

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Royal Grammar School

Full Name of the School	Royal Grammar School
DCSF Number	936/6534
Registered Charity Number	312028
Address	High Street, Guildford, Surrey GU1 3BB.
Telephone Number	01483 880600
Fax Number	01483 880602
Email Address	office@rgs-guildford.co.uk
Headmaster	Dr Jonathan M Cox
Chairman of Governors	Dr Henry J Pearson OBE
Age Range	11 to 18
Gender	Boys
Inspection Dates	19th to 22nd November 2007

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 and May 2007.

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

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
	Characteristics of the School	1
2.	THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION	3
	The Educational Experience Provided	3
	Pupils' Learning and Achievements.....	4
	Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils	5
	The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment).....	6
3.	THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS	9
	The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils.....	9
	The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community	11
4.	THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT	13
	The Quality of Governance	13
	The Quality of Leadership and Management	13
5.	CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS.....	15
	Overall conclusions	15
	Next Steps.....	16
6.	SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE	17
	List of Inspectors	17

1. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 The Royal Grammar School, Guildford (RGS) is a day school for boys aged 11 to 18 which aims to provide an excellent education for boys, supporting them in their passage to adulthood by developing character, intellect and physique within a scholarly community in which each individual is cared for and valued equally. Other aims include retaining a highly qualified and committed staff, active collaboration with parents, and encouraging in boys consideration for others and pride in the school. Intellectual curiosity, creativity and habits of learning are to be developed through a broadly based and balanced curriculum, and social, sporting and cultural abilities through extra curricular activities and service to the local and wider community.
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1509 under the will of Robert Becketingham, and became 'Royal' in 1552 by charter of King Edward VI. RGS returned to the independent sector in 1977 and acquired Lanesborough Preparatory School as its junior school in 1978. Lanesborough educates the choristers of Guildford Cathedral and its pupils transfer to RGS after Year 6 or 8. The school now has a pupil roll of 906. In Year 7, around 90 boys are admitted and in Year 9 another entry of 60. In Year 7 there are four tutor groups and six in Year 9. The few pupils who leave after Year 11 are replaced by new entrants joining a sixth form of 280. Around 150 pupils receive some fee support. Pupils travel to the school from a wide catchment area.
- 1.3 The school buildings, in the centre of Guildford, date mostly from the 20th century. However, the more famous buildings date from the 16th century and include the 'chained library' and various public rooms. The music and newly-developed art departments and sixth form facilities are in the environs of the Tudor buildings. Pupils are able to take advantage of facilities offered by the university and elsewhere in the city, as well as having links with other schools in Guildford. The 20-acre playing field and pavilion are a few miles away at Bradstone Brook.
- 1.4 Since the last inspection the school roll has increased by around fifty boys. A considerable programme of building and improvement has been undertaken, including recent additions to the art and design centre, the sixth form centre, and the sports hall. The links with other schools and with the community have been extended. The present headmaster took post in January 2007.
- 1.5 Pupils admitted to RGS in Years 7, 9 and 12 are carefully selected. Almost all pupils are in the top band of ability and the ability profile of the school is far above the national average. If pupils are performing in line with their abilities their results in public examinations will be above the average for all maintained selective schools. No pupils need support as a consequence of English being their second language. Of the 65 pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), 31 receive support from the school and one has a statement of special educational need.

