



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

KING'S COLLEGE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of School **King's College**
DfE Number **933/6023**
Registered Charity Number **1103346**
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Headmaster **Mr Richard Biggs**
Proprietor **Woodard Schools Taunton Ltd**
Chair of Council **Mr Roger Knight OBE**
Age Range **13 to 18**
Total Number of Pupils **444**
Gender of Pupils **Mixed (271 boys; 173 girls)**
Number of Day Pupils Total: **166**
Number of Boarders Total: **278**
Full: **278** Weekly: **0**
Inspection dates **6 Mar 2012 to 9 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 March 2009.

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 May 2011 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 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 John Dunston	Reporting Inspector
Mr Alan Bougeard	Team Inspector (Head of Middle School, HMC school)
Mr Jay Piggot	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Mrs Julie Roseblade	Team Inspector (Head, GSA school)
Mr Roger Shaw	Team Inspector (Director of Administration, HMC school)
Mrs Flora Bean	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Diane Riley	Team Inspector for Boarding (Former Head of Boarding, GSA school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 King's College is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged from 13 to 18. It was founded in 1880 by the Reverend Nathaniel Woodard as one of the successors of a local medieval grammar school, the Bishop Fox School. In keeping with the vision of the Woodard Corporation, which owns the school, King's College aims: to value and nurture the spiritual by providing an education rooted in a Christian ethos; to inspire in pupils a desire for excellence and a love of learning which goes beyond the formal curriculum; and to develop independent, searching minds. The ethos of the school is designed to provide a safe, welcoming, supportive and tolerant environment in which each pupil feels valued as an individual and becomes tolerant and considerate towards others.
- 1.2 The school occupies a site of 100 acres near the centre of the county town of Taunton. Boarding accommodation ranges from the modern Woodard and Tuckwell Houses to King Alfred House, which occupies the top two floors of the original Victorian building. New facilities since the previous inspection include classrooms, a library and an all-weather sports pitch, and in addition, some of the boarding houses have been refurbished. The sixth-form curriculum has been broadened by the introduction of the Extended Project Qualification and additional A-level subjects.
- 1.3 The school has 444 pupils, 271 boys and 173 girls, of whom 278 are boarders. About half the pupils join the school from King's Hall, a preparatory school within the local Woodard foundation, the remaining pupils coming from other preparatory schools in the West Country and further afield. Just over one-tenth of the pupils are overseas nationals. Approximately two-thirds of the pupils are boarders, and all day pupils belong to a boarding house.
- 1.4 Standardised measures indicate that pupils' ability is above the national average. Eighty-one pupils have been identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom fifty receive specialist learning support. Seventy pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), of whom forty-four receive language support. No pupils have statements of special educational needs.
- 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
Third Form	Year 9
Fourth Form	Year 10
Fifth Form	Year 11
6.1	Year 12
6.2	Year 13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school successfully fulfils its aims of providing an education rooted in a Christian ethos, and inspiring in pupils a desire for excellence and a love of learning. Pupils benefit from a broad and demanding curriculum and an outstanding extra-curricular programme. Examination results and evidence from the inspection indicate that pupils achieve at a high level and make good or excellent progress, including in the sixth form. Pupils' achievements in music, speech, drama and sport are regularly at the highest level. Pupils develop into good listeners and are able to apply the skills they learn to other areas of the curriculum. They show an excellent attitude to learning and genuine support for each other's achievements. They speak and write well. The quality of teaching is good with some excellent features, from which pupils benefit greatly. This is supported by good governance, leadership and management and by the enthusiasm of the staff in all areas of school life. All appropriate policies are in place, though the monitoring of their implementation is irregular, leading to inconsistent practice in some departments and houses.
- 2.2 The personal development of the pupils is excellent. Pupils develop a strong spiritual awareness in keeping with the Christian tradition of the school, and reflect this in a range of activities that benefit the local and international communities. They contribute greatly to the sense of being at ease and relaxed that characterises the school community. The pastoral care offered to pupils is excellent and represents a strong feature of the houses, which accommodate both boarders and day pupils. The house system is at the heart of the school's provision of pastoral care and provides a positive and enjoyable experience for boarders. The houses are of different ages and design, are well maintained and offer pleasant and appropriate accommodation.
- 2.3 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, its provision often exceeding the minimum required. In response to recommendations from the previous ISI and Ofsted inspections, steps have been taken to broaden the range of teaching styles in order to raise the level of challenge for pupils, and records have been centralised. Pupils' reports now include recognition of their involvement in extra-curricular activities. Staff have been involved in the shaping of strategies for the school's development. Daily registration procedures have been made more effective. Risk assessments are in place. Staff recruitment procedures have been strengthened, including the maintenance of the single central register. Boarding houses have been refurbished in order to continue bringing standards up to those of the best. Pupils overwhelmingly enjoy being at the school and feel well supported by their teachers. They enjoy their work, feel they make good progress and appreciate the range of activities available to them. Inspectors found no evidence to support the claim by a small number that their views are not listened to. Boarders expressed considerable satisfaction with their boarding experience and education. Parents are very appreciative of the opportunities and support offered to their children, and feel involved in the life of the school.

