



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

SHERBORNE SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Sherborne School

Full Name of School	Sherborne School	
DfE Number	835/6006	
Registered Charity Number	1081228	
Address	Sherborne School Abbey Road Sherborne Dorset DT9 3AP	
Telephone Number	01935 812249	
Fax Number	01935 810426	
Email Address	enquiries@sherborne.org	
Head	Mr Ralph Barlow	
Chair of Governors	Revd Gordon Parry	
Age Range	13 to 18	
Total Number of Pupils	551	
Gender of Pupils	Boys	
Numbers by Age	11-18:	551
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	53
Number of Boarders	Total:	498
	Full:	498
Inspection Dates	17 Mar 2015 to 20 Mar 2015	

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 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) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations 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.

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, with the chair of governors and other governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the 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

Mr Martin Bussey	Reporting Inspector
Mr Alan Cooper	Team Inspector (Senior Master, HMC school)
Mr Peter Hamilton	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Mrs Myra Howard	Team Inspector (Former Head of Sixth Form, GSA school)
Mrs Linda Macfarlane	Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mr Rod Spencer	Team Inspector (Former Senior Master, HMC school)
Mr Alun Watkins	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Dr Nicholas England	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Kate McCarey	Team Inspector for Boarding (Former Assistant Head, HMC School)

CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL	2
(a) Main findings	2
(b) Action points	3
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	3
3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	4
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning	4
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c) The contribution of teaching	6
4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	8
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	8
(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care	9
(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	10
(d) The quality of boarding	10
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	13
(a) The quality of governance	13
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	13

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Sherborne School is an independent boarding school for boys aged from 13 to 18. It was founded in 1550 and occupies a large number of buildings in Sherborne in Dorset, all within a few minutes' walk of each other. The school holds services twice weekly in Sherborne Abbey. The school is a charitable trust, overseen by a board of governors who are the trustees. Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed two new deputy heads, in September 2014, one of whom was then appointed as headmaster, to serve until January 2016. A new headmaster has been appointed from January 2016. The chair of governors was appointed in 2013. The school has recently opened a new music school, altered the timings of the school day, and expanded academic support for boys; it ceased to offer the International Baccalaureate from 2013.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide an outstanding, all-boys boarding education in a community that is based on Christian values. It seeks to ensure that every boy has the opportunity and confidence to succeed, by providing suitable support and challenge, fostering intellectual enquiry, promoting independence and developing respect for the needs of others.
- 1.3 Boys are drawn from across the south of England, mostly White British, from professional backgrounds. Just over 90 boys come from overseas, from a range of countries. At the time of the inspection, there were 551 boys on roll, of whom 498 are boarders. Boarders are housed in one of eight boarding houses which accommodate boys of all ages. The 53 boys who attend as day pupils are integrated into the boarding houses. The ability profile of boys on entry to the school is above the national average, with around a sixth of pupils having ability that is well above average. This broadens by Year 12, where it is just above the national average, with around a fifth having ability which is below average. There are 130 boys who have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and 60 of these receive help with their learning; 30 boys have English as an additional language (EAL), of whom 13 receive support. One pupil has an education and health care (EHC) plan.
- 1.4 National Curriculum (NC) 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 equivalence are shown in the following table.

