



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

KING'S SCHOOL, ROCHESTER

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

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King's School, Rochester

The Preparatory and Pre-Preparatory schools were inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School	King's School, Rochester
DfE Number	887/6000
Registered Charity Number	1084266
Address	King's School, Rochester Satis House Boley Hill Rochester Kent ME1 1TE
Telephone Number	01634 888555
Fax Number	01634 888505
Email Address	principal@kings-rochester.co.uk
Principal	Mr Jeremy Walker
Chair of Governors	The Very Reverend Dr Mark Beach
Age Range	13 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	272
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (186 boys; 86 girls)
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 220
Number of Boarders	Total: 52 Full: 31 Weekly: 21
Inspection dates	05 Mar 2013 to 08 Mar 2013

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in November 2008.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

This inspection contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education, personal development and welfare. Until September 2011, Boarding inspections were carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills.

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 King's School, Rochester can trace its origins back to the foundation of Rochester Cathedral in 604AD and the establishment of St Andrew's Priory. It was re-founded as a school by King Henry VIII in 1542. It is now a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged 3 to 18, comprising the pre-preparatory, preparatory and senior schools. It is an associate member of the Woodard foundation. The school occupies land and buildings in the vicinity of the Cathedral, dispersed about that part of Rochester, with access between buildings gained by public rights of way. The senior school, for pupils aged 13 to 18, is a mix of Victorian and more modern, purpose-built buildings. It includes two boarding houses: School House, for boys, and St Margaret's, for girls.
- 1.2 The school is a charitable trust and overseen by a board of governors, of which the chair is the Dean of Rochester Cathedral; it includes ex-officio members from the Cathedral Chapter, members appointed by other bodies, such as the diocese, and some appointed by the governors themselves. Since the previous inspection, the school has ceased to teach lessons on Saturdays, acquired an existing sports centre, revised its management structures, renovated the boys' boarding house, and introduced new subjects in the sixth form and the IGCSE in some subjects. The principal and the chair of governors took up their posts in September 2012.
- 1.3 The school aims to challenge and support each pupil to make the most of their academic and personal potential and to enable them to achieve excellent results through developing an enquiring mind and a passion for learning. It seeks to help pupils develop their skills, qualities and interests through activities and opportunities beyond the classroom, and to be a nurturing community that develops values within the setting of Christianity.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection there were 272 pupils educated at the school, of whom approximately two-thirds were boys, and 52 of whom were boarders. The average ability on entry to the school is slightly above the national average with a wide range of abilities represented. Around a fifth of pupils are of below average ability. This profile is broadly representative of the sixth form, where the profiles of different cohorts vary. Most day pupils come from north Kent, from a diversity of social backgrounds. Boarders come from the south of England and from 14 countries overseas, the largest group coming from China. There are 24 pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), 20 of whom receive support. There are 80 pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) of whom 16 require and receive specialist help with their learning. Three pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

School	NC name
Removes	Year 9
Lower Fifth	Year 10
Upper Fifth	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The overall achievement of pupils is good. Pupils develop well in knowledge, skills and understanding. Some more able pupils achieve excellent standards in activities, for example in music, individually in sports, and in the performing arts, although opportunities to replicate these levels of achievement in the curriculum are not fully provided in drama. Pupils make good progress, including those pupils with SEND or EAL. They do so as a consequence of good curricular and extra-curricular provision. Good teaching, some of which is excellent, supports the pupils' progress. Teaching demonstrates strong subject knowledge, particularly in the sixth form, and exceptional relationships between teachers and pupils ensure that pupils feel well supported. Pupils are keen and well-motivated learners who work very well with others, although in some lessons there is less challenge for pupils to reason for themselves without being over-reliant on the teacher's initiative.
- 2.2 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils demonstrate mutual respect, a strong sense of fairness and excellent behaviour. There is an easy mix of the different cultures within the school. This very high level of personal development is supported by excellent pastoral care and good arrangements to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, pupils were positive about the school. The quality of boarding is good and the recommendations of the last boarding inspection have been met.
- 2.3 Good governance supports the school's aims and Christian ethos strongly. Governors are well informed and supportive. They provide good oversight of those areas where they have legal responsibilities, although historically this has lacked consistency in monitoring some practice and procedures. Careful financial provision supports the pupils' good academic achievement and excellent personal development. Leadership and management are good, particularly strong at senior level in evaluation of the school's needs in a period of transition. The resultant initiatives are realistic and suitably ambitious. Links with parents are excellent and in responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire parents expressed a high level of satisfaction with the school. The school has made substantial progress in monitoring teaching and learning but this, together with oversight of some areas of welfare, health and safety, and boarding, is not yet wholly consistent. It has also made significant progress since the previous inspection in the management and monitoring of its arrangements for pastoral care and in the quality of its planning.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.
- 2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2011.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that the curriculum provides suitable opportunities for all pupils to develop their skills.
 2. Disseminate more widely the elements of the best practice in teaching already current in the school to ensure more consistent levels of experience for pupils.
 3. Strengthen monitoring structures in all areas, including boarding, to match the quality of those already developed for pastoral care.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning

