



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**LINCOLN MINSTER SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Lincoln Minster School

Full Name of School/College **Lincoln Minster School**

DfE Number **925/6012**

Registered Charity Number **1016538**

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Head **Mr Clive Rickart**

Chair of Governors **Mrs Angela Crowe**

Age Range **11 to 18**

Total Number of Pupils **550**

Gender of Pupils **Mixed (287 boys; 263 girls)**

Numbers by Age 11-18: **550**

Number of Day Pupils Total: **489** Capacity for flexi-boarding: **22**

Number of Boarders Total: **61**

Full: **30** Weekly: **31**

Inspection dates **04 Oct 2011 to 05 Oct 2011  
02 Nov 2011 to 04 Nov 2011**

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in October 2005.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government 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 is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

\*These Standards Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

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

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) 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.

The inspection of boarding was not carried out in conjunction with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills, and the report does not contain 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 and development in general. The full Ofsted report refers to an inspection in March 2011 and can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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, though inspectors will 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.

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Lincoln Minster School is a day and boarding school occupying three main sites in the City of Lincoln. The school was created by the merger of Lincoln Cathedral School, St Joseph's and Stonefield House School. The preparatory school has recently merged with St. Mary's Preparatory School. Lincoln Minster School is one of eleven schools owned by the United Church Schools Trust (UCST), which holds the legal responsibilities of governance. The local governing body (LGB) has an advisory role. The UCST is a group founded on the principles of respect, service and compassion. The school aims to educate young people to the highest academic standard of which they are capable, in a Christian environment which promotes happiness, safety, respect and a growth in self-esteem.
- 1.2 The school is co-educational throughout with an equal proportion of boys and girls. The school has 550 pupils of whom 137 are in the sixth form and 61 are boarders. The school educates the forty cathedral choristers.
- 1.3 Since its previous inspection in 2005, the school has built a new music school, a recital hall, a sports hall, a sixth form centre and reading rooms. It has opened a new boys' boarding house and refurbished the drama hall.
- 1.4 The ability of pupils is assessed using nationally standardised tests. The ability profile is above the national average to GCSE and in line with the national average in the sixth form. Most pupils are from the local area and from families with professional or business backgrounds. One hundred and twenty-nine pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), ninety-six of whom receive specialist learning support from the school. Fourteen pupils have statements of special educational needs. The vast majority of pupils are British with a few pupils from overseas, sixteen of whom receive support in the development of their English from the English as an additional language (EAL) department.
- 1.5 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 Lincoln Minster School strongly meets its aims that individuals come first, all pupils have a role to play and achievement is a priority. Pupils' attainment in public examinations has risen and their success beyond the classroom is excellent, not only in music, a key strength of the school, but in a wide range of other aesthetic and physical pursuits. Pupils' achievement has been enhanced by the development of a system of tracking progress and by an improvement in teaching. The good and, often, excellent quality of teaching stems from a structured programme of teacher support developed in recent years. The curriculum and extra-curricular programme are outstanding. The enhancement programme for academically gifted pupils, however, is not yet fully developed.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils are enthusiastic about their school and clearly value their education. They are courteous and engage readily with adults. A hallmark of the school is the quality of relationships amongst pupils across all age groups. Pupils benefit from outstanding support by teachers in both academic and pastoral roles. Pupils are known as individuals by the staff, who have a strong commitment to ensuring that the school's aim, "the best in everyone", is met for every pupil. In the small number of responses to the pupil pre-inspection questionnaire, pupils were very pleased about their academic progress and how well teachers supported them. Almost all said they liked being at the school. Pupils showed some concerns about homework, the fairness of punishments and the response to pupils' views. However, neither the pupils' responses in interviews nor the inspection team's findings supported these concerns.
- 2.3 Governance, management and leadership are excellent. All levels of management have worked together to ensure that the physical development of the school has been complemented by improvements in academic standards and pupils' personal development. The trust, local governors and senior managers work cohesively and the quality of this cohesion is reflected, not simply in physical growth and improved facilities, but in the pupils' personal development, the enhancement of teaching and the role of middle managers. Library facilities have been developed since the last inspection, but remain limited. Regulatory requirements, including the safeguarding of pupils, are rigorously monitored. The school has an excellent relationship with its parents. Those parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very supportive of the school, particularly noting the school's nurturing of each pupil's academic ability, its high quality of pastoral care and the way it engenders mutually supportive relationships amongst pupils across all age groups. The limited parental response included a few concerns around the quality of boarding accommodation and the programme for academically gifted pupils. The school has a refurbishment plan for boarding accommodation. The inspection team recognises that the school is developing a programme for the academically gifted but would agree that this is not yet fully established.

