



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
KENT COLLEGE PEMBURY**

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Kent College Pembury

The preparatory school was inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School	Kent College Pembury		
DfE Number	886/6009		
Registered Charity Number	307920		
Address	Kent College Pembury Old Church Road Pembury Tunbridge Wells Kent TN2 4AX England		
Telephone Number	01892 822006		
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Email Address	kirka@kentcollege.kent.sch.uk		
Interim Head	Mr Anthony Kirk-Burgess		
Chair of Governors	Mr Edmund Waterhouse		
Age Range	11 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	442		
Gender of Pupils	Girls		
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	373	
Number of Boarders	Total:	69	
	Full:	60	Flexi-boarding: 9
Inspection Dates	01 Dec 2015 to 04 Dec 2015		

PREFACE

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.

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*. The inspection on which the report is based took place over a period of four continuous days in the school.

The previous ISI intermediate boarding inspection was in October 2012 and the previous ISI second cycle inspection was in November 2009.

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.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited 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 Richard Mannix	Reporting Inspector
Mr Paul Bate	Team Inspector (Former Head, ISA school)
Mrs Jane Grubb	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Jane Huntington	Team Inspector (Head, ISA school)
Mr Stephen Jefferson	Team Inspector (Former Director of ICT, GSA school)
Ms Clare Trelfa	Team Inspector (Head, ISA school)
Mr Matt Williams	Team Inspector (Assistant Head, GSA school)
Ms Alison Horton	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Kent College Pembury is an independent girls' boarding and day school, for pupils aged 3 to 18. It was founded in 1886 in Folkestone by the Wesleyan Methodist Schools' Association. In 1939 the school moved to its current location, in a substantially refurbished and developed Victorian manor house on a 75-acre rural parkland site in the village of Pembury, near Tunbridge Wells. Today, Kent College Pembury is an interdenominational Christian school, welcoming girls of all faiths and backgrounds and it comprises two schools, a senior school for girls aged from 11 to 18 and a preparatory school for girls aged from 3 to 11. The two schools share the same site and facilities. The school is one of ten within the Methodist Independent Schools Trust, which acts as its proprietor. Almost all aspects of governance, apart from the most significant financial decisions, are delegated to the school's local governing body. There is currently an interim head in post. In January 2016, a new head will join the school.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide all pupils with a balanced, well-rounded education, where the individual needs of each pupil are met within a tolerant, supportive and caring family community, based on mutual respect and firmly grounded upon Christian principles. The school also seeks to maintain high standards in academic, cultural and sporting activities, supporting those who may struggle, and challenging those who can excel.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, the school has undertaken a number of improvements: new classrooms have been added; the sixth-form centre and the purpose-built theatre have been refurbished; a new art and library centre has been completed; a new fitness suite has been developed and, in 2015, the building of a new sports hall was completed. At the time of the previous inspection, both the preparatory and the senior school were inspected together as one school. During this inspection, the preparatory and senior schools were inspected at the same time as two separate schools. This report is for the senior school only.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection there were 442 pupils on the roll in the school, including 127 pupils attending the sixth form. There were 69 boarders in the school, including 27 in the sixth form, with a significant number from Chinese families. Day pupils come from a wide area of the surrounding counties of Kent and Surrey. The majority are from business and professional families; a small proportion are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- 1.5 According to nationally standardised tests, the ability of the pupils is above the national average, with the pupils in the sixth form being slightly above the national average. At the time of the inspection there were 40 pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL), 36 of whom receive specialist support. The school identifies 80 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 70 of whom receive special educational provision. No pupil has an educational health and care plan, or a statement of special educational needs.

- 1.6 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 NC equivalence are shown in the following table.