Senior School

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

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The quality of the boys' achievement and learning is excellent. The school meets its aim to provide an outstanding, all-boys boarding education in many areas. Boys demonstrate good levels of knowledge, skills and understanding. Those with SEND or EAL achieve at levels equal to their peers. More able boys and the gifted and talented achieve well, particularly in creative subjects and sport, where boys excel. Boys achieve at excellent levels in activities. The boys' achievement and learning are enabled by an excellent curriculum and programme of activities, and by good teaching which frequently provides rigour and challenge, and promotes critical thinking skills and independent learning. Boys are focused and highly co-operative learners; some show a genuine passion for the subjects they study. They frequently show independence and persistence but some are inattentive when teaching fails to stimulate their interest. Marking and the use of assessment are excellent; the recommendation of the previous full inspection in this area has been met well, together with those concerned with teaching resources, and provision for boys with SEND.
- 2.2 The boys' personal development is excellent. They are unassumingly confident, self-aware and emotionally mature. They respond well to the school's Christian ethos and show strong spiritual development. The school actively promotes British values and boys have a strong sense of justice and of service. Their behaviour is courteous and they are well mannered. Boarding enhances their understanding of other cultures. The school provides excellent pastoral care. Its highly effective overall provision to promote good behaviour is enhanced by good self-review in this area, resulting in recent initiatives to strengthen the school's anti-bullying measures. Strong arrangements to safeguard the boys and ensure their welfare, health and safety are implemented successfully. Checks on newly recruited staff are highly efficient and recorded methodically. Boarding makes an excellent contribution to the boys' personal development. Houses retain their individual character and support the boys' welfare, but the use of sanctions is not yet wholly consistent. The regulatory requirement of the previous boarding inspection has been met and its recommendations fulfilled.
- 2.3 Good governance is strongly committed to the boarding ethos of the school. The governors scrutinise finance carefully to enable capital projects and provide good resources. They maintain effective oversight, including in areas where they have legal responsibilities, but there is no arrangement for the regular, formal appraisal of the headmaster. This limits the effectiveness of oversight of the work of senior managers. Leadership and management are good. Recently appointed senior leaders give clear educational direction. In many areas of the school's activities good progress has been made since the previous inspection, resulting in the boys' excellent achievement and personal development. However, this progress has not been fully supported by an effective culture of regular self-review leading to systematic development planning. Recent initiatives successfully lay the foundation for active self-evaluation, with methodical provision made for consequent planning. The school has excellent links with parents. Those who responded to pre-inspection questionnaires show extremely high levels of satisfaction with the education provided by the school.

2.(b) Action points**(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- 2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Institute suitable, structured appraisal of the headmaster.
 2. Ensure that arrangements for boys to express their opinions and receive a response are systematic, consistent and clearly communicated to them.
 3. Improve consistency in the use of sanctions in boarding houses.
 4. Ensure that all teaching consistently reflects the most effective practice in the school, especially with regard to pace, organisation, challenge and the use of varied strategies.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the boys' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The school successfully fulfils its aims. Boys achieve good levels of knowledge, skills and understanding. Boys with SEND or EAL achieve consistently at levels similar to their peers. This is enabled by focused learning support and by the school's care for the individual. Boys excel in creative subjects; in art, they develop their ideas to extremely high levels, in response to the stimulus of other artists. Their physical development is similarly strong, enhanced by extensive opportunities for sport and by the boys' high levels of application. Boys are articulate and write fluently, including in modern foreign languages (MFL). Analysis of Shakespeare by more able younger boys contains perceptive and thoughtful ideas, although written work at GCSE level does not always reflect a similar depth of thinking. Boys develop strong mathematical skills, particularly the most able. Boys' scientific understanding is good. Boys are logical and methodical in their work. They develop good information and communication technology (ICT) skills and use these well in many areas, for example their sophisticated use of software to manipulate images in art.
- 3.3 Boys achieve highly in a wide range of activities, particularly the gifted and talented. They are supported by plentiful opportunities stretching well into the evening, and by targeted coaching. Individuals achieve representation at national level in rugby, sailing and modern pentathlon, and have won gold medals in national athletics competitions and bronze in European biathlon. Others are attached to professional rugby and county cricket clubs. Teams enjoy success in national rugby, judo and ski-racing competitions. Boys perform well in instrumental, drama and verse-speaking examinations. Choral singing is of very high quality, particularly in its excellent development of young male voices. Boys win engineering scholarships and succeed in science and mathematics Olympiads. Younger boys have won writing competitions in religious studies intended for sixth formers.
- 3.4 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2011 to 2013. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in GCSE have been above the national average for boys in maintained schools, and in 2011 and 2013 were well above the national average. Just over three-fifths of grades achieved at GCSE are at grades A or A*; the figure in 2014 was 54 per cent. Both GCSE and A-level results have been similar to the average for boys in maintained selective schools. Nearly seven-tenths of A-level passes have been awarded at grades A* to B; in 2014 the proportion increased to 73 per cent. These levels of attainment, considered alongside the boys' responses in interviews, their written work and in lessons, indicate good progress to GCSE and excellent progress by the time boys leave the sixth form. A good number of boys each year gain places at universities in the UK with demanding entry requirements; boys are particularly successful in achieving places on degree courses sponsored by financial services companies, and on art foundation courses.
- 3.5 The boys are focused and highly co-operative learners who enjoy and appreciate the teaching they receive. Their files and workbooks show a good volume of work, and are well presented and organised. Boys frequently show independence and persistence but sometimes these traits are lacking, or boys show inattentiveness,

