

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS COUNCIL  
(ISC)**

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**INSPECTION OF**

**CLIFTON COLLEGE**

**By the**

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE  
(ISI)**

**On**

**12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> March 2007**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## INSPECTION REPORT ON

### Clifton College

The preparatory and pre-preparatory schools were inspected at the same time, and separate reports were published.

Full Name of the School	<b>Clifton College</b>
DfES Number	<b>801/6000</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>311735</b>
Address	<b>32 College Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 3JH.</b>
Telephone Number	<b>0117 315 7000</b>
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Email Address	<b>admissions@cliftoncollegeuk.com</b>
Head Master	<b>Mr Mark Moore</b>
Chairman of Council	<b>Mr Andrew Thornhill QC</b>
Age Range	<b>13 – 18 Years</b>
Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>12<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> March 2007</b>

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](http://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.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 Clifton College comprises three schools: the pre-preparatory school, known as Butcombe, the preparatory school, known as The Pre, and the Upper School, and provides a continuous education for boys and girls from age 3 to 18. Each school has its own head, and the head of the Upper School is the head of college. The college was founded in 1862 to provide “a first-class establishment in the nature of a Public School, for the education of sons of gentlemen in Clifton.” John Percival, its visionary first head master, rejected a narrow classical curriculum, set up Town House for day boys, and encouraged the foundation of a Jewish house in 1878. It was closed in 2005, although a small number of Jewish pupils and the synagogue remain. The college became coeducational in 1987.
- 1.2 The college is situated on a prime Bristol site in what Betjeman has described as “the most elegant suburb in Europe,” on the edge of Clifton Down. The schools are a mixture of purpose-built facilities and converted Victorian town houses, spread over several blocks adjacent to residential property. The principal sports facilities are on the other side of the River Avon at Beggar Bush.
- 1.3 The college has a boarding ethos although day pupils, mainly from the Bristol and surrounding county areas, now comprise half of the intake of Years 9 to 11. However, the sixth form is three-fifths boarding. The present head master took up his post in September 2005. Since the last inspection, in spring 2001, systematic refurbishment of several boarding houses has taken place and one boys’ house has been relocated to a new building. The famous cricket pitch on The Close has been re-laid and there has been considerable upgrading of classroom and sporting facilities.
- 1.4 Standardised tests indicate that the overall ability of the pupils is well above the national average, with about two-thirds in the top quarter of the ability range. Thus, where pupils are performing in line with their abilities, results in public examinations are expected to be well above those achieved in all maintained schools.
- 1.5 Day pupils are not only local but also come from the wider geographical area. Boarders are mainly regional and national, although some have an international background. Most of the parents are engaged in professional and business occupations.
- 1.6 Slightly less than a fifth of pupils receive scholarships or bursaries, although up to two-fifths of pupils, in total, receive some assistance with fees. At the time of the inspection there were 236 girls and 445 boys in the college. Of these there were 146 girl and 261 boy boarders. There were 128 girls and 259 boys in Years 9 to 11, and 108 girls and 186 boys in the sixth form. A fifth of pupils in the Upper School came from overseas, representing over 30 different first language speakers. Pupil numbers are up to a tenth higher than when the previous inspection took place.
- 1.7 No pupil has a statement of special educational need, but there are 145 pupils for whom English is not their principal language, and 49 receive language support. In addition, the school has identified 103 pupils as having learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD), and 94 are given specialist assistance; most usually for mild dyslexia and dyspraxia. Entry to the school essentially at 13+, and in the sixth form, is based on a selection process including examinations, interview and a report from the previous school.

- 1.8 Most pre-prep and prep pupils pass the entrance test for the Upper School. In recent years, very few pupils accepted at 13+, and less than one per cent of those joining the sixth form come from maintained schools in the UK. Other entrants are from the independent sector or from schools overseas. The majority of pupils stay on in the sixth form. In recent years up to 10 per cent have left from Year 11, but a substantially larger number of pupils have been accepted into the sixth form from outside. Nearly all sixth form pupils proceed to higher education in this country.
- 1.9 The college is a Christian foundation and it aims to:
- nurture the spiritual life of each person, enable pupils to appreciate cultural, religious and social diversity, teach responsible moral choices in private and public life and promote a culture of honesty trust and respect;
  - encourage academic excellence for all, together with intellectual passion and curiosity, encourage an appreciation of music, art, design, drama and literature and encourage pupils to enjoy physical fitness and competitive games;
  - ensure that pastoral care and the house system provide a happy and homely context for pupils and staff to grow emotionally, and to live together in a cooperative way.
- 1.10 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

School	NC name
Third Form	Year 9
Fourth Form	Year 10
Fifth Form	Year 11
Lower Sixth Form	Year 12
Upper Sixth Form	Year 13

