



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

IPSWICH SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Ipswich School

Full Name of School	Ipswich School
DfE Number	935/6039
Registered Charity Number	310493
Address	Ipswich School Henley Road Ipswich Suffolk IP1 3SG
Telephone Number	01473 408300
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Email Address	enquiries@ipswich.suffolk.sch.uk
Headmaster	Mr Nicholas Weaver
Chair of Governors	Mr Karl Daniels
Age Range	11 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	749
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (475 boys; 274 girls)
Numbers by Age	11-18: 749
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 707
Number of Boarders	Full: 42
Inspection Dates	18 Nov 2014 to 21 Nov 2014

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in October 2008. The previous intermediate boarding inspection was in March 2012.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State 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, as amended. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

This inspection contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. 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, personal development and welfare. Until September 2011, Boarding inspections were carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors 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.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgements.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

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 broad sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and 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 Ruth McFarlane	Reporting Inspector
Dr Trevor Clarke	Team Inspector (former Boarding Housemaster, HMC school)
Mr John Cox	Team Inspector (Head of Department, HMC school)
Mrs Ellen Douglas	Team Inspector (Head of Department, ISA school)
Mr Paul Fisher	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Miss Helen Johnson	Team Inspector (former Head of Department, HMC school)
Lady Lisa Laws	Team Inspector (Former Headteacher, GSA school)
Mrs Lorraine Winch-Johnson	Team Inspector (Head of House, Learning Support lead, ISA school)
Mr Gregg Davies	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Ipswich School is a co-educational day and boarding school for boys and girls aged three to eighteen years. The original school, for boys, dates from the late 1300s. It moved to its present site in 1852 and became fully co-educational in 1997. It is a registered charity, managed by trustees, who form the governing body. There is a senior and a preparatory school, each with its own head, senior leadership team and buildings. The headmaster of the senior school has overall responsibility for both schools. The governing body also serves both schools. This inspection is of the senior school, including boarding.
- 1.2 The school aims, revised in 2014, are based on four core values of care, passion, potential and communication. The aims are to provide an environment where pupils feel safe and brave in all that they do, where they are presented with a wealth of opportunities both inside and outside the classroom, and where they are helped to find their own passions. Further, the school aims to monitor provision across all activities to help all pupils to achieve their potential and to look for new ways to achieve high standards, while managing demands on pupils and staff. It also aims to strengthen the links between parents, pupils and school; to help pupils consider moral and spiritual values and to understand their place in the world. Finally, it aims to develop in pupils a spirit of service within the community and to equip them with skills to be happy in their success at school and beyond.
- 1.3 The senior school currently has 749 pupils, of whom 475 are boys and 274 are girls. There are 42 full boarders (26 boys and 16 girls). The boarding accommodation is at Westwood, and consists of three buildings set in wooded grounds approximately five minutes' walk from the main campus. The school also provides occasional boarding, whereby a pupil may board if, for instance, his or her parents are away for a short time.
- 1.4 Day pupils come from the local area and outlying districts. Boarders are from a variety of backgrounds, including overseas. Both day and boarding entry into Years 7 and 9 depend upon pupils' academic capability. The great majority of pupils from the preparatory school move through to the senior school at the age of eleven.
- 1.5 The ability profile of pupils is above the national average, with most pupils having ability that is at least above average and about one-third having well above average ability. Forty-three pupils are from minority ethnic groups and require support in speaking English as an additional language (EAL). Forty-two pupils are identified by the school as requiring support due to having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Two of these have a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.6 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 school's four core aims are fulfilled to a high degree through pupils' excellent achievement and learning. High standards are achieved, including by pupils with EAL, the more able and those with SEND. Pupils consistently achieve at levels well beyond those expected for their age. Their academic achievement is complemented by excellent achievement in activities, underpinned by unusually high levels of learning skills. Pupils make excellent progress in response to the particularly vibrant curriculum which includes an exciting and extensive array of activities and sports. Their progress is supported by dedicated and often passionate teaching, which is of excellent quality overall, although the marking of pupils' work is not consistently helpful.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent, supported by an extremely effective and well-organised pastoral care system. Pupils show high levels of confidence, are thoroughly articulate, and demonstrate very strong moral and cultural awareness. There are strong arrangements to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. Most pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were highly positive about the school. Boarding makes an excellent contribution to boarders' personal development.
- 2.3 Leadership, management and governance are excellent, promoting the school's aims very strongly. Governors' highly effective support and challenge to the school underpin pupils' excellent levels of achievement and personal development. Governors are exceptionally well informed about the school's operations and needs, and provide excellent human and material resources. High-quality building developments support the school's ambitious aims and focus on its extra-curricular provision. Governors also fulfil their legal responsibilities, through rigorous monitoring of the school's work, including boarding. The school has made significant progress since the previous inspection. A key feature of the astute and highly effective leadership at all levels is the forward-looking approach. All departments are led effectively, and are focused on the journey to full cohesiveness and consistency of practice, not yet fully achieved. Almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire stated that they would recommend the school to others.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.
- 2.5 The school meets all of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013.