when teaching does not stimulate their interest or challenge them sufficiently. Sometimes, in discussion, boys show a genuine passion for the subjects they study.

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

- 3.6 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.7 The curriculum supports the school's aim of focusing on academic values at every level of school life. It provides for boys of all ages, abilities and needs. A broad range of subjects is available at all ages, combined with access to an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities, all of which help promote fundamental British values in a balanced manner.
- 3.8 In Year 9, all boys study two languages from French, German and Spanish within a curriculum of 14 subject areas; some also study Mandarin. Study includes three separate sciences, and ICT lessons which lead to an internal diploma. This prepares all boys, whatever their different backgrounds on entering the school, to choose from a good range of 21 options at I(GCSE). The core curriculum includes the possibility of triple, double or single science awards. Options enable the study of up to three MFL as well as classical subjects and the performing arts; some boys study as many as 12 IGCSE courses. In the sixth form, there is a good choice of over 20 subjects. The breadth of options is extended by some joint courses taught with pupils from Sherborne Girls School, for example history of art, government and politics and photography.
- 3.9 Excellent provision for learning support enables access to all areas of the curriculum for boys with SEND or EAL. Strong provision of specialist teaching is linked to highly effective tracking of the progress of individuals. All boys benefit from the 'super-curriculum' which includes academic societies and a Saturday morning programme of lectures by outside speakers. These arrangements support the needs of the more able particularly well, enhanced by academic extension sessions. Each year group also has a group which discusses ideas beyond the curriculum, to engage the more able. The 'Student Voice' group meets regularly to provide an academic forum, run by boys, to discuss their learning.
- 3.10 Many of the extension activities outside lessons are held jointly with pupils from Sherborne Girls. This reflects the close, fruitful links which exist with other schools in the town, including attendance at various of the school's careers events. Strong community links include boys working in the town's charity shops as well as involvement in the life of Sherborne Abbey.
- 3.11 A carefully considered and comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) is taught through discrete lessons up to Year 11 and, currently, through talks in the sixth form. This promotes informed decision making, positive relationships and healthy living, including mental health.
- 3.12 Boys receive excellent careers guidance. This includes information sessions, plentiful resources, focused aptitude testing and high-quality personal advice from experienced staff.
- 3.13 The provision of extra-curricular activities is excellent and includes performance groups, sport and the combined cadet force (CCF). This is complemented by diverse opportunities ranging from the debating society and subject-related clubs, to a 'Masterchef' class. Some activities have been started by boys, including a robotics club and the Model United Nations (MUN). Provision of 'protected time' for key

activities avoids clashes. Tutors ensure that boys pursue a range of activities, yet are not over-burdened by them.