## **2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

### **The Educational Experience Provided**

- 2.1 The full and varied education provided by the college successfully matches its stated aims and philosophy. There is a broad and balanced curriculum at all levels, complemented by an exhaustive programme of sporting, dramatic, musical and other co-curricular activities. The college actively seeks to foster a spirit of community and commitment to its ethos and values, epitomised by pupils' perception of the chapel as central to the school's life. Since the last inspection the college has sought to broaden its GCSE and sixth form provision, it has reformed the timetable to improve the rhythm and pattern of the school day and it has made curriculum changes to ensure a more equitable distribution of teaching time in GCSE option group subjects. It has also made progress in increasing the levels of careers advice and guidance. A sixth form girl summed up her experiences: "the school is amazing and a wonderful place to learn, not only for work, but also skills for life; I'm so lucky to be here." In their pre-inspection questionnaire parents were highly supportive of the overall educational programme on offer.
- 2.2 Through its wide-ranging curriculum, the education provided in the classroom contributes to the pupils' linguistic, mathematical, scientific and technological development. The human, social, physical, aesthetic and creative dimensions are also represented at all levels. GCSE provision offers a satisfactory basis for sixth form studies, but a commitment to the full GCSE range stretches some students too widely. In the sixth form, there is much flexibility and choice, with pupils being able to select A levels in all subjects taught at GCSE, together with a considerable number of new options. There are four main timetable columns plus an additional block offering a wide range of possibilities which include a BTEC First Diploma in public services, additional modern languages, one of which is Mandarin, critical thinking and photography. Further breadth comes from a sixth form lecture programme.
- 2.3 The provision of co-curricular activities is outstanding, and pupils engage eagerly in all the programmes that are provided. Participation in sport, drama and music is available to the highest performance standards but there are also opportunities to achieve in these and other activities for pupils of all levels of talent or competence. The standard of boys' sport is high, and girls are successful in national sporting competition. There is keen team games rivalry at house level and there are also plenty of opportunities for other recreational sport. There is also considerable participation in music with over two-fifths of pupils having music lessons. Standards in music are very high, as demonstrated by the quality and variety of playing and singing displayed at a major concert during the inspection week. Drama, with the advantage of excellent facilities in the purpose-built Redgrave Theatre, and debating add to the diversity of opportunities. There is also a wide-ranging and highly successful community service programme called Clifton in the Community. The Combined Cadet Force (CCF), with its three service sections, and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award offer many team building and leadership opportunities.
- 2.4 Pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) receive additional English tuition through individual or group private lessons, and by specialist timetable options. The progress of these pupils and others who receive learning support is carefully monitored and the amount of specialist tuition is increased or decreased, as necessary. All teachers have access to information about pupils with EAL and LDD within their classes, and are expected to take account of their needs when planning lessons or homework.

- 2.5 A substantial number of clubs and societies further contribute to the rich menu on offer - from cooking to chemistry, and from photography to philosophy. Pupils of different ages play well together. Staff make an outstanding contribution and a great personal commitment to the success of activities programmes. Strong commendation for their efforts was a feature of the responses of large numbers of pupils and parents in the pre-inspection questionnaires.
- 2.6 Opportunities also exist within houses, and in the school as a whole, for pupils to initiate, organise and run their own activities. A recent Band Night was mounted because of the enthusiastic efforts of boys in one boarding house, a Russian Night took place, and there were special celebrations of the Chinese New Year. These events also resulted from pupil initiatives.
- 2.7 The appointment of a new head of careers and university entrance, much welcomed in the pre-inspection questionnaires by the pupils and parents, is offering a more systematic approach to guidance issues than previously. Pupils are encouraged and helped to find relevant work experience. Stronger links with local businesses are being cultivated by the new director of external relations. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) courses for Years 9 to 11 have recently been revised and are currently bedding in. In the best lessons observed there was clear evidence of teachers catering for the needs and abilities of all their pupils. Clifton has a good record of entry at Oxford and Cambridge, but there is no overall strategy in place for identifying, stretching and challenging the most able pupils at each age level within the school. However, it is planned that the former position of master in charge of scholars is to be replaced by the appointment of a gifted and talented pupils' co-ordinator.
- 2.8 The school meets the regulatory standards for the curriculum [Standard 1].

