

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS COUNCIL  
(ISC)**

**\*\*\*\*\***

**INSPECTION OF**

**LINGFIELD NOTRE DAME SCHOOL**

**by the**

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE  
(ISI)**

**on**

**January 29<sup>th</sup> – February 1<sup>st</sup> 2007**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## INSPECTION REPORT ON

### Lingfield Notre Dame School

Full Name of the School	<b>Lingfield Notre Dame School</b>
DfES Number	<b>936/6255</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>295598</b>
Address	<b>Racecourse Road, Lingfield, Surrey, RH7 6PH</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01342 833176</b>
Fax Number	<b>01342 836048</b>
Email Address	<b>office@lingfieldnotredame.co.uk</b>
Principal	<b>Mrs Nuala Shepley</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Paul Yeates</b>
Age Range	<b>2-18</b>
Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>January 29<sup>th</sup> – February 1<sup>st</sup> 2007</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 has accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003.

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

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION</b>	<b>2</b>
The Educational Experience Provided	2
Pupils' Learning and Achievements	3
Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils	6
The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)	7
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS</b>	<b>9</b>
The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils	9
The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community	10
<b>4 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>12</b>
The Quality of Governance	12
The Quality of Leadership and Management	12
<b>5 CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS</b>	<b>14</b>
Overall Conclusions	14
Next Steps	14
<b>6 INSPECTION EVIDENCE</b>	<b>15</b>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 Lingfield Notre Dame School stands on a 35-acre site on the outskirts of the village of Lingfield, in the south-east corner of Surrey. It is a co-educational day school for pupils aged from two and a half to eighteen years of age. The school was initially founded in 1940 in Lingfield by the School Sisters of Notre Dame as a secondary convent school for girls. Substantial expansion in recent years has extended the age range and admitted boys to all classes. Though the younger pupils are housed in a separate building, the school functions as one school under one Principal. Since 1987 the school has been an educational foundation, a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity, administered by trustees and an appointed board of Governors.
- 1.2 The school aims to develop self worth in every student, promote traditional values in a nurturing environment, stimulate intellectual curiosity and develop initiative and achieve high academic standards in a relaxed but disciplined atmosphere. Additional supporting intentions are listed in the prospectus and other literature.
- 1.3 A total of 742 pupils are currently on roll, 354 boys and 388 girls. Sixty-two are under 5 of whom 26 are part time. A further 235 are in the junior school. Four hundred and forty-five pupils are in the senior school of whom 93 are in the sixth form. Admission is through assessment for all prospective pupils from Year 1. In the junior school this is part of a 'taster' day prior to entry. From year 7 upwards a formal admission test is given and an interview required. Entry to Year 12 is dependent upon GCSE results. For all, a reference from the previous school is required.
- 1.4 The full range of ability is represented, although standardised tests show that pupils overall are above average ability in the junior school and in the sixth form compared with national norms. Their ability is well above average in the senior school (Years 7-11), where the intake is more selective. If pupils are performing according to their ability, results should be above the average for all maintained schools in the junior school and the sixth form, and well above that average in the senior school.
- 1.5 Currently, 63 pupils have learning difficulties, 42 in the junior school and 19 in the senior school. Two have a statement of educational need. Pupils come from a variety of social and economic backgrounds within a wide catchment area. Few have English as an additional language (EAL) and all these are fluent English speakers.
- 1.6 The majority of Year 6 pupils move to the senior school, forming about half of Year 7; the remainder of Year 7 come from maintained and independent junior schools. A very small number of Year 11 pupils leave at 16 after GCSE and go on to other schools. Of those remaining in the sixth form almost all go on to higher education.
- 1.7 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout the school, and in this report, to refer to year groups in the school. Additionally, the pupils in year 6 and below are referred to as in the junior school, those in Years 7-13 as in the senior school, of which those in Years 12 and 13 are also referred to as sixth form students.

