

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS COUNCIL
(ISC)**

INSPECTION OF

CHARTERHOUSE

by the

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE
(ISI)**

on

30th April to 3rd May 2007

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Charterhouse

Full Name of the School	Charterhouse
DfES Number	936/6041
Registered Charity Number	312054
Address	Godalming, Surrey, GU7 2DJ.
Telephone Number	01483 291600
Fax Number	01483 291647
Email Address	headmaster@charterhouse.org.uk
Headmaster	The Reverend John Witheridge
Chairman of Governors	Mr John Walker-Haworth
Age Range	13-18 years
Gender	Boys (Years 9-11); Mixed (Years 12-13)
Inspection Dates	30th April to 3rd May 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 has accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003.

The inspection was not carried out in conjunction with the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and the report does not contain specific judgements on the National Minimum Boarding Standards. 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 CSCI report can be found at www.csci.org.uk.

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. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 Charterhouse was founded, together with an almshouse, in 1611 by Thomas Sutton, a wealthy businessman, in the Charterhouse, on the site of an ancient Carthusian monastery in Smithfields. The school moved out of London in 1872 to its present site at Godalming in Surrey. Originally a boys' school, girls were admitted into the sixth form in 1971. Currently the school has 735 pupils aged 13 to 18, all of them boys except the 103 sixth-form girls. Almost all the pupils are boarders, with only 19 boys and 1 girl being 'day boarders'. Over half the pupils are in the sixth form.
- 1.2 The mission of the school states that its priorities are primarily academic, but are not exclusively about achieving qualifications by public examinations. It aims, in addition, to stimulate independent enquiry and intellectual curiosity; to enrich spiritual awareness; to match physical fitness with a love of the arts; and to promote individuality, together with a sense of duty to friends and society.
- 1.3 The school occupies a large site in excess of 200 acres. The original neo-Gothic school building comprises the four 'old houses', with the seven 'new houses' built a short distance away in a 1970s complex. Girls are full members of the boarding houses, but have separate hostel-type sleeping accommodation. Recent major developments include significant refurbishment of boarding houses, a newly equipped library, the Queen's Sports Centre, the social sciences building and, nearly complete, the new modern languages centre.
- 1.4 The great majority of boys are admitted into the school in Year 9 through their performance in the Common Entrance (CE) Examination and a report from their preparatory school. A number are admitted through the scholarship examination. Entry into Year 12 (for around 50 girls and 15 boys) is by selective examination, interview, and predicted GCSE results. The majority of boarders come from London, and towns and villages in Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire. Some of the pupils joining the school in Year 12 come from overseas, as do a few younger boys. The school has 63 pupils for whom English is an additional language. Of these, 35 receive English language support.
- 1.5 Pupils in Years 9 and 12 take a range of nationally standardised ability tests. These indicate that their average ability is well above the national average in Year 9. Their ability is above the national average in the sixth form. If pupils achieve in line with their ability, therefore, they will gain results at GCSE that are well above the national average for all maintained secondary schools, and above the national average at A level. On leaving the school at age 18, nearly all pupils proceed to UK universities, including Oxford and Cambridge, and some overseas, most gaining places at their first-choice institution and course.
- 1.6 Two pupils have statements of special educational needs, and the school has identified a further 93 with mild learning difficulties or disabilities, of whom only 25 require additional specialist support.

- 1.7 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
Fourth Form	Year 9
Remove	Year 10
Fifth Form	Year 11
1 st Year Specialists	Year 12
2 nd Year Specialists	Year 13

