

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

The Godolphin School

Full Name of the School	The Godolphin School
DCSF Number	865/6006
Early Years Number	N/A
Registered Charity Number	309488
Address	Milford Hill, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 2RA.
Telephone Number	01722 430500
Fax Number	01722 430501
Email Address	generaloffice@godolphin.wilts.sch.uk
Headmistress	Miss M J Horsburgh
Chair of Governors	Mr Giles Fletcher
Age Range	11 to 18
Gender	Girls
Inspection Dates	10th to 13th 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 inspection was not carried out in conjunction with Ofsted, Children's Directorate, and the report does not contain specific judgements on the National Minimum Boarding Standards. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to girls' education and development in general. The full Ofsted report can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Inspection reports/Boarding schools.

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

CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
	Characteristics of the School	1
2.	THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION	3
	The Educational Experience Provided	3
	Pupils' Learning and Achievements.....	4
	Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils	6
	The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment).....	7
3.	THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS	10
	The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils.....	10
	The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community	11
	The Quality of Boarding Education	13
4.	THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT	14
	The Quality of Governance	14
	The Quality of Leadership and Management	14
5.	CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS.....	16
	Overall Conclusions	16
	Next Steps.....	16
6.	SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE	17
	List of Inspectors	17

1. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 The Godolphin School is a boarding and day school for girls aged from eleven to eighteen. The school aims to be an inclusive, forward-looking community which provides a broad-based, liberal education that will enable each girl to fulfil her potential so that she may live her life to the full, whilst playing a responsible part in society and showing an active concern for other people. Although founded in the tradition of the Church of England, and retaining deeply-rooted Christian values, Godolphin also welcomes girls of other denominations and faiths.
- 1.2 Founded by the will of Elizabeth Godolphin in 1726, the school is the second oldest girls' school in England and has played a pioneering role in women's education. Situated within easy walking distance of Salisbury's historic centre, Godolphin has occupied its present sixteen-acre site since 1891. The main building is Victorian and the other buildings represent a range of 20th-century architectural styles, as the school has developed, the most recent additions being a performing arts centre, an indoor swimming pool and fitness centre, a new boarding house and a sixth-form study centre.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, there were 437 pupils, of whom 158 were boarders and 137 were in the sixth form. Entry to the school is selective. Girls are admitted at the ages of eleven, twelve or thirteen following either the Common Entrance or scholarship examination. Entrance to the sixth form is dependent on an interview and written papers, usually a general paper and papers in two of the subjects that the candidate proposes to study for A level. Candidates must also have a satisfactory report from their school and an expectation that they will gain at least five GCSE passes at grade C or above, with grade B or above in the subjects that they intend to study. Entry at other ages is occasionally possible if places are available.
- 1.4 Scores in standardised tests taken by girls entering the school in Year 7 indicate that the average ability of the pupils in the school is well above the national average. Where pupils are performing in line with their abilities their examination results are expected to be well above the average achieved nationally in all maintained schools, but below those achieved in maintained selective schools.
- 1.5 Most pupils enter Godolphin from independent preparatory schools in Wiltshire, Hampshire and the adjoining counties, including those from The Godolphin Preparatory School, which occupies an adjoining site and shares some of the main school facilities. A minority of the day pupils come from local primary schools. Of the boarders, a small number come from London and about a quarter are from forces families. Currently, just over five per cent of the girls are foreign nationals, coming from a variety of countries, mainly outside Europe. About one in ten of them benefit from means-tested bursarial support. Parents expect their children to continue into the sixth form and to undertake courses in higher education.
- 1.6 No pupil has a local authority statement of special educational need, but the school has identified 27 girls with learning difficulties or disabilities, of whom 18 receive additional tuition, the remainder being supported in lessons by class teachers. English is not the first language of 23 girls, 18 of whom receive additional tuition.

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

School	NC name
First year	Year 7
Second year	Year 8
Third year	Year 9
Fourth year	Year 10
Fifth year	Year 11
Lower sixth	Year 12
Upper sixth	Year 13

