



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

FELSTED SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Felsted School

Full Name of School	Felsted School
DfE Number	881/6009
Registered Charity Number	310870
Address	Felsted School Felsted Dunmow Essex CM6 3LL
Telephone Number	01371 822600
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Email Address	hmpa@felsted.org
Head	Dr Michael Walker
Chair of Governors	Mr John Davies OBE
Age Range	13 to 19
Total Number of Pupils	530
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (301 boys; 229 girls)
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 80
Number of Boarders	Total: 450 Full: 244 Weekly: 206
Inspection dates	24 Sep 2013 to 27 Sep 2013

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 September 2007. The previous boarding inspection, conducted by Ofsted, took place in June 2011.

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 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. Until September 2011, Boarding inspections were carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills.

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', '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 the chair of governors and another governor, 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 Peter Jones	Reporting Inspector
Mr Simon Corns	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Dr Philippa Davies	Team Inspector (Senior Teacher, HMC school)
Mr Ben Edwards	Team Inspector (Head of Sixth Form, HMC school)
Mr David Forster	Team Inspector (Director of Studies, HMC school)
Mr Neil Mason	Team Inspector (Director of Studies, HMC school)
Mr Nicholas Plater	Team Inspector (Deputy headteacher, HMC school)
Mr Matthew March	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Miss Sue Duff	Team Inspector for Boarding (Senior housemistress, HMC school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Founded in 1564 by Richard Lord Riche, Felsted is an independent co-educational boarding and day school, located within the village of Felsted in rural Essex, about 7 miles from the town of Braintree. It is a Church of England foundation, originally to provide education and alms houses for the Parish of Felsted. Its core values are expressed in Richard Lord Riche's Collate, focused on good learning and comforting others and by, 'example to styrr up many others to the like liberalitie'. The school's motto is 'Garde ta Foy' (guard your faith). The school is governed by a Board of Trustees who are the legal governors of the school.
- 1.2 The school's mission is to foster Felstedian characteristics in every pupil; a strong sense of community, encouraging and nurturing the development of personal faith in a climate of tolerance and respect, and creating truly effective global citizens. The school aspires to excellence in all aspects of school life. The school says that it seeks to send pupils out into the world equipped as lifelong learners, well rounded with cultural breadth and appreciation; ambitious and ready to accept life's challenges in order to draw out their own inner qualities; educated for social responsibility; able to demonstrate leadership skills and commitment to serve others; in possession of the emotional and intellectual skills and knowledge necessary to enter university and the world of work with assurance and confidence.
- 1.3 Most pupils board at the school and day pupils belong to two separate day houses (one for boys and one for girls). There are eight boarding houses, three for boys in Years 9 to 12 and three for girls of similar age, and two separate Year 13 houses, one for boys and one for girls. Since the previous inspection the proportion of girls in the school has increased; a new girls' house with capacity for 28 boarders was opened in 2010. The school has a scholarship policy and awards scholarships in a range of disciplines, as well as bursary provision.
- 1.4 The school has 530 pupils, with 251 boy boarders and 50 day boys, together with 199 girl boarders and 30 day girls. There are 233 pupils in the sixth form. There are 109 pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and 67 of these receive specialist learning support from the school. There are 78 pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) and 31 of these require language support. The ability profile of the school is above the national average with around two thirds having an ability that is at least above average. The ability profile of the sixth form is in line with the national average. Pupils represent a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds, with many receiving bursaries or scholarships, and boarders are from many different countries.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups throughout the school. This is the year group nomenclature used by the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Felsted School is a thriving and distinctive educational community which engenders great loyalty in pupils, staff and parents. The dedication and commitment of all staff ensures the welfare, personal development and achievement of pupils and the fulfilment of the school's aims. This is matched by the pupils' wholehearted and energetic involvement in the life of the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent; they are united in aspiration. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the impact the school has on their children's lives.
- 2.2 The pupils' academic and other achievements are excellent. Different groups, including those with SEND and EAL, make good progress and achieve very well in relation to their abilities. The wide-ranging and high-quality curriculum, which includes the Felsted Diploma, gives pupils opportunities which allow them to achieve in academic, sporting and creative areas as well as in the areas of service to others, an important part of the school's educational aim. Excellent teaching across the academic and co-curricular provision promotes high levels of achievement and reflects the focus the school has placed on the improvement of teaching since the previous inspection. The school continues to use this focus to promote consistency of excellence in its teaching provision.
- 2.3 Excellent pastoral care and thorough policies and procedures for welfare, health and safety, and the strong emphasis the school places on mutual respect and tolerance are key contributors to the pupils' excellent personal development. Boarding, with excellent outcomes, provision, care and leadership and management, plays a vital role in personal development and in enabling the school to meet its aims.
- 2.4 The excellent quality of governance reflects the meticulous care taken by staff and governors to ensure that the governing body is aware of and fulfils its duties, including those related to safeguarding and child protection. Inspirational leadership and management challenges staff and holds them stringently to account while giving positive and highly effective support in helping them achieve the school's aims. Staff give freely of their time and effort to help pupils succeed, and this is greatly appreciated by pupils and their parents, who fully support the school.
- 2.5 The school has met in full the points for improvement from the previous ISI inspection. There were no recommendations resulting from the Ofsted boarding inspection of June 2011.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.6 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.
- 2.7 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013.