### **Pupils' Learning and Achievements**

- 2.9 Pupils achieve very well in their academic courses and in other activities. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they study, listen attentively, take a pride in their work and collaborate effectively in groups and teams. They apply themselves appropriately to their learning, and they are beginning to use information and communication technology (ICT) more widely. At times they can be passive in class, relying on exposition and printed notes and handouts, and a little reluctant to think critically and to become more independent learners. This was referred to in the previous inspection.
- 2.10 Broad objectives for improving GCSE and A level results have been set. External examination performances are good across all age groups, given the range of ability at entry. There is a little unevenness in examination performance between subjects, but boys and girls of similar abilities perform equally well, and there has been consistent improvement in results over time at both GCSE and A level. Pupils' attainment in GCSE examinations is good in relation to their abilities, and their progress from entry onwards is well above national norms. GCSE results, overall, have improved steadily since the last inspection, with about half the grades being at A\* and A over the last three years, well above those in all maintained schools, and similar to those in maintained selective schools. Results at A level have improved even more over this time with seven-tenths of the grades being at A or B. The results are good in relation to pupils' abilities, being comparable with the averages for maintained selective schools. Pupils' progress at A level in almost all subjects is well above national norms.
- 2.11 Individual pupils and teams have achieved very well in a variety of activities. Extensive pupil input into chapel services contributes to their learning and enhances their presentational skills and self-confidence. There have been successes in mathematics and science Olympiads, and a

recent Arkwright Scholarship award in design technology. The standard of choral and instrumental music is excellent. Very popular and well-organised public performances take place each term. Similarly, there are several high quality college and house drama productions each year. Achievements in many sports are very good. In particular, boys' rugby, hockey and cricket teams do well in regional and national competitions, with regular individual representation at county, regional and occasionally national level. Girls' hockey and netball teams also achieve very well nationally, and this is also reflected in individual selections at regional and national level. Girls also fence internationally. The CCF has three popular sections and pupils achieve effectively in normal services activities and in regional competition. Shooting is also of high quality, and top awards are achieved in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Clifton in the Community involves large numbers of pupils in many different voluntary service roles, and all these achievements and activities increase pupils' confidence and broaden their experience beyond the taught curriculum.

- 2.12 High standards of literacy and numeracy are evident in pupils of all ages, including those with LDD. Most pupils are articulate as well as being good listeners. They respond effectively to questions and can be proactive in asking questions themselves. They use technical vocabulary appropriately in a wide variety of subjects. Most pupils are capable note-takers, although the content of their notes is more often directed by their teachers than the result of independent research. Information is sought using reference books, the internet and also periodicals, of which there is a wide selection in the Percival Library. Written work is generally well organised, and coursework is carefully prepared and presented, often using ICT. Most pupils try hard in class, but a few do not always use their time effectively, particularly during class self-study time. Homework is usually completed punctually, but its value to learning can be reduced by an over-emphasis on completing work started in class, especially in Years 9 to 11.
- 2.13 Pupils have good arithmetical abilities and algebraic manipulation skills which they use effectively together with the capacity to apply mathematical techniques and concepts in a wide variety of subjects. They draw and interpret graphs with confidence not only in mathematics but also in geography, economics and science. Pupils are proficient in the use of ICT, and by undertaking a variety of subject-based tasks gain an appreciation of its use as a provider and filter of information, and as a diagnostic tool. The creative class use of laptop computers, computer simulations and the internet by pupils is infrequent.
- 2.14 Whilst pupils show confidence in their teachers and a willingness to persevere and try to ensure that they complete set tasks, they can be too passive in their learning, particularly in Years 9 to 11. In lessons that involve a variety of teaching methods, and an emphasis on pupil-teacher interaction, pupils clearly show enjoyment and are engaged in the learning process in more focused and passionate ways. They cooperate well in groups and teams, are happy to share information and to help one another. This ability to work together effectively occurs in many lessons, and is particularly evident in sport, music, community service and the CCF.

## **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils**

- 2.15 The college is excellent in enabling pupils to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. Their personal development is central to the college's ethos and is a main aim. Pupils are open, natural and self-assured and relate easily to others. They have a strong sense of loyalty and commitment to the college and to their houses, which is often retained long after they have left school. Many parents expressed strong appreciation of the college's ethos and value system in the pre-inspection questionnaire.
- 2.16 Clifton is a Christian school, but welcomes pupils of all faiths or none. The beautiful chapel, which is very much at the centre of the campus and college life, is used not only for religious services and assemblies but also for informal school gatherings such as house music competitions. Pupils, in house groups, lead morning chapel assemblies exploring themes of a moral or spiritual nature. During the inspection, members of a girls' house presented their ideas on the meaning of certain symbols in every day life, sharing their thoughts, displaying illustrative logos and leading prayers. Some Year 9 pupils volunteered their genuine appreciation of inspection week assemblies and the contributions of their peers to daily chapel.
- 2.17 The chaplain provides strong spiritual leadership and encourages an atmosphere of enquiry and investigation. His thought for the week, posted on the college's website and emailed widely, encourages pupil reflection, and this is supplemented by 'Chaplaincy Papers' which are distributed to all staff to stimulate thinking and discussion. There is regular attendance at linked activities such as the Philosophy Society, the Christian Forum and Agnostics Anonymous.
- 2.18 Pupils of other faiths are supported and many are involved in assembly presentations. There is a strong Jewish tradition at Clifton. Jewish pupils go to the college synagogue on a daily basis, and special academic arrangements are made for those who do not attend lessons on Saturdays.
- 2.19 The college's code of conduct is widely respected and there is a very civilised atmosphere on the campus. The excellent family atmosphere created in the houses greatly influences behaviour. Senior pupils take their responsibilities as role models seriously, and help to support younger pupils. College prefects are given important supervisory responsibilities which they carry out effectively and efficiently. Moral issues are addressed in the PSHE programme in Years 10 and 11, and in periodic sixth form lectures designed to stimulate thought on a wide range of moral and ethical questions. In the week of inspection, during a Year 11 PSHE lesson, pupils were challenged to examine their tendency to stereotype, and in a Year 9 religious studies (RS) lesson pupils discussed the problems of coming to terms with dying. In a Year 13 lesson there was a lively exchange of views on the merits of aid to developing countries which was conducted entirely in Spanish.
- 2.20 Pupils' social development is a real strength and they have a wide range of opportunities to contribute to their houses, to the school and beyond. Every pupil is involved in house activities, and competitions in music and drama allow pupils in all year groups to work cooperatively. These opportunities, together with a rich variety of other co-curricular activities such as sport, CCF, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award and the School Council, enable many to develop greater confidence, self-reliance and group skills. Clifton in the Community, in which nearly half the pupils participate in voluntary service, promotes a greater awareness of the needs of others. There is much charity fund raising and on a morning break during the inspection, a group of pupils raised money for a worldwide charity, Opportunity International.

