



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
THE KING'S SCHOOL ELY**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

The King's School Ely

Full Name of School	The King's School Ely		
DfE Number	873/6005		
Registered Charity Number	802427		
Address	The King's School Ely Barton Square Ely Cambridgeshire CB7 4DB		
Telephone Number	01353 660700		
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Email Address	reception@kingsely.org		
Principal	Mrs Susan Freestone		
Chair of Governors	Mr Jeffrey Hayes		
Age Range	3 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	986		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (574 boys; 412 girls)		
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	69	5-11: 260
	11-18:	657	
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	760	
Number of Boarders	Total:	226	
	Full:	226	Weekly: 0
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection Dates	11 Mar 2014 to 14 Mar 2014		

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) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended. 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.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Education (DfE) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

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', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors and four other governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Elizabeth Coley	Reporting Inspector
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Mr Paul Bevis	Team Inspector (Headteacher, ISA school)
Mrs Sandra Clements	Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, GSA school)
Mrs Susan Court	Team Inspector (Former Head of Professional Development and Training, ISA school)
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Mr Michael Higham	Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mr Geoffrey Hill	Team Inspector (Former Director of Music, HMC school)
Mr Gerry Holden	Team Inspector (Headmaster, Society of Heads school)
Mr John Orr	Team Inspector (Senior Teacher, HMC school)
Mrs Deirdre O'Sullivan	Team Inspector (Former Head of Junior School, GSA school)
Mrs Anne Price	Team Inspector (Former Staff Development Co-ordinator, HMC school)
Mr Stephen Pugh	Team Inspector (Senior Deputy Headmaster, HMC school)
Mrs Helen Skrine	Team Inspector (Headmistress, IAPS school)
Mr John Tolputt	Team Inspector (Former Head, HMC school)
Mrs Jill Wood	Team Inspector (Former Head of Department, IAPS school)
Mrs Myra Rodgers	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mr Martin Ford	Team Inspector for Boarding (Senior Teacher, IAPS school)
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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The King's School Ely is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils from the ages of 3 to 18. It was founded around 970 AD, although it dates back to 673. The school received its Royal Charter in 1541. In 1945, it took over the Ely Cathedral Choir School, and became fully co-educational, admitting girls, in 1970. The school is run as a charitable trust, administered by a board of governors, all of whom are also trustees. It operates within four sections. King's Ely Acremont and Nursery (KEA) is set a short distance away in the town from the rest of the school and houses the youngest pupils, from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to Year 2. King's Ely Junior School (KEJ) educates pupils from Years 3 to 8, King's Ely Senior School (KES) comprises Years 9 to 13 and King's Ely International (KEI) caters for pupils in Years 10 and 11 who come from abroad and who wish to be immersed in English language and culture. Some of these pupils stay on at KES for Years 12 and 13. The main site, where KEJ, KES and KEI are based, is set in the heart of Ely in Cambridgeshire and has strong links to the cathedral.
- 1.2 In September 2013, the head of King's School Ely became the principal and a new head of the senior school was appointed. Since the previous inspection: the post of director of boarding has been created, along with the director of sport, two enrichment co-ordinators and senior posts within the support staff. The Old Palace, the former home of the Bishops of Ely in the centre of the town, has been acquired and converted for use as a centre for Years 12 and 13, boarding accommodation for girls from overseas, classrooms and additional dining facilities. A new arts centre has opened, along with a full refurbishment and expansion of the drama facilities and an extension to the school hall. A new science laboratory in KEJ has been provided and there have been improvements to the play area, and some refurbishments have been carried out in the junior boarding houses.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, there were 986 pupils on the roll, 574 boys and 412 girls. In total, 69 children up to the age of 5 were in the EYFS and 65 pupils were in Years 1 and 2. There were 195 pupils in Years 3 to 6, and 657 were in Years 7 to 13, of whom 152 were in Years 12 and 13. A total of 226 pupils board full-time at the school in 8 houses set around the town, and a further 14 pupils board on a flexible basis. Of these, 132 come from overseas, representing nearly 40 nationalities, although the highest numbers come from China and Russia. Approximately one out of every four pupils comes from an ethnic minority background. Of the 188 pupils who have been identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 1 has a statement of special educational needs and 122 receive specialist learning support. One hundred pupils are learning English as an additional language (EAL) and receive support. They are prepared for different examinations in English according to their proficiency in the language. The majority of pupils come from families with a professional or business background, and day pupils travel up to 30 miles to attend the school. The ability profile of KEJ, KES and KEI up to the age of 16 is above the national average. The ability profile of the pupils in Years 12 and 13 is slightly above the national average, with a wider spread of abilities than found in Years 7 to 11.
- 1.4 The school aims to provide and maintain a culture of integrity and trust in which childhood and youth are honoured, and people of all races, faiths and backgrounds feel valued and respected, within the context of a secure, stable yet dynamic environment, rooted in Christian values. It seeks to promote self-knowledge, develop skills for life, provoke high expectation, achievement and strong self-esteem, and meet individual needs, whether educational or pastoral, allowing each

pupil to find a voice. The school strives to promote personal and social responsibility for its own, the local and wider communities, to encourage pupils to embrace the challenges and opportunities life presents, thereby enhancing their personal development and leadership skills, and to foster creativity and independence of mind, inciting a continuing love of learning. It sets out to encourage pupils to cherish the heritage and history of their city and school, and to live the truths for which they stand.

- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school fulfils its aims extremely well. Pupils' achievements are excellent; their academic progress is significantly strengthened by their successes in co-curricular activities, with an extremely wide range of pursuits available through the Ely Scheme adventure opportunity, clubs, visits and residential trips. High levels of academic achievement begin in the EYFS, where pupils make very good progress towards the Early Learning Goals. The setting makes excellent provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. Throughout the school, excellent achievement is supported by the pupils' exemplary behaviour, their outstanding attitudes to learning, and their commitment to developing their knowledge, understanding and skills across all subjects. Particularly high standards are attained in the creative subjects of music, drama, photography, sport, textiles and fine art. An excellent curriculum is provided across the four sections of the school, with a wide range of subjects available for examination courses in Years 10 to 13. Pupils at KEI have extremely good opportunities to extend their qualifications in English and develop their language skills in other subjects. Excellent teaching overall enables pupils to develop their strong literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, creative and physical skills. However, marking does not always give helpful comments to pupils or advice about how to improve. Very good progress has been made on the recommendations from the previous inspection of KEA and KEJ: to ensure the greater use of information and communication technology (ICT) as a teaching strategy to support learning, to encourage pupils to take more responsibility by providing opportunities for independent learning and to develop further the libraries as learning resources.
- 2.2 The personal development of the pupils from the earliest ages is excellent and is supported by excellent pastoral care and good attention to their safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Arrangements for maintaining a safe working environment are managed extremely well and given a high priority. Pupils' spiritual development is extremely strong, nurtured through the links with the cathedral; the choral tradition is a particular strength of the school. Pupils throughout the school are confident, very articulate and mature for their ages. Their moral and social development is high and their relationships with each other and with staff are outstanding. Their cultural awareness within the school's diverse community is excellent. They have a strong awareness of responsibilities to others less fortunate and they fully appreciate their own cultural heritage. The boarding provision is good, and makes an excellent contribution to pupils' personal development and care.
- 2.3 Governance, leadership and management are good, ensuring that the school's aims are fulfilled. Governors have overseen strong financial provision for the school, for example by acquiring and refurbishing the Old Palace, which includes boarding accommodation for the female pupils at KEI, fulfilling a recommendation from the previous inspection. They are well informed about the challenges and successes of school life and they are strongly involved in strategic development. However, their monitoring of the school's compliance with regulatory requirements has not been sufficiently rigorous. The school has not been fully comprehensive in following some of its recruitment processes, although all current staff have enhanced disclosures and barred list checks. Senior leadership is strongly committed to the pupils' excellent achievement and personal development, and this vision is expressed in a clear educational development plan. Management processes are largely carried out extremely well, and there are clear links between the development plan, in-service

training, and professional development and review. In the EYFS, the recording of children's achievements is inconsistent between the two year groups. Links with parents are excellent.

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 recruitment checks, concerning the barred list check, medical fitness, right to work in the UK and references, are carried out on all staff before they begin work at the school [Part 4, paragraphs 19.(2)(a), (b)(ii) and (e), and 19.(3), under Suitability of staff and proprietors; and, for the same reason, Part 3, paragraphs 7.(a) and (b), and 8.(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety, National Minimum Standard 14.1, under Staff recruitment and checks on other adults, and National Minimum Standard 11, under Child Protection].

2.5 The school does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013, as described above.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action point, the school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Devise a stronger system for the governors to monitor and evaluate the school's compliance with regulatory requirements.
2. Ensure that marking is more consistently used to give pupils specific and helpful advice on how to improve their work.
3. Improve the consistency within the EYFS of recording children's achievements by sharing the most effective practice in the setting.

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 All sections of the school fulfil their aim to promote self-knowledge and develop skills for life. Expectations are high, resulting in excellent achievement and strong self-esteem. Individual needs are met very well; the school aims to encourage each pupil to find a voice, and its success in achieving this is widely evident in the confidence and courtesy of the pupils.
- 3.3 In the EYFS, children make good progress in relation to their starting points and ability. Younger children are inquisitive learners who confidently discuss their learning with others. They demonstrate a growing ability in letter and sound recognition, along with excellent counting skills, with some children counting easily up to 30. Older children read sentences confidently and use their secure phonic knowledge to undertake independent writing activities. Mathematics is made fun and relevant; older children pay for their snack using pretend money, considering different ways of making the amount each day. They have a thirst for knowledge, and fully immerse themselves in the creative curriculum, completing activities that cover all areas of learning to high standards by exploring and investigating. The range of skills demonstrated is strong; older children use suitable tools to investigate how things work and they use ICT confidently.
- 3.4 At KEA and KEJ, a love of reading is evident in Year 1, where skills are strong; the oldest pupils are proud and feel privileged to use the Porta library at KES. Written tasks are completed with independence and enthusiasm; pupils listen carefully to instructions and each other. They are extremely articulate communicators, happy to question when they do not fully understand something. Levels of numeracy are high, and pupils are able to apply their mathematical knowledge and use critical thinking skills to solve problems and to aid investigations. Many subjects within the curriculum are complemented by the relevant use of ICT. This was particularly evident in the space project at KEA and during a mathematics lesson at KEJ. A national award has led to the school being 'e-twinning' ambassadors for the British Council. Pupils achieve well in team sports and excellent progress is made in physical skills.
- 3.5 At KES and KEI, pupils display excellent levels of knowledge and understanding; their well-developed skills are evident in all subject areas and especially in co-curricular activities. Standards of literacy are high; written tasks are thoroughly completed and very well presented. Pupils listen attentively, both to adults and each other; they speak with confidence and clarity. Excellent levels of numeracy are evident across a range of subjects; in mathematics, standards are high and more able pupils are further challenged by success in mathematics challenges. Pupils are confident in their use of ICT across the curriculum and they frequently use reasoning and critical thinking skills when presented with problem-solving activities.
- 3.6 In Years 12 and 13, some pupils show a considerable level of insight and knowledge. Pupils are fluent in a range of modern foreign languages, and others gain excellent results in biology and chemistry Olympiads. Pupils' creative work is of a high standard; excellent examples were seen in art, photography, drama, English, music and textiles, with work recently exhibited at Olympia. More able pupils achieve very well and many gain places at universities with a high standard of entry.