- 3.14 The many musical groups include four choirs and four orchestras, complemented by smaller ensembles. Large numbers participate and many boys learn one or more instruments. The many drama events include annual school productions and house plays, some directed by boys. The art department is almost always open for boys to pursue their projects.
- 3.15 Numerous sporting opportunities are supported by excellent facilities. The major games support a large number of participants and boys can explore less common sports, such as rugby fives. The CCF involves large numbers of boys and includes ample opportunities to develop personal discipline and leadership roles, especially in the sixth form.
- 3.16 The activities programme is enhanced by visits to complement the curriculum, both at home and abroad. These include ski racing in Switzerland and visits to Barcelona, Berlin, Salamanca and Pompeii.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.17 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.18 Teaching effectively enhances the boys' progress and supports their academic achievement. At its most successful, teaching supports fully the academic aims of the school to provide rigour, challenge, the development of critical thinking skills and independent learning. This is achieved through a broad, balanced and non-partisan approach from teachers. There is, however, variation in the quality of teaching. Most is good or better but a small amount does not reach this level.
- 3.19 The most effective teaching exhibits excellent subject knowledge, transmitted through highly-structured and effective lesson planning. Considerable, at times imaginative, efforts are made to provide carefully for the different individual needs of all pupils in a stimulating manner. Strong individual support is given to boys with SEND or EAL. These groups are encouraged to develop interest in their learning and independence alongside their peers. Their needs are understood and teaching incorporates appropriate tasks in lesson planning and strategies.
- 3.20 Pace, enjoyment, appropriate levels of challenge and high expectations of boys, aligned to varied tasks and to the effective use of resources, characterise the most successful teaching. Well-targeted questions and the appropriate use of technology often elicit insightful responses from boys which illustrate both independent and collaborative thinking skills. Genuine intellectual engagement by the boys, and pride in their achievement and the presentation of their work, follow naturally in response. This further develops the boys' understanding and command of the relevant subject areas, particularly successfully for more able boys. In these lessons, effective time management, the identification of clear learning outcomes, and excellent relationships with their teachers, all have a significant impact on the boys' learning.
- 3.21 The less effective teaching lacks pace, urgency, organisation and challenge. The identity of those with individual learning needs is recognised, but their needs are not consistently met. A reluctance to take risks or to embrace varied teaching strategies results in a preference for a more teacher-led approach. This limits the boys' independence and their progress. It particularly hinders the progress of the more

able because sufficiently high expectations or appropriately tailored challenge are lacking.

- 3.22 The school has encouraged the innovative work of the 'TeachMeet' staff forum, and the teaching and learning committee. These groups aim to develop further the quality of teaching, the sharing of the most effective practice through activities such as peer observations of teaching. This has brought about reflection and dialogue on different teaching styles and strategies which has already had an impact on pupils' learning in the most successful teaching.
- 3.23 Responses to pupils' and parents' pre-inspection questionnaires illustrated strong satisfaction with the way that teaching helps boys to make progress. Interviews with boys confirmed resoundingly that teachers readily provide individual help outside lessons.
- 3.24 The quality of marking and assessment is excellent, confirmed by evidence from the boys' workbooks and files. The recommendation of the previous full inspection to improve the quality of marking across the curriculum has been fully met. All teachers are guided by the whole-school assessment policy, with pragmatic departmental variations. This ensures informative comment on what has been achieved, and identifies next steps to ensure progress. Boys fully understand the various school monitoring and reporting systems, as do parents and staff. These successfully track the boys' progress through use of assessment data. They are deemed to be helpful and are beginning to bring about improvements in the boys' awareness of their potential, and what they need to do to improve.
- 3.25 The school properly makes the provision set out in EHC plans.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The school meets its aims highly successfully. By the time they leave, boys are articulate and confident; they have a purposeful sense of what they want to do next and are ready to meet the challenges of adult life. They say that their experience of the school's boarding ethos is invaluable in character building, fostering independence and encouraging a healthy lifestyle.
- 4.3 The boys' excellent spiritual development is reflected in their unassuming confidence and self-awareness. This is supported by the Christian ethos which pervades all aspects of school life, including services in Sherborne Abbey and the school chapel, prayers and assemblies. These allow time for reflection, to which boys respond well. Boys strongly appreciate the non-material aspects of life: they respond at high levels to hearing and playing music and studying literature, drama and art. They celebrate one another's achievements readily across diverse fields such as piano-playing, the CCF experiences on an assault course, and sporting success. This helps to motivate boys. Success is celebrated in services, assemblies, postcards to parents and in displays. Participation in team games enhances the strong support that boys show for one another. Strong emotional maturity was demonstrated in the responses of younger boys to Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* when they spoke about the relationships, feelings and motivation of characters with sophistication and interest.
- 4.4 The boys' moral development is excellent. They are proud of their school and respect its values. Boys have a strong sense of justice which is actively encouraged through classroom discussion and debate. This is reinforced by the PSHE programme, visits from the local police and respect for whole-school provision for rewards and sanctions. Boys appreciate that good work and behaviour are rewarded by commendations and rewards and feel motivated to observe school rules. Boys discuss issues of morality, such as the end of appeasement and racism and economical fairness in the American Great Depression, with fluency and interest. They raise funds for elected charities such as for wells in Africa and children's hospitals.
- 4.5 Courtesy, thoughtfulness and the norms of good behaviour characterise the boys' excellent social development. These underpin the relationships among boys and between boys and staff. Boys make a valuable contribution to the school community as prefects, chapel wardens, through the academic 'Student Voice' group, and by fulfilling boarding house and school duties. They give service to the wider community by helping those less fortunate than themselves. A wide range of voluntary work includes gardening for the elderly and helping in local primary schools; the CCF provides additional opportunities for leadership and service. Boys develop a good awareness of social and political issues, services and institutions. In history, boys show good understanding of the role of the United Nations. Boys are currently planning a mock general election and some engage in local democracy through the town council. They explore economic issues in PSHE and respond well to academic study related to current events, such as financial problems caused by the Vanuatu cyclone, set as a model A-level question.
- 4.6 The boys' cultural development is excellent. Boys show strong respect for the beliefs, customs and achievements of others. This is enhanced by their friendship