## **2.(b) Action points**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Develop a more structured programme for academically gifted pupils.
  2. Develop library resources to offer pupils more support in reading, research and academic discovery.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

#### **3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills**

- 3.1 The quality of pupil's achievement and of their learning, attitudes and skills is good overall, and in many respects excellent. The school is making good progress towards its stated aim of educating young people to the highest academic standard of which they are capable and drawing out the talent in every child.
- 3.2 Pupils display good subject knowledge and understanding. In the majority of lessons their achievement was observed to be excellent. For example, in a Year 13 English class, pupils had a strong grasp of the argument and language of metaphysical poetry. The standard of literacy is good and pupils have equally good numeracy skills, observed for example when they calculated market share and the tipping-point leading to insolvency.
- 3.3 Pupils produce a substantial volume of work, which is well organised and neatly presented. They display strong note-taking skills and solve problems efficiently. Their information and communication technology (ICT) skills are good. Pupils are keen to contribute orally, read well and think for themselves; they answer questions readily and engage in constructive discussion and reasoned argument. Creativity is strong across the curriculum, for example in the excellent art and in Year 11 drama where pupils improvised the roles of the silent protesters in the Argentinian experience of "The Disappeared".
- 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. In GCSE examinations, results have been good when compared to the national average for maintained schools, and at A level, they have been similar to the national average. In GCSE, more than a third of the grades were A\* or A, and at A level over half of the grades were A\*, A or B. The 2011 results were higher. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make good progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability as supported by nationally standardised measures of progress. Public examination results gained by pupils identified with SEND or EAL were at least in line with the results of the school, and the results of those who were academically gifted enabled them to enter top universities. Equally in classroom observation, SEND and EAL pupils were achieving on a level with their peers.
- 3.5 The pupils' talents in extra-curricular activities are successfully nurtured. Music is an undoubted strength of the school. Many vocal and instrumental groups cater for the needs of pupils of all musical abilities. The boy and girl choristers of Lincoln Cathedral are members of the school and, thanks to the strong and forward-thinking integration between the school and the cathedral, the choristers successfully combine the demanding schedule of musical commitments with a wider participation in school life. Pupils perform regularly not just in the cathedral but also in venues across Lincoln, giving singing recitals at an international music festival and performing with a touring opera company. In sport, the school performs successfully on an appropriately chosen circuit. Pupils experience a wide range of sports, including polo and sailing, and a number gain representative honours at national, county or district level. The school is represented at a national level in rowing, women's football and ice hockey. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme is a thriving activity. Pupils enthuse about the range of activities in which they can participate.



- 3.6 Pupils have an excellent attitude to learning which is apparent from the way in which they enthusiastically talk about their work. They clearly enjoy their studies and understand the relationship between their learning, improvement and attaining the highest possible standards. They are happy working both on their own and collectively in pairs or small groups. They co-operate well in group work and listen appreciatively to each other's views. Pupils were also capable of independent work as exemplified in a Year 12 sports' studies coursework session where they developed and filmed netball strategies. They settle readily to work and are attentive in class. The most able are eager to be challenged and through a rigorous system of baseline testing, tracking, profiling, regular assessments and an early intervention policy, pupils feel very well supported by teachers.

