



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Marlborough College

Full Name of College	Marlborough College		
DfE Number	865/6013		
Registered Charity Number	309486		
Address	Marlborough College Marlborough Wiltshire SN8 1PA		
Telephone Number	01672 892400		
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Email Address	master@marlboroughcollege.org		
Master	Mr Nicholas A Sampson		
Chair of Governors	Sir Hayden Phillips GCB DL		
Age Range	13 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	889		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (557 boys; 332 girls)		
Numbers by Age	13-18:	889	
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	53	
Number of Boarders	Total:	836	
	Full:	836	Weekly: 0
Inspection dates	13 Mar 2012 to 16 Mar 2012		

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 January 2008

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed through the following link: www.legislation.gov.uk. Search for Independent School Standards Regulations and enter date 2010, to find Schedule 1, Parts 1-7.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Equality Act 2010 (including race, gender, special educational needs and disability).
- (ii) The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, banning corporal punishment.

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

Under Government arrangements, the inspection of boarding became an integrated part of ISI inspections from 1 September 2011. 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. Boarding inspections were previously carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills. The relevant Ofsted report refers to an inspection in October 2009 and can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Children's social care/Boarding school.

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.

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', 'satisfactory' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a 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

Miss Jane Hamilton	Reporting Inspector
Mr Richard Barr	Team Inspector (Head of Sixth Form, HMC school)
Mrs Diana Bendall	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, GSA school)
Mrs Cynthia Hall	Team Inspector (Headmistress, GSA school)
Mrs Roxanna Harrop	Team Inspector (Head of Higher Education, HMC school)
Mr Geoffrey Hill	Team Inspector (Former Head of Department, HMC school)
Mr John Pearson	Team Inspector (Director of Studies, HMC school)
Mr Stephen Smith	Team Inspector (Former Headmaster, HMC school)
Dr Stephanie Thomas	Team Inspector (Head of Learning Support, HMC school)
Dr Stephen Wilkinson	Team Inspector (Director of Studies, HMC school)
Mr Adrian Underwood	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Ms Elizabeth Worthington	Team Inspector for Boarding (Deputy Head, HMC school)
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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Marlborough College is a co-educational boarding and day school for pupils between the ages of thirteen and eighteen, located on an extensive campus on the fringe of the Wiltshire town of Marlborough. It was founded in 1843 by a group of Church of England clergymen who were looking to establish a boarding school with the prime purpose of educating the sons of clergy. The school became fully co-educational in 1989. The school retains its strong links with the Church of England through its Visitor, the Most Revd The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury and through its President, The Right Rev The Lord Bishop of Salisbury, an ex-officio member of Council, the governing body. Since the last inspection the senior leadership team has been restructured, including new appointments as have key support agencies in the fields of human resources and health and safety. A new teaching block has been built, the IB and the Pre-U have been introduced as an alternative to A level and a two week timetable introduced.
- 1.2 The school aims to recognize and celebrate pupils' unique gifts and personalities, by encouraging the exploration of intellectual and creative potential, and to inspire in them a lifelong love of learning and a pursuit of excellence. It seeks to encourage them to become self-confident, self-reliant and self-aware individuals, able to embrace and manage change, and develop in them spiritual understanding, sensitivity to the needs of others, and awareness of a social responsibility for the wider community.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, there were 889 pupils in the school (557 boys and 332 girls) of whom 402 were in the sixth form. All but 53 pupils were boarders. They were accommodated in 14 boarding houses, of which four are for girls, five are for boys and the remaining houses accommodate boys and a number of sixth-form girls. The vast majority of pupils come from families with professional and business occupations in southern England.
- 1.4 The ability profile of the school is above the national average. Results of standardised tests indicate that in Years 9 to 11 around a third of pupils are well above average ability, while in the sixth form most pupils are above or in line with average ability. No pupil has a statement of special educational need but 241 pupils have been identified as requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) the majority for dyslexia or dyspraxia. Eighty-five of these pupils, together with eight pupils for whom English is not their principal language (EAL), receive specialist help.

- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

School	NC name
Shell	Year 9
Remove	Year 10
Hundred	Year 11
Lower sixth	Year 12
Upper sixth	Year 13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Marlborough College is very successful in meeting its aim of inspiring in pupils a pursuit of excellence. Results in public examinations are good and pupils' extra-curricular achievements are excellent. Pupils' good academic achievement is supported by excellent teaching. The recommendations of the previous inspection to improve the quality of teaching by encouraging a wider use of teaching methods, including information and communication technology (ICT), to improve the use of libraries and to incorporate more independent research into lesson planning, have been successfully addressed. The curriculum and extra-curricular programme are excellent having both balance and real breadth.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils are enthusiastic about their school life and speak warmly about the relations between staff and pupils and between pupils. Their boarding experience is outstanding, particularly through the high quality pastoral care and also the support and guidance they receive through the house system. Pupils are compassionate young people, committed to the needs of those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils who responded to the questionnaire were very positive about their academic progress, the wide range of extra-curricular activities available and all aspects of their boarding experience.
- 2.3 Governance is excellent. Management and leadership are good overall and excellent in the areas of welfare and pastoral care of pupils and boarding. The good progress made by the college since the last inspection is reflected in the successful implementation of a large number of changes, including the appointment of new senior staff, the expansion of the curriculum and the increased emphasis on good classroom practice. The recommendation concerning the management of departments has not been wholly addressed. Regulatory issues concerning safeguarding, raised at the last inspection, are now fully resolved. The school has an excellent relationship with its parents reflected in their strong responses to the questionnaire. They are very pleased with all aspects of college life and, most particularly, the whole boarding experience. A few were concerned about support provided for children with SEND but the inspection team found no evidence to support this view.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is available through the link described in the Preface)

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.
- 2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2011.

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
 - 1. Strengthen the leadership of academic departments and ensure that good practice in planning and monitoring extends across all departments.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievement and of their learning, attitudes and skills is good.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated, in line with the college's aim to inspire in them a lifelong love of learning and a pursuit of excellence. Pupils show good subject knowledge and understanding, for example of fiscal and monetary policy in economics. They have good literacy skills, as seen in the book produced by pupils in the Year 9 humanities course. They are articulate and speak confidently in lessons particularly in modern foreign languages. Numeracy and reasoning skills are well developed and pupils apply them effectively in problem solving in subjects such as science and geography. Pupils apply their excellent information and communication technology (ICT) skills in a range of subjects, including music technology, and in design and technology (DT) where the preparation of 2-dimensional cutting plans for a wooden table was observed. Creative and physical skills are developed very well through art, music, drama and dance.
- 3.3 Pupils' attainment in extra-curricular activities is excellent. They achieve national and county representation in a wide range of sports including rugby and triathlon. Successes in music examinations are numerous, pupils play in national youth music groups and two were awarded university choral scholarships. Participation in the mathematics and science challenges is high with the recent award of a gold medal for physics. Pupils achieved fifteen gold awards in The Duke of Edinburgh Award's Scheme (DofE) in 2011 and the high standards reached in the combined cadet force (CCF) were exemplified by the recent successful biennial inspection.
- 3.4 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2008 to 2010. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in GCSE have been well above the national average for maintained schools and above the average for selective maintained schools. In the IGCSE, results have been well above worldwide and above UK averages. A-level results have been well above the national average for maintained schools and above those of selective maintained schools. In 2011 the college entered some pupils for the IB and the results were well above worldwide averages and similar to UK averages. There is no comparative data as yet for the Pre-U. These levels of attainment indicate that pupils make good progress at all stages relative to those of similar ability as confirmed by nationally standardised measures. These academic results enable pupils to gain places at a range of leading UK and overseas universities.
- 3.5 The achievement of pupils identified with SEND and English as an additional language EAL is good and in line with that of college pupils of similar ability, as confirmed by academic tracking data and observation of lessons. Progress made by the most able pupils is also good, as shown in their responses in lessons and their performance in academic elements of the extra-curricular programme.
- 3.6 Pupils' attitudes to learning are overwhelmingly positive. They enjoy their work, many relishing the intellectual challenge it can present. Pupils are well behaved and able to sustain their concentration in lessons. They work independently or co-operatively with others, such as in philosophy with its 'Throwing Open the Door' approach. Most pupils show initiative and a desire to participate in lessons but a few were passive learners. Pupils organise their work well in their files and most take