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 The high quality of the education provided for pupils at each stage of their development successfully reflects the school's aims and philosophy, as was found to be the case at the last inspection. The curriculum is broad and balanced and the girls' creative development is nurtured through a strong provision of music, art and drama. Extra-curricular provision is good and includes frequent opportunities for trips and foreign visits. The committed staff work hard to foster a supportive and encouraging environment for the benefit of their pupils' education, and strong mutual respect is evident.
- 2.2 Throughout the school the curriculum enables the development of articulate and numerate pupils who have good linguistic, scientific, social, aesthetic, creative and physical skills. They write, speak and listen intelligently, and they work hard. The curriculum allows for the development of an appropriate range of knowledge, understanding and skills. Creative grouping of subjects in the curriculum for Years 7 and 8 allows for the provision of Latin and three modern languages. Although facilities for the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons are limited by the fact that many lessons are taught in classrooms shared by several departments, provision for use of ICT is generally good, and pupils have ready access to ICT facilities for further research and homework in the library and in the boarding houses. The school has improved its ICT provision since the last inspection.
- 2.3 The excellent personal, religious and social education (PERSIL) programme is wide ranging in Years 7 to 11. After Year 11, however, the curriculum has no structured or timetabled programme of non-examined subjects. Apart from some specially arranged sessions, such as advice on student finance or a sex education talk, the provision of personal development depends on pupils' choices, such as their A-level and extra-curricular options, the acts of worship and their responsiveness to the general ethos of the school rather than on a prescribed programme within the curriculum. The sixth-form curriculum is the subject of ongoing discussion in the school. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DoE) scheme at bronze, silver and gold levels is very well supported and provides excellent opportunities for girls to undertake community service projects. Participation in the school's combined cadet force (CCF) is encouraged and offers valuable opportunities for adventurous training and developing leadership skills. A wide range of extra-curricular activities is organized at lunchtimes, in the evening and at weekends, though some have limited support from girls and participation in the programme is variable, so the benefit derived from this provision is uneven. Sport, creative cookery, music, drama and art are popular extra-curricular activities, and house events, such as a recent inter-house music competition, often involve large numbers of girls throughout the school.
- 2.4 Careers education is good. Pupils in Year 12 benefit from work experience arranged in the summer term and those in Year 10 are involved in work shadowing. Regular careers information events are arranged with other local schools. Thorough advice on higher education and university application is given to girls in the sixth form, and a programme organized by the head of sixth form provides well-informed individual support for their applications. External agencies, professional careers advisors and links with local businesses are also utilised as needed. Virtually all pupils proceed to higher education, sometimes following a GAP Year. Designated coordinators advise potential applicants to Oxford or Cambridge universities from Year 11 onwards. Information about GCSE and A level options is disseminated via a well-planned programme in Years 9 and 11 respectively.

- 2.5 The curriculum is effectively managed and a series of good-quality booklets describe its content for parents. The recently restructured curriculum review group, involving senior heads of department and chaired by the director of studies, has begun to look at current curricular issues in order to keep pace with changes in examination specifications at GCSE and A level. Flexibility in the curriculum allows for response to individual needs, for example, the provision of Greek for talented classicists. Enrichment for gifted and talented pupils is provided through meetings of the seminar society in the sixth form and through the occasional meetings of the 'Alpinists' for girls throughout the school. International GCSEs have been introduced in mathematics and science to provide more extensive syllabus content. A good range of links has been developed to support the curriculum and a very well-structured and wide-ranging programme of field trips and visits enhances the educational experience that is provided at all stages. A recent history trip to the First World War battlefields of France and Belgium developed girls' understanding of the conditions of trench warfare and, last year, a business studies and economics trip to the Czech Republic enabled examination of the glass and car production industries.
- 2.6 The recently appointed further learning coordinator, whose rôle is to oversee the help given to pupils with particular learning needs, ensures that all teachers have relevant updated information concerning girls in their classes who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), as well as herself providing valuable support for particular individuals. Provision for pupils with LDD is good and enables them to progress and achieve well in relation to their abilities. Support for those girls for whom English is an additional language, for which parents pay separately, is well organized by an external agency, which liaises closely with the school.
- 2.7 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.8 Throughout the school, pupils achieve well in relation to their abilities in both academic study and other activities. They are enthusiastic, well-motivated learners who come into their lessons expecting to work hard and settle in a business-like manner. As at the time of the last inspection, the school can be justifiably proud of its pupils' attitude to their work and their behaviour.
- 2.9 Pupils are well grounded in their knowledge, skill and understanding in the subjects and activities provided, and they can apply these skills effectively and think and act critically and creatively. In Year 11, discussing racial discrimination in a religious studies lesson, for example, they demonstrated their good knowledge, their ability to reason and their sharp insight as they linked the story of the Good Samaritan to contemporary attitudes towards strangers. Pupils' work throughout the school reveals high levels of literacy and numeracy. They express themselves fluently both on paper and orally in class, they are excellent listeners, and they are able to develop their own arguments and opinions. Standards of written work are high. They plan and present their work carefully.
- 2.10 Pupils apply mathematics and mathematical skills effectively in other subjects as necessary, including science, geography and economics. Girls in a Year 12 biology lesson confidently plotted graphs to investigate the effect of temperature on the permeability of cell membranes in beetroot, and distance-time calculations involving fractions in a Year 10 physics lesson were performed accurately without a calculator.
- 2.11 ICT skills are well developed, as was seen in a Year 9 class where pupils confidently used a computer-aided design software package to plan their ideal fantasy home and also in the files of Year 13 further mathematicians who had used a graph-drawing package to investigate

conic sections. However, the application of ICT skills, apart from word-processing, is evident in books and files in only a few subjects. The school is aware of the need to continue developments in the use of ICT within other subjects to enhance learning.

