evident in all aspects of school life.
- 2.17 Pupils' excellent spiritual development lies at the heart of the school. Attendance at chapel involves all pupils and staff members. Services provide opportunities for prayer, reflection, participation and a moral address, as well as participating in song. Pupils show sensitivity to the beliefs and spiritual needs of each other, taking either an active or a reflective part in each service. The school's aim to foster an appreciation of those things which are fine and lovely

and of good repute is assisted by the appointment of an artist, a musician and two actors in residence, who develop the aesthetic aspect of the pupils' reflective natures as part of the routine curriculum. Pupils are confident about sharing personal insights in class, with some discussing their own experiences of Epiphany in an English lesson and linking this with secular as well as religious experience. Opportunities for spiritual growth outside the formal school day are evident in the well attended Urban Saints groups, in which "the Christian faith in all its mystery and splendour" is explored. Reflection on faith and belief was evident in pupils' knowledge of other faiths in religious education (RE) and the support of both the chaplain and boarding staff for pupils fasting during Ramadan. In an RE lesson, a variety of oral, listening and written tasks were effectively combined, while still allowing time for thoughtful reflection.

- 2.18 Pupils show a strong sense of justice and have been actively engaged in the recent creation of the Christ's Hospital Community Charter, a code of conduct to which all can assent. This was much appreciated by younger pupils, who felt that it encapsulated the expectations necessary for the harmonious establishment of a school community. Issues to support pupils' very good moral development are well addressed in the taught curriculum, with pupils focusing on racism, sexism and bullying in the texts being studied for GCSE. In addition, pupils debated the moral issues surrounding Jihad in RE, and expressed some strong individual views. Life in boarding houses demonstrates pupils' support for the rules that apply, with older pupils taking responsibility to support house staff. Younger pupils valued the important role that senior pupils had played in their early settling in to their houses. Groups such as Amnesty International give pupils the opportunity to consider moral issues in the world beyond school and to take some action.
- 2.19 The strong community life at the school is clearly in evidence, and greatly enhances the excellent social development and experience of all its members. Such daily events as marching into lunch by houses, accompanied by the band, inspire a clear sense of belonging in all pupils. New arrivals are quickly able to feel part of the body of the school. Pupils of all ages show great appreciation of this tradition, and actively cherish it. The school's charter ensures a sense amongst pupils of links with many established national institutions and routines such as Remembrance Day, and the Lord Mayor's procession in London. The patronage of the monarch anchors the pupils firmly within this national framework. More wide-ranging general knowledge of public institutions and services is limited by the relatively short time allocated to this strand in the PSHE provision. In addition, from Year 8, pupils take a responsible role in the well-being of the house community, acting as 'buddies' to the new members of the year below. The recently instituted school council fosters pupils' collaboration across the year groups and presents an opportunity to take initiative and contribute to the life of the community. Over 100 of the Community Action volunteers take regular part in the wider community, with involvement in hospices, nurseries, charity shops, activities for those with disabilities and work with the elderly. The Ready and Able Club volunteer for such activities. Pupils' social development and opportunities to take initiative are supported strongly in the CCF, Scouts, and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and peer mentoring schemes.
- 2.20 The school cherishes its unique cultural identity and all pupils make a conscious choice to subscribe to its distinctive ethos. Their cultural awareness is very strong. The uniform marks out a Christ's Hospital pupil and all those spoken to, from Year 7 to Year 13, were fully supportive of it and wore it with evident pride. This shared culture of school life gives pupils a confident platform from which to appreciate and respect other cultures and traditions. The varied backgrounds of the pupils themselves bring a strong multi-cultural focus into the heart of the school. Many opportunities in the curriculum exist to explore other cultural identities, notably in the GCSE English literature syllabus where this is a

poetry focus, leading to sensitive and empathic responses from pupils. The Arts Committee, involving staff and pupils from English, drama, art, music, and theology and philosophy, ensures effective cross-curricular links, leading to cultural exploration of agreed themes, such as *Jason and the Argonauts* and *Odyssey*. The well-established link with Romania gives pupils a valuable opportunity to visit and work in this country, developing in them an excellent sense of cultural difference and consequent responsibility. Music is a shared focus for the cultural life of the school and pupils showed evident enjoyment of the singing of a spiritual in chapel. Regular trips available for pupils enable a broadening of cultural awareness, visiting such places as Germany, Morocco, France, Egypt and Italy.

