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**From: D K Bawtree CB BSc(Eng) CEng FIEE FIMechE DL  
Chairman of Governors**

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Dear Parents

### **ISI Inspection March 2004: Junior School**

I am delighted to write with details of the Inspection by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). There are many things to celebrate and some to consider.

#### **APPROACH TO INSPECTION**

The Governing Body takes Inspection particularly seriously. In recent years there have been alterations and improvements in events, premises, management structures, and many other aspects of school life. The Pre-Prep and Lower School have been merged and a Nursery started in new premises. Governors were keen to have both Senior and Junior Schools inspected simultaneously and to commission substantial teams to do so. This subjected the detail of school life to the greatest possible scrutiny. We know that parents and staff would not wish it otherwise, though I am conscious of the pressures which this placed on the Headmaster, Mrs Foster and her staff, not least since this is the first term in which ISI inspections have looked at the many legal requirements imposed by the new Education Act.

#### **AVAILABILITY OF REPORTS**

Governors had already decided to make the full text of both reports available to parents. A hard copy accompanies, and there is also a section of the website devoted to Inspection matters.

#### **BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT**

The Junior School has not, as such, previously been inspected. Its structures, as mentioned above, are also comparatively new. Governors therefore place a particular emphasis on this Report, since it provides the basis, as did the Senior School Inspection of 1998, for developmental planning from an externally verified base. We intend to respond to this Report with all the purpose and vigour which characterised the response to the Senior School Report in 1998.

#### **THE BASIC OPERATIONS OF THE SCHOOL**

PGS seeks to give its pupils the very best start in life, within a secure and caring environment. We are delighted to see the Inspectors' warm praise for this 'most successful' aspect of school life. Like the Senior School, the Junior School seeks to offer the highest possible standards in pastoral care, extra curricular activity, and, of course, academic standards. The Report states that the school has every reason to be proud of its pupils' overall achievements, and that

pupils benefit significantly from high quality teaching and very good level of care and support. There is high praise for the very positive ethos of the school, pupils' attitudes and behaviour, and pastoral systems. In terms of extra curricular activity, we are happy, anecdotally, to abide by the verdict of you, the parents. One inspector told me that the team had not encountered a higher level of parental satisfaction in any other school.

### **OTHER STRENGTHS**

The Report notes that the school has only existed in its present structure for three complete academic years, and concludes that in this time a good plan for future development has been established. Governors would wish strongly to endorse the warm praise given to Mrs Foster for her very effective and perceptive educational direction, analysed in section 7. There is particular praise for pupils' attitudes and behaviour and the quality of relationships between pupils and staff, the resources for learning, the provision for pupils' social, moral and cultural development, and the safe environment. As in the Senior Report there are many tributes to the quality of parental support which the school enjoys.

### **MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

The school welcomes the recommendations made by the Report. Mrs Foster and her team have already had two days of discussions of how best to implement these proposals and a full draft response has already been completed. Essentially, Inspectors believe that the school has all the correct managing systems in place and now needs to ensure their effectiveness as they further 'bed in' (Recommendation 1). They would like to see the same form of review of educational effectiveness as has characterised the response to the Senior Inspection – as Governors had always intended. This monitoring at managerial level will in turn reinforce the work of the subject coordinators (Recommendation 2), and enable pupils to develop as more independent learners (Recommendation 3). The Lead Inspector, Graham Nunn, has already accepted the invitation of Mrs Foster and the Governors to return and advise on progress. There are also of course many other suggestions for improvement other than the main recommendations: the school will respond to these with equal vigour.

### **CONCLUSION**

Governors are delighted with this Report, and, on your behalf, I congratulate Mrs Foster, all staff, and of course the pupils on the many compliments evident. I omitted to mention one Recommendation. Much has happened at PGS in recent years. It seems only a short while ago that Governors were considering the introduction of girls. Now we are nationally known as a family school. But alas the march of progress and the advance of the law have not quite kept step. The Inspectors concluded, by a whisker, that the modern school now has slightly too few wash hand basins, and slightly too many urinals. The Bursar already has suitable action in hand.

Finally, may I thank all parents, not only for their general support of the school, but also most particularly for the help they have given over the Inspection, in responding to surveys over a period of years, as well as by returning, in large number, the questionnaire. The school is deeply fortunate in the energy, loyalty and good will of its parental body. I commend this Report to parents, again congratulate all whom it praises, and look forward with confidence to the years ahead.

Yours sincerely,