### **3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)**

- 3.7 The academic curriculum and the extra-curricular programme are excellent. The academic provision is well balanced and broad and is suitable for the abilities and needs of the pupils, allowing them to develop knowledge and skills to prepare for the opportunities, responsibilities and experience of adult life.
- 3.8 In Years 7 to 9 pupils study an appropriate range of subjects. At GCSE and A level, pupils are able, for the most part, to study those subjects which they select as the timetable is built around their choices and needs. At A level a good range of subjects is offered including food technology, photography, psychology and travel and tourism to compliment more traditional courses. Selected pupils are able to take GCSEs early in music, mathematics and modern languages. Setting is well managed and both lower ability sets and many sixth form groups benefit from small teaching groups. Homework of a suitable quantity and appropriate nature is set regularly. The games provision is good and includes a wide variety of options for both boys and girls.
- 3.9 The curriculum is very well supported by the SEND and EAL departments and subject staff are equally well versed in how to tailor their lessons to include the needs of these pupils. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, which is mainly delivered by form tutors, is well devised and an age-appropriate range of topics is covered. Pupils also benefit from a very effective programme of careers guidance which has received the Career Mark accreditation. This programme is valued by the pupils and allows them to make informed choices about the next stage of their education. Pupils have good access to the internet and subject libraries, but, central library resources for research and academic discovery are underdeveloped.
- 3.10 Pupils also benefit from a very busy and wide-ranging extra-curricular programme. This programme of enrichment affords them the opportunity to develop a range of skills whether it be in music, sport, drama, art, chess, sailing, ICT or even jam and confectionary making. A range of speakers come to the school and the pupils enter various debates in the locality. Intellectual stimulation in extra-curricular activities is offered by a discussion society, debates and culture club outings. Academically gifted pupils are extended in some lessons. This programme of academic enrichment is not yet, however, fully developed. Pupils' cultural and social experience is extended by art, history, and drama visits to galleries and exhibitions including the Beth Shalom Holocaust centre in Newark. Pupils enjoy sports' tours including rugby in Italy, boys' football in France, girls' netball in Malta and a recent

girls' hockey tour of the East of England, including participation in the National Finals.

- 3.11 Pupils' education is strongly enhanced by their links with the community. Locally, pupils are involved with the cathedral in activities such as 'Ready Steady Choir' and 'Ready Steady Play' every Saturday morning which encourages local children to make music. During the inspection around 50 pupils combined with alumni and pupils from ULT (United Learning Trust) academies and independent UCST schools and rehearsed a new oratorio by Howard Goodall which is to be premiered in Westminster Abbey. Pupils also exhibit artwork in a Lincoln gallery and have good links with local businesses and universities. Further afield, pupils are engaged in social and educational projects with diocesan schools and higher education colleges in Southern India. Pupils also regularly volunteer to camp and work on the renovation of a community centre in Romania, most recently assisting in the installation of central heating.

### **3.(c) The contribution of teaching**

- 3.12 The quality of teaching is good overall and a significant number of outstanding lessons were observed. The teaching contributes meaningfully to the progress and attainment of the pupils and to the school's aim of providing a happy environment where pupils can make the most of their abilities.
- 3.13 The teaching that was judged to be excellent was dynamic, well paced, required the pupils to have high expectations of themselves and encouraged pupils to participate and work independently. The making of canvases from scratch in a Year 12 art class was an example of independent learning at its best. Only a small number of lessons were rated as satisfactory and in these the pace was too slow and the work was too repetitive, or the material was not sufficiently delineated for different ability levels.
- 3.14 Teachers are well qualified and have a high level of subject knowledge which they impart clearly and enthusiastically to the pupils. In all lessons teachers created a well-disciplined yet very enjoyable atmosphere, which encouraged pupils to want to learn. Their working relationships with the pupils are outstanding. In all but a few lessons, teachers paid careful attention to the needs of individuals and, where necessary, tailored their lessons accordingly. Throughout the school, lessons are well planned and follow appropriate schemes of work which, for examination classes, cover the syllabuses very thoroughly. In modern foreign languages the target language was well used in some lessons but not all. The provision of ICT hardware is good and all teachers make constant and very effective use of the interactive whiteboards. Inspectors, however, observed limited use of ICT by pupils in lessons. The SEND and EAL departments are thorough in their approach and provide excellent support to pupils. These departments work closely with subject teachers, providing them with very detailed information about pupils with particular needs. SEND and EAL pupils enjoy individual lessons and in-class support. In interview, these pupils across all year groups reported that this support really made a difference, and this is borne out by their examination results.
- 3.15 The marking of books and files is very good in both quality and quantity. In the work samples there were many examples of good practice when teachers gave pupils appropriate guidance for improving their work. Teachers use departmental marking policies in a consistent way, which helps the pupils to know how they are progressing. Teachers keep very thorough records of the pupils' progress.