with overseas boarders. Teaching in theology lessons covers the practices and beliefs of all major faiths and allows boys to develop a good understanding and appreciation of the achievements of other communities. Boys debating the place of faith in school life showed both good awareness of the tenets of different faiths and tolerance in their respect for these. Boys develop strong awareness of Western cultural traditions through their highly successful participation in art, drama and music. Their study of and fluency in a number of different MFL enhances this awareness, as does the understanding they develop of older civilizations through the study of classics.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 The school provides excellent support and guidance for boys. This fulfils the school's aim to provide individual pastoral care and support. The pastoral system ensures that the care of day boys is integrated well. Each house team is under the overall responsibility of the pastoral deputy head and other members of a senior pastoral team. This team provides excellent oversight through regular meetings. These identify the welfare needs of individual boys, which are communicated effectively to staff. One-to-one meetings with a personal tutor provide valuable personal guidance and support for every boy.
- 4.9 Relationships between staff and boys and among boys are excellent. Boys support one another and mix comfortably across year groups.
- 4.10 Boys receive excellent encouragement to lead a healthy lifestyle. The ample provision of, and emphasis on, sporting activities, makes a strong contribution. The wide range, quality and variety of food support this. The PSHE programme provides effective guidance, including on the use and abuse of alcohol.
- 4.11 Through its comprehensive behaviour policies, clear provision of sanctions and positive use of rewards, the school is highly effective in promoting good behaviour. It takes due regard of any related disability. A small minority of responses in the pupils' questionnaires expressed dissatisfaction with the fairness with which sanctions are employed. Inspectors found there was some lack of consistency between boarding houses but that sanctions for the most serious misdemeanours, imposed by senior managers, are used fairly. The school has effective measures to guard against bullying which have been reinforced by recent additional guidance to boys and training for staff. The school's anti-bullying policy requires all to take a stand in reporting bullying. It takes appropriate action to help any victim of bullying and to ensure that the bully understands that such behaviour is unacceptable. Boys confirm that they know where to seek help should there be any bullying and they are confident that any incidents are dealt with.
- 4.12 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.13 In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses a minority of boys disagreed that the school listens to or responds to their views. Boys raised this as an issue of concern during the inspection visit. The school has a number of ways in which boys can express their concerns. Some boarding houses have regular house council meetings while, in others, informal channels exist for boys to raise issues. As a result of concerns raised by the boys, changes have been made to the school day, and to meals. However, there is no commonality of approach across houses, or a

structured whole-school system, which limits the consistency of the school's arrangements.

