



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

WINDERMERE SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

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Windermere School

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

Full Name of School	Windermere School
DfE Number	909/6008
Registered Charity Number	526973
Address	Windermere School Patterdale Road Browhead Windermere Cumbria LA23 1NW
Telephone Number	01539 446164
Fax Number	01539 488414
Email Address	ws@windermereschool.co.uk
Headmaster	Mr Ian Lavender
Chairman of Governors	Mr Peter Redhead
Age Range	11 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	256
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (114 boys; 142 girls)
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 118
Number of Boarders	Total: 138 Full: 109 Weekly: 29
Inspection dates	20 Mar 2012 to 23 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 February 2008.

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

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

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

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

Under Government arrangements, the inspection of boarding became an integrated part of ISI inspections from 1 September 2011. This inspection contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education, personal development and welfare. Boarding inspections were previously carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills. The relevant Ofsted report refers to an inspection in June 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 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 Michael Higginbottom	Reporting Inspector
Dr Haydn Griffiths	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mr Richard Palmer	Team Inspector (Head, SHMIS school)
Mr Mark Robinson	Team Inspector (Deputy Headmaster, SHMIS school)
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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Windermere School was founded in 1863 in Lytham St Anne's as a school for girls. In 1924 the school moved to its present hillside site just outside the town of Windermere and overlooking the lake. In 1999 it became co-educational, together with its preparatory school at Elleray nearby, and changed its name to Windermere St Anne's. In 2010 it became Windermere School. The school is a charity, one of the international Round Square group of schools, and has a governing body of ten members.
- 1.2 Accommodation and facilities have been increased over the years and the school roll has expanded to its present size of 256, with 118 day pupils and 138 boarders, comprising 114 boys and 142 girls. The boarding girls, from the preparatory school and up to Year 11 in the senior school, are housed in the main school building. Boys up to Year 11 are in Langdale House, opened in 2001, and all Year 12 and 13 boarders and day pupils are based together in Westmorland House, purpose built originally in 1990 for sixth-form girls.
- 1.3 Day pupils are from the local area but boarders come from across the UK and from overseas. Half of the boarders come from overseas, and are the children of UK forces posted abroad and others from Hong Kong and China, Germany, Spain and other countries of Europe.
- 1.4 The school shares the six Round Square key aims of providing an holistic education for life, embracing the principles of the acronym IDEALS: internationalism, democracy, the environment, adventure, leadership and service. The school's vision is to seek excellence in all things, to inspire and challenge its pupils to reach beyond themselves and to leave the school proud of what they have achieved. Through excellent teaching, a broad and challenging curriculum, supportive pastoral care and experience of the Lake District environment, the school aims to encourage individual success for the common good, together with self-knowledge, self-reliance and a desire to be of service. It seeks for pupils to become responsible for their own learning and acquire a global perspective, with a readiness to respect differences.
- 1.5 Based on nationally standardised tests taken in different years in the school, the ability profile in Years 7 to 11 is above the national average, but with a wide range of ability, including a significant minority of pupils whose ability is below the national average. In the sixth form, the ability range is a little above the national average but similarly, the range is wide. A number of pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL); currently, 64 pupils receive extra language support. Of the 79 pupils listed as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 35 receive support. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.6 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 pupils' academic achievement is good, and they are very well supported and challenged to achieve individual success, in the classroom and in the many and varied activities available to them outside the main timetable. Good achievement and appropriate progress are seen across a wide-ranging curriculum, with a large element of choice at key points. Examples of excellent work are seen in all sections of the school. The recent increase in high grades, at GCSE and in the International Baccalaureate Diploma (IB) in the sixth form, reflects good and often excellent teaching. Pupils with SEND make equally good progress as their peers, and those with EAL receive the support they require. Pupils also gain considerable success in sport, music and drama, and develop new skills in adventure activities and community service. The standard of basic skills, in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT), is high.
- 2.2 Personal development is outstanding at all levels in the school. Pupils are confident, friendly and socially at ease in the family atmosphere of the school and the boarding houses. They enjoy being part of an international and multi-cultural community. Relationships amongst pupils, and between pupils and staff, are excellent. Pupils are very well cared for and the new tutor system, backed up by the boarding house staff, ensures the maximum support for pupils' personal development and achievement. The quality of boarding is excellent, and boarders flourish academically, socially and personally.
- 2.3 The governing body strongly endorses the school's mission and aims. Governors support the leadership's vision, and ensure appropriate financial and staff resources. They have endorsed a long-term refurbishment plan for the boarding houses and other school accommodation. They monitor the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils, and for providing for their welfare. Leadership is strong. Management is successful at each level in the school, although the current structure and roles of senior management do not facilitate support for, and monitoring of, the work of middle management. Nonetheless, educational direction across the school is effective in promoting pupils' education and personal development. Links with parents are excellent and almost all parents are very positive about the work 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. Improve the quality of marking to the standards of the best, monitoring the implementation of policies to ensure that marking is of a consistently high standard.
 2. Improve those areas of the school acknowledged to be in need of refurbishment.
 3. Clarify the structure and individual responsibilities of senior management in order to facilitate their role as monitors and line managers of middle management.