- 2.21 The high levels of participation in cultural activities serve to strengthen sensitivity to the arts. In religious studies pupils explore cultural differences, such as those between the Christian and Islamic traditions, and in several subjects the effects of race discrimination, environmental issues and human rights abuses are examined. Many pupils widen their horizons through college trips abroad; significant numbers of international pupils are welcomed, resulting in the promotion of tolerance and understanding. Pupils are appreciative of the college's encouragement of the celebration of different cultures and traditions, and the greater understanding this generates.
- 2.22 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

### **The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)**

- 2.23 The quality of teaching is generally effective; some examples of outstanding teaching were observed, although a few lessons were unsatisfactory. The teaching staff are appropriately qualified and highly committed. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and their enthusiasm for their subjects is clear, although this is not always transferred to the pupils. The staff know their pupils well and display genuine concern for their progress. Teaching styles are thorough and safe with much exposition by the teacher, but there was less evidence of independent learning or the stretching of the most able. There is wide use of data projectors by teachers, but some lessons lack variety, with pupils being directed to a restricted range of tasks, sometimes resulting in a lack of pace. In the last inspection it was recommended that a whole school database should be introduced to improve the efficiency of staff access to information, and to enhance the ability of the school to assess and monitor pupil performance. The database has been created and is beginning to be used more effectively.
- 2.24 There is an over-reliance on worksheets and photocopied material in some subjects. Files and exercise books vary in the quality of their presentation and organisation. Good examples of high quality presentation and data handling were seen in several coursework projects.
- 2.25 Some independent learning was seen in LDD lessons, drama and art where pupils were encouraged to show initiative, with the teachers providing individual back up support. Highly developed reasoning skills were displayed in a critical thinking lesson which centred on the analysis of arguments and evidence assessment. Teachers know their pupils well and are aware of those who require learning support. Good practice was observed in individual psychology and RS lessons; specific writing and speaking help was available in the former, and the support of a learning assistant was present in the latter.
- 2.26 Since the last inspection there has been greater emphasis on professional development via increased in-service training provision. In some departments peer classroom observation takes place and there is a commitment to sharing good practice.
- 2.27 The beautiful Percival Library is well used and its staff provide support for teaching and learning. A library induction programme is run for all new pupils, and specific workshops are delivered, as required, by subject staff.
- 2.28 Departments are well resourced with ICT projectors being evident in all but a few rooms. ICT is taught as a discrete BTEC course to Year 9 pupils, and an induction programme is provided for pupils who join the school later. There is no systematic use of ICT in teaching programmes, although pupils were seen using ICT effectively during private study periods and in a lower ability ICT Year 9 lesson, where they prepared information for a presentation on