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
1. Ensure consistent high-quality practice across all departments, including in marking and its monitoring.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils' high levels of achievement fully reflect the school's core values and aims. Pupils demonstrate excellent levels of knowledge, skills and understanding across all subject areas, in response to an ambitious curriculum and excellent teaching. This is equally apparent in the achievement of pupils with SEND, those with EAL and the more able pupils. Highly focused analysis, evaluation and argument are frequently seen. Advanced levels of mathematical problem-solving are similarly common, even in lower forms. The pupils' scientific understanding is excellent for their age. High levels of response are evident in a wide variety of classical and modern foreign languages. Pupils develop high-order thinking skills because the teaching allows them to think for themselves. Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) very well to support their learning. Achievements are also excellent in aesthetic pursuits. For instance, vibrant and skilled artwork is displayed around the school and in the art studios, and pupils demonstrate high creative and performing skills in both drama and music.
- 3.3 Standards in physical education, in a very wide range of sports and in a vast array of activities, are exceptional, with a plethora of county places in teams and some pupils' selected for national teams and competitions. Individuals participate in sports such as badminton, sailing and women's cricket at the highest levels nationally. A good number attain gold in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, where contribution to the local and wider community is strong. A key feature of participation is pupils' diversity of interests, for example, some rugby players are also keen poets.
- 3.4 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2011 to 2013, the most recent three years for which comparative analysis is available. GCSE performance is above the national average for maintained schools, and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. Boys' results have been well above the national average for boys, and girls' results in 2013 were well above the national average for girls, in maintained schools. IGCSE results have been higher than worldwide norms, and have shown improvement from 2011-13. A-level results have been above the national average for maintained selective schools. Girls' results at A-level have been well above the national average for maintained selective schools. The 2014 results show further improvement in GCSE and at A-level, especially for the highest grades. All entrants for the Extended Project gained A* or A.
- 3.5 This level of attainment and nationally standardised progress data that is available, including 2014, show that pupils make good progress relative to the average for pupils of similar abilities by the end of Year 11, and excellent progress by the time they leave the sixth form. This includes the more able pupils. Throughout the school, those with SEND and EAL make excellent progress. Pupils' outstanding standards in activities and sports, alongside their academic success, confirm that achievement overall is excellent. Sixth formers consistently gain places at universities that have high entry requirements.
- 3.6 Pupils of all ages develop their learning skills to an extremely high level. Their self-motivation and readiness to learn independently, and a natural inclination to work collaboratively to excellent effect, together with highly developed curiosity, enable

them to achieve well. All of these skills are demonstrated within a learning environment which is characterised by thorough enjoyment and good humour, in keeping with the school's aim to ensure pupils are happy while fulfilling their potential.