- 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
First Form	Year 7
Second Form	Year 8
Third Form	Year 9
Fourth Form	Year 10
Fifth Form	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 Education at RGS successfully fulfils the school's declared aims and philosophy, not least in providing an excellent education for its pupils within a scholarly community. A serious academic approach enables senior boys in particular to reach exceedingly high standards. The broad educational provision ensures a very wide range of curricular and extra-curricular activities. Already very good at the last inspection, the educational experience is now outstanding.
- 2.2 The school curriculum is broad, balanced and coherent, providing appropriately for the considerable aptitude and abilities of the pupils and for successful development throughout the age range. All aspects of pupils' development - linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic, and creative – are catered for and aided by some specialisation beginning in Years 9 and 11. The skills of speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy are promoted with great success.
- 2.3 The school is aware of the need to keep all curricula under review and to seek opportunities to include elements to further broaden and enrich what is on offer. The programme of extra-curricular activities is among the many strengths of the school. The numerous and varied opportunities provide for boys of all ages to attend clubs and societies, to represent the school or their house at different levels in an array of sports, to perform in plays and musical groups and other competitive activities. An arrangement, which allows all pupils to take part in activities in a timetabled period, works well and emphasises the importance the school attaches to extra-curricular provision. Apart from allowing time for practice and rehearsal in music and drama, a thriving and expanding combined cadet force (CCF), the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DoE) and the scout group are encouraged; each attracts large numbers of boys and achieves high quality service. Sport at RGS is very strong. The school takes much pride in fulfilling its aim of providing sporting opportunities for all, through the many teams in each age group which play matches in a growing number of sports. Even the less talented sportsmen represent the school or their house in competitive sport with the benefit of good coaching. Music and drama are also first class and a considerable number of boys perform to a high level in a variety of recitals, concerts and productions. Parents support these activities enthusiastically. Service to the local community is an outstanding feature, not least through links with local schools and through summer schools and master classes.
- 2.4 Provision of careers advice, much of it in tutor time, is excellent, sensible and readily available. Boys are prepared very well for higher education, employment and adult life. Advice on universities is outstanding; last year almost all Year 13 pupils who left the school went to their first choice of university. Their preparation gains from the encouragement to be independent learners, to be self motivated, to observe and listen, to question and challenge and to express their viewpoint cogently. Work experience at the end of Year 11 is well managed and supported; a comprehensive scheme is well supported by parents, former pupils and members of the Guildford community.
- 2.5 The curriculum and setting arrangements, for example for French in Years 9 to 11 and for mathematics in Years 10 and 11, allow work to be targeted at a level appropriate to the ability of the boys, and, along with related activities, provide excellent opportunities for all pupils. A very good range of documentation sets out curricular arrangements for each part of the school. The curriculum is currently under review, including the extension of setting arrangements into earlier years, early examination entries at GCSE and the introduction of

additional subjects, such as further modern languages. Re-organisation into separate sciences and the addition of humanities subjects are other changes either in planning or implementation. The inspection team agrees with the favourable comments of boys and parents on these changes.

2.6 The school takes appropriate steps to identify pupils requiring special provision and has in place arrangements to support these pupils and to allow them full access to the curriculum.

2.7 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

2.8 The quality of pupils' learning and achievements is outstanding at all levels and successfully fulfils the school's aims. Pupils of all ages achieve the highest levels in their knowledge and understanding in all subjects and activities and learn to apply them most effectively. The recent appointment of a coordinator of teaching and learning is but one example of the thoughtful efforts being undertaken to further concentrate the school's attention on these essential aspects. The previous inspection reported that the school provided an environment in which able pupils flourished academically and that pupils and staff showed a respect for high academic standards and traditional virtues of hard work and commitment. Since then the school has progressed and the learning and achievements of pupils are now outstanding.

2.9 Pupils are highly successful learners and no significant differences in attainment between subjects are apparent. While all pupils are at the higher end of the ability spectrum, real care is taken to ensure that the needs of all pupils within the range at RGS are being met. They are thoroughly grounded in knowledge, skills and understanding in all subjects in the curriculum; and apply their knowledge with great skill and dexterity. Students in Year 13 exhibited rare levels of ability in handling difficult aspects of development economics, and in German demonstrated manipulation of grammar of a complex nature, worthy of an undergraduate. In Year 12, a Greek literature lesson was based on sophisticated textual analysis of the highest order and in Year 10 a pupil discussed in minute detail the differences between Picasso and Braque. Pupils demonstrate thinking skills of the highest order by analysis, argument, evaluation and debate; they apply mathematical concepts logically, revel in the challenges of linguistic precision and explore scientific, literary and mathematical ideas with relish.

2.10 The school has success in public examinations as one of its aims and this has been fulfilled at commendable levels over the years. Results in GCSE and at A level over the three years for which comparative data are available (2004 to 2006) are good in relation to the school's unusually high ability profile, being well above the average for maintained selective schools. At GCSE, over eighty per cent of these results were achieved at grade A/A* and, at A level, well over ninety per cent were attained at grades A/B. Attainment in 2007 reflects the previous years' achievements. Standardised measures of progress indicate that pupils exceed expectations in working towards GCSE and that progress in the sixth form is above national norms. At all ages, pupils' skills, understanding and application are well above normal expectations of pupils of similar ages and abilities. Attainment in written work and in lessons is excellent and progress was rapid in all subjects observed. Boys quickly settle to the task, work formidably and relentlessly, and display a brisk, no-nonsense approach to school life in general.

