



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**WOLDINGHAM SCHOOL**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

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## Woldingham School

Full Name of School	<b>Woldingham School</b>	
DfE Number	<b>936/6111</b>	
Registered Charity Number	<b>291258</b>	
Address	<b>Woldingham School Marden Park Woldingham Caterham Surrey CR3 7YA</b>	
Telephone Number	<b>01883 349431</b>	
Fax Number	<b>01883 348653</b>	
Email Address	<b>registrar@woldinghamschool.co.uk</b>	
Headmistress	<b>Mrs Jayne Triffitt</b>	
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Richard Stone</b>	
Age Range	<b>10 to 19</b>	
Total Number of Pupils	<b>529</b>	
Gender of Pupils	<b>Girls</b>	
Numbers by Age	11-18	<b>529</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>229</b>
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>300</b>
	Full:	Weekly:
Inspection dates	<b>07 Feb 2012 to 09 Feb 2012</b>	

## 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 November 2007.

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](http://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 November 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, 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 a representative of the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mr John Marshall	Reporting Inspector
Mr David Bell	Former head, ISA school
Mrs Elaine Brook	Former head, SHMIS school
Dr Helen Brooke	Vice Principal, HMC school
Mr Charles Bush	Headmaster, HMC school
Mr Ben Edwards	Head of Sixth Form, HMC school
Mrs Alison Horton	Deputy Head, GSA school
Mrs Flora Bean	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Lynne Heath	Team Inspector for Boarding

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

- 1.1 Woldingham School is a boarding and day school for girls aged eleven to eighteen. It was founded in 1842 as a Convent of the Sacred Heart Foundation. In 1946 the school transferred from Roehampton to the present 700 acre site in Surrey. The first lay head was appointed in 1985 and in 2009, the school incorporated to become a company limited by guarantee. It is part of the international network of Sacred Heart Schools and is run according to its aims and philosophy.
- 1.2 The school aims to be a caring and supportive Christian community in which girls are happy, confident and inspired to meet challenges and achieve excellence in whatever they choose to do, according to their ability. The intention is to encourage girls to become independent, enquiring young women, who forge lasting relationships, achieve academic success and become positive influences in the world.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection 529 girls were on the roll; 369 in Years 7 to 11 and 160 in the sixth form. Nearly two-thirds of the pupils board. The majority of girls are of white British background, but currently a quarter come from other ethnic origins, predominantly Hong Kong, China, West Africa, Spain and Mexico.
- 1.4 Standardised measures indicate that pupils' ability is above the national average. Seventy-five pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom six receive weekly additional support and many others receive support to improve their study skills. One hundred and fifteen pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and fifty-two of them receive extra help with their English.
- 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 The school amply fulfils its aims to develop the whole person to the highest level in all spheres of activity, emphasising high moral values within a strong Christian ethos. Pupils enjoy a particularly rich educational experience through the formal curriculum and a particularly strong extra-curricular programme. Examination results and inspection evidence indicate that they achieve highly and make exceptional progress at all levels, most notably in the sixth form. Achievement is equally strong in creative areas such as music, art and drama. Pupils are enthusiastic and committed learners; they have good note-making skills but their information and communication technology (ICT) skills are under developed. The learning resources centre is under-used at present and its purpose is unclear. The quality of teaching is excellent and the school benefits from excellent governance, leadership and management and from the total commitment of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, who give unstintingly of time, energy and expertise, to the happiness and success of the pupils.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent and they leave school mature and confident, with a genuine concern for others, strongly influenced by the Christian values of the school and the goals of the Sacred Heart Foundation. Pupils receive excellent pastoral care based on a most effective house system. The school is distinguished by a very strong sense of community and service. Pupils raise considerable sums for a wide range of charities both in this country and abroad, particularly in Africa. The boarding experience is excellent and makes an important contribution to pupils' personal development. Accommodation is of a high standard, as are the care and support of the boarding staff.
- 2.3 The school is fully compliant with regulatory requirements, and the National Minimum Standards are fully met. In response to the recommendations of the previous inspection, the planning process has been streamlined; the roles of senior managers are clearly defined and the monitoring of policies and procedures is effective; the school day has been restructured, but the problem of movement between lessons has not been entirely resolved. The introduction of year heads has further enhanced the quality of pastoral care. The increase in grouping by ability in Years 7 to 9 has improved the quality of the learning experience of the pupils. Parents are fully appreciative of the education received by their children and the great majority have no significant concerns; they particularly value the progress made by their children and the quality of pastoral care. Pupils are happy at the school and they acknowledge the support and guidance from their teachers. Boarders feel safe and get on well with each other and the staff. Inspectors found no evidence to support the claim of inequality of the treatment mentioned by some, the lack of activities at the weekend and the quality of food.