- their “Clifton Experience.” Some use of intranet resources by staff and pupils was also observed.
- 2.29 Marking is satisfactory with grades being recorded in mark books or on databases. Marking procedures are set out in a specific policy document and also in a less detailed way in the staff handbook. However a variety of marking techniques is employed and there is an inconsistency of approach within departments. In some subjects formative marking is the norm, while in others effort grades or numerical attainment grades are awarded. Teachers’ comments range from extensive and helpful to simple statements which offer little advice as to how the pupil could improve. Pupils sometimes respond inadequately to comments requesting missing work to be completed, and corrections are not always undertaken. However, some good practice was seen in the classroom in terms of verbal feedback by teachers on set class and homework. There is little systematic monitoring of the marking or grading of colleagues by heads of department, but there is good practice in mathematics, and also in physics where marks for all tests and examinations are entered on a common database so that uniformity of grading can take place.
- 2.30 Pre-inspection questionnaire concerns by parents and pupils that coursework deadlines were uncoordinated were confirmed. There is currently no agreed timetable for coursework between departments. Poor effort grade performances are followed up by housemasters and housemistresses. Attainment and examination grades are fully recorded on the reports of pupils involved in AS/A2 level and in the latter stages of GCSE, although in Years 9 and 10 any attainment marks are only reported in the body of the text of the end of term report. Parents receive twice yearly exam reports, separately and additionally.
- 2.31 Heads of department are required to analyse their external examination results and submit reports to senior management. The results of internal and external examinations are monitored and compared to baseline tests results. Results of baseline tests and predictions have only been recently made available to all staff and so the information is not yet used systematically to ensure that pupils meet their full potential.
- 2.32 The school meets the regulatory requirements for teaching [Standard 1].

### **3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS**

#### **The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils**

- 3.1 The outstanding care given to individual pupils is a major strength of the college. Welfare provision and health and safety procedures are excellent and they have been reviewed and improved since the last inspection. This was indicated by the warm endorsement of pastoral provision in the pre-inspection parental and pupil questionnaires, and the positive expression by pupils about being highly valued and supported made during inspection week.
- 3.2 Pastoral care for all pupils is provided through highly supportive house structures. Day and boarding houses are run effectively by caring housemasters and housemistresses. All pupils are now in house-based tutor groups and housemasters and housemistresses, their assistants and their house tutors monitor pupils' academic and co-curricular progress. Tutors take direct responsibility for closely supervising pupils' overall progress and for providing guidance. Only one formal tutor group tutorial period is provided each week but tutors are easily accessible at other times to provide individual support, and much use is made by staff and pupils of the internal email network.
- 3.3 House matrons assist in maintaining pupils' welfare, and the recent additional provision of matron posts in the day houses has been welcomed. The chaplain, who is held in high regard, is freely available to pupils, and there are also male and female counsellors based at the health centre. House councils, which have been extended to all houses this year, and the newly established School Council provide further opportunities for pupils to raise matters. The School Council is still developing its procedures and mechanisms for feedback. Housemasters and housemistresses meet weekly with members of the senior management team (SMT), and advice is also sought from other colleagues. However, leadership and senior management changes have resulted in modifications to previous deliberative processes, and recent policy making in some pastoral areas has involved little consultation with housemasters and housemistresses.
- 3.4 A sense of mutual respect and common purpose between pupils themselves, and between staff and pupils, pervades all aspects of college life. Pupils value the care and patience of staff and enjoy the sense of belonging to a community. Older pupils help to look after younger ones in both day and boarding houses. At the heart of this system is the deep knowledge of and care for their pupils that housemasters and housemistresses possess.
- 3.5 The college has detailed policies on a wide range of pastoral issues including discipline, rewards and sanctions and bullying. This information is available to staff on the intranet and the college rules are listed in the prep diary. General information is also contained in the staff handbook. Bullying is rare and the college appears to be successful in its aim of creating an atmosphere of tolerance, cooperation and mutual respect in which bullying is seen as unacceptable. There are occasional lapses in the dress and appearance code, and in punctuality and in behaviour but generally pupils are mindful and accepting of the college's requirements.
- 3.6 A detailed child protection policy is in place. The chaplain is the designated child protection co-coordinator. The policy recognizes the requirement that all staff must be trained regularly. Support staff training is now in place, and the college has plans to extend this to include peripatetic music staff. A governor has been given specific responsibility in this area and the college has fully implemented the government guidelines for checking the suitability of staff.

- 3.7 The college takes seriously its health and safety responsibilities. Detailed, effective policies, including those for procedures for events off site, are in place and the works manager has received appropriate training in fire safety, and holds regular practices. In departmental areas such as design technology and chemistry pupils' awareness of health and safety issues is raised through handouts, exercises and appropriate signs.
- 3.8 The health centre serves all three sections of the college. It is well staffed and equipped. The college has expanded its bed capacity, reviewed its running, and an external audit is soon to take place. Nurses work closely with house matrons. Pupils are now able to choose to see either a male or a female doctor. A large number of staff are trained in first aid. The college has followed the recommendations of the last inspection report by upgrading catering provision. It has responded to pupils' concerns about food quality by increasing the budget and the variety of food available. Pupils confirm that there have been improvements this year. Healthy eating is encouraged and pupils now have a wider choice at each meal time.
- 3.9 Great care is taken to monitor the attendance of pupils, with registrations taking place three times a day for boarders, and twice for day pupils. Attendance at lessons is also recorded on the electronic registration system. Attendance and admissions registers comply with statutory obligations. The college has in place a policy as required by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act which is being reviewed in anticipation of future needs.
- 3.10 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3].

