

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

St. Joseph's College

Full Name of the School	St. Joseph's College
DfES Number	935/6044
Registered Charity Number	1051688
Address	Birkfield, Ipswich, IP2 9DR
Telephone Number	01473 690281
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Email Address	s.grant@stjos.co.uk
Principal	Mrs Sian Grant
Chairman of Governors	Mrs. J. Lea
Age Range	2½ - 18
Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	8th – 11th May 2006

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

The inspection was not carried out in conjunction with the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and the report does not contain specific judgements on the National Minimum Boarding Standards. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education and development in general. The full CSCI report can be found at www.csci.org.uk.

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

1. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 St. Joseph's College is a day and boarding school for girls and boys between the ages of 2½ and 18. It was originally a Catholic foundation, the boys' school having been set up in 1937 by the Brothers of the De La Salle order. In 1995 there was an amalgamation with a local Catholic girls' school. Today St. Joseph's is a Christian school in the Lasallian tradition of its foundation.
- 1.2 The college is situated near the centre of Ipswich in extensive grounds. At the time of the inspection the college had 588 pupils aged from 2½ to 18, with 160 aged 2½ to 10 in the junior school, 321 aged 11 to 16 and 107 in the sixth form. There are currently 90 boarders of whom 80 are from overseas and one is a child of armed forces personnel.
- 1.3 Since the last inspection, in May 2000, the college has undergone a programme of refurbishment and reorganisation and improved its facilities and resources, including a new teaching and learning centre, science computer atrium, new arts and photographic suite, computer networking, a music technology suite and enlarged boarding accommodation. A new junior school is about to be built on the campus, releasing space for the further development of boarding. The current head was appointed in January 2002.
- 1.4 Day pupils come from a wide catchment area and many use the college transport. Pupils have a wide range of social backgrounds and 30% of the pupils are in receipt of bursary funding, most of which is from the college's own resources. The college has three boarding houses.
- 1.5 The main entry ages for the college are 2, 5, 11 and 16. Entry into the junior school is by informal assessment and interview and taster days. At the age of 11, prospective pupils are required to take written tests in English, mathematics, science and abstract reasoning and all are interviewed. At age 16, entry depends on GCSE results, supplemented by an interview and a report from the current school.
- 1.6 Standardised tests in recent years indicate that the average ability of the pupils on entering the college at age 11 is in line with the national average. Similarly in the junior school, the average ability is in line with the national average. If the pupils were to achieve in line with their abilities, they would obtain results in line with the national average for all maintained schools.
- 1.7 The college has identified 42 pupils as having a special educational need (SEN) and 69 other pupils whose needs are monitored. Most pupils are proficient in English and support is given to the minority of pupils for whom English is not their principal language.
- 1.8 Most pupils entering Year 7 are from the junior school, local maintained primary and preparatory schools. Many pupils in Year 11 stay for the sixth form. On leaving Year 13, 96% of the students proceed to university.
- 1.9 The college believes that the purpose of education is to prepare pupils to lead fulfilled, productive, responsible, happy and successful lives. It seeks to do this by enabling each pupil to discover and develop their full potential through effective teaching and learning in a Christian community. The college believes that the need for high self-esteem, individual confidence and the ability to manage personal change and work as part of a team are important. It believes that this is achieved through a

balanced and well-rounded education that considers and responds to the needs of the whole person. Particular emphasis is being placed on the development of pupils' information and communication technology communication (ICT) skills as a preparation for the world of work.

- 1.10 The college's core values support pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development. These values include: developing the spiritual dimension of pupils' lives; listening and respecting the views of others; being reflective and wanting to learn from experience; being proactive and committing to plan ahead; caring for others and working for the common good; developing a sense of responsibility – taking ownership of issues; setting high standards and striving for excellence; working hard and smart, using ICT to help; achieving a good work/life balance; recognising the contribution of all.
- 1.11 The school is a member of the Lasallian network of schools throughout the world. The schools in membership of this group were all founded by the Brothers of the de la Salle order and share the same values and aims. The network fosters, amongst other things, exchanges between schools, international cultural and spiritual events and the opportunity to work on support projects in the third world.
- 1.12 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school; at times the term 'sixth form' is used to refer to Years 12 and 13 as a whole.

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 St. Joseph's College provides a rounded education of high quality, fully consistent with its aims and philosophy. The college is committed to academic success within the context of fully developing all the talents and skills of its pupils. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural values are at the heart of the college and inform all its activity. Pupils are confident and engaging and exemplify the college's ethos that "the purpose of education is to prepare pupils to lead fulfilled, productive, responsible, happy and successful lives". All pupils are exposed to the opportunities and challenges of the wider world, benefiting from the world Lasallian network. High standards of behaviour are the norm; pupils are more than just polite, they are contagiously enthusiastic about the educational opportunities offered by the school.

Junior School

- 2.2 The junior school provides an effective educational experience for all its pupils including those with special needs. In the parents' questionnaire, many parents commented favourably on the school, one parent saying that "it is how it should be for all primary school children: caring, supporting and stimulating". Strong emphasis is placed on spiritual, moral, social and cultural values and pupils operate in a nurturing environment, which encourages and supports them very well.
- 2.3 The educational experience has improved since the last inspection with progression in learning through a planned curriculum and appropriate learning and assessment objectives being fully established. Stronger links have been established between the junior and senior schools and provision for learning support has been increased.
- 2.4 The curriculum is suitable for pupils' ages and abilities. It is based on the nationally specified early learning goals at the foundation stage and on the national curriculum programmes of study, with the addition of French, from reception onwards.

- 2.5 The curriculum contributes decisively to pupils' progress and makes good provision for the acquisition of skills of speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy. Information and communications technology (ICT) is mostly used well in the curriculum, although not many computers were seen in use during inspection week.
- 2.6 The curriculum is well planned, schemes of work are thorough and detailed showing learning intentions, activities, assessment and resources. It clearly identifies the needs of different pupils so that all pupils are able to experience the full curriculum and its supporting activities. Boys and girls work well together both in clubs, such as gymnastics and cricket, as well as in lessons.
- 2.7 The curriculum fosters creativity using weeks specifically devoted to such areas as the mathematics challenge, design and technology (DT) projects and world cultures. Nursery pupils explore materials, sort colours and find out what happens when they mix colours. Historical studies have been greatly enhanced by the 'Ice House' project. Parents value this aspect of the curriculum, saying "there is a high emphasis on experience-based learning by doing and discovery: how primary aged children should learn".
- 2.8 The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme includes a range of age-appropriate issues such as the health service, the media and early emphasis on the importance of being kind to one another. This programme is complemented by planned themes for assemblies.
- 2.9 The pupils' involvement in extra-curricular activities is good and their achievement is appropriate. In the activities observed, the pupils were confident and enjoyed their clubs including cookery, guided reading groups, orchestra, various sports and a religious group.
- 2.10 Educational enrichment is gained through many outside visits and talks on a range of issues including orphanages in Russia, the role of the police by a police officer and voluntary work in the Gambia. In addition many pupils benefit from participation in concerts, music workshops, Christmas productions and chances to share their class assemblies with parents. Pupils' experiences are significantly enriched through links with the community, including fund-raising projects.
- 2.11 The induction arrangements for new pupils are effective. Procedures are well established to ensure the smooth transition of pupils from Year 2 to Year 3 and for pupils moving to the senior school. Senior school staff teaching in the junior school further facilitates transition from junior to senior school.
- 2.12 Provision for pupils with SEN and English as an additional language (EAL) is good. Pupils in need of learning support benefit from a system which provides specific assistance in some lessons and keeps teachers informed about the needs of all, so that classroom help can be given. These pupils have individual education plans (IEPs), appropriate to their needs. Any pupil with a statement of special educational needs receives a suitable and efficient education in line with the statement, and an annual review. This provision represents a significant improvement since the last inspection.

