



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

KING'S SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

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| Full Name of School | King's School |
| DfE Number | 933/6004 |
| Registered Charity Number | 1071997 |
| Address | King's School Plox Bruton Somerset BA10 0ED |
| Telephone Number | 01749 814200 |
| Fax Number | 01749 813426 |
| Email Address | office@kingsbruton.com |
| Headmaster | Mr Ian Wilmshurst |
| Chair of Governors | Mr Wayne Thomas |
| Age Range | 13 to 18 |
| Total Number of Pupils | 331 |
| Gender of Pupils | Mixed (207 boys; 124 girls) |
| Number of Day Pupils | Total: 103 |
| Number of Boarders | Total: 228 |
| | Full: 228 Weekly: 0 |
| Inspection dates | 09 Oct 2012 to 12 Oct 2012 |

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in October 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) (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 deputy chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and a church service. 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

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mrs Patricia Taylor | Reporting Inspector |
| Ms Margaret Burnet Ward | Team Inspector (Head, HMC school) |
| Ms Sue Court | Team Inspector (Former Head of Professional Development, ISA school) |
| Mrs Sue Lucas | Team Inspector (Senior Teacher, Society of Heads school) |
| Mr Graham Wigley | Team Inspector (Head, Society of Heads school) |
| Mrs Flora Bean | Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding |
| Mr Alan Sturrock | Team Inspector for Boarding (Assistant Head, HMC school) |

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 King's School, situated in the small Somerset town of Bruton, has a long history. It has been educating boys ever since it was founded in 1519 by the Bishop of London, with a gap from 1529 to 1550. It was one of the first schools to have a governing body, the records for which date back to 1560. In the 1950s it sold its copy of the Magna Carta, raising funds to build the boarding accommodation, Lyon House. Girls were admitted to the sixth form in 1969 and since 1999 the school has been fully co-educational.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection the senior management team has been restructured, a new chair of governors has been appointed, and more girls have joined the school. A programme of refurbishing the boarding houses has begun in all houses, with work completed in two. The curriculum has been expanded at both GCSE and A level.
- 1.3 Pupils are allocated to one of seven mixed-age boarding houses, three of which are for girls. Pupils can select their boarding house and all have distinctive characteristics. Through the boarding community the school seeks to provide a warm and supportive environment that values individuals, embeds its Christian ethos and supports the pupils' spiritual and academic development. The school aims also to create a culture of high expectations and to achieve excellence in sport and the performing arts.
- 1.4 The school's ability profile is above the national average. Overall, pupils in Years 9 to 11 have an ability that is at least above average, with few being below average. The ability profile of the sixth form is in line with the national average, with a wide spread of abilities represented.
- 1.5 At the time of the inspection there were 331 pupils in the school: 207 boys and 124 girls. Of these, 103 were day pupils and 228 were full boarders. Most pupils are of white British origin, and the remainder are from other European countries and from the Far East. Most are from professional backgrounds. Of the 103 pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 53 receive additional support from the school. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. In total, 43 pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), of whom 40 receive additional help from the school.
- 1.6 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.

| School | NC name |
|-------------|---------|
| Third Form | Year 9 |
| Fourth Form | Year 10 |
| Fifth Form | Year 11 |
| Lower Sixth | Year 12 |
| Upper Sixth | Year 13 |

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The quality of academic and other achievements is excellent. Pupils are very well educated in accordance with the school's aims; they aim high and achieve well, both in academic examinations and in the multiplicity of extra-curricular activities in which they are encouraged to participate. Those with EAL or SEND are well supported, enabling their achievements to match those of others in the school community. Additional challenge for the most able and a wide range of examinations, from the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) to the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and International GCSE (IGCSE) English as a Second Language, enable all to reach their potential. Many individuals excel in sport and the creative arts, and the school has a wide range of teams, competing well against other schools, with some pupils succeeding at regional and national levels.
- 2.2 The personal development of pupils is excellent. Pupils are confident, relaxed and articulate. The spiritual and emotional development of the pupils is supported by the school's Christian ethos. They are sensitive to the needs of others, quickly offering help to those around them. They support and encourage one another, celebrating successes and empathising with those in difficulty. All pupils are attached to a boarding house, affording a warm, family atmosphere that enables their personal qualities to develop. Here, pupils have many opportunities to take on responsibility and give help or guidance to others. The many excellent features of boarding enhance the education pupils receive. However, pupils expressed concern about the food provided.
- 2.3 The quality of governance and of leadership and management is good overall, with some excellent aspects. All of these areas benefit from careful strategic planning, self-evaluation and a willingness to undergo additional training to enhance performance. There is a clear, shared vision, with strong leadership driving the school's improvement. The school responded well to the recommendations of the previous inspection. However, not all monitoring of policies and procedures has been sufficiently rigorous; some regulations concerning appointments have not always been met.