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 Charterhouse provides an excellent range of educational opportunities, very well suited to the interests, aptitudes and needs of its pupils. The school is highly successful in fulfilling its declared aim of according priority to academic endeavour beyond the achievement of qualifications in public examinations. In addition, it stimulates independent enquiry and intellectual curiosity both inside and outside the classroom. Pupils have exceptional opportunities in sport and cultural activities, and the school fosters their individuality whilst inculcating a sense of duty to friends and society.
- 2.2 Since the last inspection, the school has reviewed and reconsidered the curriculum for Years 9 to 11. It now includes music in Year 9. An on-line computing course has been introduced for all Year 9 pupils, and participation in sporting activities is more closely monitored. The headmaster and senior management team are rigorously involved in the continuing development and fine-tuning of the curriculum, and are monitoring closely Charterhouse's curriculum in the light of national initiatives.
- 2.3 The broad and balanced curriculum, enriched by the extensive extra-curricular programme, contributes significantly to the pupils' linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative development. Pupils have many opportunities to acquire skills of speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy. At GCSE, pupils supplement the core subjects of English, mathematics and three sciences with a choice of 13 optional subjects, and the school has been both creative and flexible in its approach to examinations at this stage. Some subjects have moved to the international GCSE, which is better suited to Charterhouse pupils. At AS and A Level, 24 subjects are available. Pupils' creative education is enhanced by the presence (in annual rotation) of a writer-, artist- or composer-in-residence. A considerable number of academic and learned societies make it possible for pupils to extend their knowledge and skills even further. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) does not form part of the timetabled curriculum, although a programme of valuable and relevant topics is covered by outside speakers, housemasters and tutors.
- 2.4 Pupils are offered a full and rich variety of extra-curricular activities that contribute very significantly to their wider education. They are enthusiastic about the choices and find that only time, and not opportunity, limits them. Both boys and girls have access to major and minor sports and are able to choose which to be involved in. A large number of teams enable many to experience competitive sport. Giving sport and culture priority on particular afternoons reduces conflict and caters for those with talents and interests in both areas. A further afternoon is dedicated to activities that nurture leadership and promote self-reliance and voluntary service. Many outside speakers come into the school to speak on academic, pastoral and cultural topics so that links with the world beyond the school are strong and frequent. Year 11 boys are helped and encouraged to undertake work experience after GCSE.
- 2.5 Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Almost all proceed after leaving school to university, some taking a gap year first. The provision of careers guidance and support is of high quality, and takes place throughout the school, with preparation for GCSE and A-level subject choice, and also advice about universities, gap years and career possibilities. Year 11 pupils take a range of interest and aptitude tests, and Years 12 and 13 receive further specialist help, including interview training. Pupils expressed confidence in reaching their own decisions, helped by the support they receive. The breadth and balance of

their education prepares pupils very well for adult life and learning. The style of teaching, especially in the sixth form, accustoms pupils to the rigours of a seminar, developing the confidence to participate fully in the academic life of university.

- 2.6 The assistant head (academic) takes the initiative for curriculum planning, and departments also play a significant role in developing the most appropriate curriculum for Charterhouse pupils. As yet, departments do not submit written development plans, and schemes of work and handbooks show some variation between subjects. Although the assistant head conducts an annual review with each department head, discussing progress and aims, no sharing of best practice in teaching and learning strategies between or within subjects is apparent. Housemasters and tutors monitor and encourage participation in the school's wide extra-curricular programme.
- 2.7 The school is particularly successful in challenging talented and gifted pupils. All departments aim to teach well beyond the confines of public examination syllabuses; academic societies, the Year 12 research essay and the individual encouragement given to all pupils to learn for learning's sake, contribute to an environment in which the academically able can excel. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are given one-to-one support, paid for by parents, where it is needed. New entrants to the school are screened and the progress of all is tracked, in order to pick up incipient problems. The education support department liaises frequently with teaching staff, housemasters and tutors to ensure that the learning needs of individual pupils are appropriately met. Pupils with statements of special educational needs receive education entirely consistent with their requirements. Those for whom English is an additional language are given appropriate support where necessary, and the school ensures that they have the required qualifications in English to gain access to British universities.
- 2.8 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.9 The broad and challenging education provided by the school enables pupils of all ages to achieve good standards relative to their ability in their academic work and learning. They have an extensive knowledge and a very clear understanding of the subjects they study. Pupils have a positive attitude towards their learning, and apply themselves to their work in a highly purposeful way. The school's aim to achieve the highest academic standards is well met and it has succeeded in maintaining the high standards and positive attitudes seen at the last inspection. Pupils continue to be enthusiastic about school life in all its dimensions, and eager to learn.
- 2.10 Pupils bring an academic, and often intellectual, focus to their class work and many of their extra-curricular accomplishments. Pupils generally have an impressive knowledge of their subjects and have developed the skills appropriate to them. For example, previously acquired knowledge is well applied to new material in many subjects, such as pupils' weather-forecasting skills in geography, their grasp of the concept of infinity in mathematics, their understanding of cause and effect in economics, and an appreciation of the link between structure and function in science.
- 2.11 Across all areas of the curriculum, boys and girls of differing abilities, as well as those with learning difficulties or disabilities, and those with English as an additional language, make good progress towards their academic goals. Less able pupils work with confidence and accuracy, and the brightest are effectively stretched and challenged. No significant difference was observed in the sixth form in the relative attainment of boys and girls.