3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision

- 3.7 The contribution of the curriculum is excellent.
- 3.8 The curriculum provides very effectively for all areas of learning and contributes significantly to the pupils' achievements. It is highly successful in supporting the aim of the school to present pupils with a wealth of opportunities, both inside and outside the classroom, and to help them to find their own passions. The great breadth of subjects offered is complemented by a well-structured personal, social and health education programme, an improvement since the previous inspection.
- 3.9 The curriculum is highly appropriate and well-matched to the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND or EAL, managed by a strong learning support department. Challenge for the more able is managed well through a co-ordinator. Individual departments provide many opportunities that enable these pupils to have a wide range of academic extension. This helps to nurture an excellent spirit of enquiry.
- 3.10 In addition to the emphasis on mathematics and English, which lead to IGCSE, all pupils study the three separate sciences to GCSE. The curriculum provides excellent opportunities for the development of human and social skills including history, geography and religious education. A wide range of languages is offered. Pupils in Year 7 study classical civilisation, and Latin is introduced in Year 8. Greek is also offered. Almost all pupils study at least one modern foreign language from a choice of French, German, Spanish and Russian. There is excellent provision for furthering pupils' creative, aesthetic and technical development through music, art, drama, design and technology and ICT.
- 3.11 In the sixth form, most Year 12 pupils embark upon an ambitious AS programme, enhanced by the choice of a further area of study from the exceptional enrichment programme. Through this, pupils acquire qualifications in subjects which include critical thinking, Mandarin, ICT, law, photography and sports coaching. The majority of Year 13 pupils study three subjects to full A level. There has been a steady rise in the numbers and success of pupils embarking on the Extended Project Qualification, giving pupils useful life skills in independent research and learning.
- 3.12 The careers programme has undergone significant development in response to a recommendation of the previous inspection. Extensive careers information is supplemented by helpful advice when selecting options for GCSE and A level, and work experience. The well-resourced careers office is staffed throughout the day. Informative booklets, practice interviews, advice from tutors and former pupils, conventions and exhibitions help pupils applying to university. Pupils applying during their gap year are also provided with significant advice and guidance.
- 3.13 The provision of extra-curricular activities, known in the school as the 'co-curriculum', is excellent. It complements the academic subjects well, while also contributing significantly to pupils' personal skills development. Enormous variety and opportunities are available to all pupils. Teachers responsible for the games programme and the many activities show passion in their commitment, as do pupils, in fulfilment of the school's core value. The vast programme of activities engenders

