



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

ST EDWARD'S SCHOOL

INTERIM INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

St Edward's School

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

Full Name of School/College **St Edward's School**

DCSF Number **916/6032**

Registered Charity Number **293360**

Address **St Edward's School
Cirencester Road Charlton Kings
Cheltenham Gloucestershire
GL53 8EY**

Telephone Number **01242 538600**

Fax Number **01242 538610**

Email Address **headmaster@stedwards.co.uk**

Headmaster **Dr A J Nash**

Chairman of Governors **Mr Peter Walsh**

Age Range **11 to 18**

Total Number of Pupils **458**

Gender of Pupils **Mixed (253 girls; 205 boys)**

Inspection Dates **23rd to 24th November 2009**

PREFACE

This report is according to the *Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) schedule* for INTERIM inspections. The inspection is a two day visit with a focus on compliance with regulatory requirements. ISI inspections occur every three years and have two formats, interim and standard, which usually occur in an alternating pattern. The school's next inspection will therefore follow the standard schedule, which includes two visits totalling five days and places greater emphasis on the quality of education and care in addition to reporting on regulatory compliance. The school's previous inspection was in March 2006.

ISI is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to 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 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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INSPECTION EVIDENCE

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 St Edward's is a Roman Catholic school for pupils aged from eleven to eighteen that aims: to teach a wide and stimulating academic curriculum and to obtain the best possible examination results, while teaching beyond examination syllabuses to cultivate pupils' critical and creative faculties; to give religious education a central place and to nourish pupils' spiritual life through prayer and liturgy; to provide challenging and absorbing extra-curricular activities, especially enabling excellence, and enjoyment of all, in sport and outdoor pursuits, and having a rich cultural life in which the arts flourish; to expect high standards of behaviour, manners and dress; and to give good pastoral care to pupils, guiding them in developing a sound moral character based on gospel values. The school is a charitable trust whose trustees form the governing body.
- 1.2 St Edward's was formed in 1987 from two Catholic grammar schools. Around a quarter of the pupils are Roman Catholics. The separate junior school shares the same governing body, and some facilities and staff, but is managed autonomously. The school is on an extensive site on the outskirts of Cheltenham.
- 1.3 Since the last inspection, a chaplain has been appointed. Accommodation developments have included the opening of a building containing a refectory, drama studio and classrooms. This has allowed the restructuring of existing buildings: additional sixth-form facilities, new art studios and a permanent Combined Cadet Force (CCF) headquarters.
- 1.4 Currently, 458 pupils are on roll, 205 girls and 253 boys, with 112 pupils in the sixth form. The ability profile of the school is above the national average. About half the Year 7 entrants are from the junior school. The school has no pupil with a statement of special educational needs but it has identified 83 pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and gives specialist learning support to 42 of these. Very few of the pupils are from ethnic minorities.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills

- 2.1 Pupils are educated well in accordance with the aims of the school. They are good learners who take responsibility for their own learning and they take pride in their achievements. They are articulate and write well. They handle mathematical concepts across the curriculum. They use information and communication technology effectively. Pupils' progress over time is good in relation to their ability. Results at GCSE and A level over the last three years for which comparative data is available have been high in comparison with all maintained schools. Almost all Year 13 leavers go to university, most to their first choice institution. Pupils at the school have been successful in winning certificates in mathematics, drama and music, and in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme at all levels. Pupils have had representative sporting honours at county, area and national level, and two members of the CCF have been appointed Lord Lieutenant's Cadets. The curriculum is broad and balanced. The provision of separate sciences and of four modern foreign languages, as well as Latin, is a strength. Greek is offered as a lunchtime extra subject. The provision for those in need of learning support is good. Curriculum planning is thorough. The school offers a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. All pupils in Year 12 undertake some kind of community service. A particularly wide variety of sports is offered: in winter, rugby, soccer and hockey for boys, and for girls, netball and hockey.
- 2.2 Teaching is good. Lessons are very well planned. On a few occasions, teachers make use of commercial worksheets that are not always suitable for the pupils since they lack sufficient challenge. Teachers know the pupils as individuals, have high expectations of behaviour and maintain excellent discipline with a light touch. They are well-qualified specialists and make well-chosen use of the good facilities. Marking is generally helpful, diagnostic and often tailored to the subjects; modern foreign languages and Latin, for example, offer comments in the language being taught. In a few instances, marking is perfunctory.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 2.3 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is outstanding. In the curriculum, religious education is compulsory for every pupil, including sixth formers. The school is successful in integrating religious faith into all that it does. The provision of a full-time chaplain has helped to give a personal focus to the school's spiritual life, and to link the spiritual with the pastoral, as pupils attested. Pupils make use of a small chapel for Mass and prayers. Moral development is excellent. The pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. They exhibit behaviour in class and around the school that shows concern for others and have a clear moral code. The pupils' social development is strong. They relate well towards each other, and are supportive and caring. They are polite and courteous. The pupils become well aware of their own culture and those of others, especially through participation in the arts.
- 2.4 The pastoral care of the pupils is good. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, contribute to the excellent care, support and guidance for the pupils. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils is outstanding, promoting a positive and nurturing atmosphere. The provision for welfare, health

and safety is good. Measures to ensure the protection, health and safety of pupils are successful. The school has all necessary policies and procedures, such as those in relation to bullying and first-aid, and measures against fire, but its care of the pupils goes beyond that which is compulsory.

The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management

- 2.5 Governors are well aware of their responsibilities and give good strategic leadership while supporting the headmaster in the running of the school. They are the guardians of the school's aims. The chairman of governors meets the headmaster regularly and other governors are in school frequently. The governors, with effective oversight, ensure that the school fulfils its duties of child protection, in recruitment and for matters of health and safety. The school is very well led. The headmaster and the senior staff have a strong sense of the Catholic identity and ethos of the school. The school, therefore, has a strong spiritual and moral atmosphere that stems from the senior managers. They are largely effective in leading the other teachers in promoting the school's aims.
- 2.6 Recruitment procedures are thorough, and accord with legal requirements. Non-teaching staff make an outstanding contribution to the school through their cheerful efficiency, dedication and care. The school's premises and accommodation are good and are constantly being improved. The grounds, buildings and equipment are very well maintained. The school has effective links with parents and an active parent teacher association. The school provides all the required information but goes beyond that, especially in the contents of its attractive website and prospectus. Parents expressed positive views in the pre-inspection questionnaire. The school has a suitable complaints procedure. In recent years, no complaint has gone beyond the preliminary informal stage.

3. ACTION POINTS

(a) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 3.1 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2003, as subsequently amended.

(b) Recommended action

- 3.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements:
1. ensure all marking meets the standards of the best;
 2. monitor the use of worksheets to ensure that they consistently provide sufficient challenge to pupils.

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 a governor representing 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

Mr Eric Hester

Mrs Deborah Forbes

Reporting Inspector

Senior Team Inspector (Former Headmistress,
GSA school)