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 2010, and therefore it is required to:
- ensure that all List 99/ISA barred list checks are carried out before those requiring them start at the school, and ensure that the school receives all the necessary information from a supply agency before a member of staff from this agency joins the school, and then enters this on the central register of appointments [Part 3, paragraphs 7.(a) and (b), and 8.(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety, and National Minimum Standard 11, under Child protection; and for the same reason, Part 4, paragraphs 19.(2)(a) and (e), 20.(2)(a), (d) and (e), 22.(3)(b) and (g), and (5)(a)(i) and (ii), (b) and (c), under Suitability of staff and proprietors, and National Minimum Standard 14.1, under Staff recruitment and checks on other adults].
- 2.5 The school does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2011, as described above.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Improve procedures at all levels of governance and leadership and management for ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements.
 2. Take steps to address the pupils' concerns about food.

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 Pupils are very well educated in accordance with the school's aims to continue to raise the academic expectations of them all and for them to achieve excellence in extra-curricular areas.
- 3.3 Levels of knowledge, skill and understanding are very strong across the curriculum. Pupils speak confidently, demonstrating the ability to reason, argue cogently and question in order to test theories and develop understanding. Literacy skills are at times exceptional, as in extended writing tasks in ethics and religious studies. Mathematical skills are applied confidently across the curriculum, for example in physics, and pupils demonstrated good skills in information and communication technology (ICT) during the inspection in a range of subjects, including English, design technology and food science.
- 3.4 Pupils work well independently, for example when developing ideas in art at A level or investigating areas of personal interest for the EPQ, but also when working with the whole class, challenging or offering ideas as occasion demands. Pupils work effectively in pairs or groups, often learning from one another, for example in a Year 12 geography lesson when they researched one topic before teaching it to another member of the class.
- 3.5 Extra-curricular achievements are often considerable. In the past three years, pupils have represented Great Britain at group level in gymnastics, skiing, acrobatic skiing and equestrian events. Others have represented their counties in hockey, rugby, netball and golf. The biathlon team has qualified for the national finals on two occasions, and the school is represented in the national badminton squad. Pupils regularly gain distinctions and merits in music and drama examinations, and gain awards in national mathematics competitions.
- 3.6 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2009 to 2011. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results at GCSE have been above the national average for maintained schools. The IGCSE results have been above the worldwide average in history and sciences; in mathematics results were similar to the worldwide average in 2011, but below this average in 2009 and 2010. Results at A level were similar to the national average for maintained schools in 2009. In 2011 results were similar to the national average for maintained selective schools and in 2010 above this average. These levels of attainment, along with inspection evidence and the nationally standardised progress data available, indicate that at GCSE pupils make appropriate progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability. At A level, the data and other inspection evidence show that pupils' progress was in line with the average for pupils of similar abilities in 2009 and good in 2010 and 2011.
- 3.7 Data shows that the achievements of pupils with SEND or EAL are in line with those of other pupils in the school, reflecting teaching that is informed about, and meets, their needs. Those who are very able achieve high grades in the EPQ examination.
- 3.8 Pupils take their work seriously. They come to lessons expecting to work hard and quickly focus on the given tasks. They are attentive, demonstrating a clear desire to