much enthusiasm. There are numerous opportunities for pupils of all ages to develop and exercise leadership, including the Combined Cadet Force and the International Leadership Programme offered to Year 12 pupils. In addition to their place in the main curriculum, music, art, drama and dance are all strong features of the co-curricular programme. Rehearsals were in full swing during the inspection for performances of the musical 'We will Rock You'. Bands and choirs are a regular feature of daily school life. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 perform music and drama in local care homes and primary schools as part of the strong community service programme.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.14 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.15 Almost all the teaching is at least good with a substantial proportion that is excellent. It makes a significant contribution to pupils' progress and supports the school's aim of enabling pupils to grow and excel in all that they do. The recommendation of the previous inspection to improve the quality of teaching has been fully met.
- 3.16 Planning is very well structured and enables the use of a variety of resources effectively. Teachers know their pupils well and all lessons demonstrate excellent working relationships and strong subject knowledge. Teachers manage behaviour very well so that classrooms are characterised by hard-working individuals, purposefully acting on teachers' instructions and often making rapid progress.
- 3.17 In the best teaching, pupils are fully involved in their learning and a variety of teaching methods are used to create opportunities for them to achieve and put forward their own ideas. Work is regularly marked, with the best examples providing detailed feedback, with well-focused comment as to how pupils could improve and specific reference to their targets. However, there are different marking policies from subject to subject, which can be confusing for pupils. In books scrutinised, marking was inconsistent and guidance was sometimes limited with no checks on whether it had been acted upon. In these cases, marking did not lead to prompt improvements in pupils' work.
- 3.18 As recommended at the previous inspection a more coherent approach to assessment is now well embedded through the regular tracking and monitoring of progress. 'Chances graphs' and 'Traffic Lighting' provides tutors and teachers with regular essential information, leading to improved learning.
- 3.19 Pupils identified with SEND and EAL requirements are given strong guidance by the learning support department and this enables them to make excellent progress. This includes those pupils with statements of special educational needs, the requirements for which are fully met. Many examples were observed of particular care taken by teachers in providing appropriate tasks for SEND and EAL pupils.
- 3.20 More-able pupils are both stretched and challenged. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that the more able pupils receive a good level of support. The pupils themselves agree. The vast majority of parents responding felt their children were making good progress, and almost all pupils agreed and indicated that they feel encouraged and supported by their teachers, and know that individual help, when they need it, is readily available and given.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The personal development of pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The school's core value of 'passion' is fully realised through pupils' excellent spiritual development. They become confident and articulate young people with high self-esteem and a willingness to express their views. They are reflective and self-critical, recognising their own strengths and weaknesses. Their well-developed aesthetic and spiritual awareness is demonstrated through their high-quality musical and drama performances and their thought-provoking artwork. They show great spirituality in chapel services and assemblies. Pupils spoke of the feelings of awe they experienced on residential trips to locations such as China and battlefield sites.
- 4.3 Pupils' moral development is excellent. They show a keen sense of fair play and debate moral dilemmas with maturity and good sense. Pupils develop their own set of appropriate values, while respecting and appreciating those of others. They are able to explain and defend their views during classroom discussions, as for example, when sixth formers debated whether punishment or treatment is better for offenders. Pupils show consideration and a well-developed understanding of correct behaviour, for example, being respectful of the dignity of the losing team in sporting fixtures.
- 4.4 Pupils' develop socially into young adults with very mature outlooks. They demonstrate a very well developed sense of care and thought for others, in keeping with a school core value, with many senior pupils helping and supporting younger groups. For example, Year 10 pupils work with Year 4 pupils to gain the Junior Sports Leadership Award. Pupils show a generosity of spirit and appreciate the circumstances of those less fortunate than themselves. Their strong commitment to community service is evident with high levels of participation in volunteering and charitable fundraising. Many pupils help out at a local residential care home and in local primary schools. Pupils show good political and economic awareness. In questionnaire responses, a small minority of pupils felt they were not given the chance to take on responsibility. Discussions with pupils and observation of activities showed this not to be the case. Pupils relish their responsibilities representing their form, or as school councillors, or as prefects. In many cases they demonstrate initiative, introducing and organising activities and events, such as the Poetry Club and the Travel to Africa charity fundraising event.
- 4.5 Pupils' cultural development is excellent. Relationships between pupils of different nationalities and ethnicity are generally friendly and relaxed. Pupils show a perceptive understanding of other cultures and faiths as well as their own. They enjoy cultural activities, for example, those organised by the languages department. Pupils regularly discuss global issues in lessons and activities such as the debating club and assemblies and this helps to give them their understanding of some of the range of cultural issues that face the world today.
- 4.6 Pupils leave the school with highly developed personal skills, as confident, emotionally mature young people, able to respond to the challenges of the modern world.