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 good.
- 3.2 Achievement is in accordance with the stated aims of the school, for all pupils to pursue individual success and reach beyond themselves. Exemplary behaviour and small class sizes, coupled with excellent relationships between pupils and staff, engender a highly positive learning environment that values academic success.
- 3.3 Throughout the school, pupils show good levels of speaking, listening, numeracy and ICT skills. They are articulate and confident giving presentations in class, often making good use of ICT. Sixth-form work shows logical and coherently constructed arguments. Mathematical skills are applied competently. Pupils with SEND also achieve well in class.
- 3.4 Pupils show significant success outside the classroom, for example in music, where they gain merits and distinctions in external examinations, as well as recognition in local festivals. A number of gold awards are won in the UK Maths Challenge each year and pupils perform well in other areas, for example in Young Enterprise, and the Model United Nations held recently in Qatar. In recent years, most sixth-form pupils have gone on to a wide range of universities in the UK and abroad. Many pupils achieve well in sport at both individual and team level, with significant numbers of pupils representing the region in hockey and netball squads, and recent successes in table tennis, cross country and skiing.
- 3.5 A strong emphasis on outdoor pursuits allows opportunities for personal development and a sense of achievement for all ages. Individual and team skills are developed, and some pupils gain national qualifications for navigation, mountain leadership and water sports.
- 3.6 The following analysis uses national data for the years 2008 to 2011; these are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. Results at GCSE level between 2008 and 2010 have been above the national average for maintained schools. In 2011, 41 per cent of all grades at GCSE were A* or A. Results in International GCSE (IGCSE) mathematics have been close to the worldwide average. In 2011, pupils sat IGCSE in French, German and Spanish, with results similarly in line with worldwide averages.
- 3.7 Since 2009, pupils in Years 12 and 13 have followed the IB programme, with over 80 per cent gaining the award up to 2010. These results were similar to the worldwide average but rather below the UK figure. The 2011 results showed a significant improvement.
- 3.8 Progress, as indicated by nationally standardised measures, is in line with pupils' ability, both up to GCSE and in the sixth form. In pupils' written work, rapid progress during the year was noted in a number of subjects, for example in English and physics in the IB course. The progress of pupils with SEND is also good because of the support they receive and the annual monitoring within the learning support department. Pupils with EAL make rapid progress in fluency and vocabulary in their extra support lessons, enabling them to cope effectively with IB work.
- 3.9 The quality of pupils' learning is excellent. Their articulate and confident manner is seen in their active class contributions and willingness to express their opinions.

They co-operate very well with each other in class and are keen to do well. Pupils' academic enthusiasm stretches across the subject range and beyond the remit of the syllabus. Pupils take responsibility for their own success, recognising a need to develop core competencies such as effective personal organisation and becoming independent learners. They clearly enjoy their work.

