



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

RATCLIFFE COLLEGE

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Ratcliffe College

Full Name of School	Ratcliffe College
DfE Number	855/6001
Registered Charity Number	527850
Address	Ratcliffe College Fosse Way Ratcliffe-on-the-Wreake Leicester Leicestershire LE7 4SG
Telephone Number	01509 817000
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Email Address	registrar@ratcliffe.leics.sch.uk
Headmaster	Mr Gareth Lloyd
Chair of Governors	Mr Richard Gamble
Age Range	3 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	794
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (435 boys; 359 girls;)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 0 5-11: 191 3-5 (EYFS): 43 11-18: 560
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 684
Number of Boarders	Total: 110 Full: 92 Weekly: 18
Head of EYFS	Mrs Sarah Rankine
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	3 to 6 March 2015

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in February 2010.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Education (DfE) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

This inspection contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education, personal development and welfare.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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

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

same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with 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 Bill Burn	Reporting Inspector
Mr Phil Foley	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Adrian Lowe-Wheeler	Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Mr Christopher Alcock	Team Inspector (Head, HMC school)
Mr Richard Barr	Team Inspector (Former Head of Sixth Form, HMC school)
Mrs Angela Drew	Team Inspector (Head, GSA school)
Miss Adrienne Richmond	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, GSA school)
Mr Roger Waller	Team Inspector (Former Head, maintained school)
Ms Myra Rodgers	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Penny Oates	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Ratcliffe College is located to the north of Leicester. It was founded in 1847 as a school for boys by the Institute of Charity, the Rosminian Fathers. It admitted girls into the sixth form for the first time in 1977 and became fully co-educational in 1984. A nursery was added in 1998, and a junior school for pupils aged 5 to 11 in 2001. It retains a strong Roman Catholic ethos while welcoming pupils of all denominations, faiths and backgrounds. The governing body oversees all sections of the school.
- 1.2 The school aims to educate young people in the spirit of the Gospel and the traditions of the Catholic Church, seeking to nurture the God-given talents and potential of each individual so that each child may become a confident, responsible and useful member of society. It seeks to do this by offering a broad and balanced curriculum, striving for excellence in all aspects and offering a thorough preparation for life.
- 1.3 There are 794 pupils, 435 boys 359 girls, including 43 in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). In addition, there are 191 pupils in the preparatory school and 560 in the senior school, of whom 110 are boarders.
- 1.4 The ability profile of the pupils is above the national average in the junior and senior schools, with a wide range of abilities represented. The ability of the sixth form is in line with the average for pupils in sixth form education.
- 1.5 One hundred-and-one pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and 60 receive specialist learning support. Sixty-seven pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) of whom 49 are at an early stage of learning English and receive language support from the school. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs or Education, Health and Care plan.
- 1.6 Since the previous inspection, a new chair of governors has been appointed. There has been significant investment in the buildings, with a new preparatory school opened in 2014, a new exit road, design technology (DT) workshop, and cricket facilities. Science laboratories have been refurbished. Additional posts have been created among both support and teaching staff. The senior leadership team, boarding staff and the games and physical education staff have all been restructured. The school's management information system is being used more extensively, particularly for academic purposes.
- 1.7 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The quality of academic and other achievements is excellent. Pupils develop excellent knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils with SEND, and those with EAL also make excellent progress, at least in line with their peers. The curriculum is appropriate at all stages and offers flexibility which meets the needs of the wide range of pupils in the school. Pupils are willing learners, eager to please and hard-working. They benefit from excellent teaching, especially in the Early Years and preparatory school. They benefit from excellent teaching as a result of clear lesson objectives and strong planning. Teachers show excellent subject knowledge, time management and use of resources. They know their pupils well and assess their needs accurately, making different provision for different groups of pupils. Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent. The use of ICT by pupils in the senior school is limited, which restricts the development of independent learning skills. Teaching does not consistently offer sufficient challenge to the most able pupils.
- 2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent throughout the school. Pupils are mature, articulate and confident by the time that they leave the school. The school's aims and values are reinforced through assemblies, tutorials, and the personal, social, health and citizenship education programme (PSHCE). The ethos of the school ensures that pupils develop a strong moral code, and they know right from wrong. They are aware of the needs of those less fortunate than themselves, and devote time and energy to charity fundraising and offering practical help on their own account. Pupils embrace the values of tolerance, the rule of law, and democracy, and they have a heightened awareness of faiths and cultures other than their own. They are supported by excellent pastoral care and excellent provision for boarders. The school is a safe and healthy place for pupils to grow up, and their welfare is central to the school's life and work.
- 2.3 The governance, leadership and management of the school are excellent, and work together creatively and harmoniously to improve outcomes for pupils. Governors and senior leaders are ambitious to improve the school's provision wherever possible. To that end they carry out rigorous self-evaluation, and set clear priorities in their strategic planning. Safeguarding measures are secure, including the appointment of staff. The recommendation from the previous inspection to ensure implementation of policy by middle managers is consistent across all subject areas has been met in full. Similarly, 'next steps' for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) have now been incorporated into short-term planning. Provision for more able pupils has been improved but is not yet fully implemented.

