

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS COUNCIL
(ISC)**

INSPECTION OF

CARLETON HOUSE SCHOOL

By the

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE
(ISI)**

On

June 12th-15th, 2006.

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Carleton House School

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Full Name of the School | Carleton House School |
| DfES Number | 341/6004 |
| Registered Charity Number | 505310 |
| Address | Lyndhurst Road, Mossley Hill, Liverpool, L18 8AQ |
| Telephone Number | 0151 724 4880 |
| Fax Number | 0151 724 6086 |
| Email Address | carleton@carletonhouse.co.uk |
| Headmaster | Mr. Peter Andrew |
| Chairman of Governors | Mr. Paul Bibby |
| Age Range | 4-11 |
| Gender | Mixed |
| Inspection Dates | 12th-15th June, 2006. |

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 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.

CONTENTS

| | Page |
|--|-----------|
| 1 INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 2 THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION | 2 |
| The Educational Experience Provided | 2 |
| Pupils' Learning and Achievements | 3 |
| Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils | 5 |
| The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment) | 7 |
| 3 THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS | 9 |
| The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils | 9 |
| The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community | 10 |
| 4 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT | 13 |
| The Quality of Governance | 13 |
| The Quality of Leadership and Management | 13 |
| 5 CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS | 16 |
| Overall Conclusions | 16 |
| Next Steps | 16 |
| 6 INSPECTION EVIDENCE | 17 |

1. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 The life of Carleton House School is built upon its mission statement, which states that, “following the teachings of Jesus Christ, the school community will work in partnership to foster confident, considerate pupils who will respect the beliefs and opinions of others”. The school is very proud of its Catholic heritage and, whilst it warmly welcomes pupils of all faiths, its primary aim is to “strive to enable all children to achieve their full potential in a Christian environment”.
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1975. At that time it was led by the Sisters of Notre Dame in the Woolton area of Liverpool. Following the decision by the Order to cease their involvement in primary education the school became a Charitable Trust and the business was placed in the hands of a limited company. The trustees are directors of the limited company and members of the governing body. When the Sisters of Notre Dame ceased their involvement, the trust moved the school to a new site in a quiet and leafy suburb of the City of Liverpool. The school site is leased. The school is housed in a large Victorian house and outbuildings within pleasant grounds. The governing body comprises trustees, local businessmen and a good number of parents. A new headmaster has been appointed since the last inspection.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection 141 pupils were on the school roll. Of these, 19 pupils (10 boys and 9 girls) aged four years were in the Reception class, 42 pupils (24 boys and 18 girls) aged between five and seven years were in Years 1 and 2 and 80 pupils (36 boys and 44 girls) aged between seven and eleven years were in Years 3 to 6.
- 1.4 The majority of pupils enter the Reception class following an informal assessment, and move on through the school until they leave at age 11. Should places be available, entry to other year groups follows a day’s visit to the school, meetings with parents and scrutiny of reports received from a pupil’s present school. Insufficient information is available from standardised testing to make a firm judgement on the ability of pupils. However, that which is available suggests pupils’ ability varies. Approximately a third of pupils are of average or above average ability, just over half of pupils are of well to far above average ability and a few pupils are of below average ability. The results of national tests at the age of eleven will reflect the differing abilities of pupils and are expected to range from being broadly in line with the national average to being far above the national average of pupils in all maintained primary schools.
- 1.5 The school has identified two children in the reception class and a further 26 pupils throughout the school as requiring assistance with an aspect of their learning. No pupils have English as a second language. The majority of the happy and confident pupils live in the south of Liverpool. The Catholic ethos of the school and the comprehensive preparation of pupils for senior school entrance are very important to the primarily business and professional parents, who are strongly supportive of the school.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school, with the exception of the Foundation Stage (4-5 year olds), which in Carleton House School is designated the ‘Reception class’.