- 3.7 Pupils reach exceptional standards in co-curricular activities. They succeed at a high level in instrumental music; some gain choral and organ scholarships and advanced performance diplomas. The choral tradition is a particular strength of the school and singing is outstanding. The choristers and girls' choir of Ely Cathedral are all pupils and feel a great sense of pride in their participation, and the choristers have sung Evensong on national radio. Results in external drama and music examinations are excellent, with a significant number of distinctions; several candidates achieve London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art gold medals in acting. Pupils succeed in design and technology competitions, and they are outstandingly successful in cricket, hockey, netball, football, martial arts, rowing, rugby, athletics and equestrian sports. Individual pupils also achieve very well, for example within a national story-writing competition.
- 3.8 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2010 to 2012. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national tests at the age of 11 have been good in relation to the national average for maintained primary schools. They have shown improvement over these three years, and in 2012 were excellent in relation to the national average for maintained primary schools. The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2011 to 2013, being the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. Results at GCSE have been good in relation to the national average for maintained schools, and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. This level of attainment indicates that pupils in the senior school up to Year 11 have made at least a good rate of progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability, as shown by standardised measure of progress. Results in International GCSE (IGCSE) subjects in 2012 and 2013 were mostly higher than worldwide norms. A-level results have been good in relation to the national average for maintained schools, and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. This level of attainment indicates that pupils in Years 12 and 13 have made at least appropriate progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability, as shown by standardised measures of progress for KES and KEI. However, inspection evidence, as assessed in lesson observations, pupils' written work and curriculum interviews with them, indicates that the progress of current pupils is excellent in all sections; pupils throughout the senior school, including in Years 12 and 13, achieve very well considering the large number of international pupils and others who have English as an additional language and who enter a wide range of public examinations.
- 3.9 Pupils with EAL at KEI make excellent progress, achieving the IGCSE in English as a second language in one year. Some pupils successfully pass the English first language GCSE examination. At both KEJ and KES, pupils with EAL are achieving as well as their peers and make outstanding progress as the result of appropriate support given by class teachers with regard to language requirements. At KEJ, staff have an awareness of different learning styles so that pupils with SEND make excellent progress. Where the pupils are divided into sets for subjects, all achieve well according to their ability but occasionally in the mixed ability classes the more able are not sufficiently challenged. Pupils with SEND at KES are making very good progress as they are given excellent support by specialist teachers as well as within subject lessons. In most curricular areas, more able pupils are challenged by extension activities to achieve very highly.
- 3.10 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent; they are highly motivated and approach tasks with enthusiasm. At KEA and KEJ, pupils are lively but nonetheless listen carefully to instructions and are confident to try things out independently. They are

equally competent in both paired and group work and are regularly given the opportunity to assess each other's work, a task which they complete sensibly. At KES and KEI, pupils collaborate and concentrate well in class and take pride in their work; in interviews they showed enjoyment in learning. They carry out highly effective independent research and enjoy finding out for themselves, though this independent approach to learning is not yet consistently evident throughout these sections. Throughout the school, pupils work well with their teachers and demonstrate high standards of behaviour. Their positive, confident and co-operative attitudes contribute considerably to their high levels of achievement.

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

- 3.11 The contribution of curricular and co-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.12 Throughout the school, the curriculum is broad and balanced, offering a wide range of subjects suitable for the age and ability of the pupils. It makes an excellent contribution to the achievements of the pupils, and fulfils the school's aim to encourage them to embrace the challenges and opportunities life presents. The curriculum and co-curricular activities are carefully planned to suit all ages, needs and abilities, including strong provision for those with EAL or SEND and those who are more able. Curriculum planning across all sections takes suitable account of the pupils' needs.
- 3.13 In the EYFS, the cross-curricular educational programmes make learning relevant and fun for children, helping them to achieve the expected level of development for their age, with some children exceeding this expectation. Through the creative curriculum, a love for learning is fostered from an early age, and the children's enthusiasm and enjoyment are palpable. Children are provided with frequent opportunities to explore and investigate both indoors and out. Weekly challenges encourage them to think critically in open-ended tasks and teachers carefully plan opportunities that enable the children to initiate their own play confidently. Planning across the EYFS considers the needs of each individual child, with children actively involved in this process.
- 3.14 Throughout the school, the curriculum covers the requisite areas of learning. Time is efficiently and appropriately allocated to subjects. At KEA and KEJ, pupils enjoy a broad and diverse curriculum that builds in breadth as they move through these sections, and prepares them well for senior education. The curriculum is well planned and fulfils the recommendations from the previous inspection, including clear opportunities for independent learning and greater use of ICT as a teaching strategy to support pupils' learning. The use of ICT in lessons has become a strength of KEA and KEJ. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme reflects the school's aims and ethos, and pupils are mindful of the lessons that are taught, demonstrating a clear understanding of the issues covered.
- 3.15 At KES, pupils are carefully guided through the option choices for GCSE through the careers element of the personal development programme and by the tutorial team. In Years 12 and 13, freedom of choice is central to the options system, with pupils being able to choose from an extensive range of 40 subjects, both academic and creative, including film studies, photography, and government and politics. There is also the opportunity for pupils to strengthen their studies by taking the Extended Project Qualification. A well-structured system helps pupils through the university application process, and Year 12 pupils attend a higher education conference to guide their choice for the next step in their academic career. Pupils are free to seek

advice from their tutors and senior managers regarding university choices and entrance, deferred entry or Gap Year possibilities, and pupils are appreciative of the support they receive in considering future subjects and career options. Pupils' personal development is enhanced by the PSHE course and valuable opportunities for work experience are available in Year 10.

