



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
CHURCHER'S COLLEGE**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Churcher's College

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

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| Full Name of School | Churcher's College |
| DfE Number | 850/6040 |
| Registered Charity Number | 307320 |
| Address | Churcher's College Ramshill Petersfield Hampshire GU31 4AS |
| Telephone Number | 01730 263033 |
| Fax Number | 01730 231437 |
| Email Address | headmaster@churcherscollege.com |
| Headmaster | Mr Simon Williams |
| Chairman of Governors | Mr Michael Gallagher |
| Age Range | 11 to 18 |
| Total Number of Pupils | 850 |
| Gender of Pupils | Mixed (511 boys; 339 girls) |
| Number of day pupils | 850 |
| Inspection dates | 20 to 23 January 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 February 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.

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.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chairman of governors and other governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited 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 George Fisher | Reporting Inspector |
| Mrs Val Barnes | Team Inspector (Former Head, ISA school) |
| Mr Steve Hardy | Team Inspector (Teacher, HMC school) |
| Mr Gerry Holden | Team Inspector (Former Headmaster, HMC school) |
| Mrs Dorothy MacGinty | Team Inspector (Headmistress, GSA school) |
| Mr David Morgan | Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school) |
| Mr Michael Streat | Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school) |

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Churcher's College was founded in 1722 as a non-denominational institution, moving to its current site in Petersfield, Hampshire, in 1877. It is a co-educational, selective, independent day school for pupils between the ages of 11 and 18. The junior school, which educates pupils between the ages of 4 and 11, is on its own site in Liphook, around eight miles away, and is the subject of a separate report. The school is an educational charity, with a board of governors acting as trustees and providing governance for both the junior and senior schools.
- 1.2 The school's aims are to develop the full academic, creative and sporting talents of its pupils, within the context of social awareness. They also stress the importance of developing self-esteem, moral values and leadership.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection the school has created the Richard Churcher Foundation to provide financial support for those who could not otherwise attend the school. The school has created a Community Action Service group (CAS) and introduced a lecture series for senior pupils. There have been a number of improvements to the school site including a new swimming pool opened in 2012 and a fitness suite completed in January 2015.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection, the school had 850 pupils, with 511 boys and 339 girls, including 213 in the sixth form. The school's ability profile, including that of the sixth form, is above the national average. Pupils come from families with a broad range of professional backgrounds. As a day school, the pupils are reflective of the local community, with a very small minority of pupils drawn from minority ethnic backgrounds. No pupil has English as an additional language. There are 17 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), mainly to help with dyslexia. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs or Education, Health and Care Plan.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

Senior School

| School | NC name |
|---------|---------|
| Year S1 | Year 7 |
| Year S2 | Year 8 |
| Year S3 | Year 9 |
| Year S4 | Year 10 |
| Year S5 | Year 11 |
| Year L6 | Year 12 |
| Year U6 | Year 13 |

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The pupils' overall achievement is good, as demonstrated by their levels of performance in public examinations and within lessons and extra-curricular activities. Pupils, including those with SEND and the more able, make good progress overall. The curriculum is broad and well matched to the needs of the pupils, offering suitable choice at all stages. It is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including within the creative and performing arts, sports and outdoor education. There are high levels of participation in the combined cadet force (CCF), The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) and in music, all of which provide effective links with the local community. Pupils demonstrate strong qualities for learning. They are willing, enthusiastic and make good listeners. Written work is usually well presented and organised, and they show creativity and imagination. The quality of teaching is good and is characterised by good subject knowledge, energy and enthusiasm, and a strong rapport between teachers and pupils. In a small number of cases, the teaching methods used have too narrow a focus on examination preparation and therefore provide insufficient challenge, limiting achievement within lessons, particularly for able pupils. The school has made progress in meeting the recommendations of the previous inspection, particularly in giving more opportunity for independent learning and to extend across all subjects the guidance for teaching pupils with SEND.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent. The pastoral systems provide a secure base within which pupils feel confident and can flourish. Pupils are friendly, happy and open in their relations with one another and with staff. Healthy living is successfully promoted for all pupils. Arrangements for welfare, health and safety are sound. When it was identified that, in the past, a number of staff had begun work before all of the necessary checks had been completed, the school was quick to take remedial action.
- 2.3 Governance is good and maintains a clear, strategic role in shaping the development of the school. Whilst governors discharge fully their responsibilities for educational and financial provision their oversight of the undertaking and recording of recruitment checks has not been sufficiently rigorous. Leadership and management are good; senior leadership is particularly strong and is supported by effective middle management. Links with parents are excellent and their endorsement of the school and its values was evident in the exceptionally positive responses to the parental questionnaires.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2014, and therefore it is required to:

- ensure that all recruitment checks, including of medical fitness, qualifications and references, are carried out on all staff before they begin work at the school and they are accurately recorded on a single central register of appointments [Part 4, paragraphs 18(2)(c)(ii) and (iv), 18(3) and 21 (3) (a) (iv), under Suitability of staff and proprietors; and, for the same reason, Part 3, paragraphs 7 (a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety].

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Use the good practice in the school to make sure that all teaching challenges all pupils.

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 Pupils are well educated in line with the school's aims to give pupils the widest range of experiences and opportunity to excel. Pupils demonstrate good levels of knowledge, skills and understanding in all subject areas. They are attentive listeners and fluent speakers, with older pupils demonstrating good levels of competence in foreign languages. Pupils read a wide range of texts with a good level of understanding; writing skills are strongly developed and pupils can write confidently and persuasively. Pupils are logical thinkers and analyse and synthesise arguments with increasing levels of sophistication. Creativity is highly developed, with excellent outcomes evident within drama, art and music. Pupils apply mathematical understanding confidently, and, in science, they show well-developed practical skills. Pupils are proficient users of information and communication technology (ICT), employing it effectively in a range of contexts. They show a high level of competence and commitment in physical activity. Pupils achieve notable successes in a range of competitions, including mathematical and science Olympiads. Around four-fifths of leavers progress to their first choice of university or college.
- 3.3 Pupils are fully involved, and achieve well, in a rich variety of extra-curricular activities. Significant numbers of pupils gain selection at regional and national levels in a range of team sports, as well as in individual pursuits, including slalom skiing and synchronised swimming. There are high levels of achievement in instrumental music or speech and drama examinations. Ambitious drama productions take place at both junior and senior levels. One choir has competed at national level; many ensembles and bands participate in regional festivals and competitions. There is strong participation in DofE, the CCF, and within outdoor education.
- 3.4 The following analysis uses the national data for the period 2011 to 2013, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Performance at GCSE has been above the national average for boys and girls in maintained schools and similar to that for maintained selective schools. Results in 2012 were well above the national average for maintained schools. Results in IGCSE English have been higher than worldwide averages. The A-level results have been above the national average for maintained schools and for maintained selective schools. Results in 2014 were broadly in line with those of previous years, with girls outperforming boys at A level.
- 3.5 Pupils with SEND attain at a good level and become confident learners across the curriculum, as well as contributing fully to extra-curricular activities. The more able, and the gifted and talented, attain at a high level, using their talents to inspire their peers in lessons and within enrichment activities.
- 3.6 The levels of attainment and standardised measures of progress indicate that pupils make progress that is good in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Pupils with SEND make good progress overall, as evident from an analysis of the school's data, and from individual case histories. This reflects the high quality of the individual support they receive, and the focused work provided in almost all of their lessons. The more able progress appropriately well from their starting points.