Senior School

School	NC name
Year 7	Year 7
Year 8	Year 8
Year 9	Year 9
Year 10	Year 10
Year 11	Year 11
Lower 6 th	Year 12
Upper 6 th	Year 13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The quality of pupils' achievement and learning is excellent. Pupils have well-developed listening and organisational learning skills. They are highly articulate, their linguistic, mathematical and scientific skills are strong, and they have excellent outcomes in art, drama and music. Pupils with SEND, EAL, and those who are more able progress well. The curriculum is excellent; it shows great breadth, effectively covers all the appropriate areas of learning, whilst suiting all abilities and needs. The curriculum provision has been enhanced since the previous inspection, with the addition of a new library and resources centre and much improved information and communication technology (ICT) provision. Pupils respond enthusiastically to a rich variety of extra-curricular activities. The excellent teaching, characterised by the use of a wide variety of teaching strategies, is purposeful and highly effective. There is a strong rapport between teachers and pupils. In a few cases, teachers do not follow the school's policies for the assessment of pupils' work, and providing guidance for improvement, including in their written reports.
- 2.2 The personal development of the pupils is excellent. Pupils are confident and very courteous, with consistently high standards of behaviour. They are thoughtful and compassionate, with a well-developed understanding of right and wrong and a high degree of emotional maturity. Pupils respond well to the spiritual dimension of the school and its community, with mutual respect, tolerance and care for those less fortunate strongly in evidence. The school provides excellent pastoral care. There are outstanding relationships between all members of the community. The ways in which the school seeks the views of pupils is not sufficiently developed. The arrangements to secure the pupils' welfare, health and safety are excellent. The school has rigorous procedures in place, understood by all staff. The quality of boarding provision is also excellent. The arrangements for the support of boarders reflect the outstanding arrangements for day pupils, and these have developed strongly since the previous inspection.
- 2.3 Leadership and management, and also governance, are excellent. They work closely together to provide clear challenge, direction and vision for the school, fully in line with the school's aims and Christian ethos. This approach has enabled the school to develop well since the previous inspection, successfully enhancing the well-being of the pupils and providing improved facilities in areas such as sport, information and communication technology (ICT) and independent learning resources. The school maintains a constructive relationship with parents. Both parents and pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed a strong endorsement of the school, its values and its care for pupils. The school has made good progress in meeting all recommendations of the previous report.

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 2015.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that the pupils have an improved forum to express their views and concerns, and that effective feedback is provided.
 2. Ensure that all teachers follow the school's policies for the assessment of pupils' work and providing guidance for improvement, including in their written reports.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning in the school is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated in line with the school's aim of providing a balanced and well-rounded education that promotes the confidence of each individual. Pupils demonstrate excellent levels of knowledge, skills and understanding in all subject areas. They are attentive listeners, and are highly articulate when discussing concepts and topics. Pupils read a wide range of texts with a clear level of understanding and their writing skills are highly developed. They use logical thought to construct well-conceived arguments, in which complex ideas are often advanced with strong independent thought. They show good, and often excellent, linguistic skills and their creativity is strongly developed, as evidenced in the art, photography and textiles displayed. Pupils apply their mathematical understanding confidently, make constructive use of ICT, and show well-developed practical skills. They show a high level of competence and commitment in physical activity. In the questionnaire responses, an overwhelming majority of parents said that they are pleased with the progress their child is making, and a very large majority of pupils agreed with this view.
- 3.3 Pupils are enthusiastic and achieve excellent standards in a rich variety of extra-curricular activities. Significant numbers of pupils achieve sporting, choral and musical success in regional and national competitions. The school undertakes regular operatic and drama performances of a consistently high quality. Many pupils participate successfully in The Duke of Edinburgh's (DofE) award scheme.
- 3.4 The following analysis uses national data for the period 2012 to 2014, the most recent three years for which comparative statistical data is currently available. Performance at GCSE in 2012-2014 has been above the average for girls in maintained schools. Performance at A Level over these three years has been above the average for girls in maintained schools and above the average for girls in maintained selective schools. Results at A Level in 2014 were well above the average for girls in maintained selective schools. Results in IGCSE are generally in line or above UK and worldwide averages. Evidence during the inspection, from work scrutiny, lesson observations and pupil interviews indicates pupils reach an excellent level of achievement relative to their abilities. School data confirms that GCSE pupils have performed well above expectations over the last three years. Most leavers proceed to their first choice of university, with a significant number gaining places on highly-selective courses.
- 3.5 This level of attainment at GCSE, and standardised measures that are available, indicate that pupils make progress in the school that is good, and often excellent, in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. The level of attainment at A-level indicates that pupils make progress in the sixth form that is excellent in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Pupils with SEND make strong progress, as a result of thoughtful, non-discriminatory ability grouping, a comprehensive network of support strategies, and their own determination. Pupils with EAL make good progress, which is at least in line with the ability levels of their peers. The most able pupils also make good progress, in part due to school strategies designed to promote critical enquiry and independent thinking.