- 2.12 Pupils achieve well across the whole range of subjects and abilities, including those with LDD and those girls for whom English is an additional language. During the three years to 2007, the latest for which national comparative data was available at the time of the inspection, results at GCSE were far above the average obtained nationally by girls in all maintained schools, and in line with the average achieved in maintained selective schools. Results at GCSE are good in relation to the pupils' abilities. Standardised measures indicate that pupils who enter the school in Year 7 make progress to GCSE that is well above the national average for pupils of similar ability, but corresponding data is not collected for those who join the school in Year 9.
- 2.13 Over the same three-year period, results at A level were well above the average for all maintained schools, and in line with those achieved in maintained selective schools. Results at A level are also good in relation to the ability of the pupils. The school does not use standardised measurements of progress at A level. GCSE and A-level results achieved in 2008 were consistent with those in the previous three years.
- 2.14 Individuals and groups of pupils have achieved distinction in a wide range of activities. In lacrosse and hockey, several girls have been selected for national squads and have been invited to attend training at the regional centre for excellence. Throughout the school groups of pupils have been involved in highly-acclaimed performances in drama, and chamber music groups have achieved noteworthy success, in particular the vocal ensemble who reached the national selection stage in the BBC 3 'Youth Choir of the Year' competition and the under-16 brass ensemble, who were national finalists in the *Pro Corda* schools' chamber music competition.
- 2.15 An exceptionally large number of pupils achieve DoE awards, including more than 40 gold awards last year. Wide-ranging achievement helps girls grow in confidence and stimulates their enjoyment in working well together, so making a significant contribution to the high levels of personal development which they achieve.
- 2.16 Effective note-taking and organisation of exercise books and files are apparent across all age groups and teaching frequently lays the foundation of these skills. By Year 11 most pupils have acquired the abilities to make their own notes and to organise their study with some independence. Although in a few lessons pupils are insufficiently challenged to undertake independent study, when given the opportunity they show a facility for working independently. In a sixth-form art lesson, for example, the internet was used effectively to research a variety of painting styles and, in a Year 11 food technology lesson, pupils worked purposefully on their coursework projects, seeking guidance from the teacher as they required it.
- 2.17 Pupils cooperate, study and work effectively in groups and teams. They concentrate well on their own learning and are mutually supportive, working sensibly in pairs and groups to complete a required task. Girls in a music lesson in Year 8, divided into small ensembles, cooperated well on a simple jazz piece, devising improvisations and then performing their compositions with verve and enthusiasm. Successful and enjoyable group work was apparent in a drama lesson in Year 13 as the pupils rehearsed their devised pieces and the teacher allowed them to use their imaginative and organisational skills to develop further their own ideas in a collaborative and fruitful session.

- 2.18 Pupils of all ages arrive promptly for lessons, settle to their work quickly and apply themselves with perseverance. Purposeful enjoyment of work and activities can be seen at all levels and in most areas of the school. Their persistence was evident, for instance, in a sixth-form further mathematics lesson in which pupils were determined to find a minor slip in their working to ensure that the demanding expansion that they were deriving was correct. They have an exemplary attitude towards their learning and this, along with a high level of self-discipline and excellent behaviour, contributes to their considerable success as learners.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.19 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is outstanding. The school continues to fulfil its aims to develop confidence, independence, tolerance, responsibility and a sense of belonging, to develop spiritual and social awareness, and to support the Christian values inherent in its foundation, as was so at the time of the last inspection. The school is highly successful in developing in the pupils an awareness of the spiritual and moral dimensions to human life, their responsibilities as members of society, and different cultures and beliefs. High-quality individual pastoral care enables girls to develop self-knowledge and self-confidence. The house system encourages positive relationships and fosters social development and loyalty. At house and school assemblies the sense is of an extended family gathering. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were overwhelmingly supportive of the attitudes and values promoted by the school.
- 2.20 The recent appointment of a full-time chaplain is an explicit affirmation of the school's continuing and lively commitment to its Christian tradition. The worship, teaching and values which characterise the life of the school enable girls to achieve appropriate awareness of the spiritual dimension of human beings. The number of confirmation candidates is testimony to the school's success in enabling pupils to deepen their spiritual understanding and express their commitment. While no timetabled religious studies teaching occurs after Year 9, the pattern of regular worship includes weekly assemblies, regular prayers, services in Salisbury Cathedral, and, during the week of the inspection, well-devised and moving Armistice Day remembrance ceremonies. The Elizabeth Godolphin Commemoration Service in Westminster Abbey during the weekend preceding the inspection had evidently made a deep impression on those who attended.
- 2.21 The creative and performing arts departments provide much rich stimulus and, on frequent occasions, spiritually uplifting experiences. Original writing is generated by, for instance, a creative writing group, the summer holiday writing competition and poetry day. A lively, purposeful rehearsal of *The Mikado*, involving pupils from all age groups, was observed during the inspection and the vocal ensemble, finalists in a recent national competition, made an outstanding contribution to a morning assembly. High-quality artwork in various media is produced, although opportunities for its display around the school are not widely taken.
- 2.22 Pupils develop a strong moral sense and gain apposite knowledge and understanding of a wide range of moral and social issues. Initially this is achieved through the PERSIL programme provided for all girls in Years 7 to 11, which includes informative introductions to a number of the public institutions and services in England. The demeanour and behaviour of pupils are clear indicators of a community whose members have an excellent and well-developed sense of right and wrong. While the range of sanctions and the boundaries of acceptability are well known, discipline is not a significant issue as far as the day-to-day life of the school is concerned. Self-discipline and consideration for others predominate. Proud of their school and affectionate towards it, the pupils conduct themselves in a courteous and civilised manner. With rules and restrictions kept to a minimum, the sixth-formers' regime is based on trust and the pupils do not find it necessary

