

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Cranmore School

Full Name of the School	Cranmore School
DCSF Number	936/6519
Registered Charity Number	252878
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Headmaster	Mr Michael Connolly
Chairman of Governors	Monsignor Canon Jeffrey Scott
Age Range	3 to 13
Gender	Boys
Inspection Dates	24th to 27th November 2008

This inspection report follows the framework laid down by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The inspection was carried out under the arrangements of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. It was also carried out under Section 162A(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002 as amended by the Education Act 2005, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended with effect from January 2005 and May 2007.

The statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage were not inspected as part of this inspection.

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 Cranmore School is a day school for boys from the ages of three to thirteen years. It was founded under the leadership of Canon Peter Freed on its present site in 1968. Its mission is to be a Catholic school committed to the teachings of the Gospel with the aim of helping all boys fulfil their potential, by fostering their individual talents and providing for their needs within its caring Christian community. The school is situated in West Horsley, Surrey, within a 25-acre site consisting of a range of modernised and recently-built accommodation and facilities surrounded by sports pitches and playing fields. The school is organised in two sections: a Junior Department which incorporates the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and a Senior Department. It is governed by a board of nine members. The headmaster has been in post since September 2006.
- 1.2 Boys come from a variety of backgrounds with about one-third from Catholic families and all have high expectations for their children's education. The majority of boys live locally, although some come from a wider geographical area.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection the school accommodated a total of 471 boys. In the EYFS for boys aged 3 to 5 years, 13 attended part-time in the Nursery and 38 attended full-time in Reception. In all, 137 were in the Junior Department for boys in Years 1 to 3 and 283 in the Senior Department for those in Years 4 to 8. Entry is based on a visit to the school for younger children and, from Year 1, it incorporates an assessment in English, mathematics and non-verbal reasoning. The main entry points are Nursery, Reception and Year 3.
- 1.4 Boys take a variety of nationally standardised tests at several stages during their time at Cranmore. Based on these, the ability profile is well above the national average, although a number of boys are far above the national average and a few are below. The school has identified 122 boys as requiring some degree of learning support. None of these has a statement of special educational needs. Few boys are from ethnic minority groups. All boys are proficient in English although eight come from families that do not have English as their first language. The majority of boys transfer to other independent schools at the end of Year 8 via Common Entrance or scholarship examinations. A small number of boys gain places to senior schools in both the independent and maintained sectors at the end of Year 6.
- 1.5 Since the last ISI inspection in 2003, the school has undergone an extensive programme of refurbishment and new buildings provide improved facilities for the library, art and technology rooms as well as a modern dining room and kitchen, and new classrooms. In addition, substantial investment has been made in other facilities, including upgraded playing fields, a common room for senior boys, and an enhanced outdoor covered area for both the Nursery and Reception classes. The last Ofsted Nursery inspection took place in May 2008.

- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

Early Years Foundation Stage

School	Age of children
Nursery	3 to 4
Lower Prep	4 to 5

Junior Department

School	NC name
Middle Prep	Year 1
Upper Prep	Year 2
Ones	Year 3

Senior Department

School	NC name
Form Two	Year 4
Form Three	Year 5
Form Four	Year 6
Form Five	Year 7
Form Six	Year 8