Senior School

- 2.13 In response to the last inspection report, significant developments have been introduced to ensure that, for all subjects, progression in learning is achieved through a planned curriculum, which sets out appropriate learning objectives and assessment opportunities for each year and ability group. The introduction of faculties has improved the co-ordination of departmental planning so that all subjects now enforce

key skills. Additional curricular links have been established between the junior and senior schools.

- 2.14 The provision for SEN and EAL pupils continues to improve, with parental concerns in these areas being recognised and acted upon, particularly in the quality of learning support being offered. Special attention is given to technical vocabulary in science and mathematics. Innovative approaches are being taken to improve literacy and numeracy for lower ability pupils, but not across all departments. The use of ICT is being extended and developed and exciting projects are underway, but these initiatives have yet to be grasped by all teachers.
- 2.15 The senior school successfully promotes linguistic, mathematical, scientific, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative development, and the acquisition of skills in speaking, listening and numeracy. Pupils exhibit strengths in all these areas. Breadth has been added to the curriculum to allow pupils more opportunities to develop creative skills in music, drama, public speaking and debate. The development of physical skills through sport, the combined cadet force (CCF) and extra-curricular activities continues to be a major strength of the college. The college is developing initiatives for the identification of gifted and talented pupils, and for their support and challenge in lessons. These pupils benefit from the setting arrangements, the top set in Year 11 in mathematics often moving on to consider A-level concepts. Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) days have been instigated to include pupils from other schools and feeder schools as well as programme of master classes in sport and music.
- 2.16 The curriculum across all three key stages in the senior school is well planned with clear opportunity for the personal development of all pupils. All pupils have access to all subjects. The Year 9 “Pathways” programme for entry into Year 10 is attentive to the needs of individual pupils. The pressure on timetable space in Years 7 to 11 results in an imbalance of time allocated to the science subjects. Overall, however, there is much flexibility in the curriculum, which gives rise to pupil satisfaction. A similar process of tailoring A-level courses to suit individual students entering Year 12 is also much appreciated.
- 2.17 The PSHE and citizenship policy has been carefully drawn up with pupils in Years 7 to 9 receiving formal lessons and pupils in other years benefiting from PSHE provision in tutorials, house assemblies, chapel assemblies, and across the curriculum. The programme is supplemented by talks from expert outside speakers. Pupils appreciate that question and answer sessions following these talks take place without teachers being present. The chaplain offers a very supportive chaplaincy service. The Birkfield Society, a mock general election and the pupils’ council all contribute to the heightening of political awareness.
- 2.18 The strong programme of extra-curricular activity adds breadth to the educational experience. The timetable has been revised so that many activities take place within the school day, ensuring that all pupils may participate, including those with long journeys on the school buses. During the inspection, pupils in the engineering club were totally absorbed in an impressive project to construct a full size one-man hovercraft, working on this project with pupils from a local maintained school. Independent State School Partnerships (ISSPs) are a key part of the wider educational provision. One of the current partnerships is the excavation of a nineteenth century Ice House in the grounds of the college by pupils from the college and two local maintained schools with support from an archaeologist. Success has also been achieved in the UK mathematical challenges and the national “Electric Heavy Lift” championships, which the college won in competition with university teams. Opportunities for leadership training and outward-bound activities are offered by the

CCF and sixth form pupils go through a rigorous process of prefect selection resulting in a confident group of senior pupils acting as role models for the younger members of the community.

- 2.19 Pupils' education is also enriched by positive links with the wider community. Sports festivals, local community service, world charity events, including a pupil-engendered project to buy a goat, all contribute to the pupils' consciousness of the world beyond the school gates.
- 2.20 The careers education programme is effective in helping pupils plan and manage their progression to the next stage of their education. Connexions Suffolk offers comprehensive guidance on opportunities beyond school. Pupils have access to networked IT careers programmes as well as a range of careers' material in the resources centre. Years 9 and 10 participate in "Take Your Children to Work Day", but work experience has not been developed beyond this. Sixth form teachers, outside speakers and university visits combine to give strong support for those pupils applying for university. Pupils are confident that St. Joseph's prepares them well for life after school.
- 2.21 The college's provision for SEN and EAL pupils is sound and includes some "in class" support as well as additional lessons. Advice is given to teachers in tailoring their teaching for pupils with different special educational needs. Many teachers were seen to follow this advice in lessons, but not all did.
- 2.22 St. Joseph's is part of the worldwide community of Lasallian schools offering pupils very valuable experiences in projects in India, Sri Lanka and Africa. This worldwide network of schools with similar values is an important aspect of the education enjoyed by St. Joseph's pupils.

Whole School

- 2.23 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.24 The college is fully successful in meeting its aims to develop the pupils' academic potential, intellectual curiosity, knowledge and skills. Pupils' standards of learning and achievement have improved significantly since the last inspection. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils and they respond accordingly. Pupils are committed to their work, sustain concentration and, in some areas of the curriculum, show that they are independent learners.

Junior School

- 2.25 The pupils learn effectively and achieve well, in line with a core value of the college to "work hard and smart". As a parent observed: "my daughter is encouraged to learn in a stimulating environment and made to feel a valuable member of St Joseph's".
- 2.26 The quality of achievement in lessons observed is good, an improvement from the previous inspection. Pupils of all ages have a good level of knowledge, skills and understanding; they think and act critically and creatively and can work independently. For instance, reception pupils used books to research mini-beasts, Year 4 pupils designed their own mathematical games and Year 6 pupils used the internet for independent investigation. No significant difference is apparent in the relative attainment of pupils in different classes or subjects.