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 school offers a broad and balanced curriculum that is effective in covering the requisite areas of learning and is well suited to the ages, abilities and needs of the pupils. It supports the aims of the school to provide a curriculum that has breadth, balance and challenge. Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire show a high level of satisfaction with the range of subjects and activities on offer.
- 3.12 The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 offers a good range of subjects, including extensive citizenship and life skills courses, and a second modern foreign language from Year 8. A strong and popular feature of the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is the adventure programme, which introduces pupils to skills in many outdoor activities. In Years 10 and 11, pupils follow a core of mathematics, English and a modern foreign language, and three additional GCSE subjects to study in each of Years 10 and 11. This arrangement enables the school to offer more choices in the combined Year 10 and 11 classes. It also meets the needs of pupils joining the school from overseas in Years 10 or 11 to gain GCSE qualifications before embarking upon the IB course. It does however mean that pupils follow somewhat intensive courses in their optional subjects and experience a lack of continuity in subjects they may choose again in the sixth form.
- 3.13 Sixth-form students study the IB. As well as the diploma programme, the school offers IB certificates and BTEC courses. A small number of pupils have opted for this alternative and the school is considering other combinations to meet the needs of those not suited to the full diploma course.
- 3.14 Most sixth-form pupils leave to attend higher education in the UK or abroad, and they are supported well with higher education choices and applications. They visit higher education conferences and attend a workshop on writing personal statements. Below the sixth form, little careers education is included in the curriculum, although some talks and presentations are given by outside bodies, and Year 11 pupils complete psychometric tests followed by an interview.
- 3.15 Excellent provision is made for pupils with SEND, focusing on classroom support as well as one-to-one assistance in the learning support department. The requirements of any pupils with statements of special educational needs are met and relevant reports completed annually. Pupils with EAL are also well supported. The most able pupils are given opportunities from time to time by individual teachers to attempt more challenging work. A number of specific activities and lectures are also offered to these pupils, for example through a cross-curricular programme for modern foreign languages in Year 10, but no systematic approach is yet established for gifted and talented pupils.
- 3.16 The school offers an excellent range of extra-curricular activities and links with the wider community. Pupils are encouraged to become involved in drama, music and sport, as well as continuing with adventure and outdoor activities, including use of the school's watersports centre. 'Sport for all' activities are popular and the choices

are widened, for example, by the recent introduction of basketball. House competitions in sport, drama and music create fervent but friendly rivalry. The Young Enterprise team received an award at the area finals. Pupils are successful in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Both pupils and their parents appreciate the commitment of the staff to this very successful activities programme.

- 3.17 Community links are also strong. The school has contacts with the local church. Sports teams play against local schools and pupils compete in local music festivals. Pupils enjoy raising money for local and international charities. Year 10 pupils have a wide-ranging community service programme, and the IB requires such activity in its Creativity, Adventure, Service (CAS) programme. Other pupils help with a young carers' summer school and there are links with a school in South Africa. Pupils value the opportunity to take part in the Round Square exchange programme with schools overseas.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.18 The quality of teaching overall is good.
- 3.19 Almost all teaching is at least good and much is excellent. Progress is achieved through purposeful teaching that supports the aims of the school by encouraging pupils to fulfil their individual potential. The overall standard of teaching has risen since the previous inspection.
- 3.20 Lessons are well planned, and relevant both to pupils' needs and to schemes of work. In the best examples, teachers provide considered, evaluative marking, including appropriate targets based on a good understanding of the specific needs of the individual. Pupils are genuinely interested in the tasks set. Classroom management is good and the pupils are both attentive and focused.
- 3.21 Time management is good, especially where a variety of teaching methods is used within the same lesson. A wide range of resources and methods is employed by teachers, including interactive whiteboards and projectors, video and audio work with computers, and both oral and written question and answer sessions. The subject knowledge of teachers is always good. Pupils are encouraged to work independently in most lessons. Careful guidance for projects and extended essays in the IB programme is apparent in pupils' written work. Pupils often engage in collaborative learning, either in pairs or in larger groups.
- 3.22 Teachers show great awareness of the differing needs of their pupils, including those with SEND or EAL, often through carefully focused questioning. The support in some lessons for SEND by the learning support staff is particularly effective. Some provision for gifted and talented pupils was seen in a GCSE mathematics lesson, where a small number of pupils were working on additional mathematics as an extra qualification. These pupils also receive an extra lesson for this purpose.
- 3.23 Overall, marking within and between departments varies in quality, although some departments provide models of excellent practice. Some progress has been made in response to recommendations in the 2008 report on marking and assessment, but marking remains inconsistent in its usefulness to the pupils. Analysis and use of examination and standardised test results have greatly improved and are now being used by senior management, and by tutors and teachers to support target setting. The recording and use of internal assessment by subject teachers to help plan future teaching are not widespread.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. The six key themes of Round Square are evident throughout the school's curricular and extra-curricular provision. Spiritual development is enhanced by the pupils' own values of self, and respect for others. They share a true sense of wonder and beauty in the location of their living and working environment. Pupils occasionally attend church services and Church of England confirmation classes are offered. Other faiths are explored and celebrated through the citizenship programme, and the multi-cultural nature of the school is embraced and celebrated throughout the year. Frequent opportunities are taken to share in the successes of others, for example in assemblies and corridor concerts. Pupils share in an experience of community together on a regular basis in the morning reflection, which offers a short time to pause and consider a theme at the start of the day.
- 4.3 Moral awareness is excellent. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong, apparent in their care for one another and, in the wider context, those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils demonstrate their commitment in excellent charity work, which includes fund-raising events supporting local, national and international causes. Pupils develop community responsibility through practical projects in countries such as South Africa and Kenya, reflecting the service element of Round Square. The link with the Tiger Kloof project in South Africa is particularly strong.
- 4.4 The social development of pupils is excellent. Pupils develop very good social skills through opportunities to take on leadership roles such as those in the senior school council. A junior school council for Years 7 to 9 has recently been developed, which is greatly appreciated by younger pupils, many of whom are keen to serve on it. Pupils feel that their views are listened to through the council, boarding house meetings and the suggestion box, and are taken seriously. Senior pupils support younger pupils, both through formal 'study buddy' arrangements and informally through older boarders helping younger ones with prep.
- 4.5 The pupils' cultural development is also excellent. The multi-cultural environment, as well as the internationalism ideal of Round Square, influences the work and attitudes of the pupils and their appreciation of cultural diversity. A drama lesson looking at puppetry as an aspect of world theatre and concentrating on Japanese Bunraku was particularly effective. Pupils are culturally very aware, partly through the many nationalities represented in the school, and partly through their regular exchanges with schools across the world. This direct cultural experience is also developed within the school through celebrations such as Chinese New Year.
- 4.6 Pupils grow in self-confidence and consideration for one another. They take full advantage of all that the school has to offer, and their excellent behaviour and very positive attitude to learning contribute to the outstanding level of all-round personal development they acquire by the time they leave the school. The school's aims for pupils to become responsible for their own learning, and to contribute to the school and community, with a respect for others and for different cultures, are fully achieved.