- 3.16 The school makes extensive use of national systems of testing which is disseminated to heads of departments and teaching staff in the form of a data booklet. Further information is gathered through reading schemes and cognitive ability tests alongside screening programmes which help to identify SEND and EAL pupils. All this data is very well used by the staff. It provides the basis of a comprehensive and regular academic monitoring system and these frequent assessments facilitate an early intervention strategy which helps pupils to get back on track quickly and effectively. Pupils at all levels very much appreciate the approachability of the teachers and the willingness of the teaching staff to help them outside timetabled lessons. Pupils commented that teachers did all they could to help them.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent and reflects the aims of the school to bring out the best in everyone, promoting creativity, confidence, compassion and integrity.
- 4.2 Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. Pupils' spiritual development was a main recommendation at the previous inspection and inspectors found that pupils have a strongly developed spiritual dimension to their lives. Music, art, poetry, drama and religious studies all make a considerable contribution to this. Pupils appreciate the beautiful setting of the school, sheltered by the cathedral. In the chapel pupils enjoy moments of quiet to look beyond themselves and be inspired by the music of the chapel choir. Through the chapel talks, pupils consider issues of justice and compassion, for example through the life of Nelson Mandela. Year 13 pupils critically evaluated Dawkins' arguments about religion and appreciated the wonder and value of life when discussing the ethical issues involved in abortion and euthanasia. Explosions in "Wacky Science" evoked a sense of wonder from younger pupils. Drama pupils, among others, display a well-developed level of self-awareness.
- 4.3 Pupils' moral development is also excellent. From the youngest to the most senior, they have a strong sense of right and wrong. Senior pupils help the more junior, as seen in a boarding house, where older girls willingly take on the role of supporting any younger girls who need support. This strong moral compass produces a tangible sense of mutual respect. Pupils are confident to share their individual views, secure in the knowledge that others respect their right to be different. A sixth form consideration of a Marvell poem illustrated the confidence of older pupils to discuss sexual relationships in a mature way, secure in their relations with both their teachers and their peers.
- 4.4 Pupils' social development is excellent. Pupils of all ages are well mannered and at ease in the company of adults. Excellent social interactions among pupils were observed in a quiz during Year 9 form time and as pupils moved around the school. Sixth form pupils acting as reading buddies and senior pupils befriending younger ones with problems bear witness to pupils' social skills and sense of community responsibility. Year 10 pupils relish the opportunity to become buddy mentors to support new pupils. Charity collections and community service projects in India and Romania illustrate awareness of social responsibility. Pupils with special educational needs appreciate the ways in which they are supported by their fellow pupils as well as by their specialist teachers. Pupils take responsibility for school community projects; for example, Year 11 pupils organised the management and fundraising for the school's year book and annual prom.
- 4.5 Pupils' cultural development is excellent. Music, art and drama all contribute well here. Through religious studies, pupils develop a detailed understanding of a wide range of religions. They share their different cultural backgrounds, which range from western American life to Judaism and Hinduism. Pupils preparing for the Romanian project learn about the language and culture of Romania, and in music pupils have an insight into Asian culture by playing the full range of Gamelan instruments. The close links with the cathedral and the school's musical life enable pupils to experience the best of English and European music. GCSE and A-level artists showed a keen appreciation of the work of Feuerbach, Hockney, Escher and Saville.

In drama pupils enjoy exploring the work of a wide range of European dramatists and tours and visits broaden pupils' cultural horizons. Pupils are positive about the school's cultural diversity and this easy cultural mix is particularly evident in the boarding houses.