- 3.7 Pupils display a very positive attitude towards their learning, taking pride in their work and showing enjoyment in their studies. Their behaviour within lessons is usually excellent. Sixth-form pupils respond very positively to opportunities for independent learning. Pupils support each other very effectively when working collaboratively, and their work is generally well organised.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.9 The school meets its aim to provide a very broad curriculum through which pupils can develop their academic talents and excel in examination.
- 3.10 The curriculum covers all the requisite areas of learning, and provides an element of choice at every stage. Since the previous inspection, the school has broadened the curriculum to increase variety and to provide more challenge. For example, at GCSE, most pupils now study separate sciences, and the more able may take GCSEs in mathematics and music early. At A level, philosophy and government and politics have been introduced, as well as the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). A course in ICT leads to certification for all in Year 9, and there has been a successful introduction of computing at both GCSE and A levels. The provision of modern foreign languages is good, enabling pupils to study French and up to two other modern foreign languages at GCSE. The provision for creative and performing arts is strong at all ages.
- 3.11 The provision for pupils with SEND is good. Pupils requiring support are identified at an early stage, receiving highly effective individual support and specialist teaching where appropriate. Where necessary, the curriculum is modified appropriately to meet individual needs. Able pupils, or those who are gifted and talented, are also identified. Provision for the more able in Years 7 to 11 centres on a programme of lectures and a forum for debate. The school has identified the need to extend this to subject-specific activities outside the classroom.
- 3.12 Setting by prior attainment is used successfully in many subjects throughout Years 7 to 11 to maintain smaller class sizes for the less able, allowing the pupils to receive more attention. However, this occasionally leads to large class sizes elsewhere.
- 3.13 The provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is well-structured, and reflects the aim of the school to enable pupils to become confident and responsible citizens. The course ensures that coverage of political issues contains a balanced presentation of opposing views. The programme also helps them to prepare for adult life through leadership and teambuilding exercises, and, in the sixth form, through a life-skills scheme. The provision for careers guidance is strongly focused on support for university applications, supplemented by external careers testing in Year 11 and helpful links with parents and alumni.
- 3.14 The extra-curricular provision is excellent, including the area of adventurous activity. The Year 7 residential visit to an outdoor adventure centre, the outdoor survival, challenge and adventure scheme (OSCA), the CCF, DofE, national and international expeditions are all strongly and enthusiastically supported.
- 3.15 The provision for sport is strong throughout the school and has broadened since the previous inspection, enhanced by the addition of a new swimming pool. Opportunities for competition at all levels of ability are imaginatively fulfilled, for example through the Churcher's Development League. Within music and drama

there is a wide range of opportunities for all abilities and interests, with the majority of pupils being involved in one or more activities every week. The host of events throughout the year also provide many opportunities for pupils to perform to an audience.

- 3.16 Links with the community are very strong, with significant sums raised for charities each year. Locally, pupils offer their time by volunteering in schools, in sheltered housing schemes, and through the community service element of the DofE programme. Musicians perform at care homes and community events, and the school has close ties with regional, national and international charities and organisations.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.17 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.18 Throughout the school, teaching is successful in promoting the pupils' progress and in supporting the aims of the school. The high quality of teaching is based on a good understanding of pupils as individuals and of their existing levels of knowledge and understanding.
- 3.19 Strong and detailed planning is evident in most lessons, with short-term objectives being set clearly within an overall scheme of work. Homework and class-based tasks are carefully planned but sometimes have a narrow focus on examination preparation. Time is well managed with appropriate changes to the classroom activity ensuring that a good pace is maintained. Occasionally, when the lesson does not run to time or is rushed, pupils have limited opportunity to participate fully and their reasoning skills develop less quickly.
- 3.20 Teachers have strong subject knowledge which they present enthusiastically to their pupils, who then have the opportunity to explore and debate new ideas. This acts as a stimulus for increasingly sophisticated thinking. Teaching uses a wide range of methods, including model-making in science, prompted enquiry, visual displays and guided questioning to maintain the attention of the pupils. Pupils' levels of understanding are checked regularly through suitably targeted questioning. Some progress has been made following the recommendation in the previous inspection to promote more independent learning, and older pupils comment that they value such opportunities.
- 3.21 Teaching makes use of a wide range of learning resources, with effective use of ICT observed in design technology and science. The library provides an excellent facility for research and the promotion of reading for pleasure amongst pupils of all ages. Teaching is further enriched by the programme of visiting speakers, which includes many notable figures.
- 3.22 Effective structures and systems are in place to identify pupils with SEND and to communicate their needs to teaching and house staff. Teaching also enables pupils with SEND to be involved in the planning of their own learning. The identification of needs is clearly present within lesson plans, but in isolated cases these are not always followed in practice. The more able are usually challenged effectively in lessons with well-devised and varied activities which enhance their learning. However, in the very small number of lessons when they are not challenged sufficiently, progress is slowed because pupils lose interest.