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

- 2.8 The school is advised to make the following improvement:
1. Enhance the focus on excellent teaching to challenge every pupil to achieve beyond expectation.

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' achievement and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or difficulties (SEND), English as an additional language (EAL) and the most able, gifted and talented (AGT) show wide knowledge and understanding in all subjects in the curriculum and are very well educated in accordance with the school's aim to ensure that pupils are reflective, ambitious, life-long learners with high levels of emotional and intellectual skills and knowledge.
- 3.3 Standards of achievement have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils have excellent subject knowledge, are articulate, good listeners and able to write with fluency. The standard of their discussion and willingness to adapt ideas in the face of contrary views is notable; pupils argue cogently, reason maturely and apply new knowledge rapidly. Pupils also apply mathematical and scientific concepts and skills with confidence enabling them to interpret data. Pupils show high levels of creativity, as seen in drama, music and art and ably apply information and communications technology (ICT) to better their learning. They show exceptional levels of physical skill across a wide range of sports, athletic disciplines and extra-curricular activities.
- 3.4 Pupils of all ages have very well-developed skills of research, independent study and co-operative learning. The academically strongest are encouraged to enter national academic competitions and produce work of the highest award-winning quality. Membership of school societies which focus on higher-level intellectual activities is sought after and seen by pupils as something to which to aspire. High academic achievement enables a very high proportion of pupils to continue their education at universities of their choice.
- 3.5 The school's high academic standards are matched by outstanding levels of achievement in activities in team sports, and the creative and performing arts. The school has a deserved reputation for sporting excellence and pupils value the emphasis placed on success beyond the classroom. In sport they routinely succeed at county, regional and national level. Many pupils excel in instrumental music exams, choral ensembles and the orchestra. The standard of drama is very high. Active involvement in the combined cadet force (CCF), the Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE) and the many volunteering schemes means that the school's aim to foster leadership and service is well met.
- 3.6 The following analysis uses data for the years 2010 to 2012, the most recent three years for which data is available. Results in GCSE examinations have been above the national average for maintained schools. A-level results have been similar to the national average for maintained schools, and in 2010 were in line with the national average for maintained selective schools. International Baccalaureate (IB) results have been above the worldwide average and similar to the UK average. These results, together with standardised measures of progress and evidence from the pupils' work, indicate that they make progress that is good in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Attainment at A level, and standardised measures of progress indicate that pupils taking A level make progress in the sixth form that is good in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. In IB pupils make

progress which is high in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities, and this was maintained in 2013.