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

- 4.7 The school's arrangements for pastoral care are excellent.
- 4.8 Pupils say that they feel very well cared for and part of what they see as the school family. The structure of care for the pupils is secure and the new tutor system, which is increasingly valued by pupils and staff, is now under the watchful oversight of senior management. Communication between teachers, tutors and boarding house staff is excellent. Tutors are in regular contact with parents. Members of the nursing team have a key informal pastoral role, in addition to the very good medical care they provide for the whole school; the independent listener also provides a valuable pastoral service.
- 4.9 Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent and pupils feel that there is always someone who will listen and support them. Pupils support each other well.
- 4.10 In questionnaires, some pupils expressed concern over the quality of the food. During the inspection, however, pupils spoke very positively about the provision. The inspection found the food to be of a very high standard in quality, quantity and breadth of choice. It provides a well-balanced diet and is sensitive to the needs of all. An excellent food and nutrition programme also encourages pupils' healthy eating. The range of opportunities for physical activities is wide, including sport, adventure and service opportunities, all of which not only promote a healthy lifestyle but also complement the Round Square philosophy and the CAS element of the IB.
- 4.11 The excellent behaviour of the pupils within lessons, around the school and in the boarding houses contributes to their personal development. Pupils say that they have no concerns about bullying and all know how they would deal with bullying should it occur. They say that when any difficulties are reported, staff always deal with them sensitively and swiftly.
- 4.12 The school has suitable plans to improve educational access for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

- 4.13 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.14 The school has an effective system to ensure that requirements with regard to the safeguarding of children are met. All staff receive regular and appropriate training, and are fully aware of their duties in this area. Safeguarding matters are reviewed annually by the governing body, and a governor has particular expertise and involvement in this area.
- 4.15 Arrangements to ensure health and safety are good. All necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. Minor recommendations from the recent fire officer's report have been completed or are in hand.
- 4.16 Risk assessments have been undertaken for the grounds and buildings and for pupil activities. The school recognises a need for attention to particular rooms and facilities, for example some classroom flooring, the somewhat cluttered design technology accommodation, and changing and storage areas for day pupils.
- 4.17 The current arrangements for the sick bay are adequate but not ideal; the school has plans to provide a new medical centre in a more convenient location. Many of the

