

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Bradfield College

Full Name of the School	Bradfield College
DCSF Number	869/6000
Registered Charity Number	309089
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Age Range	13 to 18
Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	27th to 30th April 2009

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, May 2007 and February 2009.

The inspection was carried out in conjunction with Ofsted, Children's Directorate. The Ofsted report is available separately 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.....	5
	Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils	6
	The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment).....	8
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	12
	The Quality of Boarding Education	13
4.	THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT	15
	The Quality of Governance	15
	The Quality of Leadership and Management	16
5.	CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS.....	18
	Overall Conclusions	18
	Next Steps.....	18
6.	SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE	19
	List of Inspectors	19

1. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 Bradfield College is a boarding and day-boarding school for boys and girls between the ages of thirteen and eighteen. Set in 250 acres of rural Berkshire, it was founded in 1850 by Thomas Stevens, Rector and Lord of the Manor of Bradfield. The college is in the heart of Bradfield village, and is a major part of this community.
- 1.2 The number of pupils has increased significantly since the last ISI inspection in February 2003 from 604 to 704 in 2009, of whom 466 are boys and 238 girls. Years 9 to 11 have 394 pupils and 310 are in the sixth form. Five hundred and ninety-two pupils are boarders. At the time of the last inspection girls were only recruited into the sixth form, but now the college is fully co-educational. A quarter of pupils are in receipt of bursary or scholarship funding, all of which is from the college's own resources. The college has eleven senior boarding houses, whose membership is comprised of boarders and day pupils. All Year 9 boarders and day pupils are members of Faulkner's, a specialist junior house. Pupils mainly come from the south of England, although some pupils come from overseas from countries including France, Spain, Germany, Belgium, Russia, Nigeria, China and Thailand. Pupils are from a wide range of family backgrounds, but mainly from the professions or business. The current headmaster was appointed in September 2003.
- 1.3 Since the last inspection the college has built a new music school, a textiles centre, a photography studio and a new boys' boarding house. It has added extensively to three boarding houses and refurbished four more. It has developed a second all-weather pitch and refurbished the indoor theatre. A cross-curricular programme for the most gifted and able has been developed, classics has been re-introduced to the junior curriculum and the delivery of the programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) has been extended into the boarding houses.
- 1.4 The main entry ages for the college are at thirteen and sixteen. For entry at thirteen, all prospective pupils are interviewed and are required to take the college's scholarship examinations or the Common Entrance examination; the college also has an entrance examination for applicants from the maintained sector or from overseas. A report is also required from the feeder school of each applicant. For entry at sixteen, places are offered on the basis of testing and interviews, through an assessment day, through GCSE results and a report from their current school.
- 1.5 Standardised tests in recent years indicate that the average ability of the pupils on entering the college at the age thirteen is above the national average. If pupils are performing in line with their abilities, their results in public examinations would be above the average for all maintained schools.
- 1.6 One pupil has a statement of special educational needs, and the college has identified 96 pupils in need of learning support for learning difficulties. Eight per cent of pupils are given specialist support with English. Pupils are recruited from a wide range of preparatory schools and also from schools overseas. More than three quarters of pupils in Year 11 stay for the sixth form. On leaving Year 13, the vast majority proceed to university or higher education.

- 1.7 The college aims to inspire pupils to become confident, contributing and caring members of the global community. It sees its role as a college for life, committed equally to the academic and personal development of each pupil, with an emphasis on honing personal skills through the extra-curricular programme and boarding life.
- 1.8 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the college. The year group nomenclature used by the college and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence is shown in the following table.

College	NC name
Faulkner's	Year 9
Shell	Year 10
Fifth Form	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 The educational programme offered readily fulfils the college's aim of creating opportunities for challenge and choice for each pupil. The curriculum policy promotes examination success emerging from enjoyment and engagement with subjects with the aim of producing healthy and intellectually stimulated pupils. Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of how to succeed in the broadest academic terms, the importance of a healthy lifestyle and the value of participating in and contributing to the opportunities which arise in the college. The range of academic courses is complemented by a wealth of extra-curricular activities, visits and events which promote learning and personal development in a variety of contexts.
- 2.2 In intellectual, physical and creative domains the college is responsive to the developing interests of pupils and deploys resources to enable the pursuit of disciplines not already in the curriculum. The development of dance is a particularly successful example of recent innovation. Opportunities to pursue individual choice are balanced by an extensive number of team, society and ensemble activities; those which are compulsory for younger pupils succeed in bonding them as a cohort and in helping develop a sense of belonging to the college community.
- 2.3 Curricular provision gives all pupils experience in and contributes effectively to linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative development. Extensive provision is made for the acquisition of speaking and listening skills and literacy and numeracy, and pupils are articulate, considerate of the opinions of others and can marshal arguments cogently, as in sustained discussion of the problems confronting Elizabeth I in Year 12 history and a Year 9 classical civilisation discussion of dictators. The Divisions programme for the upper sets in Year 9 replaces history, geography and religious education (RE) with topics on world civilisation chosen by the team of tutors. Pupils observed in a lesson in this programme were articulate in their analysis of the social fabric of pre-revolutionary France, responding keenly to the stimulus of a Fragonard painting.
- 2.4 The core curriculum in Year 9 includes a broad choice of modern foreign languages, and for GCSE, AS and A2 level pupils are able to choose from a considerable range of subjects. In addition, non-examination courses in physical education (PE) and PSHE are included for all and each pupil is able to study for a qualification in information and communication technology (ICT). Within the classroom-based curriculum challenge is provided for more able pupils in Year 9 through Faulkner's Divisions, in opportunities to take GCSEs early and to take advanced qualifications by the age of sixteen, as in the French Diplôme d'Etudes de Langue Française course post-GCSE in Year 11, the AS economics course in Years 10 and 11 and the Advanced Ordinary course in mathematics for those who take IGCSE mathematics early. Pupils appreciate the extent of the academic choices and acknowledge the emphasis on academic individuality within the college.
- 2.5 The exceptional range of extra-curricular activities at the college is an essential part of the mainstream curriculum. It is notable that the range of activities includes not only high quality provision for sport, drama, music, community involvement and other pupils' interests, but also gives opportunity for pupils to develop their intellectual and social skills. Year 9 pupils enjoy a range of stimulating presentations and lectures. During the inspection one of these lectures was observed and pupils were stimulated by the presentation on the advertising industry and how pupils can develop self-awareness in preparation for life. This type of presentation, often given by former members of the college, encourages all pupils'

