



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

BADMINTON SCHOOL

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Badminton School

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

Full Name of School	Badminton School		
DfE Number	801/6003		
Registered Charity Number	311738		
Address	Badminton School Westbury Road Westbury-on-Trym Bristol Bristol BS9 3BA		
Telephone Number	0117 905 5200		
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Email Address	reception@badminton.bristol.sch.uk		
Headmistress	Mrs Rebecca Tear		
Chair of Governors	Mrs Alison Bernays		
Age Range	11 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	314		
Gender of Pupils	Girls		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	0	5-11: 0
	3-5 (EYFS):	0	11-18: 314
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	132	
Number of Boarders	Total:	182	
	Full:	169	Weekly/Flexi: 6/7
Inspection Dates	05 May 2015 to 08 May 2015		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in April 2009.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff, with the chair of governors and other governors, and with parents, 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

Dr Christopher Ray	Reporting Inspector
Dr John Godwin	Team Inspector (Former Head of Department, HMC school)
Revd David Ibbotson	Team Inspector (Chaplain, HMC and GSA schools)
Mrs Rosalynd Kamaryc	Team Inspector (Head, GSA school)
Mr Karl McCloskey	Team Inspector (Head, GSA school)
Mr Matthew March	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Kate McCarey	Team Inspector for Boarding (Former Assistant Head, HMC school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Badminton School was founded in 1858 as a proprietorial girls' school. Originally located in Clifton, in 1924 it moved to its present location in Westbury-on-Trym on the outskirts of Bristol, a site that also accommodates the school's own junior school for pupils aged three to eleven. The senior school is a boarding and day school with 314 pupils aged between eleven and eighteen, including 182 boarders who come from a variety of international and British backgrounds. Full, flexible and weekly boarding, as well as occasional boarding for day pupils, is available in three age-based boarding houses.
- 1.2 The school is non-denominational, aiming to inculcate strong moral values: central to its ethos are genuine respect for all faiths and the importance of individual integrity. The school aims to provide a holistic boarding and day education which is challenging and fun, balancing academic excellence with the fulfilment of individual potential through the creative arts, sport and extra-curricular activities. It endeavours to ensure that through all it does its pupils leave the school as curious, confident and courteous individuals ready to thrive in a competitive, global society.
- 1.3 The members of the governing body are drawn for the most part from the professions and the academic world. The governors have oversight of the junior as well as the senior school, their work being supported by seven sub-committees. The school is a registered charity and also a registered company limited by shares owned by the Badminton School Trust. Since the previous inspection a new wing has been added to the boarding house for younger pupils, a new music suite has been opened and a suite of rooms has been provided for those pupils needing additional academic support.
- 1.4 The ability profile of the senior school is above the national average, with around a third of pupils having well above average ability. Almost all pupils leave the school to proceed to universities in the UK and overseas. The school has identified 29 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). None has a statement of special educational needs, but 19 are given specialist support. There are 31 pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), and 29 of these receive support for their English.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent. The school meets its academic aims with pupils successful in their learning and personal development. All pupils, including boarders, those who are more able and those with EAL and SEND, are eager to learn and make excellent progress. The school has responded positively to the recommendation of the previous inspection that it should extend further the sharing of good practice in teaching and learning and pupils are strongly supported by the excellent quality of teaching with focused individual attention and high expectations for all. However, the quality of marking remains uneven. With the curricular provision providing an excellent foundation for learning, the school enjoys considerable academic success. Many pupils and some members of staff have yet to become sufficiently confident with all that information and communication technology (ICT) can bring to enhance learning. Excellent extra-curricular provision provides a wide variety of opportunities for pupils to flourish both in and beyond the classroom.
- 2.2 The quality of pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The school wholeheartedly fulfils its aims to inculcate strong moral values, to emphasise the value of individual integrity and to encourage its pupils to respect all faiths. Pupils readily accept responsibilities as school officers, ambassadors and sports captains. The school council and several other committees involving pupils elected by their peers allow pupils to make a significant contribution to the life of the school. Arrangements for pastoral care are excellent. The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. Parents are overwhelmingly positive in their views about boarding. Day pupils and boarders report that they feel part of a single, coherent school community. The school's anti-bullying policy, which encompasses cyber-bullying, is effective. The arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils are excellent. The school has acted decisively to implement the recommendations and requirements of the previous interim boarding inspection, strengthening its safeguarding policy and practice. Pupils including boarders report that they felt safe and happy. Parents value the pastoral support and individual attention given to their children.
- 2.3 The governance, leadership and management of the school are excellent. Governors understand their collective legal responsibilities and discharge these effectively, monitoring and supporting the senior leadership. A school development plan encapsulates a clear vision for the future direction of the school. The senior leadership promotes a clear sense of care and ambition for each individual pupil. Parents in interviews and in their pre-inspection questionnaire responses expressed considerable support for the school's leadership. Since the previous inspection the governors, working closely with a new headmistress and senior leaders, have overseen several improvements to the school's accommodation and educational facilities. Not all members of the middle management are fully engaged with all aspects of school improvement. The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent. Parents welcome the encouragement given to them to be involved in the school and they appreciate the quality of information provided about the school and about their children.