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) Recommendation(s) for further improvement

1. Enhance opportunities for independent learning in the senior school through greater use by pupils of ICT.
2. Ensure that teaching provides sufficient challenge to meet the needs of the most able pupils.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievement and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The promotion of an ethos of achievement, for example through archiving especially meritorious work, is consistent throughout the school. As a result, it meets its aim of nurturing the talents of the pupils, and striving for excellence.
- 3.3 In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), individualised care and learning programmes ensure that the children attain, and often exceed, expected levels of development for their age. Their literacy and numeracy skills are well developed. By the end of the Early Years, all children, including those with SEND, make at least good and often outstanding progress. At the end of their time in the Nursery, children are ready to progress to the next phase of their schooling.
- 3.4 In the preparatory school, pupils demonstrate excellent levels of speaking, listening, writing, and reading. For example, on World Book Day, pupils in Year 3 used sophisticated language to describe Fantastic Mr Fox as heroic. Pupils also show good levels of logical and independent thought. Pupils apply mathematics and ICT well in work across the curriculum, and benefit from consistent opportunities for extension and independent learning. The preparatory school has thorough arrangements in place to ensure that progress is maintained in the transition from the Early Years and the progress of individual pupils is tracked carefully throughout the preparatory stage. The appropriate members of the senior leadership team meet regularly to ensure a similarly smooth transfer to the senior school.
- 3.5 In the senior school and sixth form, pupils continue to demonstrate high standards of literacy and numeracy. They have the opportunity to participate in academic competitions and schemes such as Go4SET, Engineering in Education and Olympiads, with pupils regularly qualifying for the International Mathematics Olympiad. Practical subjects allow students to develop their creative skills well, as in a project to make a life-size model Spitfire. Essential skills in ICT are well established and there is excellent video work at A level. Overall, however, the development of independent learning skills amongst older pupils is limited by a lack of opportunities in the senior school, particularly through the use of ICT in classes and for homework.
- 3.6 There are high standards of achievement in many areas of school activity. For example, the senior strings group played to a high standard because of the high expectations demanded of them. Joyful singing was observed from Year 2 pupils and last year, 48 pupils took instrumental music examinations, with a quarter achieving distinctions; sixth formers gain choral scholarships at university. In the preparatory school, high standards of achievement were observed in external drama qualifications and ballet activities. Some pupils have achieved national representation in hockey and athletics whilst others have enjoyed individual success at national level in sports such as ice dance and judo. Last year, 13 students achieved gold standard in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE).
- 3.7 In the preparatory school, pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to national tests but, on the evidence available, inspectors judge it to be high in national age-related expectations. In the senior school the following analysis uses the national data for the years 2011 to 2013. These are the most recent three years

for which comparative statistics are available. Attainment at GCSE is above average for maintained schools, and in 2011 was similar to the national average for selective maintained schools. Girls' results overall are similar to the national average for girls in selective maintained schools. The IGCSE results (in Chinese and further mathematics) are higher than world-wide norms. In 2014, 48 pupils were entered for IGCSE further mathematics, with 60 per cent achieving grades A* or A. At A level, attainment is above the national average for maintained schools, and similar to the national average for selective maintained schools. At all levels of the preparatory and senior schools, these levels of attainment represent good progress; this is confirmed by inspection evidence from observations, scrutiny of work and discussions with the pupils.