- 2.12 Pupils' attainment at GCSE is good in relation to their ability, results over recent years being far above the national average for all maintained schools. In the last three years, 75% of entries were awarded A* or A grades. Over the longer term, nationally standardised measures of assessment indicate that pupils' progress to GCSE has been well above national norms. At A level, pupils' attainment is also good in relation to their ability, recent results being well above the national average for all maintained schools. In the last three years, 88% of passes were at grade A or B. Similar nationally standardised measures of assessment between GCSE and A level indicate progress above national norms.
- 2.13 Excellent individual and group achievements are evident across a wide range of extra-curricular areas. Notable success has been achieved in the UK maths and chemistry Olympiads. The quality of drama is high, with many pupils achieving distinction and merit at gold and silver level in the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art examinations. Music is equally strong, with significant numbers gaining merits or distinctions at grade 6 and above in the last year. Sporting success is enjoyed both in major games (with the first XI appearing in the independent schools' FA cup final) and in minor sports (the under-16 water polo team being the national champions for their age group).
- 2.14 Pupils are invariably articulate and engage in intelligent, well-informed discussions, and respond well to the stimulating teaching. They listen effectively, retain facts, recall previous knowledge well, and read intelligently. Writing is of good quality, particularly in English and in history, and effectively conveys nuances of meaning and considerable levels of analysis.
- 2.15 Pupils' grasp of mathematics and mathematical concepts is strong: these are applied well in a variety of other subjects, such as geography, physics, chemistry, and economics. Pupils' skills in information, communication and control technology (ICT) are well developed, and they make significant use of the school intranet to support their learning. Good use is made of ICT in geography, for example, where Year 10 pupils employed presentation software well, and in chemistry, where graphical plotting software is used. An exciting recent development has been the creation of a video link with a Russian school.
- 2.16 Pupils reason well in writing, seen for example in Year 10 essays on 'Pride and Prejudice'. Their ability to prepare and argue a case, and to 'think on their feet' is best developed in the sixth form. The success of the research essay project, produced at the end of Year 12, demonstrates vividly the capacity of pupils to think for themselves, and develop an extended argument in writing.
- 2.17 Note-taking is generally good and in some cases excellent, going far beyond what is expected, but in some areas notes are copied extensively from the board, reducing their effectiveness in supporting learning. The quality improves significantly in Years 12 and 13. A high standard of independent organisation of work was evident, due (at least in part) to high staff expectations. The presentation of pupils' work is generally good and deadlines are met.
- 2.18 The strong work ethic throughout the school encourages pupils to study and work effectively on their own. They work well co-operatively, as observed in a Year 13 business studies lesson where the class group wrote independently, then collectively discussed their individual findings. In extra-curricular activities, teamwork can be seen at its best, on the games field, and in the many musical and drama activities available to pupils.
- 2.19 Pupils are comfortable in their learning environment. They settle quickly in lessons although, on a few occasions, motivation is lower when they are not being engaged and

challenged by the teaching. Pupils embrace enthusiastically the many opportunities provided in their work and recreation. They genuinely enjoy the challenges offered to them.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.20 The spiritual, moral, cultural and social awareness of pupils is outstanding and is a particular strength of the school. Spiritual and moral values are embedded in the institutions of the school both formally, through the chapel services, and informally through the ethos and expectations of the school. Pupils are aware of wider cultural and social issues and respect other traditions. One boy said, "Institutionally we are very Anglican, but personally it is much broader". The school succeeds well in fulfilling its aim to enrich the spiritual awareness of its pupils. The school has continued to build on its strengths in this area since the last inspection. Leadership training for Year 12 pupils, especially school monitors, has been improved further.
- 2.21 The school has identified the need to fulfil its aim of promoting a sense of duty to society more effectively still. It has introduced new activities such as charity lunches and house charity days, and expanded the community service aspect of the Monday activities programme.
- 2.22 Formal chapel services offer a regular opportunity for all pupils to develop a framework for spirituality, to worship if they so desire, and to reflect on human issues and the claims of the Christian faith. The chapel itself is held in high esteem, and its role as a war memorial and a place for quiet reflection is much appreciated by current and past pupils. For many, it symbolises the corporate life of the school and provides a formal, unifying and contemplative start to the day. The school provides further opportunities for pupils to develop their personal faith and spiritual awareness through confirmation preparation and the active Christian Union. The 'Christian Focus' week in January attracted some eminent speakers and engaged over 100 pupils at daily lunchtime meetings on moral and philosophical issues.
- 2.23 Opportunities to contemplate spiritual and moral issues are offered in several curriculum areas. In religious studies, pupils consider spiritual, moral and ethical issues common to all faith groups. Year 10 pupils discussed the concepts of virtue and evil whilst studying the character of Iago in English. A sixth-form art student gave a sensitive presentation where the names of former pupils were carved in an archway. Candles were placed in the niches in the stonework and prints of former pupils positioned around the walls. Television screens scrolled a list of the war dead to the sound of marching feet on gravel and the rattle of a roulette wheel signifying the lottery of those who lived and those who died. The excellent house and tutor systems play a key role in the moral development of pupils, one of the significant features of the school. Housemasters and tutors provide very good role models and give clear guidance to those in their houses, helping pupils to develop their self-esteem and self-knowledge. House monitors are selected for their integrity and inter-personal skills, so reinforcing the moral and social values of the school.
- 2.24 The house system is primarily responsible for the very good social development of pupils. House members feel they belong to a community and develop a sense of shared responsibility through living together. Pupils show consideration for one another and older pupils take responsibility for those younger, and value their pastoral role. House competitions and sports are well supported and help to develop a team spirit. House councils offer pupils an opportunity to work together to improve their environment. In the wider school setting, pupils in Year 12 are considered for the role of house or school monitors. They are well trained and supported by their housemasters, and play a major part in the induction process for new Year 9 boarders which was much appreciated by these youngest pupils. In the PSHE programme, healthy living, bullying, alcohol issues, smoking, drugs,