- 2.27 Pupils in reception are on course to achieve all the early learning goals, the nationally recommended levels for that year. These pupils apply their skills well, being able to blend initial sounds to form words such as ‘dragon’ and being able to take turns and listen to each other. By the age of seven, results of nationally standardised tests in reading are well above the national average for all maintained primary schools, in writing they are above the national average and in mathematics they are in line with the national average. Standards of work in Years 1 and 2 are good. For example, Year 2 pupils wrote using humour and persuasive language when designing individual snake posters and Year 1 pupils used their observational skills to great effect drawing leaves, bark and flowers collected from the grounds.
- 2.28 Higher up the junior school pupils’ attainment has improved since the last inspection. However, the change in approach to learning throughout the junior school has been noted by parents who stated, there has been “a huge improvement in teaching standards over this academic year”. In Year 6, whilst a wide range of attainment in writing was seen, the level of understanding shown in a variety of tasks was good; EAL pupils could understand and write well about the main points of *The Highwayman* and the writing of higher attaining pupils was lively and thoughtful. In mathematics more able pupils were reaching high levels with pupils competently tackling challenging geometric problems.
- 2.29 Pupils speak clearly and read well and writing is often fluent and well-presented. Pupils are confident in expression and use vocabulary well, one reception child commenting, “I am on a mission to find the television remote control. I don’t suppose you might know where it is?” Pupils also listen intently, using these skills to make very good verbal responses. Pupils reason and argue cogently and express themselves confidently and succinctly as in a Year 4 geography lesson where pupils debated the pros and cons of village development.
- 2.30 Pupils can work independently and organise themselves well, as was observed in the nursery where pupils set up their farm shop and in Year 3 where pupils researched the suitability of materials for different purposes. Collaborative work is outstanding in many subjects and results in some excellent learning for pupils across the ability range.
- 2.31 Numeracy skills are strong, pupils having the confidence and understanding to use them effectively in mathematics lessons and elsewhere. Evidence of the use of ICT was observed in graphs in Year 2 mathematics and in pupils’ scientific wall displays.
- 2.32 Pupils settle well to work, tackle tasks with enthusiasm and persevere with things they find difficult. Enjoyment in their studies was evident in the moving prayers from Year 3 and the inspired writing following the “Awe and Wonder” day.
- 2.33 Outstanding individual achievement is demonstrated through pupils playing at national level for rugby and county level for cricket, badminton, chess and tennis. Pupils achieve well in associated board music examinations. Team success is seen through many sports and is demonstrated by Year 5 and 6 pupils being the under 11 girls’ football champions within local independent schools; achieved without losing a match, or a goal being scored against them, all season.

Senior School

- 2.34 Pupils are well grounded in knowledge and skills. In Years 11, 12 and 13, pupils have honed their ability to apply knowledge and to demonstrate skills: for example, in mathematics, Year 11 pupils can expand, simplify and factorise algebraic expressions with confidence; Year 12 pupils were observed to use grammatical clues to make

intelligent and informed guesses in cloze tests; Year 13 pupils identified and exemplified the paradoxes of Italian fascism and the complexities of political parties in Weimar Germany. Such knowledge and skills are developed in Years 7 to 10. Aided by the college's policy of a common lesson structure across all subjects with clearly stated learning objectives, pupils recall and use knowledge from earlier lessons and deploy key vocabulary and technical terms accurately; in science, for example, Year 7 pupils quickly understood and could explain the factors which they needed to control in conducting an investigation into the effect of temperature on solubility. No difference is apparent in the relative attainment of pupils in different classes or subjects.

- 2.35 Pupils think creatively and critically. In an English essay on *Romeo and Juliet*, a Year 10 pupil evaluated the courage which the eponymous heroine's suicide needed, concluding with passion and insight that hers was a braver death than Romeo's; in religious studies, Year 10 pupils analysed different forms of religious experience lucidly, drawing on evidence and examples from their reading and personal experience. In some lessons, pupils' opportunities to develop their thinking are limited by activities designed to support the less able learners.
- 2.36 Results at GCSE are a success story: at GCSE over the past three years, pupils have performed well above the national average for all maintained schools. Since the last inspection, there has been a consistent and steady rise in the proportion of grades C to A*. At A level, while pupils' performance for the same period is in line with the national average for all maintained schools, the most recent results point to an improvement in attainment.
- 2.37 The college has a fine record of individual and team achievements which attest to its encouragement and nurture of talent and participation across a wide range of musical, dramatic, artistic, philanthropic and sporting activities. The college's resident artist oversaw the digital art 'Double Vision Project', a collaboration with local state schools to create a 'visual time capsule' of Ipswich life; the college's musicians participated in a residential music course in preparation for the 150th anniversary of Lasallian education in Great Britain; a Year 9 pupil is ranked in the top 40 tennis players in England and a Year 11 pupil has played for the under-16 Great Britain rugby squad; Year 11 pupils manufacture and fly petrol model aeroplanes and one is a fully qualified pilot. Enterprising female pupils have raised funds and sponsorship for a netball tour to Malta. Pupils' musical talents were in evidence during the inspection: sensitive and technically assured playing characterised performances, including one Year 10 pupil who performed her own composition for the violin. These achievements confirm the college's ability to meet one of its aims to enable "each pupil to discover and develop their full potential".
- 2.38 Pupils are articulate, particularly orally: they were observed to express themselves cogently and passionately, not least in interview with inspectors to whom they were willing to express themselves fluently and vigorously, for example in identifying the values and ethos of their school. They listen effectively to adults, each other and to those pupils younger than themselves. By the time they reach Year 11, most pupils have developed a fluent writing style and are able to adapt this to the differing needs of each discipline. For example, Year 11 pupils wrote insightfully on disguise and deception in *Twelfth Night* and on the theme of madness in *Hamlet*; Year 12 pupils wrote extended essays in French showing a good range of idiomatic expressions and a freedom from thinking in English.
- 2.39 Pupils' mathematical and numerical skills are strong: pupils make good progress and have confidence in their ability. In a Year 12 mathematics lesson, pupils were intrigued about trigonometry functions. Year 7 pupils think hard and ask pertinent

questions. In a Year 11 lesson on probability tree diagrams pupils were seen to forge ahead in their search for short cuts.

- 2.40 In most subjects, pupils are not routinely required to make use of ICT in lessons, although some homework requires internet research. For example, in order to take part in a food technology (FT) lesson, pupils had to have downloaded their recipe from a designated 'Fair Trade' website; Year 12 pupils make use of French websites to find materials for their oral topics. As part of its development programme, the college is poised to extend this good practice to other areas in order to enhance pupils' ICT skills.
- 2.41 Pupils are able to reason cogently, can think for themselves and come to conclusions based on their analysis; these skills were observed to be stronger in mathematics and science. Occasionally, pupils lack confidence in their ability to do this and rely on their teacher for support. However, the college's faculty structure is being used to explore and share strategies and good practice to build individual pupils' confidence in their ability.
- 2.42 Pupils are well organised and, in particular beyond the classroom, are able to take responsibility for their learning. For example, unprompted, a Year 11 pupil researched different forms of kidney dialysis on the internet following a biology lesson while another pursued the topic of aerobic respiration in physical education (PE). In tutorials and activities, pupils expect to lead and to organise themselves. Pupils value the lengths their teachers go to in order to help them with their work; strategies in class to make pupils stand on their own feet are helping the college achieve its aim of ensuring that 'it fully enables its pupils at all ages and abilities to become truly independent learners'.
- 2.43 Pupils' ability to study and work effectively with others is a strength of the college. Pupils cooperate in and outside the classroom. Pupils are supportive of others and enjoy team and pair work which they carry out with good manners and good humour. In a Year 10 drama lesson pupils observed their peers' ensemble improvisation attentively and gave positive, helpful feed-back.
- 2.44 Pupils settle quickly to work and stick to the task. They manifest a real sense of enjoyment in the vast majority of lessons; even on the occasions where the pace of teaching slows, they apply themselves and will make the running. Pupils enjoy the challenge of new concepts; they enjoy being challenged. They relish the many opportunities for involvement in extra-curricular activities which to them form an integral part of their educational experience.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.45 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness of the pupils is striking. The ethos of the Lasallian tradition is at the heart of all college activity and this, together with the quality of relationships, makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. It is fostered throughout college life, so that the college is highly successful in achieving its aims to develop personal, spiritual and moral qualities as the basis for "fulfilled, productive, responsible, happy and successful lives".