2.11 Many boys have won representative honours at national or regional levels. The outstanding provision for activities - intellectual, cultural and physical - enables pupils to excel across an extraordinarily broad range for a day school. The music department, for instance, promotes a remarkable diversity of musical groups and activities allowing over 300 pupils to participate.

Pupils of all levels and standards, from the rank amateur to those who play in the Surrey Youth Orchestra, the National Schools' Symphony Orchestra and the National Youth Orchestra, are thus encouraged. Individuals and teams participate and compete to the highest standards in science and mathematics olympiads, in the major sports (notably rugby, with two U19 England players, hockey, cricket, athletics, swimming, shooting and skiing), in chess, and the service sections. Pupils regularly achieve local, county and national honours in these areas, along with academic honours in subjects such as history, classics, science and technology prizes. In the past three years pupils have won scholarships for the army, Royal Air Force, and for GAP Years.

- 2.12 Pupils are articulate, listen to each other well and ask probing questions of their teachers and of each other. Far from displaying signs of intellectual arrogance or disparaging the efforts of fellow pupils, inspectors found a striking culture of mutual support and genuine concern amongst pupils for the progress and wellbeing of their peers. Pupils demonstrate a rare maturity in their approach to their studies, their teachers and each other. Year 8 pupils talked enthusiastically of the help and advice given them by older pupils. The sixth form displayed a remarkable maturity in their response to a very personal, direct and hard-hitting presentation about AIDS given by a visiting speaker at assembly.
- 2.13 Many boys choose to study mathematics or subjects with mathematical concepts through to the highest levels nationally and with notable success, for example, in olympiads. They show confidence in applying basic mathematical concepts in work and activities at all levels. They also make frequent use of information and communication technology (ICT) and some outstanding examples were observed in a Year 10 geography lesson; pupils are capable users at all levels, including the use of digital projectors for presentations. However the use of ICT is not embedded uniformly either in the practice of all departments or in all departmental schemes of work.
- 2.14 The school is fulfilling its goal of developing a scholarly community. Pupils lead in class and in many of the excellent societies. The school encourages intellectual leadership and participation by pupils whatever their academic discipline. Outstanding examples of cooperative work were observed in science practicals, modern languages pair and group work, in English, history, music and theatre studies. Pupils use the excellent opportunities offered in societies for thought, information, questioning and debate; many of these societies are pupil led, although enthusiastically and actively promoted by teachers. Pupils study most effectively both on their own and collaboratively with others. Individual note taking is highly effective and examples of independent study were observed, particularly in the sixth form, where there is a convincing culture of scholarly endeavour for its own sake.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.15 The way in which boys develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally during their time at RGS fulfils the school's aim of encouraging in every boy the development of spiritual values and a personal moral code leading to the highest possible standards of behaviour and consideration for others. Evidence of pupils' spiritual awareness pervades the whole life of the school but particularly special examples were observed in two assemblies when much of the religious input was by the boys themselves, showing commendable self confidence. The religious education syllabus and practice throughout the school, starts from mostly factual information and progresses through to reflections upon moral values and ethical codes.
- 2.16 Good opportunities for moral development occur in tutor groups, assemblies, in the programme of personal, health and social education (PSHE) and in the many service activities in which the school excels. Boys exhibit a great awareness of moral issues and in

their general relationships they show great consideration for the needs of others. Their acceptance of the rules of school and society reflect their moral development.