- 3.8 Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) across the school achieve well because of the support that they receive; they perform well in public examinations. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) are very well supported by specialist staff and also achieve well. The school ensures that specialist tuition, either individually or in small groups, is available to these pupils. The progress made by able pupils is not always as high as it could be because a small proportion of lessons fail to provide enough challenge. The excellent provision for such pupils in some subjects is not being used consistently across the subject range.
- 3.9 Pupils of all ages have excellent attitudes to learning and are co-operative and collaborative learners. In the Early Years, there is an excellent mix of adult-led and pupil-initiated activities, and the children work well individually and in small groups.

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

- 3.10 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.11 The curriculum meets the needs of the range of the pupils who attend and provides highly effective coverage of all areas of learning. It supports the aims of the school and makes an important contribution to the high standards which pupils achieve.
- 3.12 In the EYFS, staff prepare a wide variety of activities. Opportunities abound for learning outside in the playground, used well during playtimes. These fully cover the prime learning areas for the youngest children and later incorporate the specific areas. The curriculum is stimulating and creative and is further augmented by specialist teaching in French, PE, music and swimming. Extra-curricular activities include swimming, ballet, tennis, gardening and drama.
- 3.13 In the preparatory school, the curriculum covers all the National Curriculum subjects and also includes French from Year 1. Since the previous inspection, the curriculum has been further enhanced with the introduction of Latin in Years 5 and 6 and a creative curriculum for Years 1 and 2. Specialist teaching in French, physical education, music and swimming has a positive impact on standards. In Year 6 specialist teaching from the senior school in science, art, DT, ICT, music, French and drama helps to promote continuity of learning into Year 7. Many trips and residential visits are organised and linked to curriculum themes.
- 3.14 All pupils are taught ICT throughout the preparatory school and in Years 7 to 9; it is also a GCSE option. Teachers are encouraged to include opportunities for ICT in their schemes of work, but inspection evidence shows that this is not being done sufficiently well, particularly in the senior school.

- 3.15 At GCSE, pupils continue to study the core subjects of mathematics, English, a modern foreign language and religious studies. In addition, all pupils study either the dual award sciences or the three separate sciences, where a switch to IGCSE has been made to provide a more rigorous approach to learning. Pupils can then choose from a wide range of subjects, which are timetabled depending on the choices to give most pupils their preferred options.
- 3.16 In the sixth form a similarly broad range of subjects is offered, and the school succeeds in allowing the vast majority of pupils a free choice of their preferred subjects. Flexibility with curriculum planning has enabled a group of sixth form students to take A-level mathematics in one year, allowing them to introduce further mathematics in Year 13.
- 3.17 Pupils in Years 7 to 13 benefit from further enrichment through the PSHCE programme. The programme is well constructed, taught by the tutors and enriched by visiting speakers, and covers all topics appropriate for the ages of the pupils. Coverage of political matters is appropriately balanced.
- 3.18 Throughout the school, there is an excellent provision for those pupils with SEND or EAL. Individual tuition and well-structured programmes communicated effectively to staff ensure that teaching in the classroom continues this support. Provision for able pupils is not as consistently strong; excellent practice in some subjects is not being used consistently well elsewhere to always meet their needs.
- 3.19 The long school day enables the school to offer a wealth of excellent extra-curricular provision. The school monitors carefully the quality of these activities and ensures that the teaching staff are deployed effectively. This allows an increasing number of pupils to participate in teams and to develop existing talents and new interests. A good balance of activities ensures that something is available to suit all pupils' tastes. A significant majority participate in either team sports or individual sporting activities, and both the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and the DofE are well supported. Pupils and parents value highly the extra-curricular activities on offer. The pupils' success is well recognised and reported to parents.
- 3.20 Pupils take full advantage of opportunities to engage in the local community or further afield such as the support for a health centre in Tanzania through fund raising activities or exchange visits with schools in New Zealand and Australia. Pupils of all ages support local charities effectively, and there are strong community links throughout the school in sport, music and drama. Sixth form pupils speak very highly about their work with a local voluntary service unit to help adults with learning difficulties on a weekly basis.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.21 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.22 Teaching across the school is effective in promoting pupils' progress and supports the aims of the school in helping the young people to achieve their greatest potential and to grow intellectually.
- 3.23 In the EYFS, a rich variety of teaching strategies is used to match children's interests, individual needs and learning styles. As a result, children make rapid progress. Expectations are realistically high and unfailingly positive reinforcement generates an enthusiasm for knowledge and a keen desire to take the next steps in learning.