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 The high quality range of educational opportunities offered by Carleton House School provides pupils with breadth and variety in their learning at levels appropriate to their needs, interests and aptitudes. The school successfully achieves its aim “to strive to enable all children to achieve in a Christian environment”. The many good features noted at the last inspection have been used effectively as building blocks upon which to improve and the recommendations made at that time have been met. Provision of a new information and communication technology (ICT) suite and classroom teaching materials has significantly enhanced the curriculum for pupils and contribute significantly to research opportunities in all subjects. The imbalances in the use of curriculum time within the school day, reported at the previous inspection, have been resolved and the timetable now accommodates history and geography appropriately. As recommended at the last inspection an activity room has been provided for Reception children. The school is continuing to improve opportunities for pupils to experience a wider range of painting and creative skills and techniques.
- 2.2 The wide range of stimulating classroom experiences, complemented by a programme of activities that expands and enriches learning, are enjoyed by pupils who, whilst having favourite subjects, state that they ‘love all their lessons’. Such provision enables the school to achieve its aim to create “a happy, disciplined environment that strives to ensure every child achieves their full potential academically, physically, emotionally, morally and socially”.
- 2.3 Pupils’ achievements in literacy and numeracy reflect the importance the school places upon the acquisition and effective use of these skills. Such an emphasis is balanced very effectively with the application of key learning skills across different subjects. Pupils of all ages are highly articulate and converse confidently. In the popular chess club pupils respond well to the challenge to develop their creative thinking and use their problem-solving skills. Pupils become actively involved with and passionate about, their environment. They argue their views cogently, produce thought-provoking reports for environmental ‘e’ magazines, grow their own produce, create wildlife habitats and actively support local areas of special scientific interest.
- 2.4 The increase in the range and quality of extra-curricular activities for juniors since the last inspection has enhanced learning. The expansion of provision for infant pupils is under review. Pupils’ enthusiasm for clubs is evident in their enjoyment and high levels of attendance. Older pupils particularly enjoy the training they receive from professional sports coaches. The impact and enjoyment of the Victorian day at Croxteth Hall led pupils to a much deeper understanding and appreciation of the differences between that era and the present age. The community work undertaken by Year 4 during their ‘Adventure Service Challenge’ scheme develops their sensitivity for, and responsibility towards, those less fortunate than themselves. Years 5 and 6 pupils successfully develop their personal skills, learn to work effectively as teams and begin to understand the importance of relying on each other during their school adventure holidays. Pupils with musical and dramatic skills enjoy performing. In particular, choir members spoke of the thrill of performing to a very large audience at the Metropolitan Cathedral.
- 2.5 Strong foundations are established in all areas of learning at all ages. The effective transitions between each stage that enable pupils to make smooth academic progress are considerably assisted by the quality of the information and comprehensive records passed from teacher to teacher. By the time they reach the end of their Reception year, children

have been well prepared, both personally and academically, to make the step into infant education. At the end of their infant education pupils' achievements prepare them well for junior life. The helpful meetings between parents, teachers and pupils at the beginning of each stage of education ensure all understand what is happening and what is expected of them. An extremely thorough academic programme prepares Year 6 pupils successfully for national tests and senior school examinations. The valuable discussions that take place in personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons concerning personal relationships and feelings promote pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. An effective preparation for transfer to senior school contributes significantly to the positive outlook Year 6 pupils have about moving to the next stage of their educational lives.

- 2.6 Throughout the school comprehensive curriculum frameworks are reviewed and updated regularly, ensuring provision remains relevant to pupils' needs. The extremely effective use of ICT enables changes to be recorded quickly and accessed easily by staff. Curriculum documentation shows clearly how well the school achieves its aim to "ensure coherence in pupils' learning" throughout all age groups. Equality of access to the curriculum for all pupils is well established and carefully monitored. Within detailed and informative weekly curriculum planning teachers include reference to the wide range of activities offered to enhance learning, the assessment taking place during lessons and the specific provision made in each lesson for pupils who require support. The additional challenges for more able pupils to extend their range of skills with investigative and research tasks adapted to their needs are clearly documented. The regular monitoring of such records by senior managers and subject managers ensures the curriculum is taught as planned for pupils of all ages and abilities.
- 2.7 Provision for pupils with specific learning needs is effective both in the classroom and in individual lessons. Following the individual assessment of each pupil's needs, helpful work programmes are provided for each pupil and these are used by staff to adapt work, provide specific support and alter expectations accordingly. Very effective use is made of 'challenge boxes' to stimulate more able pupils and provide individual tasks that extend pupils' thinking and offers intellectual stimulus at levels appropriate to their needs.
- 2.8 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.9 Pupils at Carleton House School are extremely well educated in relation to their ages and abilities. They are also, as the school claims, "thoroughly grounded in all subjects, with particular emphasis on English and mathematics". The school has built effectively upon, and improved, the 'good' education identified at the time of the last inspection. The recommendation, made at that time, to increase and improve provision for more able pupils, has been met. Particular emphasis, since the last inspection, has been given to enabling pupils to gain the skills required to become independent learners. This was exemplified very well in Year 5 when, following their information searches about slavery in Ancient Greece, pupils organised and presented their arguments for and against thoughtfully and cogently. By Year 6 the success of this initiative is evident as pupils organise their work, prepare their notes, arrange their information and complete their tasks with minimum direction.
- 2.10 The good standards and progress noted at the last inspection have been at least maintained and mostly improved upon. Significant improvements have taken place in raising pupils standards of achievement in ICT, history and geography. The good standards of Reception children, identified by Ofsted in 1999, have been maintained. Almost all Reception children have already achieved the goals expected of this age and are happily working within the initial levels of the National Curriculum. The school has recognised that, whilst achievement in the rather narrow curriculum for art is in line with pupils' abilities, the curriculum requires