pride in the presentation of their work. Their relationship with teachers is excellent and they appreciate the academic support they receive from all staff.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 The curriculum is broad and balanced, offering at each stage within the college a range of subjects suitable for the age and ability of the pupils. It provides many opportunities for the acquisition of good numeracy, literacy, listening and speaking skills and contributes to pupils' academic attainment. The curriculum also contributes well to pupils' linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social development. The curriculum for Year 9 pupils includes an unusually wide range of modern foreign languages including Mandarin and Russian and an innovative and imaginative course, named 'Form'. The course, which encompasses English, history and religious studies, is taught to small groups by a single teacher and is highly effective in fulfilling the college's aim to inspire in pupils a lifelong love of learning and a pursuit of excellence. A good range of subjects is available to pupils at GCSE, with the opportunity to study Greek and/or astronomy in addition to their timetabled options. It is planned to offer triple award science to more able pupils next year as an alternative to the IGCSE dual award currently taken by all pupils. The IB diploma introduced in 2009 and now running alongside A-level and Pre-U, enables sixth-form pupils to choose a broader range of subjects which they find stimulating and challenging. The extensive and well-resourced careers programme enables pupils to make informed choices at each stage of their education. Pupils' personal development is enhanced by an extensive personal, social and health education programme (PSHE), focused closely on the needs of individual age groups. ICT provision in the curriculum has improved since the previous inspection with the introduction of a course in Years 9 and 10 focusing on the use of ICT skills across the curriculum. Curriculum enrichment in many subjects is provided through visits and trips, often related to topics being studied. The IB and extended projects provide excellent opportunities for independent learning in the sixth form.
- 3.9 Pupils identified with SEND and EAL are given appropriate support by a specialist department and curriculum planning across all departments takes good account of their needs. In line with the college's aim of encouraging the exploration of intellectual and creative potential, the scholars' programme, which begins before they join the college, provides real challenge for the most able. It inspires scholars to follow the example of others, from older pupils to outstanding Old Marlburians and other notable figures.
- 3.10 Pupils benefit greatly from an extensive extra-curricular programme which encompasses sport, the arts, practical activity and community service. The sporting programme offers a wide choice of competitive team and individual sports, including lacrosse, fives and polo. A vast range of other activities is available, from beagling to badminton, ceramics to climbing and drama to debating. The DofE and the CCF are popular options providing excellent opportunities for personal development. Much thought has gone into designing a programme that provides genuine opportunities for pupils to discover hidden talents, to challenge themselves and to give service to others.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.11 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.12 The best teaching is carefully planned, with a variety of activities, has pace and engages pupils throughout the fifty-minute period. Such teaching showed enthusiasm and passion as exemplified by a lesson on high renaissance art. Pupils, including those with particular needs, were appropriately challenged and felt sufficiently confident to participate fully. The very small amount of less successful teaching lacked the dynamism and focus of the best lessons. The college is working hard to achieve the highest standards in all lessons, particularly the sharing of good practice in its mutual observation groups.
- 3.13 Most teaching demonstrates strong subject knowledge and an ability to present it in a clear and lively manner which motivates pupils to learn. The best teaching provides opportunities for careful examination and self-appraisal, and encourages pupils to develop a reflective, questioning approach. In many lessons pupils were encouraged to work collaboratively, either in a group or in pairs, sharing their ideas and providing mutual support and encouragement.
- 3.14 Throughout the college, teachers establish an excellent rapport with pupils based on mutual respect. High standards of behaviour and enjoyment of lessons are the norm, a view supported by the majority of pupils who responded to the pupil questionnaire. Support by subject teachers for pupils identified with SEND is good. Good communication between the learning support department and subject teachers enables support to be closely focused on the individual needs of pupils, such as the provision of colour-coded materials to help with self-organisation in business studies. Support for the most able pupils is excellent, many teachers providing effective challenge through extension tasks such as participation in the British Physics Olympiad GCSE Challenge competition, where pupils showed great delight in the award of gold, silver or bronze certificates.
- 3.15 The college has responded well to the recommendation of the previous inspection report to widen its use of ICT, in order to help improve the quality of teaching. ICT usage is the norm in many departments as exemplified by the use of short video clips in history, data-logging and immediate graphical display in IB physics, and internet research in chemistry. The college's extensive range of teaching resources, including the main and departmental libraries, is well used to support learning. Teaching of the more practical subjects such as science, technology, music, physical education and art benefits significantly from spacious well-resourced facilities. Since the previous inspection, a college assessment and marking policy has been instituted, which is adapted by departments to fit their needs. However there is some inconsistency in the implementation of these policies within departments. At its best, marking of pupil work is regular and thorough with helpful written comments. In interviews, pupils reported that very helpful feedback is often provided orally when the work is returned, and this was also observed in lessons.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils' spiritual awareness is outstanding. It embodies the Christian ethos of the college and the Marlborough Charter, drawn up by the prefects as representatives of the student body. Many pupils are deeply involved in chapel, both through music and through the readings and prayers while others value the opportunity to attend a non-religious meeting. Pupils develop their own set of values and beliefs while respecting and appreciating those of others. Pupils value the beauty of the old buildings and a sense of calm exists around the campus, even at lesson changes. Through music and art and their study of literature, pupils express a mature understanding of a world beyond the purely physical.
- 4.3 The moral development of the pupils is outstanding. They have a clear sense of right and wrong, fostered by discussions of a wide range of moral issues in houses, in lessons and during PSHE. In a Year 12 ethics lesson the arguments for and against genetic engineering were argued with sensitivity and skill. Pupils demonstrate their real concern for those less fortunate than themselves through their strong commitment to the college's extensive programme of charity and voluntary work and service in the community. Pupils' involvement includes raising money through numerous events run by the prefect's Charity Think Tank, helping in primary schools and a school for those with disabilities and undertaking conservation tasks. The Global Action group works to raise awareness of local environmental issues and is currently campaigning to conserve water in the Thames valley area.
- 4.4 Pupils' social development is excellent. Pupils develop good social skills through opportunities to take on leadership roles such as house captain or prefect, and to work as a team, collaborating rather than competing. Most pupils understand that their opinions and ideas will be listened to if presented through appropriate channels, citing recent innovations brought about by the food committee, namely the introduction of the salad bar and pancakes on the breakfast menu. Pupils value the links between year groups that are encouraged by the house system and through extra-curricular activities. Older pupils take responsibility for younger ones, supporting them through new experiences and helping them develop new skills, as exemplified by a sixth-form student teaching the rudiments of fives to Year 9 boys.
- 4.5 Pupils' cultural development is outstanding. Pupils' cultural awareness is successfully developed through an extensive range of trips, often overseas, educational visits and language exchanges, many of them involving pupils in staying with a host family. Displays of photographs and articles about such activities show pupils' deep understanding and appreciation of other environments and cultures. This understanding was also clearly exhibited in pupils' reaction to a pupil-led assembly on the plight of children in Uganda and a discussion on the victims of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Pupils are also very aware of their own culture, its music and art, its traditions and institutions as seen in pupils' lively involvement in a history lesson.
- 4.6 The quality of pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils are courteous, considerate and articulate, expressing their views with confidence but not arrogance. They listen to and respect the views of others, giving and accepting constructive criticism. Pupils of all ages take responsibility for their own actions and embrace the