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 The school provides an outstanding educational experience for its boys. It is most successful in its aim of helping boys to develop their potential through the Catholic tradition by fostering their individual talents and providing for their needs through an effectively planned education. Immediately evident is the real sense of purpose which drives every aspect of school life and the school's strong culture of celebrating excellence. The school has built well on the strengths of the curriculum highlighted at the time of the last inspection.
- 2.2 The educational experiences in the school make a significant contribution to the boys' progress in all areas of learning. Boys up to the age of five in the EYFS experience a wide range of exciting and creative activities that stimulate their interests and imagination. In the Junior Department, boys experience a rich and diverse curriculum, where subjects are often integrated together as interesting topics. Since the last inspection, the expansion of information and communication technology (ICT) to support the teaching of all subjects is now fully established and this has significantly enhanced the boys' work at all levels. Design and technology (DT) has been successfully introduced and for senior boys is delivered in a well-equipped purpose-built room. The development of physical skills is given a high priority. Physical development in the EYFS is promoted well by the use of stimulating outside areas with a range of creative equipment. The extensive playing fields, sports hall, gymnasium and indoor swimming pool are used appropriately for developing a wide range of team sports and games. Boys experience a variety of approaches in all subjects and their education allows them to progress rapidly in terms of their mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative development.
- 2.3 Exciting and stimulating opportunities for enrichment are provided through a range of educational visits, for example exchanges to France, sporting events such as Wimbledon, and trips to places of historical interest. Visitors, such as scientists and authors, are welcomed to the school to talk about their work and book weeks promote interest in reading. The school has an excellent record of success in music and throughout the inspection high quality music performance and practice, both individually and in various combinations, were evident. The school goes to great lengths to ensure the involvement of every boy in its musical life and provides many quality opportunities to perform. Personal, social and health education (PSHE), religious education and assemblies provide valuable opportunities for boys to explore with each other and their teachers matters that are important to them. However, in the Senior Department PSHE is occasionally substituted for another subject and repetition of content is found across subjects. In the Junior Department, whilst PSHE is given greater priority, the approach is variable. The school is aware that the PSHE programme is not given a high enough profile to fully support and embrace the ethos of the whole school.
- 2.4 The wide-ranging extra-curricular programme significantly enhances the educational experiences of the boys and makes a strong contribution to their overall personal development. Activities range from rowing and skiing to cooking and gardening and involve no fewer than 26 sports. Links with the community are good and the school works hard to foster these with much success. The school's facilities are used by local sports clubs, for charity work and for maintaining good links with local schools.
- 2.5 Throughout the school, boys are prepared well for the next stages of their education. Regular discussions and sharing of planning between staff enable boys to move smoothly through the school. Boys are prepared extremely well for entry to their senior schools. Results of the

various entry examinations at the end of both Year 6 and Year 8 are strong and boys are awarded many scholarships to independent schools.

- 2.6 Detailed written curriculum planning enables all groups of boys to benefit from the wide range of interesting activities offered both in and outside the classroom. All subjects have effective policies and schemes of work which enable boys to increase their knowledge, skills and understanding term by term and year by year.
- 2.7 The curricular requirements for boys requiring special provision are well met. The system allows for early identification and assessment and the school is efficient and effective. Well-constructed individual education plans (IEPs) are carefully monitored and reviewed, and teachers are kept well informed about the needs of the boys in their classes. The school maintains a register for those boys identified as gifted and talented and appropriate opportunities are provided to develop their areas of strength.
- 2.8 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.9 Boys achieve good and frequently high standards in relation to their ages and abilities. The school succeeds in its aim to provide a secure and happy environment, in which boys come to recognise the joy of learning and see that hard work is amply rewarded for achievement and talent. The school has maintained the good quality of learning and achievement highlighted in the last inspection report.
- 2.10 Boys are studious and willing to apply their acquired knowledge, skills and understanding across a broad spectrum of subjects. They achieve good levels of attainment with some particularly high standards evident in subjects such as science, music, mathematics, literacy and physical education.
- 2.11 Boys' learning and achievement are good in the EYFS in all six areas of learning. Their skills in reading, writing and speaking demonstrate a good knowledge of phonics and a developing expertise in articulating intelligent thinking. This was finely illustrated in group discussions and in the recording of their impressions of a recent friendly visit by the local police, complete with uniforms, car and sirens. At all levels boys are articulate, listen effectively, and read and write intelligently and fluently. They are confident in expression and use vocabulary well. When given the opportunity boys show a high level of critical and creative thinking. Year 7 boys asked searching questions, drawing on past learning, during a stimulating discussion about God's covenant with Abraham and the idea of sacrifice. Numeracy skills are well taught and boys make excellent use of these skills to solve problems in both mental and written exercises. They are skilled at applying mathematical concepts in investigatory activities. Year 5 boys used their understanding of decimals well when given challenging practical tasks on weight and measurement. Good progress in the knowledge and understanding of ICT was evident from the scrutiny of work in many subjects and the colourful, informative displays around the school. By the time boys leave for their senior schools, they demonstrate extensive and in-depth knowledge in the subjects they study and as a result, are well prepared for the challenges of the future.
- 2.12 The results of standardised and other tests support the evidence of boys' good learning and often high levels of achievement. They are indicative of the quality of education being offered. By the end of the EYFS, boys are well placed to achieve or exceed the nationally recognised Early Learning Goals. Progress in learning is good as boys move through the school, gaining markedly in pace and attainment before they move to their senior schools. The results of Common Entrance, scholarship papers and grammar school entrance