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

- 4.14 The arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of the boys are excellent.
- 4.15 The school has strong arrangements to safeguard the boys' welfare. Suitable links maintained with local agencies include training by the local children's safeguarding board officers for all staff. Induction training is comprehensive. Designated staff are clearly identified and they receive regular child protection and inter-agency training. Suitable arrangements are implemented if the designated safeguarding lead is absent. Any inaction by agencies is challenged by those with safeguarding responsibilities. Staff show clear understanding of appropriate reporting arrangements. These are implemented well.
- 4.16 Registration is regular, methodical and recorded electronically. The unauthorised absence of any day boys is followed up efficiently. The school maintains and stores an appropriate admission register.
- 4.17 Arrangements to ensure the boys' health and safety are strong. Any day boys who feel unwell are cared for by matrons or in the health centre. The first aid policy provides well for emergencies. Appropriate numbers of staff are qualified in first aid. Due care is taken to ensure the health and safety of any boys with special learning needs.
- 4.18 Measures to prevent risks of fire and other hazards are extremely thorough and checks are recorded effectively and centrally. Scrutiny by external consultants in areas such as fire and electrical testing is reviewed by senior managers and required improvements are implemented efficiently. Regular evacuation drills are held and the outcomes recorded and analysed. The implications of the school's buildings being spread across the town are well understood and suitable arrangements are made to combat risk. Assessments of risk are thorough and are supported by an appropriate policy to determine their content. They include strong assessments of risk for trips, which are planned with great care. Health and safety measures are regularly monitored and reviewed.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.19 The quality of boarding education is excellent.
- 4.20 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. The boarding experience makes a strong contribution to the personal development of boarders. They are very well mannered, articulate, outgoing and considerate. Boarders are mature, interesting to meet and they talk to adults with ease. The boys say that they grow in self-confidence, learn to get on with others, become better organised and acquire the habit of hard work. Nearly all boarders who responded to pre-inspection questionnaires confirmed that they enjoy boarding.
- 4.21 Boarders enjoy living together and the pace, challenge and variety of the boarding provision. They develop strong friendships with their peers. Boarding offers equal opportunities for all boys and individual needs are recognised and met. Boarders respect the house staff, and have very good relationships with them. House prefects play an important role in boarding houses, where they are instrumental in building a sense of community, and are well respected by younger boys. They are well

prepared for their role, and younger boys look up to them as friendly mentors. The prefects do not issue punishments directly to younger pupils without first discussing an appropriate response with the housemaster. The boarders are immensely proud of their school and they contribute positively to all aspects of its life. In all houses there is great loyalty and pride; every boy says that his house is by far the best.

- 4.22 The quality of boarding care is excellent. Induction enables the boys to settle quickly and feel comfortable in unfamiliar surroundings. New boarders may visit the school regularly before they join, and an orientation day at the start of the first term is much appreciated. The school has clear and effective policies for medical care, including for the administration of medicines, which are meticulously applied by staff. When a boarder is unwell during the day or night, his first point of contact is the house matron. The cheerful presence and the health care and support offered by the matrons is a strength of the boarding provision. There is good communication between matrons in houses and the health centre, including regarding the administration of medicines. This meets the recommendation of the previous boarding inspection. The boarders also have access to the health centre, which is staffed continuously by qualified nurses; a doctor attends daily. The health centre is spacious and well designed to provide comfortable and private accommodation and is effectively managed. Boarders are most appreciative of the care they receive. The boys may visit a dentist or optometrist by appointment. The many adults to whom boarders can turn include a counsellor and a listener independent of the school. Boys can express their views freely; some, but not all houses, have structured councils to enable representatives to express views. The headmaster visits each house during the year to hold an open forum.
- 4.23 Arrangements to ensure the boarders' health and safety are strong. Regular fire drills are carried out in all houses, including during the night. Boarding houses are secure and visitors may only enter with the permission of the duty member of staff. House staff know the whereabouts of boarders, through effective signing in and out procedures. All the houses provide good accommodation. Boys have adequate bed space, room to study, and access to lockable storage and generous recreational facilities. Washing and showering facilities are of suitable quality. The laundry arrangements in houses are highly efficient. In response to pre-inspection questionnaires a minority of boarders expressed dissatisfaction with the provision of snacks. Inspectors found that ample snacks are readily available in the dining hall at tea time and in the houses during the evening. Catering staff are aware of any boarder's personal or medical needs, and meet these as required. Food is plentiful, tasty and nutritious. This view was supported by many boarders in interviews. Boarders are expected to attend meals, and their attendance is monitored. This meets the recommendation of the previous boarding inspection.
- 4.24 The boarders benefit from the school's excellent extra-curricular provision. They enjoy the wide range of sporting, cultural and creative activities offered. There is plenty to do during the week and additional activities are offered at weekends. There are timetabled lessons and games on Saturdays. A few boys said that they are bored sometimes at weekends, but the overwhelming majority consider that there is an appropriate balance between structured and free time. Inspectors agree. Communication between the school and home is excellent. Boarders are able to contact their families as they wish; the house staff are readily available to parents and are efficient in dealing with correspondence.
- 4.25 The arrangements for the welfare and safeguarding of boarders are excellent. All staff are fully checked before appointment, and then receive thorough induction and