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) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
 - 1. Establish mechanisms to enable existing good practice in teaching to be shared more widely across the curriculum.
 - 2. Make more extensive use of standardised assessment data in order to identify appropriate targets for pupils and raise achievement further.
 - 3. Strengthen systems of monitoring the implementation of policy across teaching departments and boarding houses in order to achieve greater consistency.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated in accordance with the school's aim to encourage them to realise their academic potential and to develop a wide interest and participation in other activities. The school succeeds in its aims for pupils to be guided in their journey from childhood to adulthood.
- 3.3 Pupils demonstrate high levels of knowledge, understanding and skill across the full range of the curriculum. They listen attentively and write fluently. They speak confidently and articulately, and are able to express their views thoughtfully. Written work is well organised. Pupils are able to apply mathematical skills across a number of areas of the curriculum and to make imaginative use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support their learning. They read widely and are capable of logical and independent work. The high quality of pupils' achievements in art is apparent in work displayed around the school. Pupils develop considerable interests and skills beyond the classroom, notably in music, drama and sport, but also in the wide range of other activities available.
- 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. The school's GCSE results have been excellent in relation to the national average for maintained schools and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. Over half the grades achieved were A* or A. Girls' performance in 2008 and 2010 was well above the national average for girls in maintained schools. In 2011, almost one-third of the grades achieved were A*. At A level, results were good in relation to the national average for maintained schools in 2008 and 2010, and similar to the national average for maintained schools in 2009. A-level results in 2008 and 2010 were also similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. Just under two-thirds of all grades were A* to B. These results, interpreted in the light of both the nationally standardised progress data that is available and evidence from lessons observed during the inspection, indicate that pupils make good and sometimes excellent progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability. Pupils with SEND or with EAL were also observed to make good progress in relation to their ability. The most able pupils also make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability, examples of their work being seen especially in the Year 13 extended projects.
- 3.5 Many pupils reach excellent levels of achievement in extra-curricular activities. Approximately 40 pupils gain The Duke of Edinburgh's Award at gold level each year. There have been notable recent academic successes in competitions such as the UK Maths Challenge and the Arkwright Scholarship. Large numbers of pupils achieve distinctions or merits in speech, music and drama examinations, and the range of sporting achievements includes many individual and team successes at both regional and national level.
- 3.6 The pupils' attitude to learning in all years is excellent and this plays a significant role in their academic success and personal development. In lessons they are focused, well motivated and enthusiastic. They work well individually and support each other effectively in groups. Pupils are keen to succeed and are committed to their studies.