- 2.17 The standard of behaviour is excellent. Boys have respect for each other and their teachers and show a keen sense of working in partnership towards the goal of learning. A sense of purposeful energy is evident in everything that the boys undertake but great consideration is shown to others even at break times in the crowded corridors and at lunchtimes in the dining hall. They have pride in their school and in themselves. Boys develop well socially in their houses, tutor groups and through the many clubs and societies. They also have social contact with other schools, for example through the joint general studies programme which includes ballroom dancing.
- 2.18 Boys have a good knowledge of public institutions and drew on this in a well structured debate on the usefulness of the monarchy. They give many kinds of service to the local community, providing a programme of drama workshops for primary schools and frequent concerts in the city. Year 13 boys mentor those in Year 7 and new boys in Year 9 to the benefit of all. Prefectship is another way in which they develop leadership skills and learn service.
- 2.19 Boys learn about many aspects of their own and other cultures. They are active participants in a wide variety of lectures by guest speakers. They also learn by performing or listening to a prodigious amount of music of all genres, by observing excellence in the art displayed throughout the whole school and by enjoying the drama productions. They are frequently made aware of situations in other parts of the world, as observed in economics lessons when third world problems were discussed. Culture, in its widest form, is an inherent and potent factor in school life, and tolerance and harmony pervade their relationships with others both within and outside the school.
- 2.20 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.21 The quality of teaching is outstanding, enabling boys to make great progress and to achieve academic excellence. The high standards of teaching observed in the last inspection report have been broadened and now include a number of excellent features that enable pupils of all abilities, including those with LDD, to acquire new knowledge, make progress according to their ability, increase their understanding and develop their skills in an outstanding way. This high quality teaching also encourages high standards in relationships and involvement in the wider aspects of school life.
- 2.22 Teaching challenges the boys by going well beyond the requirements of exam specifications. It develops intellectual curiosity and ensures that pupils have a wide background knowledge which they are able to use, with the associated skills of essay writing and research, in a wide range of subjects. A good example of this was confidently displayed by Year 12 boys, using knowledge of 19th century European colonialism in Africa and of the theories of Darwin, in work on the historical and cultural background to Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness*. In science, the style of teaching observed was well suited to the ability, expectations and attitudes of the pupils and it allowed them to use their considerable mathematical skills.
- 2.23 The provision for pupils with LDD is good when they enter the school but less is done in later years. The needs are identified when they start at the school but initially good work does not continue beyond the year of entry or have specific reference to problems other than literacy. Information about pupils' LDD is available to all staff, some of whom adapt their

teaching appropriately. The needs identified in a formal statement of educational need are suitably met. However, some lesson planning and practice do not obviously reflect the needs of other individual pupils with LDD.

- 2.24 Teaching succeeds in fostering in pupils the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn independently. Pupils have huge respect for the knowledge and abilities of teachers and this inspires great application and interest in their work. The culture of praise and appreciation of pupils' success, seen throughout the school, provides strong motivation and engenders a generous attitude to the achievements of others. Teaching is well planned, employing effective teaching methods, good pace, suitable activities and wise management of class time. Pupils are challenged to think and learn independently by the high level questioning teachers employ and the many opportunities they give to research topics or to extend knowledge. Teachers are willing to leave time for pupils to think out answers to open questions for themselves. The ethos of the school gives equal respect to intellectual, physical and creative effort and this encourages many boys to participate and even shine in more than one of these areas.
- 2.25 Teaching shows an excellent understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils. Teachers know the individual abilities of their pupils extremely well. They make clear their very high expectations, listen carefully to pupils' contributions and build on the knowledge and understanding pupils display. Within some departments teachers work closely to ensure that information about pupils' attainments is well communicated. Teaching for the younger boys included imaginative strategies for learning, including the 'essayothaurus' planning strategy taught to Year 7, which has great impact. In the sixth form, a lecture style of delivery appeals very much to highly academic pupils, promoting rapid development of knowledge and understanding and with boys making their own notes; other excellent lessons were more like university tutorials or seminars.
- 2.26 Teaching demonstrates expert knowledge and understanding of the subject matter. Teachers bring a great depth and range of subject knowledge to the classroom and present material in ways pupils understand and enjoy; this helps them develop genuine scholarship. Pupils are inspired and exhibit pleasure in their research and specialist knowledge. A younger pupil spoke with enthusiasm and pride of the essay and research skills he had learned in researching an essay on the life of Alexander the Great for an external classics essay competition. Teaching allows the intellectual space for boys to learn; in Year 13 chemistry each student worked on an advanced reaction using the electronic whiteboard to model the mechanism involved and, thereby, enhancing the understanding of the whole group. Teachers are excellent role models for their pupils, treating them with respect and often a sense of humour.
- 2.27 Teaching is supported by an excellent quality, quantity and range of resources and makes effective use of them. Provision of ICT facilities is generous and, for example, those in the study area are used extensively by pupils for both presentation of work and research. All classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards or tablets. ICT is well used in a significant proportion of lessons, but there are occasions when this is less evident. Good use of ICT not only enhanced teaching through the presentation of material but allowed active participation by the pupils.
- 2.28 Teaching includes regular and thorough assessment of pupils' work and uses information from assessment to plan lessons so that pupils can progress. Department handbooks set out department practice in marking and assessment within the broad guidelines of the school's policy. The best marking gives a clear indication of the level of attainment of the work, encouragement and a clear indication of what must be done to ensure improvement. By contrast some work had little other than a mark and a bland comment. Many departments,