- 3.24 Teachers across the school demonstrate excellent subject knowledge and know their pupils well. Teaching takes full advantage of the excellent relationships between teachers and pupils. Pupils feel at ease approaching teachers for one-to-one help and extra support outside lessons. Teachers willingly give of their time to help pupils who seek their help either informally or in departmental clinic sessions. Management of class time is excellent and teaching consistently encourages excellent behaviour.
- 3.25 In almost all lessons, particularly in the preparatory school, teaching is well planned. Methods are varied and thus effective in maintaining interest and enabling pupils to make progress. A small number of senior school lessons relied too much on input from the teacher and pupils were therefore not given the opportunity to show independence of thought. Most teaching makes use of a wide range of learning resources, but in the senior school pupils do not always have enough opportunity to use ICT in their learning, particularly for developing skills of independent research.
- 3.26 In most cases, teaching makes good use of assessment information. Diagnostic tests on entry identify the needs of pupils and staff are provided with strategies for use in lessons, which they generally implement effectively. Pupils with SEND have individual plans which are shared with parents and made accessible to staff.
- 3.27 Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly in accordance with departmental policy. Almost all marking contains helpful comments to aid learning; at its best, comments also contain clear targets for improvement that pupils use to plan their own learning. There is an excellent, systematic approach to using assessment information to plan and modify provision for pupils of all ages who have SEND or EAL, allowing their specific needs to be met by providing them with different work to their peers. Most teaching also takes proper account of the needs of pupils who are able, gifted or talented, but the excellent practice seen in some subjects has yet to be reflected across the whole of the curriculum.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The core Rosminian motto of the school, "Love is the fulfilment of the law" permeates the life and work of the school, reflected in its active promotion of the personal development of the pupils. By the time they leave, pupils are self-confident, articulate and mature young men and women.
- 4.3 In the EYFS, children are prepared well for the next stage of their learning through meeting specialist and senior staff from other areas of the school and using such facilities as the chapel, refectory and swimming pool. Transition is managed extremely carefully and this ensures that it is seamless.
- 4.4 The pupils' spiritual awareness is excellent. The spiritual dimension of the school is one of the school's key strengths and the pupils appreciate non-material aspects of life. Pupils develop an excellent self-awareness and as they move through the school, they gain an ability to question things that might get in the way of their development. Pupils understand and appreciate the strong spiritual context provided by the Catholic faith, which permeates the school and lends it much of its character. Pupils are aware of other cultures and beliefs, including other Christian traditions and those of other faiths, and of none, are welcomed into the community.
- 4.5 All pupils display excellent moral development. They have a well-developed sense of right and wrong, are very considerate and courteous, and respect school rules, as well as understanding the particular character of the law of the land. They demonstrate high levels of self-discipline and respond very positively to their teachers. In the preparatory school, pupils are very keen to attain house points and the head's commendations for good work, which are presented on a weekly basis. Senior school pupils develop an excellent understanding of moral and ethical issues through debate and discussion, as seen during a debate led by an external speaker on abortion, in addition to being well supported by the excellent PSHCE courses run throughout the school.
- 4.6 The pupils' social awareness is outstanding; their very strong affection for their school community is profound and was very strongly evident in the pupils' interviews. For example, they were drawn into the school as it felt like a family. Older pupils express very positive attitudes and take seriously their responsibilities. Well-developed collaborative work is widely seen across the school, both in the classroom and in extra-curricular activities. Pupils recognise that people have different needs, and are to be respected equally. For example, throughout the school, pupils demonstrate an excellent awareness and empathy for those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils gain a great deal from organising and arranging charity days. The money raised supports a large number of charities, national and local. Pupils gain a great deal from active involvement, such as helping in the community. Years 12 and 13 help weekly at a local community centre for groups of adults with learning difficulties. Younger pupils in the preparatory school were raising money for a hospice by baking and selling cakes.
- 4.7 Pupils develop an excellent cultural awareness through a variety of sources ranging from school productions, high quality art and opportunities for instrumental performances, dance, choirs, and attendance at special services such as the Lenten