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

### **The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)**

- 2.22 The quality of teaching throughout the school is good and, in a significant proportion of lessons, it is outstanding. Teaching enables pupils of all abilities to acquire new knowledge, increase their understanding, develop their skills, and achieve public examination results above the level expected for their ability. The standard of teaching fulfils the school's objective of enabling pupils to achieve their full academic potential. Since the previous inspection, the quality of assessment has improved and staff now more regularly provide advice to pupils on ways of improving their progress. Parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire rated the contribution made by teaching to the pupils' progress as one of the strongest aspects of the school.
- 2.23 Teaching provides a good level of challenge, and pupils are very much expected to be actively involved in the learning process and take responsibility for their own progress. Content of lessons is not restricted to imparting the knowledge needed to pass examinations, and much of the teaching requires pupils to use and apply their specialist knowledge and skills in many different ways. In a history lesson, for example, pupils critically evaluated their responses and used these to influence the direction of debate.
- 2.24 The teaching successfully encourages and stimulates pupils to show interest in their work, to demonstrate their keenness to do well and to make significant intellectual, physical and creative efforts. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and the high standard of teaching gives them many opportunities to work independently and show initiative. As a result of these opportunities, pupils enjoy their lessons, and most enjoy learning for its own sake.
- 2.25 The relationships between pupils and teachers are very supportive and good humoured. This is continuously fostered and leads to a purposeful and supportive teaching atmosphere in which the pupils behave well and enjoy learning. The willingness of teachers to provide subject clinics in the evening and at the weekend helps pupils make sustained progress and is of particular benefit to those with specific needs or difficulties.
- 2.26 Teaching demonstrates a strong subject knowledge and understanding of the material taught at all levels. Many teachers have an evident passion for their subjects which they share with their pupils. This frequently enriches the learning experience, as teachers incorporate anecdotes and unusual background knowledge to enliven lessons, and provide new perspectives to understand the subject matter. Teaching is almost always carefully planned to make good and purposeful use of time and to employ effectively the resources available within the teaching rooms. In a geography lesson, pupils were issued with laptop computers, set clear and challenging tasks and targets, and encouraged to use their initiative. As a result, rapid progress was achieved.

- 2.27 At its best, teaching employs a wide variety of techniques and learning tasks, and uses methods that engage the attention and involvement of the whole class. In a Latin lesson, the teacher set the repetition of grammatical structures to music, and encouraged the whole class to sing. Teachers know their pupils well, and take account of their individual capabilities, prior understanding and learning needs. In a very few lessons, teaching was less successful because it was not planned thoroughly enough, and pupils were not given opportunities to contribute or to make sufficient progress.
- 2.28 In most subjects, the marking of pupils' work is comprehensive and thorough, and evaluative comments provide useful guidance for pupils on how to make further progress. On a few occasions, work was not always returned promptly, marked thoroughly enough or provided with diagnostic comments. In most lessons, well-planned and well-orchestrated question and answer sessions provide very good opportunities for teachers to assess pupils' understanding, and the dialogue between them also enhances learning. This process helps to influence subsequent lesson planning.
- 2.29 The introduction of a consistent and clearly defined grading system throughout the school has improved pupils' understanding of assessment criteria and provided them with the means to monitor their own progress. Reports and the three-weekly grade cards provide effective information about performance and progress. Pupils who are achieving unsatisfactory performance are swiftly identified and appropriate support is provided. Increasing use is being made of nationally standardised test data to evaluate pupils' progress against national benchmarks. This is leading to more refined judgements on individual pupils' progress and departments' performance.
- 2.30 The school meets the regulatory requirements for teaching [Standard 1].

