



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

ALLEYN'S SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

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Alleyn's School

The junior school was inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School	Alleyn's School
DfE Number	210/6312
Registered Charity Number	1057971
Address	Alleyn's School Townley Road Dulwich London SE22 8SU
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Email Address	enquiries@alleyns.org.uk
Headmaster	Dr Gary Savage
Chairman of Governors	Professor the Lord Kakkar
Age Range	11 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	984
Gender of Pupils	Mixed
Inspection dates	22 Jan 2013 to 25 Jan 2013

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in January 2008.

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

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

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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

Inspectors

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Mrs Alison Bawden	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mr Magnus Cowie	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
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Mr Stephen Fox	Team Inspector, (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mrs Denise Hammersley	Team Inspector (Vice Principal, ISA school)
Mr Geoffrey Hill	Team Inspector (Former Head of Department, HMC school)
Mr Nick Plater	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mr Jason Slack	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Alleyn's is a co-educational day school which, together with its junior school, educates over 1200 boys and girls between the ages of 4 and 18. The main entry into the senior school is at the age of 11. There is a further intake at the age of 13, and again into the sixth form. The school is one of three originating from Edward Alleyn's foundation 'Alleyn's College of God's Gift' in 1619. In 1857, an Act of Parliament split the college into the Lower School (now Alleyn's School) and the Upper School (now Dulwich College). The Lower School received Royal Assent in 1882, and moved to its present site in 1887. Formerly a direct grant grammar school, the school became independent and fully co-educational in 1976.
- 1.2 The senior and junior schools, each with its own headmaster, share a large, greenfield site of 30 acres. Junior school pupils have guaranteed transfer to the senior school. Pupils are drawn from a wide catchment area, including south east, south west and central London, Surrey and Kent.
- 1.3 Alleyn's central aim is to provide co-educational academic excellence for all, in a caring, friendly, welcoming community. It seeks to value academic excellence and to educate pupils of high intellectual promise. Means-tested bursaries allow access for able pupils, irrespective of financial circumstances, and policy and provision in this area have recently been reviewed. Since the previous inspection in January 2008, the school has completed an extensive capital project development, the Edward Alleyn Building, opened in November 2008. This provides a theatre for drama and music, lecture hall, and seminar and teaching spaces. The present headmaster has been in post since 2010.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection, 984 pupils, aged between 11 and 18 years, were attending the school: 514 girls and 470 boys. There are 128 pupils who receive help with special educational needs and/or disabilities, known by the school as 'specific learning differences', and 2 for whom English is an additional language (EAL). Around three-quarters of pupils have ability that is well above the national average.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school is highly successful in meeting its central aim of providing co-educational academic excellence in a caring, friendly and welcoming community. Pupils' overall achievement is excellent, both regarding attainment in public examinations and within co-curricular activities. The high levels of academic achievement are underpinned by good teaching, outstanding learning, an excellent curriculum and further supported by excellent resources. The previous inspection's recommendation to promote uniformly high and challenging standards of teaching has been partially met. The recommendation to develop the use of information about pupils' aptitudes to promote increased attainment has been met in full.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils are mature, unassuming, polite and articulate. They talk enthusiastically about school, and their approach to their studies and to other activities is exceptional. Relationships amongst pupils and with staff are characterised by mutual respect. This extends to extremely successful pastoral arrangements which involve both a vertical house-based structure and a tutor system based within year groups. All pupils feel supported and know where to find help should it be needed. Pupils have a good sense of humour and are friendly and compassionate. They are excellent role models. Pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very positive about their academic progress, the range of co-curricular activities and the level of staff support which they receive. They expressed some concerns about opportunities for taking responsibility, the amount of homework, and the fairness of sanctions and rewards; they also felt that the school does not always listen to their views. However, pupils' comments in interviews and observations of the inspection team did not uphold such concerns. Following the previous inspection, the school has created more opportunities for promoting knowledge and understanding of minority ethnic and faith groups.