- 3.23 Teaching benefits from excellent relationships with pupils who become articulate and confident, both orally and in writing. As a result, pupils work well on their own and in groups, readily sharing their ideas and knowledge. The good relationships between teachers and pupils are a key factor in ensuring that teaching promotes tolerance and respect, and is non-partisan in approach.
- 3.24 The marking of pupils' work is regular and made according to school and departmental policies. Most marking is clear, and comments on pupils' work are generally helpful and encouraging, whether given orally or on paper. The school has recently introduced a summary sheet to record homework and class test results so that pupils can easily review their progress. Teachers and pupils value this mechanism although it is not yet used consistently within departments or across all subjects. Teaching is effective in using information from standardised tests, and other assessments, to identify pupils who need additional support, and to set targets for them. Overall, teaching strongly enables and directs pupils' learning and leads to successful achievement.

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 the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The school is successful in meeting its aims for the personal development of the pupils, and in doing so, it promotes actively the relationship between the individual and wider society, for example through the PSHE course.
- 4.3 Pupils have excellent spiritual awareness and appreciation of the non-material aspects of life. They are mutually supportive and celebrate each other's achievements through house and whole-school assemblies, which promote a palpable spirit of togetherness, as well as enabling self-awareness and self-knowledge. Pupils, particularly those in the sixth form, show an emotional maturity through their experiences in PSHE, religious studies, philosophy and the performing arts. Pupils greatly appreciate the aesthetic impact of the many pieces of artwork displayed around the school, including the display of thought-provoking and moving commemorative ceramic poppies. Pupils, including those with SEND, develop self-confidence through their work in lessons, and also gain in confidence from the wide range of opportunities available to them, including in the extensive extra-curricular programme.
- 4.4 The pupils' moral development is excellent. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong, and are respectful towards one another and staff, and towards school rules and the law; they understand the over-arching character of the civil and criminal law of England. They show an understanding of the democratic process, and recognise their own responsibility for bringing about constructive change within school and the wider community. Pupils are able to challenge thinking in contemporary issues, for example when discussing abortion in religious studies and ethical behaviour in philosophy. Their sense of collegiality is further fostered through whole-school and house assemblies. They understand that there is a code for appropriate behaviour both within the school and in the country as a whole, respecting the rule of law and individual liberty. Their behaviour around school is usually orderly and respectful.
- 4.5 Pupils' social development is excellent. They feel nurtured and well supported by the staff, and are highly appreciative of the help and guidance which they receive. Pupils rise to the challenge of leadership and willingly taking on roles of responsibility when encouraged to do so. Pupils are made socially aware through the PSHE programme, gaining an understanding of the importance of healthy eating, bullying and human rights. Through their charitable efforts, pupils show consideration for others and sensitivity to the needs of those less fortunate than, or different from, themselves. They understand the importance of identifying and eliminating discrimination. They demonstrate a strong sense of social responsibility and generosity, working collaboratively in raising considerable funds. For example, recent fundraising events have included the sale of 700 ceramic poppies created by pupils with the help of the art department, and the 'spook-fest', organised by Years 7 and 8, to raise money for a children's cancer charity. Pupils develop a broad general knowledge of the public services and institutions of England. They also gain a good understanding of global, economic and political processes through the popular Model United Nations and whole-school European Parliament elections. Outside the school, pupils demonstrate care and consideration for others through community service and in visiting the elderly.

- 4.6 Pupils demonstrate good cultural awareness, valuing the achievements of both the Western tradition and of other cultures. This is enhanced by school trips, for example to the Victoria and Albert Museum, exchange visits and expeditions abroad. Interviews with pupils showed that the majority of pupils have a natural curiosity about the wider world in which they live. The cultural awareness of all pupils is enhanced through the study of other faiths and beliefs in religious studies and philosophy lessons, and through visits to places of worship, including the Hindu Temple in north London.
- 4.7 By the time the pupils leave school, they are well-balanced, thoughtful and considerate individuals with an excellent standard of personal development.