staff are trained in first aid, including some at the higher level, and retraining is undertaken regularly. The needs of pupils with particular conditions or requirements are carefully considered. The admission and attendance registers are suitably maintained.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.18 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.19 The school's clear boarding aims, to provide a safe and caring extended family environment where boarding pupils can flourish academically, socially and personally, are exceptionally well met. A wealth of opportunities exists for boarders to develop independence, self-reliance and strong interpersonal skills, supported by very committed and dedicated staff. Boarding makes a valuable contribution to the whole ethos of the school as well as to boarders' personal development. Since the previous inspection of boarding provision in June 2011, the school has made good progress with all the recommendations raised and the school's detailed strategic development plan identifies those areas that require further improvement. Boarders feel that boarding plays a considerable and beneficial part in their education and development.
- 4.20 The outcomes for boarders within the school are excellent. Substantial progress has been made in raising the profile of the boarding community within the whole school. The school has very successfully integrated all pupils from overseas into its community. As a result, all boarders contribute significantly to the life of the school, and this reflects the school's commitment to equality and diversity, and demonstrates the importance it places on promoting pupils' individuality. Throughout the whole boarding community relationships are extremely good, amongst pupils themselves, and between pupils and both boarding and academic staff. For example, staff are available to support pupils with their studies both during prep and at weekends, an experience enhanced by access to the library and other facilities. Boarders enjoy the company of others and have a strong sense of being part of a house family. This is reflected in the support they give to each other in a variety of circumstances.
- 4.21 The quality of care and the boarding provision are excellent. Boarders' health and well-being are promoted throughout the school and arrangements are organised extremely well. Staff know how to create a safe environment for boarders and how to promote health and safety. Boarders are able to access professional help and support from the school nurse and others. They have access to a doctor as required. All boarders confirm that they are aware of the procedures to follow in the event of being ill during the day or the night, and feel that they are well looked after by caring staff. Boarders confirm that an extensive range of excellent meals is provided throughout the day and they are able to influence decisions through the school council. All boarding houses have facilities for the preparation of snacks and drinks, and some boarders prepare meals and bake at the weekends.
- 4.22 During the weekdays and at weekends a wide range of activities is provided. Boarders have the freedom to choose these as they wish, and staff understand and respect the need for pupils to relax. The grounds of the estate are available to them. The range of accommodation varies across the houses for older boarders. A detailed planned programme of improvements and refurbishments is outlined in the school's development plan. Recent refurbishments have been completed to a very high standard and boarders are extremely proud of the results. Boarders are able to

contact parents as they wish, using landline telephones, mobile telephones and various applications through the internet. The recent investment in high speed broadband has improved this access and boarders report that this has enhanced the ease of communication. Staff encourage boarders to contact parents regularly.

- 4.23 The arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are excellent. Procedures for promoting the welfare and safety of boarders are very well managed by all the staff. All with access to boarders are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities, and have detailed job descriptions. All safe recruitment checks are completed and staff undergo rigorous induction procedures. The excellent behaviour of boarders is a strength, managed by staff who are confident and committed to challenging any inappropriate behaviour. Boarders know and understand what is expected of them and respond appropriately, with clear guidance on consequences and sanctions. They are extremely happy as they move around the whole school and meet freely with other boarders. Boarders say that they feel safe. They report no instances of bullying but they are fully aware of how to address any concerns, confident that they will be dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. Arrangements to ensure the security of pupils in the boarding areas are effective.
- 4.24 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of boarding is excellent. The head of boarding provides strong leadership on all issues and the headmaster and governors have a clear vision for boarding within the school. They are committed to developing and enhancing the provision. Both the headmaster and the head of boarding carry out monitoring visits to the houses. All staff within the school provide a wealth of expertise and support for both staff and boarders. Boarding policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated. A variety of mechanisms exists for boarders to make a contribution to their environment, through the house council or suggestion box, and directly through staff. They are confident that any suggestions made are taken forward and acted upon. The house council provides regular meetings with the house staff. Training is undertaken by staff in a range of areas and boarding staff can acquire accredited professional qualifications. All National Minimum Standards are met. In the 2011 Ofsted report, under the previous standards, three issues were raised, all of which have been resolved. The sick bay situation and arrangements are being reviewed; boarders' views are now being carefully considered by staff and management; and older boarders have appropriate access to local facilities, taking into account the location of the school and the commitments of the school programme.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 A new chairman has been appointed since the previous inspection, and governors provide very effective oversight of the school. The governors have a wide range of experience and expertise, which has been carefully and responsibly applied through a number of committees to promote financial well-being, and to invest in staff, facilities and resources for the school.
- 5.3 In this way, the governors have an excellent understanding of the workings of the school and have supported management in a variety of projects designed to improve various aspects of the school and the experience of the pupils. As well as a focus on finances, and the appointment of a new business manager, the governors have been closely involved in the approval and adoption of a comprehensive new development plan. They have put their expertise to work in reviewing and updating welfare, health and safety, and safeguarding policies and procedures. Governors have overseen a long-term plan for management and improvement of the school estate and facilities, including the recruitment of a new estate manager, and they have helped with the introduction of a programme of staff support and development, through a new appraisal scheme and the formation of a staff welfare group. The governors have provided strong support for the leadership, and continuing challenge to the school to grow and improve.
- 5.4 The governing body fully discharges its responsibilities for statutory requirements. Governors receive a report and undertake an annual review of safeguarding, and are represented on the health and safety committee.