to fight against it. The relaxed, friendly atmosphere is a distinctive characteristic of the school's ethos.

- 2.23 The social development of the pupils is outstanding. Relationships at all levels, between staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves are very positive, reflecting strong mutual respect and regard. Girls benefit from the many opportunities for leadership, teamwork and service, for instance through the prefect system, team captaincy, the school council, the charity committee, 'godmothering' new pupils, the DoE award scheme, the CCF and community service. Proportionately to its overall numbers, the school has very many DoE candidates for gold awards. A sense of social responsibility is evident in the charitable ventures organised by the girls, who annually raise substantial sums for good causes in this country and abroad. Social enrichment is provided by the many formal and informal events which bring together diverse groups of staff and pupils during the course of a year. Pupil-led activities are encouraged and senior girls are willing to take the lead, for instance in raising money for charity and the inter-house performing arts weekend.
- 2.24 Pupils have a high level of respect for and appreciation of their own and other cultures. The school amply fulfils its aim of welcoming girls of other faiths and of fostering tolerance and understanding both within and beyond its own community. The religious studies syllabus gives a generous amount of time to world religions other than Christianity. Many overseas trips are arranged, some of which, such as an art trip to Florence or visits to the battlefields of the First World War, are specifically related to an aspect of an academic discipline. Pupils who have been on ventures to India, Israel, Honduras and Tanzania report that their knowledge and understanding have been greatly enhanced by their immersion in unfamiliar cultures.
- 2.25 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.26 The quality of teaching is good overall, and much is outstanding. Lessons are well planned and are characterised by teachers' good subject knowledge and their high level of awareness of the aptitudes and needs of their pupils. Teaching contributes significantly to the school's aim of enabling girls to achieve their potential and is effective in helping them to acquire knowledge and make good progress, as was the case at the time of the last inspection and was recognised by virtually all the parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire.
- 2.27 Teachers know the abilities of their pupils well and match work appropriately to their learning needs. Well-timed assessment of need and suitable additional specialist help are provided for those pupils for whom English is an additional language. The recently appointed coordinator for further learning has set up a helpful and detailed database, accessible to all teachers, containing information about the specific teaching needs of individual pupils, so that classroom teaching can be suitably adjusted to match these. Additional one-to-one tuition is provided for those pupils who require such support, enabling them to progress according to their abilities. A marked improvement in the support given to those with LDD, and to those for whom English is an additional language, has taken place since the last inspection. Periodically, subject-based activities are arranged with the specific intention of challenging the most able pupils. Recent examples have included a discussion about what constitutes an ideal society following the study of Plato's *Republic* and a practical geometry activity reconstructing examples from Euclid's *Elements*.
- 2.28 Teaching at all stages is effective in fostering in pupils an interest in, and concern for, their work. Written work from pupils throughout the school shows real care and endeavour.

Teachers are encouraging both in class and in their comments on work. They employ a wide variety of teaching and questioning techniques to encourage reasoning, analytical and deductive skills, as in a Year 7 English lesson, for instance, when pupils were asked to work in pairs discussing and practising the use of paragraph changes, enabling those with better understanding to cement their grasp by explaining it to their partners.