### **3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS**

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

- 3.1 The quality of pastoral care, support and guidance for pupils is good. The school has maintained a high quality of pastoral support since the previous inspection and meets its aim to provide each pupil with a calm, caring and supportive extended family environment. However, arrangements to safeguard and promote pupils' welfare are insufficiently rigorous.
- 3.2 Staff consistently show a high level of care for the well-being of their pupils, giving very generously of their time, effort and expertise. They provide excellent understanding and support. This pastoral care is at the heart of the school's culture and is warmly appreciated by pupils and their parents. The very effective support of boarding staff is central to the provision of advice and guidance, and complemented effectively by the work of other staff with a pastoral role, such as the chaplain, counsellor and medical team. Pupils feel safe and well looked after. The induction and guidance for pupils entering the school in Year 7 are particularly good. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress through the new grading procedure and report cards has recently improved.
- 3.3 Boarding house staff provide a strong focus for the school's pastoral arrangements to be effectively implemented, and their work is enhanced by very good arrangements involving peer support from older pupils who act as guides and mentors. Pupils are also able to choose a personal tutor if they wish. This valuable provision is an informal and sometimes inconsistent arrangement and currently lacks clear central co-ordination, common expectations and consistent training and evaluation.
- 3.4 Relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves, seen in the houses, during school activities, in lessons and around the school site, are warm and mutually respectful. While some pupils can occasionally be critical of inconsistencies between staff over disciplinary matters, they warmly appreciate the time and effort that staff devote to their progress and well-being. Staff are seen as very approachable. Pupils show a high level of respect and support for each other and senior pupils are very helpful to younger boys and girls.
- 3.5 Pupils are polite and well behaved. Codes of conduct, including expectations and guidance on behaviour, rules, child protection awareness, countering bullying and tolerance are given high profiles, and are printed in the school calendar. Pupils report that levels of bullying are low and that it is dealt with effectively. Changes have recently been made to ensure greater consistency in the implementation of sanctions for poor behaviour, and to concentrate more clearly on the promotion of good behaviour.
- 3.6 A high awareness of the importance of child protection is evident among staff, who have had appropriate training in this area. The school's policy for safeguarding pupils' welfare offers good guidance to staff on responding to concerns, and the document itself includes all the required content. Three child protection officers in the school have all received the appropriate inter-agency training. While the safeguarding policy is well drawn up, it has not been implemented fully or consistently. Governors have not carried out and documented their own formal review of safeguarding procedures annually, safe recruitment practices have not always been followed in full, and the school has failed to identify and thus remedy safeguarding deficiencies with the required urgency.

- 3.7 Measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards are good. Policies are extensive, thorough and well implemented. Audits and risk assessments have been undertaken with the support of the local fire service, and the improvements recommended by them have been carried out. Regular fire evacuation practices are conducted and clear instructions posted throughout the school. The health and safety committee brings together representatives from the school, the Foundation, the sports centre and the enterprise company, ensuring regular consideration of health and safety issues. Clear lines of responsibility have been developed, with the health and safety officer monitoring the implementation of risk assessment and reduction measures. Appropriate policies and procedures for first aid and the testing of electrical equipment are implemented effectively. The school fulfils its duty under special educational needs and disability legislation. Good health care is provided by the well-staffed medical centre. Admissions registers have been appropriately maintained, and regular roll calls monitor pupils' presence during the day. The small number of day pupils (all staff children) are attached to and registered in boarding houses. The school has not hitherto classified them as day pupils, and thus has not maintained the required formal attendance register for them.
- 3.8 Pupils are encouraged to be healthy, both by developing good eating habits and by taking regular exercise. Healthy eating is studied during nutrition classes and this is complemented by posters encouraging sensible choice, by food preparation that pays attention to nutritional issues, and by the provision of healthy menu options and good quality meals. Pupils gain considerable exercise walking around the site and by engaging in curricular and extra-curricular physical education and sport.
- 3.9 The school meets most of the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3]. In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:
- (a) ensure that deficiencies in its safeguarding procedures are identified and remedied without delay; ensure that safe recruitment practices are consistently and efficiently carried out and recorded; and ensure that the governing body carries out its own formal review annually of the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils' welfare [Regulations 3.(2)(b) and 3.(3)];
  - (b) ensure that the formal register of attendance for the small number of day pupils is properly maintained [Regulation 3.(9)].