**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 To improve further the already high quality of provision the school is advised to make the following improvement:
1. Raise the standard of competence in ICT and increase its use as an integral part of pupils' learning.
  2. Draw up and implement a development plan to decide the aims for the learning and resources centre and ensure the facility is an effective resource for teaching and learning.

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

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The school fully meets its aims for pupils to meet challenges and achieve excellence in whatever they choose to do, according to their ability. Throughout the school, the pupils achieve outstanding success in their learning. They are very articulate, whether in debate or talking informally to the inspectors. They listen carefully to each other when working in groups, as in a Year 12 drama lesson where they listened intently to each other's performance in order to deliver a reasoned critique. The quality of written work is high, as a result of the drive to improve standards. Essays are well constructed and persuasive, and imaginative writing is equally well developed. Nevertheless, the pupils' writing is not quite as fluent as their speaking, particularly in the sixth form. The pupils demonstrate good thinking and reasoning skills. Year 13 pupils analysed, assessed and replied to arguments in a discussion of radical feminism with considerable skill and insight. Standards of creativity are very high in art music and drama. Mathematical and scientific skills are also consistently strong, throughout the school and applied successfully to other subjects. Year 8 pupils used their mathematical skills in geography, interpreting statistics and drawing and interpreting graphs, and in a Year 12 class they used their mathematical skills to solve mechanics problems. Skills in ICT are adequate but do not develop to a sufficiently high degree as the pupils progress throughout the school. Pupils acquire excellent physical skills through the many opportunities to practise in a wide variety of activities.
- 3.3 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 comparison with the national average for maintained schools and similar to those for maintained selective schools. Nearly three-quarters of the grades achieved were A\* or A. The 2011 GCSE results contained a similar proportion of A\* or A grades. At A level, results have also been high compared with those for all maintained schools and were also well above those for maintained selective schools. At A level in 2011, the results from a weaker year group were not quite as good, but more than four-fifths of the grades obtained were A\* to B. These results in GCSE and at A level, interpreted in the light of inspection evidence of an extremely high proportion of effective teaching, a significant amount of which was of the highest quality, and the pupils' outstandingly positive attitudes and enquiring minds, indicate that their rate of progress is unusually high; a judgement confirmed by standardised measures of progress, even when compared with others of far above average ability. Careful tracking of their progress indicates that pupils with SEND and those with EAL both achieve highly in relation to their starting points. The most able also achieve results which are commensurate with their ability. In each case, that the quality of teaching adapted to their needs is a significant factor in these pupils' achievement.
- 3.4 Results in music, drama and speech examinations are excellent, with more than three-quarters being graded distinction or merit. The pupils participate successfully in mathematical and scientific competitions. In sport, where the emphasis is on participation, considerable numbers take part each week and achieve creditable results in competitions. The pupils are very successful in achieving the gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award and also raise considerable sums for charity.

- 3.5 The pupils have excellent attitudes to work and learning skills. They are very well organised, have good research skills and are very competent in note making. They are interested in their work, conscientious, enthusiastic and determined to succeed.