2.(b) Action points**(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- 2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Improve the quality of marking so that all assessment matches the best practice in the school.
 2. Develop the strategic plans for ICT to enable pupils and staff to make more effective and confident use of ICT throughout the curriculum.
 3. Ensure that all members of the middle management achieve the same high standards evident in most areas of leadership and management.

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 pupils are well educated in accordance with the school's aim to provide an education which nurtures intellectual curiosity and which is challenging and fun, balancing academic excellence with fulfilment of individual potential in the arts, sport and extra-curricular activities.
- 3.3 Pupils develop their understanding, knowledge and skills extremely well in almost all subject areas and in the diverse range of extra-curricular activities. Throughout the school, pupils are highly articulate and engage enthusiastically with each other. They listen well, read fluently, display excellent creative skills, and produce striking extended writing. Their numeracy skills are generally strong and their practical abilities are well developed. The confidence the pupils show is demonstrated in the ease with which they form logical arguments and work co-operatively. They take great pride in their presentation of work. Many of the academic activities are successful in promoting independent learning, as seen in geography research projects in Year 9 and in work done for the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) in Year 12. Participation in national academic competitions is high throughout the school and many pupils are successful in receiving recognition for their efforts, for example in UK Mathematics Challenge and Science Olympiads. Although some good examples were seen in information and communication technology (ICT), for instance through the creation of digital films, the opportunities for pupils to build their confidence in ICT are limited.
- 3.4 Physical skills are developed effectively through a wide range of sporting activities. Pupils succeed exceptionally well in a variety of extra-curricular activities, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, which make a significant contribution to their personal development with many pupils participating in the gold award each year. The individual and team successes beyond the classroom include large numbers of externally accredited music and drama awards, together with individual sporting successes at county and national levels.
- 3.5 In the three years to 2014 for which comparative data are available, GCSE results are well above the national average for girls in maintained schools, and above the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. IGCSE results are higher than both worldwide averages and overall UK averages. A-level results are well above national average for girls in maintained schools, and above the national average for girls in maintained selective schools.
- 3.6 Pupils make good progress, confirmed in part by the analysis of a standardised assessment system associated with A-level results for 2014. The levels of attainment at GCSE and A level indicate that pupils make progress that is high in relation to pupils of similar abilities including those with SEND or EAL. Sixth-form pupils are confident in exploring ideas which take them beyond the restrictions of their A-level courses. The pre-inspection questionnaire indicated the vast majority of pupils were pleased with their progress and the encouragement that they were given to work independently.
- 3.7 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They approach their work with enthusiasm and are very focused in their individual tasks. Pupils collaborate exceptionally well