Vespers. Pupils learn to value the contributions and achievements of those whose backgrounds differ from their own. They are helped in this by having opportunities to visit Europe, to help in their languages and cultural understanding of those countries, and from links with Tanzania and New Zealand, in addition to pilgrimages. The PSHCE programme ensures that pupils of all ages gain understanding of the public services and institutions of England and the achievements of the Western cultural tradition.

- 4.8 By the time they leave the school, pupils' personal development is excellent, in line with the school's aims. They develop their gifts and talents and equip themselves to become responsible and useful members of society.

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

- 4.9 The contribution of the arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.10 In the EYFS, the provision for the children's well-being is excellent. Each child has a key person who ensures that the setting fully meets its aim that every child should flourish within a warm, welcoming, caring and secure environment. All children form strong bonds with staff, who go out of their way to ensure that the children feel happy and safe. Staff encourage high standards of behaviour, courtesy and respect for one another. The children are active explorers within this highly supportive environment, and freely use their imagination while learning co-operatively and playing with their peers. Staff teach the benefits of healthy eating and the importance of physical exercise. Playtimes are an excellent opportunity to put this into practice. The children generally manage their own personal needs and good hygiene habits are reinforced.
- 4.11 Across the school, pastoral staff provide high quality support and guidance for pupils. Guidance through the PSHCE programme delivered by tutors is effective throughout the school. Those with responsibility for pastoral matters communicate quickly and effectively. The appointment of an additional senior point of contact for pupils, parents and staff has been effective in improving communication. Regular assemblies led by senior figures in the school and twice-weekly tutor meetings offer opportunities for staff to provide support and guidance to pupils.
- 4.12 Relationships between staff and pupils during lessons and in the wider context of school life are excellent, reflecting the school's core values. Pupils say that they feel confident about speaking to a member of staff about concerns they may have. Relationships among pupils are similarly positive. Appropriately trained student listeners and prefects are effective in providing support for younger members of the school.
- 4.13 The extensive programme of games and PE ensures that pupils take regular and varied exercise; almost all pupils are involved in physical extra-curricular activities. Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits, helped by the PSHCE programme and food technology lessons. School meals offer a range of healthy options.
- 4.14 The school is very effective in promoting tolerance and good behaviour. It has clear expectations of how pupils should behave and deals effectively with breaches. In the questionnaire a small minority of pupils said that teachers are inconsistent in how they apply rewards and sanctions. Interviews with pupils across the school and examination of sanctions records did not support this view.

- 4.15 The school guards effectively against bullying. The PSHCE programme and assemblies include consideration of bullying and emphasise the school's intolerance of it. When interviewed, pupils were in no doubt of the consequences of bullying and that the school treats the matter seriously with appropriate sanctions. Pupils say bullying is very rare and are confident that if an incident of bullying did occur it would be dealt with promptly and effectively.
- 4.16 The school has a suitable three-year plan to improve accessibility for pupils with SEND.
- 4.17 In the pre-inspection survey a minority of pupils indicated that their views were not listened to. Inspection evidence did not support this view as there were clear examples where pupils had requested changes through the school council which had been acted upon, such as the recent establishment of a food council.