- expansion in order for pupils to increase their expertise and experience in a richer and more stimulating range of challenges.
- 2.11 The high expectations of the teachers and the meticulous preparation of pupils for tests and examinations have a considerable impact on pupils' progress and achievement. In national tests at the age of seven, pupils' achievements over the three years to 2004 were good, and far above the national average for all maintained primary schools. Good results were also achieved in 2005. At the age of 11, pupils' achievements over the three years to 2005 were good in relation to their abilities and far above the national average for all maintained primary schools. Pupils in Year 6 gain entry to the senior schools of their choice, many of which are academically selective.
- 2.12 Pupils' achievements in activities span many spheres and their range of success has broadened since the last inspection. Many junior pupils regularly excel in national mathematics challenges, receiving gold awards. Given the small size of the school, the under 11's football team success in gaining the league and becoming cup winners in the Liverpool and District Catholic Schools Association championships is highly commendable. A number of pupils represent the area in a variety of athletics disciplines. The Eco- club members are very proud of the 'Green Flag' award they received in recognition of their extensive contribution to environmental preservation.
- 2.13 Pupils of all ages are highly articulate. Reception pupils ask questions confidently, infant pupils express their needs clearly and junior pupils use extensive subject vocabularies in their conversations and their work. By Year 6, pupils' writing is of a high standard, imaginative and varied. The tourist guides to a Shropshire Village and the diaries of an adventure week produced by Years 5 and 6 demonstrate a strong grasp of the need to adapt style to audience and to alter tenses and content according to the purpose of the writing. Extremely high quality cross-curricular writing is evident in all age groups. Well-constructed letters by Year 6 pupils, in the guise of city children during the war, to evacuees demonstrated an impressive breadth and depth of knowledge and a deep sensitivity toward their counterparts a generation ago. The school is aware that implementation of the handwriting policy requires more effective monitoring in order to improve consistency in the presentation of work throughout the school.
- 2.14 Pupils of all ages apply their mathematical knowledge effectively in a range of subjects. During a local litter survey Year 3 pupils collected information, applied their mathematical knowledge to create a variety of graphs to represent their findings, and then used a data-handling programme in IT to present their results. Exceptionally good use of secure knowledge of different types of graphs, coordinates, and the accurate analysis of results from surveys of all kinds was seen in the comprehensive project on the locality undertaken by Year 5 pupils.
- 2.15 Pupils' use ICT extremely effectively. The new well-equipped ICT suite has assisted in raising skills and knowledge in this area. Pupils of all ages word process their work competently. Junior pupils use data-handling programmes efficiently to present mathematical work and record the results of science investigations. Year 4 made proficient use of control technology to create their initials. At all ages ICT is used well for research. The impressive internet searches conducted by Year 4 pupils led to quality chair designs. Working alongside Liverpool Yacht Club to establish an ecologically friendly environment beside the River Mersey, pupils contributed to a very informative internet magazine 'Carbon Zero'. The 'E' links established with European schools in towns twinned with Liverpool involve regular and efficient use of email. Junior pupils are adept at managing digital cameras and either downloading or using their images in their work.

- 2.16 The good behaviour identified at the last inspection remains. Pupils are extremely well behaved and well mannered. Their enjoyment of learning and their positive approaches contribute significantly to their progress and standards. Pupils of all ages concentrate on the tasks presented, apply themselves well to differing situations and expectations and achieve their goals. When presented with the task of constructing a musical instrument, Year 5 pupils wholeheartedly applied themselves to the task, persevered until they achieved success and reviewed their progress regularly. Pupils are efficient note takers and, when asked questions about the Vikings, Year 3 pupils referred competently to their notes taken during a video presentation. By Year 6, the majority of pupils think critically about what they are learning and develop the ability to evaluate their work effectively. When pupils work in teams or pairs they contribute confidently, listen to each other and respect each other's views.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.17 Pupils' outstanding spiritual and high-quality moral, social and cultural development is nurtured sensitively by the school and supported strongly by the visible and caring Christian ethos that permeates all school life. Effective provision has improved upon the good standards identified in this area at the last inspection. The Catholic ethos of the school is a noteworthy factor in enabling it to fulfil its stated mission that, "following in the teachings of Jesus Christ, the school community works in partnership to foster confident, considerate pupils who respect the beliefs and opinions of others'. The trust and confidence placed in pupils by the school strongly underpin their high quality relationships, sensitive consideration of each other's needs, and deep respect for, and growing understanding of, their world.
- 2.18 The school belief that "spiritual awareness is developed in the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ" is promoted strongly and contributes significantly to the outstanding spiritual development of pupils. Assemblies, prayers, special services and preparation classes for the Sacraments, enable pupils to discuss spiritual matters confidently and reflect with empathy and respect upon what they hear and learn. Parents from faiths other than Christianity explain and share their beliefs, which extend pupils' respect for, and understanding of, a range of faith systems. Pupils are introduced to the important features of major world religions and are sensitive to and have respect for views and practices different from their own.
- 2.19 Pupils care deeply about each other, about their school and their world. Their appreciation of nature and their belief that all forms of life, as part of creation, are to be respected leads them to become involved in many environmental initiatives to preserve the planet.
- 2.20 The quiet, insightful and caring encouragement pupils' receive during lessons increases their self-confidence, raises their self-esteem and helps them to feel valued. The searching PSHE programme challenges pupils to consider their actions and reactions to situations at levels appropriate to their ages. In conversation with pupils, it is clear they feel safe, secure and confident enough to discuss personal feelings and values.
- 2.21 Pupils' highly effective moral development reflects the school's success in achieving its aim to help pupils appreciate their role in creating a "happy, caring environment in which they can work and play together safely and successfully". Pupils of all ages have a clear understanding of what is right and what is wrong. They believe it is their 'duty' to keep their environment 'nature friendly' and have influenced the school's decision to be designated as 'ECO friendly'. Pupils have placed bird boxes in the trees, introduced recycling initiatives and developed a successful 'kitchen garden' in the grounds. They sponsor a hectare of Scottish woodland to help preserve wildlife. The popular and well-attended ECO club