sexual issues, emotional health and relationships are all covered at various stages in Years 9 to 11 and contribute effectively to pupils' growing social awareness and development.

- 2.25 Pupils enjoy and appreciate the many cultural events that take place both inside and outside school. They expect to take part in or to attend plays and concerts regularly. The annual Charterhouse Arts Festival brings together a wide range of cultural events and activities. More than half the school receive individual music lessons, several drama productions take place each year, and pupils' art work is on display throughout the school. Those of all faiths, and none, learn to respect each other's religious and cultural traditions. Overseas pupils are well integrated and respected. Cultural awareness is heightened in many subject areas: for example, classical subjects enable pupils to recognise their heritage, and geography challenges them to interpret third-world cultural traditions.
- 2.26 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.27 The quality of teaching across the school is predominantly good with many examples of excellence seen – a very significant factor in promoting effective learning and high standards across the ability range. Thorough assessment of pupils' work by teachers and the use of standardised assessment data contribute well to pupils' progress. Since the last inspection, the high standards reported at the time have been maintained. Teaching makes a major contribution to fulfilling the school's aim to be an academically focused school, with emphasis both on achieving good examination results, and on encouraging a love of learning.
- 2.28 Teaching enables pupils of all ages and abilities to acquire new knowledge and develop subject skills and understanding. Teachers are particularly adept in the use of questioning to involve all the pupils in a class and ensure their progress during the lesson. The pace of lessons is well judged to challenge the most able whilst including the less able. Teachers know their pupils very well and understand their individual academic strengths and weaknesses. Teaching is adjusted very effectively in both pace and content to suit their needs and develop their varying abilities.
- 2.29 The teaching is highly successful in motivating pupils and helping them to make intellectual, physical and creative effort. This was demonstrated well in a Year 13 mathematics lesson by pupils' confident discussion when solving line equations in vector form, and by the commitment of pupils in team practices. Teaching also fosters pupils' interest in, and enjoyment of, their work and provides many opportunities for them to think and learn for themselves. In a Year 12 lesson, pupils interpreted a French television recording and then gave individual presentations, as potential French presidential candidates.
- 2.30 Much evidence of good planning was seen. Lesson time is well managed, with work proceeding at a pace that maintains pupils' interest. The best lessons employ a varied range of stimulating activities, such as quick-fire question and answer, discussion, oral and written tasks, and individual and paired work. In these lessons, a palpable feeling of shared endeavour is evident. In a few lessons, the range of activities and teaching approaches seen was limited, possibly a reflection of the imminent public examinations for three year groups, and the need to prepare such pupils for these.
- 2.31 Teachers are extremely knowledgeable in their subject areas, have real passion and enthusiasm for their subjects, and a desire to transmit this to their pupils. The teaching encourages pupils to apply themselves to the task in hand and also to think beyond the relatively narrow confines of exam syllabuses. In mathematics, for example, Year 9 pupils

were encouraged to extend their knowledge to consider the complexities of modular arithmetic. Teaching is supported by a good quality, quantity and range of resources and generally makes effective use of them.