- intellectual, aesthetic and analytical strengths. In Years 10 to 13 the Athena programme of talks and presentations develops pupils' awareness of issues and challenges in the wider academic and professional world.
- 2.6 In Years 10 to 12 the approach to learning through Divisions is developed through a range of stimulating programmes, including Minerva, critical thinking and the sixth-form tutorial provision. From the work observed in these areas and pupils' comments it is clear that these programmes give pupils real stimulus beyond but complementary to the main curriculum. The college library supports these programmes by giving pupils access to a wealth of resources including a variety of print and electronic media.
- 2.7 In response to the last inspection, the college has revised its PSHE programme for all year groups. As well as improving the class-based PSHE (including citizenship) for Year 9 to 11, sixth-form PSHE is now taught by tutors in the boarding houses and this is proving to be an appropriate approach for this age group, encouraging debate and discussion. Pupils have opportunities to develop their role as active and responsible members of the community by assisting in events at the college to which pupils from other local schools are invited, by leading younger pupils in combined cadet force (CCF), societies and house events, by volunteering in the local community within and beyond The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DoE) scheme, and by seeking work experience placements in Year 12 with the active assistance of the careers' department and a supportive network of Old Bradfieldians.
- 2.8 The PSHE programme is partnered by a scheme of careers education and guidance for all year groups. Activities appropriate to each age group develop understanding of factors which enable and which limit career choices. For example, pupils in Year 9 spend a day working on "The Real Game" which develops their awareness of the interaction between academic study and career opportunities. During the inspection, Year 10 pupils were involved in a day-long workshop which engaged pupils in team challenges and decision making, advised by adult mentors from a range of professions. Supported by the Independent Schools Careers Organisation, by other careers professionals and the teaching staff and by the use of profiling such as "Futurewise", the careers department advises pupils and parents on the process of choosing examination subjects. Supported by tutors, this department works with senior pupils in planning for higher education and GAP Years and in seeking employment. This is valued by pupils as is the "Beyond Bradfield" programme at the end Year 12. Pupils regularly visit the well stocked careers library, although the human resources in the careers department are stretched at times when all members of a cohort need advice and guidance within the same timeframe.
- 2.9 The written curriculum policy promotes inclusivity, access and opportunity for all pupils. Recent curriculum considerations have included the rationalisation of the Year 9 curriculum to promote continuity within subjects and enhance the quality of the pupils' learning experience. Provision enables each department to offer courses appropriate to the age and ability of pupils. Participation in activities is monitored by housemasters and housemistresses to ensure pupils are accessing the wide range of activities and gaining a breadth of experience outside the classroom.
- 2.10 All pupils are screened on entry and those identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) are given very good support. This information is communicated to subject staff who are thus aware of the challenges pupils may experience in lessons. LDD support overall is effective and enables pupils with difficulties to perform well in relation to their abilities in class. Good support and tuition is offered to those for whom English is an additional language (EAL); this is both discrete and linked, on request, to subject specialisms and to specific purposes, such as university applications.