- 2.29 The expectations of teachers are high. Teaching assumes ready cooperation and responsible behaviour by the pupils. The respectful and supportive relationship between teachers and their pupils leads to a purposeful teaching atmosphere in which girls both behave well and enjoy learning. The enthusiasm and interest of teachers for their subjects are reciprocated by the pupils. Girls readily voice their appreciation of their teachers and their willingness to help them both inside and outside lesson time.
- 2.30 Lessons are well planned and conducted at a brisk pace. Clear objectives are set in most lessons and a purposeful approach is adopted to ensure that effective use is invariably made of the 35-minute lessons. Most lessons are well varied to sustain interest and provide different ways of approaching the same idea or skill. Girls in a Year 11 lacrosse lesson, for example, enjoyed coaching, playing and constructive criticism in the course of a half-hour session.
- 2.31 Teachers know their pupils very well and plan their teaching to meet the needs of the group. Teaching groups arranged by ability in English, mathematics, modern languages and science ensure that lessons can be tailored exactly to the understanding of the pupils, as was seen in a Year 10 mathematics lesson where girls in a lower set were confidently plotting lines to solve simultaneous equations.
- 2.32 Teachers throughout the school are very knowledgeable about their subjects and the examination syllabuses that they teach, and they are skilful and enthusiastic communicators of their knowledge, as was apparent in a Year 13 history of art lesson when excellent knowledge inspired debate about the coded messages in 18th-century paintings. They are particularly conscious of the demands of external examinations and often use these as a specific focus to provide well-targeted and suitably orientated teaching.
- 2.33 Resources to support teaching are good and are often used effectively to enhance teaching. Most classrooms are attractive and well-lit and some are equipped with data projectors, although the regular use of ICT is not yet fully integrated into the teaching. Some departmental rooms have to be shared by other subjects with resultant upheaval in the frequent transfer of teaching materials. The provision of departmental offices and store rooms is inconsistent across departments. The school is aware that this has an inhibiting effect on the use of resources, including ICT, and is working towards resolving the problem. The classrooms, particularly when they are dedicated to a subject area, often have colourful and relevant displays, many of them created by the pupils themselves. The excellent performing arts centre is extensively used and provides a focal point for the whole community, as well as being an invaluable resource for the teaching of music and drama. The on-site sports facilities, including the swimming pool, are constantly in use and do much to support teaching and to encourage physical fitness.
- 2.34 Marking of work at all stages is thorough and regular and the outcomes are well understood by the pupils. Girls receive valuable spoken and written feedback about their work. Praise is widely used. Written comments are full and constructive, and the best give helpful advice as to how pupils could improve their work. Teachers make effective use of information gained from marking, often referring to pupils' work in the subsequent lessons and taking care to re-explain ideas seen to have not been fully understood.

- 2.35 The pupils' academic performance is effectively monitored using mid-term tests and end-of-year examinations. This enables any concern about a girl's progress to be identified and discussed with form tutors so that appropriate supportive action is taken. The assessment of pupils' aptitudes and abilities on entry to the school is through their marks in the Common Entrance examination and scores in standardised tests taken in Year 7. However, no further standardised tests are taken after this stage, although a significant number of pupils enter the school after Year 7. This reduces the usefulness of the information obtained from standardised tests for subsequent tracking and assessment of pupils' progress. The school is aware that more needs to be done to make effective use of statistical information in tracking progress and is in the process of devising new strategies.
- 2.36 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 pastoral care and the arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils are outstanding, continuing the high standards recorded at the previous inspection, when pastoral care was identified as one of the strengths of the school. The school is highly effective in meeting its aim to enable each pupil to fulfil her potential so that she may live her life to the full.
- 3.2 The excellent support and guidance provided to pupils by the staff are underpinned by a highly effective pastoral structure, which assists and supports the work of the staff. The house, form and school tutor systems function very smoothly and enable girls to be continuously encouraged, advised and supported as they develop academically and socially. The system of tutor groups, co-ordinated by school tutors and complemented by housemistresses, their deputies and house tutors, provides an overlapping, flexible, and successful support network for pupils. The newly-established full-time chaplaincy and the health centre also play significant roles in providing well-judged and appropriate care for pupils. Excellent communication and a regular schedule of meetings between those responsible enable most problems to be dealt with speedily and effectively, and often before they fully develop. The system for registration in tutor groups in the mornings and in houses at lunch-time gives pupils the opportunity to relate effectively to an extended number of staff. Information about access to the two independent listeners is clearly displayed in all houses. Pupils comment most positively on the support that they are given, the caring attitudes and the approachability of the members of staff who are responsible for them. No criticism of care was forthcoming from any pupil. The high quality of the care and support for the pupils is enhanced by a well-constructed and appropriate programme of personal, health and social education in Years 7 to 11, which informs and guides them in important lifestyle topics and decisions.
- 3.3 Excellent relationships, based on mutual trust and respect between staff and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves, are a feature throughout the school. One pupil, supported by many, claimed that the very good relationships that she had with the staff were the 'best part of being at school', and the excellent relationships that prevail in the school were endorsed by almost all pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Pupils being interviewed agreed that they are treated as valued and respected individuals in a relaxed and supportive environment in which their views are regarded as important.
- 3.4 The school's measures to promote good behaviour and discipline are clear and well respected. Pupils found them sensible and 'not petty'. Parents who responded to the confidential pre-inspection questionnaire overwhelmingly agreed that the school achieves high standards of behaviour. Pupils and staff agree that the need for punishment is rare, a claim supported by the very few entries in house punishment records. The anti-bullying policy, which is always under review, was reported by the pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire and those questioned in person to be effective and well implemented.
- 3.5 Child protection measures are securely in place and they are effective. The child protection policy is thorough and detailed. The deputy head, the designated child protection officer, has undergone appropriate training and all staff receive annual training on child protection issues, as do all new staff on arrival. The school maintains an ongoing liaison with Wiltshire County Council.