like economics, successfully use the outcomes of assessment to plan future work. Science uses a well-designed bank of cross-departmental tests to monitor progress across groups but this has still to be integrated into the whole school monitoring/tracking system.

- 2.29 The school has in place arrangements which successfully evaluate pupils' performance. A baseline scheme of assessment is used to establish data on pupils' ability on entry to the school in Year 7 or Year 9. This baseline is also used to measure progress made by pupils to GCSE and A level. The school is using a new system for detailed pupil tracking; the information is available on line for tutors, teachers, heads of year and heads of department. While the scheme is a considerable step forward since the last inspection, the school has appropriately decided to go further. A second stage is being planned which will allow all marks, grades and measures of pupil progress to be stored with obvious benefits for pupil monitoring. Regular grading and end of term exams are also used to evaluate and record progress. In these ways the progress of pupils is being monitored most carefully and the results helpfully conveyed to parents. The results also inform planned remedial work.
- 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 school most successfully achieves its aim to provide an excellent education within a community in which each individual is cared for and valued equally. The quality of care was very high at the time of the last inspection and with improvements in organisation it has become even better. The support and guidance given to all pupils is outstanding and rooted in the excellent relationships that exist between all in the school. The approach of tutors is subtle, non-invasive but effective, and is very highly valued by pupils. In lower years they are supported by trained sixth form pupil mentors. Frequent informal communication between teachers and tutors ensures intelligent informal guidance for pupils. Pupils understand and appreciate the regular formal effort and achievement grades and the tutor commendation system that rewards exceptional performance.
- 3.2 Form tutors are the vital focus of the pastoral care arrangements and stay with pupils for two consecutive years. The heads of year and deputy heads oversee the work of form tutors, but do not intrude. They deal quickly and efficiently with issues that are more serious. Procedures for good communication are well defined and the pupil's "buff folder" is a valuable central deposit for all formal information. The school has provided for the possibility that an individual pupil may not get on with his form tutor by introducing recently the appointment of personal tutors for those in Year 10 and above. A school counsellor is also available to boys. Yet, such is the quality of relationship with form tutors that they are rarely used.
- 3.3 Disciplinary, behaviour and anti-bullying codes are transparent and well publicised. Assemblies and tutor periods are designed to make all boys feel part of the proceedings. The planned induction programme for those joining Year 7 and Year 9 ensures that all boys are aware of the system of pastoral care throughout the school and the principles of good relationships which underpin it. The school's high expectations are backed by a disciplinary system, which the pupils find to be fair, and by a well used system of rewards which encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own work and to behave with great responsibility. Thus older pupils are entrusted with many roles, such as mentoring younger pupils. Older pupils respond very well to the trust placed in them and become excellent role models.
- 3.4 Pupils are competitive, but this motivates rather than causing friction between individuals or groups. The shared pride and expectation of achievement in and outside the classroom cements the tight and mutually respectful relationships between pupils and teaching and non-teaching staff. There is a sense of purpose, but a lack of tension.
- 3.5 The director of studies and heads of year work with tutors and a coordinator to provide a wide-ranging programme of PSHE in Years 7 to 11. The monitoring of the implementation has improved since the last inspection and now ensures the plethora of available resources is used consistently by all tutors. In tutor periods pupils discuss topics from bullying to study skills; the school nurse, librarian and ICT staff run relevant sessions and excellent use is made of external speakers to address the more specialised topics of illegal drugs and alcoholism. The sixth form benefit from a series of short lectures that seek to produce greater awareness of health and social issues. The programme is successfully supported in religious education lessons.