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 successful in meeting the aim of the school to provide an all-round education that develops pupils' skills, minds and awareness of the wider world. The curriculum is broad and balanced, incorporating mathematics, English, a modern foreign language, science and religious studies, as well as optional subjects drawn from the humanities, Latin, creative and technological subjects, and physical education. Further breadth comes from courses in study skills and ICT. Extended work and projects are a popular feature of the imaginative curriculum recently introduced in Year 9. The new learning space known as The Hub has facilitated initiatives such as video-conferencing with a school in India and the use of new mobile technologies across the curriculum. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is wide ranging, and reflects the aims of the school and its Christian ethos by supporting the development of personal responsibility and the preparation of pupils for life beyond school. Careers education, including aptitude testing and opportunities for work experience, is incorporated into the programme.
- 3.9 The curriculum is appropriate for the ages and abilities of all pupils, including those with SEND, who may drop a subject if additional time is needed for learning support. Provision for the most able includes the Phoenix and Pelican societies, the Horizon lecture programme, academic societies and pupil-inspired initiatives such as the politics club. The Extended Project Qualification has enabled sixth-form pupils to develop their independent learning and research skills. In pre-inspection questionnaires, parents and pupils expressed high levels of satisfaction with the range of subjects and provision of extra-curricular activities, although a small number of boarders would like to see a greater choice of activities at weekends.
- 3.10 The school provides an outstanding range of sporting and other activities. Several pupils play at county or national level in cricket, hockey, netball, rugby and football, and teams have achieved success at both levels in all these sports, including girls' football. The Combined Cadet Force (CCF) is a popular option and many pupils successfully complete the Ten Tors challenge each year. Music plays a central role in the life of the school, the choirs competing successfully in national competitions in recent years. Other ensembles include a large wind band. Regular concerts take place in and out of school and pupils recently performed in Westminster Abbey for the Woodard Schools 200th anniversary celebration. There are regular drama performances, ranging from a recent production of *The Pirates of Penzance* to house drama competitions and junior plays.
- 3.11 Links with the community are well established. Pupils offer sports coaching to a number of local primary schools, and contribute to a local project that aims to support the health of young people. Pupils' extra-curricular involvement and achievement are reported to parents and recorded centrally, following a recommendation from the previous inspection. A system for monitoring both attendance and the quality of provision has been introduced.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.12 The quality of teaching is good overall.
- 3.13 Teaching has some excellent features, and makes a significant contribution to pupils' progress and their levels of academic achievements. Teachers have assured subject knowledge, and much teaching is innovative and imaginative in support of the school's aim to inspire pupils towards a love of learning.
- 3.14 In the best lessons, pupils achieved a high level of learning as a result of carefully devised teaching strategies, good preparation and the use of excellent pace in the time available. In a Year 9 drama lesson, The Hub, tablet computers and the Quad at King's were used to simulate Ancient Greece and to provide an appreciation of Ancient Greek theatre, modern theatre, *Harry Potter* and the use of prophecy in *Oedipus*.
- 3.15 In a Year 13 English literature lesson, a twelfth century Gislebertus tableau depicting the weighing of the souls of the departed provided an inspired insight into the representation of hell and damnation in Chaucer's *The Pardoner's Tale*. In the best lessons, it is clear that the teaching has responded to the recommendation of the previous inspection, as the wider range of teaching styles and strategies enables pupils to strive effectively for high attainment; subsequently, pupils willingly engage in the challenges of work that is high in expectation and exciting in delivery. A Year 9 class explored the practice and possibilities of Buddhist meditation in anticipation of a video conference with schools in India, an illuminating use of new technologies to approach the subject.
- 3.16 In the small number of less successful lessons seen, time management was less effective, and the pace, choice of activities and use of too many closed questions restricted opportunities for pupils to extend their learning. In these situations, pupils' progress was consequently limited. The school now has considerable standardised data relating to pupils' achievements, but the use made of this data is limited and does not extend in all departments to setting specific targets for pupils in order to raise their standards of achievement.
- 3.17 Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent, and pupils are confident to ask for help, safe in the knowledge that they will receive it. Teachers understand the individual needs of their pupils extremely well. Good progress has been made by teachers to inspire the most able pupils to use and apply their subject knowledge independently. The programme which supports scholars, the Extended Project Qualification and the increasing emphasis on the life of the mind during evening cultural activities in the school assist this advancement.
- 3.18 Pupils with SEND or EAL are well supported and teaching enables pupils of all abilities to make effective progress. Teachers give freely of their time to offer additional support sessions outside lessons and these are greatly appreciated by pupils. The Learning Strategies Programme in Years 9 to 11 offers effective, targeted assistance to pupils of all learning styles and needs. Both in the classroom and beyond, pupils with EAL receive appropriate support, understanding and assistance.