- 3.1 The pupils' achievements and learning are good.
- 3.2 They are enabled by well-planned teaching and the exceptionally positive relationships between teachers and pupils which are a hallmark of the school. All pupils are highly articulate and most express their views with confidence, particularly in the sixth form. Their literacy skills are well developed. Pupils develop good knowledge, skills and understanding. Some more able pupils acquire high levels of knowledge for their age and some develop exceptional skills in musical composition.
- 3.3 The pupils' mathematical skills are strong and these are applied well in other subjects. In response to a broad range of opportunities in modern foreign languages, pupils achieve high standards of understanding and application. Pupils reason very well when they are challenged to do so but at other times they depend too much on being given a lead in the teaching they receive. Some more able pupils research and present analysis of their findings at very high levels for their age. Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) well, including music and design and technology (DT) software; for example, to create imaginative mobile phone applications. Many pupils demonstrate excellent performing skills in activities and, where provision allows, in the curriculum. Their physical development is good.
- 3.4 Those pupils with SEND achieve or exceed the targets set for them but, in the work of some, written expression does not always reflect their ability in the subject. Pupils with EAL achieve good levels of knowledge, skills and understanding through effective support, including specific arrangements for boarders.
- 3.5 Pupils reach good levels of achievement in activities. They regularly attain places in national music ensembles. They perform well in instrumental examinations, and gain prizes in local music festivals and national composition competitions. A good number attain gold in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE). They participate in sports at county level in rugby, hockey and cricket and individuals have achieved success at national, representative level in athletics, sailing and table tennis.
- 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 in GCSE have been good in relation to the national average for pupils in maintained schools. Results in 2012 indicate that this level of attainment has been maintained. Overall results in IGCSE subjects have been in line with the average for schools worldwide. A-level results show continuous improvement, with those in 2011 above the average for maintained schools; in that year, they were above the average for maintained selective schools. These results, when considered alongside evidence from the pupils' work and their achievement in lessons, as well as standardised measures of progress, indicate that all pupils make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. Most sixth formers enter higher education and a good proportion attains places at universities with demanding entry requirements.
- 3.7 Pupils are keen to learn and show good motivation; they settle quickly to work and are well organised. They take care over their work and it is presented clearly. Pupils use a range of methods for taking notes, with sixth formers showing independence in selecting those styles which suit them best. They are very