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

- 4.8 The quality of pastoral care throughout the school is excellent.
- 4.9 The school successfully fulfils its aim of providing high-quality care through a well-structured and forward-thinking pastoral system, based around the five school houses. Relationships between staff and pupils are highly positive. Pupils speak appreciatively of the commitment, sensitivity and dedication of the staff in handling pastoral concerns. Pupils know that there are plenty of adults to whom they may turn to for advice, including the chaplaincy and medical and counselling staff.
- 4.10 Pupils understand the need to take regular exercise within the extensive sports programme, and to develop healthy eating habits; a wide range of nutritious options is offered at lunchtimes. The PSHE programme offers additional advice on healthy lifestyles, and is challenging the resistance shown by some pupils to confront matters that may arise as they go through life.
- 4.11 The pastoral system actively promotes good behaviour and takes effective measures to guard against harassment and bullying, having proper regard to related matters of disability or difficulty. Misdemeanours are dealt with swiftly, including any instances of bullying. Pupils are confident that when it does happen, bullying is taken seriously and is addressed promptly. This view is endorsed by a study of school records and case histories.
- 4.12 The school has a suitable and recently updated plan to improve educational access for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 4.13 In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils expressed a view that sanctions and rewards were not awarded fairly. Inspection evidence, including discussions with pupils and a study of school records, shows that this is not the case. A minority of pupils also commented that the school does not listen to their views. However, discussions with pupils did not find this to be the case, and noted that the school does seek the views of pupils, both formally and informally. For example, the school put up artwork in the Year 11 common room following requests from pupils. A small minority of pupils also said that opportunities for taking responsibility were lacking. Inspectors agree that while this is sometimes the case within Years 7 to 11, there are ample opportunities for leadership at sixth-form level.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is sound.
- 4.15 The policy to safeguard the welfare of pupils is thorough, and had been updated to reflect current guidance. There are constructive links between the school and the local safeguarding children board. All staff receive suitable training in child protection, welfare, health and safety during induction and at regular intervals thereafter, so that they have a clear knowledge of their responsibilities. The training materials produced by the school are of high quality and include a proper emphasis on practical situations. There has been a failure in the past to ensure that, in all cases, all of the necessary checks on staff, including references, qualifications and medical fitness, had been completed prior to appointment. Once this was drawn to the school's notice, immediate action was taken, and, by the end of the inspection, nearly all of the required checks had been completed, and properly recorded. More recent appointments had been made correctly, and in line with current requirements.
- 4.16 There is an extensive health and safety policy which is cross-referenced to a range of other more specific policies. Within this, the recently revised fire policy clearly defines emergency evacuation procedures and fire drills are conducted regularly. A biennial report on fire measures is commissioned by the school and the school acts on the recommendations, although implementation of some relatively straightforward measures takes too long. Fire and electrical equipment is systematically tested and deficiencies are remedied. A health and safety committee, with governor involvement, meets termly to review such matters.
- 4.17 Risk assessments for activities and off-site visits are comprehensive and there are adequate risk assessments for the site itself, including measures to mitigate the hazard posed by on-site traffic.
- 4.18 There is good nursing provision for pupils, including for those with SEND, ensuring that illnesses and injuries are dealt with promptly and effectively. Several staff are qualified in first aid and any accidents are appropriately reported and recorded centrally. Good channels of communication between the medical centre and staff ensure that pupils' medical needs are well provided for.
- 4.19 Admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained and stored.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 Governance strongly supports the aims and ethos of the school and provides effective oversight. Governors are very committed to the school and have a range of professional backgrounds and relevant expertise which they readily share to the benefit of the school, for example within education, law and finance. The main board and the finance committee are highly effective in ensuring that governance discharges its responsibilities for academic standards, financial planning and investment in staff and resources. Their success is demonstrated by the many areas of strength in the academic development of the pupils, and especially so in their excellent personal development.
- 5.3 Governance exercises a thorough role in monitoring the operation of the school, and regular and thorough reports from school staff enable governors to keep fully abreast of developments. Whilst there is a formal annual review of the safeguarding policy, governors have not monitored sufficiently rigorously the procedures for checking staff prior to appointment.
- 5.4 Longer-term planning is reviewed at each termly Board meeting with a biennial 'away day' used to both shape and evaluate the strategic development plan. Many governors also have a clear understanding of the school. Some undertake structured visits, whilst several governors, as parents of current pupils, have a close knowledge of its daily workings. Comprehensive and sharp-minded discussion characterise the governors' meetings and ensure that there is always both support and challenge for the school.
- 5.5 New governors have a thorough induction programme, and many also undertake further training of relevance to their role on the governing body.