- 3.16 In all sections of the school, excellent support for pupils with EAL is provided in all subjects. At KES, the curriculum is suitably modified for these pupils. In Year 9, pupils have pre-GCSE support in reading and writing skills. At KEI, pupils in Year 10 follow a pre-GCSE course in eight compulsory subjects: English, mathematics, chemistry, biology, physics, geography, history and ICT, as well as personal development. Pupils in Year 11 are required to take English and mathematics, and three other subjects from the range offered in Year 10. Most KEI pupils study English as a second language and so those who proceed to Years 12 and 13 also follow the International English Language Testing System course, which provides them with the appropriate English qualification for university entrance. The English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) department has worked with the science department, particularly physics, to develop a language curriculum that enhances the study of physics, in recognition of language skills as fundamental to effective learning.
- 3.17 Provision for pupils with SEND is excellent, with effective systems for their identification and support. The learning support departments in different sections of the school advise subject teachers on the ways in which they can respond best to their pupils' needs. Those who have individual or group support are given individual education plans, setting targets which are regularly reviewed. The provision for any pupils with a statement of special educational needs ensures that they receive an education in line with the requirements of their statement. The curriculum is successful in challenging the more able pupils. At KEA and KEJ, a carousel of foreign languages, including Mandarin, Japanese, Latin and French, enables pupils to develop a rich and diverse experience in a range of challenging languages. At KES, Greek is taught as an optional extra subject out of curriculum time. In many subjects across the school, extension tasks are used in lessons to challenge the more able pupils.
- 3.18 Across the school, the formal curriculum is augmented by numerous visits and residential trips of high educational value which deliver tangible learning experiences locally, nationally and abroad. These strongly enhance work in subjects such as modern foreign languages, geography, art, science and history. Sports teams, choirs and other musical groups engage in tours alongside cultural visits to different countries worldwide.
- 3.19 The provision for co-curricular activities is excellent, with a wide range of high quality sport, music, drama, adventure and outdoor education opportunities available that make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development and their cultural understanding. Pupils at KEA and KEJ enjoy a rich and diverse range of activities across the week, ranging from rowing and musical activities to small craft groups and chess, and the quality of these is excellent. Throughout the school, music is an extremely strong area of the curriculum for both gifted and beginner musicians in a range of choral, instrumental and contemporary genres. Sport provides both for elite and recreational participants, with the introduction of new opportunities such as girls' cricket. Drama opportunities are offered through the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art examinations and in an extensive range of productions. The long-established Ely Scheme begins in Year 9 and develops teamwork, trust and

decision-making skills in an adventure environment that is well supported by pupils in Year 11 and above, who become instructors. In Year 10, many pupils take up opportunities to specialise in an adventure activity that may culminate in a major overseas expedition, such as an imminent trip to Mongolia. The outdoor adventure skills learned in Year 9 encourage many to participate in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Many further opportunities include debating through the Youth Speaks competition, house competitions, and art and textiles exhibitions, all of which are enthusiastically supported and of high quality.

- 3.20 Links with the local community are excellent. In addition to very close ties with the cathedral, the school provides coaching opportunities for local sports clubs and young performers, and enters a number of joint community and school teams in local leagues such as for basketball. The music department offers workshops and an outreach chorister programme for local primary schools, and their pupils are invited to plays and lectures. Pupils participating in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award undertake service in the local community, and the school's work for local charities further cements these very strong links.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.21 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.22 Teaching helps pupils to learn extremely well and to achieve excellent standards in relation to their ability. Considerable effort has been made to improve teaching since the previous inspection. Overall, the teaching helps to fulfil the school's aim to make learning an adventure and to meet individual needs.
- 3.23 In the EYFS, teachers skilfully provide opportunities for children to learn basic skills through topics that capture their interest fully and so they approach their tasks with clear enjoyment. They have high expectations, motivating and engaging the children in their own learning, with knowledge of how these young children learn and develop. Good quality resources are used very well. All EYFS staff contribute to an ongoing system of assessment that informs the next steps in learning and helps all children, including those with SEND or EAL, to learn effectively because teaching is tailored to their needs. This, together with an effective level of challenge for more able children, represents an improvement since the previous inspection.
- 3.24 At KEA and KEJ, teaching is well planned and based on a clear understanding of the individual pupil's needs. Teaching is often reflective, inspiring and imaginative. The best lessons establish a brisk pace and careful management of time. Where teaching recognises different learning styles, where pupils' thinking is challenged and where activities are paced and varied, lessons are stimulating and vibrant. Teachers have appropriately high expectations of all pupils, who consequently make rapid progress. Highly committed teachers with strong subject knowledge contribute positively to the development of pupils' learning skills. In many lessons pupils are given opportunities to learn independently. There is a strong rapport between teachers and pupils, and ample praise contributes to pupils' enjoyment in lessons.
- 3.25 At KES and KEI, the very best lessons are characterised by a variety in teaching approaches, in seeking to be inspirational; this is particularly true of teaching in Years 12 and 13. Exceptionally well-qualified teachers have a high level of expertise in their subjects, and this provides a strong basis of knowledge which constantly challenges more able pupils as they further their skills. Teaching is usually pitched at an appropriate level and pupils respond to the material with a high degree of

engagement. Challenging opportunities within lessons generally help the promotion of independent learning. Pupils behave excellently in lessons and are encouraged by teachers to apply themselves fully to the task in hand. In most lessons observed, effective planning ensured successful outcomes. A very small number of lessons were over directed by the teacher and lacked variety of approach, but these are not typical of pupils' experience. In all sections of the school, the resources within departments are of a high quality and are deployed effectively. Information and communication technology equipment is of an excellent standard and is used to great advantage to support understanding and learning in the majority of subjects. The school libraries also make an excellent contribution as resources for learning; at KEA and KEJ, this is an improvement since the previous inspection.