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

- 3.6 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.7 The academic curriculum is effective in its coverage of all the requisite areas of learning up to GCSE. The curriculum has been refined since the previous inspection, strengthening the creative subjects in Years 7 to 9 and offering more appropriate language choices in Year 7 and subsequently. In Years 10 and 11, the curriculum is arranged to ensure that all pupils follow a broad programme to include English, science, mathematics, a modern foreign language, religious studies and physical education, together with three options. An impressively high number of subjects is on offer to Year 12, to meet the needs of all abilities, and the timetable is constructed around the pupils' choices. The selection is individually monitored to ensure that pupils are not limited by their choices in later life. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is comprehensive and wide ranging and makes an important contribution to the pupils' personal development.
- 3.8 The curriculum, which is kept under regular review, supports the aims of the school and is suitable for all ages and abilities, and the mix of nationalities. Curriculum planning is generally of high quality to meet the differing needs of the pupils. The adoption of a two-week timetable, with 55-minute lessons and five-minute breaks in between, has eased curriculum time pressure and resolved some but not all of the logistical challenges of the site to ensure lessons start on time.
- 3.9 An excellent programme of general courses and activities supports the formal curriculum and offers pupils a wide range of enrichment activities such as the Mathematics Challenge, British Science Olympiads, the Pax Christi Peace Challenge Competition and the Philosophy Society. The most able Year 12 pupils are supported by impressive Oxbridge preparation courses. This annual programme is diverse and provides genuine enrichment and extension for the ablest pupils who attend according to interest.
- 3.10 The screening process for pupils with SEND is excellent and has developed greater coherence since the previous inspection. Appropriate expansion in SEND teaching has responded to need. The school identifies those who are gifted and talented and the co-ordinator helps staff to recognise and meet the pupils' specific needs through the activities mentioned above, through more open-ended tasks and through extension tasks in normal lessons. The provision for pupils with EAL is excellent, their needs are clearly identified and they are supported in small groups and in class. The personal support they receive enables them to gain in confidence, as was demonstrated when Chinese pupils presented solutions to mathematics problems in the sixth form.
- 3.11 The programme of extra-curricular activities offered by the school is exceptionally wide-ranging; it offers the pupils an outstanding opportunity to develop additional interests and makes a considerable contribution to their personal development. Their place in the school day has been altered so that participation does not impact upon the academic life of the school. Provision is reviewed termly, and the pupils are invited to suggest new activities, so that the programme remains fresh and exciting. The activities range from psychology to netball to creative writing to

zumba, and, should they need to de-stress after all this activity, they can take part in fencing, cookery, calligraphy and even learn effective massage or relaxation techniques. The pupils greatly appreciate the variety of activities on offer, with many of the day pupils voluntarily extending their school day until 6.30pm and into the weekend in order to participate fully.

- 3.12 Pupils benefit greatly from the school's close links with the local community. There is a strong link with a local care home, which pupils visit regularly, offering entertainment, hospitality and simple friendship. Additionally, local schools use the school's extensive facilities.

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

- 3.13 The quality of teaching is excellent.
- 3.14 Teaching is very effective in promoting the high progress seen, and it supports the aims of the school for every pupil to experience the rewards and challenges of academic study. The teaching enables all pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability. They increase their understanding and develop their learning and their subject specific skills.
- 3.15 Teachers plan their lessons very effectively and tailor them to the particular needs of their pupils; this enables pupils of varying ability to acquire new knowledge and make good progress. Teachers are secure in both their subject knowledge and their use of teaching methods and utilise a range of challenging activities appropriately to achieve lesson objectives. Skilled questioning by teachers encourages pupils to deepen their analysis when working on abstract concepts. Activities in many lessons encourage active participation and give pupils an opportunity to develop skills, expand knowledge and deepen understanding. Group work is an effective feature of many lessons. Teaching in the upper part of the school is sometimes too closely focused on examination preparation and opportunities for extension are missed. Relations between pupils and teachers are excellent and pupils appreciate the support they receive, particularly the willingness of staff to help outside lessons.
- 3.16 Teachers make good use of the schools' excellent resources such as the theatre, the workshops, sports and music facilities. Some staff use ICT resources such as interactive whiteboards to good effect; the excellent use of a camera to show, on the screen, the detailed work of a dissection helped pupils to understand what they were expected to do. Overall, however, the development of the pupils' ICT skills is not integrated within teaching and learning and is not yet fully embedded in schemes of work. The newly created learning resources centre, the former library, is underused and is not at the heart of teaching and learning. The centre is not relevant to the pupils' lives, book borrowing numbers are very low and pupil and staff interest is not consistent with the school's academic aspirations. However, four department libraries exist to support the older pupils' academic needs.
- 3.17 Pupils with SEND, EAL and who are gifted and talented are very well supported in lessons so that they make rapid progress. Teachers understand the needs of their pupils well and make good use of the individual education plans. In geography, teachers create word mats of key vocabulary and definitions to help pupils with EAL.
- 3.18 The school has a clear policy on assessment. Grade descriptors are in place for marking and reporting, and pupils' work is graded according to the work they do in class and as additional study. The quality of marking is very thorough with clear assessment accompanied by helpful advice for further development. At GCSE and