- enables pupils to contribute to debates involving wider world issues with schools in European countries.
- 2.22 Issues with clear moral undertones are discussed knowledgably in geography lessons. In history, the study of the docklands has enabled older juniors to understand the impact of poverty and poor housing on people's lives. Pupils strongly support local charities and provide for the less fortunate. The pupils link with the Sisters of Mercy to provide food for the homeless and speak with a maturity that belies their ages about the needs of those 'on the street'.
- 2.23 Pupils' social awareness is high. Pupils who have responsibilities are very proud of their roles and feel an obligation to their friends and their school to perform their duties well. The school values their contributions and holds them in esteem. This was exemplified at the recent funeral service for the school's founder, when the head boy and girl, their deputies and the House Captains represented the school and received praise for their impeccable conduct.
- 2.24 Relationships between different age groups are happy and relaxed. Older pupils are sensitive to the needs of their younger counterparts and ready to help anyone in difficulties. Pupils are easy and confident with adults and their helpfulness and good manners are clearly visible. Meetings of the school council are used productively by year group representatives to discuss issues they feel are important to them and to younger pupils.
- 2.25 Pupils have a well-developed sense of community and nation. They know how Parliament works and have followed with interest the campaigns of local councillors. The PSHE programme is extremely effective in enabling pupils to gain knowledge of, and understand their responsibilities in, society. Regular visits by local community personnel such as the Merseyside mounted police ensure pupils' develop a suitable knowledge of public service.
- 2.26 Participation in the Adventure Service Challenge award, during which pupils choose the manner in which they wish to serve the community, links social and moral development imaginatively.
- 2.27 Pupils acquire a broad and effective understanding of, and respect for, their own and other cultures. Participation in a wide range of events leading up to Liverpool's 'European Capital of Culture' celebrations developed pupils' understanding of the similarities and differences between their own and other European cultures. Pupils' introduction to world faiths during scripture lessons helps them to understand how each faith affects cultures and lifestyles. Those pupils within the school community who are from a diversity of cultural heritages share their views, practices and beliefs confidently in class and in assembly, knowing they are respected.
- 2.28 Visitors to school enrich pupils' cultural awareness. Year 6 pupils' knowledge of Poland increased considerably when they listened to a Polish priest talking about children's lives in Poland. Links with a Portuguese school have spurred Year 2 pupils to learn sufficient Portuguese to greet their 'e' pen-pals. A joint initiative with 'e' pen-pals in Malta and Poland on renewable energy has increased pupils' awareness of how other cultures view global problems.
- 2.29 Attendance at museum workshops widens pupils' knowledge of understanding of art and history from a range of cultures. The study of literature from other cultures enriches pupils' breadth of experience. The school is presently extending its work on the multi-cultural perspective of Liverpool.