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

### **The Educational Experience Provided**

- 2.1 The educational experience the school provides meets its aims well, in that high academic standards are achieved in a relaxed but disciplined atmosphere. Since the last inspection, significant development and expansion has enhanced the school's provision and the increase in pupil numbers has been carefully planned and accommodated. The school's overall provision is good and encourages lively and confident pupils moving forward positively to enter adulthood.
- 2.2 The aims of the school are clearly embedded in all it offers. In the junior school tradition is safeguarded through the focus on English and mathematics, using an investigative approach to encourage pupils to learn to think. In the senior school, a wide range of educational opportunities is provided, suited to the interests, aptitudes and needs of all pupils. Intellectual curiosity is stimulated and initiative is developed through the gifted and talented programme and extension work.
- 2.3 The academic programme is broad and generally well balanced and includes an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities in both schools, conducive to enabling all pupils to flourish as part of their community. It includes service to those less fortunate and, at the appropriate age, participation, if they wish, in work experience. Based on the National Curriculum, it enables even the youngest children to begin to develop their intellectual, artistic, musical and physical potential. Pupils are confident and enthusiastic advocates of their school. Junior pupils say that it is 'fandabbydozy,' and senior school pupils say they would change 'absolutely nothing'. They particularly value the caring ethos.
- 2.4 The education provided contributes to a wide range of development. Literacy skills are assured throughout the curriculum, starting with the strong reading programme which begins as soon as children are ready, in the Foundation Stage. French is taught from Year 4, broadening the linguistic experience. In the senior school the many opportunities for reading, listening, speaking and discussion promote literacy well. Pupils are encouraged to write for a wide range of purposes and audiences, such as the school magazine, the newsletter and the sixth form year book. In Year 8, pupils who show linguistic aptitude start to learn German or Spanish as a second foreign language.
- 2.5 Mathematical skills are effectively developed, not only in the comprehensive mathematics programme but also through other parts of the curriculum such as geography, information and communication technology (ICT) and science. An example of this was a Year 3 science lesson where pupils created graphs to show difference in temperatures in classrooms. In the senior school, subjects such as science and geography provide useful opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills.
- 2.6 Considerable investment in technology since the last inspection has assured that pupils are well prepared for participation in the rapidly changing environment of the twenty-first century. Classroom ICT work stations enable pupils to apply ICT skills as an integral part of their learning. Music makes extensive use of ICT for composing and pupils often use computers for word-processing and internet research in many subjects. The GCSE and A level design and technology programme provides pupils with opportunity to develop their skills of design and construction using wood, plastics, textiles and food. Art provides well for pupils' practical development and design skills.

- 2.7 Human and social education is supported through project work in history including some excellent history displays in both schools. In the senior school personal, social and health education (PSHE) is provided by various means: in form time and in a cross-curricular approach, as well as having an individual subject allocation. The facilities and provision for physical, aesthetic and creative development are all of high calibre throughout the school. The Dance programme is exceptional and is enriched by the involvement of a local professional Dance company.
- 2.8 The extra-curricular clubs provide pupils with excellent opportunities to take part in sporting, musical, dramatic, creative and intellectual activities. In interviews, pupils said they very much enjoyed the wide-ranging provision. The curriculum is enriched through visits and speakers, widening pupils' experiences and opportunities. An example in the junior school is a visit from a second world war evacuee to Lingfield. The local church was visited as part of religious education studies. In the senior school accomplished speakers, musicians and theatre groups visit the school. Educational visits further afield have included expeditions in Venezuela, Vietnam, Argentina and the Swiss Alps.
- 2.9 In the junior school communication about the curriculum between year groups is strong, ensuring good preparation for the following year. Liaison is not so strong between subject leaders across the two schools so that opportunities are lost for secure preparation for the next stage. Pupils in the senior school are well prepared for life after school through aptitude testing and through advice about entry to university. Careers advice is good and is delivered principally through the PSHE programmes run by year heads and form tutors.
- 2.10 The curriculum is carefully planned throughout to extend skills and knowledge and includes a wide range of enriching activities. Good quality schemes of work and policy documents throughout the school are put into practice and these are revised regularly. In the junior school, recent curricular planning has led to a more investigative approach that has encouraged pupils to develop their critical thinking skills. It is creative, stimulating, challenging and engaging. However, this innovation has meant that less time has been spent ensuring that basic skills, such as handwriting, are taught effectively. A new handwriting scheme is in place but it is currently not used consistently and some poor practice was observed. The school is aware of this and has already targeted the area for improvement.
- 2.11 The needs of the very few statemented pupils are supported by appropriate education plans regularly reviewed. Arrangements for pupils identified by the school as having learning difficulties work well and the pupils benefit greatly. The few pupils with English as an additional language are all fluent English speakers and have full access to the curriculum. A register of those the school feels are gifted and talented has recently been developed so that staff are beginning to take precise account of their needs.
- 2.12 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

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

- 2.13 Pupils achieve high standards and are well grounded in knowledge, skills and understanding of their academic subjects. They achieve well, too, in a range of extra-curricular activities. This improves on the position at the last inspection. They are enthusiastic and enjoy their studies and activities, and they learn together with mutual encouragement. Their behaviour is excellent and they move around the extensive grounds showing intrinsic respect for their environment and each other. All this meets the school's aims very well.

