



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

CHIGWELL SENIOR SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Chigwell School

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

Full Name of School	Chigwell School
DCSF Number	881/6006
Registered Charity Number	1115098
Address	Chigwell School High Road Chigwell Essex IG7 6QF
Telephone Number	020 85015700
Fax Number	020 85006232
Email Address	hm@chigwell-school.org
Head	Mr M Punt
Chair of Governors	Mr C P De Boer
Age Range	13 to 19
Total Number of Pupils	408
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (232 boys; 176 girls;)
Numbers by Age	13-19 408
Number of Day Pupils	378
Number of Boarders	Total: 30 Full: 30
Gender	Mixed
Inspection date	26 Jan 2010 to 27 Jan 2010
Final (team) visit	22 Feb 2010 to 24 Feb 2010

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. It consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in May 2004.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as subsequently amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) The quality of education provided (Curriculum)
- (b) The quality of education provided (Teaching)
- (c) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) The welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) The suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) The premises and accommodation
- (g) The provision of information
- (h) The manner in which complaints are to be handled

Legislation additional to the welfare, health and safety Standard is as follows.

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

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

The inspection of boarding was not carried out in conjunction with the Children's Directorate of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), and the report does not contain specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education and development in general. The full Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) report refers to an inspection in October 2006 and can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Inspection reports/Boarding schools.

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

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Chigwell School is situated to the north of Chigwell village, twelve miles from central London, and is set in its own grounds of over 70 acres. The school was founded in 1629 and caters for 732 boys and girls aged from seven to eighteen. The junior and senior schools share the same site and facilities, and the same educational philosophy. The pupils come from a wide range of social and ethnic backgrounds. The senior school is a day school with a small number of international boarders in the sixth form. It caters for 408 pupils aged from thirteen to nineteen of whom 232 are boys and 176 are girls with 169 in the sixth form. The school is administered by a board of governors. The head of the school has been appointed since the previous inspection in May 2004.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide a high quality rounded education where pupils have opportunities to discover interests and talents across and beyond the school curriculum so that they can play a full part in the life of the school and the world beyond. They aim to support pupils to achieve and fulfil their individual and collective potential, develop a love of learning and are challenged to think for themselves with critical and creative curiosity. Set within a Christian foundation, the school aims to provide an inclusive community so that all learn from each other and take responsibility for others, the community and the environment.
- 1.3 Standardised national assessment shows that the average ability of pupils is above the national average of pupils in maintained secondary schools. The school enters pupils for GCSE, IGCSE Mathematics (since 2007) and A level examinations. The majority of Year 13 pupils go on to their first choice of university. The school has identified nineteen pupils as having learning difficulties (LDD) of which three have support from the school and 28 pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), of whom 24 receive support
- 1.4 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 tables.

Senior School/Upper School

School	NC name
Removes	Year 9
Lower Fifth	Year 10
Upper Fifth	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Middle Sixth	Year 13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL AND ACTION POINTS

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Pupils at Chigwell Senior School are well educated and the school fully meets its aims to provide a high quality rounded education where pupils reach high standards of achievement and develop a love of learning. Teachers are dedicated and enthusiastic and are successful in achieving high standards through good planning, the provision of varied learning activities to foster interest and an emphasis on independent learning. Attainment in public examinations is excellent, especially at A level and has improved significantly at GCSE since the previous inspection. There is a wide variety of subjects on offer and the extra-curricular provision is particularly strong. The academic initiatives, and the opportunities for challenge beyond the classroom, are exceptional, but the effort is not always taken to stretch and challenge the more able pupils within the classroom. Those with LDD make good progress although few are receiving formal support. The pupils' positive and conscientious attitude to learning and their excellent relationship with the teachers are major factors in their successful educational experience.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is outstanding and is a testimony to the success of the school's aim in seeking to promote a society in which all learn to take a growing responsibility both for each other and the wider environment. The excellent quality of pastoral care allows the pupils to develop into responsible young people in an environment which is secure and caring. The wide range of nationalities and faiths in the school provides a truly mixed cultural community alongside the core Christian foundation and tolerance of others' beliefs and opinions are notable. The international nature of the sixth form boarding houses makes a significant contribution to the personal development of day pupils as well as the boarding pupils.
- 2.3 Effective governance and leadership is successfully steering the school into a new future where change is planned but the traditions of the past are protected. They are very successful in maintaining a strong community feeling. In almost all respects governors discharge their responsibilities fully. However until recently, insufficient attention was given to ensuring that all required checks in regard to staff recruitment were made. A culture of self assessment has developed and appropriate strategic and developmental planning is beginning to show results. However the appraisal process lacks a close enough link to the development planning in the school. The quality of links with parents is outstanding creating the strong sense of community felt by all involved in the school. Parents' replies to the pre-inspection questionnaires were highly favourable with minor criticism of the special needs provision. The governors have been successful in making sure the recommendations of the previous report have been met.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school did not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2003, as subsequently amended, and therefore it was required to:

- carry out checks of medical fitness, obtain character references and where appropriate professional references [Regulation 4(2)a under Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors];
- complete enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks on governors before appointment and ensure that they are entered positively on the central register [Regulations 4B(4)(a) and 4C(6) under Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors];

2.5 At the time of the final team visit, the school had rectified all of the above shortcomings, as noted in the text of the report.

(ii) Recommended action

2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvement:

1. introduce an appraisal programme for all staff where targets are more closely linked to the school development plan so that the whole school vision is shared by all.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 Standards are excellent. Pupils are well educated in accordance with the school's aims and they have the opportunity to discover and develop their interests in a community where they are encouraged to think for themselves with critical and creative curiosity. Results in GCSE, in the last three years for which comparative data are available, have been excellent when compared with the national average for all maintained schools, and high when compared with the average for maintained selective schools. The previous inspection found some unevenness in attainment in GCSE examinations but there is no current evidence of this. Almost three-quarters of GCSE grades have been A* or A on average over the last three years. Results in IGCSE Mathematics have been moderate when compared with the average for UK schools. The pupils' performance in A level, in the last three years for which comparative data are available, has been high when compared with the national average for all maintained schools, particularly in their percentage of A-B grades. The pupils' performance, when compared with the average for maintained selective schools, is also high. Success in other national or internationally recognised examinations, such as drama and music, is a strong feature of the school and pupils also enjoy achieving at high levels in a number of sporting activities.
- 3.2 Pupils make good progress over time in relation to their ability profile. Pupils develop their knowledge, understanding and skills effectively. They reason well, have good levels of literacy and take pride in the presentation of their work. They have particularly well developed numeracy skills and a reasonable level of information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Many are very talented in the aesthetic subjects, as evidenced in the creative displays around the school, and they show confidence in the performing arts. They are at their best when given tasks that they can work on independently as demonstrated in technological activities. Almost all pupils in the pupil questionnaire said they were encouraged to do things for themselves and to work independently.
- 3.3 They are mature and conscientious learners and take responsibility for their work. They work happily together in pairs or teams and are willing to help each other whenever possible. They are confident in the classroom and this is reflected in their enjoyment of discussion and their eagerness to listen and debate their views with others. Their behaviour is excellent and they share a relaxed and respectful relationship with teachers in the classroom. There is no evidence of a difference in attainment between girls and boys, both achieving equally well. Those from overseas who have EAL make excellent and rapid progress. Those with other special needs, such as dyslexia, have little formal support in the classroom but they continue to make good progress. Few receive formal support outside the classroom.

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

- 3.4 The curriculum makes an excellent contribution to the pupils' progress. An aim of the school is to provide a high quality rounded education in the broadest sense and the school achieves this well. It provides a curriculum with a wide range of subjects which give the pupils the opportunity to discover and develop their interests and talents. The extra-curricular provision is particularly strong in achieving this aim. In

the previous inspection, the provision for developing ICT skills and understanding was deemed insufficient and poorly implemented. The school has now increased ICT facilities across the site and this is resulting in more effective teaching and learning. The curriculum is suited to all ages, abilities and needs and covers all the required subjects including a comprehensive personal, social and health education (PSHE) and careers education. Since the previous inspection more pupils are taking separate sciences and the linguistic choice has improved.