### **The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community**

- 3.10 The overall quality of the links with parents and the community is good. The school has established an effective partnership with its parents, the great majority of whom strongly support the school and all it does for their children. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the life of the local community, and this supports strongly the school's mission to enable pupils to show responsibility towards society and equip them for service to others. Since the previous inspection, the school has increased its use of the website as a communication tool, produced a parents' handbook, and refined its grading system to provide improved information on pupils' progress.
- 3.11 The school values its relationship with parents, a very high proportion of whom responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and over half of those made additional comments. The great majority of responses were highly positive, showing particular satisfaction with the teaching, the boarding provision, extra-curricular activities and with the way the school promotes high standards of behaviour and worthwhile attitudes. In their comments, parents were also particularly pleased with the ethos of high expectations, the strong and caring house system, the regular grading system, and the good relationships pupils enjoy with their teachers.

Many spoke glowingly of the school's encouragement for pupils to stretch themselves and reach high academic standards.

- 3.12 A significant minority of parents expressed concern about a perceived lack of encouragement to be involved in the life of the school (a view also expressed at the time of the previous inspection), the opportunities to discuss and be involved in their children's progress, and the way the school has communicated with them and handled their concerns. Inspectors found no conclusive first-hand evidence to support these views.
- 3.13 Parents are encouraged to attend and are welcomed at many school events such as concerts, sporting activities, dramatic performances and parents' evenings, and such occasions are advertised in the calendar, website and newsletter. Many parents are not in a position to respond to these invitations, although many travel to school to see their children at weekends. The school acknowledges that not enough is yet done to involve parents fully, recognising that, for most of them, the school is their first contact with the world of boarding.
- 3.14 The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory and is improving and developing. It includes the three-weekly grade cards, much appreciated by parents, and the creation of a new parents' handbook. Twice-yearly reports about their children's progress are helpful, diagnostic and informative. The school plans to develop its website to provide parents with further information and improved opportunities to enjoy two-way communication and discussion. It accepts that not all parents have the opportunity to access electronic information and so written information is also provided. Other useful sources of information include the school calendar, school magazine and regular newsletters from the headmaster. A few parents expressed some concern about the regularity and ease of communication with the boarding houses, although others felt that communication with their children's houses was effective. Some parents reported that telephone messages and emails are not always returned promptly.
- 3.15 The school takes the concerns of parents seriously and makes every effort to deal with them appropriately and effectively, resolving these informally wherever possible. Formal complaints received during the last year were handled with care and sensitivity. The school's complaints policy for parents, while providing helpful guidance, does not contain the level of procedural detail required.
- 3.16 Links with the local and wider community are outstanding. The school's vibrant Community Action programme involves a significant number of older pupils, who help in local primary schools, special schools and nurseries. They are also involved in hospital and hospice visiting, helping in local charity shops and in volunteering to help with Riding for the Disabled. Many children from local schools come to the school take part in badminton, drama challenge workshops and sports activities. Elderly local residents are entertained to lunch on a monthly basis. Music plays an important part in the school's outstanding work in the community. This includes lunchtime concerts which local residents attend, the community service music group, and visits by musicians to local schools and homes for the elderly. Pupils are regularly involved in charitable fund raising. Valuable links with the wider community are established through the school's long-standing work in Romania and international trips and visits abroad.
- 3.17 The school meets most of the regulatory requirements for the provision of information and the manner in which complaints are to be handled [Standards 6 and 7]. In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:
- (a) ensure that its complaints policy for parents includes clearer timescales for the management of complaints, specifically outlines the stages when complaints can be made in writing, provides specifically for a written record to be kept of all

complaints and of the stage at which they were resolved, and clarifies the confidential nature of all correspondence, statements and records, except when required otherwise [Regulations 7.(c), (e), (j) and (k)].