- 2.3 Governance, and leadership and management are excellent. Governors meet their various responsibilities in full, and are particularly conscientious in discharging their duties with regard to safeguarding and health and safety. They come from a wide range of backgrounds and provide both support and challenge for the school. Their dedication and commitment to the school are a key part of its continuing development. Staff are well managed by pastoral and academic leaders. Senior management is very effective in expressing its vision for the school and in sharing that with staff. Following the previous inspection, the school has developed a more rigorous system of performance management, together with more detailed action plans to inform developments at all levels. The school has an excellent relationship with its parents, reflected in their responses to the questionnaire. They are pleased with the progress which their children make and highly satisfied with the care and support provided. No concerns were expressed by the vast majority.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Further enhance the quality of teaching through continued exchange of good practice and thereby bring the level of all teaching up to that of the best.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils, including those with specific learning differences, show wide knowledge and understanding in all subjects of the curriculum and are very well educated, in line with the school's aim to achieve co-educational academic excellence.
- 3.3 Pupils' learning skills are at an outstandingly high level and standards of achievement have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils have excellent subject knowledge, are articulate, and are able to write with fluency and accuracy, often showing both logical and lateral thought. They are active listeners and can argue cogently, assimilating new knowledge rapidly; they can also apply mathematical concepts with confidence, enabling them to interpret data, for example within geography and physics. Pupils demonstrate high levels of creativity, noted within art, music and drama. They show exceptionally high levels of physical skill and across a wide range of sports and athletic disciplines.
- 3.4 Pupils have highly developed skills of research and independent study, drawing parallels when evaluating and analysing to make effective links. These attributes have been recognised through the Governors' Research Project Prize. Many in the sixth form are proficient touch typists, a skill which greatly enhances their ability to learn. Their level of academic achievement enables a very large majority of pupils to continue their education at highly selective universities and covering a wide range of courses. The vast majority secure places at their first choice of university.
- 3.5 High academic standards are matched by similar levels of achievement in many areas, including sport and the creative and performing arts. In co-curricular activities pupils achieve outstanding standards, for example within individual and team sports, and in music and drama. In sports pupils routinely succeed at county, regional and national levels. Many pupils excel in instrumental music examinations, and the choral ensembles and orchestras regularly achieve success in festivals. The standard of drama is also very high, and the recent production of *Les Misérables* was very well received. From Year 10 many pupils are actively involved in the Combined Cadet Force (CCF), The Duke of Edinburgh's Award and volunteering schemes.
- 3.6 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2010 to 2012. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. Results at GCSE have been exceptional in relation to the national average for maintained schools and above the national average for maintained selective schools. Results in International GCSE mathematics have been above the international average and also above the UK average, where the benchmark is higher. A-level results have been well above the national average for maintained selective schools.
- 3.7 This level of attainment at GCSE and the nationally standardised progress data available indicate that pupils make good progress to Year 11 in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. The level of attainment at A level suggests that pupils make progress in the sixth form which is high in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Achievements by pupils with specific learning differences are also excellent, for example in history, where clear frameworks and success criteria are established. Pupils enjoy much success in mixed ability groups across