- 3.5 The individualised interests of the GCSE pupils are encouraged by offering a free choice of option subjects once the core subjects have been established. The choice continues at A level where the range of subjects is very good. The length of lessons has been changed from 35 minutes to 50 minutes and this has had some beneficial effects, such as increasing teaching time for the sixth form and allowing teachers the time to provide more pupil-centred activities in some subjects in Years 9-11. There is strong provision for pupils who have EAL, and the international students make impressive progress with their English in their first months within the school. Provision for pupils with LDD is less comprehensive and although a learning support teacher has been appointed since the previous inspection the support is used mostly in the Junior School.
- 3.6 The school provides an exceptionally wide range of extra-curricular opportunities including those which enable a direct involvement within the local community. Many of these opportunities seek to inculcate a spirit of independent inquiry and to instil leadership skills, as evidenced by the Sports Leadership Award. The extensive activities of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, and of the Scouts, also promote service to the local community as do charity fund raising events such as the art exhibition for the benefit of the local children's hospice. There is good provision for the more gifted and talented in the programme through the Williams project, with inspiring speakers promoting intellectual challenge in critical and creative thinking. The academic achievement is strongly enhanced by the extensive opportunities existing outside the classroom, for example, the recent visit to the Houses of Parliament. The sporting programme is highly effective in promoting pupils' sense of community loyalty and in offering both enjoyment and challenge at the highest level. Tours to Hong Kong, New Zealand and Dublin for sporting fixtures provide exciting international experiences. Aesthetic opportunities are widely present within the school and contribute notably to the depth and richness of the curriculum such as the annual house music competition and the Chigwell School Musician of the Year event. Wind band, jazz band, orchestra, chamber choir, recorder ensemble and small vocal groups provide pupils with ample opportunities to participate in music making. Pupils of all ages enthusiastically help in the school's drama productions as evidenced by the technical support given to the Wizard of Oz production by senior students.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.7 Teaching is good, and is effective in promoting good progress. It provides appropriate support to allow most pupils to achieve and fulfil their individual and collective potential, which is a central aim of the school. The majority of lessons are at least good and some are outstanding. The most effective lessons are characterised by detailed planning, clear learning objectives and activities which promote independent learning, challenge and thinking skills. Good use of praise and encouragement is notable in all lessons. Less effective lessons are those which are

too prescriptive or involve activities which are not given enough time. Teachers have good subject knowledge, are dedicated and enthusiastic and have excellent relationships with the pupils. Detailed and thoughtful planning of varied learning activities fosters interest, reasoning and understanding. For example cartoons, stories, phrases and 'fill in the blanks' exercises enabled a lower ability group to gain confidence and make rapid progress. In another lesson, pupils were asked to explain and justify the different methods they had used to answer a range of challenging questions.