#### **4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety**

- 4.6 The quality of pastoral care and the arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent, strongly underpinning the school's aim to bring out the best in all pupils.
- 4.7 Form tutors play a key role in supporting and guiding pupils and receive appropriate training. Strong pastoral care is also evident in the boarding houses, with excellent liaison between boarding house staff and tutors. Tutor teams deliver a structured programme of activities in tutor time. This promotes pupils' personal development and enables tutors to maintain effective academic oversight through the checking of pupils' planners and regular discussions with pupils about academic performance targets. Tutors are also the first point of contact with parents, giving coherence to pupil care. The school nurse, as well as caring for sick pupils, is available for informal consultation about any concerns. The school also retains the services of a counsellor, whom pupils meet on a confidential basis. The school council encourages pupils to voice their opinions which leads to developments such as a recently established 'break café' selling snacks.
- 4.8 Personal relationships throughout the school are excellent. Staff know their pupils well, while pupils trust and respect their teachers. Pupil-pupil relationships are outstanding, with relaxed and friendly relationships across the whole community. In conversation over lunch, pupils with gifted status were able to talk openly about their talents without the others present showing any envy or resentment. Pupils described in very positive terms the benefits of having friends throughout the school, and sixth formers spoke supportively about their relationships with younger pupils.
- 4.9 The school's code of conduct is well understood by pupils. A coherent system of rewards for good behaviour, effort and achievement complements the conduct code. Merits from teachers earn pupils certificates and merit badges which are presented in assembly. Such merits are perceived as less relevant further up the school, with Year 11 pupils commenting that work-related grades and comments from teachers mean more to them. The school has an effective anti-bullying policy with a recent anti-bullying theme week reinforcing the anti-bullying message.
- 4.10 Very few pupils responded to the pupil questionnaire. Those who did were very positive about the academic progress they made and the support given by teachers in and out of the classroom. They were adamant that any bullying was swiftly tackled and almost all respondents said they liked being at the school. The limited pupil response did show some concerns about the amount of homework, the fairness of punishments and the school's response to pupils' views. However, neither the pupils' views at interview nor the inspection team's findings supported these concerns.
- 4.11 Led by the vice principal (pastoral) as the designated person, the school has a strong culture of safeguarding its pupils. The child protection policy is well known by staff and senior pupils. Training in child protection for the designated persons and the staff is up-to-date. The designated person also has good links with the local authority and, as necessary, attends "team around the child" meetings. Health and safety measures, including fire safety, are thorough and well documented. The

access plan for those with learning or physical disabilities is up-to-date. Pupils have a good range of choice at meals with menus supporting healthy eating. Inspectors, in dining with pupils, confirmed the high quality of the food and the conversation. The medical centre is well managed and strongly supports medical and pastoral care. Physical exercise is strongly promoted through sports and physical education, and pupils stated how much they value the new sports centre. Admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained and stored.

#### **4.(c) The quality of boarding education**

- 4.12 Boarders at Lincoln Minster School enjoy a good boarding experience. Their academic and personal development is enhanced by their boarding life, fulfilling the boarding aims of developing the whole person and engendering a desire for truth and a respect for others.
- 4.13 A significant strength of boarding is the quality of relationships amongst boarders and between boarders and the boarding staff. Boarders are supportive of each other and enjoy each other's company, both in their own year and across the age groups. Strong friendships abound, be they with boarders whose circumstances are similar, such as armed services families, or with boarders from overseas who share their cultural heritage with British boarders. Boarders also value the strong and supportive relationships with the boarding staff. They appreciate the guidance and care they receive from the staff teams in their houses; equally, they enjoy the less formal, relaxed engagement they can have with their boarding staff. The two recommendations in the 2011 Ofsted boarding welfare report have been met. A system of appraisal and a programme of professional development for all boarding staff are in place. Boarding training includes studying for the Boarding Schools' Association's certificate of professional practice.
- 4.14 Boarders readily articulate the improvement in academic success which boarding has helped them achieve. They value the prep regime in the houses and the academic support available from heads of houses, house tutors and older pupils. A number of weekly boarders readily confirmed that this is one of the main reasons they had chosen to board.
- 4.15 The houses are situated in different parts of Lincoln, but are all close to the school, and are contrasting in character. Whilst one house has recently been refurbished to a good standard, the physical environment of the other houses remains satisfactory. Boarders do personalise their rooms and every effort is made by the boarding staff to make the houses as welcoming as possible; even so, boarders and boarder parents welcome the refurbishment programme. The system for enabling boarders to access the internet from the houses is currently being installed and boarders report how much this will enhance their academic studies and general communication with family and friends.
- 4.16 Younger boarders, in particular, enjoy a range of extra-curricular activities. Activities in the houses are matched by activities in the sports hall and the music school. Structured activities at the weekends include outings, barbecues and formal meals. A notable feature for a school which educates the cathedral choristers is the timing of such activities so that choristers can enjoy the full activities programme as well as meet their cathedral commitments. Older pupils enjoy their access to Lincoln at weekends and, during the week, older pupils are encouraged in their membership of outside activities such as a local netball club.