### **The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community**

- 3.11 The college has strong links with parents and outstanding links with the wider community. Since the last inspection reporting arrangements have been reviewed and the voluntary service programme centred on Clifton in the Community has significantly expanded.
- 3.12 There were a large number of responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire. The parents indicated that they were particularly pleased with the range of subjects on offer, with the extensive co-curricular activities programme, with the provision for boarders and with the values, attitudes and behaviour which the college promotes.
- 3.13 Detailed reports are issued to parents at the end of every term and parents' meetings are held once a year for each year group. Reports contain helpful comments on pupils' attitudes to learning and about their general progress, however they do not always refer explicitly to pupils' subject-specific skills, and do not automatically provide targets to inform them how to improve their learning. Pupils' achievements in co-curricular activities are included in reports.
- 3.14 The range of published information is good, including high quality documentation on the curriculum. Parents also receive valuable information about the school and its activities via the very good college website and through the head master's termly newsletters.
- 3.15 There is no parents association but the Friends of Clifton provide the opportunity for parents to become involved with fund raising, and other means of supporting the college. Parents enthusiastically support activities such as sports events, concerts and drama productions, and there is regular attendance at Sunday chapel services.
- 3.16 The college receives very few formal parental complaints, and any problems are usually dealt with effectively and informally at house level. Parents appreciate the fact that staff can be contacted directly at college and that most return calls both promptly and efficiently. Since the

last inspection the response to parental contacts has been significantly speeded up by the use of email.

- 3.17 The college has established very valuable links with the wider community, over time. Pupils make a significant contribution through the college's voluntary service programme, with placements in local hospitals, primary schools and care homes. The college has registered with the Millennium Volunteers Scheme and pupils achieve the highest awards through their efforts in this programme.
- 3.18 Pupils enjoy the opportunity to go on a number of college trips and educational visits. The successful girls' netball and hockey teams have recently visited Australia, and the Under Eighteen boys' cricket eleven enjoyed a tour to the Caribbean. Other departments also provide a wide range of educational visits, such as modern languages trips to Berlin and Rouen. All these activities develop in pupils a greater appreciation of, and respect for, their own and other cultures.
- 3.19 Visiting speakers also make a contribution to the whole college experience and a recent talk to sports scholars by a celebrated middle distance runner was particularly well received.
- 3.20 The college's sports grounds and facilities on the main site and at Beggar Bush, and the Redgrave Theatre are extensively used by a large number of outside organisations and members of the local community. Clifton College Services Limited works most effectively in making facilities available to exceptionally large numbers of the community, and the Old Cliftonian Society most loyally and generously supports the college and its pupils in various ways. The college as a whole, and the day and boarding houses individually, raise much money for local, national and international charities and some of the activities of the CCF and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme contribute directly to the community. In consequence of all these initiatives, the college succeeds in developing a sense of social responsibility and maturity in its pupils.
- 3.21 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the provision of information and the manner in which complaints are to be handled [Standards 6 and 7].

### **The Quality of Boarding Education**

- 3.22 The quality of boarding is outstanding, and the boarding houses play a major part in the achievement of the aims of the college. The physical quality of the boarding provision has improved significantly since the last inspection. Staff create a very friendly, caring and happy environment, and promote consideration and respect for all. They encourage willingness in pupils to help and support others. Relationships throughout the college, and especially in the boarding community, are of high quality, and the range of activities provided is extensive. A large number of housemaster and housemistress personnel changes have occurred since the last inspection, in which boarding provision was highly praised. The Jewish house, Polack's, closed in 2005. The staffing transition has been very smooth and highly successful. Good pastoral practice is shared between houses, boarding staff are well trained and there has been appropriate investment in staffing and facilities. Parent and pupil pre-inspection questionnaires indicated a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of boarding. One Year 9 boy explained his enthusiasm for boarding, saying: "as I am always here I don't miss out on anything; there's so much to do every day; it's great!" The recommendations of the most recent CSCI inspection report have been fully implemented.

- 3.23 Boarders comprise around half the pupils at Clifton up to Year 11 and a slightly larger proportion in the sixth form. All housemasters and housemistresses, ably assisted by their committed support teams, run their houses with great care and diligence. Leadership styles differ a little, but a warm family atmosphere pervades each house. The academic progress of all college pupils is now more effectively monitored at house level whereas, at the time of the last inspection, sixth form academic tutoring was school-based.
- 3.24 Relationships throughout the houses are very positive. Pupil behaviour is of a high standard, and a warm and friendly atmosphere exists. New pupils from both the UK and overseas, are quickly integrated into all the houses. Instances of bullying are very rare, and are dealt with sensitively and appropriately. Staff are well versed in child protection and safety issues. The efficient running of the houses relies on the senior pupils taking responsibility for supervising younger ones at various times of the day, and they are supported in this by housemasters and housemistresses and resident tutorial staff.
- 3.25 A wide-ranging activities programme, some of which has an international dimension, is provided after school and at weekends. There is much on offer, but boarders also have some free time.
- 3.26 The views of pupils in individual houses and of boarders generally, are taken into account, and this well-regarded inclusive approach is now supplemented by the consultative processes of the recently formed School Council. High levels of staffing and general support are available in all the houses. Since the last inspection staffing has been increased, internet access has become available to all houses, and boarders can easily maintain private contact with their parents and families.
- 3.27 Systems and resources for caring for boarders when they are ill are outstanding. Boarders take all their meals centrally and much effort is made to provide a balanced, healthy and varied diet.
- 3.28 The overall quality of the accommodation, in buildings that are of different ages and styles is very good and there has been major capital investment in boarding facilities since the last inspection. Boarding pupils are particularly well served by their house maintenance and support staff. The standard of furnishings and decoration is not quite as good in some houses as others, but a rolling programme of refurbishment has greatly enhanced general provision over time.