many challenges they face during their time at the college with determination and good humour. Pupils say 'they love college, its whole atmosphere'.

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

- 4.7 The college's arrangements for pastoral care are excellent.
- 4.8 Pastoral care is of very high quality and, in line with the college's pastoral aims, all staff are successful in 'nourishing and supporting the personal, social and emotional growth of the pupils'. Pastoral care is mainly provided through the house system, but is seen as an integral part of every teacher's role. Pupils, both day and boarding, feel extremely well supported in their houses, with a very good system of sixth form gurus and Year 10 buddies to help the incoming Year 9 pupils. The recently introduced tutor system, based on year groups, is popular with pupils, who appreciate the opportunity to talk weekly, on a one-to-one basis, to a member of staff able to give age-specific advice and support. Pupils' relationships with the staff are excellent; many mentioned that they could talk to a range of adults.
- 4.9 Pupils feel safe and are confident that any bullying incident will be dealt with swiftly and effectively. A comprehensive PSHE programme, reinforces the pupils' personal development and greater awareness of issues such as racial discrimination.
- 4.10 House councils, with representatives from each year, are popular with pupils as a channel for expressing their views. Recent meetings have resulted in initiatives such as menus being posted in houses and new designs for college ties. Regular meetings between the head of boarding and house captains and between prefects and senior leadership ensure that issues arising are discussed and dealt with promptly.
- 4.11 In the pre-inspection questionnaire some pupils were concerned about inconsistencies in the application of the new system of sanctions but the inspection team found no evidence to support this view.
- 4.12 The food provided is varied, healthy and of very high quality. Pupils participate in a wide range of physical activities and the importance of physical fitness is strongly promoted, especially through the house system.