- 3.8 A significant number of opportunities are provided for independent learning. One pupil described how she designed and carried out her own investigation and then evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of her method. Teachers encourage collaboration as observed when pupils were eager to help each other in checking measurements in a practical lesson. Occasionally, when planning is over-ambitious, activities are hurried and less effective. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils and they are aware of their differing needs, offering appropriate individual support within lessons. In one lesson, 'show me' cards were continually used to assess individual pupils' understanding and then the teaching was adjusted accordingly. Excellent opportunities are being developed for the more able to enhance their learning beyond the classroom but these pupils are not always stretched and challenged during lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress but do not often receive formal help in the classroom for their specific difficulty.
- 3.9 There is generous provision of in-service training for teachers, some of which focuses on learning and teaching strategies, and teaching is monitored and evaluated by some lesson observation. An informal peer observation framework, although in its infancy, allows effective sharing of good practice. A teaching and learning working party has been initiated with a focus on independent learning and enhancing provision for the more able. One of the outcomes, the 'Chigwell Gateway' intranet site, is being developed to provide a range of resources and extension material which some pupils say they find very helpful. Classrooms are well resourced with good use of projectors and the internet. Although interactive white boards are a useful addition, further training would optimise their potential. Many displays are impressive, particularly those highlighting pupil work and achievement.
- 3.10 Regular tracking of the pupils' progress, and the highlighting of good performers and underperformers, is effective and has had a significant positive effect on GCSE results. The marking policy is comprehensive and effectively implemented, so that marking is undertaken regularly with appropriate use of attainment grades. Diagnostic comments vary in quality, the best involving targets for improvement. There is consensus amongst pupils that they are fully aware of their attainment levels and of the appropriate action required for improvement. A formal framework whereby departments scrutinise the quality of work and marking, and feedback their findings, is a positive development. Reports and grade sheets are regular and informative. Comments vary in terms of quality, the best being fully diagnostic with targets for improvement.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The pupils' engagement in the spheres of spiritual, moral, social, and cultural education is outstanding. Their convincing sense of moral worth derived from the strength of community values within the school is testimony to the success of the school's aim in seeking to promote a society in which all learn to take a growing responsibility both for each other and the wider environment.
- 4.2 The pupils' spiritual development is evident in their well-developed respect for a catholicity of worship in which importance is attached to the teachings of many faiths alongside the core messages of Christianity. A strong sense of respect for those universal religious truths which transcend particular societies and places can be seen working in the school community, for example, in the evident respect for each individual's worth and the bonds that tie individuals together in common humanity.
- 4.3 The moral awareness of pupils at Chigwell is of outstanding quality. Prejudice and discrimination are absent from the school community as pupils ensure that respect for others and the integrity of the community is one of the core values prevailing in daily life. Pupils are strengthened in this course by chapel services, school assemblies, house meetings and the very positive relationships enjoyed with their personal tutors. In addition they take the opportunities presented to accept responsibility for others, for example, through the induction and care of new pupils. The Williams project plays a notable part in teaching pupils to reflect upon moral dilemmas and the problems of the age.
- 4.4 The social relationships enjoyed by pupils are likewise of outstanding quality. There is an extensive outreach into the local community presenting challenging opportunities to develop service to others, for example, as in a charity home for the disabled. Pupils interact well with each other and speak of their teachers with affection and respect. The exercise of courtesy is a notable characteristic of the school. Pupils express their ideas freely and are confident in their relationships with adults. They are accustomed to celebrating the achievement of others through awards made at house meetings and in school assemblies. They participate very actively in a PSHE programme including those elements that introduce them to the workings of democracy and the parliamentary system through the visits of local politicians. They have the opportunity to hold positions of responsibility which they carry out with a sensitive maturity.
- 4.5 Pupils have an outstanding and well-developed awareness of their own and other cultures. A well inculcated collaborative style of learning serves to heighten their awareness of the differing traditions of humankind. Interest in other cultures is developed both by the presence of a diverse international community amongst the sixth form students, and by an extensive programme of visits and exchanges catering for all age groups. Recent examples of this wide ranging programme include an historical visit to St. Petersburg, German and Spanish exchanges respectively in Hamburg and Murcia, a sporting tour to New Zealand and Hong Kong and a Scouts' visit to the northern highlands of Scotland. Of particular note are the school's links with the Tim Pruss School in Southern India to which the visits of pupils, parents, and staff alike provide a moving insight into the ways in which westerners can make a real difference to the quality of life in distant less privileged communities. Music and drama both play a notable part in awakening the aesthetic appreciation of pupils. The imaginative use of the Drama Centre and the musical

performances given annually at Brentwood Cathedral, combined with the successes achieved at the Stratford Music Festival, are testimony to the vibrancy of these traditions in school life.

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

- 4.6 The contribution of the arrangements for pupil welfare is a significant strength of the school, and is consistent with the school's aim of providing an inclusive community in which all are willing to learn from each other. The excellent quality of pastoral care allows the pupils to develop into responsible young people within a caring community. The strong house system enables pupils of all ages to mix freely and lies at the heart of this success. House staff know their pupils well and have effective contact with parents, enabling concerns to be readily addressed. Some pupils reported in the questionnaire that there was no adult or senior pupil to whom they could turn if in personal difficulty but this was not evident to the inspectors in their discussions with pupils and pastoral staff. Pastoral procedures are well known by the pupils, and borne out by their very clear preference for approaching their own tutor in the first instance.
- 4.7 There is a relaxed and friendly relationship between staff and pupils. Measures to promote good conduct and discipline are effective while the rewards policy, both formal and informal, motivates pupils to give of their best. Good behaviour is promoted and acknowledged through a system of commendation and the liberal use of praise. Procedures to guard against harassment and bullying, including cyber bullying, are effective. Close monitoring and guidance of the pupils' welfare by pastoral staff ensure that such instances are rare. During interviews with pupils, no incidents of bullying were reported. Pupils who give cause for greater concern are the subject of case meetings involving the house pastoral team who in many cases can resolve difficulties through a combination of firm advice and sensitive guidance. When required, the formal sanctions are deployed. All the required policies are in place.
- 4.8 The safeguarding of pupils is good, although in the area of recruitment checks on governors before appointment, the regulations were not followed closely enough. The safeguarding policy is in place and is readily available to parents. All staff receive annual child protection training. All necessary measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards have been taken and the required fire prevention procedures are in place. The school received a report from the fire authority in 2008 and remedial action was completed in 2009 in two areas. Arrangements to ensure health and safety are effective, although staff are not always vigilant around school in observing day to day health and safety issues such as the security of floor coverings and the use of safety spectacles. The health and safety committee includes representative members from all the appropriate areas of school and has a nominated governor. The medical centre has due consideration for the safe storage and distribution of medicines. A disability committee has been established and it has produced a three year accessibility plan. Facilities for the disabled have recently been improved with new entrances to buildings and toilets.
- 4.9 The food is very popular with the pupils. The choice and quantity on offer is excellent with many healthy options available. The school provides good opportunities for exercise on the curriculum. The PSHE programme also promotes healthy living through discussions of life style and hazards to health such as alcohol and drugs. The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and correctly stored for the previous three years.