during lessons. Their written work is consistently neat and well organised. Their behaviour in class is exemplary.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 The curriculum supports effectively the school's aims to provide an enriching and holistic educational experience in which high levels of achievement in the arts, sport and extra-curricular activities complement intellectual development, academic success and pastoral care. An overwhelming majority of parents judged in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire that pupils are offered an appropriate range of subjects. The curriculum is broad and balanced with a wide range of choices for both GCSE and A level. It suits the needs of all ages and abilities, including those with SEND and EAL.
- 3.10 The curriculum is reviewed, and adapted regularly by the school to ensure that it evolves to cover all areas as fully as possible and meets the needs of individual pupils. The most recent working party review has resulted in several initiatives including the introduction of Mandarin Chinese into the Year 7 curriculum, the opportunity for all pupils to study Latin in Year 9 and the introduction of GCSE physical education. ICT is taught in Years 7 and 8, preparing pupils for more advanced work in computer studies, an option which is planned for GCSE from 2016.
- 3.11 In the sixth form, in addition to their A-level subjects, pupils are afforded many opportunities to extend themselves beyond the curriculum. All sixth-form pupils take the English Speaking Board (ESB) qualification and around one third of Year 12 pupils also undertake the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), enabling them to develop excellent research skills and independence in their learning.
- 3.12 The personal, social, health and citizenship education programme (PSHCE) is well planned and comprehensive. It is delivered through timetabled lessons throughout Years 7 to 11. A Year 8 class was observed considering the importance of achieving a work-life balance at school. British values are promoted effectively through PSHCE and the curriculum, and extra-curricular opportunities such as the general election are used to illustrate the role of elections and the importance of a balanced approach to political issues in a democracy. A higher education programme prepares pupils well for their university applications both in the United Kingdom and overseas. The careers education programme is effective throughout the school.
- 3.13 An excellent variety of extra-curricular activities is available and the vast majority of pupils in their pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that they are able to join in a good range of activities. Some of the activities for the younger pupils are organised and most effectively led by sixth-form pupils. The music and drama departments provide the pupils with many opportunities for public performance. Pupils enjoy taking part in public speaking competitions as well as other national competitions. They participate in a variety of sporting activities and compete successfully against local schools, with some pupils competing at county and national level. Visits to local places of interest and residential trips further afield are popular, for example to Montpellier for intensive language work.
- 3.14 The school enjoys good links with the community. Visitors from the local community come to school to speak to pupils, for example for the recent Inspirational Women

event and become involved in activities such as the Flying Start Challenge. Sixth-form pupils undertake voluntary service at local homes for the elderly and others undertake voluntary service overseas. The Science Outreach programme is most successful in enabling pupils to share their passion for science with local junior schools.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.15 The quality of teaching is excellent.
- 3.16 High quality teaching is seen throughout the school and is effective in supporting the progress of pupils of all needs and abilities. The teaching is challenging, affirming and focused upon the individual needs of the pupil, typically setting high expectations for all, thereby making a very significant contribution to the pupils' learning and achievements.
- 3.17 Teaching is well planned and has clear objectives. The most successful lessons are delivered at a brisk pace and include a variety of tasks which enable the pupils to learn from each other as well as the teacher. The teaching rapidly identifies individual areas of concern and enables the pupils to develop self-confidence. Stimulating and open-ended questioning is used well and pupils are encouraged to discuss their work with each other. This promotes effectively the development of high-level thinking skills.
- 3.18 The teachers have excellent subject knowledge. They show a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils and are able to target the support they provide to ensure that pupils develop confidence. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, an overwhelming majority of pupils maintained that their teachers give them individual help when needed and help them to learn. Planning takes account of all needs and abilities. Pupils with SEND and EAL are offered excellent support within the classroom. On many occasions, the more able are stretched with searching questions.
- 3.19 Teachers offer a great deal of help beyond the classroom and, in their conversations with the inspectors, pupils were enthusiastic about the support they receive and the opportunities open to them to meet with teachers. Encouragement from teachers is a central feature of lessons and this enables pupils to make good progress. The teaching nurtures the pupils who are keen to learn and exemplary in their behaviour. This creates a very positive atmosphere in all classes. Teaching promotes tolerance and respect and is non-partisan in any discussion of political issues. Many teachers use ICT to good effect to enhance the learning and understanding of the pupils but do not always have an expectation that pupils will use it as a tool in their own learning. Some teachers lack confidence in the use of ICT.
- 3.20 Academic data is increasingly used to make teachers aware of pupils' abilities and progress, to inform lesson planning and to set targets for pupils, although these strategies are not yet fully embedded within all subjects. The previous inspection report recommended that the school should extend further the sharing of good practice in teaching and learning, particularly with regard to a more consistent approach to marking and assessment. Work is marked regularly and, in some subjects, detailed assessment is made with clear use of ambitious targets to aid improvement. Whilst there is significant evidence of progress in meeting this recommendation, particularly with regard to sharing good practice in teaching and

