



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**DERBY GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Derby Grammar School

Full Name of School	<b>Derby Grammar School</b>
DfE Number	<b>831/6004</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>1015449</b>
Address	<b>Derby Grammar School Rykneld Road Littleover Derby Derbyshire DE23 4BX</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01332 523027</b>
Fax Number	<b>01332 518670</b>
Email Address	<b>headmaster@derbygrammar.co.uk</b>
Head	<b>Mr Richard Paine</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr David Walker</b>
Age Range	<b>7 to 19</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>282</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (270 boys; 12 girls;)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>7-11: 59 11-18: 223</b>
Number of Boarders	<b>Total: 0</b>
Inspection dates	<b>04 Oct 2011 to 05 Oct 2011 02 Nov 2011 to 04 Nov 2011</b>

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in October 2005.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010\*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

\*These Standards Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Derby Grammar School is an independent day school for boys, with girls admitted to the sixth form. It aims to provide an excellent all-round education with a commitment to academic excellence at its core. It aspires to equip its pupils with a breadth of skills and knowledge which will enable them to perform outstandingly well at school and in later life. It seeks to ensure that its pupils obtain places on good courses in higher education, and to succeed in a rapidly changing world. It also hopes to provide a range of well-run and diverse extra-curricular activities, through which to encourage and support pupils in becoming confident, rounded and socially responsible young people. The school is a charitable trust run by a board of governors.
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1995 on its present site, which has been developed since then in line with the school's requirements. Both senior and junior sections of the school are within the same buildings. Admission is academically selective. Among its scholarships it offers choral scholarships for choristers at Derby Cathedral.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection the school has introduced a mixed sixth form to this otherwise single sex boys' school. It has also seen the appointment of a new head and head of juniors. It now has 282 pupils, being 59 boys in Years 3 to 6, 169 boys in Years 7 to 11, and 42 boys and 12 girls in Years 12 and 13.
- 1.4 The ability profile of the school is above the national average throughout. Pupils are drawn from a wide surrounding area, and about a fifth are from ethnic minorities, mainly Asian. Thirty-four pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL), and the school has four pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receiving specialist learning support. No pupil has a statement of special educational need.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 The pupils' achievements are good. Pupils of all abilities within the school have good subject knowledge and understanding, show enthusiasm for their learning, and are attentive and responsive in lessons. They achieve examination results far above the national average at both A level and GCSE, and above the average for selective maintained schools at A Level. Pupils work well both individually and cooperatively. They take advantage of the many good extra-curricular opportunities provided, and leave the school well prepared for the next stage in their lives. The recommendations of the previous report concerning both curriculum and work styles have been implemented, and the provision for both the curriculum and extra-curricular activity are good. Most of the teaching is good, with some of it excellent; a small amount is of more variable quality. Use of technology available in classrooms is insufficiently widespread at present.
- 2.2 The personal development of the pupils is excellent and supported by the excellent pastoral care pupils receive. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is of a very high order, with the chaplaincy playing a major role in this area, supported by staff throughout the school. The school council encourages pupils to take responsibility for their community, and to come forward with positive suggestions for it. The concept of voluntary service is well developed. Pupils enjoy their time in the school. Pastoral care is well organised through a system of tutors and year heads, and parents are happy with the care provided. The school's safeguarding, health and safety procedures are good, and given appropriately high priority in school deliberations.
- 2.3 Governance, leadership and management are good, and are excellent in the Junior School. Governors have a wide range of expertise which they utilise well, they meet regularly, and are aware of their responsibilities for legal compliance, school policies, safeguarding, health and safety. Governors have good oversight of the school and ensure that its aims are met. They have a detailed and effective school development plan, and have produced policies and procedures which support pupils throughout the school. The senior management team has good structures in place for monitoring school performance, although monitoring in some Senior School areas lacks consistency. Policies and procedures in the Junior School are excellent. The recommendations of the previous report concerning management structures have been met. The school has good links with parents, who, in their pre-inspection questionnaires, expressed considerable satisfaction throughout with the school's provision. A very few parents were unhappy with support for special needs or response to parental concerns, but no evidence was found to support these views.

## **2.(b) Action points**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school did not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it was required to:

- ensure that all entries in the single register of appointments show correctly the dates on which the original relevant checks were made [Part 4, paragraph 22.(4), under Suitability of staff and proprietors].

### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

2.5 In addition to the above regulatory action point, the school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Spread the best practice seen in most teaching, including in use of ICT, to all areas of the curriculum.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

#### **3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills**

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements throughout the school is good. Pupils of all abilities have good subject knowledge, understanding and skills in a broad range of subjects and the school satisfies its aims in this respect. Standards of literacy and numeracy are high throughout the school and pupils are articulate, thoughtful and listen attentively. They are adept at using and applying information and communication technology (ICT) to support their learning. Pupils with SEND achieve well in relation to their abilities, whilst those who are gifted and talented have enjoyed greater support since the previous inspection, and achieve well.
- 3.2 The pupils achieve well in a broad range of extra-curricular opportunities that the school offers. They succeed in the junior and senior Mathematics Challenge, in an East Midlands Latin speaking competition and in various external examinations in both music and speech and drama. Music has a strong tradition with one recent sixth-form leaver gaining an organ scholarship. Swing Band, Choir and a Senior Band perform regularly in concerts; the Junior Choir has won its class in the Derby Festival. All Year 9 pupils take the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award (D of E) and many go on to silver and gold, nine pupils achieving gold awards this year. Significant pupil achievements also include the selection of a student to represent Britain as a European Youth Parliament alumni having debated in the national finals. In sport, pupils have recently rowed at international level and the First XV rugby were undefeated last season in their regular fixtures.
- 3.3 In addition to a good allocation of time to physical education (PE) and games within the curriculum there are regular team practices. Pupils eagerly take up the many opportunities to participate in a good range of sports, in which they develop high levels of skill, and they keenly contest the opportunity to represent the school in competitive fixtures. The Junior School regularly win local mathematics and design and technology competitions. The breadth and standard of these activities are influential in helping pupils become confident, rounded and socially responsible in line with the school's aims.
- 3.4 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2008 to 2010. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. Results at A-level have been above the average for all maintained schools and above the average for maintained selective schools. GCSE results have been far above average for maintained schools and similar to the average for maintained selective schools. In IGCSE Sciences, results are higher than worldwide averages. This level of attainment indicates that pupils throughout the Senior School make good progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability. Attainment at A level is good, with the number of pupils achieving A\* or A grades maintaining the high standard of recent years. Attainment in the Junior School cannot be judged according to performance in national tests, but, judged by work scrutiny and observation, it is high in relation to national age-related expectations. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils make good progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability. There are no apparent differences in academic attainment based on gender or ethnicity and SEND pupils achieve well in relation to their ability. Sixth form pupils make good progress and the majority of them gain places at their first choice of university.

3.5 The pupils' attitudes to learning and their academic work are excellent and they willingly take greater responsibility for their learning as they progress through the school. Independent learning is evident in their work in many subjects and this shows significant improvement since the previous inspection. The many clinics that academic departments offer are voluntarily well used by pupils. Written work is well presented and, attentive to instructions, pupils work well individually and cooperatively with others. In lessons they are good listeners, well focused, respectful and keen to give their best.

### **3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)**

3.6 The quality of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good and meets the school's aim to provide well-run and diverse activities. The academic curriculum is well balanced with a good range of subjects that meets the needs of the pupils, including those with SEND and the more able. The personal, social and health education (PHSE) and religious education curricula now meet the recommendation from the previous report. Almost all parents commented in pre-inspection questionnaires that they believe school provides a very good range of both academic subjects and extra-curricular activities.

3.7 The curriculum contributes effectively to the pupils' linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, creative, aesthetic and physical development. Throughout the school the curriculum is planned to suit all ages, abilities and needs, and is planned to ensure that pupils of differing abilities are all fully involved and challenged. It is effective in developing a keen understanding in pupils of PHSE. The school is making strong progress towards its aim of providing an excellent all round education.

3.8 The learning resource centre in the Senior School consisting of both an ICT suite and library is used by the whole school and provides a focus for developing independent learning. Departmental libraries, the fiction library and Junior School 'book boxes' are also well used by pupils.