4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 Highly effective, well-organised support and guidance are provided, based on a house and tutor system. This fully promotes the school's aim to provide an environment where pupils feel safe and brave in all they do and supports pupils of all ages, day and boarding. The rigorous monitoring and regular reviews of its effectiveness further meet the school's aim. Records are meticulously kept and pastoral responses are regularly evaluated.
- 4.9 The school's core value of 'care' is very well embraced. Relationships between staff and pupils and among the pupils themselves are excellent and based on mutual respect. This promotes confidence in pupils that there is always a member of staff to confide in.
- 4.10 Pupils are encouraged towards healthy eating. The extensive range of sports is open to all. Pupils heartily embrace the opportunities offered to them. The emphasis placed on physical fitness very successfully promotes healthy living.
- 4.11 The school promotes good behaviour and guards against harassment and bullying. It deals very constructively with any unacceptable behaviour, taking due account of any related difficulty or disability. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses a small minority of pupils questioned the fairness of the school's use of merits and sanctions. Inspection evidence did not support this view. Discussions with pupils and teachers and checks of records indicated that rewards and sanctions are proportionate and used consistently. A small minority of pupils and a few parents indicated in the questionnaire that the school does not deal effectively with bullying. Examination of records confirmed what pupils reported in discussions, that bullying or harassment is rare and that any incidents are dealt with effectively and promptly.
- 4.12 The school has a suitable access plan for meeting the needs of pupils with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities and any with a statement of special educational needs.
- 4.13 Pupils were keen to point to the many ways in which their views are sought and acted upon, contrary to views expressed by a minority in the pre-inspection questionnaire. Regular surveys and councils of pupils at which views are presented have resulted in, for instance, an additional tuck shop and steps to reduce queues in the dining room.

4.(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety

- 4.14 The arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils' are excellent.
- 4.15 All staff receive appropriate regular child protection training, including specialist training for the designated staff, and suitable child protection training is provided for all staff as part of their induction. There are good relationships between health care professionals and the school. Record keeping is detailed and meticulous and is well maintained. The arrangements promote the pupils' welfare and safety most successfully.
- 4.16 Provision for dealing with the risk of fire and other hazards is very thorough, and checks are recorded efficiently. Regular drills are held. Notes are scrupulously analysed, and fire equipment is checked by outside agencies regularly.

- 4.17 The arrangements to ensure the pupils' health and safety are excellent. The school's medical centre is staffed throughout the day and available for pupils to visit at appropriate times. Both off-site localities used for sports activities have a room set aside for medical care in case of an injury. School matches have medical cover supplied by external professionals and most staff have certificates in first aid.
- 4.18 Risk assessments of activities on site, such as games, and off-site activities, such as cultural trips, are comprehensive. Health and safety issues are regularly and thoroughly monitored by the health and safety committee which meets regularly.
- 4.19 Admission and attendance registers are appropriately kept and monitored very thoroughly. Absence is quickly followed up.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.20 The quality of boarding education is excellent.
- 4.21 Boarders are self-assured, courteous and respectful of one another. They develop warm and supportive relationships with one another and the boarding staff. These firm relationships enable boarders to become quickly at ease with the boarding experience and they look forward to spending time in their boarding house at the end of the school day. A minority of boarders, in their responses to the questionnaire, felt that some boarding staff did not treat all boarders fairly. Examination of records and discussions with many of the boarders described a different picture. Boarders and staff demonstrated easy relationships, where cultural differences are warmly celebrated. Older boarders naturally and willingly help new members of the community. Overseas boarders acknowledge the value of practising their English throughout the boarding house with one another and EAL lessons on a Saturday morning are almost universally welcomed. Many personalise their rooms with topical displays which add to the homely nature of the boarding house. Daily newspapers and television are provided to enable boarders to find out about world events. Prefects are not separately appointed specifically for boarding but all boarders spoken to felt they have other boarders or staff to turn to, that they can easily make their views known and that staff would consider these carefully. The development of confident social skills, in addition to becoming more independent, was a frequent response as to why the boarders see boarding as a highly positive experience.
- 4.22 When boarders were asked whether they enjoy boarding, they unanimously agreed, although a very small minority had indicated otherwise in their questionnaires. Boarders were keen to acknowledge the 'wrap-around' support between school and boarding house. House staff know the boarders well and take an active interest in their pastoral and academic needs. Teaching staff communicate effectively with their boarding colleagues to ensure continuity of care. Boarders much enjoy the fact that breakfast and dinner during the week, and all meals at the weekend, are prepared at the boarding house. The well-appointed kitchen holds the highest award for hygiene. Boarders make use of small kitchens to supplement their diet and they are particularly pleased that small appliances such as rice boilers are available. Boarders all stated that they enjoy the food and its variety, and did not echo the small minority of responses to the questionnaire that expressed dissatisfaction with the food. A few boarders also suggested, in their questionnaire, that they were not happy with the balance of free time and activities in the evenings and at weekends. Inspectors found that a wide range of activities is on offer, especially during the week.