successful in working co-operatively, helping each other and sharing ideas freely, and show much curiosity.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.9 The curriculum provides an education of good quality which largely meets the school's aim to enable pupils to make the most of their academic and personal potential and to achieve excellent results. It is stimulating and offers high levels of opportunity particularly in the sixth form, which provides a good range of subjects. The available GCSE options, and those subjects studied in Year 9, meet the needs of most of the students fully. Whilst the requisite areas of learning are covered, curricular provision within the performing arts, particularly for drama, is limited. The school's current curriculum review is considering the expansion of opportunities in this and other areas to match those provided within the activities programme. The study of separate science subjects is available and a wide range of languages are studied by pupils. Arrangements to develop skills in ICT enhance the pupils' learning. There are good opportunities for physical development; these include recently enhanced facilities for girls' games. A good range of educational visits are included in the curriculum.
- 3.10 Guidance on careers is effectively integrated within the well-organised careers, personal, social and health education (CPSHE) programme, the majority of which is delivered by the house tutors in curriculum time. This programme includes a good range of talks and discussion in areas such as finance, well suited to the needs of sixth form pupils. Pupils stated that they received good support in their choice of subjects and courses, and in university applications.
- 3.11 The curriculum makes good provision for the more able and those with particular talents to be stimulated, and for their learning to be extended. This includes sessions for academic scholars that include theory of knowledge and discussion of a range of topics. Good specialist learning support, taught in small groups, is available throughout the school for those with SEND. Lessons are carefully planned to avoid clashes with the availability of other subjects. Similar quality support for EAL pupils is provided by individual lessons on several occasions during the week. Curriculum planning within the departments is good, including the maintenance and review of appropriate subject schemes of work.
- 3.12 In response to pre-inspection questionnaires, a few parents expressed concern about the range of activities offered. Inspection evidence shows that the curriculum is effectively enriched by a good range of clubs and activities. Pupils benefit from the opportunities provided by the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) which is attended by 120 pupils and the complementary programme of the DofE award. A voluntary service scheme, 'HANDS', encourages pupils to contribute to the needs of others within the community. Music scholars and pupils can take part in a wide range of flourishing ensembles daily. Annual productions, such as that of *Sweeney Todd* which was in rehearsal during the inspection, give excellent opportunities for those who wish to participate in the performing arts or develop associated skills such as in the front-of-house and technical management of the show.
- 3.13 The activities programme includes subject-related clubs to enable pupils to catch up on work or extend their interest, but opportunities for participation in non-curricular activities connected to hobbies and interests are more limited. Charity fund-raising

provides opportunities for pupils to develop organisation and leadership skills and strengthens good links with the community. These are enhanced by the participation of pupils in Cathedral services in a variety of roles.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.14 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.15 Teaching supports the aims of the school well. Since the previous inspection, progress has been made in monitoring teaching and in marking the pupils' work. Some elements of good practice have been shared but inconsistencies remain, including in the use of comments in marking to identify what pupils need to do to improve.
- 3.16 Teaching is effective in promoting the pupils' progress. Lessons are carefully planned and time is managed well within them. Teaching demonstrates good, and frequently excellent, subject knowledge, particularly in the sixth form. Small classes and exceptional relationships between teachers and pupils ensure that pupils feel well supported. Pupils comment that most teachers intently care and 'go the extra mile' for them, in class time and beyond. A small minority of pupils and a few parents remarked in questionnaires, and inspection evidence confirms, that the volume of homework they are set is reasonable but that its scheduling is not always co-ordinated. Effective use is made of good resources, especially interactive whiteboards, and displays of posters and the pupils' work are used well to brighten classrooms, some of which are faded in decor. The library provides a good resource for study and research. Much of the teaching fosters enjoyment.
- 3.17 Some teaching is excellent, characterised by careful assessment of the pupils' needs. It incorporates pace, challenge and tasks varied to suit different groups of pupils which enable them to think and reason independently. Opportunities are taken to extend the pupils' thinking, presenting them with open-ended tasks and questions that require them to apply their subject knowledge to understanding and solving problems. Collaborative work is effectively employed. In some less successful teaching, such opportunities are missed. A desire to provide strongly structured support for pupils results in too much direction from the teacher, slowing the lesson's pace and inhibiting the pupils' active involvement in analysis, research and exploration.
- 3.18 Pupils with SEND and those with EAL receive good individual support. The information circulated about these pupils reflects the individual education plans drawn up for each of them. In the most successful teaching this advice is used to excellent effect in lesson planning and class management. However, inconsistency remains in some subject teaching in the methods used to support pupils with SEND and EAL when this advice is not followed closely. Effective activities to extend the thinking of more able pupils are offered in much teaching. Provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs meets their needs and fulfils the requirements of their statements.
- 3.19 Marking is generally thorough and regular, and the best includes helpful advice on how to improve work. The introduction of external progress data and related staff training since the previous inspection has helped to monitor the pupils' progress and set targets, as well as to guide schemes of work and lesson planning.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 The school's aim to develop the pupils' values within the setting of Christianity is met very successfully. The Cathedral is a regular meeting place for the school and pupils demonstrate strong respect for this element of school life. This is common to those of different faiths or none. Pupils listen attentively and participate positively in hymn singing. They demonstrate an enjoyment in considering spiritual aspects of life including in religious studies lessons. They participate in Cathedral events as servers, readers and speakers, showing confidence and integrity. Such confidence is also demonstrated strongly in performances and in articulate conversation. It is engendered by a readiness to applaud success in many and diverse fields, from sports to fund-raising. It contributes much to the mutual respect which all pupils show and such qualities lead to very high levels of personal development by the time pupils leave the school.
- 4.3 Fairness and self-control are successfully promoted by the school and contribute to high levels of moral development. Pupils understand the need for rules and potential sanctions, and they develop mutual expectations of behaviour which mean that sanctions are invoked rarely for social misdemeanours. Pupils have begun to extend active fund-raising for charitable causes, with the house system providing an effective focus for linked events. Through service activities each week, older pupils demonstrate an understanding of their obligation to help the less fortunate, providing support in a local hospice, for senior citizens and in a gardening project.
- 4.4 The pupils develop strong social skills. Their behaviour is excellent, both within the school buildings and in their frequent travel between lessons, in the public gaze. Their demeanour is considerate but remains lively. Both day and boarding pupils take seriously their role as part of the nurturing community the school successfully creates. The house system provides a strong impetus for the development of friendship across different age ranges. This is extended when older pupils provide support for preparatory school pupils in games. A minority of pupils felt, in questionnaire responses, that they have limited opportunities to develop responsibility. Roles of responsibility enable pupils to develop leadership skills in a number of areas. The CCF, the prefect system and supportive roles at events for parents all contribute to good opportunities for older pupils in this area, which they use well. Younger pupils have fewer specific opportunities to develop these skills. Through the curriculum and the CPSHE programme pupils develop a good awareness of their role as citizens and the roles of others in society such as bankers, although their development in these areas is not monitored or reported on consistently.
- 4.5 The pupils' excellent cultural awareness is reflected in the easy mix of those of different cultural backgrounds within the school, including in boarding. This is supported by participation in trips abroad, for example to India to contribute to community projects. Drama and musical performance, including 'open mic' nights instituted by sixth form pupils, are very well supported. Pupils show good awareness of the styles of different artists and composers. Many pupils develop strong cultural awareness through modern foreign or classical languages.