- 3.7 Excellent achievement by pupils with SEND reflects the effectiveness of their individual education plans, and the support they receive. All pupils receiving such support attained grades in GCSE mathematics between A*-C in 2013. Pupils with EAL make very good progress in developing their language skills and quickly access the full curriculum.
- 3.8 The pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent and contribute significantly to their excellent progress. They show an enjoyment of learning and celebrate the successes of their peers. They share ideas but are neither afraid to suggest alternatives nor reluctant to hear them. Pupils produce a high volume of well-presented work. In lessons the pupils are active, questioning and show intellectual curiosity. They work successfully in pairs, small groups and take responsibility for their own learning encouraged by the school's drive for positive self-criticism and reflection.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.10 The broad and well-planned curriculum, particularly for ICT, facilitates the attainment of high standards and is very well suited to the ages and abilities of the pupils. The curriculum together with a very extensive range of extra-curricular activities enables the school to meet its aim to produce pupils who are well rounded and ready to accept life's challenges.
- 3.11 The academic curriculum is thorough and well designed. On entry to the school at Year 9 pupils follow a wide-ranging foundation year of some 17 subjects, which include Latin, drama and music. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 remains broad, with an appropriate core of six subjects and a choice of four more from a comprehensive list, which includes physical education (PE) and ICT. The provision of a good personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme for years 10 and 11 meets the recommendation of the previous ISI inspection. The sixth-form curriculum is also wide ranging, offering IB or A level courses. A pilot scheme for the CVQO (cadet vocational qualification organisation) has been launched for pupils as an alternative to a third A level subject. Further breadth has been achieved by the recent introduction of A level Government and Politics.
- 3.12 The opportunity to use ICT is provided by the regular use of three well-equipped and up-to-date computer suites and sets of interactive electronic tablet devices for use within the classroom. Timely identification of the learning needs of pupils allows the well-organised EAL department to tailor support to the individual for as long as it is needed. The support for learning (SfL) department provides wide-ranging and effective assistance for SEND pupils, both for individuals and for lower sets in certain subjects, and contributes significantly to their excellent progress.
- 3.13 The quality of careers guidance, including work experience, is excellent and is an integral and valued part of the pupils' development. A number of societies and extension classes provide additional academic stimulus for AGT pupils.
- 3.14 The academic curriculum is extended by an excellent co-curricular programme, the main component of which is the Felsted Diploma. This ambitious and successful scheme, introduced since the previous inspection, unites the skills and

characteristics that the school intends its pupils to acquire in a programme which offers varied schemes. These include the CCF, comprising Army, RAF and Drum Corps and the DofE award. The pupils' self-awareness is greatly enhanced by the diploma, which includes a significant written personal reflection. Cultural awareness is further enriched by the opportunity to be involved with the MUN (Model United Nations) and the school's membership of the 'Round Square', a worldwide organisation for schools with a commitment to personal development and responsibility. These activities are very popular with pupils.

- 3.15 The provision of sport is excellent. All pupils participate three times a week in sport, and an additional fourth slot in the week is available for the school sports teams to receive additional expert team coaching. Other pupils further their physical development by participating in alternative sports such as swimming or dance. Pupils have good opportunities to participate in non-sporting options such as cartoon drawing or cookery.
- 3.16 The provision for music is very good; the pupils enjoy a wide variety of musical activities. High quality drama is provided through theatre technology and drama skills workshops, well supported by expert staff and a well-attended theatre. Well-equipped art studios provide pupils with excellent creative opportunities.
- 3.17 Links to the local and wider community are excellent and include work with local charities. Pupils gain an understanding of global issues such as the challenges facing disadvantaged children through their involvement with a charity which works with children in India. Abundant opportunities for pupils to participate in excursions at home and abroad broaden their horizons.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.18 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.19 The school fulfils its aim to foster lifelong learning and independent learning among its pupils whose attitude towards lessons and teaching beyond the classroom is wholly positive.
- 3.20 The recommendation in the previous inspection report was to improve the quality of teaching and assessment through rigorous evaluation of what is taking place and providing appropriate guidance where needed. This has clearly been achieved. Excellent progress has been made thanks to a sharper emphasis on target setting and consistency of marking. At its best marking gives clear pointers as to how to improve further. Some excellent examples of effective use of self-assessment were seen and imaginative use was made of interactive electronic tablet devices. This enables pupils to work at their own pace and to undertake appropriate research while the lesson progresses. A detailed tracking system, which monitors the pupils' individual attainment against initial test data, has had a positive impact on pupil performance. Their individual learning is effectively overseen by academic tutors.
- 3.21 Much teaching is highly successful in stimulating the pupils' intellectual development. Good subject knowledge is evident in many subjects. Particularly stimulating teaching is a feature of modern foreign languages in the sixth-form IB programme. Appropriate, sometimes large volumes of work are set for all pupils, which enables them to consolidate their knowledge, undertake independent research and make excellent progress, particularly in the sixth form. Clear targets are set in all year groups and pupils understand how these will encourage them to make further progress. Routinely, they refer back to these in order to ensure they