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

- 4.18 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.19 In the EYFS, children's well-being and safeguarding are afforded the highest significance. All staff receive regular training in child protection and health and safety procedures. Many are also trained in paediatric first aid.
- 4.20 The school's safeguarding procedures and recruitment policy are in line with official guidance and are applied consistently in practice. All checks are carried out as required and the results recorded centrally. The policy for dealing with concerns about the welfare of pupils is in accordance with locally agreed inter-agency procedures and is followed closely. The school's arrangements for handling abuse allegations are clear and implemented correctly when necessary. Safeguarding training is well organised and takes place at appropriate intervals. The school reviews all child protection policies annually to ensure that they are in line with current requirements. There are suitable policies in place to manage exclusions, pupils' behaviour and the prevention of bullying.
- 4.21 The school takes all necessary steps to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. All anti-fire equipment and alarms are checked annually and tested by professional consultants. Emergency evacuation procedures for all school premises are regularly practised and logged. The school has suitable risk assessments for all buildings and off-site trips. Some parents expressed concerns over morning traffic safety because of the large volume of traffic entering and leaving the school site. The problem has been alleviated by the construction of a new site exit road. The school has also established a temporary additional one-way system and is currently evaluating the effectiveness of this change. If successful, it is intended that the new one-way system will be made permanent in the summer. Portable electrical appliances are tested annually. All hazardous chemicals are securely stored and safely disposed of when out of date. There are ample supplies of safe drinking water.
- 4.22 A well-equipped medical centre provides effective care for pupils who are ill or injured. Pupils with SEND have suitable individual and classroom support. Strategically positioned ramps allow those with disabilities independent access to most areas of the school site.
- 4.23 Admission and attendance registers are properly kept and securely stored for the previous three years.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

4.24 The quality of boarding is excellent.

4.25 Outcomes for boarders are excellent. The boarders' personal development is clearly evident in their confidence, independence and tolerance. They are very thoughtful of the needs of others. Boarders say that they share a great sense of community. This sense of community permeates the school at all levels. Pupils from different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds are welcomed into the inclusive Catholic ethos of the school and equal opportunities are actively promoted. Both staff and boarders speak of a successful family atmosphere. There are excellent relationships among boarders of all ages and nationalities. Boarders are encouraged and supported by committed boarding staff and matrons. There is a strong bond between boarders and staff; boarders are appreciative of the efforts that staff make on their behalf. The boarders say there is a wide range of people they can talk to in times of need including an independent listener who visits the school weekly. In addition, boarders also have access to appropriate help line numbers including that of the Children's Commissioner. Boarders are well supported academically and this is further enhanced by a house tutor system. Pupils accept responsibility and develop leadership skills through the prefect system where they have clearly defined roles and are given appropriate training. The sixth form flat facility enables boarders to experience independent living, preparing them for life after school including using a washing machine. Boarders feel listened to; there is an effective boarding council where boarders can express their views and boarders are confident in approaching staff. Boarders have access to the world about them through newspapers, television and appropriate internet facilities.

4.26 The quality of boarding provision and care is good. Boarders say they feel safe. New boarders to the school speak highly of their induction and the warm welcome and the help given to them by staff and other boarders, including a 'buddy'. This enables them to settle into their new school family. They are also provided with helpful handbooks. The school has, and efficiently implements, policies for those who are unwell. There is a well-appointed medical centre where pupils receive excellent medical care. Pupils speak warmly of the care they receive there. The centre is staffed five-and-a-half days a week by qualified nurses. Nurses are on call at all other times and a school doctor attends twice weekly, ensuring that medical needs are met at all times. At other times house staff administer medicines appropriately; medicines are securely stored in the medical centre and boarding houses. Boarders have access to local services such as dentists and opticians. In pre-inspection questionnaires a majority of boarders expressed concern about the provision of food and snacks outside of mealtimes. The inspection found that food is of a good standard and when possible fresh local produce is used. Boarders receive or can make snacks and drinks at appropriate times. The school provides fresh fruit. Boarders enjoy visiting nearby towns at weekends; younger boarders are accompanied. There is a wide range of activities for boarders during the week and trips at weekends, including theme parks and city visits. Boarders speak enthusiastically about these and have an input into the choice of venues. Regular contact can be made with parents using payphones in the houses, personal mobile phones, e-mail and via internet telephone calls. The accommodation is of a high standard with good furniture and the houses are extremely clean. A very small minority of boarders commented that their belongings were not safe. The school makes provision for secure storage, but it is not always used by boarders. Boarders are happy in their environment. Boarders personalise their own rooms with photographs and posters, adding to the homely feel. Both houses have comfortable

common rooms where boarders enjoy socialising and also kitchens for the preparation of snacks and drinks. There is also a sixth form common room where the older boarders enjoy relaxing or playing pool. In the evenings boarders have easy access to school facilities in their free time. During the inspection they were seen to be enjoying playing netball, using the fitness room and playing musical instruments. Laundry is efficiently done on site. Regular fire drills are carried out and boarders have a working knowledge of the procedures.