- 3.6 The quality of the higher education advice is exceptional. The sixth form receive a detailed and personal programme of comprehensive guidance on university entry and application starting with a well-attended higher education evening. The particular emphasis on admission to the Russell group of universities ensures that as the guidance moves from the general to the specific each RGS pupil is well-armed for application and interview. The strong record of admission to the selecting universities, including Oxford and Cambridge, reflects the polished accuracy of the process.
- 3.7 Measures to safeguard and promote pupils' health and well-being are effective. Child protection arrangements are secure with the second master as the nominated child protection officer and policies are updated annually to include any new requirements. Personnel in the bursar's and headmaster's offices carefully arrange for checks on all teaching and non-teaching staff and governors by the Criminal Records Bureau. Staff in-service training is designed to increase awareness of policies and practices.
- 3.8 The health and safety committee, led by the bursar, meets regularly and works effectively. Thorough risk assessment for fire and other hazards has been completed for all areas of the school. Precautions to guard against fire are generally good and regular whole-school evacuations are held with outcomes recorded and reviewed. New staff are made aware of the procedures as part of their induction. Emergency evacuation notices are published and escape route signs are clearly displayed throughout the school.
- 3.9 Risk assessments for off-site visits are routinely undertaken. Electrical appliances are appropriately tested. Arrangements to ensure the health and safety of staff and pupils are generally good. The school gives careful attention to security matters and is planning to make further improvements.
- 3.10 The school has a written first aid policy. Fifteen members of staff are qualified first aiders and many others have received first aid training. The quality of provision in the medical room is excellent and the school nurse ensures that pupils' needs are understood and met. Medication is suitably stored and good records are kept. Acute medical problems are properly made known to all teachers and records kept secure in the staff common room.
- 3.11 The school admissions register is in good order and a new electronic daily registering system is working well at the start of morning and afternoon school. A central control is in place for effective checks on pupils who are absent. The school caterers provide a good variety of hot and cold meals for lunch. Food is of excellent quality; it is nutritious and prepared using fresh ingredients. The caterers take healthy eating guidelines into account when planning meals.
- 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 is successfully meeting its aim of an active and open collaboration with parents and building links with the community. Parents express great satisfaction with the education and support provided for their children. In response to the questionnaire issued in advance of the inspection, they agree that the school provides very good support for their sons. A small minority had concerns about the more able pupils being favoured in activities compared with the less able but enthusiastic. A few expressed concern about some variability in tutoring. However, most parents strongly agree that standards of care and communications between tutors and parents over matters of pastoral or academic concern are generally very good. Inspection evidence supports these conclusions; showing an outstandingly wide range of opportunities provided for pupils of all abilities and across all age groups. As an example, school matches allow very large numbers of pupils to represent the school in competitive sports teams, ranging from A – E in each year group. The work of specialist coaches is not confined to the top teams. Similarly large numbers of pupils are keenly involved in music with opportunities to perform whatever their competence. Housemasters keep good records of pupil-involvement in inter-house competitions and recognise these contributions in reports to parents. Tutors make regular checks to ensure boys are involved as part of very effective pastoral care through which boys are well known and parents kept informed.
- 3.14 Parents have good opportunities to be involved in activities in the school and in the work and progress of their children. They can attend one parents' evening per year, with pupils in Year 10 and over being able to accompany their parents. Additionally, they can attend many specialist meetings, like the universities meeting for Year 12 and careers meeting for pupils in Years 10 to 13. The active parent-teacher association nominates a parent governor and parents are encouraged to attend games fixtures, concerts, plays and other events. The work experience scheme for boys is well supported by parents, former pupils and members of the Guildford community.
- 3.15 Parents are provided with excellent information about the school. Regular and informative news bulletins are published together with the annual Guildfordian magazine. All copies of standard letters sent home and key school policies are put onto the communication centre of the school's website. Parents are invited to make observations in the homework diaries. Reply slips from parents are required for all off-site visits of a significant nature. Two reports per year are provided for parents and the monitoring of reply slips by tutors ensures that the reports are received. Most reports are very good but, given the concerns of some parents and managers, shared by inspectors, about the quality and usefulness of a few, the school is planning additional monitoring to ensure that all comments are diagnostic and supportive.
- 3.16 RGS handles the concerns of parents with due care. Informal complaints are initially handled by the tutor, but the head of year, deputy or even the headmaster respond if approached directly. Records of all significant communications are kept by the school. A complaints procedure is in place and a copy is available on the school website or by request but there have been no formal or sustained complaints over the last twelve months.
- 3.17 The range and quality of links with the community are outstanding and fulfil the school's aim of promoting service to the local and wider community. A community links co-ordinator has been appointed to ensure that links are identified and developed. The ongoing programme to establish further initiatives is enabling many boys to become keenly involved and to become more sensitive to the needs of others. For instance, master classes run for local Year 6 children and the summer school for Year 5 children stimulate academic interest at the primary level. Year 12 pupils help work with secondary children as classroom assistants in