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

- 4.13 The college's arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 4.14 The college has addressed fully the issues raised in the last inspection report regarding safeguarding. Comprehensive documentation giving guidance on all aspects of child protection is readily available to parents and all members of the school community. Staff and senior pupils are well aware of this guidance and the procedures to follow in cases of disclosure of abuse or bullying. Training is up to date for all staff and the designated person, who works closely with the local area designated officer and a designated member of council. Training in safeguarding issues and also in health and safety is an integral part of the induction programme for new staff.
- 4.15 The college has a strong culture of health and safety for which all members of the community feel responsible. Comprehensive and recently reviewed and updated policies on fire issues and other hazards include clear fire safety procedures approved by the local fire authority. Regular logged practices, within houses and

across the campus are in place. Regular testing of all fire and electrical equipment takes place and any deficiencies are remedied immediately. Risk assessments are very detailed and carefully implemented in areas such as science laboratories, technology and art workshops and the physical education department. Sports facilities such as the swimming pool and multi gym have controlled access and use is monitored. Pupils' safety is paramount in the planning of the many trips and outdoor activities that take place, with close monitoring of risk assessments and other arrangements the director of co-curriculum and health and safety specialists.

- 4.16 Pupils who are ill or injured benefit from excellent care, both in the houses and the professionally staffed medical centre and by a suitable number of trained first aiders amongst the staff. Records of accidents, treatments and medication are correct and the frequency and nature of accidents closely monitored. A SENDA policy ensures suitable access for those with special educational needs or disabilities. Admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained and stored.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.17 The quality of boarding education is excellent.
- 4.18 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. The high quality of boarders' personal development, is reflected in the confidence of their interaction with adults, their contributions to the life of their boarding houses and their support of each other. Relationships between boarders, and between boarders and staff, are pleasant and constructive. Notable is the leadership of the older boarders in the houses. As well as playing their part in the management of the house, they take the lead in house and school activities, such as directing house plays. Boarders are loyal to their house and take pride in being a member of a particular house, which they have chosen for their career in the college. They very much enjoy the life in their houses but also value the friendships they make with boarders across the college. They have a positive attitude towards the college's behaviour standards and articulated their appreciation of the staffs' support of them in all aspects of their lives. Boarders contribute significantly to the wider life of the community through their involvement in the outreach programme. They are involved formally in the development of their houses through councils and are affirmative of the support they receive at different phases of their college lives. Older boarders confirm that the college has prepared them well for life at university and beyond.
- 4.19 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. The close co-operation between housemasters, housemistresses, tutors and dames ensures that those in their charge receive excellent pastoral care and academic support. The sanatorium offers a high standard of care for those who are injured or unwell and issues all prescribed medication. Medical matters are carefully documented and the system for sharing important medical information with appropriate boarding staff is effective. The induction of new boarders is very effective in helping them settle quickly. Boarders of all ages confirm that there is always someone to turn to for advice, including the school counsellor. Houses are secure and regular checks on boarders' whereabouts are the norm. Boarders can keep their possessions safely in houses and can bank pocket money. Boarders regularly engage in physical exercise and value the college's range of sports' facilities. The weekend activities programme is organised by house and is carefully planned to appeal to and to allow sufficient self-directed time for the age range in the houses. The weekly activities programme is comprehensive and tailored to boarders' interests. The boarding accommodation is comfortable and secure. It ranges from modern, purpose-built houses to older,