examinations indicate that they achieve high standards. The most recent scholarships were awarded for academic prowess, music, DT and sport.

- 2.13 Determined and dedicated individual and team efforts have produced successful attainment and sometimes outstanding achievements. Boys enjoy considerable success in external examinations, including those held by the English Speaking Board, Associated Board and Trinity Guildhall music examinations, with many achieving merit or distinction. Boys also demonstrate considerable success in rowing, swimming, rugby and skiing. Development of practical skills in problem-solving and mathematical thinking is enhanced by participation in the Surrey Schools' Science and Engineer Problem Solving Challenge, with boys attaining high levels of achievement in both events. Boys of all ages are proud to mark and celebrate the extensive range of individual, team and school achievements that add significantly to their overall personal development.
- 2.14 The good standards of behaviour, politeness, care and consideration for their peers make a positive contribution towards the rapid development of learning and achievement for many boys across all subjects throughout the school. When given the opportunity, boys are able to work well independently and creatively, but, as the school is aware, occasionally the directed style of teaching restricts this. Boys have a strong, positive work ethic, know what is expected of them and achieve good results whether working alone or collaboratively.
- 2.15 Boys are responsive to their learning and show considerable interest when talking about their work and activities. They enjoy many of the subjects and voice their approval of the excellent facilities and the interesting experiences that the school provides. In lessons, they are generally quick to settle, stay on task and persevere. Occasionally, where the pace of learning was not so well matched to boys' abilities, they became restless and progress slowed. Where teachers give boys ample opportunity to explore, experiment and develop their creativity and imagination, the quality of learning is outstanding.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.16 Boys demonstrate well-developed spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. The school's caring ethos embedded in a Catholic tradition is implicit throughout the school day and contributes significantly to the boys' good overall personal development, as it did at the time of the last inspection. The school's commitment to helping boys grow in self-confidence and become responsible members of the school community is met well.
- 2.17 The boys' spiritual awareness is strong and readily noticeable. They exhibit considerable confidence and self-awareness. Their self-worth is strongly evident and fostered through many aspects of school life, most notably in extra-curricular activities and the creative arts. The Catholic ethos finds expression in every area and it is at the heart of all relationships. The 'Puer Parvulus' on the school crest, promoting peace and harmony, is itself a strong affirmation of the Christian faith and boys understand its relevance. Boys participate willingly and reflectively in prayer, in the celebration of Mass and in regular assemblies. In one assembly, boys confidently explored values and virtues during a humorous and thought provoking 'spiritual surgery' using the metaphor of doctor and patient. Boys respond well to the school's aesthetic environment, enhanced by religious works of art, and its stance as a place of faith. They appreciate the chapel which provides a tranquil place during a busy day and the 'blue box' used as a means to express concerns and request prayer. Through the school prayer, the 'thought for the week' and 'saint for the week', boys develop a sense of belonging to the school community. Those boys of other faiths or none feel part of the spiritual life of the school and this is testament to the school's inclusive and caring ethos.