Junior School

- 2.46 Pupils throughout the junior school demonstrate outstandingly well-developed spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- 2.47 Pupils' spiritual awareness is excellent. It is nurtured in many ways as part of the ethos of the school. The Lasallian tradition underpins this, recognising that every

child is special and that his or her self-esteem and self-knowledge are important parts of education. Activities such as “I can ...” lists which feature in Year 6 mathematics and English folders encourage pupils to feel good about what they can do. Pupils’ successes are celebrated in assemblies and displays in chapel illustrate where pupils have reflected on what makes them feel good. This encouraging approach included the opportunity to lead “Thought for the Day” where a Year 3 child talked about friendship and invited peers to consider what makes a good friend. The school chaplain contributes greatly to the spiritual life of the junior school as does such an event as “awe and wonder day” where all pupils spent time in the grounds looking at wonders in nature.

- 2.48 Pupils have a very good moral sense and a clear idea of what is right and wrong. Moral values are discussed formally in assemblies and PSHE lessons as well as informally during the school day, as in a Year 4 English lesson where pupils discussed guilty feelings after reading a poem about stealing money. The school provides a clear code of conduct which is continually promoted through strong direction in assemblies, the staff serving as role models and the all pervading ethos of the college.
- 2.49 The pupils’ social development is excellent. As they move up the junior school they gradually participate more in school activities and take on roles of responsibility such as prefects. The school council provides opportunities for children of all ages from reception upwards to take an active role in planning and decision making. Older pupils acquire knowledge of public institutions such as the health service or the legal system through projects and research. Pupils work collaboratively in class, supporting each other’s efforts: in an interview a Year 6 pupil said that they enjoyed working in groups “because if we’re stuck we can help each other”. A whole school assembly in chapel focused on helping others less fortunate than themselves, exemplified in the junior school treasure hunt which raised over £1,900 to help rebuild a school in India destroyed by the tsunami.
- 2.50 Cultural development is excellent. Pupils study and gain an understanding of different religions and customs. The junior school has links with the wider Lasallian family in Africa, India and Sri Lanka. Visiting musicians give concerts of music from other cultures and Year 5 have a taste of other ways of life when they visit France for a week. The school’s cultural values are reinforced in many ways such as the delightful display of bright, colourful masks in many styles and from many countries and the multi-cultural week which forms part of the pupils’ multi-faith religious education (RE) programme.

Senior School

- 2.51 The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the senior school pupils is outstanding and underpins all that goes on in the college. From the time that pupils set foot in the college, until they leave, they are developing a level of integrated spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness that provides a sustaining foundation for education in its broadest and most enduring sense.
- 2.52 The breadth of opportunities for spiritual development in the taught curriculum are recognised in the subject audits where the expected contributions of art, drama and music are complemented by the marvels of the atomic and molecular workings of the material world in physics, and those of the shifting oceans and plates of the earth over time in geography.
- 2.53 The extensive and well maintained grounds provide space for inspiration, whilst the chapel is central to the campus and open to all for contemplation or prayer. Pupils in

Year 9 benefit from the real life spiritual exercise of a day's retreat, which is a much valued first experience for many and can lead to the option of voluntary residential stays at a later age. All of these events develop and strengthen friendships, self awareness and confidence. The role of the chaplaincy is significant in helping to sustain the principles of the college which are meshed into the pastoral system and which also reach out to the wider community.

- 2.54 Pupils develop strong moral values which are evident in the way that all members of the community interact and behave. In conversation, Year 9 students identified the most important college rule or requirement as respect at all levels. Students and staff readily look out for and support each other. College fabric is well cared for, property is unmarked and unscathed and movement about the school is relaxed and purposeful. Misbehaviour does happen and sanctions are enforced but they are accepted as reasonable and justified. The code of conduct highlights the importance of mutual respect and enables pupils to learn right from wrong. The centrality of respect is, moreover, extended far beyond the day to day life and times of the college. Moral and ethical issues, for example drug-taking, euthanasia, suicide, and abortion are tackled explicitly in the PSHE and academic curriculum. Opinions are discussed, tested and modified so that complexities of issues are appreciated and faced in a secure and supportive environment.
- 2.55 Pupils display mature social skills. Pupils are friendly, welcoming, courteous, purposeful and unassuming. In conversation they are direct and take evident pride in their college. Participation in community service and the varieties of community is natural, be it in form assemblies or activities, work with local schools on the 'Ice House' project, visiting a local day centre or in projects in the Gambia. Initiatives such as the book collection for tsunami aid or the 'buy a goat' project in Year 10 come from and are organised by the pupils. Sports, drama, music, CCF and other activities encourage cooperation and the trust that comes from mutual dependence.
- 2.56 The curriculum also informs and develops the knowledge of political institutions and of political and social issues. In history liberty and democracy are covered in the studies of the civil rights movement and the cold war. Economics and geography courses look at the implications of over population and globalisation. The Birkfield Society provides a means for debate and for addressing social and political issues.
- 2.57 The college prefects are significant and respected figures who are expected to be mentors and role models. Younger pupils act as peer mentors or counsellors to help new arrivals settle in. The college council provides another voice for the student body. In many ways the students are already active citizens.
- 2.58 St Joseph's college is already a diverse cultural community with a number of overseas students and strongly fostered links with its world family of La Salle schools in Europe, Asia and Africa. Toleration and the brotherhood of humanity are high profile features of the college's philosophy and the diversity is regularly celebrated at Chinese New Year, in Black History Month and routinely in assemblies. Educational experience in the classroom is enriched by studies of Egyptian art, Gamelan music and the major world religions. Students travel abroad on sports tours and enjoy exchanges to Germany, France, Spain and Italy. Older individuals can join aid projects in Africa. These international opportunities develop pupils' awareness of other cultures and their interpersonal skills. Closer to home, students visit the Tate gallery and theatre trips are a regular occurrence. The college welcomes visitors such as the artist in residence and a survivor of the Second World War "kinder transports" in Germany and is keen to use their experiences to enrich the education on offer.