A level, assessment is tied to forecast grades based on standardised data. Pupils welcome the opportunity given for them to set themselves unambiguous and challenging targets for themselves as part of the reporting process. The school analyses thoroughly assessment data and examination results to monitor the pupils' progress and hold subject departments to account.

## **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.
- 4.2 The pupils, both from the UK and from overseas, demonstrate the strong spiritual and moral values recorded at the previous inspection, with new strengths apparent in their confident demeanour. Their academic work and extra-curricular activity relate closely to the aims of the Sacred Heart Foundation, and their day-to-day life reflects its five principles.
- 4.3 The pupils are mature, confident and have high self-esteem; they are also disarmingly modest. Their spiritual life is richly evident in many aspects of their school experience. They engage with candour and confidence in an atmosphere of mutual trust. The entire community is drawn together by inclusive worship led by teachers and both Catholic and Anglican clergy. Spiritual discussion readily arises in many lessons. Pupils are courteous, attentive and positive in their discourse. They respect their teachers and peers and are not afraid to express their ideas. The very strong art music and drama contribute to the pupils' aesthetic development.
- 4.4 The pupils have a very keen sense of moral awareness and a clear understanding of right and wrong. They are fully supportive of the school's code of conduct and understand that certain rules are necessary for the effective running of the school community. The pupils subscribe to a system in which respect and responsibility govern rules and regulations. They respond positively to an expansive system of rewards and sustain a positive culture of high expectations. Participation in sports teams reinforces their understanding of the need for rules and shared responsibility. In lessons they explore moral and ethical dimensions related to the curriculum. Open discussion in well-planned PHSE lessons aids the development of assertiveness and confidence.
- 4.5 The pupils' social awareness is excellent and their behaviour within lessons and around the school reflects a highly developed respect for their peers and for staff. The boarding experience enables the pupils to develop their social skills and they live in harmony with each other. They contribute very generously to the school community by undertaking numerous leadership roles as 'ribbons' (prefects) and sports captains; older pupils look after younger ones as 'buddies'. Pupils further contribute to the community through the Duke of Edinburgh Award's scheme. Diverse charitable enterprises embody the Sacred Heart principle of social awareness and social service, most of which focuses on disadvantaged communities both in the UK and overseas, particularly Uganda. The many smaller projects initiated by groups of pupils demonstrate their commitment. In all of these aspects, pupils understand and respond to the needs of those less fortunate than themselves.
- 4.6 Pupils understand and respect other faiths and cultures whilst still having a proper appreciation of the Western cultural tradition. The range of backgrounds, including currently pupils from more than thirty different countries, provides a rich tapestry of cultures which enlightens and invigorates the school community. Pupils of all ages and cultural backgrounds get on extremely well together and the boarding houses make a notable contribution in this regard. Participation in the Model United Nations deepens the pupils' understanding of global issues. Whilst the focus is on Christianity, pupils learn about other religions and celebrate cultural diversity through

international events. The western European cultural tradition is also celebrated, through the rich provision of music, art and drama.