- 2.11 The college meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.12 Learning and achievement by pupils at all levels are good. The college aims to develop in each individual a strong work ethos and academic skills that are relevant to adult life. Knowledge and skills are clearly developed, marked by evident progress through each of the stages. Achievement is celebrated and endorsed at all levels in the community. The last inspection reported learning to be satisfactory overall; significant advances have been made since then in pupils' learning.
- 2.13 Pupils' independent thinking and expressive skills are strongly supported by the college in its policies and extra-curricular programmes and by many of the learning styles. The Divisions and Minerva initiatives in Years 9 to 12 promote creative written work as well as critical discussion. The weekly extended writing tasks in these sessions reflect both a high quality of expression and independent research. This is complemented by sixth-form research tasks in, for instance, English, philosophy and history providing opportunities for independent analytical work where many pupils show a strong facility for personal research. Creative thinking in film studies demonstrated mastery of a range of skills in addition to analytical ability.
- 2.14 In mathematics, pupils show good numeracy skills. Engagement with mental gymnastics in a junior school assembly was both positive and enjoyable. These skills are well used in other subjects such as economics and the sciences. Pupils use ICT to support their learning in subjects such as geography, English, art, economics and languages, but this is not apparent across the full range of subjects.
- 2.15 No differences of significance in attainment were apparent between groups. Pupils with particular learning needs are identified and known to teachers. Action is taken, with appropriate discretion, to ensure they are supported in a number of subjects. Setting in languages, mathematics and sciences permits accelerated learning for some pupils.
- 2.16 Pupils achieve well in public examinations. Pupils' attainment in GCSE is good in relation to their abilities. Results in GCSE over the last three years for which comparative data is available have been well above the national average for all maintained schools. A number of subjects have consistently shown very good results, reflected in the high proportion of A and A* grades achieved. For the last three years for which comparative data are available pupils have taken IGCSE in mathematics and, in 2007, IGCSE in science. Results in these subjects were comparable with the performance in GCSE. Pupils' attainment at A level is good in relation to their abilities. Results over the last three years have been well above the national average for all maintained schools. Nationally standardised measures show that progress from Year 9 to A level is well above national norms.
- 2.17 Pupils engage keenly with extra-curricular activities and a wide range of sports. As well as the enjoyment for participants, this produces significant achievements for individuals and teams. In particular golf, show-jumping, science and mathematical Olympiads, choral and instrumental music, drama, and, recently, dance allow individuals to achieve at a high level. Debating demonstrates the development of pupil-run activities, meeting the college's aim to strengthen this aspect and increase opportunities for pupil engagement. House competitions provide a strong framework in tune with the college's aim of striving for breadth and excellence within pupils' lives. Pupils have been successful in the Young Engineer competition and football, fencing and cricket have also earned commendations for significant individual achievement.

- 2.18 Where pupils are given the opportunity, they are more than able to demonstrate resourcefulness in working independently. In Year 10 written work, pupils showed that they could organise their work well and take notes in an individual way. In the sixth form, though the framework was supplied by teachers, more scope for independent work was provided with personal response, reinforced by appropriate evidence, encouraged in a range of subjects. A member of Year 13 observed that, by the final stages of revision, it was comforting to see one's own handwriting in notes, rather than annotated handouts. As a result of the extra-curricular academic programme, the acquisition of these skills is built up from Year 9. Pupils value the opportunities they are given to develop independent learning skills and acknowledge the strength of support they gain from their individual academic tutors.
- 2.19 In class, pupils work positively and efficiently in groups. The skills of purposeful group work including listening well, making your point and keeping the pace of the group going was evident in Year 9 in history and mathematics and in a Year 10 PE class. Study visits abroad provide opportunities for new learning experiences in many subject areas, in addition to the development of teamwork provided by sports tours. Collective activity outside the classroom is extensive with pupils taking the lead in their learning well beyond the formal curriculum.
- 2.20 Pupils readily demonstrate a willingness to apply themselves, persevere and enjoy their learning. Their purposefulness in moving about the campus, sometimes covering quite long distances, to get to lessons is notable, as is their timekeeping without the need for bells to assist them. During the inspection many examples of pupils' determination to succeed were observed as was the enjoyment they gain from their classes and their activities.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.21 The last report described the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as good and the college has developed this aspect of pupils' education to the point where it is now outstanding. Pupils are confident, caring and thoughtful. This is central to the aim of the college to emphasise the importance of the social, moral, and spiritual dimensions of community life.
- 2.22 The pupils have outstanding spiritual awareness. Many of the curricular and extra-curricular activities support pupils' spiritual development and pupils show respect, support and concern for one another. Pupils exercise a choice of how they worship attending two morning chapels or the weekly Eucharist. Pupils are helped to develop personal belief in chapel where the addresses are based on the personal experience, attitudes and contemplation of the spiritual team of about twenty members of staff. Pupils act as chapel monitors and pupils also take prayers and read during services. The involvement of pupils in the life of the chapel is evolving to good effect. A morning chapel talk on the need to develop conviction and responsibility was a good contemporary topic related to issues relevant to young people and confirmed that the pupils are exposed to a range of spiritual challenges. Pupils work together with a real sense of pride and achievement and, through many varied opportunities, develop their self-confidence and a strong sense of self-worth untinged with arrogance. This was seen in activities as varied as a chapel choir rehearsal, a golf practice, a pupil-led dance session and a CCF fieldcraft activity. Pupils are elevated by the ambience of the fine main buildings and their spiritual development is enhanced by the beauty of the campus. Pupils' spiritual awareness is supported by all aspect of the curriculum. The main formal input is through PSHE, where pupils discuss issues such as developing values and the uniqueness of the individual. At the heart of the programme is the opportunity for pupils to explore their individuality and purpose. Discussions with pupils and observations of lessons and activities

confirmed that pupils do learn much about themselves and appreciate their developing individuality as they rise through the college.