- 2.30 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.31 Teaching is of a high quality throughout the school and is better than the quality of teaching observed at the last inspection. A higher proportion of lessons now include extremely effective teaching that motivates pupils to learn. When teaching is outstanding, it inspires in pupils a love of learning and a desire for knowledge. Teaching supports pupils of all ages and abilities to acquire new knowledge and make progress. During almost every lesson observed, teaching strongly supported the aims of the school to “enable all children to achieve their full potential in a Christian environment”. In a small proportion of lessons where teaching was less dynamic, the timing of lessons was not judged well and the less challenging expectations of the teaching meant the needs of all pupils were not met as effectively.
- 2.32 The wide range of activities presented to pupils successfully challenges them to think and apply themselves well. The many high quality projects produced by junior pupils demonstrate how teachers successfully assist individual pupils to apply a range of research, design, mathematical and literacy skills effectively. During work on sounds, Reception children worked in pairs to find answers to difficult questions, reasoning out their answers and responding eagerly when asked for their comments. When investigating folk-tales from other countries Year 4 pupils were encouraged to cross-reference their work to find common themes; they applied themselves well to the task. The compilation and presentation of the extensive studies of healthy living undertaken by pupils of all ages to promote a ‘healthy school’ demonstrate originality and creativity.
- 2.33 The high quality of lesson planning stimulates pupils’ interest and contributes to the standards achieved. Teaching effectively balances the promotion of core skills such as reading and writing and the development of pupils as individual learners able to research and evaluate information for themselves and to organise and present their findings effectively. In almost all the lessons observed the good match of tasks to the duration of the lessons ensured pupils completed their work accordingly. In the very few lessons in which this was not the case, the introduction to the lesson lasted too long. Teachers’ plans contain good detail of pupils’ responses to learning and show how this information is used to adapt future lessons to cater for the changing needs of pupils.
- 2.34 Throughout the school, the teachers have a thorough understanding of almost all subjects, though the school has identified the need to increase teachers’ skills in, and knowledge of, art. The enthusiasm displayed by teachers for all subjects motivates pupils to want to make progress. The high quality analysis of pupils’ contributions to lessons by teachers is a significant factor in the standards pupils achieve. Particularly good use is made of ICT in project work. Throughout the school, teachers’ confidence, competence and enthusiasm in this area stimulates pupils to learn as occurred in a Year 6 mathematics lesson.
- 2.35 The teachers’ comprehensive knowledge of their pupils enables them to offer support and guidance tailored to pupils’ needs; they use the knowledge effectively for extending learning and introducing new material. Extremely good revision of skills with small apparatus provided a solid foundation for Year 1 pupils to achieve success when applying this knowledge to new challenges. Throughout the school, teachers use the rewards system effectively to acknowledge good work and effort and inspire pupils to aim higher. The concentration of Year 5 pupils, as they constructed models, was rewarded with merit points that spurred them to sustain their efforts until they achieved success. Across the school, the

- extremely good relationships between pupils and staff are a significant factor in the high standards of behaviour observed in lessons.
- 2.36 The resources available to teachers to support learning are sufficient and are used appropriately. The well-furnished and well-equipped ICT suite is used extremely effectively to support work in many subjects. The bright, welcoming library is used efficiently as a quiet reading area and as an area for research. The school lacks sporting facilities on site but effective use is made of specialist facilities at a nearby college.
- 2.37 Teachers assess work regularly during lessons through the use of pertinent questioning. The thorough questioning of Year 1 pupils, together with the use of imaginative resources such as puppets, enabled the teacher to adapt the challenges to each level of ability as pupils worked. Throughout the school the special 'challenge boxes' for more able pupils cause them to extend their thoughts, knowledge and skills at levels appropriate to their needs. Reception teachers use their daily notes and long-term profiles of children to plan work at the correct level. The results of a wide range of continual formal and informal assessments in the infant and junior classes are recorded very efficiently and discussed regularly in staff meetings to monitor pupils' progress and achievement. This information is used well to set subject targets for each year group and, in English and mathematics, individual targets for pupils are linked to assessment results. Older juniors are assisted well by teachers to gain the skills required to assess and evaluate their own work and provide suggestions as to how they can improve.
- 2.38 Examples of high quality marking, especially for older pupils, inform them clearly of what makes their work good and what they must do to improve. A small amount of marking lacks the detail required to assist pupils to improve their work and the school has identified this as an area for improvement.
- 2.39 The use of national tests and standardised tests enables the school to monitor performance over time and at key stages in a pupils' academic life. Results are analysed to enable the school to determine pupils' success. The introduction of a system to assess and monitor progress throughout a pupil's school life is enabling the school to obtain a long-term view of the effect their provision has on each pupil.
- 2.40 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 Through building successfully upon the “effective systems of support and guidance” identified at the last inspection, the school has ensured that the pastoral care now provided makes an outstanding contribution to pupils’ academic and personal development. The impact of such care enables the school to achieve its aim to create a ‘happy, disciplined environment.’ In their comments that accompanied the completed questionnaire, a significant number of parents made specific reference to the highly effective pastoral care of pupils. As advised at the last inspection, the application of sanctions has been revised. Sanctions now primarily promote good behaviour and are rarely required as tools to maintain discipline. Significant progress has been made since the last inspection in centralising pupils’ records. These are now stored efficiently and accessed easily. Appropriate arrangements ensure health and safety provision is efficient and the school has due regard for the health and safety regulations. The school meets its aim to “maintain safe and healthy working conditions and to review and revise provision regularly”.
- 3.2 The impact of pastoral care systems was evident in the responses of pupils completing their questionnaire. They referred to the support of staff and felt they received ‘lots of help’ whenever it was needed. Almost all pupils said they would talk to any member of staff if they had a work or personal problem and a number of pupils commented that they felt ‘safe’ talking to staff because of the support they received. Class and form teachers are the first point of contact for pastoral concerns and they know their pupils extremely well. They share any concerns at daily briefings and these are followed up during regular pastoral care meetings. The records of discussions show the progress made in resolving concerns and highlight the involvement of the staff as a whole in the support systems established for the pupils.
- 3.3 The effective use of rewards raises pupils’ self-esteem and self-confidence at every opportunity. Infants speak with great pride in achieving ‘star of the week’ status for their kindness, effort, behaviour and attainment. Juniors are equally proud of their merit awards that reward their contribution to all aspects of school life. By celebrating achievement in assemblies the whole school shares in praising pupils’ success.
- 3.4 The family atmosphere of the school is an effective environment in which the strong relationships that exist between members young and old are supported by the mutual respect held by all for all. Pupils feel safe, secure and well supported. Sensitive issues are dealt with sympathetically and senior managers have a clear overview of progress. The guidance offered to individual pupils ensures that everyone understands what is required of them to improve. Extremely effective guidance for Year 6 pupils ensures they know exactly what they must do to be successful in senior school entrance examinations.
- 3.5 Effective systems support high standards of discipline and behaviour and, should behaviour not be regarded as ‘up to standard’ the actions taken are described by pupils as ‘fair and just’. Pupils of all ages understand what constitutes good behaviour. They have discussed bullying in PSHE lessons and at their school council. In conversations, pupils say bullying is very rare but should anyone be upset by another, then teachers deal with the matter swiftly. The school council have initiated a ‘friendship tree’ where pupils pin information about acts of kindness, and an ‘SBF’ (stop bullying forever) club. Members of the school council, designated as ‘playground buddies’, comfort any pupil who is feeling low for whatever reason. Parents have access to copies of the school policies on behaviour and bullying.