- 3.6 A notable strength of the school lies in the excellent attitudes which pupils show towards learning. They are keen to speak out and to engage co-operatively with each other in their studies. They express their points of view with passion and enthusiasm, welcoming the opportunities for investigation and debate. They show a committed approach to extra-curricular activity and a determination to compete successfully. Pupils are ready learners, who acquire skills through a variety of strategies including emulation, experimentation and adaptation.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 It supports the aims of the school by meeting the needs of its pupils and is suitable for all ages and abilities. This confirms the positive views of the overwhelming majority of parents responding to the questionnaire. Throughout the school, a broad curriculum covers the linguistic, mathematical, scientific, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative areas of learning. For example, there are three modern foreign languages and two ancient languages available. It presents a balanced viewpoint of political issues. The new library provides excellent facilities for both class and independent work and study. This effectively supports pupils' independent study, meeting a recommendation of the previous inspection.
- 3.9 Provision for pupils of all abilities is highly effective in meeting their needs. A secure knowledge of SEND pupils' strengths and needs enables them to be supported by a bespoke curriculum. Pupils with EAL have full access to the curriculum, are very well supported and compete favourably with their peers. An additional cross-curricular support programme, including functional mathematics and English courses, further enhances this provision. Teachers make good use of individual education plans and readily give pupils additional one-to-one support when required. Throughout the school the more able pupils benefit from extension exercises in lessons. They are provided with suitable challenge in many ways, including the UK Maths Challenge, further mathematics GCSE, the extended project qualification and English writing workshops. There is an established scholarship programme and a well-embedded enrichment programme. All pupils are provided with excellent opportunities to develop their own strengths through independent thinking, including discussions on topical issues.
- 3.10 The excellent provision of personal, social, health, citizenship and economic (PSHCE) education supports the school's aims. It is highly effective in encouraging respect for other people and supporting pupils' personal development, and it includes a well-planned approach to embed the values inherent to British society. Pupils are provided with helpful and impartial careers advice, enabling them to make informed choices about a broad range of careers options. Pupils are well supported through the subject option processes in Year 9 and Year 11, and in their university application process. Former pupils are invited to give career talks, and an annual 'Women in Leadership' conference and a biennial careers fair aim to inspire pupils.
- 3.11 A wide range of extra-curricular activities is available throughout the school, including many sporting, musical, dramatic and creative activities, as well as specific-interest activities such as the 'audio memory' and 'comic' clubs, which provide pupils with extensive opportunities for enrichment. In the questionnaire responses, almost all pupils and parents expressed a strong appreciation for the broad range of activities available, some of which are led by senior pupils, and this

was further supported in pupils' interviews. The curriculum is greatly enhanced by a wide variety of trips, both day and residential, such as the optional ones to Berlin, Nepal and Iceland, and pupils participate enthusiastically in the DofE scheme.