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 good.
- 5.7 Strong, inclusive and purposeful senior leadership ensures that the school's aims are met. A clear vision is articulated which reflects the distinctive ethos of the school with its emphasis on developing self-esteem and moral values amongst pupils, within a happy and caring environment. The clear educational direction which is mapped out is evident in the many successes of the school, and demonstrated through the very positive comments by pupils and parents about the quality of pastoral care and individual attention which is provided.
- 5.8 The senior management team works in a coherent and committed way, with weekly meetings which lead to effective actions in response to issues raised by staff. Parents and pupils also comment on the approachability and accessibility of the senior management team and the effective manner in which issues are addressed and resolved.

- 5.9 Academic leadership is strong and uses accurate self-evaluation effectively to identify areas for improvement, drawing upon the annual departmental reviews and pastoral matters identified by heads of house. This, alongside the regular monitoring of the work of middle managers, and listening to the views of staff and parents, ensures that account is taken of a wide variety of views when drawing up the school development plan. Development planning is thoughtful and identifies appropriate areas for improvement, making good use of human and material resources to support pupils.
- 5.10 Heads of house, strongly supported and directed by senior pastoral leadership, lead their teams very effectively, resulting in excellent pastoral care in the school. The use of both tutors and associate tutors, means that there is always effective provision for pupils' individual and collective needs.
- 5.11 The school appoints high quality teaching and support staff in order to meet its diverse aims. However, there has been a failure in the past to carry out the necessary pre-appointment checks on staff and volunteers, and to ensure an accurate central register of appointments. The induction of new staff is thorough and well managed by senior leaders, as is the appraisal system, which leads to an expectation of, and enthusiasm for, continuing professional development. Recent staff training, such as sessions on mindfulness and reforms to the examination system, enables teachers to focus on the immediate priorities and challenges faced by pupils. The effective support for pupils with SEND in almost all lessons reflects such training. There is currently a focus on improving the role of ICT in learning. Arrangements to train staff in their roles to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are implemented well overall, including within safeguarding.
- 5.12 A range of support staff, from those working as technicians, to catering, administrative and library staff, all play a vital role in the school's success and are an integral part of the school community. The work of the many parental volunteers is also extremely well managed and co-ordinated by senior staff.
- 5.13 The school has an excellent relationship with parents, carers and guardians. The high level of response to the pre-inspection parental questionnaire, and their highly positive comments, are a strong endorsement of the school's relationship with its parents. Parents comment particularly favourably upon the progress which their child makes, the range of opportunities which are provided and the way in which their child is looked after by the school.
- 5.14 The quality of information provided by the school for parents of current and prospective pupils is good. The website is informative and contains very helpful, general information which is updated regularly. In response to parental requests, the school now provides details of all subject-based and extra-curricular trips and visits, where possible up to three years in advance, to enable parents to plan accordingly.
- 5.15 The level of parental involvement in the activities of the school is excellent. Many parents act as volunteers across various spheres of school life, including helping with DofE and with the OSCA programme. Additionally, parents receive half-termly newsletters and invitations to musical and dramatic productions. They are also welcome to attend sporting fixtures. Parents also directly support pupils' education by contributing to the annual careers convention, providing work experience and helping to coach sports teams. Parents feel highly involved in the school and are very satisfied with the information provided by the school on their children's

progress. The grading cards and school reports provide detailed information about their children's attainment and effort, together with helpful comments as to what they need to do to improve.

- 5.16 Communication between the school and parents is excellent. Parents may use homework diaries or email staff directly, should they have any concerns. Parents say that complaints are handled sensitively and promptly and in line with school policy. A very small minority of parents expressed concern about the management of bullying within the school. However, inspection evidence, including discussions and a study of school records and pupils' files, shows that appropriate and quick action is taken in line with school policy.

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