- 3.26 Throughout the school, pupils with SEND are assisted extremely well by the learning support departments, which supply very helpful guidance for teachers on the strategies to be used to ensure effective progress for these pupils. Specialist staff regularly support some of these pupils in subject lessons, individually or in small groups, very effectively. The targets included in their individual education plans, alongside the excellent level of classroom support, ensure that provision matches their needs, encourages progress and enables them to develop confidence. The teaching makes full provision for any pupil who has a statement of special educational needs. Teaching is very well adapted to the needs of pupils with EAL throughout the school. At KEJ, pupils receive support in reading, for example. At KES, the ESOL department provides very good writing frameworks and glossaries of subject-specific language, for example in mathematics and other subjects. At KEI, excellent teaching employs a variety of effective strategies that provide an insight into pupils' needs to enhance their progress in English language. These skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening in English are fundamental to their learning in all subjects, as well as preparing them for public examinations.
- 3.27 Pupils appreciate the availability and accessibility of their teachers' help when required. Homework is used to support learning. A small minority of pupils indicated in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire dissatisfaction with homework, and a view that it is not always set in accordance with the published schedule. Inspectors found some evidence to support this view, especially for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- 3.28 In all sections of the school, the quality of the marking of pupils' work is generally good, although there remains some inconsistency within and across departments. In some subjects, marking criteria are used which are fully understood by the pupils, who then use the comments to aid future progress. Other helpful comments are made to support the pupils' desire to improve. At KEJ, pupils appreciate the time, care and consideration given to the marking of their work; they read the comments carefully and take note of them. A robust system of assessment throughout the school collects and analyses data to monitor pupils' progress. This is often used to inform staff of the next steps in pupils' learning and to group pupils according to ability. At KES, staff use nationally standardised data as a baseline from which progress is measured and targets set. Thus the whole school is able to monitor the progress of individual pupils and groups of pupils over time.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils' personal qualities are extremely well developed, in keeping with the school's aims of providing a culture of integrity and trust in which people of all races, faiths and backgrounds feel valued and respected. At KEA and KEJ, the pupils' spiritual awareness is very strong and is central to their life at the school; the cathedral is described as 'the stone' around which they live and work. They reflect well on their own lives and their place in the world. They have respectful attitudes across all ages and faiths. Pupils develop emotional maturity and self-awareness through an extensive programme in PSHE lessons. They develop spiritually through topics explored in assemblies in the cathedral and at school, which they often lead. Secure in self-esteem and confidence, the pupils at KES and KEI feel accepted and very well supported by those around them, both adults and peers. Worship in the cathedral provides an excellent focus for the pupils, who highly effectively lead and respond to services. They reflect exceedingly well on their own lives, enriched by various religious and secular programmes. They show caring and respectful attitudes towards each other. Pupils in Years 12 and 13 demonstrate an excellent spiritual awareness by participating in enlightened philosophical discussion in religious studies lessons.
- 4.3 Throughout, pupils' moral awareness is excellent and is developed by the daily life of the school, with its emphasis on harmonious interaction. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong, and a solid grasp of the values of the community of which they are a part. This creates an environment where rules are followed and where pupils behave with kindness and respect to one another and to staff. In a KEJ English lesson based on *The Tempest*, pupils demonstrated sensitivity and understanding when exploring the morality of establishing rules and laws for a community. Pupils show genuine care for each other. They are modest about their achievements and like to acknowledge the success of others. At KES and KEI, strong co-operation and reciprocal support are seen in lessons where paired and group work is used very successfully to discuss moral dilemmas. Pupils respond very positively to political opportunities; the government and politics group recently benefited from a visit to the Speaker of the House of Commons, and produced an excellent resource on the topic of the significance of politics. Visiting speakers to KEJ from a magistrates' court, the police, the fire service and a bank enhance pupils' knowledge of British institutions and services.
- 4.4 The pupils' social development is excellent. Extensive fund raising for charities at home and abroad is testament to their strong awareness of those less fortunate than themselves; pupils learn a great deal about themselves and their impact on others. At KEA and KEJ, pupils interact very effectively across year groups and genders with tolerance and respect, supported particularly by the house system, and older pupils support those in lower years through an effective 'buddy' process. They communicate with warmth, and a clear sense of calm and quiet purpose is evident. Pupils relish opportunities to communicate with their peers and staff, such as reading in assemblies or feeding back from group work, which they do with pride and confidence. They demonstrate a strong sense of mutual support. Positions of responsibility such as representing their class on the school council or as a prefect allow pupils to use their personal strengths for the general good of all; they are proud of the opportunity to make a difference. At KES and KEI, older pupils carry

out supportive pastoral roles sensitively and willingly, by helping younger ones to settle. In Years 12 and 13, the prefect system provides an excellent opportunity for outstanding leadership, supported by the house system, with KEI pupils integrating effectively into other areas of the whole school, for example by teaching pupils at KEJ in their native tongue.

- 4.5 Pupils of all ages have an excellent appreciation of their own and other cultures, promoted by both curricular and co-curricular activities. Pupils show great pride in belonging to the cultural environment in which they live, work and play. They appreciate the inclusive society they share in the cultural diversity within the school. They take an active interest in the language, traditions and beliefs of cultures other than their own. A range of modern foreign languages is taught, and pupils explore other cultures through art, music and drama. They extend their knowledge of British culture through visits and trips to places of interest such as KEA's trip to Anglesey Abbey and KEJ's outing to Walsingham. At KES and KEI, pupils demonstrate an exemplary understanding of Western cultural history, illustrated well by the trip to battlefields of the First World War. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of world faiths and cultures, participating in trips to other countries and exploring artists from other parts of the world. Pupils' enthusiastic commitment to music making, drama productions and visits to museums and art galleries adds greatly to their comprehensive appreciation of culture.
- 4.6 In the EYFS, children demonstrate excellent personal, social and emotional development. They are confident and polite, and independently undertake routines with growing complexity across the age range. For example, younger children find their own name cards for snacks, whereas older children inform the teacher of their home time arrangements on the interactive whiteboard. They demonstrate respect and tolerance for one another, reinforced by means of the awards for kindness that they are keen to receive. Children acquire strong skills for the future; 'garden days' encourage younger children to work extremely well together, for example whilst making a path out of pebbles. Shared activities across year groups help the children to prepare for their future learning, including weekly assemblies, where Nursery and Reception children share time together. As they get older, children share activities with pupils in Years 1 and 2 such as assemblies, and snack and play times, thus easing the process of transition.
- 4.7 By the time they leave the school, the pupils have developed into confident, mature and sensitive young adults, ready to play their part as citizens in a global society.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 Provision for the children's well-being in the EYFS is excellent. The key person system is implemented effectively. On joining, the youngest children have flexibility with the allocation of their key person during the first few weeks if they form attachments to other adults; this helps the children to settle quickly. Staff work as a close team, and know all the children extremely well. They are excellent role models, interacting in a calm, kind and courteous manner, placing high importance on children's health and safety. Children learn to develop healthy lifestyles. They participate in regular physical activity; staff instil interest in sport from an early age. Staff discuss with children the importance of good personal hygiene; older children recognise the reasons for regular teeth cleaning. Independence in preparing snacks is fostered. Children confidently pour their own drinks and butter their own bread. They eat healthy, balanced snacks and meals, and are developing excellent table manners.
- 4.10 In all sections of the school, staff provide highly effective pastoral support and guidance for pupils, who feel that they are very well cared for, in line with the school's aims. These arrangements make an excellent contribution to pupils' personal development. Excellent relationships are established between pupils and staff and amongst pupils themselves; teachers, tutors, and house staff know pupils extremely well. Pupils feel secure, confident and happy, and they say that they have a member of staff to whom they can turn. At KEA and KEJ, regular pupil progress meetings and staff briefings ensure that all staff are aware of ongoing pastoral matters. The 'buddy' system between older and younger pupils has helped to develop links across the year groups and pupils spoke enthusiastically about the support that this provides. In particular, pupils who are choristers at the cathedral are monitored to ensure that their related duties do not have an adverse effect on their welfare. At KES and KEI, the house system is core to the excellent relationships amongst all in the community. In addition, frequent meetings allow any concerns to be quickly identified and remedied. Detailed records are co-ordinated and monitored. The vertical house system facilitates the formation of friendships between pupils of different ages, including prefects, whom pupils say are strongly supportive, creating a warm, inclusive environment.
- 4.11 Pupils are effectively encouraged to eat healthily and take appropriate exercise in each section of the school. The standard of catering is excellent, with high quality food, wide choice and suitable portions. Special diets are catered for. Lunch is a civilised experience, increasing the self-esteem and well-being of pupils. Pupils are taught about healthy eating and the benefits of regular exercise through PSHE, and they are discreetly monitored to ensure that they make healthy choices. Some younger pupils reported that a recent visit by a dental healthcare professional had encouraged them to reflect on their eating habits. Numerous opportunities are available for pupils to participate in sport and physical exercise.
- 4.12 The measures to promote good behaviour and to guard against bullying, including cyber-bullying, are highly effective. These topics are considered within the PSHE programme. There is an ethos of respect and tolerance, and pupils conduct themselves with good humour and courtesy. Any rare instances of misbehaviour are effectively dealt with. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a very small minority of parents raised concerns over bullying. However, in discussion, pupils considered bullying to be extremely rare, confident that any reported incidents would