3.9 The variety and scale of the extra-curricular programme strongly enriches the educational experience, providing pupils with ample opportunities to experience a wide range of activities and is planned to encourage participation in more than one area. Academically based trips, for instance to Greece, or subject field courses, take place in various years and in virtually every lunch break an activity is available for each year group, as well as many after school, encompassing a very wide range of interests. The school has strong links with local sports clubs. Regular music and drama performances, both within the school and the local community, are available to both junior and senior pupils. Involvement by pupils is considerable and they greatly appreciate and enjoy these opportunities.

3.10 Throughout the school there are opportunities to take part in residential trips in this and other countries, to enrich pupils' experience and education, such as the Year 6 trip to Hollowford, a trip to Iceland and various skiing expeditions. A broad range of day excursions, for instance to Twycross Zoo, supports academic work. Intellectual stimulation is provided through activities such as language exchanges, debating, chess and business French.

### **3. (c) The contribution of teaching**

- 3.11 Teaching throughout the school is good, often excellent, and in line with the school's aim to provide an excellent education, although in a very few cases teaching was of more variable quality. Features of the best teaching include excellent planning for pupils of differing abilities, particularly successfully seen in the Junior School, clear structure of lesson plans that include a variety of tasks to enable varied learning styles, astute and skilful questioning, appropriately challenging material, good pace and high teacher expectations. This combination of features ensures that the recommendation of the previous report to encourage more independent learning has been met. Lessons are effective in producing results, but in a small number of less successful Senior School lessons teaching is over prescriptive, focusing firmly on examination outcomes and is unimaginative in style.
- 3.12 A key feature of the teaching is the culture of praise and encouragement. Teachers know their pupils well and are sensitive to individuals' needs. Pupils are confident in their teacher's subject and syllabus knowledge, and this trust ensures that pupils are open about their difficulties and teachers respond effectively to their needs. A variety of teaching methods is employed and in the best lessons teachers are adept at adapting approaches to engage and develop their pupils. The use of ICT by pupils within subjects has improved since the previous inspection, but use of new technology by teachers to enhance the classroom experience is under developed and rarely interactive, the pupils thus losing the opportunity to participate actively in this way in their learning. However, materials and resources used within teaching were often well chosen and highly appropriate.
- 3.13 Lessons are strongly led by the teacher and display clear purpose and ambition. In many lessons there are good interactive question and answer sessions. The respectful rapport between pupils and teachers keeps pupils focused on their tasks.
- 3.14 Throughout the school, work is marked regularly. In the Senior School the marking method is determined by departmental policy, each department using its own assessment criteria. This results in attainment and effort being recognised in different and sometimes conflicting ways. Some marking is superficial, providing little guidance and follow up of wrong or incomplete work. In the Junior School marking follows a detailed policy and is clear and helpful. The best marking in both sections included detailed comments to aid improvements and corrections of mistakes including spelling. A feature of all the marking was the use of Derby Grammar School Commendations and encouraging comments. School reports and grade sheets are regular and informative and track pupil performance effectively. Comments in reports vary in terms of quality; nearly all give praise, details of work covered, targets for improvement and often clear diagnostic analysis.
- 3.15 Standardised tests are used to assess entry to the Senior School. Tracking and target setting are reviewed by the use of a range of national standardised tests in Years 7, 10, and 12, supported by regular internal review of pupil progress. These are effectively used, in conjunction with internally generated data, to set GCSE and A level target grades, supported by regular internal review of progress. They are also used to monitor departmental effectiveness. They do not, however, give pupils subject specific information to enable them to pin-point areas for further attention. The Junior School has a successful tracking system based on National Curriculum targets, which focuses more clearly on specific areas for improvement.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils**