4.(c) The quality of boarding education

- 4.10 The boarding experience plays a valuable part in the pupils' education and development, and contributes in an excellent manner to the school's aims of providing an inclusive community. Boarding is focused entirely on international students who come to Chigwell in the sixth form as a preparation for entering United Kingdom universities and it prepares them well for this. An international liaison officer is also the director of boarding, resulting in excellent oversight for the boarding arrangements. She is supported by an experienced and caring staff who provide a mature community which is good preparation for adult life.
- 4.11 The boarders benefit from being part of both a day house and a boarding house, each giving individualised support and attention. The three boarding houses are clean, warm and caring in ethos, and provide a home away from home atmosphere which is very much appreciated. Pupils feel safe and well cared for. They have an excellent induction into the school with mentors providing instant friendship and guidance in a new country and school system. The close location to London offers many wonderful opportunities for cultural visits to places such as The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and The Globe Theatre. They take advantage of the good facilities on site for sports, drama and music and the school grounds provide a beautiful and relaxing environment for them to enjoy. Many of the boarders are very talented, especially in music, and make a significant contribution to school life. The wide range of nationalities represented in the boarding environment is of great benefit to the experience of the boarders but also to the day pupils who enjoy learning about other cultures and traditions. They provide a truly mixed cultural community where tolerance of others' beliefs and opinions is notable. They are mature young people who are afforded a good degree of freedom in a controlled and secure environment. There is a good tradition of academic excellence amongst the boarders which in turn contributes to the high academic standards of the sixth form and the success of entry into top universities in the country.
- 4.12 The school has fulfilled all the recommendations set out in the most recent boarding inspection conducted by OFSTED. The child protection policy now includes all the required information and the boarding handbook includes a complaints procedure. Medicines are now closely checked and used safely and all relevant checks are made on boarding staff before appointment.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The board of governors, who administer Chigwell School in its entirety, provide strong and effective governance. They offer a breadth of experience, knowledge and interest which contribute significantly to the strategic planning of the school and seek to ensure that its aims are fulfilled in any future development. The structures of governance as laid down in a comprehensive governors' handbook are clear. Regular meetings of the whole board and its committees with well-kept minutes ensure good communication is maintained. The chair of governors works closely with the Head in matters of development and the governors have a long term strategic plan that links to the school development plan. The governors offer very effective support for the school particularly in providing the important role of critical friend to the headteacher. The governors have carried out an appraisal of the head teacher and are considering ways to formalise the process for all staff. Financial management is strong and enables governors to oversee educational provision and wise investment in staff, material resources and accommodation.
- 5.2 There has been a recent review of the governing body, which has changed to increase its effectiveness, and five new committees have been formed. These allow governors greater involvement in the school and for decisions to be made more efficiently. The governors are increasingly taking up their responsibility in relation to child protection and welfare, health and safety and some have taken training to ensure that they are well informed on legal requirements. One governor has responsibility for child protection and another sits on the health and safety committee. However, in the area of governor and staff recruitment, they have paid insufficient attention to ensuring that all the required checks are made and recorded before appointment. An important addition is that of the education committee which has a good insight into the working of the school and provides support and stimulus for improvement and new initiatives
- 5.3 The governors have been successful in making sure the recommendations of the previous report have been met. Improvements to ICT and the library have been made and they have ensured that strategies are in place to raise standards in years 9-11.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.4 Through good and effective leadership, the school is providing the high quality of education it aims to promote. The management is busy planning for the future whilst being careful to maintain the traditions and strengths of its past. The aspirational leadership of the headteacher is providing a new focus and direction to a dedicated senior leadership team who are enjoying a culture of change and development. The senior leaders are ably supported by an experienced management team and together they ensure that the school runs smoothly and any new initiatives are carefully introduced. Roles of responsibility allow for effective overlap and communication at all levels is excellent. The boarding and house staff are especially valued for their contribution to the warm and caring ethos of the school. The impending loss of the head of junior school will lead to a gender imbalance on the leadership team, the importance of which the headteacher and governors are aware.