are considered when the next item of work is done. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire the vast majority of pupils said that they were making good progress and that they found their work interesting.

- 3.22 There is much evidence in the pupils' books of commendation stickers being used to encourage and motivate them to make further progress. In many cases rapid progress is made and all groups of pupils, including SEND and EAL, respond positively to dynamic and supportive teaching. Much teaching promotes challenge and debate amongst pupils. In some teaching, while encouragement is always given, there is less challenge to take pupils on to the next level of achievement. Occasionally pupils are passive in class, though always attentive and eager to learn. As a result progress is slower.
- 3.23 Well-organised and carefully planned teaching, with frequent use of electronic media, including film clips, maintains the interest of pupils and thus their behaviour is always of the highest standards. This allows pupils to co-operate and support each other, demonstrating courteous respect for differing opinions.
- 3.24 Staff give clear explanations so that pupils know exactly what is required of them. Enthusiasm and excitement are engendered in many lessons. Staff ensure that subject-related terminology is correctly used by pupils and are comfortable guiding debate even of complex moral questions, for example in religious education, to ensure progress is made.

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 fulfils its aim of encouraging pupils to develop their personal beliefs and values, in a climate of tolerance and respect. The pupils are courteous, friendly, helpful, and are emotionally mature for their age. The school's Christian ethos and the work of both the chaplaincy and the religious education department support the pupils to become reflective, and to develop spiritual and ethical awareness and sensitivity to their own beliefs and those of others. The strongly ingrained culture of pupil surveys and self-evaluation, the results of which are taken seriously and are used to improve practice, enables pupils to reflect on their own strengths and areas for development and creates an expectation that they will make a positive difference to the world.
- 4.3 Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. Year 9 pupils were able to explain the 'bystander effect', the role of those who stand by and do nothing when wrong is being done, in relation to the Holocaust, but also to situations that might arise in their own lives. There is an ethos of service both within school and to the wider community. There are numerous pupil-led charitable and fund-raising activities. Many pupils develop themselves and serve others through the DofE award, and some do voluntary service abroad through the 'Round Square'. Pupils develop political and economic awareness in a balanced and non-partisan way. The Model United Nations and trips to Parliament raise the pupils' awareness of political institutions.
- 4.4 Felsted pupils have a high level of social awareness and responsibility which is effectively supported by the well-developed PSHE programme. This has an emphasis on developing emotional intelligence and understanding the components of good personal relationships. Pupils are keen to take on leadership roles, for example as prefects, in their houses, on the School Forum, in the CCF, and in sport. Pupils support and encourage each other very effectively. The older pupils show a genuine concern and desire to help younger ones, and a large number of pupils volunteer to be trained as peer-counsellors.
- 4.5 Pupils show a strong cultural awareness supported by friendships between pupils from different nations, the study of world religions, cultural evenings and overseas visits. Excellent aesthetic awareness develops as a result of the many opportunities to participate in dramatic, musical and artistic activities.
- 4.6 By the time they leave the school pupils are confident and self-aware, show a very good understanding of their responsibilities and have an excellent standard of personal development.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 The school is very successful in fulfilling its aim to support all pupils. They appreciate the compassionate and well-judged encouragement from which they benefit. A meticulously designed system of care allows each house to enjoy autonomy in developing its own identity while any serious concern is managed in accordance with whole school policy so that consistency and monitoring are