- 4.17 Boarders feel able to express their views in weekly house meetings. They enjoy nutritious, healthy and well-balanced meals, but also enjoy making snacks in their houses. The school acknowledges in its boarding refurbishment programme that much of the accommodation needs updating, but this is more than compensated for, in the medium term, by the atmosphere of mutual support, fun and community spirit in the houses.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) The quality of governance**

- 5.1 The governance of the school is excellent, achieved by the complementary support of the United Church Schools Trust (UCST) and the local governing body (LGB). The UCST holds the legal responsibilities of governance and clearly delineates the accountabilities between the trust, the school and the LGB. The trust has oversight of the school and, through regular meetings and reports, is well informed and, thus, successfully fulfils its legal duties. The trust strongly supports the school's vision and has been highly supportive in the school's significant development in the last decade. As a facet of this support, the trust and the LGB work closely together in offering challenge to the school through regular review procedures. The school benefits from the trust's programme of professional services and staff training. The principal and the trust agree the annual budget for the school and the principal controls its expenditure. The trust has ensured that excellent accommodation and resources have been developed, notably the recent building of the music school and the sports hall, both of high quality and much appreciated by the pupils.
- 5.2 The LGB's role may be designated as advisory but it contributes significantly to the development of the school. Governors, some of whom are parents, have a range of expertise and are very involved in the life of the school. Local governors carefully monitor pupil welfare, health and safety and safeguarding. The trust received reports on these areas from the LGB, thus fulfilling legal requirements including the annual review of the safeguarding policy and practice within the school. The chairman of governors is a member of the trust board, which supports communication between the school and the central trust. Through its awareness of the life of the school, and through "away days" with the senior leadership team, the LGB supports the school's and the trust's vision for the development of the school. The combination of national and local oversight has been key in the development of high academic standards and the significant role played by the school in the life of the Lincoln community.

### **5.(b) The quality of leadership and management**

- 5.3 Leadership and management are excellent at all levels and strongly support the school's aims for the pupils' educational and personal development. The improvement in academic results, the excellent standards in pupils' personal development and the growth of the school are all testaments to the quality of the management.
- 5.4 Fully supported by the senior managers and the UCST, it is clear that the principal has been a catalyst for the significant development of the school. Merging four schools into a single institution has demanded strategic vision as well as awareness of local sensitivities. Management of change has been a challenge during the growth of the school, but it has been a challenge which has been well met. Notably, whilst management has inevitably grown, the personal dimension has not been lost and pupils confirm that they are as well known by senior managers as by their teachers and tutors. Management structures are regularly reviewed in the best interests of the pupils' needs, a good example being the appointment of a vice principal with specific responsibilities for teaching and learning. Complementing this bigger picture is the management's care to ensure that policies are effectively



implemented and that health and safety practices are regularly monitored. High priority is given to the safeguarding of pupils and the recruitment of staff. The culture of child protection throughout the school and the boarding houses is palpable; senior leaders ensure a high quality of training for staff in child protection and health and safety.