- 2.14 Pupils' enthusiasm and inquisitiveness mean they learn readily and the knowledge thus gained forms the basis for their next questions. These high-quality attitudes to learning lead to rapid progress so that they leave the school with strong foundations across the whole curriculum.
- 2.15 The start in the Foundation Stage is thorough, and pupils build on this through the junior school, assisted by the innovative curriculum that emphasises investigative work to encourage critical thinking. High standards of numeracy and literacy are reached by the time pupils leave Year 6 and pertain throughout the senior school.
- 2.16 Many pupils display vibrant creativity, not only in traditional creative lessons such as art and drama, but also through other subjects such as English writing. In a Year 6 literacy lesson pupils explored the poem Jabberwocky by Lewis Carroll exploring characterisation and this led to work in newspaper reporting. In a Year 9 ICT lesson, posters were created using appropriate software enhancing and changing images.
- 2.17 On a number of occasions during the inspection, for example in a Year 3 religious education (RE) lesson, pupils demonstrated their ability to expand topics by their curiosity and to respond critically during discussions. These skills are further developed as the pupils move through the senior school, for instance in a lively debate in a Year 9 biology lesson investigating the toxins in food chains.
- 2.18 All groups achieve well compared with their ability levels across the entire curriculum. No significant differences were observed in attainment between different subjects or curriculum areas.
- 2.19 National tests are not taken in either school. In the junior school the test papers are used in the following year and internally assessed so that levels cannot be compared with the national standard. However, other standardised measures are used and show pupils attainment at age 5, 7 and 11 is high, and good in relation to their abilities.
- 2.20 Standardised measures show that attainment at 14 is high, which, given the higher ability levels in the senior school, is in line with ability. Results at GCSE over the past three years are well above the average achieved nationally in all maintained schools, in line with pupils' ability. In most subjects at Advanced Level the number of entries is too few for valid comparison to be made with national norms. The authenticated results show that, taking all subjects together, attainment overall is good in relation to ability and well above the national average for all maintained schools. The school measures success against the number of places gained at first choice universities, matching these to each pupil's likely attainment. Using this measure the pupils attain very well.
- 2.21 The pupils achieve well in a variety of individual ways as well as in groups and teams. In sport, a junior school team recently won a local cross country event and teams take part in various other team competitions such as netball. The senior sports teams are successful in county and national association competitions. They are also provided with opportunities to develop qualities of perseverance, initiative and leadership through The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Recently the girls qualified for the All England under-15 Dance Finals.
- 2.22 In academic areas, a group of Year 10 pupils won a public speaking competition recently. Groups do well in the mathematics and science Olympiad, in history, Spanish and geography extension tests and, recently, in a 'gifted and talented' history essay competition, run by Cambridge University. Each year a significant number of pupils achieve considerable