learning, more remains to be done so that all teaching reflects the most successful practice in marking and assessment evident within the school.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The school wholeheartedly fulfils its aims to inculcate strong moral values, to emphasise the value of individual integrity and the importance of equality of opportunity, to encourage its pupils to respect all faiths and to prepare them for life and work in a global society. The distinctive climate and ethos of the school sets the scene for pupils to grow and flourish so that they become confident, articulate, outward-looking individuals who appreciate their own worth and that of others. By the time they leave the school, they have an excellent standard of personal development.
- 4.3 The spiritual development of pupils is excellent. Pupils speak freely and articulately about their feelings and beliefs: they readily reflect on their spiritual and aesthetic experiences, demonstrating in many cases a deep appreciation for the non-material aspects of life. Philosophical discussion is encouraged in religious education as well as in other academic subjects. Learning in art and in music plays an important role in accentuating aesthetic sensibilities and the appreciation of beauty.
- 4.4 The moral development of pupils is excellent. Pupils actively distinguish between right and wrong and display a readiness to apply this understanding in their own lives. Older pupils act as positive role models for younger pupils. Pupils have respect for good conduct, justice and fairness. Through activities such as debating pupils shape their own moral sensibilities, reflecting upon their own behaviour and the consequences of their own actions for others.
- 4.5 The social development of pupils is excellent. Pupils develop personal and social responsibility both through leadership in posts such as school officers and house captains and also by means of their membership of the school council and the food, boarding and other school committees. Pupils contribute beyond the school and make a positive impact on the lives of those in wider local, national and global communities through charitable fundraising events, and voluntary service placements. They are also involved in outreach activities such as the science programme, through which senior pupils visit some twenty local state-maintained primary schools each year.
- 4.6 The cultural development of pupils is excellent. They understand, respect, accept and celebrate cultural diversity most effectively within the school community. One pupil remarked, "You encounter lots of people from different cultures: it helps you with the process of growing up." Pupils have a highly developed general knowledge and genuine respect for public institutions and services in England. They display knowledge, and appreciation of the wide range of influences that have shaped British culture and heritage and respect the fundamental English values of parliamentary democracy, the rule of law and liberty for the individual within a legal framework. Examples of this include a mock general election conducted during an assembly by pupils with the full range of mainstream political parties represented. Annual elections to the school committees, through which pupils are given a voice on issues such as catering and charities, highlight for them the importance of the democratic process.

- 4.7 Assemblies play a major role in providing opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their overall personal development. For example the Year 13 presentation to celebrate their last formal day of lessons provided an excellent display of self-confidence, humour and warmth of relationships between pupils and staff.

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

- 4.8 The quality of pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 The school fully meets its aim to provide pastoral care which promotes respect and tolerance and encourages each pupil to accept responsibilities for their own actions within a supportive community. Relationships between the staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves are warm and mutually respectful. The relationship between boarders and day pupils is harmonious. Day pupils are happy to board occasionally. Friendly rivalry amongst pupils is fostered, for example by house singing and dancing competitions that bring together day and boarding pupils.
- 4.10 A published set of agreed sanctions and rewards encourages good behaviour and promotes a very high standard of behaviour in all areas of school life. In interviews, pupils stated that they respond more to gentle encouragement and reproof than to formal punishments. The school has a thorough set of policies and procedures to discourage and to deal with bullying (including cyber-bullying). Pupils commented during interviews on the rarity of bullying.
- 4.11 There are many opportunities for pupils to contribute to the life of the school. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a significant minority of pupils maintained that the school failed to listen and respond to their opinions. During interviews pupils said that they do have many opportunities to make the school aware of their views and that the school responds to them. The school council and several committees, including charities, food and e-safety, allow pupils to give voice to their ideas and concerns, with many school initiatives arising directly from suggestions made by the pupils.
- 4.12 The dining hall offers a wide range of dishes and healthy options to cater for all tastes. Regular exercise is encouraged within the curriculum through physical education and games and also through the extra-curricular use of the superb sports facilities. The excellent PSHCE programme makes the promotion of health and wellbeing a major priority in the curriculum.
- 4.13 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational and physical access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.15 Careful attention is given to the safeguarding of pupils and the comprehensive policy for this is implemented effectively. The school has addressed the requirements and recommendations of the previous interim inspection. All teaching and non-teaching staff under-go the required checks prior to appointment and these are recorded meticulously on the single central register of appointments. Pupil records are kept centrally to facilitate ready access by those staff with responsibilities for pupil welfare. The medical centre has been relocated so that it is now separate from the boarding houses. Internet facilities on the campus have been improved providing easier and private access to family and friends for pupils.