- 3.12 The school has strong links with the community. Charity ventures are encouraged and highly successful in the vicinity, and community service plays a conspicuous role. One such example is the tea party for local elderly people, which is hosted by sixth formers. Visitors frequently come into the school, often to work with pupils as part of the scholarship programme and themed days such as 'Resilience Days,' during which mindfulness and e-safety are delivered, as well as during dedicated enrichment weeks.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.13 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.14 Teaching fully supports the aims of the school in its commitment to develop the potential of each individual. It makes a significant contribution to the pupils' progress and achievement. An overwhelming majority of pupils responding in the pre-inspection questionnaire felt their teachers helped them to learn. A large proportion of teaching is well-structured and proceeds at a challenging pace, using a wide range of stimulating methods and resources that encourage pupils to think and work independently. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge and highly supportive attitude towards pupils further enhance their learning. Teachers give generously of their time, and pupils are highly appreciative of this.
- 3.15 Since the previous inspection, there has been good progress in the use of data for target setting, especially at sixth-form level. Assessment and marking is effective, enabling pupils to make good progress. Most marking gives pupils well-considered guidance and suitable targets to improve. However, this is not consistently embedded across all subjects.
- 3.16 There is a particularly strong rapport between teachers and pupils, enabling the teaching to be purposeful and effective, and it is usually enjoyed by pupils. The teaching is characterised by its enthusiasm and the wide variety of approaches used to accelerate pupils' progress. In most of the teaching, high quality open-ended questioning and an encouragement to participate ensure pupils are engaged fully, fostering a genuine interest and independence of thought. Teaching promotes tolerance and respect and, when appropriate, enables non-partisan views to be discussed freely.
- 3.17 In line with the recommendation of previous inspection, there has been progress in implementing systematic arrangements for sharing good practice in teaching, which continue to be developed. The most able pupils now have a range of extension work, and many opportunities to develop their work independently. Events such as 'Question day', 'Theme day' and 'A* day' provide intellectual extension opportunities for the most able. Pupils indicate that they found the work challenging and engaging, and the evidence from the inspection showed this to be the case in the majority of the teaching. In their responses to the questionnaire, a small minority of pupils expressed concern with the volume and the relevance of the homework they are required to do. Evidence from the inspection, showed this work to be of an appropriate volume and that it is effective in supporting pupils' learning.
- 3.18 Pupils with SEND and EAL are clearly identified and their needs are well met, through careful monitoring, planning and individual support. Teachers are kept well-

informed on the needs of individual pupils, and on strategies to use to enhance their progress. Regular and helpful advice and support is provided for all pupils with SEND and EAL, by trained and dedicated staff, and pupils are very warm in their praise for this support.

- 3.19 Since the previous inspection, the school has been successful in improving ICT provision, both in the classroom and for individual pupil's work. Teachers use this widely to good effect. Pupils and staff interviewed were satisfied with the access they now have to digital media to support teaching and learning.

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 Pupils abide by the ethos of the school, showing mutual respect and tolerance, grounded in Christian principles. They are self-confident, outward-looking individuals and, on leaving the school, they have strong self-esteem and demonstrate an excellent standard of personal development.
- 4.3 Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. They are self-aware, with a good understanding of the part that faith plays in their lives. Pupils speak freely and articulately about their beliefs, as seen in a discussion about Christian morality and fundamentalism in Syria during a religious studies lesson. Their learning in art and music contributes greatly to pupils' appreciation of the aesthetic; in one painting within an exhibition, a pupil demonstrated a clear compassion for others by depicting a refugee mother and child.
- 4.4 The quality of pupils' moral development is excellent. Pupils are highly courteous, and their behaviour both inside and outside the classroom is excellent. Their understanding of ethical issues, such as the value of forgiveness, is enhanced by discussion, and they show great appreciation for the needs of those less-fortunate, both within and beyond their school community. They develop their appreciation and respect for the English legal system, national institutions and democracy through PSHCE lessons, and events such as mock general elections. Pupils raise considerable sums of money for charitable causes through a variety of activities, including an annual sponsored walk. Kent College School in Nepal, a partner school, benefits from pupils' hard work, both in school and through pupil visits to this partner school.
- 4.5 The social development of pupils is excellent. Pupils are thoughtful and the individual recipients of the annual 'Wesley Badge' are those pupils who have embodied the "do all the good you can" approach. Pupils develop social responsibility through leadership posts, such as school officers, and through mixing between year groups in house events and a broad range of extra-curricular activities. Through an effective eco-committee, they have secured the highest level of eco-school award. They regularly welcome members of the local community to the school, giving generously of their time to help others in social activities such as assisting the elderly to gain access to the internet.
- 4.6 Pupils' cultural awareness and development are excellent. They appreciate and learn from the different cultural backgrounds of their peers during events such as the boarders' international evening and overseas exchanges. Through many trips, drama and musical activities, pupils show a strong insight into other cultures and pupils learn to appreciate their own heritage through consideration of aspects such as the influences of classical art in western culture. Pupils enthusiastically took part in a Model United Nations general assembly, allowing them to broaden their understanding of global issues.
- 4.7 Pupils are aware of the need to be anti-discriminatory, and they appreciate the positive values of British society, such as democracy, the rule of law, individual freedom, mutual respect and tolerance. They discuss contentious matters, such as military action in another country, with great sensitivity.