the 'Schools without Walls' scheme; community service volunteers assist in local schools, charity shops and with the elderly. A Christmas party for the elderly, organised by the group, is a significant highlight. Free lunchtime concerts and performances by the choir, which includes parents and staff, and orchestra are greatly appreciated. All the RGS service groups – CCF, Scouts and DoE – and the charity committee do much to build community links while the school facilities are used by local sports clubs and other organisations such as the Geographical Association.

- 3.18 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 excellence of education achieved at RGS is testimony to the very high quality of governance and management and to the successful achievement of overall aims. The system of governance is very strong; with support from several long-serving and very experienced governors. The well-structured board consists of some 20 governors, half co-opted and half nominated. It includes a good mix of parents, Old Guildfordians, staff and external governors. Appropriate expertise is available. There are three committees: academic; finance and general purposes (F&GP); and nominations. Proper arrangements are made for checks on the suitability of governors. They are conscientious in their attendance and respond very well to the considerable demands on their time. The preparation for meetings is thorough and the use of time well managed. Governors are well aware of the school's aims, objectives and values and have a good knowledge and understanding of the way the school works. Their outstanding work contributes significantly to the school's success.
- 4.2 The support given to the staff by the governors is excellent and the headmaster was particularly well supported in his first year in office. All reasonable requests for resources are quickly met and checks made to ensure that they are well used. The accommodation is generally very good but is crowded and heavily used, so governors have undertaken a considerable programme of building; the sports hall, art school, auditorium and sixth form centre have not long been completed and the purchase of a neighbouring office building is intended to help reduce many accommodation problems.
- 4.3 Appropriate time is given to careful development planning and the headmaster and governors are endeavouring to involve all constituencies in the process. Review and planning were at the heart of the recent governors' away-day and this also provided valuable training for newer governors. A few governors have attended courses as part of their training, and responsibilities for welfare, health and safety have been properly allocated.
- 4.4 Not a great deal of contact is possible with the boys though some governors are invited to visit classes occasionally and some are very good at attending major school events and performances or giving support on the touchline. Support staff are less well known and no governor has the responsibility for this important school constituency.
- 4.5 Financial management is very good and boys' education has benefited considerably as a result. It is thoroughly monitored by the F&GP, who also keep the financial implications of development plans under review. The governors have proper regard for the needs of the school and of its charitable objectives in setting the fee levels.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.6 The quality of leadership and management is very high. Since the last inspection, an important change has occurred in the leadership of RGS with the retirement of a long-serving headmaster and the arrival a year ago of his successor. This has been the catalyst for the review of many aspects of leadership and management; sensible changes have occurred, as a result, and other significant improvements are in the pipeline. Further, the appointment of the current senior deputy to a headship has enabled the revision of job descriptions, making the division of responsibilities between the deputies clearer and more coherent. The school's aims and ethos have been in place for some time and are also now under review. The senior

management team (SMT) give significant leadership in the drive for even higher standards but all parts of the school community are contributing to the consultative review process.