- 4.27 The arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are excellent. The school operates a safe procedure for the recruitment of staff meeting the recommendation of the previous inspection. Child protection measures are effective and all staff, including ancillary support staff, receive regular training and are aware of their responsibilities. There are sufficient members of staff on duty and boarders can contact them at all times. There is an effective anti-bullying policy and boarders report that bullying is not a problem in the school. There are clear policies to promote good behaviour and boarders are seen to be exceptionally well-behaved, polite and respectful. The boarding houses are secure. Boarders are registered at regular intervals ensuring that their whereabouts are known at all times. Risk assessments are undertaken and all the required policies and documents are in place including a complaints policy.
- 4.28 The effectiveness of leadership and management within boarding is excellent. A suitable statement of the school's boarding principles and practice is available to parents, staff and boarders. The governing body takes an active role in the boarding life of the school. The boarding team receive excellent support from the senior leadership team. Boarding staff have clear job descriptions, are appraised and have suitable opportunities for further training. Effective links are achieved between boarders' academic and pastoral lives by regular staff communication between academic and boarding staff enhanced by boarding tutors.

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 governors are passionate and committed to the life and prosperity of the school, and make a distinctive contribution to its success. They supervise all sections of the school, in line with its aims and ethos. They bring a suitably wide range of skills and interests to the task, devote a great deal of time to it, and have developed a fruitful and mutually supportive relationship with the senior leadership team, also challenging and stimulating them when necessary.
- 5.3 They exercise shrewd financial stewardship and have been instrumental in enabling the school to invest appropriately in staffing, both teaching and support, and also in extending and developing the accommodation and resources, most recently the preparatory school in 2014. They are highly ambitious for the future of the school.
- 5.4 The governors provide an excellent oversight of the school's educational standards and benefit from a system of committees, which enables them to develop a detailed understanding of the school's strengths, as well as the areas where it can continue to grow stronger. Communication is exemplary, facilitated by the provision of a professional externally appointed minute-taker for meetings, who gets minutes agreed and circulated promptly; and by the fact that almost all governors live close to the school, and feel welcome to call in regularly.
- 5.5 Governors are actively involved in and highly supportive of the work of the EYFS. Highly effective communication between governors and staff has a very positive impact on the overall provision. Governors are involved in development planning and in setting priorities.
- 5.6 There is a well-judged programme of visits to shadow pupils, observe lessons, spend time in the boarding houses. Records of all such visits are kept. In addition, staff are given opportunities to meet governors informally and to contribute to committee meetings. Governors are familiar figures at school events and are well known within the school community.
- 5.7 Governors undertake appropriate training, and have taken pains to ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities in matters of legal compliance. The full governing body carries out an annual review of the school's safeguarding arrangements and the way that they are implemented.

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

- 5.8 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.9 The leadership and management team are wholly committed to ensuring that its Rosminian values are upheld successfully. The highly professional and supportive leadership inspires confidence in pupils, parents and staff. A re-alignment of middle management responsibilities has resulted in a clearly-defined management structure. Leaders and managers at all levels are highly effective at fulfilling their

responsibilities. Strong cohesion across and within the teams along with a constant quest for improvement is at the heart of the school's success.