- 3.6 The school has taken all necessary measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. Following a visit from Wiltshire Fire Brigade in 2006 the school commissioned a major fire risk assessment in 2007 and has acted appropriately to implement the recommendations.
- 3.7 Arrangements to ensure health and safety are highly effective and the school has proper regard for its health and safety statutory obligations. The recently re-constituted health and safety committee under the joint chairmanship of the deputy head and the bursar is charged with both developing appropriate policies and disseminating and advising on good practice. Risk assessment procedures are clear and effective and advice is always on hand for the many members of staff willing to take pupils out of school on academic or extra-curricular trips.
- 3.8 The medical welfare of the pupils is given an appropriately high priority. The school nurse has devised excellent systems for liaison with the boarding house staff, and the health centre is always open during the school day to deal with pupils' health problems. The centre also provides a valuable service to pupils who need to talk to someone. The school has a thorough policy for first aid and a suitable number of the staff holds a first-aid qualification. Attendance and admissions registers are diligently maintained and effective measures are in place to follow up unexpected absences.
- 3.9 Pupils are encouraged to be healthy, both by developing healthy eating habits and by taking regular exercise. The school's catering service is professionally run, menus are varied and the quality of the food is high with an innovative colour-coded system to give pupils further helpful information about what they are eating.
- 3.10 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

- 3.11 The links that the school has established with its parents and with the wider community are outstanding. They fulfil very well the school's aims to enable girls to play a responsible part in society and to show active concern for other people. They maintain the excellent standard recognised at the time of the last inspection.
- 3.12 A high proportion of parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and almost all expressed strong satisfaction and pleasure with the school, many stressing that their daughters are happy and thriving at the school. They were almost unanimous in their approval of the effectiveness of teaching and of the attitudes and values promoted by the school, as well as recognising and applauding the high quality of the help and guidance provided. Very few of the parents had criticisms to make of the school.
- 3.13 Parents have excellent opportunities to be involved in the life of the school and many are actively involved. Parents are welcome visitors in school, whether to see their daughters perform in sport, music or drama or on a more informal basis in the houses. Communication between the school and parents is very good and enables parents to be informed and involved at all important stages of their daughter's schooling. The Godolphin Parents' Association has developed since the last inspection and now hosts a good variety of events to promote communication between parents, including wine tasting evenings, new parents' telephone 'ring-arounds' and parents' receptions, as well as organising valuable talks on some of the issues facing the parents of teenage girls.
- 3.14 The recently restructured reporting system provides full and regular communication to parents about their children's attainment and progress. Reports are carefully written to

provide parents and pupils with both information about progress and suggestions for future improvement. Annual parents' evenings, much valued by the parents, encourage open and frank discussion between parents and teachers, normally with the pupil present. *Godolphin News*, the school magazine (*The Gazette*), and the school's excellent website, in addition to a range of well-presented handbooks, further involve and inform the parent body about the life of the school, its policies and activities.

- 3.15 Parental concerns are listened to carefully and handled with due care. Parents are encouraged to contact pastoral or academic staff with such concerns, and these are handled appropriately, often informally, and always with respect. A new and apposite complaints policy is in place, with clear and publicly stated procedures. Reference to files confirms that senior staff deal with any matters brought to them promptly and with appropriate diligence.
- 3.16 The school has well-established and positive links with the local community. Sports amenities, the theatre and social facilities are made available to the public when not required by the school. Local maintained primary schools benefit from use of the swimming pool on a weekly basis. The general public is encouraged to attend the school's musical events both by notices in the *Music in Salisbury* leaflet and in the school's own brochure of events. The popular and flourishing DoE Award scheme enriches the local community through its service element, which involves a significant number of pupils in a variety of activities ranging from visits to a local centre for the handicapped, to working in charity shops or helping to run local Brownie packs and Beaver colonies. The work-shadowing and work-experience programmes arranged through the careers department depend on links with the wider community that benefit the pupils' experience. The school's long association with Salisbury Cathedral means that, as well as pupils having the privilege of worshipping regularly in the cathedral, the dean appoints a representative to the governing body, as does the bishop. Evening lectures on the history of art attract pupils, parents and members of the local community.
- 3.17 The pupils work hard for those in need often, but by no means exclusively, by their extensive fund-raising. The charity committee initiates many projects and others come from ideas from individual pupils. Whether in the innovative *How to Grow a Pound* venture, packing customers' bags in a local supermarket, or by providing an enjoyable afternoon for the members of the local Alzheimer's society, Godolphin girls are constantly looking outwards, in direct fulfilment of one of the school's aims.
- 3.18 A wide-ranging programme of international trips and expeditions, which has recently included visits to Belgium, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Spain, Tanzania, and the exchange programme established with Melbourne Girls' Grammar School, provide important enrichment to the educational experience of those who participate in them, as do the annual art history trips to Florence or Paris.
- 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].