- 4.16 All members of staff, governors and volunteers receive regular and effective safeguarding training which includes Internet safety awareness. Records relating to any concerns about pupils' welfare are stored carefully and suitably trained designated members of staff maintain close and appropriate contact with the relevant local agencies. A named governor is trained to an appropriate level in safeguarding procedures: this governor monitors closely those members of staff with specific responsibilities for safeguarding.
- 4.17 The necessary measures to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards are methodical. Fire risk assessments and training records are up-to-date and the procedures are well known and understood by pupils and staff. Risk assessments associated with the premises and with school activities and trips are comprehensive. Maintenance of the buildings and the site is very well managed.
- 4.18 The school's health and safety committee meets regularly and its deliberations and recommendations are considered and acted upon effectively both by the leadership and management and by governors. The provision for ill and injured pupils is very effective. Key members of staff are trained in first-aid. Pupils who are ill benefit from excellent medical support from qualified medical staff in a dedicated medical centre.
- 4.19 The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and correctly stored.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.20 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.21 Outcomes for boarders are excellent. Parents are overwhelmingly positive in their views about boarding. There is a powerful sense of community amongst the boarders and this manifests itself in a number of ways, notably through the mutual support they offer one another and through the evident and genuine pride and affection which pupils have for their school. Boarding plays a vital part in helping the school to fulfil its aim that pupils should leave the school as confident and courteous individuals evident through their articulate, mature and exceptionally polite demeanour.
- 4.22 The quality of provision and care in boarding is excellent. The resident housemistresses are committed, approachable and held in affectionate esteem by the pupils. They are supported by assistant housemistresses and resident tutors so that each house has a substantial and sympathetic adult presence at all times. The three well-maintained boarding houses are in excellent and attractive decorative order and are very well furnished and spacious. They offer a secure, warm, welcoming, clean and comfortable environment for all pupils. Computers and wireless access are available in all the houses enabling boarders to make contact with families and friends.
- 4.23 Noticeboards have a wealth of information for pupils about routines, healthy eating and who is on duty as well as providing essential advice on who to turn to if they need help. Routines are well established and meticulously followed. There are plentiful toilet and washing facilities which respect privacy. Fire drills are carried out regularly during boarding hours and the boarders know how to respond. The laundry systems work well. There is a boarders' shop where toiletries and stationery items are available. A minority of boarders in their pre-inspection questionnaires expressed concerns about the safety of personal property. All boarders have a

lockable drawer and are aware of the necessity to use it. All boarders interviewed indicated that there is a high degree of respect among the pupils for the property of others and for the fabric of the buildings.