be dealt with promptly and constructively. Inspection findings indicate that such instances are logged and monitored effectively by the appropriate head of school. Pupils understand the system of rewards and sanctions although, in their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a small minority showed concern about the consistency of its application. Inspectors found that at KEJ, a recently improved system of coloured cards ensures that sanctions are fairly administered, and the majority of pupils spoken to reported that they find the system fair. At KES and KEI, discussions with pupils and the examination of behaviour records indicated that the system is both appropriate and fairly operated.

4.13 The school seeks the views of pupils through a variety of councils and committees. Questionnaire responses showed that a small minority of pupils feel that the school does not ask for or respond to their opinions. At KEJ, inspectors found that minutes of the pupils' forum demonstrate that many of the pupils' suggestions have been implemented, and pupils were unanimous in confirming that their views make a positive contribution to school life. At KES and KEI, pupils spoke highly of the system, particularly the house council, though their views on and understanding of the school council were mixed. Inspectors judge that there are sufficient ways in which pupils can make their opinions known. However, the results of a recent survey have not yet been fed back to pupils.

4.14 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

4.15 The contribution of the arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.

4.16 Throughout the school, excellent attention is given day to day to the welfare and care of pupils, but staff recruitment processes have not always been sufficiently rigorous. New staff receive the necessary child protection training as part of their induction process. This training is also a regular part of the school's arrangements for all staff. The child protection officers have been trained to the higher level. The school's links with the local safeguarding authority are strong, and the child protection officers keep detailed records of any disclosures and referrals as necessary.

4.17 In recent years the school has developed a culture where health and safety are part of everyday operations for the whole school community. Issues are dealt with promptly using an efficient online reporting system. The team responsible for health and safety is committed to the importance of safety and works tirelessly to maintain a safe working environment. The school has received a 'Safe Schools Certificate' using an external consultant to monitor its practice, showing a continued rise in health and safety standards. Staff have a clear awareness of health and safety, and receive regular training. Record keeping is exemplary. Policies and manuals are comprehensive and reviewed regularly.

4.18 A governor who has particular responsibility for health and safety is trained and takes an active involvement in the whole process of monitoring, reporting and dealing with health and safety issues. Fire practices are regular and reviewed to identify any possible improvements, and checks on all fire equipment are routine. Risk assessments across the whole range of school activities are particularly thorough and stored efficiently. Outward-bound trips to a variety of challenging locations are also subject to careful risk assessment throughout the planning phases.

- 4.19 In the EYFS, appropriate safeguarding and risk assessment procedures are implemented, with staff placing great importance on keeping children safe from harm by undertaking child protection training. Children are content and happy in the care of the staff, who are successful in creating an environment that is attractive, safe and welcoming. They work hard to minimise any risks to the children by undertaking daily checks of the indoor and outdoor areas. Adequate numbers of staff hold paediatric first-aid qualifications.
- 4.20 Pupils who require medical attention or become ill during the school day are cared for in the medical centre. This is staffed six days a week, with out-of-hours and overnight cover maintained by healthcare assistants. Record keeping is excellent, and staff report to pastoral teams using online records and by telephone to parents. Storage of medicines is secure. A number of staff are trained in first aid, receiving regular refresher training, often focused on an individual's particular area of responsibility within the school.
- 4.21 The school maintains and stores attendance and admission registers appropriately. Pupils are registered efficiently in houses as necessary and unexplained absentees are checked by prompt contact with parents.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.22 The quality of boarding is good.
- 4.23 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. The boarders' personal development is promoted extremely well by their positive boarding experience. Pupils say that they share a great sense of community, in line with the school's aims. Boarders are confident, extremely polite and thoughtful of the needs of others. This extends throughout the different years and cultures within the houses. Boarders are well supported and encouraged by very committed boarding staff and matrons. Boarders are also supported academically, enhanced by the house tutor system. They are extremely well behaved and are aware of the school's expectations. In interviews, the boarders said that there is a wide range of people to whom they can talk, and that their views are considered and acted upon through the respective house councils and forums; for example, new sofas have recently been purchased in one of the houses. In addition there is a school committee, a food committee and a newly formed boarding committee. Telephone numbers for appropriate helplines are displayed on all house notice boards, including details of the Children's Rights Director and the independent listener. Boarders accept responsibility readily and develop strong leadership skills through the house prefect system, where they have clearly defined roles and are given appropriate training. Boarders in Years 12 and 13 gain independence and feel that they are being well prepared for the next stage of their education. Information from around the world is accessible through newspapers and televisions, and electronically. Staff are mindful of the commitment of the choristers and of balancing their routine both in school and boarding, so that their duties in the cathedral do not have an adverse effect on their welfare. The policy for equal opportunities is implemented very well in practice. Boarders' relationships with each other and with staff are strong.
- 4.24 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. Boarders feel safe and very well cared for. School counsellors and a school chaplain are available to support the boarders should they have a concern they wish to discuss. There is a good programme of induction for new boarders, including a mentor system. Useful handbooks are available which help them in their settling in process. The school