- 2.59 The college community has an outstandingly rich spiritual, social, moral and cultural stream which is primarily the result of its commitment to living by an ethos grounded in the Lasallian tradition.

Whole School

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

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.61 Throughout the college, the quality of the teaching and the excellent relationships between pupils and staff are essential factors in promoting the pupils' effective learning and good standards, thus fulfilling one of the college's aims to help pupils realise their academic potential. The great majority of the teaching was good and some was outstanding. Most of the teaching results in motivated pupils who work hard and enjoy school. Since the last inspection, the college has developed new approaches to teaching which allow, in many cases, greater scope to the pupils' own ideas.

Junior School

- 2.62 Overall the quality of teaching is good and supports the aims of the school. Pupils of all abilities acquire new knowledge, make good progress and increase their skill levels due to the excellent planning and good delivery of lessons and also the rigorous assessment system. A clear and comprehensive teaching policy is followed by all teachers. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching standards are in place.
- 2.63 Teachers plan a range of work which supports the whole ability range including SEN and EAL pupils. Booster sessions are in place for numeracy and literacy. Classroom support enables pupils with special needs to have access to the curriculum. Teachers are very aware of methods available to recognise different learning styles in their pupils. Nursery pupils, for instance, made significant progress because of the very good range of activities in sorting objects allowing pupils to make discoveries and share them with each other. The use of debate in Year 4 geography lesson gave pupils the opportunity to pool ideas and views and then deliver them to the class. This independent learning included a period of reflection on the views of other groups.
- 2.64 The planning of lessons is outstanding, leading to excellent time management, use of resources and goal-setting for each lesson. Reception pupils, for instance, had planned activities, including researching information from books and using key words and pictures, to enable them to sort mini-beasts into groups.
- 2.65 Teachers are well qualified to teach their subjects. The best teaching occurs where the teachers have a thorough knowledge of the subject content they are teaching, fully understand the ability range and give real pace to the lesson. Teachers engage pupils in confident verbal exchanges. In a Year 3 science lesson the pupils were willing to ask and answer questions about the properties of materials and to use appropriate vocabulary including words such as "translucent" and "opaque".
- 2.66 Teaching is supported by a good range of resources. Each classroom has a computer linked to the well resourced ICT Suite. Excellent use of resources was seen in the nursery in setting up a farm shop. In Year 6 science the pupils used microscopes, including a digital type, to investigate crystals. ICT was not seen being widely used in classroom work but there are good examples of pupils' independent work in ICT on the walls of classrooms and corridors. Creativity and good use of ICT skills were

evident in Year 4 mathematics, Year 1 literacy, Year 5 historical studies and internet research in Year 6 RS.

- 2.67 Assessment policies are excellent and their employment is outstanding. This is a strength of the school and supports learning and achievement. Pupils have a good understanding of the “target tracking” goals set for them by the teachers with constant review and re-setting of targets involving pupils in determining their own rate of progress. As an example, Year 6 mathematics books have individual targets attached to them for constant reference. Parents are very pleased with the improved reporting and assessment system, which produces an impressive amount of qualitative and quantitative data about each pupil. This is shared with pupils and parents in an open manner. The school marking policy is followed by all teachers providing positive reinforcement to the pupils through constructive comments. Results of standardised assessment tests are used effectively to inform teacher planning.
- 2.68 Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent. Mutual respect leads to a peaceful working environment. In a Year 5 and 6 rounders lesson excellent attitudes and responses of the pupils to the teacher resulted in enthusiastic progress being made in batting, bowling and fielding skills. Teachers use opportunities for pupils to work together and share experiences as in a Year 6 mathematics lesson where pupils worked together on revision games in preparation for their standardised attainment tests (SATS).

Senior School

- 2.69 The teaching in the senior school ensures that pupils of all abilities and with a wide variety of needs are able to acquire knowledge, make progress and develop a good range of skills.
- 2.70 Special courses are arranged for the most able and teaching is sometimes arranged to give these pupils greater knowledge and understanding. Lower ability pupils are generally well taught: in French, for example, these pupils honed their examination skills well by means of punchy quick-fire questions and answers. Since the last inspection, the school has greatly improved the provision for those with special educational needs. Lessons are now much more closely matched to the needs of individual pupils. Lessons in English for overseas pupils are provided at every level and are often taught when day pupils have gone home, enabling these pupils to attend timetabled lessons during the day.
- 2.71 PE teaching fosters energetic physical effort. For example in one PE cricket lesson on bowling and fielding, the enthusiasm of the teaching enabled all the pupils to achieve a high level of ball-handling skills. In FT pupils learned quickly for themselves because of the careful preparation and guidance of the teaching. The development of creativity is well supported, as in a Year 8 music lesson when pupils performed Gamelan music with twenty glockenspiels. Intellectual effort is strongly encouraged in many lessons, especially in mathematics where a high proportion of lessons were very well taught. Examples of pupils’ independent learning include the use of the internet to research the background of the drawings of Degas. Recently, effective changes in the teaching styles practised in the school include supported study skills, but it is only in art and PE that clear evidence was found that this leads on to independent research.
- 2.72 Teaching is well planned, employing effective teaching methods which are generally in line with the new teaching and learning policy. Lessons are structured into defined sections. Practical activities reinforce learning, for example a new aeroplane is being built by the pupils for the national “Electric Lift Challenge”. However, teaching

styles did not always enhance the learning of the most able, although in a number of lessons teachers had clearly embraced the notion that enthusiasm, novelty, praise and immediate feedback encourage good learning. Homework is set regularly and in about the right quantity.

- 2.73 Teachers show a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils. They have access to the information from the recently introduced entry assessments and from their own marking. At their best, lessons are planned around the needs of individual pupils. For example, in one lesson a Year 11 pupil, not taking GCSE Literature, worked on language skills while the rest of the set revised literature analysis skills. In another lesson the less able completed a cloze comprehension exercise while the able were constructing essays on the same topic.
- 2.74 Teaching resources in the classroom are good in quality, quantity and range. The resources centre and ICT facilities are both in the process of development. The ICT resources have been developed in part through DfES funding in a joint independent-state school project. This funding is used to implement and carry through the “Ice House” and “Double Vision” projects as well as providing excellent facilities for photography, film-making and media studies. The teaching of research skills is not sufficiently integrated into coursework planning at GCSE and A level. This does not encourage independent learning, which is one of the school’s aims. Overseas pupils studying science receive a CD with technical terms translated into their own language.
- 2.75 Teaching includes regular and thorough assessment of pupils’ work and uses information from assessment to plan lessons so that pupils can progress. Since the introduction of the marking policy there has been a great improvement in standards of internal marking, but this is not carried through by every teacher. Marking is against national criteria for public examinations in Years 10 to 13 and against the national curriculum in Years 7 to 9. Not all pupils understand these criteria or how the mark schemes work. Self-assessment and short-term target setting in Years 7 to 9 are not yet standard practice.
- 2.76 Teaching encourages pupils to behave responsibly. The relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Pupils said that with all the extra support after school, including sports coaching, activities and lessons, it was clear that teachers do not stint on their time and this was greatly appreciated. Lateness to lessons is not tolerated, files have to be well kept and pupils whose attention strays are quickly brought back on task. Homework is generally handed back promptly.
- 2.77 Since the last inspection the school has introduced a very thorough and effective system for assessing pupils against the standards of the national curriculum on entry and at regular intervals thereafter. This is then translated into target grades for externally assessed examinations in Years 9, 11 and 13, so that each pupil, their teacher and parents know just what they all need to do for the pupil to achieve the grades appropriate for their ability in each subject. This is a major improvement since the last inspection and is already driving up standards of teaching and the level of effective support provided by parents at home. Pupils are screened for specific learning difficulties on entry or before, and appropriate class support is provided. The school maintains its published policy of not providing private lessons.