- 5.5 Thorough self-evaluation and risk management is taking place, and school documentation is up-to-date and excellent in its detail. School development planning is linked to the school's aims but lacks precise details of when targets are to be met on some important educational matters such as staff awareness of LDD pupils and strategies to help them. A named person to monitor progress is not always evident. An appraisal programme called career development review lacks rigour and is not linked closely to the school development plan, so the whole school vision is not fully understood by all staff. The identification of educational monitoring as a priority has raised expectations and improved academic attainment especially at GCSE level. In the previous report a lack of aspiration in Years 10 and 11 was noted and this has now been corrected.
- 5.6 The school has recruited and retained a motivated, well-qualified and hardworking staff. They are dedicated to the welfare and academic success of the pupils and give generously of their time to provide them with excellent opportunities both in and out of school. Training for individuals and the whole staff is provided on a regular basis including areas of child protection and safeguarding. Staff are encouraged to take part in training outside of school and to look outwards in their vision for their departments. The administration of the school is efficient but this is sometimes at the expense of the senior leadership team who are engaged in tasks of an administrative nature when the school would be better served by focusing their attention on teaching and learning.
- 5.7 Chigwell School has rectified the regulatory shortcomings in relation to the recruitment of staff that were noted at the time of the initial inspection visit. All staff have made declarations of medical fitness. Rigorous recruitment procedures now always include the making of medical fitness checks and obtaining character references and, where appropriate, professional references. Procedures for the appointment of governors specify that the CRB checks must be completed and included on the central register before an appointment is taken up.

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

- 5.8 The school's links with parents are outstanding, and it is the quality of these links which is largely responsible for creating the strong sense of community felt by all involved with the school. The majority of parents strongly agree in their questionnaire that they can communicate easily with the school and receive timely responses to their questions. Information about the school and its policies are readily available. In the previous inspection the quality of links with parents was rated as sound but it was noted that the curriculum policy was not available to parents. All important policies including curriculum, safeguarding, welfare, health and safety are now available on the website and updated regularly. They are satisfied that the school handles well any concerns they have. All complaints handled in the last year have been resolved informally. No formal complaints from parents were recorded in the previous academic year.
- 5.9 The school has an informative internet website and an excellent 'school to home' email system. The newly established portal, 'Chigwell Gateway', is a useful and popular initiative. Frequent high quality publications such as, 'News from Chigwell' and 'Headmaster's Letter', keep parents well informed of special events and extra-curricular activities, and detailed information booklets are provided for all sections of the school. The school takes every opportunity to share the success of its pupils with the parents adding to the inclusive feeling of the school community. Regular information about the pupils' progress is provided by useful half term grade reports,

and clear full reports produced either once or twice a year. Parent evenings are held at least once a year and are now more effective as pupils can accompany their parents.

- 5.10 Parents are given many worthwhile opportunities to become involved with the work and progress of their children. The majority agreed in the questionnaire that they are encouraged to be involved in the school's life and work. They are welcomed into school for matches, concerts, drama productions and social events. Classes for parents are beginning to be provided in languages and parental surveys are carried out to greater understand parental needs. Parents are invited to join the 'Friends of Chigwell' who give valuable support to the school, most recently in raising funds for the refurbishment of outside areas and purchase of extra resources for the classrooms such as electronic whiteboards.

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 chair of governors and two further governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Maureen Bradley

Mr Stephen Cole

Dr John Guntrip

Mr Stephen Jefferson

Reporting inspector

Senior Team Inspector (Head, HMC)

Senior Team Inspector (Director of Studies, HMC)

Senior Team Inspector (Head of Dept, HMC)