- 4.24 New boarders of all ages, including the few junior school pupils who board alongside senior pupils, come from a variety of backgrounds, cultures and countries and are seamlessly assimilated through the comprehensive induction programme. The dedicated boarding house for the younger pupils enables boarding staff to focus on the individual needs of boarders and thereby to inculcate the school's standards amongst its pupils. As the pupils proceed through the school they are given greater independence. In their sixth-form years, boarders and day pupils live and work together in a single 'adult' environment allowing them to begin to prepare for life after school.
- 4.25 The medical centre is well staffed and pupils are well aware of how to contact a member of staff at night if they need to. Pupils have access to school counsellors and to external medical, dental and ophthalmic services: parental consent is always sought for external appointments. All medicines are appropriately stored and recorded and pupils who are unwell can be accommodated overnight in the health centre. Medical confidentiality is carefully observed and health records are detailed.
- 4.26 The school's dining hall is a spacious and attractive room and the variety and quality of the food provided is very much appreciated by the pupils. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses a large majority of pupils agreed that the food is good. Catering staff provide for a wide range of vegetarian, medical and religious requirements. The food provided was observed to be healthy, nutritious and of good quality. Drinking water is always available in the boarding houses and pupils may prepare their own snacks.
- 4.27 There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities available. Weekend risk assessed trips take place regularly. Parental permission is routinely sought for off campus activities. A minority of boarders indicated in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire that they were unhappy about the balance of free time and activities. All pupils interviewed were positive about the variety of activities available and the ability to opt in or out of them as they move up through the school. Boarders have many spaces in which to relax and these include small rooms where they can be alone if they wish. The extensive well-lit and effectively monitored school grounds provide outside recreational facilities.
- 4.28 Welfare and safeguarding for boarders is excellent. The school fully implements its safeguarding policy in all relevant areas including boarding. The graduate resident tutors receive safeguarding training at the beginning of the year and are also reviewed twice during their year in the boarding houses. All other boarding staff receive appropriate and regularly updated safeguarding training in line with school policy. They fully understand their responsibilities for the boarders in their care.
- 4.29 Members of the resident boarding house staff help to maintain the observed high standards of behaviour amongst the boarders. There is a strong sense of mutual support amongst boarders, both informally and also formally through older pupils who are trained as peer mentors. In interviews, boarders were unanimous in their views that there were many adults to whom they could turn in times of need and that bullying, including cyber bullying, was not an issue in the school. An overwhelming majority of boarding pupils reported in the pre-inspection questionnaires that they are happy and feel safe within their boarding environment.

- 4.30 The leadership and management of boarding is excellent. The principles and outstanding practice which direct the daily routines support fully the aims of the school. Communications between members of staff with responsibilities for boarders are excellent. There are frequent formal and informal meetings to ensure continuity of academic as well as pastoral care. There is an effective system of appraisal for boarding house staff.
- 4.31 At the heart of all the excellent practice observed is the sense of care for each individual pupil together with the desire continually to improve standards of boarding, and it is this overriding principle which drives the management of boarding. In interviews, the pupils said that the boarding experience has enhanced their independence, tolerance and understanding of others and that it has provided a firm foundation for their future adult life.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The governors are successful in supporting the overall vision of the school to provide the best possible academic, pastoral and social preparation for life and work within a global society. Whilst building upon the strengths and success of the school, the governors have developed a clear and ambitious vision for the future. Since the previous inspection, the leadership of the governors has helped to improve the standards of education whilst ensuring that the welfare and wellbeing of pupils is excellent.
- 5.3 Collectively the governors have a range of professional and educational experiences. With a supportive presence, they have an excellent insight into the school, meeting regularly with the senior management and leadership and also with other members of the school community. The governors exercise careful control of the school's financial resources. Seven committees monitor the administrative and educational work of the school and members of staff are invited to contribute to their meetings and report on a range of educational developments.
- 5.4 The governors' strategic vision is strong, articulated through the school development plan. Careful financial management is embedded within the ethos and educational ambitions of the school. Since the previous inspection, the governors have continued to extend the facilities and resources and supported the appointment of high-quality staff. School buildings are maintained effectively and any issues relating to health and safety are dealt with promptly. Governors provide excellent support for the head through both widely focused appraisal and regular contact.
- 5.5 The governors acting as a corporate body understand their legal responsibilities and maintain careful oversight of policies and procedures all of which are reviewed regularly. The welfare, health and safety of pupils are reviewed regularly and robust procedures are in place for safeguarding. An appointed governor for safeguarding maintains close and regular contact with the school and another has specific responsibility for boarding. The governors receive and review an annual safeguarding report and they receive appropriate training.