- 4.23 Medical arrangements are excellent. Communication between the main school matron and the boarding matrons is efficient and effective. There is appropriate accommodation for sick or injured boarders and record keeping is thorough. House matrons accompany boarders to any specialist appointments, which are easily arranged. These arrangements, and a thorough check of records, did not endorse the very small minority of responses to the questionnaire which suggested that boarders were not well looked after if they were injured or ill.
- 4.24 Boarding accommodation is comfortable with single rooms for the older boarders and small dormitories for others. Bathroom facilities are good. The matrons operate the laundry facilities and there is a high degree of satisfaction with the service. Large common rooms with recreational games, a small library and computers give boarders the opportunity to relax together. In their questionnaire responses a few boarders did not feel their belongings were safe. However, lockable cupboards are available for each boarder in their room. During interviews with boarders many spoke of an ethos of honesty throughout the boarding houses. Good internet access is important to the boarders who regularly use it to access various forms of communication with their families and value the flexibility which enables cross-continent connection. Appropriate internet security measures are taken and taught. Boarders feel safe and secure.
- 4.25 Safeguarding arrangements are excellent. Staff recruitment checks are meticulous and the school has exemplary child protection policy and procedures. House staff are aware of boarders' whereabouts and maintain robust systems for signing in and out. Staff are clear about the procedures in the unlikely event that a boarder is missing. Appropriate risk assessments and health and safety audits are properly undertaken. Fire drills are undertaken at various times, including at night, ensuring that boarders do not become complacent when they hear the alarm. The recommendation from the previous boarding inspection regarding timings of fire drills has been met in full. Fire alarm systems are regularly checked and appropriate logs kept. The positive atmosphere in the house leads to very few disagreements and boarders feel that if any behavioural issue, including bullying, arises, they can speak to a member of the boarding team and appropriate action will ensue. Boarders are confident that resident staff can be contacted easily at night should an emergency arise. Sanctions and rewards are used appropriately and are logged assiduously thus ensuring that all staff are kept fully informed.
- 4.26 The boarding is well run and the leadership promotes fully the aims of the school. The school has a comprehensive statement of the boarding principles which is sent to new parents and was seen to work in practice. This is augmented by an informative boarding handbook for parents. The school's senior leadership and governors have highly effective oversight of the boarding, know its strengths and areas for development well and ensure it is continuously improved. Termly meetings of the boarding group ensure both operational and strategic oversight. All staff involved with boarding have comprehensive job descriptions. Links between house staff and teachers are extremely good, ensuring that the pastoral care and the academic progress of boarders are kept paramount. Leadership is very experienced and well-supported by other staff with boarding duties. All have regular access to appropriate and specific training, including qualifications in boarding education and management. All required records are kept and monitored diligently.
- 4.27 All of the boarders' parents who responded to the questionnaire were highly positive about the boarding experience.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Pupils' excellent achievement and personal development are underpinned by governors' very strong oversight of the school's work and support for its aims. Governors discharge all of their responsibilities exceptionally well, promoting the school's distinctive ethos with passion and wholehearted commitment.
- 5.3 The governing body includes an excellent range of experience. Care is taken over the appointment of new governors. Succession planning is exceptionally thorough. Regular presentations to governors by senior leaders provide the full governing body with high quality information about the school's activities and current educational issues. Governors are regular formal and informal visitors to school, including to lessons, and their reports are comprehensive. They undertake frequent training in the school on their regular governors' meeting days as well as through external courses. This ensures that skills are kept up-to-date and extended and enables their monitoring of the school's work, including boarding, to be thoroughly effective.
- 5.4 Careful and resourceful financial management has enabled the school to develop further through capital projects, such as current building development for music and the recent purchase of sports facilities offsite. Support for key management objectives is through well-informed strategic planning, formulated, in part, on regular away-days.
- 5.5 Governors review welfare, staff recruitment, and health and safety arrangements fully and regularly, including all governors undertaking a comprehensive annual review of safeguarding measures. Through this wide-ranging, excellent support and challenge to all aspects of the school, governors provide significant stimulus for improvement and enable the successful fulfilment of its ambitious vision.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.7 Clarity of vision and direction underpins the excellent leadership and management and assists the school in achieving its broad-ranging aims. Leaders ensure that they provide a wealth of opportunities to help pupils find their own passions. They allow full scope for pupils to fulfil their potential by rigorously monitoring every aspect, pastoral, curricular and co-curricular, of their experience at school. Pupils' academic and personal prowess gives a very clear indication that leadership in the school is very strong, especially when considered alongside the focus and attention given to providing excellent pastoral care. Stringent structures and checks ensure that policies to promote health, welfare and safety are comprehensive and are implemented fully and consistently.
- 5.8 Leadership and management are highly effective at the senior level. All work closely together, united in purpose. There is an excellent process for the tracking of pupils' progress, currently in its second year of operation. Extensive data and information