- 2.23 Moral development is outstanding and, through many rich opportunities, pupils develop a well founded sense of right and wrong, demonstrate a sense of fair play on the sports field, in competitions and as part of their response to consideration of relationships within and outside the classroom. Through assemblies, tutor periods, some subject lessons and extra-curricular activities, pupils willingly engage in moral discussion and develop their moral reasoning. Notably, in a pupil-devised theatre piece, stimulated by news reports of the incarceration of a family in Austria, pupils tackled the question of whether we are born human or develop human characteristics. A debate observed during the inspection entitled 'This house believes that the recession is not necessarily a bad thing for Britain' enabled pupils to discuss economic realities and inequalities. In geography, Year 13 students debated the ethics of genetically modified crops and in a Year 9 drama lesson acted out a section of a Pinter play, expressing issues of adult dominance of one individual over another. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others who are less fortunate than themselves, to environmental concerns and are regularly involved in initiatives to raise money, one of many examples being the 24-hour football match for the Afrikids project which supports a school in Ghana.
- 2.24 Pupils have outstanding social development which derives from the ethos of respect and value of individuals promoted by the school. They develop as caring, confident and self-assured members of the school community, with Faulkner's house playing a pivotal role in giving the younger pupils an excellent foundation on which to build their social development. Pupils naturally work together with commitment and enjoyment. An excellent example of this was observed in a Year 13 theatre studies class, where the natural physical engagement in group work acting out aspects of *The Trojan Women* was indicative of a high level of social development. Pupils have high regard for their staff and this is mirrored by the respect that the staff have for them. Older pupils learn to interact with those younger than themselves through many good opportunities in the houses, other activities and the peer counselling scheme. Pupils from overseas are welcomed and settle in harmoniously. Pupils gain knowledge of citizenship and of public institutions through their lessons in PSHE. Pupils become resilient and resourceful through the challenges of outdoor activities. They have opportunities to take on responsibilities, which lead them to a better understanding of the challenges of leadership and of setting a good example. Opportunities to develop leadership skills are available in many activities, such as the DoE scheme, the CCF, the work of school and house prefects, and representing sports teams.
- 2.25 Pupils have outstanding understanding and appreciation of their own and other cultures. The school is a multi-cultural community where respect and tolerance for the traditions and beliefs of others are high. Excellent opportunities for cultural development include a large number of musical groups and rich dramatic opportunities, some for themselves and others for a wider audience. Fine paintings by pupils demonstrate the cultural awareness of those whose work are displayed, and contribute to the understanding of others who observe. Music of many types and complexities permeates the school, whether in performance with the school choir, chamber choir and barbershop quartet, or through the various practices and activities which occur. These contribute to pupils' recognition and understanding of different genres. A recent talent show allowed pupils of different cultures opportunities for some exuberant performances. In a modern foreign language quiz activity, pupils recognised that they were able to develop skills to access other cultures at basic conversational level. It is clear that pupils recognise and value diversity of culture within the college community where they were observed to be at ease with each other and willing to learn from each other's backgrounds.

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

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.27 Judged to be satisfactory at the last inspection, the quality of teaching at the college is now good overall and several examples of outstanding teaching were observed. Parental feedback to questionnaires was very positive with parents noting the strong improvement in teaching standards. Teaching meets the college's aims of enabling pupils at all levels to make good progress, develop their skills and develop understanding appropriate to their age and abilities.
- 2.28 Teachers know their pupils well and are conscious of the specific needs of those identified as having LDD or EAL challenges. Many lessons provided evidence of planning and execution for those with specific needs, for example in a sixth-form English language lesson and a Year 9 French lesson on healthy living; such provision was not, however, universal. Since the last inspection, the introduction of Divisions in Year 9, the critical thinking sessions, the extra-curricular Minerva and Athena programmes and the sixth-form tutorials has addressed pupils' needs of extension and challenge. These initiatives are relatively new but there was positive feedback about them from observations, pupil interviews and questionnaires. In the case of Divisions the opportunity to go 'off syllabus' was observed to be producing high attainment in both oral and written work.
- 2.29 Good teaching, strong encouragement, excellent pupil-teacher relationships and a supportive atmosphere throughout the college clearly foster pupils' interest in their subjects and pupils contributed willingly to lessons, especially when lively and engaging teaching caught their imaginations. There were several examples of pupils taking ownership of their learning. Pupils were supported in their exploration of topics, their views were valued, and they were given the freedom (often via coursework) to pursue their particular interests. Pupils confirm that they strongly appreciate their teachers' support in and out of the lessons through the widespread provision and use of surgeries and tutorials and the availability of teachers for one-to-one consultation.
- 2.30 Well-paced lessons and firm control in the classroom contribute strongly to the pupils' overwhelmingly positive approach to their learning, with teachers keen to enforce behavioural issues such as punctuality. The quality of teaching at the college is reflected in pupils' enjoyment of lessons and the way they work with enthusiasm and focus. One particular element which contributes to enjoyment and academic development is the way teachers praise pupils' success and identify individual progress for commendation.
- 2.31 The best lessons employed an effective ensemble of teaching techniques to vary the pace and keep engagement high, for example in a Year 9 history lesson on the slave trade. The college has made good progress in the sharing of good teaching practice within and between departments since the last inspection, though this was not seen to have been universally adopted into teaching as a whole. Several examples of sharing best practice were seen, often producing clear frameworks for teaching across departments and inventive use of teaching techniques. However, pupils' learning is not always enhanced in some lessons by a variety of approaches or ICT use. Several individual examples of excellence in these areas were observed, for example the use of an interactive whiteboard in a Year 9 mathematics lesson to demonstrate trigonometrical ratios. The reduction of lesson times from 60 minutes to 45 minutes since the last inspection is accepted as having had a beneficial effect on planning of lessons and the effectiveness of teaching.
- 2.32 Throughout the college teachers were seen to show a strong consciousness of pupils' prior experience and attainment, using it to inform planning and teaching to good effect, with