- success in extra-curricular activities. A large number of junior and senior pupils, for example, are successful in music and drama performance examinations. Almost all pupils win a place at their first choice university.
- 2.23 Learning attitudes are remarkable in their consistent excellence at all ages. Pupils are articulate, listen effectively, read intelligently and write fluently. They develop very good skills and attitudes from an early age given the close attention to their personal development that is a feature of the school. This development is nurtured and built upon through the school. Pupils are highly and consistently articulate, especially in the senior school, as they demonstrated in interviews with the inspectors. In lessons, they listen and respond well to their teachers and to each other.
- 2.24 During their time in the school pupils develop the ability to read intelligently and at an appropriate age they are able to write increasingly fluently in their notebooks and in their creative writing books. Their competency was observed throughout the school, from strong foundations laid. For instance, a special activity group is in operation for junior school able writers and the work there covers a range of genre, resulting in high-quality fluent creative writing.
- 2.25 Numeracy skills are also of high quality. In the junior school, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils were busily engaged in devising models with cubes that had a notional monetary value so that the finished model amounted to 50p. Pupils apply these skills well both in mathematics lessons and elsewhere. In geography, for example, mathematical data is regularly used by pupils in both schools.
- 2.26 Good ICT skills are developed during lessons in this subject and in some other subject areas. Skills in ICT have improved dramatically since the last inspection. The use of ICT across the curriculum has shown significant improvement in both schools and the department is vibrant and lively.
- 2.27 When pupils have cause to reason and argue a case in their lessons, they do so effectively. They answer questions willingly and with conviction, and think and speak for themselves, for instance in Year 4 where the cost of a family going to the seaside was the topic, and an animated discussion ensued about group charges. Junior school pupils question and think for themselves. These skills are also nurtured in the senior school, for instance in the science lessons where debate is a frequent feature.
- 2.28 According to their age, notes are increasingly written by the pupils themselves, for instance in a Year 13 PE lesson, spontaneous notes were taken about global trends in international sport. Some books and wall displays show good independent learning by pupils, who have clearly taken pride and enjoyment in the challenge of finding information for themselves. Pupils are very good indeed at working with each other. Whether getting ready for a particular activity or working in small groups to prepare for a performance, they collaborate well with each other, completing tasks with a minimum of fuss, and show a high level of self-motivated organisation. Their behaviour is excellent throughout the school.
- 2.29 Lessons start promptly and pupils arrive and prepare for a lesson clearly expecting to settle and to learn. Concentration levels are very high, for instance in a Year 10 art lesson where pupils concentrated very well whilst sketching a self portrait. Pupils clearly derive considerable enjoyment from their work and activities.

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

- 2.30 Outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a characteristic of the school. Its promotion of Christian values is significant and the high quality of relationships supports this ethos, representing an improvement of the good provision reported at the last inspection and meeting the aims of the school very well.
- 2.31 The spiritual development of pupils is exceptional. They develop a strong set of values, principles and beliefs that are integral to the life of the school. This spiritual development is the result of experiences in assemblies, RE lessons, form time as well as in the many subjects that embrace the school's detailed and well developed cross-curricular PSHE programme. Pupils exhibit confidence, self-awareness and open-mindedness, and clearly understand the needs of others and respond to them. Pupils from different cultural and religious backgrounds show self-confidence and self-esteem as well as increasing self-knowledge. The school is highly successful in enabling its pupils to reflect on the meaning and purpose of life in a context that clearly values and respects the beliefs and opinions of others. A good example of this is the senior school assembly observed referring, amongst other things, to the celebration of world religion week.
- 2.32 Pupils have a highly developed sense of right and wrong and are able to discuss ethical issues with developing knowledge and insight. Their very good understanding of moral issues and respect for the law are carefully nurtured throughout the school. This was clearly seen in a Year 3 PSHE lesson talking about choices and consequences, exploring right from wrong. A Year 11 chemistry lesson examined the moral dilemma of the scientist Haber observing his research into fertilisers for food being used for explosives.
- 2.33 Pupils are well aware of the school rules. They respect them and understand that they exist for the benefit of the school community. In conversation, Year 8 pupils said the school rules are easy to keep because they are fair.
- 2.34 By being involved in raising money for charities, pupils clearly demonstrate a well-developed understanding of their obligations to those who are less fortunate than themselves. Year 11 pupils have chosen to sponsor a child from Ghana for the next 3 years. Sixth form volunteers help weekly in a local centre for epilepsy.
- 2.35 Playing a part in the society in which they live is a high priority, too. For instance, pupils take part as representatives on the School Council and as Year ambassadors for their school houses, raising funds for charity and helping on Open Days. They raise and attempt to solve issues through debate and discussion. The school recently hosted the second religious studies conference for sixth forms through which pupils had the opportunity to become problem solvers and reflect on a range of ethical issues.
- 2.36 They respond well to the many opportunities to take responsibility, such as house captains and sports captains in the junior school, and in the senior school as school prefects, house prefects, subject captains, Year 7 liaison prefects and anti-bullying monitors.
- 2.37 Elements of citizenship in the PSHE programme include knowledge of public institutions and services in England, for instance in drama in Year 8, the history of theatre is studied, through which pupils gain knowledge of the beginning of British social history and the role of the church and the guilds. In Year 8 geography, they are taught about tourism in the UK focusing on the national parks. Knowledge of the court system is taught and a magistrate visited to give a talk. All these opportunities contribute well to pupils' developing understanding of how human society functions.