support on their arrival. All are trained in safeguarding and understand their responsibilities and reporting arrangements. The school has effective policies and procedures to guard against bullying, and to promote good behaviour. When bullying occurs, the school acts robustly. In response to pre-inspection questionnaires, a minority of boarders stated that sanctions are not always applied fairly. Inspection evidence confirms that there is some variation in the way in which sanctions are applied in different houses. The pastoral management team is aware of the issue and has begun to monitor provision across houses, in order to promote greater consistency and fairness. The large number of staff attached to each house, their high visibility and availability contribute strongly to the positive atmosphere and the good conduct of boarders. Suitable supervision is provided at night and boarders know how to contact staff in an emergency.

- 4.26 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the boarding provision is excellent. Information provided by the school, and each house, for new boarders is very clear; a wealth of helpful advice is included and expectations are clearly set out. The school's boarding policies are in line with its aims and well organised; records are used effectively to monitor a boarder's progress and to record information. The moral leadership and the management of boarders' care, in each house, are excellent. Housemasters are tireless and energetic in their support for boarders, and tutors take a keen and individual interest in their tutees. This ensures strong oversight of the boys' academic and pastoral development. The National Minimum Standards for boarding are reviewed effectively to ensure high levels of care for boarders. Outline plans for the future of boarding include a review of tutoring, the role of matrons and ongoing refurbishment of houses. There are many opportunities for staff to be trained and there is a highly effective system of appraisal for all staff involved in boarding, teaching and non-teaching. This satisfies the requirement of the previous boarding inspection. The strength of the management of the houses is seen in the outcomes for boarders. Boys leave the school very well equipped for the next stage of their lives, with strong moral values, excellent inter-personal skills and a desire to contribute positively to society.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 Governors are strongly committed to the boarding ethos of the school. The governing body includes a good range of experience and skills, particularly in education and in support of the school's Christian foundation. Two additional governor committees have been introduced since the previous full inspection, related to academic and pastoral aspects of school life. These monitor the school's provision and success in these areas well, and demonstrate suitably high expectations, including with regard to educational standards.
- 5.3 Governors have developed closer contact with and knowledge of the school since the previous full inspection through increased visits, including to lessons, but communication with parents about significant decisions has not always been clear and informative. Presentations from staff at governors' meetings, and reports, provide additional information about the school. Governors have sufficient knowledge to provide good support and challenge for the school, and for senior managers, and to act decisively when necessary. However, the absence of regular, formal appraisal of the headmaster restricts opportunities to review the work of senior managers systematically. Overall, governors' oversight supports the boys' excellent personal development and achievement. Training for governors has been increased since the previous inspection and recent meetings have considered how this area of governance can be improved further.
- 5.4 Financial scrutiny is careful; governors act decisively after considering the financial implications of curriculum planning. They ensure that good human and material resources are provided. Governors encourage senior staff to plan strategically. They give good guidance and support capital projects highly effectively.
- 5.5 Governors provide effective oversight of those areas where they have legal responsibilities. They review health and safety arrangements regularly and nominated governors participate in on-site monitoring. Monitoring of welfare arrangements includes an appropriate annual review by all governors of safeguarding policy and procedures. Boarding is monitored by an identified governor through visits to all houses. Checks on newly recruited staff are carried out with great efficiency and recorded methodically. Governors audit staff recruitment checks, including staff files and the register of appointments.