- 2.18 Boys have well-developed moral attitudes. From the youngest age, they recognise the importance of right and wrong and distinguish between them, thus making a significant contribution to their moral development. Boys know and understand the school's code of conduct. They respect it and appreciate its positive impact in fostering good relationships. Boys have a clear understanding of 'golden rules' which serve as a framework for good conduct. Younger boys enjoy receiving 'golden awards' which reinforces their good behaviour. Through their work for a range of charities, such as the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, boys recognise their Christian duty to others less fortunate than themselves.
- 2.19 Boys develop well socially, accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute to the school community. They have a well-developed sense of how their actions and attitudes impact on others. Responsible behaviour was evident throughout the school day and across the campus. Caring for others is seen as a practical expression of the school's Christian values. Boys in Year 8 have a real sense of seniority and enjoy their own common room, playground area and uniform. They value and willingly accept the responsibilities conferred upon them and undertake duties to serve the school. Throughout the school, boys have a broad knowledge of public institutions and services appropriate to their age. Visits by the police and prison chaplain, for example, complement this. Older boys demonstrate good qualities of independence and interdependence and speak highly of the programmes for outdoor education.
- 2.20 Boys develop a good understanding of their own culture through their participation in drama, music, art and literature, and through an extensive programme of tours, educational visits and visiting speakers, artists and musicians. Older boys enjoy newspapers in their common room and in the senior library, and a news board highlights current affairs drawn from the world of science. The school is alert to the importance of teaching boys to understand and appreciate other faiths and cultures, but recognises that not enough is done to raise awareness throughout. Boys spoke with excitement about a visit to the school by an Aboriginal storyteller. Stimulating displays, such as the one seen on Diwali, are effective in helping younger boys understand the importance of celebration in different cultures.
- 2.21 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of boys [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.22 Teaching is notably effective in promoting the boys' learning and achievements. The great majority of teaching seen was at least good and some was outstanding. Teaching standards have been maintained since the last inspection and as a result, the school is effective in striving to fulfil its mission statement of helping all boys to fulfil their potential.
- 2.23 Teaching generally enables boys of all ages and abilities to acquire new knowledge, make progress and develop effective skills. A significant feature of the teaching is the individual and group support given to boys in a caring and sensitive way by the progress unit in discrete lessons or in the classroom by teaching assistants. IEPs are used effectively and enable staff to target specific learning needs and address matters quickly for boys with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

- 2.24 Teaching seeks to extend boys intellectually, physically and creatively. Where lessons are outstanding, lively and enthusiastic teaching with high expectations and well-focused open-ended questions encourage boys to think creatively and learn for themselves. In such instances pupils achieve standards well beyond those expected for their age. Contributory factors to less successful lessons include a lack of pace and limited challenge in relation to ability, leading to a loss of concentration by the boys. As the school is aware this is because teaching is sometimes too directed and boys are not presented with sufficient opportunities for independent work and open-ended discussion. However, generally teaching encourages boys to work hard, behave responsibly and enjoy their learning.
- 2.25 Lessons are mostly competently planned with clear learning objectives, an effective range of teaching methods and activities that lead to good progress in boys' learning. The best planned lessons provide opportunities for boys to explore topics using creative thought and initiatives and place less reliance on the use of worksheets. Group tasks and paired work are employed to good effect in many subjects. Senior boys worked cohesively as a unit exhibiting excellent team skills in their inter-school sports matches. Well-planned lessons for the younger children, with a focus on careful attention to each boy's individual needs, often lead to excellent progress. Whilst homework is usually planned well to support and reinforce work covered in class, the school recognises that disparity sometimes exists between the published homework policy and its application in practice. For instance, occasionally boys are given extra homework that has not been outlined on their homework timetable, and this results in difficulties with homework organisation for the boys.
- 2.26 Teaching generally shows a clear understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the boys. The good relationships between staff and pupils are based on respect and mutual trust. Consequently pupils feel confident about expressing their ideas and opinions. Boys who need additional help are well supported and their progress is carefully monitored. The work of teaching assistants contributes significantly to boys' learning and pastoral support.
- 2.27 Teachers know a great deal about the subjects they teach and they use their expertise effectively to encourage and motivate boys. In a Year 8 science lesson, boys responded enthusiastically to the challenge of planning an investigation into the strength of an electro-magnet. Year 4 boys showed excellent application in the identification and use of adjectives in a stimulating English lesson.
- 2.28 The school's extensive range of fine resources supports the teaching very well. The provision of ICT equipment is of high quality and in most instances used effectively. The refurbished libraries are a valuable resource for the school and provide an environment conducive to research and quiet study. The appointment of a librarian is increasing the effectiveness of both libraries. This represents a major improvement since the last inspection.
- 2.29 The quality of assessment throughout the school has markedly improved since the last inspection. The comprehensive policy document includes detailed programmes of assessment throughout the school year and much has been achieved over the last two years. This is already making a difference in both the planning of the curriculum and the progress of the boys. A number of initiatives are in their early stages, including the monitoring of internal examinations where there is a desire to develop a better balance between content knowledge and skills acquisition. Marking is, for the most part, constructive and encouraging, with the best examples setting targets and showing boys how they can improve their standards further.