- 2.32 Teaching encourages pupils to behave responsibly, and pupils respond well to the high expectations of their teachers. Lessons have an air of shared enjoyment, and good relationships help pupils to behave well in class as well as around the school. In a small but not insignificant number of lessons, weaknesses in planning, a failure to engage pupils fully, and teaching methods that left few opportunities for pupils to respond, contributed to slower progress, to less effective learning, and to some unsatisfactory behaviour.
- 2.33 The assessment and marking of pupils' work are regular and thorough, identify strengths and weaknesses, and indicate strategies to improve performance. Individual departments have policies for assessment and marking, but these are not always fully or consistently implemented by individual teachers. Some variability in the use of numerical scores and letter grades is seen, but pupils are usually able to decode these without undue difficulty. In Years 9 to 11, the process of regular grading is generally seen by pupils as positive and helpful. The ceremony of 'Calling Over' follows each grade period, and involves each form group being presented formally to a senior member of staff so that individuals can receive appropriate encouragement, praise or exhortation. Some, however, feel that effort grades are not always applied consistently, and would like greater use made of attainment grades.
- 2.34 A range of nationally standardised test and progress data are used to evaluate the overall performance of subject departments and pupils. This data provides the basis for annual discussions with heads of department about examination performance. Individual teachers are made aware of the pupils' ability range within their classes. In Years 9 to 11, the available data and the 'Calling Over' grades are used to monitor the performance of individual pupils and identify those who are under-achieving.
- 2.35 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 quality of pastoral care is outstanding, and ensures that pupils feel secure, valued and encouraged to make the most of the many opportunities presented to them. It was a notable strength in the last inspection report and, since then, much time and thought have been devoted to maintaining high standards. Arrangements to ensure pupils' welfare are effective, and the implementation of the school's health and safety policy is exemplary. The school is aware of its responsibilities and the need to provide additional child protection training for non-teaching staff and to monitor welfare practices. In other respects, effective procedures are in place for evaluating and reviewing the pastoral systems within the school.
- 3.2 The tutorial system ensures that every pupil meets his or her tutor once each week, individually or in a small group. The support and guidance given by tutors is much appreciated by pupils, and this is strongly endorsed by parents. Housemasters are pivotal figures in the day-to-day life of the school, exceeding the demands of their job descriptions to ensure the academic and emotional development of their pupils. It is to the housemaster or tutor that a pupil would naturally turn for help but, should the need arise, many pupils felt they could approach almost anyone else in the school, be it another member of staff, their matron, a counsellor, an older pupil or their peers.
- 3.3 Training and support for tutors are provided by housemasters, who hold regular meetings with both tutors and monitors in order to ensure that relevant information is exchanged and concerns shared. The house log maintains a record of welfare and disciplinary issues and provides an effective communication and tracking system. Housemasters' meetings provide an opportunity to discuss wider pastoral issues and to ensure consistency on major school issues. Pupils' views are canvassed effectively in differing ways across all houses. Individual welfare plans are being introduced in all houses to ensure that the needs of pupils are recognised and met.
- 3.4 Staff and pupils work together purposefully and with mutual respect; pupils are polite, confident and relaxed, much as they would be in their own homes. Each individual house is very much a home, and most pupils mix easily with those junior or senior to them.
- 3.5 The anti-bullying policy has recently been re-written and widely publicised to both staff and pupils, and it is clearly understood. Year 9 boys are helped to draw up their own house anti-bullying charter. The school rules are clear and detailed, and most are thought to be fair. A few pupils, however, felt that some of the sanctions were disproportionate, and reported occasional inconsistencies in application between houses. The parental questionnaire expressed strong satisfaction with the standard of pupils' behaviour. Rewards for effort and achievement are well established, but many pupils derive equal satisfaction from the personal encouragement and praise they receive from teachers and tutors.
- 3.6 Since the last inspection, much has been done to raise the awareness of child protection issues, and appropriate training has recently been given to all teaching staff, though non-teaching and peripatetic staff are yet to be included. An annual audit of documentation and welfare systems within each house is carried out by an assistant head to confirm compliance with national standards. However, the governing body is yet to conduct its required annual review of the school's procedures for safeguarding welfare.
- 3.7 Thorough and detailed risk assessments for fire and other hazards have been completed for all areas of the school. Regular whole-school evacuations are held, as well as individual

house fire drills, and the fire officer provides appropriate training for staff. Recommendations from the latest inspection by the fire authorities have all been completed. The school is aware that the movement of vehicles across the campus could pose a risk to pupils, and it is currently negotiating proposals for new parking and access arrangements. Detailed risk assessments have been completed for each boarding house, and other aspects of school activity, including educational visits, and these are well understood. Electrical appliances are appropriately tested.

- 3.8 House matrons are the first port of call for minor medical matters, though pupils can visit the school medical centre for further treatment or to see the school doctor. All teaching staff receive training in first aid. Pupils feel that the food is satisfactory and usually plentiful, though the standard varies. They are able to express opinions through the food committee, and healthy eating is encouraged within the PSHE programme in Year 11, and again in Year 12 for girls.
- 3.9 The school's admissions register is maintained in the requisite format, but the attendance register for day pupils does not yet meet statutory guidelines.
- 3.10 The school meets almost all of the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3]. In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:
- (a) ensure that the governing body carries out an annual review of the school's arrangements for safeguarding welfare, and that the school's non-teaching and part-time staff receive appropriate training in child protection [Regulation 3.(2)b];
 - (b) ensure that the attendance register of day pupils is kept in accordance with the relevant Education (Pupil Registration) Regulation [Regulation 3.(9)].