the curriculum. Gifted and talented pupils also achieve very well and contribute particularly effectively to discussions. Occasionally, within lessons, pupils' progress is less rapid where the level of the teacher's expectation is reduced.

- 3.8 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent; they develop a love of learning and knowledge, and are well-motivated, sophisticated learners. Pupils take great pride in their work, which is well organised and presented. In lessons, they are attentive and active, and relish the opportunity to develop their intellectual curiosity. They are respectful of the views of others. They work successfully individually, in pairs or in groups. Pupils readily show initiative and take responsibility for their own learning when the opportunity arises.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.10 The curriculum provides very effectively for all areas of learning and contributes significantly to the pupils' achievements. It is highly successful in meeting the aim of the school to develop logical, critical and imaginative thinking, and it successfully promotes academic rigour and intellectual challenge. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and tailored to the aptitudes and interests of the individual.
- 3.11 In addition to the core subjects of mathematics and English, all pupils study biology, chemistry and physics to GCSE, and the vast majority study at least one modern foreign language from a choice of French, German and Spanish. Latin is compulsory in Years 7 and 8, with the option of Greek and classical civilization at GCSE, where pupils are also advised to select from five broad curriculum areas. There is excellent provision for fostering pupils' aesthetic and creative development through music, art and drama, and their technical development through design technology, food technology and computing.
- 3.12 Pupils' choices of option subjects are carefully guided through the careers element of the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme and by the pastoral team. In the sixth form, freedom of choice is similarly central to the options system, with pupils being able to choose from a wide range of subjects. In Year 12 and in Year 7, all pupils benefit from an enrichment programme. The curriculum is further enhanced by talks and visits, many of which are organised or presented by the pupils themselves. This is an effective part of the school's drive to promote academic enrichment both inside and outside the classroom.
- 3.13 Pupils with specific learning differences are identified at an early stage and teachers are provided with comprehensive information and guidance to help these pupils access the curriculum and achieve their potential. In mathematics, from Year 8, and in English and science subjects at GCSE, setting is successfully employed to cater for pupils with different needs. Pupils' personal development is enhanced by the PSHE course and there are valuable opportunities for work experience, following GCSE examinations in Year 11.
- 3.14 The programme of co-curricular activities is outstanding. The school offers an exceptionally wide and diverse selection of clubs, societies and activities. Collectively, these significantly enhance pupils' educational and intellectual development, and provide opportunities for leadership, personal development and challenge. The programme is open to all, irrespective of ability, and pupils are actively encouraged to get involved. The co-curricular programme is very well managed, including a highly effective tracking and monitoring system, introduced

after the previous inspection. This has led to a more balanced, pupil-focused programme, and awareness of opportunities has also been increased through improvements in communication.

- 3.15 Pupils' experiences are further enriched by the many trips that take place. The management of this area has been improved, with greater guidance for staff organisers and the creation of a five-year rolling programme that also enables parents to be better informed. Links with the local community are well established including volunteering schemes in Year 10 and Year 11, where pupils mentor youngsters from a local primary school on Saturdays. Nearly 200 pupils complete a period of voluntary service within the local community as part of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. The Edward Alleyn Club fosters strong links with former pupils, and a partnership with a local maintained sixth form has been established, supplementing the school's long-standing involvement in the Southwark Schools Learning Partnership. Many external organisations also use the school's facilities: the theatre is used widely by visiting groups and speakers, as well as by the community and other schools. An international links co-ordinator has been appointed who is developing links with schools in Kenya and Zimbabwe.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.16 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.17 A recommendation of the previous inspection was to promote uniformly high and challenging standards of teaching and marking, and to extend the excellent practice of some departments across all. The school has endeavoured to implement this recommendation and to establish the highest standards in all lessons. The quality of teaching in lessons is mainly good or excellent, but less than good in a small minority.
- 3.18 In the best lessons, which make a valuable contribution to the pupils' achievement, learning is exciting as pupils are enabled to discover for themselves and recognise achievement as their own. These lessons have pace, set appropriate challenges and utilise the pupils' noted strengths in discussion and reasoning. The excellent rapport between teachers and pupils contributes significantly to progress in lessons at all levels and for all groups, including those with specific learning differences. Pupils listen closely to each other and respect different views, but are not afraid to disagree.
- 3.19 A variety of key study skills is taught across the curriculum and these are used to very good effect in many disciplines. Various note-taking and mind-mapping techniques are used and the freedom to select the preferred method, when offered, is welcomed by pupils. Less effective teaching lacks sufficient challenge and rigour, and the pace of lessons is slow, leaving pupils unenthused. In these lessons resources are insufficiently used to enliven the classroom experience.
- 3.20 Teachers throughout the school are highly committed and knowledgeable so that their teaching successfully prompts and enables learning. Teachers' enthusiasm for their subject is a notable feature and pupils are encouraged to discuss ideas that stretch them. The aim of the school in securing academic interest and excellence is met well.
- 3.21 Teaching is well planned and greatly encourages intellectual enthusiasm and the pursuit of a detailed and accurate response. At times, classroom activities do not

vary sufficiently to retain pupils' interest and to promote more rapid progress within the lesson.