succeed. Their files are well kept and carefully organised and, in both the library and in boarding accommodation, pupils were observed applying themselves diligently to their work. On leaving the school, most pupils continue into higher education, with applications covering a wide range of courses and universities, including many that are highly competitive.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.10 Throughout the school the curriculum is broad and challenging, spanning a total of 19 subjects in Year 9; it covers and exceeds all the required areas of study and enables pupils to experience a stimulating range of options. In response to recommendations from the previous inspection, ICT has been brought back into the Year 9 curriculum and an online ICT qualification is being introduced across the school, for both staff and pupils.
- 3.11 At GCSE, pupils select three options from a wide choice, in addition to the compulsory core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Even within these core subjects there is choice, enabling pupils to study separate or combined science courses; and either English, English language or IGCSE English as a Second Language, according to the particular needs of individuals. In the current academic year, the provision of modern foreign languages has increased from three to four, and there are two classical languages on offer. A separate additional qualification is available for those requiring additional challenge in mathematics. Pupils with EAL or SEND do not have their curriculum studies compromised by the additional support they receive; rather, this is offered as an additional lesson.
- 3.12 The choice of subjects in the sixth form is also broad, catering for individuals' needs, including, for pupils with EAL, the IELTS qualification, and there is good provision for creative subjects, including art, music, and drama and theatre studies. The A-level curriculum has recently expanded to include psychology, German and food science. Sixth-form pupils also have an enrichment programme to complement their studies and they are offered the EPQ. The school has thus responded positively to the recommendation in the previous report that additional challenge should be provided for the most able pupils.
- 3.13 Personal, social, health and economic education in Years 9 to 11 covers a range of key topics such as drugs, sex education and finance. In the sixth form, guidance on entrance to higher education is provided as part of the careers education programme. A careers convention is held at which representatives from universities, members of the local community and former pupils of the school share their professional experiences with the pupils and offer advice about careers. Pupils regularly worship in the local church and support the wider community through charitable activities within the school. Links with an Indian orphanage make pupils aware of the needs of those less fortunate within the international community.
- 3.14 The extra-curricular programme is a strength of the school, offering around 80 activities to pupils, and catering for interests as diverse as yoga and the Combined Cadet Force, as well as an extensive range of musical activities. Some of these activities lead to formal qualifications, but many are simply enjoyed for their own sake. All pupils take part in activities and questionnaire responses indicate that this programme is very highly valued by pupils and parents alike.

- 3.15 The curricular and extra-curricular provision contributes significantly to the pupils' achievements and personal development, helping all pupils to identify and develop their particular strengths.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.16 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.17 The high quality of teaching enables the school to fulfil its aim of raising the academic expectations of all pupils. Lessons are well planned, with many making very good use of a variety of strategies and resources. Steps have been taken since the previous inspection to ensure that good ideas are shared, and systems are in place, both formally and informally, to do this.
- 3.18 Teaching demonstrates a clear understanding of pupils' individual needs, with some lessons demonstrating excellent practice in matching work to the pupils' different abilities, through different worksheets, tasks or questions. Teachers are well informed of the needs of pupils with SEND or EAL, through regular training and pupils' individual learning plans, to ensure that provision matches individual need. The high quality additional teaching which these pupils receive, either in individual lessons in the learning support unit or in group lessons in the EAL department, provides exemplary support. The extension work observed in a Year 9 biology lesson and a Year 9 music lesson, and the individual teaching in Year 13 classics, all demonstrated that those who are particularly able also receive appropriate teaching.
- 3.19 Active participation and interest in lessons are clearly fostered by the use of a variety of teaching styles, reflecting progress since the previous inspection. Opportunities are provided for pupils to work individually, in pairs or in groups. Independence is also encouraged, leading to lessons in which teachers allow pupils the space to work alone.
- 3.20 Teaching demonstrates excellent subject knowledge and, in the best lessons observed, a clear enthusiasm for the subject, which inspired the pupils. Teachers make use of a range of resources and encourage pupils to use ICT, which shows a positive response to a recommendation in the previous inspection. Innovative use is being made of software applications in GCSE ethics and religious studies, and departmental blogs in geography and economics.
- 3.21 Marking is regular and, at its best, provides clear and helpful advice about how to improve. However, there are inconsistencies across subjects, both in this and in the use of resources that are well matched to pupils' needs. Assessment data is available to teachers, and targets for pupils are set using both standardised data and professional judgement. However, schemes of work sometimes show inconsistencies in the use made of this information when planning work.