- 3.6 The procedures in place for child protection are thorough and successful. All documentation is based upon local area guidelines and staff sign to acknowledge they have read and understood policies. Useful working relationships have been established with local area agencies. The school's child protection officer and the governor's child protection officer attend regular training. Changes in requirements are notified to governors and senior managers, who then pass the information to all staff. School staff receive training on a regular basis. All appropriate measures are taken regarding the appointment of staff.
- 3.7 A range of risk assessments cover all aspects of school life appropriately and, should areas be identified as requiring attention, they are placed in order of priority and dealt with accordingly. All necessary measures to reduce the risk from fire are implemented appropriately. A fire-safety inspection of the premises takes place regularly and regular checks of fire and electrical appliances, plus records of regular fire drills, are up to date.
- 3.8 The care of pupils is of paramount importance to the school and the procedures in place reflect this emphasis. The school is vigilant about safety and takes appropriate measures to ensure the site is secure. Daily matters are dealt with efficiently.
- 3.9 A good number of staff have emergency and full first-aid qualifications. School medical information, such as the first-aid guidelines, administration of medicine records, accident books and the medical needs of individual pupils are up-to-date and accessible. The pupils are very involved in a 'healthy eating' programme. Pupils order their daily sandwiches over the internet, choosing a range of healthy fillings. The school achieved the Liverpool Health Schools Award for the third time in 2005. The work on healthy lifestyles, undertaken by Year 6 pupils, indicates their ability to argue their case for changing eating habits and introducing more exercise into their lives. Their arguments are persuasive and make effective use of quality research to support their points of view.
- 3.10 The school's long-term accessibility and disability strategies show the care expended to ascertain where, when and how provision could realistically be improved. Since the last inspection the school has reviewed the completion of registers and admissions and attendance registers are now satisfactory.
- 3.11 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3].

The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community

- 3.12 The extensive work undertaken by the school to include parents in its life and, through its Roman Catholic tradition, in its witness, has contributed significantly to the increase in, and quality of, the links between home and school since the last inspection; links are now excellent and the school successfully meets its aim to place "great emphasis on close contact and cooperation between parents and the school". The valuable communication with parents, referred to at the last inspection, has been maintained. The parental questionnaire completed prior to this inspection was, in almost every respect, exceptionally positive. A few parents indicated their desire for more information about how teachers were meeting the needs of the more able pupils. The school has already recognised the need to extend the information shared with parents to ensure they are aware of the full extent of daily provision for such pupils.
- 3.13 The many comments from parents that accompanied the questionnaire included strong support for the family atmosphere, the manner in which good behaviour is promoted, the availability of the staff to parents and the approachability and helpfulness of senior managers. Parents feel the school is a happy place and that their child's progress and

attitudes to school are significantly enhanced by sensitive pastoral care. Almost all parents felt their child made progress.