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

- 4.7 Pastoral care for the pupils is excellent.
- 4.8 The school's pastoral arrangements play a central role in helping all pupils attain high levels of personal development. Tutors provide excellent academic and pastoral support and guidance for the pupils in close conjunction with heads of year, housemistresses and teaching staff. The increased use of e-mails for communication has enabled tutors to be much more pro-active in communicating with parents. Record keeping is excellent and provides a complete picture of each pupil. The introduction of a new layer of management to the structure of pastoral care has been very effective. More time can now be invested in pastoral care and the integration of day and boarding pupils has significantly improved. Pupils have a good range of staff to whom they can turn if they have any worries or concerns. In addition, from Year 10, they may choose a personal tutor from the staff with whom they meet on a regular but informal basis. An independent counsellor is also available. Relationships amongst the pupils and between the pupils and staff are excellent and show the highest level of mutual respect and care for one another. In lessons and around the school, the pupils are clearly at ease with staff and visitors and are confident in making contact, asking questions or giving their opinion. Boarders and day pupils are very well integrated.
- 4.9 A discrete health education programme operates in Years 7 to 9. It runs alongside an excellent PSHE programme for the whole school. Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy attitudes to food and exercise: they are weighed and measured on a termly basis. A wide choice of carefully prepared and nutritious food ensures pupils eat healthily. Pupils and staff alike comment very positively on the high quality of all meals. All pupils take regular exercise, making the most of the school's impressive sports provision.
- 4.10 The school has effective procedures in place to promote good behaviour and guard against harassment and bullying and to deal constructively with any unacceptable behaviour, taking due account of any related difficulty or disability. The regular celebration of pupils' achievements in assemblies boosts their self-confidence and self-esteem. Pupils also have a clear understanding of sanctions, which they consider to be fair and fairly applied.
- 4.11 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND which is reviewed every year and amended where necessary.
- 4.12 The school has set up a wide range of ways in which pupils' views can be heard: suggestion boxes, school councils, house forums, and the Monday "Munch" club where small groups of Year 7 and 8 pupils meet with the head of year for an informal lunch. The great majority of pupils are happy at the school and said so in innumerable encounters with inspectors.

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

- 4.13 Arrangements to promote the pupils' welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 4.14 Safeguarding arrangements are secure; all regulatory requirements are met and any concerns are dealt with effectively. Recruitment is carried out meticulously and all necessary checks completed. The child protection officer receives training every two years, and all other staff every three years.
- 4.15 Arrangements to ensure health and safety are highly effective and cover all aspects of the life of the school for pupils, staff and visitors. All fire prevention measures are in order; fire practices are held termly, and also once a term in silent hours in the boarding houses, and are recorded correctly. Watches from the local fire station visit annually as part of the PSHE programme to raise pupils' awareness and detailed procedures in case of fire are written in the pupils' handbooks. Effective measures are in place for pupils who are ill or injured. The medical centre affords excellent facilities and constant support, with well-qualified staff; records are kept meticulously.
- 4.16 The admission and attendance registers are accurately completed and kept for the required period.

**4.(d) The quality of boarding (for schools providing boarding accommodation)**

- 4.17 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.18 Boarders clearly enjoy their boarding experience, and develop strong and long lasting friendships. They develop very positive and constructive relationships with house staff and are confident, self-reliant and show high standards of integrity. Many pupils speak highly of the support and care they receive. They have high standards of behaviour, borne out of a real sense of mutual respect and tolerance. Boarders settle quickly into boarding life, are at ease with one another and enjoy life in their house and are loyal and supportive of its aims and values. International boarders enjoy a real sense of welcome, have plenty of opportunity to mix socially, and those with English as a second language make excellent progress and integrate quickly. Boarders take pride in their house and enjoy contributing and participating in house events. Boarders demonstrate positive attitudes, often raising money for charities both locally and abroad for those less fortunate than themselves and contribute willingly to the smooth running of the house. They take responsibility on food and house committees and regularly contribute to the smooth running of their house. In the older year groups, pupils have opportunity to develop strong independent and leadership skills as house prefects (ribbons) or in helping to organise whole-school day events. These varied roles of responsibility and leadership opportunities prepare them very well for the wider world, in keeping with the aims and values of the school.
- 4.19 Pastoral arrangements are excellent. There is very well-organised and meticulous documentation for the smooth running of the houses. House staff work hard to get to know boarders well and to understand their differing needs. Through thoughtful planned induction and on-going supportive care, new boarders are quickly put at ease and settle comfortably into boarding life. Sleepovers and tester days help with the settling in process, and the peer 'buddy' system and termly room rotas mean boarders get to know each other which creates an excellent community spirit within



the house. Pupils have a number of opportunities to help in organising activities and charity events in each house. The quality of the accommodation is excellent with all houses tastefully furnished and decorated within an on-going refurbishment programme. Each house has spacious common room and recreational facilities and more than adequate washrooms. The boarding house system has clear year-group house areas with purpose-built houses for Years 12 and 13, the latter with en-suite, individual bedrooms. Evening snacks in house for younger pupils, often reflecting requests from boarders, are organised by the catering department. The quality and range of meals enjoyed by all in the new dining hall is excellent, and boarders are encouraged to eat healthily, with a choice of hot and vegetarian dishes, soups, desserts and an excellent range of exotic fruits. The dining hall, beautifully designed and extremely spacious adds much to the quality of the dining experience for boarders.