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 Its Christian ethos is of paramount importance to the school and the spiritual development of the pupils is a key aim. Pupils exhibit a high degree of maturity in terms of their ability to relate to and support others. They are at ease with themselves, their peers and with adults. They reflect on spiritual matters through active involvement in church activities and through courses such as Time 2 Think in Year 9. The influence of the chaplaincy is greatly felt and highly regarded by all. Pupils are encouraged to explore their faith, whilst respecting the faiths of others. Spiritual development is also enhanced by involvement in the rich creative life of the school, which fosters an appreciation of music, drama and art through many productions, concerts and displays.
- 4.3 The moral development of pupils is reflected in their clear awareness of right and wrong. Pupils understand the moral values underpinning the school community and espouse them actively. They are courteous and sensitive to the needs of others, and behave very well. Their social development is also very strong, with a firm sense of belonging within the boarding community. They are keen to take positions of responsibility to enable these communities to flourish and know other members of their house very well, quickly offering help to those who need it, whether practically or emotionally. Their care for one another extends to the classroom, for example when a spontaneous round of applause celebrated the success of others. Pupils take responsibility for the welfare of their peers, for example in training as mediators to whom others can turn. The team of prefects contributes significantly to the smooth running of the school community and they provide excellent role models for younger pupils.
- 4.4 Pupils' social and cultural development is enhanced by activities that extend beyond the school community, such as a programme in India which extends their understanding of life in this country. Closer to home, support for good causes such as the air ambulance raises awareness of local needs. Pupils' social awareness is also developed through voluntary work in local institutions and in projects concerned with the town's heritage. The international mix of pupils within the school exposes all pupils to aspects of different cultures, which greatly assists their personal development. Through events such as the Oktoberfest, and the Keep Calm and Have a Cupcake tea, pupils inform one another of local cultural traditions, to the benefit of all.
- 4.5 The strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils underpins their excellent personal achievements.

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

- 4.6 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.7 The school's pastoral arrangements play a central role in helping all pupils to attain high levels of personal development. Staff from all areas of the school work very effectively together, often using email to communicate with one another and with parents. The integration of day and boarding pupils is a true strength of the school community and gives all pupils access to support in the boarding houses, as well as in the main school.
- 4.8 Pupils have a good range of adults to whom they can turn, including an independent therapist. Trained pupils are also available. Relationships amongst the pupils and between the pupils and staff are excellent. Pupils demonstrate a high level of mutual respect and care for one another.
- 4.9 All pupils take regular exercise, making the most of the school's extensive sports and extra-curricular provision. In responses to questionnaires, both parents and pupils expressed dissatisfaction with the food available. The choice and quality of food during the inspection were adequate. Healthy food is available as an option, though it is possible for pupils to opt for less healthy combinations of dishes. A food committee is in place and is well managed, with evidence of action points and responses from the catering department. However, pupils told inspectors that they continue to be unhappy with the food provided.
- 4.10 The school has effective procedures in place to promote good behaviour and pupils reported that there is little incidence of bullying. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND, which is reviewed every year and amended where necessary.
- 4.11 In their questionnaire responses, pupils raised a concern that the school does not always take account of their views. Inspectors found a number of mechanisms for pupils' views to be heard. These include school councils, house meetings, roll call sessions and two tutorial sessions each week, when pupils can have individual time with a tutor to discuss academic or pastoral matters. Minutes and action points raised in formal meetings are made available in the boarding houses.

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

- 4.12 The contribution of the arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.13 An appropriate child protection policy is in place, supported by regular training for the child protection officer and deputy every two years, and all other staff every three years. Staff are trained as soon as possible after commencing work at the school. The school has responded well to the recommendation made in the previous report. However, procedures for the safe recruitment of staff have not always been followed rigorously.
- 4.14 The school has comprehensive risk assessments for fire and other hazards on site and these are scrupulously maintained, reviewed and updated. Estates staff respond rapidly to any reported concerns. Regular fire drills are held and all staff have received appropriate fire safety awareness training. Pupils are regularly advised about safety at the main road and steps are taken to ensure safe travel to and from church.