The Quality of Boarding Education

- 3.20 Excellent boarding provision has been enhanced since the last ISI inspection with the opening of a new, high-quality house. The very few improvements suggested by Ofsted in January 2008 have been made, or are in progress, making all boarding facilities conducive to learning and the pupils' wellbeing. In line with the school's aims to allow girls to develop their confidence, responsibility and sense of belonging, a caring and supportive ethos has been established in each of the houses, in which the pupils can feel secure and yet thrive as they become more independent.
- 3.21 Relationships within the houses, as throughout the school, are excellent, positive and supportive. Each house has a resident housemistress and a deputy. All members of the teaching staff join a house and some become house tutors, with the rôle of providing additional support for pupils who board. The very close links between form tutors, school tutors and house staff mean that problems are identified and dealt with rapidly. The health centre plays a vital and much appreciated rôle in supporting pupils, whether or not they are ill. Girls in the houses for younger pupils value the return of the sixth formers to help with, for example, organising the performing arts week-end. The 'godmothering' system ensures that new pupils are welcomed and supported whilst they settle in and pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very appreciative of the help that they had been given on arrival. Day pupils, known as Sarums, are well integrated as members of the houses and are equally well valued and supported. Pupils are whole-hearted in their praise for the house staff, with some finding the boarding experience 'more fun than home', while others say that boarding has enhanced their relationship with their parents.
- 3.22 The school offers a very good range of activities out of school time and during weekends. Each house is well equipped with televisions, computers, cooking facilities and table-tennis or pool tables. Newspapers, stocks of video tapes and discs are readily available, and piano and music rooms are available in the houses for practice or impromptu concerts. Pupils in Year 9 and above appreciate being allowed some access to the city during the week, as do all boarders at weekends. Weekend activities are cultural, academic and entertaining; they are obligatory for those in Years 7 to 9, although a minority would prefer that they were not. After matches on a Saturday and on Sundays, activities can range from belly dancing and circus skills to cake decorating and trips to the theatre or to Salisbury Cathedral's spire. Boarders not in the sixth form must attend a religious service on Sundays, which is either in the cathedral, the parish church or at school, providing an interesting variety of worshipping experience.
- 3.23 The accommodation and resources are at best excellent and always at least adequate and suitable. Both sixth-form houses have been recently modernised and provide light airy bedrooms, with basins, and high quality common room and bathroom facilities. A 'happy room' exists for relaxation and to escape from work. Two of the junior houses are in the process of refurbishment but still provide adequate bedrooms, common rooms and bathroom facilities, whilst the third is a model example of a high-quality, purpose-built boarding house, of which staff and pupils are clearly proud.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 The school is fortunate to have loyal, interested and hard-working governors who continue to provide effective governance in most areas, as was so at the last inspection, and who help to set appropriate aims and values.
- 4.2 The committee structure and arrangements established by the governors are well defined and allow for strong oversight of the finances, building developments, health and safety and child protection procedures. This enables governors to provide valuable support and appropriate advice and challenge to the staff in these areas. The governors' oversight of educational development is, however, largely dependent on the professional advice of the leadership team at the school, all of whom attend governors' meetings.
- 4.3 Governors on the development committee are particularly involved in planning and monitoring the future development of the school and the governors have held away days to consider strategic planning. They do not currently include among their number someone with experience of running a secondary school, and this limits their ability to give appropriate advice and challenge to the staff on academic development, an issue they are aware of and are trying to resolve. The governors have established strong and effective systems for safeguarding the school's financial well-being and the school benefits from good, well-maintained and regularly upgraded buildings and sufficient resources.
- 4.4 Members of the governing body have frequent contact with and are well known to the senior leadership team, giving them good insight into the working of the school. The governors have tried hard to meet and to know other members of the staff through hosting dinners, attending school events and a recently initiated programme of linking to departments and visiting lessons. However, most members of staff still view the governors as being remote and do not understand their role in setting priorities.
- 4.5 Governors are well aware of their responsibilities for the welfare, health and safety of girls. Two governors have been given particular responsibilities to monitor health and safety and child protection procedures, in which capacity they provide valuable support and advice to the school. The governing body is conscientious in reviewing the arrangements for safeguarding children and their effectiveness.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.6 The headmistress and her senior team provide high quality leadership and management, giving clear and positive direction to the school, which is appreciated by all in the school community and which enables the school successfully to fulfil its aims, as was judged to be so at the time of the last inspection.
- 4.7 The leadership group working with the headmistress, comprising the deputy head, the director of studies and the bursar, has been reconstituted with new appointments in all the supporting roles during the last two years. The members of this group are still establishing themselves as an effective team, each with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, but the high quality of the education provided, the excellence of the care of pupils, their outstanding personal development, the very good quality of boarding and the successful fulfilment of the school's aims, indicate that they are managing the transition well and that continuity of the