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

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.7 In their pre-inspection questionnaires, parents expressed very positive views about the school and its leadership, with the vast majority of them saying that the school is well led and managed and that they would recommend the school to other parents. These strongly supportive views were wholeheartedly reinforced during an interview with a group of parents. Pupils have been inspired by the leadership and management to take up their own leadership roles within the school, as school officers, ambassadors and sports' captains.

- 5.8 The senior leadership and management of the school is excellent. It is highly effective in enabling the school to meet its aim to provide the best preparation for pupils living and working in a global society. It is likewise successful in creating and sustaining a culture which fosters mutual respect and understanding. The integration of boarders and day pupils into a single coherent community is a priority for the leadership: this is achieved exceptionally well throughout the school and is especially evident in the sixth-form years. Liaison with the leadership and management of the junior school is regarded as a vitally important aim for the two schools to maximize the continuity of education of their pupils as they move from the junior to the senior years.
- 5.9 The senior leadership and management works closely and fruitfully with the governors in identifying the priorities for the school's development plan. There is a decided and productive unity of purpose. There is a marked commitment to continuous improvement as the school has sought to fulfil the recommendations of the previous inspection, namely to extend the sharing of good practice in teaching and learning and to develop strategies to monitor the consistency of approach between academic departments. With the active encouragement of the senior leadership, the heads of the four academic sections of the school undertake purposeful monitoring of colleagues' work through classroom observation and work scrutiny. However, the full impact of these initiatives has yet to be felt with some continuing unevenness in the detail of marking noted in the scrutiny of pupils' work and in tracking of pupil progress. Academic and pastoral managers take their responsibilities very seriously and discharge their duties effectively. Nevertheless, there is scope for the further sharing of good practice amongst the middle management of the school, especially in the context of changes to the school's pastoral structure which seek to strengthen the roles of form tutors.
- 5.10 Professional review is regarded as a key to school improvement. Governors and the head of another school formally appraise the headmistress. In turn, the headmistress appraises members of the senior leadership. Regular appraisals for all members of staff aim to promote their professional development and to focus their endeavours towards whole-school priorities during a time of change and renewal. Constructive criticism provides the basis for self-reflection and a clear direction for school improvement. Members of staff are provided with a comprehensive programme of training related to their curriculum areas and whole-school aspects. They participate in a wide range of internal professional development programmes including first aid, developing the use of tablet technology and support for pupils with SEND. The school also offers middle management specific leadership training through an extended leadership group which includes both academic and pastoral management. This group has developed a number of initiatives including a training day focusing upon cross-curricular issues and a review of the staff induction programme.
- 5.11 Welfare, health and safety procedures are efficiently managed. Procedures to safeguard all pupils throughout the school are rigorous and all staff, volunteers and governors are trained in safeguarding procedures, welfare, health and safety. Secure procedures to check suitability of staff, governors and volunteers to work with children are in place and appropriately detailed records are made in the central register. The need for stricter safeguarding controls identified by the previous interim inspection has been implemented most effectively.
- 5.12 The quality of links with parents is excellent. The school maintains constructive relationships with parents in accordance with its aims and in order to achieve

positive benefits for pupils. The senior leadership team is highly committed to ensuring that the school is more outward facing and the links between the school and the parents present as a significant strength of the school in this regard. The school provides parents with comprehensive information about the school, its policies and its work. The high quality of the school's literature, including a digital diary, is appreciated by parents who said in interviews that they valued seeing the reports of pupil success within and beyond the school.

- 5.13 Parents also appreciate the frequent reports and academic grade assessments they receive. They are able to meet with members of staff regularly to receive updates about their children. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses an overwhelming majority of parents expressed satisfaction with the information given to them about their child's progress.
- 5.14 Parents are welcomed into school to attend concerts, performances and sporting events across the academic year, with almost all parents positively acknowledging in their pre-inspection questionnaire responses the encouragement they receive from the school to involve themselves in events and activities. The parents' association for the school organises a range of social activities and fund-raising events. The association maintains close contact with the school through year group parental representatives.
- 5.15 The school has an appropriate complaints policy which is readily available to all parents. The complaints procedure is effectively managed with almost all concerns being resolved without recourse to the formal process. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses the vast majority of parents maintained that their concerns were handled well and their questions answered in a timely manner.

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