### **The Quality of Boarding Education**

- 3.18 The outstanding quality of the boarding experience at Christ's Hospital is central to the pupils' education and personal development, and performs a vital role in fulfilling the school's aims. Since the previous inspection boarders have benefited from significantly improved facilities in the houses, the establishment of a school council to help channel pupils' views and a more consistent sanctions system. The school plans to develop further training for boarding staff and improve communication between parents and the boarding houseparents.
- 3.19 Warm and open friendships quickly develop amongst pupils within and between year groups in the boarding houses, and the great majority of those spoken to felt safe and well protected. As one older pupil remarked, "We know we are going to live in close proximity for seven years, and so we quickly learn how to get on with each other". A good system of support from the pupil 'buddies' helps new pupils settle in, and house captains and their deputies are recognised as good role models and mentors who can offer help and guidance to others in their houses. The majority of pupils appreciate the dedicated and caring approach of the house staff, including the matrons who play a pivotal role, and the houses create a strong sense of individuality and community in a secure and supportive atmosphere. This is, of course, exemplified by the pride that the pupils show as they march as a house into lunch, and eat together, each day. Pupils develop positive and appropriate relationships with houseparents and tutors.
- 3.20 Boarders are offered an excellent programme of sports, music, drama and other activities after the formal school day in the evenings and at weekends, and these are strongly supported by the pupils. The sports hall, music school, art department, library and other facilities are available most of the time for the pupils to gain maximum benefit. At the weekends, pupils appreciate the house-run Saturday night films, discos, quizzes and other informal events, and senior pupils are allowed into Horsham. Inter-house competitions (such as the popular house singing competition) also help to promote a strong and healthy sense of house identity.
- 3.21 All the boarding houses have been fully refurbished over the past few years and the standard of accommodation is excellent. Some variety of style and layout exists, which helps to maintain individual house identity, and all pupils speak appreciatively of the generous common rooms and games rooms. The two co-educational upper-sixth houses are of an especially high standard and provide a clear and valuable link with, and preparation for, the halls of residence that pupils will encounter at university. These senior boarders are each issued with a school laptop, and all houses are fully networked with a good provision of computers. Boarding at Christ's Hospital successfully fosters confidence and a respect for others and prepares the pupils well for the next stage in their education and development.

## **4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

### **The Quality of Governance**

- 4.1 Governors provide strong support for the school's life and work, and contribute a wide range of expertise. They support strongly the school's mission to ensure that pupils benefit from a high quality boarding education, whilst continuing to maintain the school's charitable purpose. However, governance has provided insufficient oversight of governors' legal responsibilities as proprietors and lacked sufficient awareness of regulatory failures.
- 4.2 The school's governing body has been in existence for just two years and, in that time, has made great progress in achieving legal and operational separation of the school from the Christ's Hospital Foundation, creating new systems of governance and accountability through reporting systems and its sub-committee structure. In addition to re-defining the role of the school and the position they expect it to occupy in the independent school sector, governors have devoted considerable effort to developing an appropriate working relationship with the Foundation. Despite the recent legal separation, the Foundation still provides the major proportion of the school's funding, owns and maintains the school site, plays a major role in the selection of pupils, and remains the main provider of significant administrative and service functions. Educational priorities are being defined, refined and developed in order to ensure that the school's primary purpose and mission remain central to its work. Governors are starting to establish relationships with a wider range of school staff, and are kept informed about the school's progress through various reports and working contacts with senior staff.
- 4.3 Governors regularly review health and safety issues and the school's risk register, and have ensured that they fulfil their duties under special educational needs and discrimination legislation. However, governors have not yet paid sufficient attention to ensuring that the school fulfils all its statutory duties, and currently systems are not fully in place to assess and monitor all their legal responsibilities as proprietors. A number of regulatory failures have not been detected. They have not carried out and formally adopted and documented their required annual review of the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils' welfare, nor have they yet set up a rolling programme to approve many of the important school policies.