- 5.10 The senior leaders understand the school and the needs of its pupils very well; they provide clear educational direction. They recognise its strengths and are successful in identifying areas for development. Strategic planning is based on rigorous processes of accurate self-evaluation and wide consultation. The five-year school development plan is comprehensive and ambitious, expressing broad strategic intent, and the detailed plans have clear targets, success criteria and anticipated completion dates. Departmental priorities are very closely aligned to the school development plans. This leads to a continuous process of review so that pupils receive a stimulating educational experience of high quality.
- 5.11 Staff appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the plan and recent restructuring is having a very positive impact, allowing their voices to be heard. The open-door policy of the senior leadership team is welcomed widely by the staff. The recommendation in the previous inspection report to ensure that the implementation of policy by middle managers is consistent across all subject areas in the senior school has been implemented successfully in almost all areas. Formal and informal systems to monitor, evaluate and review the work of the academic and pastoral teams include peer review. Staff movements such as the biennial changes of Heads of Years 8 and 9 are designed to ensure continuity of care. Monitoring of teaching and learning through lesson observation and work scrutiny is carried out regularly and drives school improvement. Governors take an active part in the monitoring and evaluation processes and their input is valued by staff. There is very effective and regular liaison between staff across senior and preparatory schools and pupil transfer is enhanced by staff who teach in both sections. This ensures the school's ethos and feelings of unity is consistently promoted.
- 5.12 In the EYFS, planning and monitoring of the educational programmes is meticulous. This ensures consistently high standards throughout the setting. Self-evaluation shows an excellent understanding of the strengths of the provision and identifies clearly the areas for development. Staff feel very well supported by the professional supervision which is conducted formally and informally. Assessment of performance is linked clearly to training opportunities. When necessary, external agencies are consulted so that children receive the support they need.
- 5.13 At whole-school and departmental level, the leadership has been successful in recruiting, supporting, motivating and developing high-quality staff, and ensuring that they are suitably checked and trained for their roles in meeting the needs of pupils in the areas of safeguarding, safe recruitment and welfare, health and safety. There is also appropriate and regular training for staff. A very thorough induction programme supports staff new to the school and its effectiveness is closely monitored and meticulous records are kept. Systems for appraisal and professional development are clear and comprehensive and work effectively at all levels of management. Pastoral leadership and management are excellent. They ensure that the school's aim of sustaining a safe, caring and compassionate community in which all members are able to realise their potential is met. The pastoral team is wholly effective in providing high quality care for the pupils and the daily log ensures that all staff are kept well briefed about pupil matters.
- 5.14 The school maintains an excellent constructive relationship with parents in accordance with its aims. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the parental questionnaire indicated that the school encourages them to be involved

in its life and work and they can communicate effectively with the school. They feel able to contact staff who care for their child, that their child is well supported and that information about the school is readily available. Inspection evidence supported these views.

- 5.15 The school provides a wealth of printed and digital material of high quality, which covers all aspects of school life, including required information for parents of current and prospective pupils and parents. Parents joining the school receive detailed parental handbooks and access to their child's grades through the school's new information management system. The school's website is informative and regular newsletters are attractive and celebrate the life of the school. The school is proactive in seeking the views of parents through detailed surveys and senior leaders respond to feedback.
- 5.16 In the EYFS, parents take advantage of opportunities to visit the school, for social events, but also to support their children's learning at home via online mathematics. Written reports place on record what they already know about their children's learning and development. Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire praised the nurturing environment. They praised the high expectations of the staff and their close understanding of individual needs. In discussion with inspectors they spoke warmly of the availability of staff and the successful balance between an academic focus and all-round care for their children. They feel very involved in their children's education.
- 5.17 The school provides opportunities for parents to help out with trips and visits and parents are invited to a range of events including parents' cafe functions to listen to invited guest speakers. Parental support is also valued in helping to run book fairs and the second-hand school uniform shop as well as accompanying trips such as a recent visit to a theatre by preparatory school pupils. The parents' association is a very active body across the school and works energetically to organise social and fundraising events. Parents have ample opportunities to become involved in the work and progress of their children. All pupils have planners in which to record homework and enhance communication between staff and parents. These are signed by teachers and by parents who may use them for communication. Detailed annual reports, regular parent-teacher meetings and regular grade cards in both preparatory and senior schools provide detailed feedback about each child's progress. The school also publishes weekly E-Newsletters which keep parents well informed and an annual magazine that celebrates all aspects of the life of the school.
- 5.18 The school handles the concerns of parents with care and follows its published procedures. It is clear that the school pursues a rigorous approach to ensuring that pupils treat each other with care and respect.

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