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent. The school's aim of encouraging a sense of happiness and fulfilment at school is successfully achieved.
- 4.2 The pupils' spiritual awareness is very well developed. Throughout the school they have a high level of self esteem, confidence and emotional maturity, developed in large part through the emphasis on praise and rewards both in lessons and beyond the classroom. They demonstrate an appreciation of world faiths through religious studies and visits to places of worship in the community. During prayer and readings in assemblies, pupils listen, reflect and show respect for others. The Christian Union and musical concerts in Derby Cathedral further enhance the pupils' awareness of spiritual inspiration. The spiritual leadership and support of the chaplaincy is greatly valued by the pupils.
- 4.3 The moral development of pupils is outstanding. They have a clear sense of the difference between right and wrong and the need to take responsibility for their actions. This was observed during a citizenship lesson when younger Senior School pupils gave sophisticated responses to various moral dilemmas that they were asked to consider, and in the expectations of pupil and teacher behaviour written by older Junior School pupils. The orderly, friendly atmosphere that pervades the school is testament to the pupils' appreciation of their code of conduct, their self discipline and consideration for others. The younger pupils respect the senior prefects who play an active role in monitoring pupils, distinguishing between right and wrong forms of behaviour.
- 4.4 The pupils' social development is excellent. Representatives from every class serve on the effective Junior and Senior School councils. A recent request from the council to include financial awareness lessons within the Year 7 to 9 citizenship course is under discussion. In such ways pupils are encouraged to show initiative and contribute to the development of the school. Pupils value making a difference to the wider community, through the voluntary service element of the D of E, and as they enthusiastically participate in numerous charitable ventures such as the creation of ninety shoeboxes for distribution to the YMCA, the recent expeditions to Africa and South America, and fund raising such as the large sums raised each year for children's charities. The pupils are well aware of the needs of those less fortunate than themselves. The school succeeds well in its aim to support pupils in becoming socially responsible young people, well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- 4.5 The pupils' cultural awareness is strongly developed. The school aims to respect diversity, which it does well. Pupils show interest in the cultural and ethnic mix of their school. The Junior School is pioneering a relationship with a small rural community in Tanzania for which it is doing effective fund raising. In addition, pupils come to understand cultural heritage and influence through the curriculum; older Junior School pupils in design and technology investigated different ways in which bread is prepared around the modern world. The well established language exchange programme, as well as a wide array of other trips abroad, ensures immersion into the language and culture of other countries. On a day to celebrate languages, pupils gave each other an awareness of languages not normally delivered within the curriculum, such as Italian, Punjabi, Chinese, Arabic and Marathi.

#### **4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety**

- 4.6 The contribution of arrangements for welfare health and safety throughout the whole school is excellent. In accordance with its aims, the school supports its pupils to become confident, rounded and socially responsible young people. The pupils' first point of contact is their form tutor, who is supported in the Junior School by the head of juniors, and in the Senior School by the head of year, who in turn is guided by senior management. The pastoral structure is thus robust and closely monitored, with the recent useful addition of appraisal for tutors in their pastoral role in the Senior School. Frequent meetings between pastoral and academic middle managers ensure constant exchange of information. The small size of the school enables each child's personal development and academic progress to be tracked very closely, thus confirming one of the stated distinctive features of the school.
- 4.7 Relationships between pupils and teachers and among pupils themselves are friendly, open and founded on mutual respect. The staff give generously of their time, offering many after-school clubs, which the overwhelming majority of the pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire recognise and appreciate. In addition, the mentoring offered by sixth formers to younger pupils in need of support, following its successful introduction, is being considered for development into a formal process.
- 4.8 The school's highly effective behaviour management policy places great emphasis on publicly recognising achievement in all its forms. The school rules are clearly defined, with a graduated set of sanctions, taking into account individual circumstances when necessary. The excellent traffic light system to remind pupils about behaviour is visible in all Junior School classes. Pupils generally regard the policy as fair and justly applied. Instances of bullying are rare and swiftly dealt with. Posters, with input from the school council, are displayed around the school promoting an anti-bullying culture. Pupils are well aware of the procedures to follow should they witness or experience harassment.
- 4.9 Effective child protection measures are in place and all staff receive relevant training as per requirements. Child protection and safeguarding matters are also appropriately regular items for in-service training.
- 4.10 Health and safety arrangements are thorough, and clearly laid down in school policies and procedures. Measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards are comprehensive and all necessary risk assessments are in place. Pupils who require medical assistance receive immediate attention. All staff are trained in first aid. All curriculum areas are accessible to wheelchairs with specialist furniture for disabled pupils available in some science laboratories.
- 4.11 Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits and to take regular exercise. The food is nutritious and the pupils appreciate the choice offered. Suggestions regarding food issues have been discussed with the catering manager at the school council. Registration is conducted correctly and admissions procedures are appropriate, all registers being stored appropriately. Pupils are well supervised during all activities, the arrangements being appropriate to the age of those involved.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) The quality of governance**