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 The school successfully meets its aims of guiding its pupils from childhood to adulthood, ensuring that they develop the attitudes, skills and confidence needed to flourish in the next stage of their lives. Pupils consistently use their initiative, are creative, and develop a sense of purpose, self-worth and identity.
- 4.3 Pupils display excellent spiritual awareness, encouraged by the strong Anglican tradition and Christian ethos of the school. The provision of regular worship offers pupils a moment for reflection and prayer, and the choir provides inspiring and exhilarating singing, such as in the celebration of the Eucharist during the inspection. Pupils share insights and discuss matters that affect their lives as individuals and as part of a community at the weekly Oasis group. Several pupils are confirmed each year, marking a commitment to their faith. A Year 9 pupil reflected maturely on how her personal development had led to a desire to commit to a Christian way of life. Pupils gain an awareness of dimensions of life beyond those presented by the physical world.
- 4.4 Through the PSHE programme, the sixth-form Horizon lectures and teaching in religious studies, pupils explore moral, personal, cultural and social issues, recognising how individuals' values and beliefs can influence behaviour. In a Year 10 philosophy of religion and ethics lesson, pupils were challenged to explore views on complex ethical questions surrounding abortion. They feel that their personal development is nurtured by participation in the life of the school, supportive relationships and the sense of being valued that pervades the community. They enjoy being at the school. Consequently, pupils are confident and have high self-esteem but are modest too. Pupils feel ready for the challenges that lie ahead of them.
- 4.5 The moral development of pupils is excellent. Pupils have a strong moral sense and understand the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. Pupils trust, care for and consider one another. Younger pupils acknowledge the influence on them of the older pupils who lead by example and show genuine care for them. The quality of relationships and the high standard of behaviour contribute to the smooth running of the school. Pupils understand the school's code of conduct and feel it to be fair. The generosity of pupils in supporting a broad range of charities reflects their high level of moral awareness. Pupils raise funds for building materials and have taken part themselves in the construction of two houses for homeless families in India as part of the King's Community Action Project. Each year, every house undertakes fund raising for a local and a national charity.
- 4.6 The pupils' social development is excellent. They respond positively to the encouragement they are given to contribute to the community of the school, taking responsibility for supporting others and for leading clubs and activities. Older pupils willingly act as prefects and mentors, give guidance and serve as role models for younger pupils. Pupils welcome opportunities to undertake leadership roles in the wider community through games, music, drama and the CCF. Pupils regularly organise assemblies. They enthusiastically embrace the school's sustainability strategy, which encourages them to become responsible citizens who are sensitive to their impact on the modern world.

- 4.7 Pupils have excellent cultural awareness. They have a keen appreciation of other faiths and cultures and readily expand their horizons by learning from each other, particularly in the boarding houses. The comprehensive programme of educational visits, including trips to the theatre, places of worship, art galleries and historical sites, allows pupils to build an appreciation of their own tradition and culture. The school's overseas link with a school in Cape Town further enhances pupils' appreciation of cultural diversity. Pupils also develop a strong awareness of the world and society in which they live and gain first-hand experience of other cultures on the numerous trips abroad. Additionally, regular drama productions of high quality and an extensive schedule of concerts and recitals reflecting a wide variety of musical styles provide significant opportunities for pupils to broaden their cultural experience.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of the arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 The excellent impact of this provision on pupils' development fully supports the aims of the school. There is a strong sense of community; pupils feel that they are well known and fully supported by their teachers. Those joining the school are provided with 'buddies' and a good induction system is in place for pupils from overseas who are in the care of a dedicated tutor. Excellent links exist between pupils of different ages, both in the houses and through the extra-curricular programme. Centralised pastoral records are supplemented by those kept in the houses. While much informal communication takes place, good practice in implementing procedures is not consistent in all houses.
- 4.10 Relationships amongst the pupils and between pupils and staff are excellent. Pupils feel that staff are accessible and report that they are generous with the time they give to deal with any pastoral or academic concerns. In particular, boarders speak warmly about the many trips and activities organised, including climbing and camping. Pupils are happy, open, relaxed and courteous, and clearly proud of their school. They feel safe and well looked after.
- 4.11 There is great encouragement for pupils to be healthy and take physical exercise and many opportunities are provided for them through the extra-curricular programme, which offers a range of individual and team activities, including dance and yoga. Pupils speak highly of the food available. There is plenty of choice and a variety of healthy options. The PSHE programme makes further provision for pupils to develop healthy lifestyles by covering topics such as diet, body image and drugs awareness. Boarders contribute to the cafeteria committee.
- 4.12 Robust systems are in place to prevent bullying and to ensure that pupils are safe. Any incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with quickly and constructively. Bullying and friendships are covered within the PSHE programme, which is supported by talks given within the Year 9 Standing Tall workshop. Details of further sources of help are available on notice boards in the boarding houses, and the school counsellor offers additional support. Good achievement and positive contributions to the school community are recognised in assemblies. The school rules published in the school diary include an appropriate and proportionate range of sanctions.
- 4.13 There are a number of effective ways in which pupils can express their views to the school. These include year forums, house pupil committees, regular meetings with

the chaplain and the headmaster's weekly 'open door' sessions. School prefects, house prefects and heads of house meet regularly with the headmaster and other senior staff. Some concern was expressed through the pupils' questionnaires that the school does not seek or respond to their opinions. Inspectors found no evidence to support this.