- many references to previous lessons and homework being used to begin lessons and to consolidate knowledge, for example in a Year 10 chemistry lesson on electrolysis. This connection of teaching across a period of time clearly allowed teachers to build confidently on what had previously been achieved. Teachers' knowledge of their subjects and specifications was seen to be strong and, at best, very strong and this supports pupils' confidence and encourages a high level of pupil-teacher interaction.
- 2.33 Teaching is well supported by generous provision of materials and resources and since the last inspection, when evaluating the use of photocopied handouts was prioritised, the college has made good progress in this area. There were good examples of worksheets being used to enhance teaching and aid revision, for example in a biology Year 11 revision class, and many classrooms have stimulating displays of pupils' projects which promote learning and encourage pupils' development. Where ICT was used by teachers it enhanced pupils' learning, for example data projection and interactive whiteboard use in modern languages.
- 2.34 Teachers set and assess work on a regular basis throughout the college and several good examples were seen of assessment for learning principles such as formative marking and shared success criteria being used to inform pupils' development and lesson planning. At its best assessment is very detailed, gives good guidance for improvement and makes clear how marks have been awarded, though this approach is not yet uniform.
- 2.35 The college makes use of nationally standardised baseline data to evaluate performance of pupils with reference to national norms as well as to set targets in consultation with pupils. Heads of department have been trained in the interpretation and use of such data insofar as it can inform evaluation of performance and planning of teaching in the future (though this area has only recently been revived after a period in abeyance) and are given key responsibility for results in their subjects. Interim tests are used to evaluate progress between formal internal or external exams and to inform teaching. Sixth-form pupils are also engaged in the evaluation process through self-assessment as part of the formal reporting procedure and are thus able to influence teaching by identifying their own needs. Overall, the college is keen to promote its philosophy of learning for its own sake with assessment seen as a secondary concern; that is not to say however that performance significantly below expectation would not invite comment. Heads of department report formally on their departments via an audit system every year and planning for teaching stems partly from this review.
- 2.36 The college 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 care that the staff provide for the well-being of all their pupils throughout the college is outstanding, as is the attention given to welfare, health and safety. The college's aim to support every pupil in achieving his/her maximum potential in the areas of personal, social, emotional and intellectual development is very well met. The college has maintained the high standards achieved in the last inspection. The phrase 'it feels like home' was frequently used by pupils and they clearly appreciate the supportive ethos of the college and the care they receive from all staff.
- 3.2 The staff are assisted by very effective pastoral arrangements. A good number of developments in terms of pupil support have been introduced since the last inspection including the establishment of a pastoral carers' committee, the revitalisation of the medical centre and a stronger focus on pastoral care in the staff briefings, the housemasters' and housemistresses' meetings and senior management team (SMT) meetings. The thoroughness and clarity of the documentation for staff in the Standing Orders and the Housemasters' and Housemistresses' Manual is excellent, covering all aspects of pastoral procedures in great detail and is regularly updated.
- 3.3 The effectiveness of the pastoral care was commented on by many parents and pupils in the questionnaires: 'School helps the pupils settle in'; 'Teachers show concern for pupils' and, 'The pastoral care is excellent'. These responses stem from excellent links between the pupils, tutors and the boarding staff, pupils being allowed appropriate freedom but with responsibility. Pupils appreciate the support from the junior common room (the prefect body) with whom they feel they can discuss issues of relevance to their school life. Faulkner's for all the Year 9 pupils gives them a very good start to their life at the college, allowing them to interact confidently with all their peers in a relaxed and positive manner and establishing friendships which remain strong when they go into different senior houses.
- 3.4 The quality of the relationships between the staff and the pupils are of a very high order, again confirmed by the comments by many parents and pupils in the questionnaire responses. Pupils stated that the teachers are extremely kind and helpful and parents confirmed that there was a good balance between the parents being involved and the children being able to develop independence. All pupils confirmed the very good integration in the boarding community, whether boarders are from the UK or overseas or day boarders. Overseas pupils feel accepted within the college community and different cultures integrate well.
- 3.5 Success is celebrated widely, which results in positive self-esteem and self-confidence. The staff go out of their way to promote pupil achievements. In an assembly, pupils were congratulated for performances in house plays, especially for the members for whom this was their first thespian activity, the success of a girls' netball team, and a special word for a member of a cricket team who had a batting average of 279. This commendation of pupil success is also a feature of the college newsletter and the website. Pupils show concern for each other, but, equally, healthy competition exists between the houses. House loyalty IS high amongst the pupils.
- 3.6 The school's procedures for promoting good behaviour are very clearly set out in the Pupil Handbook and are known and respected by all pupils. The pupils consider the rules to be fair and justly applied. The college sets out clear guidelines regarding the prevention and handling of bullying and every pupil is issued with information in the Always Opposed to