Whole School

- 2.78 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 Staff provide high quality care for pupils of all ages, and the college gives close attention to their welfare, health and safety.

Junior School

- 3.2 The staff care extremely well for all pupils' well-being and development, and are supported in this by an effective structure.
- 3.3 The staff provide outstanding support and guidance to all their pupils. The school's priority is to provide a family atmosphere and a sense of community, where all aspects of pupils' development can be nurtured. Staff work closely with parents for the benefit of their children.
- 3.4 Excellent pastoral arrangements exist, including those for the transfer programme. At the end of Year 2 pupils spend time with their future teacher in a building new to them. By the end of Year 6 children are familiar with many of the senior school staff and, in addition to spending a day in the senior school, pupils enjoy a variety of projects to smooth the transition to the senior school. Staff reported that the pupils are now more confident than before about the move into the senior school.
- 3.5 Effective measures to promote good discipline and behaviour are in place. Rules are few and are agreed by all and pupils reported that they found most rules to be acceptable and fair. Year 5 pupils said that discipline has been tightened in recent times, but also agreed that the atmosphere in the school is good. Pupils confirmed that there are very few cases of bullying or other playground problems and that, if they cannot solve these themselves, they can go to a member of staff and would be confident of a happy and swift resolution. They say that things are much better now than they were before, "everything's sorted out now".
- 3.6 It was noted on more than one occasion that special care was shown towards a pupil with a special need. Most teachers praise pupils' efforts, encouraging them to feel valued and good about themselves. One young pupil stated: "I used to think I couldn't do stuff, but now I can". On numerous occasions pupils were observed working well together, helping each other and readily sharing tasks. Pupils enjoy excellent relationships with each other and their teachers.
- 3.7 Measures exist to promote pupils' health. They are encouraged to eat healthily and school meals are very popular. If they are unwell they can go to one of the school nurses in the medical centre. The chaplain also plays a valuable part in pupils' pastoral support, through meditation sessions or in conversation with pupils.
- 3.8 The school is a safe environment for children and health and safety issues are well handled.

Senior School

- 3.9 Pastoral care is outstanding in all areas. A strength in the last report, the college has built on this by recruiting a chaplain and a co-ordinator for heads of year. Pastoral care underpins the core values and aims of the college. The caring Christian ethos pervades all areas of college life and as one parent commented: "The college turns out good human beings". Pupils and parents are appreciative of the excellent support and guidance, one pupil describing the college as "a large family where everyone cares

for each other”. Informal and formal counselling plays a large part in this care and the chaplain is available to support pupils, staff and parents. The college is a happy, harmonious community where each individual is valued; an example of this is the celebration of pupils’ and staff birthdays in school assemblies. This support is highly effective and the guidance enables pupils of all ages to develop personally and academically.

- 3.10 Staff are very well assisted by strong pastoral arrangements. The chaplain, medical staff, form tutors, year heads and the year heads’ co-ordinator are at the heart of this, with a member of the senior leadership team having oversight of all pastoral procedures. Working in teams, the staff’s commitment to the care of the pupils provides a real sense of security. The pupils feel that the staff know them well. The medical protocols are extensive and thorough both for day pupils and the boarders. Medical care in the medical centre staffed by two nurses is highly valued by the pupils with one Year 7 pupil commenting “The nurses are excellent, really, really, really good”.
- 3.11 Relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils are excellent. The college places strong emphasis on community spirit and in this setting there is mutual respect for each member of the college community. In lessons and activities observed the pervading atmosphere was one of tolerance, sensitivity and openness. In sport pupils showed competitive spirit whilst having the awareness to help and support the less able. Pupils not only relate very well to their peers but also mix well across year groups, for example in school productions and ski trips.
- 3.12 Measures to promote good discipline and behaviour are very clearly defined and are understood by all pupils. School rules and the code of conduct are displayed in form rooms. Sanctions are appropriate and pupils interviewed felt that the staff applied these consistently. Good work and behaviour is recognised through awards, merit marks and house points. Success is also rewarded in assembly and in various school publications. The senior prefects provide excellent role models for the younger pupils and they take the lead in setting high standards of behaviour, for example by being on duty in the chapel before assembly. The behaviour in chapel is exceptional. Pupils are proud of their college and speak passionately about it. There are plenty of opportunities for leadership and responsibility in sport, CCF and community work. The anti-bullying policy is thorough and, on the rare occasions when bullying occurs, pupils report that it is dealt with promptly and effectively. Year Meetings are valued by the pupils as a forum for discussing a whole range of issues.
- 3.13 Welfare of pupils and health and safety procedures are outstanding. Child protection policies and procedures are well established. All staff have received relevant training and there are clear systems in the staff guide for reporting and logging concerns. All the necessary checks are made when staff are recruited, including volunteers and contractors. In a recent college newsletter guidance was given to pupils and parents on safe web-surfing. The college is using a new software internet filter system as a means of keeping the pupils safe from unwanted internet material.
- 3.14 Fire procedures and risk assessments are excellent. Regular fire practices are held and the pupils commented that they felt extremely safe and confident should any emergency arise.
- 3.15 Health and safety arrangements in the college are outstanding. The recently appointed facilities manager has overall responsibility and chairs the health and safety committee. Key areas of the college are represented on this committee and thorough minutes are recorded. The college has adopted the Essex county council health and safety documentation, policies and training.

- 3.16 Guidelines and procedures for educational visits are comprehensive as is the accessibility and disability plan. First Aid Training has been increased since the last inspection and consequently there are now more qualified staff to accompany school trips and visits. Procedures for preventing and recording accidents are effective, as are the procedures for registering pupils.
- 3.17 The catering staff provide well balanced and nutritious meals with plenty of choice. The college is working towards the healthy schools award.

Whole School

- 3.18 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

- 3.19 Links with parents and the wider community are a strength of the college and parents are very satisfied with the college.