converted buildings some of which breathe history and fame. Year 9 boarders live and work in larger bedrooms, after which they enjoy progressively smaller units and graduate to single study bedrooms in the sixth form. Facilities for boarders, such as house kitchens and games rooms, are good. Common rooms of different sizes provide excellent areas for boarders to socialise and there is enough space to allow boarders personal privacy. They personalise their own rooms and some show considerable creativity in this area. Boarders make use of the network facility for their laptops and also use house computer facilities. Boarders are able to contact their families easily by telephone. Links with parents are excellent. As well as regular communication with parents, houses put on events specifically to involve parents, such as concerts or tennis tournaments. It is clear from responses to the parent questionnaire that this involvement is much appreciated.

- 4.20 The quality of arrangements for welfare and safeguarding is excellent. Recruitment of staff meets all requirements and outside persons visiting boarding accommodation are suitably supervised. All boarding and other staff are regularly trained in safeguarding and are confident that they know what they should do if a child protection issue arises. Regular compliance checks of fire regulations in houses and termly unannounced fire drills are standard practice. Risk assessments are carefully monitored and boarders are encouraged to assess risk for themselves through courses on self-protection and digital safety. The staff supervising boarders outside teaching time are sufficient in number and well trained. Boarders report positively on the adult support in houses. The systems for contacting staff in houses at night are clear and all houses have good overnight supervision. Boarders follow a well monitored process for signing in and out of houses. Staff are aware of what to do when a boarder is reported missing and are quick to follow up any unexplained absences. The college has a clear policy to promote good behaviour, which is effectively implemented, including rewards and sanctions. Boarders understand the need for the regulations which contribute to their safety. They report that they know bullying is not tolerated and any instances are dealt with speedily and effectively, but boarders confirm that bullying is rare because relationships in the houses and across year groups are strong. Good relationships with boarding staff ensure that pupils can raise concerns easily.
- 4.21 The leadership and management of boarding are excellent and strongly support the college's pastoral aims. Whilst the fourteen houses are individual entities, with their own character, the management systems ensure parity in the high quality of care. Unified teams of house staff are supported well by senior leaders. Policies and procedures are clear, up to date and published on the website. Staffing levels strongly support the personal development of boarders, including many tutorial sessions in the houses in the evenings. Boarders' progress in all areas of their lives is carefully and regularly recorded and available, as appropriate, to all members of the house teams. Staff are well supported, benefitting from regular review and training. A good proportion of staff have achieved or are studying for the certificate of professional practice in boarding education and boarding courses are also well attended. The college is committed to evaluation and improvement. It has refined its boarding management systems and now has a boarding development plan for the improvement of the physical provision of the houses over a seven year period. All the recommendations from the previous inspection of boarding have been successfully addressed.
- 4.22 Responses to the boarder and parent questionnaires were very supportive of boarding at the college. Boarders confirmed their enjoyment of boarding, the positive relationships amongst boarders and the high quality of the food. There was

some concern about insufficient activities, but discussions with boarders during the inspection confirmed a contrary view. Boarder parents were enthusiastic in their praise of the children's boarding experience, stating that it contributed significantly to their personal development. They liked the ease of contact with housemasters and housemistresses, the effective management of boarding and the way their children were treated as individuals in their boarding communities.