implements effective policies for those who are unwell. As well as receiving excellent healthcare from the medical centre, where qualified nurses are in attendance during the day, there is also an overnight on-call system. Medication is securely stored, the school doctors hold surgeries each week and appointments can be made with local specialist services, such as with dentists and opticians. Boarders' rights to confidentiality are respected as appropriate. Some concerns were raised by a small minority of senior pupils in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire about the safety of possessions, but boarders in interviews did not support this; they all have lockable cupboards in which to keep their personal belongings. There is a good choice of food at mealtimes, including healthy options, and special dietary needs are catered for. Dining rooms are hygienic and spacious, and service is efficient. A small minority of boarders indicated in responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire dissatisfaction with provision in the boarding houses for them to prepare snacks and drinks. Inspection evidence did not support this view.

- 4.25 The boarding accommodation is of a good standard and there is a rolling programme of refurbishment. Houses are well maintained with a high standard of cleanliness. All houses have welcoming common rooms. Bathroom facilities are good and include private showering cubicles. Bedrooms are light and airy, and boarders are allowed to personalise their own sleeping and individual study areas. The school operates an on-site laundry and older pupils are able to manage their own washing. Boarders are allowed to visit the nearby shops at appropriate times where they can obtain personal items. They lead a very full and busy life, and have varying amounts of free time in which they can take part in activities, both at school and in the houses. These include a variety of sports, use of the gym, and table or board games. Quiet areas are available for boarders to use should they need some time alone. Excursions, including trips to theatres, galleries and shopping, enhance the boarding experience at the weekends. Boarders are able to maintain regular contact with their families by email and telephone, and the school has effective channels of communication with parents and guardians.
- 4.26 The arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are good in almost all respects, with the exception of a small number of incomplete recruitment checks as previously described. Child protection measures are effective and all staff, including ancillary staff, receive regular training and are aware of their responsibilities. Behaviour is excellent; an anti-bullying policy is implemented well and boarders report that bullying is rare. A sanctions system is appropriate and details are recorded effectively. A rigorous system for signing in and out operates for boarders and visitors, enabling staff to be aware of the whereabouts of boarders at all times. The missing child policy is clear and well understood. There are adequate numbers of staff on duty in the houses and boarders can easily contact them at all times during the day and overnight. Excellent risk assessments are undertaken for boarding accommodation and activities. The houses hold regular fire drills at various times during boarding hours. All required policies are implemented well.
- 4.27 The effectiveness of leadership and management of the boarding provision is good. A suitable statement of the school's boarding principles and practice is made available to parents, staff and boarders, and implemented well. Regular meetings are held and, whilst parity is sought in the running of the houses, each house retains its individual character, giving respective boarders a strong sense of belonging. Boarding staff are suitably trained, have clear job descriptions, are regularly monitored and have opportunities for further training. Responses to the pre-inspection pupils' and parents' questionnaires were positive about the boarding experience. The previous Ofsted inspection made no recommendations.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

5.1 The quality of governance is good.

5.2 The school is administered in line with its aims. The varied backgrounds and expertise of governors, and the committee structure which has been developed, effectively support the educational direction of the school. The governors have a strong involvement in the three-year strategic plan and educational development plan, through which they offer support and challenge for the school's growth and improvement. The principal's detailed report for the termly board meetings gives full information about the school's successes and challenges for the future, and all heads of section participate with contributions from their area of responsibility, giving the governors a clear view of the school's academic and welfare provision. Financial planning is carried out with care. Governors oversee excellent provision for accommodation and for human and material resources, including investment in ICT equipment that is very effectively supporting learning across the curriculum at KEA and KEJ, an improvement since the previous inspection. This is also seen in the acquisition and refurbishment of the Old Palace, which has provided excellent accommodation for the female pupils from overseas as well as extremely good facilities for pupils in Years 12 and 13. This demonstrates a very effective response to the recommendation of the previous inspection, concerning the further integration of the KEI pupils. In all sections of the school, governors enable the needs of the pupils to be met very well. Heads of department are invited regularly to the education committee meetings to give a presentation on current standards and issues in their subject areas.

5.3 Governors have particular links with sections of the school or have special responsibilities, including KEA, KEJ, boarding, child protection, and health and safety. The governor who liaises specifically with the EYFS demonstrates excellent involvement, and enables the board to have a good understanding of the setting. Governors visit on occasion during the school day to observe lessons, have lunch with pupils and hold discussions with staff. The minutes of board meetings indicate that they debate all aspects of school life carefully. Governors participate in a considerable amount of relevant training. Safeguarding, and welfare, health and safety are given appropriate emphasis at board meetings; the board fulfils its responsibilities for reviewing the safeguarding policy annually and the efficiency with which the related duties are carried out. However, there have been a few shortcomings with the recruitment checks on staff at the time of their appointment, and governors' oversight of regulatory compliance has not been sufficiently robust in this regard.