The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community

- 3.11 The school has formed very good links with its parents and is developing increasingly productive partnerships with the wider community. This close relationship with the home and family, and with the world outside school, makes a strong contribution to the fulfilment of the school's aims. The good standards identified in the last inspection have been improved still further by a complete refurbishment of the website, increased use of electronic communication and the enhancement of the community service aspect of the activities programme. The school recognises the need to expand its relationship with the wider community still further.
- 3.12 Over 300 parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire. The overwhelming majority expressed considerable satisfaction with the school: they were very pleased with the teaching, the curriculum, the help and guidance given to pupils, the high standards of academic work and behaviour, the promotion of worthwhile attitudes and values, the good range of activities and the provision for boarders. One parent went so far as to say that he wished he lived in a world "where everyone had the benefit of a Charterhouse education". However, a small but significant proportion expressed dissatisfaction with the information provided by the school, and the opportunities to discuss their children's progress; the lack of encouragement to be involved in the life of the school; and with the handling of complaints. The inspectors found little evidence to support these concerns.
- 3.13 Good opportunities exist for parents to be involved in activities in the school and in the work and progress of their children. The headmaster actively encourages parents to visit the school for chapel, sports fixtures, plays, concerts, art and design exhibitions, and social events. A calendar is sent to parents and is available on the website, listing events throughout the term. The headmaster and his wife are 'At Home' to parents and staff twice a

term on Sundays after chapel, and further invitations are sent by many housemasters who host events, such as house concerts, house charity days and social evenings, which are usually organised around exeat weekends to facilitate parental attendance. In addition, the careers department involves parents in work experience placements and careers advice.

- 3.14 Parents receive much high quality information about the school and its work. Parents' evenings and forums, the school website, the school magazine, and various brochures, pamphlets and newsletters give extensive and up-to-date information about activities, events and pupils' endeavours. House handbooks are informative but vary significantly in tone and style. The very best of these provide a welcoming reassurance to pupils and parents alike, and make it clear just what life is like in the house. Parents are invited to contact the school whenever they would find it helpful to do so, and the headmaster encourages all staff to make at least an initial response within 24 hours. A wide range of policies and written procedures is available for parents on the website. Full reports are sent termly to parents, and provide useful information on pupils' achievements and attitudes to work. They also offer helpful advice on areas for future improvement.
- 3.15 The formal complaints policy for parents is comprehensive and fully compliant. A log is kept of all serious complaints and concerns, and their resolution: these are fully documented and appropriately handled. Whilst many parents cite communication with houses as outstanding, the questionnaire suggests that some perceive inconsistency in the extent to which housemasters and tutors initiate contact. A few feel that some low level concerns are not always handled sympathetically or promptly.
- 3.16 Many valuable partnerships with the local and wider community enrich the life of the school. Links exist with teacher training departments, with local primary and secondary schools, and with the Hill School near Philadelphia. Outside organisations are welcome to use the school's facilities, especially the Queen's Sports Centre. A visit by the King of Sweden is planned in the summer for the centenary of the scouting movement, to be held at the school. Charterhouse was one of only 8 schools invited to produce artwork for an exhibition at the Royal Albert Hall, and the chapel choir sang in Trafalgar Square on the day before Remembrance Sunday. Some pupils use their Monday afternoon activity time to teach Latin in a local school or to do community service, such as gardening for the elderly. The Combined Cadet Force visited war graves of soldiers related to members of the local community. Cadets tidied the graves and reported back to surviving relatives. Pupils organise opportunities to raise considerable sums for charity, and a regular hunger lunch is held.
- 3.17 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].

The Quality of Boarding Education

- 3.18 The school provides an extremely good boarding experience that supports and nurtures pupils' personal development and welfare very strongly. Although the school has not articulated or formulated specific aims for the boarding experience, the boarding communities contribute strongly to the fulfilment of the school's overall mission and purpose. Very good progress over recent years has been made in terms of major refurbishment of accommodation, the development of strong teams of boarding staff, and appropriate resolution of the recommendations of the last boarding welfare inspection.
- 3.19 The excellent relationships within the boarding houses are warm and supportive. Boarders appear relaxed, self-assured and purposeful, with good integration among different year

groups in the houses. The school has worked particularly hard to achieve good programmes of induction for new boarders and newly appointed house monitors. Pupils very much identify with their house community, and a strong family atmosphere prevails. As one boarder commented, "My housemaster's wife is like my mum here". Girls and day boarders are accepted as full members of the boarding houses. Relationships between staff and boarders are also good, and pupils report that they value the advice and care given.