- 5.5 The responses to the two recommendations of the previous inspection have been constructive. As confirmed in this report, the spiritual development of pupils is outstanding. The school's response to the recommendation from the last inspection to make suitable provision for a central library resource has been to develop two reading rooms, a sixth form library and departmental libraries. However, this does not fully meet pupils' learning needs in relation to reading, research and academic discovery.
- 5.6 The role and effectiveness of the heads of departments have been strengthened. They play a key role in the raising of academic standards and are committed to the vision for the school. Heads of department work effectively with the director of studies in tracking pupils' progress and with tutors in setting pupil targets. This has led to half-termly progress reviews to which both pupils and parents are able to respond. Regular meetings of the heads of department contribute to curriculum development and pupil monitoring. Teaching quality has been enhanced by the sharing of best practice through the work of the "leading learning group" and also by the institution of "drop in" lesson observation and pupil questionnaires on the quality of lessons. This focus on raising academic standards has been complemented by a structured programme of tutor training leading to improved academic and pastoral care.
- 5.7 The development plan is very well structured with target dates and allocated responsibilities. Progress on the development plan is regularly reviewed. Systems for the induction and support of new staff are effective, as are the programmes for appraisal and professional development of all staff. Recruitment is managed efficiently, and the procedures for checking all school staff, governors and volunteers are thorough and very well documented in the single central register.

### **5.(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians**

- 5.8 The school maintains excellent links with parents, guardians and carers meeting its aim to include parents in a shared and happy community. The opening statement of the *Parent Handbook* encourages parents to maintain close contact with the school and the school is responsive to parents in facilitating two-way dialogue.
- 5.9 Those parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire confirmed strong satisfaction with the range of subjects offered, pastoral care, the promotion of worthwhile attitudes and views, the information and policies of the school and the school management. Tutors take an active role in communicating with parents and underpin the school's open-door ethos by making individual telephone contact with them. Teachers aim to respond to parents within 24 hours. Each year group has at least one parents' evening per year and parents are welcomed to a wide range of cultural, sporting and social gatherings as well as religious services and musical events in the cathedral.
- 5.10 Most of the parents who returned their pre-inspection questionnaires consider that the school encourages them to be involved in its life and work. The "Friends of LMS" is open to parents and former parents and organises a wealth of well-attended

activities from lunches to quizzes and discos. These events provide financial and social support for the school as well as good opportunities for socialising and support for pupils. The principal takes the lead in ensuring that parents are kept informed. Weekly newsletters are posted on the school website and e-mailed to parents and are a valuable source of up-to-date information. Newsletters contain a broad variety of information celebrating pupil successes, advertising events and indicating changes in school policy or schedules.

- 5.11 The school provides an on-line prospectus for prospective parents and a wealth of other information about the school. The website is very informative. The *Parents' Handbook* provides clear and helpful advice on general academic and pastoral matters beyond those covered by the on-line policy documents. Comprehensive and clear reports are compiled once per year. They include information on academic attainment and staff assessment of pupils' work, and also provide areas of focus for each subject. Reports are supplemented by half-termly progress reviews which are sent to parents four times a year. Progress reviews track effort, attainment, homework management, organisation, behaviour and attendance. Parents are invited to return written comments on their children's review and notice is taken of their comments. The Christmas progress review is augmented by a tutor comment to facilitate dialogue about pupil performance. Parents and pupils find these reviews helpful, especially in regard to target grades.
- 5.12 Relatively few parents responded to the parent pre-inspection questionnaire. The majority of parents who responded confirmed that the school handled their concerns well and that they could communicate easily with the school. Parents' responses included a few concerns about the quality of boarding accommodation and the enrichment programme for academically gifted pupils. The school does have a programme for refurbishment of the boarding accommodation, evident in the improvement in accommodation in one of the houses. Enrichment opportunities for academically gifted pupils do exist but the school has not yet developed this into a coherent programme. The formal complaints policy meets requirements and is made available to all parents.

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

## 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 chairman of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions, chapel 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 Adrian Underwood       | Reporting Inspector             |
| Mrs Diana Jeffkins        | Former Headmistress, GSA school |
| Mrs Frances Proud         | Head of Department, HMC school  |
| Mr Jonathan Runswick-Cole | Senior Housemaster, HMC school  |
| Dr Andrew Storey          | Head of Department, HMC school  |