- 4.7 Leadership from the top is excellent and is in no small measure responsible for the outstanding academic results. Equally, the leadership of the system for the care of pupils is outstanding, with the keen interest of senior managers and the dedication and enthusiasm of the year group teams, all of whom are always ready to go the extra mile in resolving pastoral problems and encouraging academic progress. Similarly high quality management ensures that the extra-curricular activities contribute much to boys' all round education and development. Activities are well led and the complexities are well managed, for instance the school competes effectively in a wide variety of games despite having to bus boys some distance to the games fields. However, the planning consumes much management time.
- 4.8 The middle managers who head departments are very able and experienced and respond well to the needs of the boys and to the lead of the director of studies and the SMT. Handbooks and schemes of work set out appropriate procedures and policies. Some departments are more rigorous than others at monitoring the effectiveness of these procedures, including marking and assessment policies and report writing. The introduction of a newly designed data base is helping to improve the quality of monitoring, though more remains to be done as the system does not yet provide for all marks and assessments to be entered.
- 4.9 Heads of department are well involved in the appraisal of staff and offer encouragement for some professional development, though further expansion of training and the fuller use of departmental meetings are needed to exchange and build on good practice. Excellent leadership is provided for the many boys of very high ability without neglecting the interests of others. Conscious of the need to encourage more enrichment activities to supplement the basic curriculum, middle managers are strong in encouraging and organising academic societies, inviting lecturers, taking visits to places of interest, both in this country and abroad, and entering the boys for national competitions. On the pastoral side, heads of year are very successful in coordinating the work of tutors and in helping the SMT to analyse the needs of the boys. All departments contribute to an annual development plan, which is coordinated by the SMT to establish priorities.
- 4.10 Senior and middle managers are properly concerned with securing high quality staff and are having to adopt new strategies to attract good teachers to this expensive area. The school is meticulous in the arrangements for checking the suitability of staff, supply staff and governors. It plays a leading role in training teachers at all levels; post graduate education (PGCE) students are welcomed and the induction of newly qualified teachers is of high quality, the school being fully aware of the expectations of the independent schools council teacher induction scheme. Some teachers are doing their PGCE in post, and all new members of staff participate in a valuable programme of induction. Heads of department and others who act as mentors play an important part in ensuring the success of the schemes.
- 4.11 The financial management of the school is in the highly competent hands of the bursarial staff who work closely with other managers to ensure that the needs of the boys are met. The administration of the school is highly efficient.
- 4.12 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].
- 4.13 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 The school is achieving outstanding success in encouraging in pupils the growth of intellectual curiosity, creativity and habits of learning, through a broadly based, coherent and balanced curriculum. It prepares boys for excellent examination results; and provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities which help boys to develop social, sporting and cultural talents. RGS develops in boys self discipline, responsibility, spiritual values, excellent behaviour, and consideration for others; and helps them develop character, intellect and physique. Within this scholarly community each individual is cared for and valued equally. It achieves strong collaboration with parents, though it aspires to make this even more effective, as well as promoting more service to the local and wider community, which is already strong. Boys are given a very good understanding of higher education and careers, and the wider world. All this is achieved as the result of excellent leadership, management and governance and the efforts of a staff of wide ranging talents, good qualifications and strong commitment.
- 5.2 Since the last inspection, examination results have improved, the outcomes of learning and achievement are now outstanding, and there is more evidence of independent learning. Where teaching was reported as good with some outstanding lessons in the last report, the proportions are now reversed. More support staff have been employed and they ensure that premises are well maintained and cleaned, that catering is excellent, and that technical support is of high quality; service throughout the team is highly committed. Pastoral care, which was good, is now excellent, as a result of strong leadership and improved procedures. The spiritual dimension of boys' development has continued to improve and cultural development is now even stronger. Links with the community have been extended further with great success and awareness of the importance of the school's wider charitable function is growing stronger.
- 5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

- 5.4 The following recommendations would enable the school to strengthen its provision even further. It should do more to:
1. monitor marking and assessment, making use of a further developed data base and ensuring that assessment informs more lesson planning;
 2. enrich learning by encouraging more teaching to go beyond the examination curriculum;
 3. provide more physical space for teaching and learning and library services when the new building becomes available;
 4. monitor report writing in order to avoid inconsistencies and ensure that high standards are evident throughout, including giving positive advice and encouragement;
 5. reduce, as resources allow, the pressure on teachers' time to allow for management, planning and professional development, including delegating some administrative functions, such as booking of transport and music administration, to support staff;
 6. monitor professional development to ensure that this is strong in all departments and activities, drawing on the outcomes of appraisal, and endeavouring to spread good practice both within and between departments.
- 5.5 No action is required in respect of regulatory requirements.

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 19th to 22nd November. 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. Inspectors visited 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.

List of Inspectors

Dr Vivian Anthony	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Lydia Baker	Senior Teacher, GSA school
Mr Andrew Boggis	Head, HMC school
Mr Bill Chadwick	Director of Staff and Pupil Development, HMC school
Mr Stephen Cole	Head, HMC school
Mr Rod Spencer	Senior Teacher, HMC school
Mrs Gwen Caddock	Former Head, GSA school
Mr Richard Willan	Head of Department, HMC school