- 4.15 The provision for pupils who are ill is excellent, with a fully staffed medical centre in the main school and matrons in the boarding houses. A considerable number of relevant staff are trained in first aid and the requirements of pupils with particular needs fully considered and met.
- 4.16 Since the time of the previous inspection, the school has made improvements to the accuracy of the attendance registers and this has a high priority in the boarding houses. These registers are now accurately maintained and correctly stored, as are admission registers.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.17 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.18 The quality of outcomes for boarders is excellent. The highly positive and inclusive ethos of each house ensures that boarders thoroughly enjoy their boarding experience. From the moment they arrive, boarders are given help to settle in and make new friends, and are encouraged to join in. Boarders are confident, polite and at ease with one another and with adults. Relationships with house staff and other members of the school community are mature and a true strength; as a result, all pupils feel welcome. New boarders are warmly welcomed and pupils with EAL are well supported. The integration of boarders and day pupils in the houses contributes to very positive relationships throughout the school. This results in a true sense of community spirit.
- 4.19 Excellent opportunities to take on roles of responsibility and leadership within boarding ensure that boarders are well prepared for the world beyond school. Each house has its own head of house and deputy, house council and house meetings, as well as a team of prefects who willingly support staff in the smooth running of the house. The house mediators play an equally significant role in supporting others, contributing to the positive and inclusive atmosphere. The sense of community is developed through encouraging one another and celebrating events, whether a birthday, sporting success or academic effort. The school's aim to encourage the Christian ethos of care and support for others is truly reflected in the relationships between staff and pupils. This is wholly inclusive, irrespective of faith or beliefs, and is at the heart of the pupils' positive experience.
- 4.20 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. House staff work very diligently, together with matrons and non-resident house tutors, to ensure that each day runs smoothly. Pupils are well known in each house and well supported. Record keeping for pastoral matters is up to date in each house, and academic records are kept on the school's information management system to ensure that all house staff, including non-resident tutors, are well informed. The encouragement and commitment of house staff ensure a harmonious and tolerant house, where all pupils have the opportunity to be themselves and to develop at their own pace. This creates an excellent community spirit within each house.
- 4.21 An extensive programme of activities is offered in the evenings and at weekends. Boarders can take part in a wide variety of music, art, drama and sporting options, the chaplaincy always has an open door, and weekend outings and trips are arranged to broaden horizons. There is also opportunity in each house for independent time and quiet time, providing a balance within boarding life.
- 4.22 Boarding accommodation is comfortable and secure. The quality and decoration of the accommodation vary between houses, as was noted in the previous inspection

report. A refurbishment programme is in place, and improvements have been completed in two houses and begun in the others. All houses have large common room areas, suitable recreational facilities and adequate washrooms. Each house has clear year group areas for Years 9 to 11, and those in Year 13 have individual rooms. Boarders can personalise their own areas and this gives each house its own identity. There are adequate kitchen facilities in all houses. The quality and range of meals vary, and a large percentage of questionnaire responses indicated dissatisfaction with these. Inspectors found the choice and quality to be adequate.

- 4.23 Communication between the medical centre and individual houses is good, and documentation carefully kept up to date. Individual care plans are provided if required. The medical centre provides 24-hour medical care from well-qualified nurses who give due attention to all needs, including for any medical conditions or injuries. They fully support house staff in providing good care for boarders. Pupils have ample opportunities to contact family and friends, and each house provides a computer with telecommunication software for international boarders. The school communicates regularly and effectively with the parents of boarders and follows up any concerns immediately. Particular attention is given within houses to acknowledge individual effort and to celebrate success.
- 4.24 Arrangements for boarders' welfare and safeguarding are good. All but one of the National Minimum Standards are met, the exception relating to aspects of appointment procedures noted elsewhere. All relevant policies are in place and are fully implemented and reviewed to ensure that they reflect the most effective practice. All staff involved in boarding are trained appropriately in safeguarding procedures and understand fully their responsibility for those in their care. Boarders report unanimously that they feel safe at school and have a number of house and school staff to whom they can turn should the need arise. Boarders have access to helplines that are clearly displayed on notice boards and have the contact details of an independent listener. There is always a member of the boarding staff on duty in the evenings and at weekends, and boarding staff are well supported by non-resident tutors on a rotational basis. Pupils enjoy the support given by non-resident staff in their houses and reported in discussion that there is always someone to help with a tricky homework problem.
- 4.25 The use of computers and mobile telephones is carefully monitored for the safety of boarders. Registration procedures are clear. Staff are vigilant in following up any absences and in knowing the whereabouts of pupils at any given time. In responses to questionnaires, parents expressed appreciation of the support and care of their children. Behaviour in boarding houses is very good and in discussion boarders reported that there is little, if any, bullying in the school. Any such behaviour is dealt with swiftly and effectively by house staff. This ensures that a harmonious atmosphere prevails.
- 4.26 Leadership and management within the boarding houses are excellent. Boarding house staff clearly support one another. The oversight of boarding within the school is good. Clear duty rotas between boarding staff and non-resident staff ensure that effective supervision is in place to support boarders. The regular monitoring of boarding procedures is less clear and house documentation for daily routines varies in quality between the houses. For example, not all houses collate their pastoral and academic information in one place. Recent new house appointments have enhanced support to the boarding community, which is greatly appreciated. Weekly briefings and regular boarding staff meetings ensure that boarding staff are informed and remain up to date with matters of policy and procedure. Risk assessments for