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, is good.
- 5.7 Recently appointed senior leaders show a strong commitment to the fulfilment of the school's aim to provide an outstanding boarding education for boys. They give clear educational direction and ensure that respect and support for others are evident in the school's ethos. In many areas of the school's activities, good progress has been made towards meeting its aims since the previous inspection, resulting in the boys' excellent achievement and personal development. The recommendations of the previous full inspection have been met with regard to teaching resources, marking

and awareness of the needs of those pupils with SEND. The regulatory requirement of the previous boarding inspection has been met and its recommendations fulfilled. However, these developments have not been fully supported by an effective culture of regular self-review, including senior staff appraisal, and consistent review of policies, leading to systematic development planning. Recent initiatives successfully lay the foundation for active self-evaluation at all levels, and in all areas of the school, with methodical provision for consequent planning. Current policies now reflect published guidance and are implemented effectively. Initiatives linked to identified needs include increased oversight and monitoring of extra-curricular activities through a senior management post, further development of the boys' learning skills through a learning diploma in Year 9, and continued focus on ensuring consistency in the management of boarding houses, while retaining each house's individual character. These planned changes set helpful parameters for improvement. Recent review of pastoral areas such as the school's anti-bullying procedures, the management of medical care, and evaluation of teaching and learning through lesson observations by middle managers, has been effective and has already resulted in improvement. Leadership and management ensure the safeguarding of pupils.

- 5.8 Within the school's well-established structures, effective delegation to subject leaders and housemasters ensures good oversight of teaching and the curriculum, and excellent monitoring of pastoral care. The school appoints staff of good quality, both teaching and non-teaching. Checking procedures to ensure the suitability of staff, volunteers and governors to work with children are confidently and securely implemented and recording of checks is systematic. All staff are well trained in their responsibilities in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety.
- 5.9 The school is supported by many support staff in a wide variety of roles. They provide efficient and highly effective support throughout the school's widespread buildings and spaces. They support teaching and the care of the boys with strong commitment to the school's boarding ethos.
- 5.10 Staff appraisal and development are good. There is a very detailed and robust system to appraise staff, including house staff, that runs on an annual school year basis. Heads of department appraise all within their department. This is linked to appraisal by senior leaders of those with additional responsibilities, such as housemasters. An ICT-based system allows all staff to record their progress towards internally generated expectations, their aspirations to meet these and requests for professional development. They can also review the impact of professional development on their role within the school and record essential training. The appraisal system for senior leaders has not been implemented recently.
- 5.11 There is strong school support for professional development in academic, pastoral and extra-curricular areas. Regular whole-school and departmental training is enhanced by the use of external trainers. The number of staff attending external training has increased since the previous inspection and the school encourages and financially supports the gaining of external qualifications. The collegiality of the school encourages teachers to share their expertise and experience from external training. There is well-organised and welcoming induction for new staff.
- 5.12 Links with parents are excellent. In response to pre-inspection questionnaires, parents showed extremely high levels of satisfaction with the education and support provided for their sons. Some parents commented that day-to-day communication

with the school is inconsistent. Inspectors found that excellent communication exists through the parental portal on the school website, via email and through housemasters and their son's tutors.

- 5.13 A few parents expressed concerns over how the school handles complaints. Inspectors found that complaints are handled appropriately, broadly in line with suitable published procedures, but that there has sometimes been inconsistency in the past in meeting published timescales.
- 5.14 Parents are warmly welcomed by the school to support the education of their sons. Care is taken to make the most of occasions such as parents' evenings, sports fixtures and the start and end of terms, to enable parents to meet housemasters, teachers and staff. Parental talks about elements of PSHE before parents' evenings provide valuable information on academic choices and careers, and salient advice about issues such as under-age drinking.
- 5.15 Parents of current and prospective pupils are given comprehensive information by the school, including all that is required to be made available. Housemasters quickly establish contact with new pupils and their parents, establishing a rapport and confidence that usually last through the boys' school career. Communications from housemasters and tutors are regular and are enhanced by weekly school information emails. Regular assessments and well-written and informative reports, suitably timed, are made available on the parent portal. This resource provides parents with a wealth of current and historical information about their son as well as news of school events.

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