- Bullying leaflet. Pupils indicate that any instances of bullying are dealt with quickly and sensitively. An effective and well-attended 'Anti-Bullying Workshop' was recently held for parents.
- 3.7 The college provides a safe, healthy and happy environment in which pupils can thrive. All matters of health and safety and welfare are dealt with in a highly professional manner. The admissions register and the daily attendance registers are kept correctly. Registration was observed in the houses and was effective, allowing further regular contact between boarding staff and pupils. In such a large campus, information regarding the location of pupils is tracked very carefully by a daily electronic spreadsheet, updated during the day as was observed in lessons.
- 3.8 The medical centre provides excellent facilities and is well staffed with medical professionals who are in close contact with the boarding staff, the SMT, tutors and parents. The college has over a hundred qualified first aiders and their training is rigorously kept up to date. The work of the medical centre is complemented by a team of counsellors, with whom the medical team works closely. The college has an effective policy on disability arrangements which complies with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act.
- 3.9 Detailed child protection measures are in place showing appropriate consideration for both pupils and staff. All staff and senior pupils are issued with a wallet card on child protection giving sound advice that is easy to follow. Posters displayed around the college also highlight child protection issues for the pupils. The staff show understanding of the procedures to be followed and are confident about who to contact should they need to discuss any child protection issues. Appropriate training is given in accordance with local requirements. A named governor is responsible for ensuring compliance with the child protection policy and all staff and volunteer helpers have been through statutory checks required for adults working with children.
- 3.10 Fire procedures are well documented and regular tests and practices, night and day, are undertaken. The pupils and staff were all very clear on the actions to be taken in the event of a fire. The school has effective measures in place to manage the safe crossing of roads and is pressing the local authority to enact further traffic calming measures. At key times of the day, members of the security staff were highly visible at the crossroads to assist pupils. Detailed risk assessments, including those for trips and expeditions, are in place.
- 3.11 Healthy choices for diet are developed through the food committee and pupils commented about the improvements in the catering and the wide choice available. The food sampled by the inspection team was excellent with a very large choice of healthy and nourishing options being available. The atmosphere in the dining hall during meals was most conducive, with good behaviour and pleasant social interactions. Pupils have a wealth of opportunities for physical exercise offered in the curriculum, the sporting programme and in moving about the large campus.
- 3.12 The college meets the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3].

The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community

- 3.13 The college has an outstanding and effective partnership with parents. The links with the wider community, which were judged as good in the last report, have improved further, and the development of these links has enabled the college to foster its aim of inspiring its pupils to become contributing and caring members of the community, through an ethos of volunteering, sharing and giving to others.
- 3.14 The responses to the parents' questionnaire reflect a high level of parental satisfaction with the education and the support given to their children. Parents state that the school caters well for all abilities and enables pupils to realise their potential. Parents praised the wide range of extra-curricular activities which they said helped to fulfil the aim that every pupil at Bradfield will find something at which to excel. Other areas of strength recognised by the parents were the range of subjects offered to their children and the very good boarding provision. Parents were particularly enthusiastic about the Faulkner's experience in Year 9.
- 3.15 Parents endorse the college's attitude to their involvement. Parents are encouraged to be involved in all activities such as sports, assemblies, concerts, drama productions and college events, and are welcomed to support the work and progress of their children. Parents commented that the college conveyed the atmosphere of an extended family. The parents' association regularly gives support to college events such as sports' day and organizes events which both parents and staff can attend such as quiz nights. Many parents respond generously to invitations to share their experience and expertise with pupils and talks on "The Effect of the Credit Crunch" and experiences on the "Beyond Endurance Expedition" are just two examples of this. Attendance at plays, concerts and festivals as well as sports matches provide parents with opportunities to meet staff and to show their support for the work of the college. The college arranges seminars for parents to discuss issues concerned with the upbringing of their children such as bullying and has workshops on parenting. Parents are strongly appreciative of the ready access to the staff who they regard as being well informed, interested and approachable. Issues are dealt with promptly and to the benefit of the pupils and "nothing is ever too much trouble". Communication between the college and the parents is a two-way process and regarded as highly efficient. Parents based overseas are particularly pleased with the good flow of information they receive.
- 3.16 The new website is regarded as excellent by the parents. It is informative about all aspects of college life, conveys news of events that have taken place and are forthcoming. The headmaster's newsletters, the housemasters' and housemistresses' termly house news and the regular updating of the website are greatly appreciated. The parents' handbook is comprehensive and provides current and prospective parents with all the information they need about the college. Regular reports serve as a good source of information about pupils' progress. The reports are clear, encouraging and give praise as well as constructive criticism. They are informative in ways to improve and set targets. The parents are particularly appreciative of the reports from the housemasters, housemistresses and tutors, which are thorough and illuminating and show that they know the pupils well. Parents' evenings provide an opportunity for a three-way dialogue between parents, staff and pupils. In addition, in Years 9 and 11 meetings are held to explain the GCSE and AS options schemes. The college handles the concerns of parents with care. The college's formal complaints procedure is legally compliant and the college deals with complaints appropriately.
- 3.17 Strong links exist with the local and wider community. Pupils volunteer, sometimes as part of their DoE service, to help out with after-school clubs, coaching tennis, football, helping with drama and choir at local primary schools. They also help run three sporting competitions through the year at which approximately 600 primary school children from the

surrounding area attend. The important link between the college and the Peckham Youth Club in London results in many fund-raising activities by the pupils. The college musicians perform concerts at the club for the local community, some pupils are able to help out at the club during the summer holidays and children from the club enjoy an activities-filled residential programme at Bradfield each summer. Primary school science days take place at the college and sixth-form scientists assist in these. The children who come have fun and enjoy the various practical experiments as was observed during the inspection. One major project this year was to design and produce a 'Living Paintings' book for the blind and partially sighted and this involved members of the college in all years. Pupils are encouraged to use their initiative to organize various fund-raising schemes themselves and throughout the year a plethora of events including concerts, plays and sporting activities take place raising considerable sums of money for a whole range of charities from riding for those with disabilities to aiding projects in Ghana. The local community is welcomed at a variety of college productions and functions and a number are members of "the piano club" at which some pupils act as tutors. The facilities are regularly used by various local schools and clubs for a wide range of activities.