- 2.38 Cultural development is strong. Understanding of other cultures is promoted positively. In the junior school, in Year 5, work on Mexico and the Aztecs resulted in a lively, stimulating display. Other displays in the junior school celebrate world faiths. In 2006 a group of sixth form pupils joined a World Challenge Organisation expedition to Argentina and worked with impoverished communities, writing sensitively of this in the school news magazine. Pupils show excellent understanding of the diversity of their community and the world in which they live.
- 2.39 The school is careful to include experiences of the music, art and literature of many cultures in its life. In Reception, learning about the life of an African child, pupils responded to the register in Swahili. Recent senior school cultural work included a visit to Brighton Dome to take part in the Brighton Festival for Drama, and a Year 8 drama performance using northern dialect.
- 2.40 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

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

- 2.41 The warmth, friendliness and kindness, noted as a quality of the teaching at the time of the last inspection, remains. Teaching is often stimulating and well-planned, capturing the enthusiasm of the pupils. Three quarters of the lessons observed were good or better and almost a fifth were outstanding. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen, an improvement since the last inspection. The school succeeds in its aim to achieve high academic standards in a relaxed but disciplined atmosphere.
- 2.42 The teaching assists pupils of all abilities to make good progress and to achieve high standards, enabling even the youngest children to begin to develop their intellectual, artistic, musical and physical potential. The needs of all pupils are catered for, including those with SEN, learning difficulties, EAL and those whom the school regards as gifted and talented.
- 2.43 The teaching enables all pupils to acquire new knowledge. All teachers are aware of those in need of additional help and this is provided by varying means including excellent, planned use of the classroom assistants, for instance in Reception, and to support the less able in literacy and numeracy. The teaching of handwriting in the junior school lacks sufficient subject knowledge and the approach is not consistent. In junior school lessons across the curriculum, the most able pupils are provided with useful extension material and in the senior school the gifted and talented are identified on registers provided for all teachers, who accommodate their needs well.
- 2.44 Teaching encourages pupils to apply themselves purposefully to their work and independent learning is promoted, for instance in mathematics in Year 6 where pupils showed they are able to estimate angles and check their results with a protractor. An excellent example of the promotion of thinking skills and independent learning in the senior school was observed in Year 11 science that also involved sixth form students, where the teaching methods used clearly encouraged independent thinking.
- 2.45 In physical activities observed, good teaching enabled pupils in Year 5 hockey to extend their hand-eye coordination skills well, and in Year 11, teaching pupils to think for themselves resulted in pupils leading a circuit training session with great motivation, independently using correct safety procedures and techniques. Creative effort is encouraged. In music in the senior school, Year 10 pupils were given a range of learning stimuli which led to them composing variations on a nursery rhyme using instruments of their choice.