- 3.22 Informed by careful and regular assessment, most teachers understand the needs of each pupil well. Marking is generally carried out to a good standard, with helpful comments on how to improve being especially effective in the sixth form. In the best practice, pupils are guided to find for themselves the most effective means to improve. Not all assessment is as rigorous, however, and the application of formative assessment methods in Years 7 to 9 is inconsistent, both across and within departments.
- 3.23 Those with specific learning differences are identified effectively and receive individualised support where required. A comprehensive and well-resourced system of learning support then allows staff to be aware of the particular needs of specific pupils with specific learning differences or EAL. Pupils value highly the strategies offered to aid learning, although the extent of the staff response to the informative individual learning support programmes is inconsistent within the classroom. Many teachers do, however, provide one-to-one support in lessons where necessary, both inside and outside formal lesson time. The most able are not formally identified, but pupils value the opportunities that the curriculum and teaching provide.
- 3.24 Resources to support teaching are plentiful, including the much valued contribution of support staff. Information and communication technology equipment is of a good standard and it is used effectively to support understanding and learning in several subjects.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils' strong spiritual development is encouraged by an underpinning Christian ethos that welcomes and respects members of other faiths and those of no faith. The founder's prayer that the school should be a place of "godliness and good learning" is known and understood by all, pupils and staff alike. The chaplaincy is highly regarded by those of all viewpoints, and in interviews pupils made strong personal observations about its effectiveness. Pupils are encouraged to develop their own personality and thus become self-confident young people with a clear sense of what they believe in. Their appreciation of other faiths and beliefs is well supported by the curriculum. Through musical performances, drama and art displays, pupils are able to express a mature understanding of a world beyond the physical and to become increasingly self-aware.
- 4.3 The moral development of the pupils is excellent. They have a clear sense of right and wrong, and understand well a personal and social need for considerate and social behaviour. Pupils have a deep-rooted respect for fundamental British values of democracy and the rule of law. They also demonstrate a genuine concern for those less fortunate than themselves through a strong commitment to the programme of charitable giving. Each term a charity is chosen by the charity committee, run by the pupils with some help from the staff, and there are plans to extend this work further afield through connection with a school in Kenya. The school has been instrumental in setting up a fund to help disadvantaged children to attend school in Zimbabwe.
- 4.4 Social development is excellent. Pupils have high standards of social awareness and relate extremely well to each other, across ages, faiths and traditions. They display high levels of courtesy, maturity, consideration and respect for each other and for visitors. Younger pupils enjoy sharing the same building, with Year 8 helping to mentor Year 7, an arrangement that works extremely well. Enrichment and PSHE programmes increase pupils' understanding of life, and the curriculum is enriched by speakers from a variety of organisations. The thriving CCF and other activities give many opportunities for pupils to develop leadership skills.
- 4.5 Pupils' cultural development is excellent and this awareness has improved significantly since the previous inspection. It is promoted in many curricular areas, including art, music and drama. Additionally, pupils relish the opportunities given to discuss wide-ranging cultural issues, for example in history, geography and sixth-form modern foreign languages. Pupils thus gain an appreciation of, and respect for, their own faith and culture, and those of the wider community. Pupils also have the opportunity to extend further their cultural awareness by participating in visits to countries such as Iceland, Morocco, China and Mongolia.
- 4.6 The quality of the pupils' personal development is outstanding by the time they leave and is a great strength of the school. Pupils are well-rounded individuals who are self-assured, articulate and confident in social situations.