maintained. General data is conveniently accessible through the on-line management information system (MIS) whilst more sensitive matters are recorded in housemasters' files. Since the previous inspection stronger collegiate management has been developed without compromising the individual character of each house. Senior leaders with responsibility for pastoral care oversee the implementation of policies to address serious issues, and allow housemasters to manage individual cases according to their knowledge of each pupil's needs. Small tutor groups and the generosity of staff giving their time ensure that each pupil's talents and needs are fully recognised. They are aided by a practical and stimulating programme of tutorial support which includes frequent opportunities for reflection through 'Talking to Crocodiles', an on-line personal assessment system. The Upper Sixth boarding houses expertly aid pupils in managing their transition to full independence.

- 4.9 Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Older and younger pupils help each other enjoy the school fully through mutual respect. Sixth-form pupils are well trained for senior roles. The school is highly successful in promoting good behaviour and guarding against bullying. Misconduct and bullying are rare in the view of those pupils who were interviewed and by those who completed the inspection questionnaires. Where misbehaviour does occur, the sanctions imposed are fair and proportionate. Pupils of all age groups say they feel safe and secure at the school, and this was unanimously endorsed by responses to the parental questionnaire.
- 4.10 Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy living through extensive participation in the diverse sporting activities available, with every effort made to offer different opportunities for physical exercise which every pupil can enjoy. All pupils eat school meals which offer plenty of choice and emphasise healthy options whilst retaining appeal to teenagers. They learn about healthy lifestyles in science lessons and PSHE lectures organised through the Medical Centre.
- 4.11 In their questionnaire responses a small minority of pupils' said that the school did not ask for their opinions but this assertion was not supported by pupils during the interviews inspectors held with them. Evidence shows that the school makes every effort to ensure that the pupils' views are taken into account through House and prefect meetings. The whole school forum is supplemented by consultation of many more specific groups through surveys. Matters raised by pupils are addressed seriously and have resulted in beneficial changes including in catering which now more fully matches the pupils' appetites. Pupils with SEND are very well supported by the school.

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

- 4.12 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.13 The school's aims, to provide a strong sense of community and a climate of tolerance and respect, are very well met by its excellent arrangements for welfare, health and safety. A very strong safeguarding culture is in place in the school. Safeguarding arrangements are most thorough and have close regard to official guidance. The arrangements are specifically designed to take careful account of the context of the school with its mixture of boarding and day pupil provision. Training of staff in safeguarding is of high quality and provides them with a strong awareness of the importance of safeguarding arrangements and their implementation. Records relating to safeguarding are detailed and comprehensive, and are well-coordinated to ensure that the school has a clear overview of the whole child. The school is in

close contact with the relevant authorities in relation to safeguarding and child protection. The school's strategy for safe recruitment is meticulously implemented with very careful consideration of the pupils' safety. The recruitment process is monitored with care, and detailed attention to requirements, by senior staff and by governors.