- 4.14 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

- 4.15 Arrangements to promote the pupils' welfare, health and safety are good.
- 4.16 All necessary measures are in place to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. Arrangements to ensure health and safety are effective and cover all aspects of the life of the school for pupils, staff and visitors. Fire prevention measures are in order; fire drills are held at least once each term and include practices during the hours of darkness. These drills are recorded appropriately and feedback provided. The school has made complete and effective checks for health and safety and has due regard for the statutory regulations. Written policies and appropriate risk assessments are in place.
- 4.17 Pupils who are ill or injured are very well looked after in the medical centre, and robust protocols are in place to safeguard the storage and administration of medicines. Staff are well qualified and records are kept meticulously. This facility provides another place where pupils receive a high standard of care. Should the need arise, appointments with a counsellor are arranged. Good systems are in place to support those pupils with SEND and to promote their safety and well-being.
- 4.18 The admission and attendance registers are suitably maintained and correctly stored for the previous three years. Registration is carried out twice a day, with effective systems in place for recording and reporting absence, in accordance with a recommendation in the previous report.
- 4.19 The school makes appropriate safeguarding arrangements for the recruitment of staff to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.20 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.21 Boarders demonstrate a strong sense of community spirit and commitment to their house, and their personal development is outstanding. The houses are characterised by warmth and conviviality. Boarders are confident and self-reliant and greatly enjoy life in their house. They are at ease with one another and take pride in representing their house in competitions and at school events. Boarders are allowed to develop as individuals and any who experience emotional or social difficulties are well supported by house staff. Those with SEND appear relaxed within the community. Boarders from overseas are well integrated, and those with EAL mix well with boarders whose first language is English.
- 4.22 There is an excellent balance of free and supervised time for boarders, who demonstrate high standards of behaviour. Boarders contribute to the smooth running of their house, also taking responsibility for organising charity events. Most participate fully in sport, music, drama and a wide range of other extra-curricular

activities. They are also actively involved in the community service programme. In discussion during the inspection, a small number of girls expressed the view that on Sundays they would like more outings and trips to be organised and more facilities to be open in school, but they appreciate and enjoy the busy schedule of activities available to them during the week. Boarders are confident that their views are listened to and taken into account. They feel safe both in and out of school. Through their involvement in the life of the boarding community, boarders develop and mature successfully as individuals and are well prepared for the next stage of their lives.