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

- 4.8 The quality of pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 The excellent pastoral care provided for all pupils ensures that the school successfully meets its aims; to maintain a tolerant and supportive ethos based upon mutual respect; to ensure that all individual needs are met, and that everyone has the opportunity to gain in confidence and excel. Relationships are highly positive between staff and pupils and amongst pupils themselves, and this provides a secure and supportive environment for pupils to learn and develop. In the questionnaire, all parents indicated their child feels happy and well looked after, and a very large majority feel the school achieves high standards of behaviour. In the pupils' questionnaire responses, most felt the teachers showed concern for them as a person, and that they have a person to whom they can turn to if they are in difficulty.
- 4.10 Pupils are encouraged to be healthy by taking frequent exercise and developing healthy eating habits. Pupils interviewed were pleased by the choice of food at lunchtimes, and the excellent quality and choice available was confirmed by the inspectors.
- 4.11 The school is effective in promoting good behaviour and guarding against harassment or bullying in any form. In the questionnaire, a small minority of pupils felt that the teachers were not fair in administration of rewards and sanctions. Interviews with pupils and the documentation seen indicated that the rewards and sanctions system is administered fairly and appropriately, with the lower years much prizing the awarding of 'Sunny Slips' as a reward for good work and behaviour. A very small minority of pupils and parents expressed concern about the school's response to bullying. The scrutiny of records and interviews with pupils showed that the few incidences of bullying are carefully recorded and monitored, and appropriate action is taken swiftly when required. Topics in PSHCE are thorough in their coverage of bullying, including teaching the safe use of the internet.
- 4.12 The school seeks pupils' views and concerns through a variety of channels. A minority of pupils in the pre-inspection questionnaire suggested that their concerns did not receive a response. Inspection evidence, including interviews with pupils, indicates that pupils usually receive a favourable response to concerns raised. However, this process could be more effectively implemented, including providing more informative feedback to the pupils.
- 4.13 The school has an excellent plan to improve access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 4.15 All matters of welfare, health and safety are dealt with rigorously, and this ensures that the school, including the boarding accommodation, is a protected and secure environment for pupils and staff. This makes a strongly positive contribution to pupils' personal development. In the questionnaire responses, an overwhelming majority of the parents indicated their child felt safe.
- 4.16 Safeguarding arrangements show due regard for official guidance, including effective measures to prevent radicalisation and extremism. All staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding, including internet safety, in line with their level of responsibility, and staff are required to acknowledge their awareness of regulatory

procedures. New staff follow a thorough induction process, which deals with safeguarding procedures. The school has good links to local safeguarding agencies, and follows rigorous recruitment procedures.