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- 2.30 Assessment systems, which include the use of standardised tests as well as subject examinations, are thorough and efficient and the school regularly evaluates its performance in relation to its aims and to national norms. The information these tests provide is analysed and any emerging patterns discussed at staff meetings to enable colleagues to plan appropriate tasks to match the boys' needs in both Junior and Senior Departments.
- 2.31 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, welfare, and health and safety of pupils overall is good; the school has successfully maintained the high quality pastoral care identified at the last inspection. Boys are cared for well, a fact pointed out by parents in the comments accompanying the pre-inspection questionnaire they completed. The aim, to provide a happy, secure environment in which boys show respect for each other, is met well. Arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of boys are outstanding. Since the last inspection the catering provision has significantly improved, and the 'no blame' bullying policy is clearly understood by the boys.
- 3.2 Staff provide effective support and guidance in many ways, including examination preparation, supportive sports coaching and through the progress system. Teachers are accessible and boys respond well to the encouragement they receive, and feel supported and confident. Form teachers are responsible for gaining an overview of each boy in their form and of their achievements. Additional support is available through the house system which helps to raise the boys' self-esteem and sense of belonging to a community.
- 3.3 In the Junior Department, the pastoral arrangements provide good support for all staff. They are successfully monitored by the head of the Junior Department. In the Senior Department, arrangements for overseeing pastoral care procedures are less well defined. For example, the monitoring of form periods is not carried out consistently with the result that time is not used effectively by all form tutors. Throughout the school, transfer of academic information across year groups is well structured whereas pastoral information is carried out more informally. Staff meetings to discuss individual boys are held regularly in both sections of the school.
- 3.4 The quality of relationships amongst all in the community is good. Teachers are caring and professional and show concern for the boys' well-being and academic progress. Boys are able to identify at least one member of staff that they would talk to if they had any difficulties. Boys commented on their ability to openly talk to their friends about concerns and were seen to work co-operatively in pairs and groups, playing together with enthusiasm and respect for each other. Boys are encouraged to support and help each other. They value the 'buddy system' and older junior boys were seen helping younger boys getting ready for lunchtime play. A junior boy also talked about the 'buddy stop' where a boy can go if he is feeling left out or not included in the playground.
- 3.5 Opportunities for boys to have their views heard are variable. Some boys commented that on occasion they could express their opinions in form periods, whereas others remarked that the opportunity to voice and discuss their opinions was more limited. Following a pupil survey, the provision of a 'worry box' has been provided in some senior classes. In the Junior Department, 'golden boxes' are available. These provide an opportunity for boys to put in a question or concern which would be followed up later by staff.
- 3.6 Measures to encourage good discipline and behaviour are mostly effective. Boys value the school's reward system which promotes and celebrates their achievements. The school sets out clear guidance on the use of sanctions to be adopted in the event of boys' misbehaviour. However, inconsistencies exist in the issuing and recording of minor misdemeanours. In the Senior Department, PSHE provides boys with time to explore issues such as bullying, and rights and responsibilities; for younger boys in the Junior Department, it encompasses the