### **The Quality of Leadership and Management**

- 4.4 Much of the school's leadership and management makes a significant contribution to the success of the school and the quality of education provided. The strengths of leadership and management ensure that the school remains faithful to its founding mission – to provide an educational experience of breadth and excellence to equip pupils for success in life and service to others. Since the previous inspection, a new senior management team has been created, enabling sharper identification of improved educational priorities. However, the key management function to establish systems and procedures to ensure effective implementation of policies and monitor compliance with regulations is inadequately robust.
- 4.5 All but two of the senior management team have joined the school within the last two years and the whole team has worked very hard and rapidly to develop new systems of management and a clearer focus on educational and pastoral practices. They are aware that these are not yet fully developed, and that not enough time has elapsed for them all to be fully established and integrated within the school.

- 4.6 There is much within the leadership and management of the school which is of good quality. The clear vision of the headmaster and the impetus he brings to seek improvements to the education provided have raised the pulse of the school's life and work. Greater accountability for assessing academic success has been taken on by heads of department, although this culture of evaluation of school improvement has so far not been as strongly in evidence among the houseparents. The school has drawn up a comprehensive development plan, linking desired improvements and school priorities to the school's aims, and an academic development plan that provides a sharp analysis of future educational needs, providing the drive to raise standards still further. A wide range of pastoral and welfare policies and procedures has been drawn up, many designed to improve the support and guidance of pupils and increase their well-being. The new staff review procedure has been established to improve the professional development of teachers and non-teaching staff, and to offer opportunities for training that are effective and firmly linked to academic and pastoral goals. The induction of newly qualified teachers is effective.
- 4.7 Financial management is efficient and prudently organised, and is effective in providing the tools and resources to achieve successful outcomes for pupils. The routine administration of the school is efficient and unobtrusive.
- 4.8 However, the leadership and management also have some significant weaknesses. Systems and procedures have not always been robust or effective enough to identify failures to comply with some regulations and ensure that the required high standards for pupils' welfare have been fully met. In particular, the implementation of the safeguarding policy and the management of pupils' access to the sports centre have not been effective enough. Although policies have been rapidly developed, and the school is aware of the need now to review their effectiveness, monitoring of practice is currently not strong enough. Failures to carry out some recruitment checks promptly or fully, including checks of a few part-time staff with the Criminal Records Bureau, have become apparent. The school now acknowledges these deficiencies in oversight and accountability and is working to address them.
- 4.9 The school does not meet the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff [Standard 4]. In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:
- (a) ensure that all the required checks on previous employment history, character and professional references, and relevant qualifications are carried out promptly [Regulations 4.(2)(a), 4C.(2)(c) and 4C.(3)];
  - (b) ensure that checks through the Criminal Records Bureau are carried out on all part-time staff before appointment or as soon as practicable after appointment [Regulations 4.(2)(b) and 4C.(2)(d)];
  - (c) ensure that all checks required for staff working with boarding pupils are fully carried out before appointment [Regulations 4.(2)(e) and 4C.(2)(g)].
- 4.10 The school meets most of the regulatory requirements for premises and accommodation [Standard 5]. In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:
- (a) ensure that the welfare of pupils is fully safeguarded when they use the sports centre [Regulation 5.(e)].
- 4.11 The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers and meets its requirements.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