- 4.17 Welfare, health and safety policies and procedures are thoroughly and effectively reviewed and all the equipment is appropriately tested and maintained. Full and detailed records of fire evacuation drills are maintained, including night time drills for boarding houses. All necessary measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards, and risk assessments for activities in school and during trips are rigorously undertaken.
- 4.18 Well-qualified staff are available in an excellent medical centre to assist any pupil who becomes ill or sustains an injury, and the welfare of pupils, including provision for those with SEND, is a high priority. Suitably qualified staff with first-aid training and numerous first-aid boxes are readily available throughout the school.
- 4.19 The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and correctly stored for the previous three years. Pupil absences are recorded carefully via an information management system, and followed up efficiently.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.20 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.21 The outcomes for boarders are excellent, and in line with the boarding aims to encourage all pupils to achieve their full potential and become “the best that they can be.” Boarders are articulate and courteous, expressing their views in a sensible and friendly way. They relate to both fellow boarders and adults with respect and easy confidence, and are extremely positive about the boarding experience they receive. Older boarders reflect positively on the independence and self-reliance they have acquired as they make progress through the two boarding houses. Those with boarding prefect responsibilities receive appropriate training, and work together with the house leadership team for the benefit of their community. All boarders make a positive contribution to, and enjoy being part of, their community.
- 4.22 Boarders of all ages and backgrounds relish the opportunities boarding gives them to develop a more acute awareness and tolerance within a harmonious multi-cultural boarding community. Their knowledge of the outside world is enhanced by a range of newspapers and magazines, and access to the internet and television. Boarders in the senior house enjoy the regular “Talking Points” sessions, where they discuss current affairs. A minority of boarders, in the questionnaire, did not feel that the school asks or responds to their opinions. Evidence from the inspection, including the boarders spoken to, identified a wide range of effective ways in which boarders could express their views, and they could give examples of how their ideas had been swiftly implemented.
- 4.23 Relationships between boarders and between boarders and house staff are outstanding. Boarders value highly the friendships they make, and deem them the most important aspect of the boarding experience. They express the view that dealing with the occasional minor issues between boarders enables the development of their understanding and diplomacy skills. They fully appreciate the house staff, who all have a natural and open rapport with the boarders in their care. Boarders are aware of a range of people to contact if they have a concern, with most identifying a member of the boarding staff as their first choice.

- 4.24 The quality of provision and care is excellent. Boarders, whether full, weekly or flexi, are well cared for, and a very large majority indicated in the pupil questionnaire that they feel safe in their houses. Thorough induction procedures, including checklists, are used for new boarders and first time flexi-boarders. The recommendation in the previous intermediate report, to produce a written policy for flexi-boarding, has been met. Boarders have the relevant information to enable them to access telephone helplines should the need arise, including the contact number of an independent listener.
- 4.25 Boarders benefit from high quality medical provision. The medical centre provides them with appropriate facilities for treatment, and longer-term care if needed. Boarders are registered with a local doctor and there are excellent links with other local specialist providers. The awareness, and quality, of support for mental health matters is excellent. A counsellor is available weekly for appointments and there are links with external services. Thorough procedures ensure that details of treatment given to boarders are appropriately exchanged between the medical and house staff. Procedures regarding confidentiality are meticulously observed, and details of those with chronic conditions or allergies are recorded, and staff made aware. Prescribed medicines and controlled drugs are appropriately stored, and dispensed in the houses and the medical centre, and appropriate records are maintained.
- 4.26 A very small minority of those boarders who responded to the pupil questionnaire expressed concern over the quality of the food. The inspection judgement, based upon boarders' opinions during their interviews, and from the food observed and sampled at breakfast, lunch and supper, is that the quality and choice of food is excellent. All specific dietary needs are met. A few boarders indicated in the questionnaire that they were unhappy with the availability of snacks in the houses, but evidence from the inspection showed a good variety was available at all times in the houses, including fresh fruit. Boarders benefit from excellent kitchen facilities for their own food preparation and regular trips to a local supermarket ensure they can buy any necessary ingredients, together with personal items and stationery. Boarders fully appreciate the daily laundry service and the facilities to launder items themselves.
- 4.27 In the questionnaire responses, a few boarders were not happy with the balance between free time and activities. In interviews with boarders and other evidence showed that this referred primarily to younger boarders having to do homework if not involved in an activity. Otherwise, boarders, as a whole, very much enjoy the breadth of the after school and weekend activity programme, and feel that the balance of directed and self-directed time is appropriate.
- 4.28 Boarders benefit from an excellent standard of accommodation, which they appreciate. The houses are welcoming and attractively decorated. Common rooms are homely, comfortably furnished and well-equipped. Excellent facilities are provided for individual study and ICT provision, including internet access, is available for all boarders. The boarding houses are secure, and afford boarders a high level of privacy. Boarders have no difficulty in maintaining contact with family and friends, and there is effective and regular contact between boarding staff and individual parents. In addition, there is a regular boarders' 'blog' posted on the website and a termly newsletter, created by sixth-form boarders.
- 4.29 The effectiveness of arrangements for welfare and safeguarding is excellent. The school fully meets the National Minimum Standards. The school implements the safeguarding policy, the prevention of bullying policy, and all other relevant policies