‘golden rules’. Measures to guard against harassment and bullying are effective. Boys spoke confidently about how to deal with bullying although stated that such incidents were unusual; they know that any issues would be dealt with constructively by the school. They are fully aware of the measures in place and are able to comprehensively explain the ‘no blame’ policy.

- 3.7 In all respects, the school has established excellent measures to safeguard and promote boys’ health and well-being. The child protection policy is secure and measures are well known. All staff have received the appropriate training. The child protection officer and child protection governor each have a clear understanding of their role. Effective procedures are in place for the maintenance of admission and attendance registers. Supervision throughout the day is appropriate.
- 3.8 All measures to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards have been taken. Fire safety measures are thorough and practices are held regularly and recorded. Health and safety policies are comprehensive, and the health and safety committee meets regularly to discuss these policies and their development. Risk assessments for off-site visits are thorough and an educational visits co-ordinator holds an overview of these.
- 3.9 The majority of staff are qualified in first aid. Together with the school nurse they ensure that measures to promote boys’ health and well-being are of high quality, including the availability of a suitable medical room. Accessibility development plans are in place and contain clear timescales, in line with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act.
- 3.10 Boys enjoy nutritious and appetising school lunches and are offered an excellent choice of food. This is endorsed by the boys. The school provides the option for boys to attend for breakfast and tea, offering supervised care before and after school. The provision for regular exercise is promoted well through the sports programme and extra-curricular activities.
- 3.11 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of boys [Standard 3].

The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community

- 3.12 The quality of links with parents and the community is good, reflecting the school’s aims to work in partnership. This has been sustained since the last inspection. Concerns previously raised at the last inspection have been reviewed and several innovations implemented. In the spirit of continuous improvement, the school actively seeks parental views through surveys.
- 3.13 From their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents are overwhelmingly pleased with many aspects of the school’s work, including the quality of teaching, the range of subjects covered, the promotion of worthwhile attitudes, behaviour and the wide range of extra-curricular activities. A small but significant number of parents feel that there is not enough opportunity to discuss progress at parents’ evenings and they expressed a lack of confidence in the school’s ability to handle concerns. Inspectors found that the school is responsive when parents feel they need further discussion. The school has appropriate procedures in place to handle concerns which are followed correctly and with due care.
- 3.14 Since the last inspection the school has introduced several initiatives to improve communication. The headmaster’s reception evening has been expanded to include curriculum information and school organisation issues in addition to informal discussion between teachers and parents. Half-termly assessment reports have been introduced to provide feedback more frequently. Various channels for communication, including direct voicemail, serve to strengthen the school-parent partnership through more frequent and less

formal contact. Nevertheless, the school recognises the concerns of parents and is already developing systems to improve communication still further.