- 2.46 The best teaching features high expectation and quick changes of activity to maintain brisk pace. In a number of lessons effective use of interactive whiteboards motivated pupils and promoted learning. Lesson objectives are well planned and very clearly stated, with useful references to prior learning and next steps. Plenaries are significant in their clarity.
- 2.47 Teaching is often adapted well to meet the particular needs of individual pupils by, for example, grouping by ability from a young age for numeracy and literacy, enabling tasks to be matched to ability. Teachers' own knowledge of their subject is generally good, and for some subjects, very good. The way in which resources are used by teachers is good overall. ICT resources are used well for skills lessons as well as for enhancing and supporting the curriculum in some subjects.
- 2.48 The assessment processes have improved dramatically since the last inspection so that the teaching and learning is monitored well in both schools and the minor weaknesses are being dealt with. Teachers' planning is securely based on prior attainment in the majority of cases. In most subjects, pupils' work is regularly and consistently marked according to the school's marking policy. Day to day marking is carried out to a very high standard, is positive and supportive and points the way forward. Self assessment is a familiar process to many of the pupils and operates well.
- 2.49 Teachers expect pupils to behave responsibly and to work hard and give them every encouragement to do so. Such expectations are fulfilled, creating a very positive and enthusiastic learning environment in which pupils thrive intellectually. Formal and informal regular assessments are undertaken and careful records are kept for each pupil. A number of standardised tests are used to assess achievement and progress against local and national norms. These assessments are effectively used to monitor achievement, progress and to inform planning.
- 2.50 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 High quality care devoted to the well-being of pupils is evident throughout the school, improving on the already good provision noted in the last inspection. The attention given to welfare, health and safety has developed and improved. Staff in both sections of the school know and relate to their pupils very well. Positive relationships that promote effective learning and a lively, caring atmosphere prevail, so that the school fulfils its aim to cultivate personal and collective responsibility and service.
- 3.2 Support and guidance for pupils is strong. Pupils feel well supported in and out of the classroom and that they are treated fairly. Some Year 7 girl pupils report: 'We are delighted with our school'. Pupils trust their teachers, who take their pastoral duties seriously. Form teachers offer support and guidance of high quality.
- 3.3 The structures, policies and procedures established to support and secure the well being of pupils are well thought out and efficiently applied. Junior pupils say if they need help they would go to their form teacher, their deputy-head or to their friends. The main reason for the success of the procedures is that all pupils know and trust the systems.
- 3.4 The House system, named after four saints, is very strongly established in both schools. It is well supported by events such as the regular senior school house assemblies and the periodic junior school house assemblies. Each year group has a house representative to take responsibility for communication. Many inter-house competitive events occur, such as music, drama and sports competitions. Sixth form pupils take their part in supporting the younger ones, for instance as part of the anti-bullying policy, in the 'drop-in' centre. A worry box is posted outside the school office. All these arrangements provide a high quality secure pastoral framework.
- 3.5 Pupils say they know the staff will listen. The staff handbook gives clear guidance on the various pastoral roles and teachers are well supported by the management structure in fulfilling this part of their function.
- 3.6 The excellent relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils and pupils, are a strength of the school. They are based on mutual trust and respect which are palpable throughout the school. One pupil, on being asked 'What is special about your school?' immediately said 'You don't need to tell teachers when you need them, they just know'. Pupils are familiar with school procedures and clear about what they should do if they have concerns.
- 3.7 Measures to promote responsible behaviour are clear, and focus on encouragement and positive reinforcement. Pupils respond very well to the stars system in the junior school, becoming star of the week. Each junior class writes their own rules alongside standard general rules for behaviour, giving them responsibility. Pupils respond very well to the responsibility they are given.
- 3.8 The anti-bullying policy operates effectively throughout the school because all know that the procedure and their concerns will not be brushed aside. Pupils and parents say that bullying rarely occurs. Pupils say they know who they would turn to and are confident that the matter would be resolved.

- 3.9 Good procedures for child protection are effective and training has been thorough. All necessary measures have been taken to minimise the risk of fire and other hazards. Regular fire drills are carefully recorded. Arrangements to ensure health and safety are effective on site and off. Risk assessment is carried out well and overseen by the governing body. Governors take responsibility for health and safety and risk assessment effectively.
- 3.10 Staff and pupils' awareness of health and safety issues, for instance the importance of healthy eating, are high. Medical records are kept for each pupil and located in convenient locations known to staff and a nurse is available for regular visits to address health education issues. First-aid boxes are located around the school and a number of staff are trained in first-aid. Appropriate arrangements are in place for pupils who are ill during the course of the day and include medical rooms in both schools so that measures to protect pupil health and safety are effective.
- 3.11 Admissions and attendance registers are completed accurately and arrangements are in place to follow up unexplained absence promptly. Attendance is good. The general provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is of a high standard. The school has a clear understanding of the guidelines and is vigilant about the safety and welfare of its pupils. Pupils are well nurtured, their welfare is carefully fostered and they feel happy and safe.
- 3.12 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3].