effectively. House staff and domestic staff demonstrate a clear awareness of their safeguarding responsibilities, and all have been appropriately trained. Rigorous recruitment procedures, as well as thorough behaviour protocols for those adults resident on site, ensure a high standard of welfare for boarders. Effective, and appropriately reviewed, risk assessments of the boarding houses, further ensure the safety of boarders. Regular registration sessions ensure boarding staff are fully aware of the whereabouts of the boarders in their care, and the missing child policy and procedures are well known to all staff. There are suitable protocols in place to search boarders and their possessions.

- 4.30 The effectiveness of leadership and management of the boarding provision is excellent. The comparatively new and highly committed house leadership team run the houses smoothly and sensitively, in line with the school's boarding aims. The leadership team knows each individual boarder, and their needs, extremely well, and they are highly respected by the boarders in their care. There is good liaison between the house leadership team and academic staff. Boarding benefits from the expertise and active involvement of the governors, who understand their responsibilities. Boarding staff develop their skills through the sharing of good practice and a significant programme of in-service training, both in-house and via external agencies.
- 4.31 Excellent communication within the house leadership teams ensures that boarders benefit from a consistent approach, and enables the sharing of ideas and good practice. The recommendation from the previous report that the daily house diaries be standardised has been met. The house leadership regularly meets with the school's senior leadership, who offer support and enable the continuing successful development of the boarding provision.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The local governing body (LGB) provides strong oversight of the school, including its boarding provision. The LGB supports the work of the school, and enables it successfully to realise its aims. It is fully supported by a number of committees, including an educational committee, which are effective in encouraging and enabling the work of the senior leadership team. Clear educational vision and astute financial planning have enabled a substantial building development programme to be implemented, which has greatly enhanced pupils' enjoyment of their school environment. Governance places significant emphasis on appropriate recruitment and development of staff, and in providing the school with the required learning resources.
- 5.3 The LGB has excellent insight into the functioning of the school through the work of its committees and numerous school visits. Robust monitoring enables the LGB strongly to support, challenge and stimulate improvement in the school. A recent initiative to review the effectiveness of the LGB has further enhanced its composition and available expertise. Governors' training, including in safeguarding, has been regular and appropriate. Reports from the head and senior staff, and a number of reviews undertaken in areas such as teaching and learning, have enabled the governors to form well-constructed development plans.
- 5.4 Governors take their responsibility for meeting statutory requirements very seriously. The annual review of the school's safeguarding policy and arrangements throughout the school is undertaken robustly by the LGB. Governors meet regularly with appropriate staff to discuss health and safety matters and review and enhance their implementation.