- 4.14 Suitable welfare, health and safety policies are available to parents and are reviewed regularly by the school and by governors. The school site is carefully monitored and fire risks and other hazards receive close attention from designated professional staff. Risk assessments for activities in school and visits out of school are carefully prepared. Pupils themselves show very good awareness of the importance of being responsible for their own welfare. A well-equipped Medical Centre for pupils who are ill or injured fully meets requirements and qualified nurses are in attendance. Admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and correctly stored for the previous three years.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.15 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.16 Boarders have an excellent standard of personal development, reflecting the school's aim for boarding to develop a strong sense of community and a climate of tolerance and respect. A powerful sense of community is engendered by boarding and boarders value highly the friendships they make. They say that peer 'buddies' and a peer counselling arrangement gives excellent informal support in each house. Boarders say that their shared experience of boarding strengthens friendship and gives it deeper roots. Overseas boarders mix well with their UK counterparts and this contributes very effectively to the development of their confident use of English. Boarders are happy in the school and feel well looked after. They are confident and outgoing, engaging readily with one another, staff and visitors. Boarders take an active role in the school's extensive programme of charitable work in the local community. The high quality of the boarding experience provides excellent preparation for their life beyond school and successfully promotes independence and a sense of responsibility. Prefects within houses are carefully trained to work with and support younger pupils.
- 4.17 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. Boarders are very well accommodated. Houses have been built or converted over a period of time and so although the quality of accommodation varies, in all cases the houses are bright, well decorated and well furnished. In response to a recent fire, the school rapidly introduced excellent quality temporary accommodation. For younger boarders, small dormitories comfortably accommodate the maximum of six pupils, while most older boarders have single studies. Common rooms are well furnished with television and computer facilities, and houses offer wi-fi access. All pupils have the opportunity to brighten their areas with photographs and posters and some internal corridors are equally attractive. All house noticeboards display both routine school information as well as the national welfare contact numbers. Houses are clean and all boarder laundry is done within the house usually within 24 hours. All medical matters are dealt with well by the central school Medical Centre and boarders who are unwell are accommodated there. The Medical Centre is staffed day and night, dispensing all medication to the pupils; a daily surgery is held. All medical information is kept securely and comprehensively on the patient tracker electronic system.

- 4.18 There is a very wide range of out-of-school activities available to all boarders and a varied Sunday programme is also on offer. All new boarders have a thorough induction programme. Boarders report that there is always someone, both amongst the pupil body and adults, to whom they can turn when they are worried or concerned. In interview boarders were clear that bullying was not an issue at the school but were aware of the formal pathways available to support them if needed. Boarders are able to communicate freely with their parents by telephone. A small minority of boarders expressed dissatisfaction, in questionnaires, about the quality of food. These views were not supported by boarders in interview, nor by inspection evidence. The 'nine o'clock feed', when food is delivered nightly to houses by the catering department, is very popular throughout the school and helps to ensure boarders are well fed.
- 4.19 Care for boarders' health, welfare and safeguarding is excellent. The safeguarding policy is robust and implemented in all relevant areas of the school. There is a healthy inter-house competitive spirit stemming from the pride the pupils have in their houses, for example the 'House Shout' (singing) competition. Resident house staff in each boarding house, and the day matrons ensure high quality care for boarders. Boarders say there is consistency in disciplinary matters between houses and view the application of sanctions as fair.
- 4.20 Boarding houses are very well led and effectively managed at senior leadership level and highly effective policies and procedures underpin their operation. Boarding provision is constantly evaluated and there is good and highly effective planning for improvement. A successful appraisal system for housemasters and mistresses is in place and is being developed further. The school's approach to boarding allows a degree of independence in the management of individual boarding houses which allows them to develop unique and distinctive characteristics whilst ensuring a common framework of policies and procedures. Houses are well staffed and run smoothly and efficiently. House staff work effectively as a group, ensuring coherence and collaboration and meet with senior staff weekly to deal with routine matters and fortnightly to discuss common issues and more strategic matters. All house staff have relevant training and excellent opportunities for boarding-related professional development. The mentoring of newly appointed house staff is highly effective and ensures that staff are well prepared for their roles. Each house also has two resident assistants and a team of tutors who oversee the development of a small group of boarders. The school's MIS system allows the resident house staff to keep good records and to gain a rounded view of each boarder. Effective communication between academic and house staff supports the boarders' curricular, co-curricular and pastoral needs effectively. Contact with parents, either through the house tutors or the house master or housemistress, is good.