### Overall Conclusions

- 5.1 Christ's Hospital is a school with a long history and tradition and was founded to educate those in need. It is conspicuously successful in its aim to provide a high quality boarding experience and a broad and challenging academic education. The strong house communities and the care and concern shown by all staff contribute strongly to the outstanding relationships and high standards of pupils' personal development. GCSE and A-level results have been good and above the level expected for the ability and background of the pupils, who are keen to learn and show commendably positive attitudes to their work. These achievements are enhanced by the excellent quality of the extra-curricular programme and opportunities for service in the community. However, the personal tutor system, the relevance and continuity of the PSHE programme, and the level of support for pupils with LDD and those requiring learning support do not operate as effectively. More significantly, some serious failures in monitoring compliance with regulations and the safeguarding of pupils have become apparent. Governors and senior managers are now aware of these deficiencies and are working to address them.
- 5.2 Considerable progress has been made since the previous inspection, and relevant recommendations made in 2003 have been carefully considered and appropriate action taken. In particular, the massive programme of complete refurbishment of all boarding houses has been completed to a very high standard; significant developments in the curriculum have taken place; a more robust and effective staff review and development programme has been created; a more effective development plan has been drawn up; and improvements to the assessment of pupils' work have been successfully implemented.
- 5.3 The school does not comply with the regulatory requirements. It does not meet Standard 3 (welfare, health and safety), Standard 4 (suitability of staff), Standard 5 (premises and accommodation), and Standard 7 (the manner in which complaints are handled).

### Next Steps

- 5.4 In order to raise still further the good standard of education provided, and to enhance pupils' progress, welfare and personal development, the school should take the following action.
1. Review, evaluate and improve the continuity and effectiveness of:
    - the personal tutor system;
    - the provision of PSHE; and
    - arrangements for pupils requiring learning support.
  2. Develop stronger and more effective systems to monitor implementation of policies, and identify and remedy areas of regulatory non-compliance.
- 5.5 In order to meet all the regulatory requirements, the school must:
- (1) ensure that deficiencies in its safeguarding procedures are identified and remedied without delay; ensure that safe recruitment practices are consistently and efficiently carried out and recorded; and ensure that the governing body carries out its own formal review annually of the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils' welfare [Regulations 3.(2)(b) and 3.(3)];
  - (2) ensure that the formal register of attendance for the small number of day pupils is properly maintained [Regulation 3(9)];

- (3) ensure that all the required checks on previous employment history, character and professional references, and relevant qualifications are carried out promptly [Regulations 4.(2)(a), 4C.(2)(c) and 4C.(3)];
- (4) ensure that checks through the Criminal Records Bureau are carried out on all part-time staff before appointment or as soon as practicable after appointment [Regulations 4.(2)(b) and 4C.(2)(d)];
- (5) ensure that all checks required for staff working with boarding pupils are fully carried out before appointment [Regulations 4.(2)(e) and 4C.(2)(g)];
- (6) ensure that the welfare of pupils is fully safeguarded when they use the sports centre [Regulation 5.(e)];
- (7) ensure that its complaints policy for parents includes clearer timescales for the management of complaints, specifically outlines the stages when complaints can be made in writing, provides specifically for a written record to be kept of all complaints and of the stage at which they were resolved, and clarifies the confidential nature of all correspondence, statements and records, except when required otherwise [Regulations 7.(c), (e), (j) and (k)].

## **6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> September 2009. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended chapel services and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the medical centre. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.
- 6.2 National Minimum Boarding Standards were inspected by a team of five Ofsted inspectors over four days.

### **List of Inspectors**

Mr Timothy Holgate	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Perdita Davidson	Deputy Head, GSA school
Mr Ian Galbraith	Head, HMC school
Mrs Helen Griffiths	Retired Inspector
Mr Colin Haddon	Deputy Head, ISA school
Mrs Diana Jefkins	Former Head, GSA school
Mr David Warwick	Former Head of Department, HMC school
Dr John Wharam	Director of Teaching and Learning, HMC school