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

- 4.7 The school's arrangements for pastoral care are excellent.
- 4.8 The pastoral structures, incorporating a vertical house-based system from Year 9 upwards, together with a tutor-based system throughout, meet the needs of all pupils very effectively. Good communication amongst pastoral staff and with senior management ensures that overall provision is fully co-ordinated. Records of pastoral issues are well documented.
- 4.9 In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils questioned the fairness of the school's use of rewards and sanctions. The inspection did not find evidence to support this. Positive relationships between staff and pupils are a distinctive feature and pupils are confident that there is always a member of staff to confide in, including access to male and female counsellors. The school is very effective in promoting excellent behaviour and this was observed throughout the inspection.
- 4.10 The food provided by the school is popular and healthy, and pupils contribute suggestions to the overall menu. Fitness is nurtured through a wide range of opportunities for physical activity. Pupils benefit from an effective PSHE programme, with Year 13 speaking particularly highly of the support provided for applications to higher education. Sixth-form pupils who serve as prefects provide strong role models to younger pupils; this is just one of many leadership opportunities which are much valued by pupils. Pupils report that bullying or harassment are not features of school life and any minor incidents are dealt with effectively.
- 4.11 The school has a suitable access plan for meeting the needs of pupils with specific learning differences and any with a statement of special educational needs.
- 4.12 In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a minority of pupils felt that the school does not listen to their views. The inspection found that the school does have formal channels of communication and that it is reviewing the structure and operation of its school council. The excellent relationships between pupils and staff mean that informal channels are regularly used to inform staff on how pupils feel about their school.

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

- 4.13 The school's arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 4.14 Staff training across all areas is up to date and appropriate records are maintained. The school has extremely robust arrangements for dealing with safeguarding issues. These arrangements include a rigorous recruitment procedure and appropriate measures for child protection. Any welfare matters are sensitively and effectively managed by the school; pupils' well-being is paramount. Staff, at all levels, take their responsibilities extremely seriously and are proactive in taking swift, supportive action if they identify a need. All members of staff have received appropriate training in child protection and receive regular updates. Good links with the local authority are maintained so that all the required policies relating to welfare, health and safety are in place, implemented and regularly reviewed.
- 4.15 Effective measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards, with detailed arrangements for practical safety throughout the school. Closed circuit

television and staff duties result in a secure, well-managed environment. Appropriate risk assessments are undertaken for departments and activities in school and during trips and visits, the latter being particularly well documented.

- 4.16 A well-equipped and welcoming medical centre staffed by qualified nurses provides for pupils who are ill or injured. School nurses are also involved in pastoral and welfare meetings so that key staff are made aware of pupils with acute medical or welfare needs. There is also a large number of trained first aiders and excellent provision of, and training in, defibrillators.
- 4.17 Admission and attendance registers are suitably maintained and stored.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Governors wholly fulfil their responsibilities for educational standards, financial management, and investment in staff, premises and resources. They have a range of professional backgrounds, including a serving independent school head, and annual audits are undertaken to ensure that the governing body maintains the necessary expertise to meet its current and future needs. A nominee of the school common room helps to ensure that there is representation of, and empathy for, the views of staff.
- 5.3 Governors have a very clear vision for the school and understand the features that make it distinctive. In this way the aims of the school are met successfully, with close attention to pupils' needs and good resourcing. A strategy group meets with senior staff to shape the planned capital development of the school. Regular and detailed reporting from the headmaster and senior staff, together with their attendance at meetings, ensures that the governing body has a keen insight into the school and is able to provide support and stimulus for the future. Governors are frequent visitors at school events and are known by the staff.
- 5.4 Governors take a strong interest in matters of welfare, safeguarding, and health and safety, ensuring that they are fully aware of any issues that have arisen. The governing body carries out an annual review of the safeguarding policy and procedures. Specific governors take a particular responsibility for these areas, with regular liaison with school staff; actions are appropriately monitored within the committee structure. All governors are trained in safeguarding matters and also undertake induction training. Governors' scrutiny of the appointment procedures is excellent.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.6 Strong leadership and management make a key contribution to the effective promotion of the school's aims, including the excellence of the pupils' achievement. The energetic and professional approach of senior leadership is balanced by care for individual members of staff, and those with management responsibilities listen as well as lead. A collegiate atmosphere is evident throughout the school and committed staff work as a team in the best interests of pupils. Staff at all levels enable pupils to achieve high standards in and out of class, to develop into confident and self-assured young people, and to flourish within a supportive school community.
- 5.7 All staff take part in well-resourced and carefully targeted professional development and this contributes to meeting the school aim of creating a learning community for all. The well-established professional review system allows teaching staff to reflect on their development with a colleague in a critical yet supportive manner. A performance management system has been implemented in line with

recommendations made at the previous inspection. This scheme is seen as productive by middle managers in helping to promote a consistently high level of classroom practice, although there are currently no agreed criteria against which to assess the quality of teaching.