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

- 5.5 The quality of the leadership and management of the school, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.6 Members of the senior leadership and management team (SLT) are committed to the aims and ethos of the school and provide strong leadership. They each have clearly designated roles within the school, which have been effectively re-structured in response to the recommendation of the previous inspection. They provide clear and effective support to ensure the pupils' well-being, including a clear focus on individual needs and serving the best interests of each pupil. As a result, pupils are confident achievers, who feel well supported by the network of management strategies available. Values that encourage respect for others, and democracy, are very evident in the aims and ethos of the school, and from the SLT's approach to management.
- 5.7 Whole-school policies are appropriately reviewed and updated to ensure that regulatory requirements are met. A few policies required strengthening prior to the inspection. The SLT ensures that safeguarding and health and safety procedures are rigorously and efficiently managed. Safeguarding is given a high priority.

Members of the SLT work well together as a team; this is supported by the view of the staff as a whole. The SLT also works closely with the governing body. In the questionnaire responses, a very large majority of parents felt that the school was well led and managed.

- 5.8 All pupils' academic performance is closely monitored by the SLT, and the school portal offers both staff and parents access to this data. There are regular staff meetings and meetings with heads of department, pastoral and boarding staff, where helpful feedback allows staff to further improve and develop their role in the school. This meets another recommendation of the previous inspection.
- 5.9 Development planning is well-informed; prioritised targets with clearly identified outcomes are set in formal meetings, and there is an evaluation procedure for their implementation. The SLT has a keen awareness of the need to adapt to change, and to decide on priorities for the development of the school. Feedback is sought from pupils and parents to help in formulating initiatives for the future. Other staff have opportunities to contribute to the development of the school through regular meetings. The school has a 20-year development plan, which includes the consideration of aspects such as sports provision and boarding development.
- 5.10 The school is successful in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified staff and governors, and all required checks, policies and records are undertaken before they start work at the school. Thorough induction arrangements ensure that new appointees are well informed of school routines and safeguarding arrangements. Staff receive appropriate update training in their roles in safeguarding, welfare and health and safety. A new staff performance management system has been recently introduced, and staff are keen regularly to review and develop their skills in order to undertake their duties effectively. The school positively encourages the staff to attend development courses. The premises are well maintained and provide a safe environment. The school runs efficiently due to the care and expertise of all staff, including administrative staff, who work hard to support pupils.
- 5.11 The school maintains a constructive relationship with parents, demonstrating the school's aim of meeting the needs of each pupil within a supportive and caring family community. Parents spoken to felt that the school was producing confident pupils, who are well known by the school, including the SLT. In the questionnaire, an overwhelming majority of parents indicated in the questionnaire that they would recommend the school to another parent.
- 5.12 A small minority of parents did not feel that the school handles their concerns well, or gives timely responses to questions. Inspectors scrutinised records and interviewed parents and staff. The inspection judgement is that the school handles concerns with great care, in accordance with published procedures, and the responses are timely and appropriate. The staff are seen as easy to contact, and parents have designated staff who they can, and do, approach if they have any concerns. Pupils benefit from the excellent relationship between the parents and the school.
- 5.13 Parents have good opportunities to be actively involved in the work and progress of their children. Parents are encouraged to check the school website portal, and take a close interest in their child's progress. A very large majority of parents in the questionnaire responses, felt that the school encouraged them to be involved in events and in other aspects of the school. Parents were frequently invited to come

into the school to give talks about aspects in which they have expertise. The school benefits from having an active parents' association.

- 5.14 Parents of pupils, and of prospective pupils, are provided with the required information about the school. They have access to the appropriate school policies via the school website, and other documentation is available on request. Since the previous inspection there has been an increase in the number of opportunities for the parents to meet the staff, including socially.
- 5.15 Parents receive clear and useful reports about their children's work and progress. The parents felt that the reporting systems at the school were good, with full termly reports and interim progress reports. The quality of feedback on the way that pupils can improve was not consistently in evidence. Extensive contact with parents takes place through a variety of media. The extent of this weekly contact is currently under review, to ensure it is appropriately controlled. Parents' evenings are effective, frequent, and much valued by the parents.

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