- 3.20 Inspectors found no evidence to support the views of a few parents who felt that the weekend activities programme was poor. The school recognises the changing shift in the demand for seven-day boarding, whereby the majority of boarders take the opportunity to be with their families on some weekends, and is currently undertaking a review of weekend arrangements. Nevertheless, a wide range of informal and structured activities and access to many facilities are provided, as well as opportunities to take part in recreational and sporting activities. Older boarders, with demanding academic and sporting commitments, often wish to catch up with work, or unwind at weekends. Trips and outings are arranged on some Sundays, and boarders of all ages state that they are very satisfied with the activities and opportunities available. One felt that there was not enough time for all the things he wished to undertake. A very wide range of inter-house competitions in sport, music and drama is much appreciated by pupils.
- 3.21 The resources available to boarders and their houses are good. Pupils' accommodation is highly appropriate to their needs, with the great majority of boys having single study bedrooms, and girls having modern en-suite sleeping accommodation. The lengthy programme of refurbishment of boarding houses is nearing completion, and the school recognises the need to keep the standards of decoration of all houses up to that of the best. The provision of kitchen areas and relaxing space in the houses is good, and all houses have access to a computer room. Housemasters are key figures in boarders' lives and their commitment to the pupils and their sense of vocation are strongly evident.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 Governors provide an effective oversight of all the school's work. They take their responsibilities seriously, and consider that they represent the 'corporate memory' of the school, while helping the headmaster to realise his educational goals. The governors understand and support the school's mission statement in all its aspects. They have responded to the recommendation in the last inspection report (to set up an education sub-committee) with alternative strategies for monitoring the academic life and work of the school. Governors have increasingly been a source of initiatives within the school over recent years and have shown great commitment to the school's success, with an ambitious building programme. They accept that appropriate reviews of welfare policy have not been carried out and intend to address this omission in the near future.
- 4.2 The governing body incorporates a wide range of relevant and valuable skills, expertise and experience. Governors ensure that they support the school's aims through well-attended meetings and through the work of its many sub-committees. They understand and cherish the school and promote its values strongly. Governors have shown initiative in the area of public benefit with the creation of a development office.
- 4.3 Governors are aware of their responsibilities, have an appropriately prominent role in the financial oversight of the school, and are looking carefully and imaginatively at its future direction and longer-term priorities. Financial planning is realistic, but also ambitious. Governors are aware of the need to take a more obvious and direct role in overseeing welfare issues and, particularly, child protection. They consider themselves now to be committed to ensuring that educational and welfare issues are given greater prominence in their work, and that these inform and underpin their wider debates and decisions.
- 4.4 It is increasingly common for senior members of staff, and others such as the school doctor, to address the governing body on educational and welfare matters. Governors are well informed about the school's work through regular and detailed reports from the headmaster. Governors meet housemasters and other staff at the invitation of the headmaster, and informally at the wide range of school events supported by governors.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.5 The quality of leadership and management throughout the school is good, with many significant strengths. Leadership and management at all levels enable the school's purpose and aims to be clearly understood and well met, and provide the stimulus to maintain high standards. Good progress has been made since the last inspection in developing the academic and pastoral life of the school and, specifically, addressing the last inspection recommendations of improving staff induction, developing a comprehensive ICT policy and reorganising the senior management team. However, progress has been slower in developing coherent school and departmental strategic plans. The school acknowledges that its prevailing culture and management style are, perhaps, more concerned with outcomes than with process, and evaluation and monitoring of practices and their effectiveness is often rather informal and unclear in its structure.
- 4.6 The headmaster and the senior management team provide strong leadership. A clear commitment to maintaining high standards and to providing a broad and comprehensive education permeates all levels of the school's work, and the strong contributions of middle