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

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is good.
- 5.5 The high quality of the educational experience offered and the excellent personal development of the pupils demonstrate that the school is successfully achieving its aims of ensuring that all pupils feel valued and respected within the context of a secure, stable yet dynamic environment rooted in Christian values. The senior leadership and the strong, committed teaching and non-teaching staff have a clear vision for the next steps in the school's development, through the strategic, educational and support services aspects. All departments have contributed to the reflective development plan, which is used as a working document and is regularly reviewed and evaluated in the light of changing needs.
- 5.6 Various management processes have been further developed since the previous inspection. Staff new to the school undergo a thorough induction process and are well supported, adopting its ethos. A new system of professional development and review has been followed over the last two years, and the staff have recently evaluated its operation, prior to embarking on its next cycle. This system includes lesson observation to identify effectively the training needs of staff. In addition, staff participate in mutual observation, which is undertaken and recorded. In-service training is given a high priority and links successfully with the school development plan and the system of professional development and review. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning also includes the regular examination of pupils' books. Subject departments across the school work very closely together and this is encouraged by the deployment of a good number of staff in more than one section, and through a teaching and learning committee, consisting of teachers from across the school. Whole-school curriculum meetings, which include all staff from the Nursery to Year 13 teaching a specific subject, are appreciated by the staff and ensure a smooth transition between school sections for the pupils.
- 5.7 The roles of the senior leadership team are clearly delineated and working well. This team and other committees in different sections have regular meetings that are carefully minuted so that progress can be easily checked. Middle managers have clearly understood responsibilities for both curriculum and pastoral matters, which they fulfil with skill and enthusiasm. All policies are regularly reviewed, including some very recently, concerning content and implementation, and staff have been trained effectively for their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Communication amongst staff, both formal and informal, about academic and pastoral matters is continuous. This ensures that the needs of and outcomes for the pupils are continually at the forefront of the senior leadership's actions and given a high priority.
- 5.8 Staff recruitment checks at the time of their appointment have not always been comprehensively undertaken, with some staff beginning work before all required checks, including barred list and right to work checks, medical declarations and references, have been carried out. However, all current staff have been checked against the barred list and have received an enhanced disclosure, and all outstanding issues are currently being completed. The single central register accurately records recruitment checks. The school runs extremely efficiently due to the care and expertise of all those who work to support the pupils through the administration, catering and maintenance departments. Pupils throughout the

school respect their learning environment, and many displays, particularly at KEA and KEJ, celebrate their achievements, reflecting the effort they put into their work and the pride they have in their school.

- 5.9 In the EYFS, leadership and management are good and currently under re-development. The setting evaluates its practice suitably and demonstrates through its recent development plan good self-awareness. Staff meet regularly to discuss planning and the children in their care, and day-to-day practice is strong and often exemplary. A system for regular individual meetings where key people have opportunities to discuss the children in their care with management is carried out, along with a regular cycle of appraisal. These both provide opportunities for staff to reflect on practice, and build upon their skills by identifying areas for continuing professional development. This in turn improves children's experiences. The setting is aware of the significance of maintaining links with other settings that children might attend, and welcomes dialogue wherever possible. Similarly, the staff welcome the opportunity for working with external agencies to support children's needs in areas such as speech and language.
- 5.10 The school promotes excellent relationships with parents, who value the open channels of communication, in line with the school's aims. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were highly supportive of the way in which their children are looked after, the quality of the boarding experience, the diversity of the curriculum and the excellent provision of extra-curricular activities. A very small minority of parents expressed dissatisfaction with the way in which the school handles their concerns. Parents who were spoken to during the inspection disagreed, and said that the staff know their children very well and deal quickly and effectively with any concerns as they arise. Staff are readily available to parents and internet-based conversations are arranged with the parents of pupils from overseas. The school has a formal complaints procedure that is available to parents. Any concerns are recorded carefully and in detail, treated sensitively and resolved through prompt action, following the official procedure when appropriate.
- 5.11 A very small minority of concerns were expressed by parents in responses to the questionnaire with regard to encouragement of their involvement in the life of the school. Inspectors found that parents are very much considered part of the school community and are encouraged to be involved. The Friends of King's School Ely group organises diverse activities, with a clear aim of developing community relationships between parents and staff as well as raising funds that support the work of the school. The school places great importance on ensuring that the parents of new pupils quickly feel at ease. For example, an effective 'buddy' system for the parents of new choristers provides families with a point of contact. A system of parent class representatives facilitates communications, and parents take part in voluntary activities such as coaching sport, assisting in the KEJ and KEA libraries and on trips, or participating in careers discussions.
- 5.12 Parents of current and prospective pupils are provided with a wide range of relevant information. The school website provides all the necessary information on procedures and policies. Parents in all sections of the school welcome the arrival of the *Almanack*, giving the calendar of events, a range of regular newsletters and a termly *Porta* magazine, which keep them and former pupils informed of the life of the school, enabling them to share the success of the pupils. Parents are also invited to the principal's forum and a variety of information meetings. These include guidance at times of key change, such as points of transfer through the school, and topics

relevant to teenagers such as eating disorders and e-safety, thus creating a joint partnership in the excellent personal development of the pupils.

- 5.13 In response to questionnaires, a very small minority of parents raised a concern about the quality of information received regarding their children's progress. Inspection evidence does not wholly support this view. Parents of pupils at KES receive full and informative reports on the progress of their children, with clearly explained criteria for effort and achievement. At KEJ, the quality of reports is more variable; the best provide a detailed summary of progress. Reporting for the pupils at KEI is tailored to the needs of the families, offering concise comments and monthly assessments linked to the more intensive nature of the courses the pupils follow. All these pupils have a guardian who acts as an advocate for them as well as a translator for parents if needed. Throughout the school, interim grade cards and parents' evenings provide additional information. All parents and guardians are invited to make a follow-up appointment with the school to discuss any concerns arising from reports.
- 5.14 In the EYFS, parents have opportunities to become involved in their children's learning. Through the 'star child' system in the Nursery, parents often visit to share family experiences. All parents are encouraged to share children's achievements from home by means of completing 'stars' that outline their successes. In their responses to the questionnaire, parents were generally satisfied with the care and education that their children receive. A very small number of parents voiced concerns about the information provided about their children's progress. Inspectors found that, whilst records of children's achievement are kept comprehensively, they are not in a consistent format across the classes to allow all parents to have easy access to their children's progress in their learning and development. In the best examples, parents are provided with an effective means of sharing information between home and school through a 'special book'. Reports provide parents with useful information about their children's progress across all areas of learning.

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