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

- 3.13 The school has established a variety of links with the parents ensuring that it meets its aim to promote traditional values. Many parents are highly satisfied with the education and support provided for their children. Links with the community are plentiful and well-developed. As identified at the time of the last inspection, these links contribute usefully to the fostering and promoting of good relationships and a sense of belonging to the school community.
- 3.14 The responses received to the parents' pre-inspection questionnaire were mainly supportive. The most positive aspects identified by the parents are the quality of teaching, attitudes and values promoted by the school, help and guidance given to pupils, and the high standards of behaviour achieved.
- 3.15 A small minority of parents expressed concern about information about their child's work and progress, and too few opportunities for parents to be involved in school life. One or two parents felt that their concerns had not been handled well enough.
- 3.16 The inspectors investigated individual concerns most carefully, and also the concerns specifically identified above. They found that information provided for parents is sufficient and clear and opportunities for parents to be involved in school life are adequate. For instance parents are invited into school for breakfast on Friday mornings and take some of the extra-curricular activities. The arrangements for handling complaints, both formally and informally, are clear. The points individual parents raised as not having been dealt with effectively have all been addressed and no valid cause for concern was identified.
- 3.17 The Parents' Association covers both the junior and senior schools and provides worthwhile opportunities for parents to be involved with the life of the school, organising many regular events such as the Christmas fair, a race night and a school disco. Other recent parents' association initiatives have included a ski and sportswear sale and a Golf Day.

- 3.18 The school encourages parents to be involved in the work and progress of their children, for instance by welcoming support at school events, concerts, matches and assemblies. During the inspection, a music assembly took place in the junior school to which parents were invited, and which celebrated achievement. Further examples include parents who conduct mock interviews with sixth formers to give them practice in preparing for university or work.
- 3.19 Parents receive good regular information. New parents are given a useful introductory handbook and all parents are sent newsletters regularly. Some departments send out separate newsletters, both for juniors and seniors, and in the case of the sports department, fixture cards. The variety of communication effectively highlights and celebrates success in a broad range of activities as well as giving notice of events. The school's website is also very informative and regularly updated. Plenty of information about their children's work and progress is available, including homework letters for any unsatisfactory work. Homework diaries provide a two way communication. Commendation letters are sent home for good work in the senior school.
- 3.20 The annual written reports that are sent out inform parents about their children's work and progress and more frequently the grade cards update that information. Questionnaires are given out at each parents' evening and the responses are carefully read and acted upon. Parents are invited into school regularly to see work in the classroom. All these examples promote high-quality positive exchange of information.
- 3.21 Most concerns raised by parents have been dealt with and matters concluded. A formal complaints procedure is in place which is comprehensive and readily available for parents.
- 3.22 The school has varied and comprehensive links with the local community that include visits to the local church and the British Museum, and the Bentley Motor Museum. In sport in the community, pupils enjoy competing in a range of sports such as hockey, football, tennis and dance and achieve regular success in teams and individually. Visits into school by outside agencies in the sixth form for careers advice and in the juniors, where recent visits have been from a theatre company and a Second World War Road Show provide links that support and enrich pupils' education well.
- 3.23 Charitable giving forms an important regular link with the community, such as raising money through school variety shows and helping a local centre for special needs. Charities are supported through the House system as well as through whole school and parents' association events. Important overseas links exist with the Notre Dame School in Ghana and the Rush Academy in Kenya. In all, many opportunities are taken annually for charitable giving, keeping in mind the needs of others less fortunate and contributing to a strong and worthwhile element in the school.
- 3.24 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the provision of information and the manner in which complaints are to be handled [Standards 6 and 7].

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

### **The Quality of Governance**

- 4.1 The structure and management arrangements related to the governing body are clearly defined and fully support effective oversight of the school. The hands-on involvement of the chair of governors with the school has ensured that development has been supportive, measured and wise, so that progress since the last inspection has been good. Governance focuses clearly, and to a high degree, on the aims and aspirations of the school.
- 4.2 Currently the delegation of governors' responsibilities is limited and therefore the burden on the chair of governors is very heavy. This issue is under consideration to ease the analytical oversight of the school's development and finances. Governance, through the five trustees and a governing body, has been very prudent, far-sighted and thorough and has led to the substantial increase in roll, fully supported by the timely construction of carefully orchestrated additional facilities.
- 4.3 Governors are fully aware of their responsibilities, for instance for health and safety, and operate regular checks on the arrangements. They are committed to maintaining their knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Financial oversight is strong, overseen by the bursar, and resources are good. The longer-term development receives good oversight and the development plan pays close attention to costing.
- 4.4 Governors are well informed about the school and have constructive relationships with staff. They regularly attend key events and hold a staff dinner at the start of each year which helps encourage a mutual supportive, constructive and positive relationship. A pupil commented 'the governors are very friendly and part of our school'.
- 4.5 Formal arrangements are in place for regular meetings with staff, and each governor is allocated a group of staff to enable them to provide them with support and advice and the appropriate level of challenge.