- 4.23 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. Each house has its own character. All house staff know their boarders extremely well and well-planned induction days help new boarders to settle in. House staff and academic tutors work closely together to understand each boarder's social and academic needs. At weekends, activities regularly include sports fixtures as well as The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, surfing and outward bound expeditions. Pupils exercise responsibility through the house prefect system, school forums, house meetings and food committees. They organise house concerts, charity events, film and pizza evenings and summer barbeques. There is a strong culture of praise and encouragement within the houses and boarders' achievements are celebrated at house meetings. Excellent arrangements for sick or injured boarders are in place, supported by experienced medical staff. Since the previous inspection, all showers have been fitted with lockable doors to improve pupils' privacy and procedures for self-medication have been reviewed and strengthened. There is close liaison between house staff and the medical centre. Boarding accommodation is comfortable and clean. Washroom provision is good. Each house has a number of comfortable common rooms.
- 4.24 Procedures for safeguarding are in place and implemented. Appropriate checks are carried out to confirm the suitability of new staff and volunteers. All staff responsible for boarders are suitably trained in child protection, including new staff and newly qualified staff. Boarders are made aware of risks and of the procedures necessary for their safety. In discussion, boarders reported without hesitation that they felt safe and that they know that there are members of staff and others to whom they can turn should a concern arise. The behaviour of boarders is excellent. Procedures for sanctions are in place but rarely need to be used. Should any incident of bullying occur, it is dealt with efficiently and effectively, and is regarded throughout the community as unacceptable. Risk assessments are in place for any potential health hazards. Monitoring of welfare, health and safety takes place in each house, but not consistently across the houses. Some houses employ more rigour than others in this respect.
- 4.25 Leadership and management of the boarding houses are good. Monitoring of house procedures, policies and risk assessments is good in general but not systematic or sufficiently consistent. All house staff are well trained and many are very experienced. Staff new to boarding are well looked after and inducted by senior house staff. Record keeping is in place but is of varying quality and quantity. Boarders are enthusiastic about their lives in boarding and houses run smoothly and pleasantly, with noticeable harmony and a sense of purpose. Excellent contact with parents is maintained and indicative of a purposeful relationship. All recommendations from the previous Ofsted boarding inspection report, relating to the dispensing of medication, staff recruitment procedures and risk assessments, have now been met.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 Governance is effective in supporting the aims and ethos of the school. The Council brings together a range of appropriate experience among its members to reflect its responsibilities and to plan for the future. New governors are selected on the basis of background, competence, specialist skills and Christian commitment. Governors take a keen and devoted interest in the life of the school, a number having a long-standing connection with King's.
- 5.3 The work of the governing body is strongly supported by its five committees that take a closer interest in particular aspects of the school's operation, including education and finance. Governors have a good understanding of the work of the school, strengthened by the annual Education Day, which they spend observing lessons and other activities and meeting with staff and pupils. Council meetings are held regularly and the minutes reflect the range of issues about which governors are kept fully informed. Governors have a good oversight of the operation of the school, and have implemented effective financial and strategic planning in order to secure appropriate investment in facilities and resources.
- 5.4 In the past, insufficient attention was paid to monitoring and reviewing the implementation of recruitment policies for staff and the single central register of appointments, but significant steps have recently been taken to ensure that governors' responsibilities are met. Individual governors have specific responsibility for child protection and boarding, and visit the houses on a regular basis.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is good.
- 5.6 Leadership and management at all levels strongly support the school's aims and uphold the values and ethos of a Woodard education.
- 5.7 Members of the senior management team have clear job descriptions. They are seen as approachable by staff and parents, and work well together. The senior management team sets high standards. Management is based on trust and openness, as a result of which initiatives are welcomed from both staff and pupils. The management of some departments and houses is excellent. Effective structures are in place to ensure that policies are regularly reviewed, though the monitoring of their implementation is uneven. As a result, matters are sometimes dealt with informally, which leads to inconsistency of practice.
- 5.8 The school's development plan is reviewed annually and linked to its aims. Staff have been fully involved in drawing up the plan, which outlines recent progress as well as short-term and medium-term targets, but success criteria are not always clearly identified.

- 5.9 The school is very successful in making strong appointments of both teaching and support staff. New staff benefit from a thorough induction programme and are allocated a mentor in addition to their head of department to help them to settle into the school. Suitable training is given to all members of staff to support them in meeting the needs of pupils. A regular appraisal scheme is in place for teaching staff and members of the senior management team.
- 5.10 The school's attractive grounds and natural environment are kept in excellent condition and are a particularly notable feature. The smooth day-to-day running of the school is made possible by the dedication and effectiveness of the administrative and other support staff.
- 5.11 The school has taken significant steps to ensure that the administration of recruitment checks is carried out rigorously and that the single central register is fully maintained. All appropriate measures are in place, supported by robust procedures that have been recently introduced.
- 5.12 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents expressed significant satisfaction with the education and support provided for their children, and the high quality of communication they receive. The school works hard to maintain constructive relationships with parents. Housemasters and housemistresses are the first point of personal contact, with frequent communication and a positive 'open door' policy observed across the school.
- 5.13 Complaints are considered with care and consideration, dealt with in accordance with the school's policy, and recorded both in houses and centrally.
- 5.14 Parents have good opportunities to be actively involved in the work and progress of their children. In advance of important career choices, parents of pupils in relevant year groups are invited to discussions over supper. Parents enthusiastically support the Parents' Association Ball, Burns' Night Supper, Friends of King's events and Saturday Morning Breakfast gatherings. The positive atmosphere generated by such events encourages parents to contact the school informally at any time to discuss academic or pastoral matters. Pupils' families are welcome at school events.
- 5.15 Parents of current and prospective pupils have easy access to required information about the school. The leadership has taken the school into a paperless world of communication with the use of a newly introduced management information system, and parents have responded positively to the advantages it has brought. The ability of parents to view online a continuous record of their children's progress has contributed markedly to the positive dialogue between home and school.
- 5.16 Parents receive interim and end-of-term reports, which are generally of high quality and include timely commentary on their children's academic performance and progress. Most reports provide specific comment on how pupils can improve further. In response to parental requests and a recommendation in the previous inspection report, sections in the reports focus on significant extra-curricular contributions.

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