- 3.15 Parents have good opportunities to be involved in activities and in the work of their children. They are warmly welcomed to a prayer group, Mass and assemblies. They help with outings and productions, support sporting fixtures and serve as class representatives. Parents of younger boys are invited to curriculum workshops and visit classrooms to see their work. Through the work of the Cranmore Parents' Association (CPA), parents have further opportunities to be involved in the life of the school. The CPA enthusiastically organises social events for the whole school community to enjoy. Annual events include the summer fete, quiz, school ball and bonfire night, which are all well attended. Funds raised by the CPA have provided an array of facilities and resources to support the school.
- 3.16 Parents receive an extensive range of literature which provides a window on school life. On pupils' entry, a parents' handbook provides important information and signposts the availability of key policies. The *Weekly Chronicle* features events, fixtures, reports on activities and news. The termly school calendar, website and *The Cranmorian*, an annual magazine, showcase the rich experience of school life and its many achievements over the academic year. Reports provide parents with good insights into how their sons are progressing. They include attainment grades and targets to improve performance.
- 3.17 Since the last inspection the school has established a complaints procedure which is available to parents and provides for a complaint to be handled on an informal and formal basis.
- 3.18 Constructive links have been established with the wider community. The school's fine facilities have been used effectively by the local community during evenings, week-ends and holidays. Boys enjoy valuable links with schools in France. Several local, national and international charities are well supported by the school community, including The Alex Ewert Memorial Fund, The Mission Society and a school in Sri Lanka. Older boys visit a local night shelter and spend time gardening and cleaning at a nearby respite care home. These activities make their endeavours particularly meaningful.
- 3.19 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the provision of information and the manner in which complaints are to be handled [Standards 6 and 7].

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 Effective governance ensures that the school's strong Christian ethos and aims founded on the Catholic principles are met successfully. Governors take their roles to improve the ethos, quality and resourcing of the school seriously. The quality of governance has been strengthened since the last inspection.
- 4.2 The structure and management arrangements related to the governing body are well defined. They include appropriate sub-committees and properly minuted meetings that enable it to competently oversee the work of the school. Governors offer a broad spread of skills and professional expertise, well matched to the needs of the school. They are committed to the school and its development. Governors have been effective in making appropriate, well-considered provision for the school's accommodation and human and material resources, which are of the highest quality, in order to meet boys' educational needs. They maintain particularly strong oversight of the school's financial affairs, alongside the bursar's effective management. Governors have invested considerably in the school's development and have a leading role in building and planning issues. This has enabled the school to establish a secure position from which to plan its future. Governors receive regular informative reports from the headmaster and the bursar and act effectively as a 'critical friend'. They are fully aware of their legal, financial and educational responsibilities. One governor has responsibility for matters relating to child protection and ensures policies and procedures are regularly reviewed. Governors are effective in discharging their responsibilities for the welfare, health and safety of boys. The health and safety committee, which includes a nominated governor, meets regularly.
- 4.3 Governors are well informed by the headmaster and communication is regular and open. Informal and formal visits provide the governors with a good insight into the working of the school. Opportunities for teaching staff to make presentations to the governors concerning particular subjects or aspects are providing governors with increased knowledge about the school's functions and activities. Governors' relationships with staff and senior managers are positive and constructive and where appropriate they provide advice, support and stimulus for growth and improvement. Boys, parents and staff are extremely appreciative of the school's excellent facilities, many of which have been developed since the last inspection.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.4 The quality of leadership and management is good, with some significant areas of strength. The school's aims are supported well, particularly those designed to offer a rich all-round education within a Christian environment, to develop appropriate attitudes and values and to prepare boys thoroughly for their future schools. The arrangements for management provide a suitable framework for educational direction and future development. Many changes have taken place since the last inspection, most notably the appointment of a new headmaster, the restructuring of the senior management team with new personnel and new responsibilities, and the review of management systems. Many of the strengths of leadership and management have been maintained and built upon since the last inspection.
- 4.5 Through commitment to the school's Catholic traditions, and a calm, purposeful and inclusive work ethic, the leadership provides a well-defined vision for the future of the school. In this, the headmaster is well supported by the senior management team and hard

working staff. Senior managers liaise regularly to ensure that school improvement is a continuous and corporate process and appropriate priorities have been identified in their planning. The school development plan is a well-considered document and a key element in school improvement. Subject heads and co-ordinators have well-defined roles and work closely together to strengthen further curricular links across each section of the school. They have been proactive in establishing higher expectations of subject schemes of work and planning procedures. Whilst a priority has been afforded to establishing effective monitoring procedures with the aim of improving consistency in all practices and procedures, the school is aware that inconsistencies still exist. Although procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are being developed, the process is not yet sufficiently rigorous to ensure consistency of practice. Pastoral systems are in place but are not systematically monitored across the school. Assessment procedures have been recently reviewed and amended, and standardised tests have been introduced to track the boys' progress. Teachers are assiduous in ensuring that careful assessment of boys' work is used to inform them of their next steps in learning, and so makes a positive contribution to their progress.