- 4.20 The staff work closely with the health centre to monitor boarders' health and well-being, providing individual care plans where appropriate. The health centre, due for refurbishment in 2012, provides 24-hour care from well qualified nurses who pay due attention to any continued medical needs or injuries. Boarders have ample opportunity to contact family and friends and may return home from Saturday lunch time if they so wish. The school communicates very effectively with parents of boarders and follows up any concerns immediately. The outstanding, wide-ranging programme of sports and extra-curricular activities keeps boarders very busy in the evenings and at weekends. Each weekend 'Saturday active' and sports and games fixtures mean that the vast majority of boarders are involved. Particular attention is made within houses to acknowledge the pupils' participation and success. Saturday afternoon cultural and social trips from school by coach are well supported, and from Year 9 upwards, pupils enjoy shopping trips locally by train.
- 4.21 Arrangements for boarders' welfare and safeguarding are excellent. The National Minimum Standards are fully met and the school implements fully the safeguarding policy and all other relevant policies. All house staff are trained in safeguarding procedures and understand fully their responsibility for those in their care. Boarders report that they feel safe at school, have a number of house and school staff to whom they can turn, including an individual mentor from Year 10 upwards with whom they can meet. Boarders have clear access to help lines should the need arise and have the contact details of an independent listener. There is always a member of the boarding staff on duty in the evenings and at weekends, and gap-year students support the staff effectively in looking after the boarders. The use of computers and mobile telephones is monitored carefully and sensibly for the safety of boarders. Staff are vigilant in following up absences and in relaying information or concerns. The responses to the pre-inspection parental questionnaires indicate that parents appreciate the staff support and care for their children. Behaviour in the school and in boarding houses is exemplary and any minor incidence of bullying, which is rare, is dealt with immediately, recorded and monitored to ensure that a harmonious atmosphere continues to prevail.
- 4.22 Leadership and management of boarding are excellent. There are clear and effective lines of communication between the senior management team and boarding staff. The documentation of policies and procedures is meticulous and contains very clear guidance for the smooth running of a boarding house and any eventuality or emergency. Policies relating to the management of boarding are kept up to date and reviewed regularly. Regular, fortnightly meetings between senior pastoral staff and house staff ensure that boarding staff remain up-to-date with matters of policy and procedures. The new layer of management, the heads of year,

is proving to be very successful as a liaison between house and teaching staff, and monitors both the pastoral and academic progress of all the girls. All boarding staff are well trained and take part in continued professional development. Boarding is highly regarded and contributes fully to the overall experience of pupils in the school. They are catered for outstandingly well and have abundant opportunity for personal development. The well-being of each individual is of vital importance to the boarding staff who take great pride in their work to create the smooth running of each house and the excellent family atmosphere.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The board of governors makes an invaluable contribution to the development of the school. It managed the recent change of status most successfully, incorporating to become a company limited by guarantee. With the headmistress, it re-affirmed the Catholic ethos, and the values of the Sacred Heart foundation. The board has made a particular contribution in the areas of strategic planning and financial management, and as guardians of the aims, ethos and traditions of the school. Governors have a wide range of skills and experience at a high level, the balance is kept under regular review and the nominations procedure is rigorous. The governing body is a member of relevant professional organisations and makes use of their in-service training. The induction of new governors is thorough.
- 5.3 A strong committee structure underpins the work of the governors. Committee chairmen are chosen for their prior expertise and they provide strong leadership. Prudent financial planning has allowed the governors to invest in well qualified staff and resources. The minutes of meetings indicate detailed analysis and lively debate.
- 5.4 The governors are very committed and actively involved in the life of the school; they are assiduous in attending functions and some visit the school regularly. They are very well organised, take seriously their responsibilities as 'critical friends', and hold the school to account. They are well informed by reports and newsletters from the leadership and by regular contact, and teaching staff have opportunities to make presentations relating to their areas of responsibility. Governors are conscientious in carrying out their responsibilities and are kept up-to-date with changes in legislation and legal requirements. Safeguarding is subject to particular scrutiny and the policy is reviewed, amended where necessary and approved each year. Arrangements for welfare, health and safety are subject to equal scrutiny.