## **4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

### **The Quality of Governance**

- 4.1 The college is effectively governed. The full governing body, which meets annually and has a membership of over 150, delegates power to the Council which is responsible for the overall governance of the three sections of the College. The Council and its several sub-committees meet regularly, reporting lines are clear and very good minutes are kept. It is fully aware of the college's aims and helps to ensure that these are met. The Royal Charter has been updated since the last inspection, reducing the minimum numbers of the Council necessary for a quorum, and introducing a trustee charging clause. These changes benefit its working and give members a better chance of participating in meetings. The Council has expertise in important areas of governance, although its female complement is only three out of a membership of seventeen.
- 4.2 Council members are kept fully informed about, and are much involved in, all-important aspects of financial management and administration, and exercise appropriate financial control. They take their roles of maintaining the Christian ethos and the quality and development of the school very seriously, and are totally committed to ensuring compliance with regulatory and legal requirements. A female Council member has taken on responsibility for child protection matters. On a day-to-day basis management authority is vested in the college executive committee comprising the head master, the heads of the prep and pre- prep schools, the bursar and the managing director of Clifton College Services Ltd.
- 4.3 A well-organised committee structure ensures that governors contribute appropriately to financial planning, academic matters and investment in resources. All three sections of the school have a general purposes committee whose membership includes Council members and teaching staff. These groups ensure that governors are well informed about such issues as curriculum development, accommodation and staffing. Development planning is becoming a feature of governors' deliberations, but no overarching priorities have yet been established for the whole college.
- 4.4 The chairman is in regular and close touch with the head master. He has enormous knowledge of the college, and has vast experience of school governance. Council members are routinely provided with very good quality information by the head master. There is a high attendance record at various Council meetings, and several governors regularly attend chapel services, concerts, plays and sporting events. Good relationships between the governors and staff of the school are carefully fostered. Periodically, the Council entertains staff to supper on an evening before one of their meetings. In addition, social events are held to which Council members and staff are invited. Governors are very proud of Clifton and its achievements, have a deep understanding of what is going on, and provide encouraging and positively critical support for the college.

## **The Quality of Leadership and Management**

- 4.5 Much of the college's leadership and management is purposeful and forward thinking and the college is successful in achieving its aims. The new head master has worked hard to improve recruitment and establish more modern and effective marketing methods, including the creation of an enhanced website. He has instigated a review and subsequent rationalisation of the support department which have brought considerable efficiencies to the college. A new bursar, director of external relations, and heads of human resources and procurement have been appointed recently, and there has been considerable turnover in the membership of the senior management team since the last inspection. It was recommended in the last inspection report that there should be a strengthening of links with the prep school, and this is now beginning to take place.
- 4.6 The head master has a vision for strengthening the college's position. An Upper School development plan has been drafted and centres on reviewing the curriculum, teaching and learning strategies and certain management functions. It also seeks to improve still further the extensive and high quality co-curricular provision, extend the marketing effort and create more modern and spacious accommodation. In this phase of transition, lines of communication and consultation are not always clear so that the head master's vision is not entirely shared or understood.
- 4.7 Since the last inspection some progress has been made to further integrate the three divisions of the college. The head master has established, for example, an 11 to 16 curriculum review, under the leadership of the head of the prep school, to provide a continuous and differentiated curriculum for pupils across the college. Also, the head of the pre-prep has been asked to take charge of a group to look at the recruitment of girls and related issues on a college-wide basis. Elsewhere, however, links between the three sections of the college remain uneven, and strategic planning for the whole college is in its early stages of development.
- 4.8 The SMT, together with heads of faculties and heads of department, work hard to carry out their respective responsibilities. The workloads of particular senior managers vary and individual overload has led to unevenness of outcome in some areas. This particularly applies to the academic deputy who is fully stretched to ensure that the college operates effectively in curricular areas. Housemasters and housemistresses lead highly capable pastoral teams, and responsibilities are successfully devolved to a committed group of house staff and tutors, whose work in the support and care of pupils is very good and well overseen. Those with management responsibilities analyse needs and determine priorities and produce development plans annually.
- 4.9 Arrangements are in place to review and develop college policies and procedures and various staff are involved in that purpose. Heads of department monitor the teaching of pupils, but their job descriptions do not include the monitoring of learning. The staff handbook is clear but is lacking in detailed information. However, there are separate policy documents to guide staff in important areas such as assessment and teaching and learning strategies. Members of the college executive committee work closely to ensure that educational aims are met within broad financial parameters. Heads of department, housemasters and housemistresses are generally satisfied with their budgets and the process for determining them.
- 4.10 The procedures for the appointment and deployment of sufficient high-quality staff at all levels in the college are effective. The induction process for newly-qualified staff is appropriate, and enables them to achieve qualified teacher status. All new teachers feel very well supported and encouraged.