- 3.18 The college 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

- 3.19 The outstanding quality of boarding life strongly supports pupil's education and development and meets the college's aim to provide an environment which will safeguard and promote the health, happiness and proper physical, intellectual, emotional, social and behavioural development of a child. Boarding also fulfils the college's stated aim of protecting the child from the risk of suffering significant harm or neglect at the same time as developing the personal and social skills necessary for children to live harmoniously within a community whatever their individual strengths and weaknesses.
- 3.20 Pupils and their parents confirm their high level of satisfaction with boarding and the start given to Year 9 boarders in Faulkner's. This prepares pupils well to move on to their senior houses whilst at the same time enjoying outstanding provision tailored specifically to their age.
- 3.21 Boarders relate very well with each other. Pupils have a strong sense of loyalty to their house, are proud of the distinctive nature of each of these communities, reflected in their passion for many house competitions. Pupils genuinely care for each other in daily life, many examples being observed during the inspection. In particular, the prefect system encourages pupils to take responsibility for those who are younger and pupils describe the boarding experience as living with friends. Boarders feel accepted and nurtured within the house whatever their talents or abilities and this helps to engender the articulate and confident characters that are a hallmark of the college. Pupils from overseas settle well and feel very positive about the way they are integrated into the house and college.
- 3.22 The leadership and management of boarding are outstanding with staff working as cohesive teams. Training for staff in boarding is given a high priority. Staff have a good knowledge of the boarders as individuals and the relationships developed between staff and boarders are a particular strength, reflecting the care of the staff and the boarders' trust in the boarding staff teams. Life in the houses is relaxed but purposeful with a homely atmosphere although there is a clearly understood framework for discipline that encourages boarders to take responsibility for their own behaviour. House forums allow for pupils to raise issues with staff formally but boarders also describe being able to speak with staff freely whenever they

want. Parents are particularly appreciative of the housemasters and housemistresses, who are described as being highly supportive of the children and making a difference.

- 3.23 The programme of activities provided for the boarders is wide ranging with outstanding features including cultural and artistic pursuits as well as a range of sporting opportunities and this variety is much appreciated by the pupils. Younger boarders' involvement in activities is monitored to ensure that they gain the most from the provision. Pupils comment on Sunday as a special time of the week with "brunch" and opportunities for relaxation after a very busy week. On Sunday they are also able to be involved in activities appropriate for their age if they wish and pupils in Faulkner's have a fuller weekend programme specifically tailored to their needs.
- 3.24 The houses offer a high standard of accommodation and furnishing. Bedrooms feel homely and are personalised well by their occupants. Social areas are comfortable and spacious and boarders are able to prepare snacks in the houses using the well-equipped kitchenettes. The sensible use of wireless internet is encouraged and much appreciated by the boarders. Boarding at the college is likened to living in a village and it was clear that the individuality of each house supported this village atmosphere of boarding life.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 The governance of the college is highly effective, the governors meeting their stated responsibilities of upholding the aims of the college, supporting the executive and monitoring the school's development and progress. In the 2003 report governance was described as having many good features. The governors' clear vision of the aims of the college, reinforced by developments in the structure of the council (the governing body) and its committees, and the governors' commitment to enhancing the physical provision have led to the improved way in which the college is governed.
- 4.2 The structure of the council is clear and supports the college's development. The responsibilities of each sub-committee are carefully defined and their deliberations link sensibly to the meetings of the full council, allowing for helpful communication on the full range of college issues to all governors. An annual council strategy day enables governors and the headmaster and bursar to meet without an agenda and discuss long-term issues and challenges for the college. The council has a wide range of professional expertise. The nominations committee is aware of the council's needs in relation to the appointment of new governors with a commitment to having a council of active members with particular skills. Currently, it is seeking to appoint more female members and representatives from higher education. The full council discusses annually the child protection procedures at the college, guided by the governor with particular responsibility in this area. New governors receive induction and training and the individual support of more experienced governors. The chairman's introduction of a system of governor self-evaluation supports all governors in their roles and commitment as governors.
- 4.3 Members of the council are well aware of their responsibilities and are appropriately involved in educational development and financial planning. They are very effective in discharging their responsibilities for the pupils' welfare and health and safety. Development planning is strong with input from governors, the senior management team and staff. The development plan is revised annually and the monitoring of its progress ensures that targets are met. A major element of the development plan in recent years has been the planning for a new science centre, the building of which the governors have confirmed will commence at the beginning of the next academic year. The planning and financing of this centre at a time of national economic challenge is testament to the council's commitment to the college's future needs and to the strong support from the Bradfield foundation. Governors' regular involvement in the life of the college gives the council as a whole good insight into the way the college is managed and is developing. Individual governors liaise with each member of the senior management committee. Governors are members of a number of the college committees: health and safety, staff-council liaison and staff-council public relations. In addition, a number of parents and former pupils are members of the council. Governors attend social events with the staff and support many college events.
- 4.4 The statutes and regulations of governance are clear and comprehensive, confirming commitment to legal compliance. The finances of the college are carefully monitored.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.5 The college is strongly led and managed. The 2003 report stated that the management of the college had many good features. Since 2003, the new leadership has given new direction and purpose to the aims and ethos of the college, improved its management structures and facilities and overseen the successful development of co-education throughout the college. It has positively addressed both the recommendations of the last report.
- 4.6 Parents strongly support the way the management of the college gives their children a rounded education underpinned by a high quality of pastoral care and comment that “The college is doing a wonderful job in educating our children and enhancing our own standards of behaviour and self-awareness”. Parents confirm that the college benefits from leadership that encourages community values, is committed to inculcating high standards in human relationships and “always has the child’s interest at heart”. The common theme of parents is that Bradfield is a school with values and standards which it is not afraid to emphasise in all aspects of its life.
- 4.7 The management of the college is most effective and underpins its commitment to help every pupil to excel in some aspect of their lives and to build an inclusive community. The development plan has been carefully drawn up with input from many sectors of the college community. The development plan’s sections, with identified areas of responsibility for delivery, confirms the way the college is managed with senior and middle managers being fully aware of their particular areas of responsibility. Evaluation by senior management of academic departments is regular, recorded and supports departments’ development, linking them to the college’s overall plans for development. Policies are regularly revised and, in keeping with the school’s transparency of communication, are published on the college website. An indicator of the care the management brings to college developments is the way in which full co-education has been supported since the last inspection. The planning for this significant development in both physical provision and cultural and social change has ensured a relatively seamless transition. A hallmark of the day-to-day management of the college is its Standing Orders document whose clarity and comprehensiveness supports staff in understanding their roles and responsibilities in the education and care of pupils.
- 4.8 The management’s response to the two recommendations of the last report has been positive. The recommendation about the length of lessons was addressed by reducing the lesson length. This arose from a careful analysis of pupils’ learning needs. The other major recommendation about teaching strategies has been positively addressed resulting in a wider range of teaching and learning styles, although the management acknowledges that some work remains to be done.
- 4.9 Heads of department and heads of houses support the school’s academic and boarding life very well. Departments and houses are managed with enthusiasm, care and commitment and support pupils’ in their academic and personal development. Department and house documentation is clear, comprehensive and regularly reviewed. Addressing the needs of a school which has grown significantly in size over the last six years, senior management has developed appropriate systems for the management of academic and pastoral care. The heads of department meetings and the academic committee give impetus to academic development and innovation; the housemasters’ and housemistresses’ meetings ensure that pastoral issues are carefully monitored.
- 4.10 Management at all levels is effective in securing, supporting, developing and motivating sufficient high quality staff. The school’s checking of the suitability of staff and proprietors is centralized, robust and clearly documented. Recruitment strategies are thorough and involve heads of department and senior managers. New staff report that they are well