- managers and staff are evident. Respect for the school's history and traditions is well blended with the aspiration to provide a first-class, modern and relevant education. Structures are in place through the two assistant heads to oversee academic, pastoral and welfare issues. Regular meetings between the appropriate assistant heads and housemasters and heads of department, for example, provide opportunities for senior managers to assess the success of the academic and pastoral life of the school.
- 4.7 Arrangements to evaluate and identify the school's and pupils' needs and priorities are in place although, as yet, no consistent subject-related aims or objectives exist to assist academic planning. Many heads of department tend to know intuitively what needs to be done, although this is not in every case clarified for other subject teachers. No development plans are uniformly in place for subject departments or houses, for which they and their teams are responsible. The school development plan clearly outlines the key priorities for the coming year, although it does not specify how these will be achieved.
- 4.8 A wide range of whole-school policies is in place, some (such as the assessment and marking policy) being implemented in different ways at departmental level. Key welfare policies are clear and robust in their commitment to high standards, and ensure an important element of consistency between houses. Heads of department and housemasters assist senior managers in drawing up and amending policies, although the mechanism for assessing whether they work effectively is less clear. The school is aware of the need to evaluate the effectiveness of many whole-school initiatives, such as the provision of PSHE and careers, the implementation of assessment and marking practices, the newly created ICT course and the quality of teaching and classroom management. Some of these are about to be considered by various working parties.
- 4.9 The deployment and development of teaching staff are very good, and the school has high expectations of classroom performance to which these dedicated and talented people respond positively. Induction arrangements for teachers, and new heads of department and housemasters, have been greatly improved recently; those for teachers new to the profession meet national standards. A new appraisal system is in its infancy, and involves an element of lesson observation that, it is hoped, will help departments to refine classroom practice. The culture of peer observation and monitoring standards is not yet, however, sufficiently well developed to allow a full sharing of good practice. Staff development for non-teaching staff is limited, but the appointment of a human resources manager has been welcomed by staff. All teaching and non-teaching staff undergo a check before appointment through the Criminal Records Bureau, but not all the other required checks have been systematically documented for some part-time staff.
- 4.10 Financial control and planning are good, and the bursar monitors expenditure regularly against agreed budgets and objectives. The provision of resources is very good, with extensive sports facilities managed well and much commitment of capital expenditure to new buildings, updated ICT facilities and an extensively refurbished library. Classroom and learning resources are well matched to the school's aims and meet the pupils' needs. Support staff provide a dedicated and often unobtrusive support for the work of the school, and are all committed to its ethos and success.
- 4.11 The school meets almost all of the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff [Standard 4]. In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:
- (a) carry out appropriate checks on staff prior to their appointment to confirm their identity, medical fitness, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references [Regulation 4.(c).]

- 4.12 The school meets the regulatory requirements for premises and accommodation [Standard 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 Charterhouse is highly successful in meeting its declared aims. Outstanding public examination results have been gained and successfully combined with good standards of achievement in the classroom. Respect for the school's strong traditions and long history is effectively blended with the challenge of providing a contemporary education that prepares pupils very well for the next stage of their lives. Boys and girls work hard; they respect each other, their teachers and their school environment; and they show an evident love of learning for its own sake. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the extensive education provided, relishing the challenges of the academic, sporting and cultural opportunities offered to them. The excellent care and pastoral support given by the dedicated staff enable pupils to develop very well in body, mind and spirit.
- 5.2 The school has made considerable progress since the last inspection by the Independent Schools' Inspectorate in 2001, and the last boarding welfare inspection by the Commission for Social Care Inspection in 2004. A complete programme of boarding house refurbishment, significant investment in new buildings, improved computing resources, and enhanced library facilities have been achieved. The school has shown strong commitment to enhancing pupils' welfare and pastoral care, and the wider development of their intellectual, physical and cultural interests. The school has made slower progress in the involvement of staff to develop strategic planning, both at whole-school and departmental level.
- 5.3 The school complies with almost all of the regulatory requirements, but does not at present fully meet Standard 3 (welfare, health and safety of pupils) or Standard 4 (suitability of proprietors and staff).

Next Steps

- 5.4 The school has many strengths and no significant weaknesses. In order to maintain consistently high standards, the school should:
1. involve all departments and their staff in developing priorities for learning and teaching, and encourage them to identify and share best practice;
 2. satisfy itself that the current provision for PSHE, procedures for assessment and marking, and systems for communication with parents, are working effectively.
- 5.5 In order to meet all the regulatory requirements, the school must:
- (1) ensure that the governing body carries out an annual review of the school's arrangements for safeguarding welfare, and that the school's non-teaching and part-time staff receive appropriate training in child protection [Regulation 3.(2)b];
 - (2) ensure that an attendance register of day pupils is kept in accordance with the relevant Education (Pupil Registration) Regulation [Regulation 3.(9)];
 - (3) carry out appropriate checks on staff prior to their appointment to confirm their identity, medical fitness, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references [Regulation 4.(c)].

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 30th April to 3rd May 2007. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the medical centre. The responses of parents to a pre-inspection questionnaire were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.

List of Inspectors

Mr Timothy Holgate	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Deborah Forbes	Former Head, GSA School
Mr Donald Gorrie	Former Deputy Head, HMC School
Miss Elizabeth Knibb	Senior Mistress, HMC School
Mr Stewart Roberts	Head, HMC School
Mr Joseph Spence	Head, HMC School
Dr Timothy Stubbs	Second Master, HMC School
Mrs Cathy Williamson	Deputy Head, GSA School