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- 4.11 Appraisal and continuing professional development systems exist, but the programmes remain in transition and line management is not entirely clear. A modified appraisal system is being developed by the human resources department that is planned to embrace all college employees.
- 4.12 The restructuring of employment levels in support areas has caused difficulties, but staff are most loyal, work very well in teams and provide an effective all-round service. Routine administration is good at all levels and helps to ensure that the college functions smoothly and effectively.
- 4.13 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].
- 4.14 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 school successfully fulfils its aims and aspirations of nurturing the spiritual life of its pupils, and enables them to appreciate cultural, religious, and social diversity. It fosters moral choice making and promotes a culture of honesty, trust and respect. It strives for academic excellence, and widely promotes an appreciation of, and participation in, the arts and sport. It emphasises care for each individual within a strong community framework, and provides a broad and balanced all-round educational experience for both day and boarding pupils. Very good educational opportunities are afforded by extensive curricular and co-curricular programmes at all levels. Leadership is purposeful and forward thinking. The SMT shows real purpose in shouldering the high burden of responsibility of keeping the college running effectively on a day-to-day basis. Teaching and support staff are dedicated, talented and totally committed, and they deliver very good pastoral care for all. The college's all-round provision for boarders is outstanding, as are links with the community. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is very evident, and they show real understanding of, and sympathy for, others. Input, both inside and outside the classroom, has enabled pupils to broaden their horizons and to extend their interests in the wider world. Academic achievements are high, given the spread of ability of the intake, pupils' learning skills are developing; and they show increasing intellectual curiosity the further up the college they move. Parents are very satisfied with the education provided, and pupils are most appreciative of all the opportunities which are made available to them.
- 5.2 Since the last inspection, the college has made progress in several areas. It has enhanced its academic and co-curricular standards, and it has improved its already high quality pastoral care at both boarding and day level. The governing body has encouraged more integration between the three sections of the college. The level of marketing has been scaled up significantly. There has been major investment in the building of a new girls' boarding and day house and a new boys' boarding house. There has also been much refurbishment of other day and boarding accommodation. Sporting facilities have been enhanced and the Percival Library has been expertly restored and developed. In addition, some classroom accommodation has been upgraded. There are more languages on offer, GCSE option choices have been extended, and additional subjects have been brought into the A level curriculum. A new head of careers and university entrance post has been created, and the provision of EAL and learning support has been enhanced. There is an awareness of the need to strengthen teaching, assessment and monitoring, to extend staff appraisal and professional development, to develop the PSHE programme, and to undertake whole college strategic development planning. There is also an awareness of the problems of transition to new leadership, of associated communications difficulties and of a lack of coherence in senior management decision making, implementation and monitoring. The college is also aware of what still needs to be done to further exploit ICT resources, to stretch the most able and to promote more independent learning.
- 5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

### **Next Steps**

- 5.4 In order to build on progress made since the last inspection and to ensure that all pupils are achieving their full potential the college should concentrate on the following areas.
1. Formulate a strategic development plan for the whole college.
  2. Ensure that Upper School planning:
    - is driven by the learning and teaching needs;
    - achieves necessary coherence and consistency in areas such as assessment and monitoring of academic performance;
    - is informed by improved professional development and appraisal of staff.
  3. Ensure that the standards of learning and teaching throughout the Upper School improve further by providing more opportunities for pupils to engage in independent thought and study, and to participate actively in lessons.
- 5.5 No action in respect of regulatory requirements is required.

## 6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> March 2007. 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 co-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the health centre. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the college.

### List of Inspectors

Mr Neil Gamble	Reporting Inspector
Mr Edward Halse	Headmaster, HMC school
Mr David Bown	Deputy Head, COBISEC school
Mr Alan Cooper	Senior Tutor, HMC school
Miss Theresa Homewood	Deputy Head, HMC school
Dr Julian Pattison	Deputy Head, HMC school
Mr Graham Ryder	Director of Studies, HMC school
Mrs Veronica Walker	Head of Department. HMC school