- 5.8 Heads of department formally evaluate the academic success of their subjects through an annual report to the headmaster on the academic effectiveness of their departments. This report creates opportunity for self-reflection and improvement, and acts as a stimulus for constructive dialogue. A high level of professional support takes place informally amongst teaching staff within departmental areas. This process of peer support is both appreciated and effective in creating a progressive environment of improvement amongst teachers. Management at all levels plays a significant part in sustaining this caring culture.
- 5.9 The whole-school development plan plays a significant role within the context of leadership and management. It refers well to the aims of the school. Members of staff responsible for each aspect of provision are clearly identified, along with an indication of the timescale for a successful outcome. The extensive and wide-ranging content of the development plan conveys a broad focus for the main priorities and its effectiveness then depends upon an action plan which is updated on an annual basis.
- 5.10 The establishment of a sub-committee of heads of department has led to more effective discussions within academic middle management. The wider staff body is given the opportunity to contribute to development of the school through a comprehensive set of standing committees and working groups. Membership of these groups is rotational and further adds to the professional development opportunities available to teaching staff. The deliberations of these committees help to inform the development plan. Regular meetings between subject co-ordinators in the junior school and members of the corresponding department in the senior school help to ensure curricular continuity across the schools.
- 5.11 Pupils' progress through the school is well monitored by both academic and pastoral staff. Heads of section and heads of house use quantitative data, including baseline testing and standardised results, to track changes in the achievement of pupils. Potential under-performance is highlighted and steps taken to address any concerns. Similarly, heads of department monitor pupil progress within their subjects.
- 5.12 Support staff are well managed and fully integrated into the life of the school, and their expertise and enthusiasm are notable features. An appraisal system for support staff has been devised and is intended to provide additional opportunities for training.
- 5.13 A strong emphasis is placed on the recruitment and retention of high quality teaching and support staff with a broad range of experience. The school carries out rigorous recruitment procedures, ensuring that all required checks, including criminal record checks, are carried out promptly and recorded accurately. Newly appointed staff are made aware of the ethos of the school so that they are able to contribute positively to the learning environment. The induction programme for new teaching staff is comprehensive, responsive to individuals' needs and very well regarded by them. It also provides training in safeguarding, welfare, and health and safety matters.
- 5.14 The positive relationship with parents, carers and guardians is a major strength of the school. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire showed overwhelming

satisfaction with the academic and pastoral care provided by the school. Tutors or house masters are the first point of contact for parents, and any concerns are addressed quickly and efficiently. Any complaints are dealt with promptly, in accordance with the school's policy.

- 5.15 Parents are kept fully informed about the life of the school through weekly email and a termly newsletter, as well as the end-of-year publication, *Scriblerus*. Parents of current and prospective pupils receive information by means of the detailed parents' handbooks and the school's comprehensive website. Parents have numerous opportunities to be actively involved in the life of the school through attending drama performances, concerts, sporting fixtures and social events. The school organises annual curriculum and pastoral information evenings, which successfully highlight the work of individual departments as well as issues such as alcohol awareness and e-safety.
- 5.16 An annual parents' evening is held for each year group to enable parents to discuss the progress of their children with their teachers. In addition, the school organises a Year 7 welcome evening, the Year 9 House at Home and Year 12 information evening for those pupils and parents who are new to the school. Parents receive high quality and informative academic reports twice a year, including reference to co-curricular activities. These full reports are supplemented by grade sheets during the year.
- 5.17 The Alleyn's Parents' Association is very active and helps significantly in promoting a sense of belonging to the school. Its objective is to foster communication and relationships between the staff, parents and others associated with the school through social and educational activities. The association organises several events through the year, ranging from Year 7 welcome parties and quiz nights to a major fund-raising event, the Holly Fair, in December. The funds raised are used in part to support pupils whose financial means are more limited to take part in school trips and visits.

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