- 3.14 Parents are involved in the life and work of the school. The school welcomes parents to assist with hearing pupils read and, on occasions, to talk to pupils about various professions and about different faiths and traditions. Parents are very active in their support of sports, drama and musical activities and school outings. An extremely active, well-organised and strongly supportive parents association involves everyone in a wide range of social events, affirming the family atmosphere of the school, raising considerable sums for pupils' charities and providing many additional resources to enhance pupils' learning.
- 3.15 Parents appreciate the opportunity to visit the school whenever they have a concern. In addition, parents' evenings enable them to discuss their child's performance and update them of progress on a regular basis. The meetings arranged for parents as pupils move from one stage of learning to another ensure they fully understand what will happen. At the beginning of every half-term parents are informed of what their child will be learning in class so they feel part of the process of learning. Parents can access school policies if they wish. General information about school life is contained in friendly regular letters and, should information be lost between home and school, a notice board at the school entrance contains copies of all documentation sent home. The reports sent to parents about pupils' academic performance inform them fully of what their child knows, what they can do, the progress their child has made and what is needed to raise attainment further.
- 3.16 The school handles parental concerns sensitively and with due care. The parents' questionnaire indicated that concerns are dealt with well by the school. As yet no matters have reached formal complaints stage. Should this happen, the school has a thorough complaints procedure in place. It is available to parents should they wish to view it.
- 3.17 Links with the community have remained strong, as they were at the time of the last inspection and a much wider range of contacts between school and community has been established. The links between the school, the local Catholic parish and the Metropolitan cathedral support the ethos of the school successfully. By inviting parents to join with pupils and the local maintained Catholic school to celebrate Mass on Holy days and involve pupils in other liturgical celebrations throughout the year, an effective shared worship link is created between home, parish and school. Parents share in knowledge of neighbourhood activities through the parish newsletter, which is distributed to them each week.
- 3.18 The school welcomes education students from the university, offering them the opportunity to increase their practical skills as part of their work-based units in educational studies. Senior pupils from local colleges visit to undertake work experience and sport leadership courses. The contact with these adults increases pupils' knowledge of the world and improves their social skills. Links with the local physical education college enable pupils to benefit from specialist football training.
- 3.19 Strong and fruitful links have been established with the neighbouring senior school. As a result, productive communication between teachers involved with pupils who have specific learning needs has been established. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 joined a 'jazz workshop' at the senior school that extended their musical knowledge and understanding considerably. The links that exist with the local wildflower centre for environmental scientific study enhance pupils' scientific studies.
- 3.20 Impressive and productive links have been established with a number of European schools in the towns twinned with Liverpool, through 'e' pen-pals. The school is investigating the possibility of developing partnerships with local maintained schools in the area of language

teaching. It hopes, through the sharing of expertise, to enhance language teaching for local schools and explore the possibility of creating teams of linguists who will teach in both sectors.

- 3.21 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 The frameworks that support the governors in the management of the school enable them to maintain a well-informed oversight of school life and contribute to the school's success in achieving its mission to 'follow the teachings of Jesus Christ and work in partnership to foster confident, considerate pupils who will respect the beliefs and opinions of others.' The clear sense of direction exhibited by governors at the last inspection has remained. The governors oversee financial matters efficiently and provide sufficient resources to promote effective teaching and learning. The governors and senior managers have successfully met almost every recommendation made at the last inspection. They are presently discussing the one issue remaining from that time, which is to provide suitable medical accommodation for pupils who are ill. Attendance registers are now completed correctly, the school plan has been extended to cover a minimum of three years, the balance of time allocated to subjects has been reviewed and anomalies removed, and the school day has been extended.
- 4.2 The governors, in "ensuring quality provision, supporting good practice and planning efficiently" ensure teaching and learning needs are met and that the aims of the school are supported. The strategic building and finance plan supports work and development in all areas. A long-term programme of investment in the renewal and replacement of resources supports the governors' aim that "pupils should be provided with resources of the best quality." Senior managers and governors work together on the school strategic plan that covers all aspects of the business and school life and are kept well informed of needs by staff at all levels of management. The consultation and negotiations that take place ensure that, when the budget is constructed, the priorities are supported by all.
- 4.3 The regular meetings between governors and senior managers and their informal contact with staff, pupils and parents enable governors to maintain an awareness of the views of all those connected to the school. The wholehearted attendance of governors at school functions demonstrates their strong support for pupils and broadens their view of school life. The governors support staff strongly and share in the preparation of school policies that are clear, challenging, and demonstrate their high expectations of all within the school. Such involvement helps governors obtain a clear view of where the strengths of the school lie and of aspects requiring further development. Constructive and respectful relationships exist between the head teacher, staff and governors. The senior managers welcome the willing and constant support of governors in the life of the school. They particularly appreciate the chairman's role as 'critical friend' to the school.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.4 The well-informed educational direction and highly successful leadership of senior managers has sustained and built upon the 'effective' management identified at the last inspection. The senior management team, established since that time, provides sensitive, caring leadership and a clear sense of purpose. Their vigour and dedication motivate staff to work hard. They understand the school, balance the needs of pupils, parents and staff appropriately and have very high expectations of everyone. Their informal but structured approach is totally pertinent to the size and style of the school. They have a major impact upon the quality of teaching, the standards achieved by pupils and the provision of outstanding pastoral care that result in well-adjusted and happy pupils.