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

- 5.5 The overall quality of leadership and management is excellent.
- 5.6 The school is strongly led and continues to move forward successfully, fulfilling its aims and aspirations in all areas of activity. The already good standards of achievement have risen still further in academic subjects and in art, music and drama, sport and activities. The quality and range of the extra-curricular activities have further improved. The school has re-affirmed its Catholic tradition and commitment to the values of the Sacred Heart foundation.
- 5.7 Members of the senior leadership team have clear job descriptions and work very well together as a team. The leadership sets high standards and management is based on trust, team work and the confidence that all are committed to the same goals. This confidence is amply justified by the continued progress of the school. Regular meetings with line managers are embedded within management. Most heads of department, heads of year and house and other middle managers are very effective and some are inspirational. The school has a clear understanding of its

strengths and its areas for development and the quality of monitoring of the implementation of plans, policies and procedures is good.

- 5.8 The school has a well thought out development plan which has been the subject of wide consultation to which all have had the opportunity to contribute. Policies are in place for all aspects of school life; they are well implemented and reviewed as necessary. Safeguarding and health and safety policies are comprehensive and the necessary training is up-to-date.
- 5.9 The school is fortunate in having the services of high quality staff, and much of the success of the school is due to their dedication, energy, skill and enthusiasm.
- 5.10 Recruitment is secure and stringent checks are carried out on those appointed to work in the school; the centralised register is well maintained. A range of meetings and committees at all levels ensures good communication and enables all staff to contribute to the future development of the school. Ancillary staff are well organised and fulfil their duties in exemplary fashion. They feel valued and well integrated into the life of the school, of which they are very proud.
- 5.11 The school's effective appraisal scheme is backed by generous professional development provision. Staff are encouraged to develop their expertise in classroom teaching and pastoral support through a carefully planned programme of in-house and extramural courses. Those attending courses outside the school are required to provide feedback to colleagues so that all can benefit from what has been learned. The school provides excellent induction for newly appointed staff, which includes a full day's training prior to the start of term and specific child protection training provided by the child protection officer. Newly qualified teachers receive continuing support and appraisal throughout their probationary year, which they find invaluable.
- 5.12 The quality of links with parents is excellent. The very positive outcomes of the questionnaires to parents demonstrate that the great majority are very satisfied with the education and support provided for their children, with the progress they make and with the quality of communication with the school.
- 5.13 The school maintains a lively and constructive relationship with parents in accordance with its aims. The school takes seriously any concerns expressed by parents; almost all are dealt with informally because of the ease of communication and the ready availability of senior members of staff. For any others, the school has a clear complaints procedure and examination of documentation indicates that they are handled with great care according to published procedures.
- 5.14 The website includes letters and reports from the headmistress and other staff and is an extremely helpful source of information, detailing events, activities, overseas trips and outcomes of matches, in addition to curricular information, thereby keeping both prospective and existing parents and guardians very well informed about the life of the school. In addition, parents are readily contacted by email or telephone so that any concerns may be resolved as they arise. They can also access the parent portal to receive more general information such as fixtures lists.
- 5.15 Parents have very good opportunities to be actively involved in the work and progress of their children. The Woldingham Parent Staff Association (WPSA) holds regular meetings, organises social events and fundraises energetically for the school, a recent gift being a landscaped garden in the Quad. Parent representatives

for each year group meet twice a term and can act as an informal link with the school administration.

- 5.16 Clear and useful reports about their children's work and progress are given regularly to parents; they detail not only past achievement but also set clear targets for future improvement. The pupils are offered the opportunity to evaluate their own progress and any concerns about personal progress are followed up by staff.

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