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 governing body provides very effective support and challenge to enable the school to meet its aims. The governing body has a very clear and effective oversight of its responsibilities including those for financial planning and the provision of resources. It is well aware of its safeguarding responsibilities and carries out a suitable annual review of safeguarding and child protection policies and practices. The governing body works closely with the school, making good use of careful recordkeeping by senior leaders to ensure that child protection, safeguarding and safer recruitment fully meet requirements. Governors are drawn from a suitable range of professional backgrounds which gives the school valuable access to advice and guidance in drawing up and fulfilling its strategic plans. Well-established, regular reporting mechanisms allow governors to monitor the school and hold it closely to account. There is frequent and well-managed contact between the governing body and senior leaders, and governors are regular visitors to the school. A well-documented system of sub-committees responsible for specific areas ensures that governors can give detailed attention to their responsibilities. Arrangements exist for externally conducted appraisal of the head.

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

- 5.3 The quality of leadership and management is excellent.
- 5.4 Leadership and management successfully promote the school's aims, including the aspiration to excellence in all aspects of school life.
- 5.5 The structure of the senior leadership team, which draws on considerable experience and expertise, including in bursarial and administrative areas, ensures excellent and perceptive oversight of all aspects of school life. At all levels, those with leadership and management responsibilities evaluate their own work accurately and the planning that results is focused closely on the key areas of school development. They fully understand and support the aims of the school and are very effective in promoting them. The implementation of policies including those related to safeguarding of pupils is consistently thorough. A clear educational direction has been established over recent years through inspirational leadership at all levels and this has strengthened the school's identity, further refines the development of its aims, and supports the excellent achievement of pupils. There is highly effective liaison between the senior leadership and the governing body which helps the school to meet its aims. Staff are highly motivated and effective as leaders and team members throughout the school. The excellent Teacher Learning Communities initiative provides an additional focus for teachers as they review their methodology with colleagues and teachers from other schools in a formal way.
- 5.6 In the day and boarding houses, pastoral management is particularly effective in promoting the core values of the school and this has a strong impact on the excellent personal development of pupils. Academic departmental management is highly effective. Heads of department have a clear role in leading as well as managing their departments and are held closely to account. Lesson observation is

at the core of all professional development reviews and the positive impact of this on the quality of teaching, as well as self-evaluation for staff, has been further enhanced by the recent introduction of peer observation. The many initiatives in place to further develop staff include programmes to support middle managers as leaders and work focused on sharing best practice in teaching. These meet the recommendation of the previous inspection. The school ensures that suitable and well qualified staff are appointed and that they are given training in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. An integral part of the leadership and management of the school is a well-established dialogue between the senior leadership team and other staff which allows for quick and effective responses to issues raised.

- 5.7 The school's relationship with the parents, carers and guardians is excellent. The school is very successful at including and involving parents. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about the school, expressing very high levels of satisfaction with regard to the care, safety and happiness of their child. Parents have had input into the school's strategic direction, including the formulation of the school aims. There is a very active Parents Consultative Group and parents frequently engage with the life of the school, taking the many opportunities available to get involved such as attendance at concerts and sports matches.
- 5.8 Information sent to parents at all levels is clear and highly informative. Specific information sent to parents about option choices and general academic issues is very detailed and thorough. Electronic communication is increasingly the means of contact to and from parents and this works well. The website is very informative with all required material available. Parents are further informed with up-to-date information through the school's social networking accounts. The very wide range of excellent published material is of high quality and suitably informative for both parents and prospective parents. Regular magazines and newsletters are available. Clear and helpful grade descriptors for reports are also included.
- 5.9 Reporting to parents on their children's progress is carried out termly. Reports are detailed and informative at all levels. Grades are given for the use of study time, behaviour, engagement and independent learning as well as achievement. Targets are clearly set and parents are encouraged to become involved with monitoring and review. Parents' evenings are well attended, with additional individual meetings held as and when necessary.
- 5.10 The school has an appropriate complaints procedure. Parental concerns are few but those that do occur are dealt with promptly and in accordance with the published procedure.

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