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 governing council has a clear vision for the future of the college and works closely with the senior leadership to ensure this vision is met. Its members are committed to providing the support, including financial, essential for the college's future development, and also to ensuring that the college continues to meet the needs of all its pupils, while retaining its unique ethos. Since the previous inspection, council has overseen the building of a new teaching block, changes to the academic curriculum, significant new appointments to the college's management and the purchase of a building which, it is intended, will provide much needed girls' boarding accommodation.
- 5.3 Members of council know the college well. They receive reports from the senior leadership about all aspects of school life prior to their meetings. Good relations and regular communication between the chairman and the master facilitate an open and constructive exchange of ideas. Excellent opportunities are provided for council to visit houses, to talk to both staff and pupils and to attend a broad spectrum of college events. The range of experience and expertise amongst the council members ensures that the college benefits from oversight by people who can provide real advice and challenge to the leadership.
- 5.4 Council discharge their responsibilities very well in relation to statutory requirements. The regulatory recommendation of the previous inspection has been met fully. College policies, including those for health and safety and also safeguarding, are reviewed annually by council and the efficiency of their implementation monitored closely through discussion with members of the senior leadership. A designated member of council works with the college's child protection officer to ensure the effectiveness of pupils' safeguarding procedures. Scrutiny by council of the selection and appointment procedures for all staff, governors and volunteers is comprehensive.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management of the college, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is good.
- 5.6 The senior leadership is highly committed to promoting the aims of the college, to encourage intellectual and creative exploration, the pursuit of excellence, a lifelong love of learning, spiritual understanding and social responsibility. The recent restructuring of the senior leadership team and new appointments to key posts, have brought fresh purpose and vigour to the leadership of the college. Roles are clearly defined and members are very active in the discharge of their duties. They work closely together with a strong vision for the future development of the college, focused closely on the needs of the pupils. They know the pupils well and are very involved in the day to day life of the school, leading by example in everything they do. The senior leadership team is highly successful in appointing and motivating high-quality staff and ensuring they are suitably trained and supported in their roles.

- 5.7 Pastoral leadership and management are outstanding. Based on the house structure and overseen by the head of boarding, the pastoral care, welfare and guidance of day and boarding pupils is very effectively managed by housemasters and housemistresses, with excellent support from dames and tutors. The strength of the system is reflected in the excellent personal development of the pupils, and in the overwhelmingly positive response of the pupils' and parents' questionnaires. The recent appointment of heads of year to provide an overview of pupil development is already having some impact, with the introduction of year group assemblies and other initiatives but the roles are not yet fully understood by pupils or staff. Safeguarding of pupils is paramount and all staff receive appropriate child protection training. Awareness of welfare and health and safety procedures is excellent. Staff recruitment is rigorously monitored and checking of staff, governors and volunteers accurately recorded in a central register. New staff appreciate the comprehensive induction process they undergo and the support they receive from their colleagues.
- 5.8 Leadership and management of academic departments is good overall, but lacks consistency and rigour in some areas. The recommendation of the previous inspection report concerning aspects of departmental management, including development planning, has not yet been fully met. Development planning in some departments is good but these plans, which often lack detail, are not yet aligned with college strategy, a fact which the college acknowledges. Good practice was observed in the implementation of departmental policy in areas such as marking and pupil tracking, but this is not yet sufficiently widespread. The cross-curricular mutual observation groups and the new scheme for the review of teaching, closely linked to the professional development programme for academic staff, are already bearing fruit with more sharing of good practice within and across departments.
- 5.9 Links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent. Parents are closely involved in their children's education through the strong relationship the housemasters and housemistresses forge between college and home, from before the time when a pupil joins the college. The overwhelming majority of parents are very satisfied with the college's provision for their children, as can be seen from the highly positive response to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Parents are particularly appreciative of the boarding care provided and would recommend the school to others. They feel well informed about all aspects of college life and are confident that any query, particularly one regarding a pastoral issue, will receive a swift response. There is strong approval for the choice of subjects available and the extensive range of extra-curricular activities offered. A small number of parents expressed dissatisfaction with the provision for pupils identified as having special educational needs but the inspection team found no evidence to support this view. When parental concerns are raised, they are taken seriously and dealt with promptly in line with the college's policy on complaints.
- 5.10 The college uses a parent portal as its main means of communication with parents. The system is highly successful, being used regularly by over 99% of parents, and provides information on college events, details of sporting fixtures and, via secure login, detailed individual pupil information. End of term reports indicate attainment and effort grades and show very good awareness of a pupil's strengths and weaknesses, drawn together in a helpful overview by the housemaster or housemistress. An almanac, devised primarily for the use of pupils, is issued to parents each term and more general information, including college policies, is made available on the college website.

- 5.11 Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the life of the school: they attend special events, drama productions concerts and sports fixtures and offer their professional expertise to support college initiatives. The Old Marlburians, who have a strong identity, also provide practical support. The college holds a parents' evening for every year group, once per year, and goes to considerable lengths to accommodate parents from overseas who are only able to visit on isolated occasions.
- 5.12 Parents of prospective pupils receive comprehensive information about the college through the website and through a wide range of literature including a prospectus made available by the admissions department.

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