- 5.1 The governance of the school is good, ensuring effective oversight of educational standards, financial planning and use of resources, in accordance with the school's aim to provide an excellent all-round education with a commitment to high academic achievement at its core. Governors have approved an extensive and detailed development plan, related to the school's aims, with financial implications assessed and criteria for evaluation stated, whose continuing implementation ensures good progression in the school's activities. Four governor sub-committees, for finance, property, health and safety and marketing, enable governors to manage their work effectively and to utilise their varied and valuable business experience. The support they can provide to the head in school educational matters is more limited.
- 5.2 Governors provide stimulus and support for growth in both the Junior and Senior Schools. They are informed by regular reports from the head, covering both sections of the school. Some governors have attended governors' training, and governors also attend as many school functions as their professional lives permit. Some parents and staff feel that their knowledge of the governors is slight; the school agrees and is looking at ways of extending the governors' interaction with staff and parents as far as is realistic.
- 5.3 Governors are now effective in discharging their responsibilities for safeguarding children and ensuring their health, safety and welfare, although in the past some entries on the central register of appointments were not correctly recorded. All necessary safety checks are carried out and these are now appropriately recorded, and all required policies are in place, and implemented and regularly reviewed. The governor responsible for child protection reviews the policy every term.

### **5.(b) The quality of leadership and management**

- 5.4 Leadership and management of the school are good, and outstanding in the Junior School. The strong senior management team provides direction for staff, sets staff targets through an efficient appraisal system and has made a start on systems to ensure that targets are met. The appraisal system is also used to identify areas for relevant professional development and where possible appropriate courses are identified for staff wishing to increase their professional training. In the Junior School excellent systems are in place for pupil assessment and target setting for pupil progress. Policies are very clear and comprehensive, and management takes steps to ensure that all staff understand and implement them fully. The recommendations from the previous inspection report concerning management have both been implemented.
- 5.5 Department and faculty heads are involved in development planning, and monitor the work of their departments, including pupil assessment, both through appraisal and work scrutiny; some of this is done very efficiently but at present this best practice is not consistent in all departments. Junior School marking grids are used very successfully to monitor pupil progress. Faculty and departmental meetings enable staff to consider pupils' performance against baseline estimates and to take remedial action where needed. The clinics run by all departments were much appreciated by pupils who spoke to inspectors.

5.6 The school has an induction procedure for new staff which ensures that teachers are fully informed about the school's activities, and covers all the necessary safeguarding, welfare, health and safety routines which are also covered for all members of staff. Checking procedures, to ensure safe appointments, are also covered for all staff. New staff spoke very appreciatively of the care taken to ensure they received a good and thorough induction.

### **5.(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians**

5.7 The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is good. The school values highly its links with parents, which, in accordance with its aims, are based on a shared objective to support and develop each pupil's self-confidence and self esteem. Parents, in their pre-inspection questionnaire, reported high levels of satisfaction throughout. They particularly liked the attitudes and values the school promotes, and the range of both the curriculum and the extra-curricular activities. Inspectors agreed with these findings.

5.8 The Junior School holds mathematics and English evenings to explain the methods taught to pupils so that parents may better support them at home, and throughout the school a programme of parents' evenings, Parent Teacher Association meetings and activities, various school performances and an extensive fixture list give parents good opportunities to be involved in school life. The Junior School forum gives parents a chance to discuss with the school, on a termly basis, areas of interest or concern to them.

5.9 Information given to parents is good. Reports are detailed and helpful, the website is clear and up-to-date, newsletters to parents, both from the school and the Parents' Association are frequent and the school makes good use of email communication. In the pre-inspection questionnaire parents agreed that communication was good. A few parents said they were not happy with the way their concerns had been handled, and a few did not agree that their children had been given suitable support for special needs, but inspectors found no evidence to support these views.

5.10 The school has an appropriate policy for dealing with complaints from parents.

**What the school should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.**

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mrs Jenny McCallum	Reporting Inspector
Mr Robert Haworth	Head, SHMIS school
Mr Alec Synge	HoD IAPS school
Miss Francesca May	Director of Studies, HMC school
Mr Alan Cooper	Professional Tutor, HMC school
Dr Simon Horbury	Director of Studies, IAPS school