Junior School

- 3.20 Parents' views on the quality of the school's links with parents and their relationships with the staff are very positive showing excellent progress since the last inspection. Parents are very pleased with the reporting procedures and the increasing quality of assessment material sent home. The school has improved its links with the community since the last inspection and parents have become more involved in the school activities. Parents have very good opportunities to be involved with the work and progress of the pupils.
- 3.21 Parents are encouraged to take part in the life of the school. Induction of pupils into the nursery involves parental participation. Parents are invited into "sharing time" at the end of day lessons and are enthusiastic in their attendance at assemblies. Parents are also provided with workshops to help them support their children's learning, for instance in writing development.
- 3.22 The school provides parents with excellent assessment data and helpful reports. Foundation stage parents receive a weekly timetable of lesson activities and parents of older pupils receive curriculum information each term. Parents have welcomed the recent changes in the quality and quantity of the information from the school, a parent commenting in the parents' questionnaire: "the communication from the junior school has become much clearer and more in advance; thank you so much, as a parent I feel really in the picture".
- 3.23 The headteacher and his staff have an excellent relationship with parents. This is based, in part, on the fact that they know the pupils so well and have their trust and respect. The headteacher is approachable to parents and works hard to sort out pupil issues. The school has a formal complaints procedure which operates effectively when necessary. Parents feel confident in approaching the school.
- 3.24 The school is developing strong links with the wider community. The whole school community ethos of "caring for each other" and reaching out to "help those less fortunate than yourself" was seen in a variety of community activities: in a whole school assembly celebrating a pupil's sponsored dive to raise money for the victims of a terrorist explosion in an Egyptian town; by the of raising money for a school in India destroyed by the tsunami; and by a book collection for a Gambian school. Pupils are encouraged to think about those less fortunate than themselves and families are encouraged to engage in this process.

Senior School

- 3.25 Parents strongly support the work of the college and value highly the quality of support provided by the conscientious staff to their children and, on occasions, to them as parents. Respondents to the parental questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive, with the vast majority indicating their satisfaction with what the college provides and the standards achieved by their children.
- 3.26 Parents have good opportunities to be involved in activities in the school and in the work and progress of their children. Even though the college's catchment area is wide, an active parents' association has a good level of involvement in wide range of events: parents help at the cricket and rugby festivals, organise a Christmas bazaar and run the second-hand uniform service. Information about the role and activities of the association are not included in the college's induction pack, which reduce some parents' awareness of its existence.
- 3.27 Parents are invited to and attend an inspiring range of college concerts, drama productions, acts of collective worship and other regular events in the college calendar, including the popular "May Ball". Parents are provided with good information about the college and receive reports about their children's work and progress. Some concern was expressed in the parental questionnaire about the promptness and accuracy of communication with home. No evidence during the course of the inspection was found to support this view.
- 3.28 Parents' evenings are held once a year for each year group. Further feedback is ensured by the issuing of regular academic reports, assessment sheets and testimonials. Reports to parents are clear and helpful, and give evaluations of the standards that the pupils are currently reaching and what they should aim for as a final 'target' grade. Targets for improvement are also stated on the reports and are found useful by both pupils and their parents. Curriculum information in the public examination years is good in the form of dedicated GCSE and A-level booklets and short summaries on reports. Reports in Years 7 to 9 lack the information that a 'course summary' section would convey. The 'Student Comments' section in the sixth form reports is valued by the students but this has not, as yet, been extended to Years 10 and 11.
- 3.29 All years have an 'Information' Evening' at the start of the year where parents can discuss the year ahead with teaching staff. Other specific parent events, which further enhance the college-parent dialogue, include: evening presentations to Year 9 regarding 'Pathways' and GCSE choices; a Year 11 'introduction to the sixth form' evening; and Year 12 session on university applications. Parents are kept informed of college events and achievements through an informative quarterly newsletter and the well-maintained website.
- 3.30 The college handles the concerns of parents with care. Successful after-school and evening sessions have been held for parents to address 'parenting' concerns. As an example, the great majority of those that attended the information evenings on drugs and binge-drinking found the events "useful". The college has a formal complaints policy and the college handles parental concerns with understanding, sensitivity and efficiency.
- 3.31 The pupils give of themselves in time and money to a variety of projects and events. Service to the community through the CCF and the Duke of Edinburgh award, fund-raising through a range of projects, including a Christmas 'shoe box' appeal for Romania, Gambian school refurbishment, and new classrooms and dormitories for pupils in St Joseph's High School, India, is a real strength of the college.

- 3.32 The sporting festivals for rugby and cricket (the former enjoys national status and the latter is rapidly increasing its recognition) bring together many schools from far and wide. Parents and the public have the opportunity to combine watching and celebrating high quality school sport in a family setting.
- 3.33 Arts festivals and art projects are a key feature of the college. This year's 'Double Vision' digital art project takes a novel interpretation of community 'Our Roots, Our Selves and Our Community' as its theme. The final pieces will be screened in the participating schools and in Ipswich town centre.
- 3.34 The recently discovered early 19th century 'Ice House' in the grounds has provided yet another opportunity for local secondary school co-operation. It has stimulated many cross-curricular links, contributing to the development of pupils' intellectual curiosity and awareness of history. It has also developed wider community access and the involvement of other agencies such as the Suffolk County Council Archaeological unit.
- 3.35 Specialist pupil groups such as the hovercraft club and the aeroplane 'heavy lift challenge' club compete locally and nationally. The inception and success of these projects exemplifies the belief and commitment to large inter-school co-operative ventures. These are made possible by DfES Independent/State School Partnership (ISSP) funding but also the essential and dynamic leadership and drive of St Joseph's staff. They are shining examples of what can be achieved under the ISSP scheme.
- 3.36 The local community benefits in many ways from the college's site and facilities; examples include: sporting events such as the Ipswich fun run and cricket courses in the grounds; use of the chapel by the local parish and primary schools; and hosting of regional and the national karate championships. In the summer of 2005 the college was the film set for the Channel 4 television series on grammar school life in the 1960s, "That'll Teach 'Em".
- 3.37 Links with Lasallian colleges and projects in Europe and worldwide are strong. The principal shows personal commitment to the Lasallian ethos and is currently president of the European Lasallian heads' association. Recently the college hosted eight Lasallian schools in preparation for a service in Liverpool Cathedral in July to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the founding of Lasallian schools in Britain.

Whole School

- 3.38 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

- 3.39 The college ensures that the quality of the boarding experience supports pupils' education and development. The boarding provision is a key resource of the college and this is borne out by the college's commitment to expand boarding in the immediate future.
- 3.40 The quality of pastoral care and accommodation in the three boarding houses is good. The boarding pupils have a positive impact on the college community and make a considerable contribution to the academic and cultural life of the college.
- 3.41 The relationships between the boarders, of all ages, are good. The atmosphere within the houses is lively, warm and supportive with pupils liking each others' company at all ages. Hill Brow (the junior house), is run as an extended family, where "living strategies" are developed. The management of Mews and Goldrood (the senior

houses) supports pupils in their maturing years and prepares them for university life, giving older pupils some independence and self- responsibility. Pastoral support in the houses is caring, but also tempered with the realism of today's society. Boarding staff expect and receive high standards in the daily life of the houses. As a parent states in the parents questionnaire "Boarding staff are a great asset, very caring but firm".