are collected and used in support of the pastoral structures. The excellent personal development of the pupils and their levels of involvement in activities of all kinds are also very strongly supported by the co-curricular leadership and management.

- 5.9 Academic department heads meet with their teams regularly and manage their areas of responsibility very well. However, a lack of consistency still remains in some aspects, such as in the way that meetings are recorded, and in the monitoring of teachers' marking, so that gathering and dissemination of information are occasionally not completely smooth, and pupils receive a varied quality of written guidance.
- 5.10 The school knows itself exceptionally well and a comprehensive school development plan underpins its direction, with progress on priorities meticulously followed up. At all levels, management is successful in securing, developing and motivating high quality teaching and support staff, and ensuring that they are suitably trained, at all points in their career, to meet the needs of all children, safeguarding and welfare, health and safety. All the required safe recruitment checks are made on all staff, governors and volunteers before appointment. Details are maintained thoroughly on a single register as required. Staff quality is checked through a systematic review and development process on a three-year cycle that supports the excellent teaching. Training and professional development opportunities are plentiful. For example, a recent initiative has enabled two teachers to take up a national academic management qualification.
- 5.11 Links with parents, guardians and carers are excellent. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, the overwhelming majority of parents expressed strong satisfaction with the education and support provided for their children, and the high quality of communication they enjoy with the school. Communication between tutors and parents is highly constructive and is closely monitored by senior management. Information is relayed daily to parents, through helpful weekly and annual newsletters; 'The Occasional' is a particularly popular communication. The school website provides up-to-date events, news and advice. Parents can also access the headmaster's Twitter page.
- 5.12 An appropriate and comprehensive complaints procedure is maintained and is implemented effectively on the very rare occasion it may be necessary,
- 5.13 There are many opportunities for parents to be involved with the work and progress of their son or daughter in fulfilment of the school's ambition to form a triangular partnership with parents in the education of their children. Strong and supportive relationships are evident. Parents receive regular informative reports with details of academic performance. These are supplemented with effort and attainment grades each half-term and also with parents evenings to review pupils' progress. In addition, parents play an active part in organising social events which are well supported by parents and school. Records show that large numbers of parents attend school matches, performances and other functions. There is also a thriving alumni network that forges continued enthusiasm through generations of pupils at the school, who are active supporters of the school's longer-term plans.

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