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

- 4.6 Leadership and management are characterised by hardworking dedicated staff. Undoubtedly the energetic leadership of the principal has been the guiding force for the school's development and this hands-on, controlling dynamism has facilitated considerable growth in numbers and a strong ethos of spiritual values, fully supporting the school aims. Progress since the last inspection has been good. The school is aware of the areas for its next attention.
- 4.7 The principal is supported by the two deputy heads, one for the junior school and one for the senior school. The clear direction and leadership provided by managers are reflected in the good quality education and care, the high standards achieved and the happy and lively ethos that pervades the school. The internal management structures of both sections of the school are now clear and function effectively. Classroom assistants are used well and considerably enhance the educational experience for the pupils.
- 4.8 The school has an effective development plan that has clearly analysed the school's needs, set priorities, planned to meet those priorities, and has put decisions into practice. This is exemplified in the junior school where a major review of the management structure and the curriculum developed was undertaken and new strategies are now being implemented. This

has included a new management team to introduce a modern creative curriculum that is closely monitored to ensure a stimulating and engaging education. The pace of change has been challenging. To enable the junior school deputy head to oversee this development, all junior school staff are appraised annually, though staff in the senior school are appraised every two years. Targets set are realistic and closely related to the pupils' needs. The programme for the professional development of staff is underpinned by the development plan and a substantial budget. In both schools, priorities are addressed promptly and as one result, governors have established close links with departments and are developing links between the two sections of the school.

- 4.9 Many useful policies have been written and are known to all staff. Arrangements are in place to regularly review the policies and check their effectiveness. Monitoring of teaching and learning is good overall, due to the assessment and appraisal procedures introduced since the last inspection.
- 4.10 Recruitment procedures for staff are good and thoroughly applied. All statutory checks are made prior to the confirmation of appointment of both teaching and non-teaching staff. Currently the school is inducting four newly qualified staff (NQTs). The policy adopted allows them to achieve fully-qualified status. The induction procedure for new staff is supportive and works well.
- 4.11 Catering and maintenance staff are hardworking and support the school well.
- 4.12 The arrangements for providing appropriate resources are well-managed ensuring that pupils' needs are met. ICT resources have been much developed since the last inspection. Fast and exciting development is occurring in ICT so that resources have improved substantially in this area.
- 4.13 Day-to-day organisation of the school is thorough and effective. Administrative support is of very high calibre so that the principal has time to lead the whole school effectively.
- 4.14 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].
- 4.15 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 Lingfield Notre Dame is a vibrant and high achieving school, true to its aims. It successfully maintains its 'one school' ethos which works effectively to produce happy, successful all-rounders who behave very well so that their learning potential is unlocked and high standards are achieved. The very supportive ethos, the result of dynamic, purposeful leadership, is characterised by outstanding care, spiritual and moral development. These qualities are underpinned by strong, caring governance.
- 5.2 Since the last inspection, the school has expanded considerably. It has made good progress in many areas, especially in the monitoring of the teaching and learning and in ICT. However, it now needs to steady the pace of change in the junior school, improve standards of teaching handwriting there and strengthen subject liaison between the two schools to ensure optimum continuity.
- 5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

### **Next Steps**

- 5.4 The school embarked on a successful set of measures following the last inspection, to address the weaknesses identified. It is now ready to move forward further and is aware of the steps required:
1. build on the existing liaison between subject departments across the two schools by developing stronger and more consistent links;
  2. steady the pace of change in the junior school to give time for basic skills such as handwriting to be consistently and accurately taught.
- 5.5 No action in respect of regulatory requirements is required.

## 6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 29<sup>th</sup> January to 1<sup>st</sup> February 2007. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.

### List of Inspectors

Mrs Ruth McFarlane	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Brenda Doig	Former Head of Junior School, GSA school.
Mr Jonathan Carroll	Headmaster, IAPS school.
Mrs Sandra Clements	Deputy Head, GSA school.
Miss Eleni Conidaris	Head of Department, HMC school.
Mrs Dee Hutley	Former Headmistress, ISA school.
Mrs Hilary Kiff	Former Headmistress, ISA school.
Mrs Gillian de la Torre	Former Deputy Head, ISA school.
Mr Philip Salmon	Former Head of Department, IAPS school.