- 3.42 Boarders report that they have a good range of activities. Younger boarders enjoy a variety of activities in the house and expeditions away from the college and the older boarders value being able to use college facilities out of college time. Boarders also confirm that they feel academically supported by the boarding staff, who go out of their way to reinforce academic development.
- 3.43 Resources, within the houses, are good and are suitable for the ages of the pupils. A regular programme of refurbishment ensures that the houses offer good facilities for all age groups. Kitchens, games rooms, television rooms and internet access all contribute to the welfare and development of the pupils.
- 3.44 The pupils and their parents are appreciative of the high standards of care, consideration and welfare offered by the boarding staff. This is characterised by both the comprehensiveness and clarity of the written procedures and the individual support given to each member of the house. The boarding provision at the college is well encapsulated in a recent report by the Commission for Social Care which reports that the staff demonstrate a clear knowledge of young people's needs and are committed to meeting these needs. The report finds that the well-being of the young people is central to the running of the college. This affirms the commitment to a high quality of boarding provision at the college.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 Highly effective government and management deliver a good quality of education.
- 4.2 The governors are wholly committed to the ethos and the development of the college. The governors are led by a chairman who has the good of the college at heart and communicates the vision for St Joseph's to fellow governors, staff, parents and pupils.
- 4.3 This vision led to the governors appointing the current principal and, in doing so, they fulfilled a key responsibility of governance. The strength of governance of the college is the support of the principal and the senior leadership team by the governors, support which has enabled the principal to reinvigorate the Christian ethos of the college in the Lasallian tradition.
- 4.4 The chairman and principal have identified the key skills needed on the governing body and have brought on board governors with these skills who are contributing to the future developments of the college. New governors have not yet received the full range of governor training and the articles of governance, particularly the terms of reference for each committee, have yet to be fully developed.
- 4.5 The chairman of governors visits the college regularly and attends many functions where she is able to discuss current issues but also experience the college's special ethos as, for instance, at the annual 'Leavers' Service'.

- 4.6 The governors are kept informed about the school through their support of school events, by the senior leadership team and invited senior staff attending their meetings and by principal's report to each meeting of the full governing body, a report which includes the report of the head of the junior school. The governors' deliberations are supported by admirably tight financial control and care of resources, which ensures that the physical aspects of the development plan can be funded, including the exciting project of the new junior school.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.7 Leadership and management are highly effective in all areas of the college, which is one of the main reasons why St. Joseph's is "going places". The college's aims and ethos are wonderfully reflected in the pupils themselves, who live out the college's commitment "to prepare pupils to lead fulfilled, productive, responsible, happy and successful lives". The ethos is also reflected in the pupils' good academic achievement, the outstanding pastoral care and the exemplary contribution of pupils and staff to the wider community. As one parent notes in the parental questionnaire "The school's ethos is excellent. It promotes community values and believes there's more to educating the child than academic achievement and competition".
- 4.8 The principal and the head of the junior school offer dynamic, inspiring and caringly effective leadership. Indeed, it is widely acknowledged by the college community that the principal, in a relatively short time, has set the college on a new course of development and major improvement. The senior leadership team, who have clearly defined roles in different areas of the college, work positively together and strongly support the ethos and aims of the school. This team is in a period of transition and the careful management of this change reflects the strength of the principal's vision for the college. The management advisory group is another new development and this group values the role it plays in the college's development. The introduction of faculty heads has led to greater cohesion in the management of academic issues. The system of tutors is well structured and contributes to a much admired and valued network of pastoral care.
- 4.9 The three-year development plan is a streamlined working document, reflecting the regular updating of the college's consideration of its future. It is clear that the development plan feeds into departmental development plans, a good example of which is development plan of the art department.
- 4.10 The college staff speak highly of the framework of professional and personal development. This is a priority for the management team, who support the linking of development opportunities with annual appraisal and faculty review. As well as using external sources of professional and personal support, the college has developed an in-house higher degree which is being followed enthusiastically by teaching staff from both schools. Staff taking the in-house degree confirmed how valuable this was proving in terms of their professional and personal development. Induction of new members of staff and support of newly qualified teachers and teachers in training are all carefully managed.
- 4.11 The college is well supported by stringent financial management which ensures the supply of a good range of resources and suitable premises and accommodation. The quality of the recent development of art and music facilities and the overall quality of the campus and buildings confirms this. The college also benefits from committed and motivated support staff who enhance the pupils' educational opportunities by the high quality care of the buildings and grounds, the provision of appetising and healthy meals and range of other support services.

- 4.12 The school fully 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 college achieves its aims and is fully committed to its ethos and the shared passion for education by so many of the college's staff. Pupils really enjoy their school life in a special atmosphere of care, commitment and thoughtfulness. They are keen to learn and this, combined with the quality of teaching, leads to good academic results for their individual abilities. The outstanding quality of pastoral care and the wide-ranging local and international community links support the pupils' personal development that is marked by their initiative, their support of each other and their awareness of issues beyond the textbook.
- 5.2 Since the last inspection reports (ISI & Ofsted), the college has made a number of improvements in accommodation and the curriculum. New educational facilities include a teaching and learning centre, science computer atrium, new arts and photographic suite, computer networking, a music technology suite and enlarged boarding facilities. The curriculum has been improved by extending the national curriculum to the whole college, by the introduction of the pathways programme to enable the full range of ability to access the GCSE curriculum, by the introduction of double award science and by the introduction of new subjects at A level such as media studies, sociology and music technology. The establishment of the governors' education and personnel committee has enhanced the support of the college. The recommendations of a recent boarding welfare inspection by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) have been addressed positively in the best interests of the boarding pupils.
- 5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

- 5.4 The college's strengths far outweigh any weaknesses but the college should:
1. Give consideration to the further development of teaching techniques to meet the needs of all pupils by building on the roles of the subject coordinators in the junior school and the faculty heads in the senior school.
 2. The sharing of best practice in teaching and learning techniques, already a feature of the college and particularly of the junior school, should be widened.
- 5.5 No action in respect of regulatory requirements is required.

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 8th to 11th May 2006. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors

visited boarding houses and the medical centre. The responses of parents to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the college.

List of Inspectors

Adrian Underwood	Reporting Inspector
David Beck	Formerly Deputy Head, HMC school
Jenny Butler	Deputy Head, GSA school
Susan Gardner	Formerly Head, GSA school
Adam Pettitt	Deputy Head, HMC school
Andrew Selkirk	Director of Pastoral System, SHMIS school
Hilary Williams	Formerly Deputy Principal, HMC school
Sara Wiggins	Assistant Reporting Inspector
Sarah Eley	Formerly Head, IAPS school
Martin James	Head, IAPS school