- 4.5 The school is extremely well managed. The school plan, as recommended at the last inspection, now extends over three to five years and is a working document to which staff and governors contribute. Senior managers set priorities and make decisions confidently but sensitively. Efficient subject management ensures subjects are well documented, efficiently planned and suitably provided for. Subject coordinators have clear plans to show how their subjects will develop over time. Through the effective monitoring of standards, teaching, learning and assessment, they identify good practice, recognise where improvements are needed and support colleagues effectively.
- 4.6 The established performance management scheme involving the observation of teaching, discussion of training needs and discussion of individual performance targets, is felt by staff to be very beneficial. Comprehensive monitoring systems ensure school policies are implemented effectively. The consistency evident in the quality of teachers' planning is the result of weekly monitoring by senior managers. Teachers' lesson plans are monitored by the respective subject coordinators every half-term, thus ensuring the curriculum is taught as planned. The governors, senior managers and staff all contribute to the regular evaluation of school policies.
- 4.7 The provision of well-qualified and experienced staff is a significant factor in the standards pupils achieve. Induction procedures for staff new to the school are clear. The programme for a newly-qualified teacher is supportive, well documented and follows the Independent School's Association teacher induction programme. Throughout the school, positive relationships exist between committed, loyal and supportive staff. The promotion of training opportunities by governors and senior managers is evident in the wide range of courses attended by staff. The effectiveness of training and the contribution it makes to the school is monitored by senior managers.
- 4.8 Efficient financial management ensures premises are suitable and that resources support teaching and learning. Classroom environments are clean, light and well-furnished. Excellent progress since the last inspection has resulted in a new, well-furnished library that offers a retreat for quiet reading and a suitable area for research, a well-equipped ICT suite and good ICT classroom resources, and an activity room for Reception children. The school is aware that the ICT suite lacks adequate ventilation. Imaginative use is made of the small site with a pupils' garden, a wild area, play areas and quiet corners. Effective links with the university enable pupils to access good quality sports facilities. The school is aware that provision of medical accommodation remains unsatisfactory.
- 4.9 The efficiency of well-informed administration staff is evident in the neatly organised office systems that work smoothly and enable the school to function effectively. Pupils' records and information are safely stored and easily accessed. School documentation is well presented with extremely efficient use made of ICT.
- 4.10 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff [Standard 4].
- 4.11 The school meets almost all of the regulatory requirements for premises and accommodation [Standard 5]. In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:
- (a) Ensure there are appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 [Regulation 5.(1)].
 - (b) Ensure ventilation in the ICT suite is satisfactory in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 [Regulation 5.(p)].

- 4.12 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 Carleton House School provides a high quality education within an environment that is highlighted by a deep care and concern for each pupil as a unique individual. The school is successful in achieving its aim to “strive to enable all pupils to achieve their full potential in a Christian environment”. Strong, sensitive leadership, effective management and successful teaching significantly influence pupils’ enthusiasm for learning, their trusting and respectful relationships and the high standards they achieve.
- 5.2 The strong Christian principles underpinning school life are a significant influence on the outstanding spiritual development of pupils. The exceptional standard of pastoral care contributes to pupils’ highly developed social, moral and cultural awareness and is reflected in the friendly and courteous demeanour of pupils who show genuine concern for their school, their community and their world. The importance placed upon developing pupils’ ability to think for themselves, plan and organise their work has had a noteworthy effect in creating competent, confident, independent and sensitive learners. Pupils, who are prepared extremely well for the national tests and for entry to senior schools, are supported by parents who speak highly of almost every aspect of school life.
- 5.3 The school has progressed well, improved upon the strengths identified at the last inspection and made substantial progress in responding to the recommendations made at that time. Standards have risen in all areas since the last inspection. The provision of a new library, ICT suite and activity area for Reception children has considerably enhanced learning for pupils of all ages. The curriculum is now balanced, attendance registers are completed correctly and, through more efficient longer-term planning the school knows exactly what is required to make further progress.
- 5.4 The school complies with most of the regulatory requirements, but does not at present meet Standard 5 (premises and accommodation).

Next Steps

- 5.5 To maintain and improve upon its many strengths the school should, as correctly identified by senior management, rectify the following minor weaknesses.
1. Complete curriculum documentation for art and design and raise teachers’ knowledge of, and skills in, this subject.
 2. Eliminate inconsistencies in the quality of the teaching of handwriting and in teachers’ marking throughout the school.
- 5.6 In order to meet all the regulatory requirements, the school must:
- (1) Ensure there are appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 [Regulation 5.(1)].
 - (2) Ensure ventilation in the ICT suite is satisfactory in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 [Regulation 5.(p)].

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from June 12th-15th, 2006. 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

| | |
|-----------|---|
| S.Gordon | Reporting Inspector, Retired Head of IAPS/ISA School. |
| B.Duckett | Retired Head of ISA Prep School, |
| L.Savage | Head of Pre-prep, HMC School. |