all house matters, outings and trips are in place, and there are policies for any eventuality or emergency, which are implemented when required. The school communicates regularly and effectively with parents. All boarding staff have regular opportunities to take part in continued professional development.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The governance of the school is good.
- 5.2 Governing arrangements have been restructured since the previous inspection, with the establishment of a risk management committee and the merger of the education committee with that of the preparatory school. A new chair of governors has been appointed. The range of governors' committees maintains a good oversight of the different areas of the school, and enables the governing body to support its development effectively. A structured programme of meetings keeps governors informed of current issues within the school, and development planning is in place to help the school to progress further. Rapid progress, for example in the refurbishment of boarding houses, has resulted from this effective strategic planning.
- 5.3 The governing body has ensured that the points raised in the previous inspection report have been dealt with, resulting in a more coherent approach to school improvement.
- 5.4 Governors are committed to executing their roles effectively and attend training sessions to develop their skills. They fully support the headmaster and work in close partnership with him in the development of the school. Those governors who live close to the school regularly attend school events and meet staff and parents. Although governors review policies and procedures, this has not always been sufficiently rigorous, leading to some gaps in meeting requirements for checks when making appointments.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is good overall.
- 5.6 Strong and highly effective leadership provides clear vision and direction to the school, helping it to fulfil its aim to achieve excellence within the framework of a supportive Christian ethos.
- 5.7 At all levels, those with management responsibilities implement whole-school policies and monitor their effectiveness. In response to the recommendation in the previous inspection report, there is now a coherent approach to school improvement. Managers work co-operatively, sharing information and expertise to maintain the impetus of improvement through self-evaluation. The management of subject areas is generally successful, although there are variations in the approach to marking and the planning of work. Systems to evaluate and track pupils' performance have been developed, resulting in a good understanding of how best to provide support, as well as providing valuable information to help in self-evaluation.
- 5.8 The school has been successful in recruiting and retaining suitable staff, although appointment procedures have not always been followed in full. Staff are suitably trained for their roles, including in child protection, and welfare, health and safety. The very well-organised appraisal system identifies additional training needs, which are met and monitored through a good system of staff development.

- 5.9 Links with parents, carers and guardians, commended at the previous inspection, are outstanding and a strength of the school. The school maintains very constructive links with parents and in their questionnaire responses, parents reported that any concerns are dealt with effectively. Inspectors found that where concerns occur they are handled in line with the school's stated policy and procedures. Parents expressed a very high level of satisfaction with the school; all who responded to the questionnaire commended the information the school provides for them. All respondents also expressed that their children are treated as individuals, and parents of boarders all agreed that the boarding experience is well organised and that it enhances progress and personal development. Almost every parent who responded would recommend the school to others.
- 5.10 Parents have very good opportunities to become involved in the life of the school, and expressed appreciation for this in responses to the questionnaire. The termly activities booklet and the events programme keep them very well informed of forthcoming events and activities in which their children can participate, and those which they can attend. They can join the Friends Association, attend concerts and take part in clay pigeon shooting. The school's website provides a very comprehensive amount of information for parents of current and prospective pupils, and this is supplemented by high quality printed brochures covering a range of school issues, for example the chaplaincy. The annual publication of *The Dolphin* showcases the many experiences pupils enjoy at the school and the range of opportunities provided further afield.
- 5.11 Detailed reports on pupils' academic progress are provided twice a year, with shorter reports and grade sheets supplying information in the other term. Parents are also invited to meetings to discuss their children's progress, with opportunities provided at other times, as requested, to suit the needs of individual families. These systems ensure that all parents are kept fully informed of their children's education.

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