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

- 5.5 The overall quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is good.
- 5.6 Leadership is excellent and the school is generally well managed. Strategic planning seeks to promote the school's vision and meet its aims. Clear educational direction is given across the school, ensuring the quality of the pupils' education and of their personal development. The school meets all the regulatory requirements. The missing medical checks on some staff, mentioned in the 2008 report, have now been undertaken and recorded where appropriate.
- 5.7 Senior management is effective in many of its different roles, for example in regulatory compliance, safeguarding and welfare management, and curriculum matters, and in running the different sections of the school. However, some other roles are less well covered, in part the result of the group's structure. For example, the implementation of policies and initiatives is not always sufficiently followed through. The monitoring of different aspects of teaching and learning, and of boarding and tutoring, is increasing but is not yet systematically undertaken by senior management staff in their various areas of responsibility.

- 5.8 Most middle management is good overall and sometimes excellent. Management of boarding is strong and effective, with the pupils' welfare and safety a priority. Most academic departments, and areas such as adventure activities and sport, are well run, often with great commitment and a determination continually to improve results and outcomes for pupils. However, lines of accountability are sometimes unclear, and, as at senior level, supportive monitoring and challenge are lacking.
- 5.9 A new development plan has been prepared by management, covering all aspects of the school; it is subject to continual review and includes clearly set priorities. This includes a regular process of overall self-evaluation, and an audit in areas such as risk and the analysis of academic achievement. New and ambitious arrangements for staff review, welfare and professional development are being implemented. Training includes regular updates in safeguarding, first aid and the support of those with SEND, and staff regularly attend training to support their particular pastoral or teaching role.
- 5.10 The non-teaching staff in the school provide very good support for teachers and pupils in their different areas. They are committed and loyal to the school and their contribution is appreciated. Their relationships with pupils are excellent.
- 5.11 The school's links with parents and carers are excellent. In their questionnaire, parents strongly endorsed the current leadership and management of the school. They said that their children are happy at the school, safe and well looked after. The great majority are pleased with the progress that their children are making, and with the range of the curriculum and the variety of opportunities outside the classroom, notably in sport and in adventure activities. The pupils themselves praised these areas in their questionnaire but also criticised some aspects of provision. Little evidence of these concerns was found during the inspection. Almost all pupils indicated that they enjoy school and feel secure and cared for in what they describe as an extended family, praise the food, and are grateful for the support and friendship of their teachers and tutors. They believe very strongly that they are making good progress, personally and in their work, owing to the support of their teachers.
- 5.12 Parents also said that staff and tutors are easy to contact and responsive to their concerns. They receive regular updates from the school on their children's progress, and detailed and constructive reports at the end of term. Current and detailed information about the school is available on the website, and the new broadband system has greatly enhanced communication between home and school. Weekly newsletters are sent and a number of handbooks for boarding and new pupils offer information and advice. Parents are welcomed to the school and to its events, and are able to keep in close contact with their children's education and progress. A clear and comprehensive complaints procedure is available to parents, on the website and from the school. Parents say that any concerns they raise are handled well.

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