- school's ethos and expectations has been achieved. They meet weekly to discuss strategy and day-to-day administration and to ensure effective collaboration and unity of purpose.
- 4.8 The school's management is effective in identifying needs, setting priorities and putting plans into effect, and this has improved since the previous inspection through more detailed and focused departmental and whole-school planning. Clearly identified action points, indicating staff accountability and time scales, in development plans ensure regular review of school needs and priorities and enable progress to be systematically reviewed against defined criteria. The quality of departmental management is generally good, with regular, minuted meetings providing good communication and the means of sharing good practice. Departmental handbooks, including schemes of work, are generally useful working documents which help to set expectations, establish priorities and identify budget proposals, and thus serve as effective instruments for communicating leadership. Efficient management structures are in place to cover all areas of the school and include, on a termly basis, heads of department and council meetings. The council provides an important forum for staff discussion and consultation on a wide range of issues, which enables all members of the staff to make their views known. All committees, including those set up for special projects, are clearly defined in the staff handbook; minutes are kept and made available for staff information.
- 4.9 Clear and appropriate procedures and policies to cover the whole range of school life have been drawn up and implemented. The school publishes a comprehensive staff handbook and list of policies for the use of all parts of the school community, to which parents and pupils can gain access through the website. These are reviewed and updated on a regular basis in the light of their effectiveness.
- 4.10 The recruitment and management of staff are well handled. The school has established a comprehensive centralised recruitment register and all arrangements for the safe recruitment of staff and voluntary helpers are in place. All members of staff are subject to regular and supportive appraisal in relation to their job descriptions. New members of staff joining the school take part in a helpful induction process to secure a sound understanding of the school's aims and practices. The induction programme for newly-qualified teachers is implemented efficiently, with trained mentors to support the process. Teachers working towards gaining fully qualified status feel well supported. Members of staff, including the non-teaching staff, enjoy a sense of community and work very much as part of a team. Members of the leadership team are regarded as approachable and attentive to the opinions and views of the staff.
- 4.11 The school's financial resources are well and prudently managed to ensure that the resources and accommodation enjoyed by the community are sufficient to support and enhance the educational aims and meet the needs of the pupils. The school is aware of the need to work towards greater integration and provision of departmental classrooms, offices and storerooms although progress towards this is dependent on funding. The premises and grounds are well kept and reflect the loyalty and dedication of those who care for them. Members of the administrative staff carry out their duties efficiently and with good humour and provide good support in the achievement of the school's aims.
- 4.12 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].
- 4.13 The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers and meets its requirements.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall Conclusions

- 5.1 The Godolphin School fully meets its aims of being a liberal, tolerant community in which girls can flourish and develop in a secure and supportive learning environment. The pastoral care, personal development and boarding provision are outstanding and enable very positive and constructive relationships of trust and mutual respect to develop between pupils and teachers and between the pupils themselves. Attainment in public examinations is consistently good in relation to the pupils' abilities. Although the pupils work hard, they do so willingly and without undue pressure. They are proud of their school, happy to be there and their behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. Teaching is thorough, carefully prepared and effective. The school has forged excellent links with its parents, who are strongly in support of the school, its ethos and the attitudes and values that it promotes.
- 5.2 The school has continued to achieve good or outstanding standards in all major aspects of its life. It has made good progress with both the main recommendations made in the report following the last inspection conducted by the ISI in November 2002, and has already taken steps to comply with all but one of the recommendations of the report following the Ofsted Children's Directorate inspection of boarding standards conducted in January 2008. Work to comply with the remaining one, concerning the provision of staff toilet and bathroom facilities, is in hand.
- 5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

- 5.4 In order to improve further the high quality of the education that it offers, the school should:
1. enhance the formal curriculum for the sixth form so as to broaden the pupils' educational experience beyond their A-level courses;
 2. work towards providing departments with more dedicated classrooms, office and storage spaces in designated departmental areas;
 3. seek to add to the governing body someone with experience of managing a secondary school, and improve the opportunity for governors to provide appropriate advice, support and stimulus for educational development.
- 5.5 No action is required in respect of regulatory requirements.

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 10th to 13th November 2008. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with selected 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, prayers and assemblies. Inspectors visited the boarding houses and the health centre. 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, including a self-evaluation.

List of Inspectors

Mr Rodney Fox	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Caroline Bateson	Headmistress, GSA school
Mrs Harriet Granville	Deputy head, GSA school
Mrs Lizbeth Green	Headmistress, ISA school
Mrs Janet Huntly	Head of department, GSA school
Mr Paul Spillane	Former headmaster, HMC school
Mr Tony Woolstone	Former deputy head, HMC school