supported through induction and mentoring. The college is committed to supporting newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and staff in training, and manages their programmes appropriately. The system of appraisal for both academic and pastoral staff has been recently revised and emphasises the links between performance, support and further training.

- 4.11 The community would not function as effectively as it does without the support of a dedicated and professional support team. It is clear that this bursarial team contributes strongly to the pupils' development and feels an integral part of the college family. Finances and resources are very well managed to meet the needs of the pupils. The high quality of premises, resources and extensive grounds are appreciated by pupils and staff alike and these are caringly maintained by the support staff. The administrative staff offer a welcome and a ready smile to all visitors, and, with the aid of the new and very effective website, ensure that communication is effective.
- 4.12 The college meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].
- 4.13 The college 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 Bradfield College is clearly meeting its aims and is highly successful in the education it provides. The pupils are at the heart of the college's educational mission and are engaging, articulate and very appreciative of being members of the community. The parental responses to the questionnaire very strongly supported the college's ethos and its commitment to inclusiveness and individual support for each pupil. Pupils are highly supportive of each other and help new pupils from a range of backgrounds to feel welcome and valued. Pupils also benefit from the way the college gives them responsibility to make decisions for themselves. Pupils are helped to achieve very good academic results and benefit from an outstanding quality of pastoral care. Equally outstanding are the pupils' personal development, the college's partnership with parents and the quality of its boarding life. Pupils enjoy an excellent range and quality of extra-curricular activities and these are underpinned by strong support from the academic and pastoral staff, who give unstintingly of their time to aid pupils in all spheres of their school life. The school benefits from strong and committed leadership and is well supported by a governing body with expertise and vision.
- 5.2 The college has improved significantly since its last inspection in 2003. Achievement is higher and there are more areas of excellence in the education provided and the physical provision. Co-education is now fully established. The length of lessons has been appropriately adjusted and issues of teaching and learning in the last report have been addressed well, even though some further development remains to be undertaken in this area. It is clear that the college is very aware of its future needs and has the quality of management to execute future development. The five recommended actions of the last February 2005 Commission for Social Care Inspection boarding welfare inspection have been fully met by the college.
- 5.3 The college meets all the regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

- 5.4 The college has no major weaknesses. However, to achieve further improvement in the education it provides it should:
1. build on the best practice which has been developed in the college's teaching to ensure greater use of a variety of teaching methods across the curriculum and greater use of ICT to enhance teaching and pupils' learning.
- 5.5 No action is required in respect of regulatory requirements.

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 27th to 30th April 2009. 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, chapel services and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the medical 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 college.
- 6.2 National Minimum Boarding Standards were inspected by a team of four Ofsted inspectors over three days.

List of Inspectors

Mr Adrian Underwood	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Mary Booth	Head of Department, HMC school
Mr Neil Boulton	Director of Academic Administration, HMC school
Mr Steve Callaghan	Headmaster, GSA school
Mrs Lynn Clarke	Headmistress, GSA school
Mr Christopher Long	Head, HMC school
Mr Graeme May	Deputy Head, HMC school
Mrs Lesley Norton	Head of Department, SHMIS school