- 4.6 The work of the school is underpinned by a full range of comprehensive policies. They are detailed and provide clear guidance to all staff, parents and boys. Their continuing effectiveness is reviewed regularly and is generally carried through in practice.
- 4.7 Teaching and support staff are deployed effectively and contribute significantly to boys' learning and welfare. The recruitment and induction procedures of staff are properly managed. The school rigorously carries out all the required staffing checks and maintains comprehensive centralised records. Induction procedures for staff new to the school support them well. The school follows the national scheme for newly qualified teachers and the arrangements meet requirements, although none are presently employed. A system for the appraisal of staff is developing and is increasingly effective. Many opportunities for professional development through in-service training are available for staff and these are becoming more closely linked to the development planning process.
- 4.8 Budgetary and financial controls are rigorous. Funds are managed well by the bursar to secure high quality accommodation and resources in supporting the school's educational aims and the needs of boys.
- 4.9 Routine administration and day-to-day management are generally efficient. The welcoming and helpful response of the school office team is important in supporting the school's ethos.
- 4.10 Since the last inspection substantial improvements have been made to the accommodation and outside areas, providing the boys with secure and high quality facilities. Interesting and colourful displays in all parts of the school, together with the development of an outside classroom for the younger boys, create a most stimulating and exciting learning environment.
- 4.11 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].

5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall Conclusions

- 5.1 The school provides a good quality education for boys, and meets its aims and aspirations well. Boys grow and develop in a caring community where religious faith and spiritual understanding underpin the school's ethos. Consequently, boys show initiative, recognise that they have a duty to contribute to the school community and are willing to take on social responsibility. There are areas of excellence in the school, particularly in relation to the creative and aesthetic provision, and many boys have particularly good aptitudes in art, music and sport. Although much of the teaching is inspiring boys to strive for excellence, not all lessons were of an equally high quality; on occasion, the style of teaching gives fewer opportunities for independent work and open-ended discussion. The school has an appropriate assessment policy, which leads to boys' progress and achievement being monitored carefully. However, inconsistencies exist in the implementation of homework procedures. Although the school provides many good opportunities for the personal development of the boys, the programme for PSHE is not consistently monitored or evaluated. Provision for boys' welfare, health and safety at all stages is outstanding. Boys are well prepared for their senior schools, with many achieving scholarships in a wide range of subjects. The governing body supports the school effectively. A critical and perceptive evaluation of all areas of school life has provided a sound basis to identify the areas of strength and those that require improving. The school recognises that systems for monitoring and evaluating consistency in procedures and practices in some areas are not yet fully implemented throughout.
- 5.2 The school has successfully addressed the recommendations highlighted at the time of the last inspection. Substantial investment has been made in buildings and resources for the whole school, providing the boys with excellent facilities for their education.
- 5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

- 5.4 To continue the significant improvement the school has made since the last inspection, it should:
1. strengthen the pastoral system by further developing a coherent programme which includes PSHE and evaluate its effectiveness;
 2. eliminate inconsistencies in teaching by providing boys with more opportunities to plan and present their work with less teacher direction;
 3. review the homework policy and practice.
- 5.5 No action is required in respect of regulatory requirements.

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 24th to 27th November 2008. 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. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.

List of Inspectors

Mrs Gail Purt	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Caroline Ansell	Former Senior Mistress, IAPS school
Mr Malcolm Gough	Director of Studies, IAPS school
Mrs Tracy Handford	Director of Studies, IAPS school
Mr Michael McKaughan	Head, IAPS school
Mr Paul Ellis	Head, IAPS/COBIS junior school