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

- 4.6 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.7 Staff with pastoral responsibilities provide highly effective support and guidance for the pupils in accordance with the school's aim to create a nurturing community. Since the previous inspection systems of pastoral care have been strengthened considerably and they support the pupils' personal development strongly. Senior staff see pastoral care as a key aspect of their roles and monitor this area closely. The house system is central to pastoral structures and the role of housemasters has been enhanced to support this. Housemasters lead the regular assessment feedback meetings, which are used effectively to ensure all staff are aware of the academic progress and pastoral needs of individual pupils. House tutors, who are also responsible for registration and teach the CPSHE programme, play a vital role in ensuring the pupils' needs are monitored successfully day-by-day. This meets the recommendation of the previous inspection well.
- 4.8 Relationships between staff and pupils are exceptionally good and pupils express a very high level of confidence in their teachers and tutors. Staff know their pupils well and readily give time to listen or to advise. Pupils know to whom they can go when they are in need. Interactions between staff and pupils are characterised by mutual respect and frequent humour. Pupils are very supportive of one another, are good at listening and value each other's contribution, in and out of class. A caring atmosphere pervades the school.
- 4.9 The school promotes a healthy lifestyle. The CPSHE programme includes modules on the benefits of healthy eating and regular exercise, as does the IGCSE biology course. Pupils show a good awareness of the constituents of a healthy diet and catering staff ask individuals what they have eaten for lunch if they have concerns. The curriculum provides a variety of opportunities for all pupils to take regular exercise, and more are available through the activities programme.
- 4.10 The school has a good behaviour policy which staff follow closely. This is highly successful in promoting good behaviour, as demonstrated by the pupils' comportment in lessons, activities and as they move around the school. A small minority of pupils raised concerns about fairness in the application of rewards and sanctions in the pre-inspection questionnaire. This is not supported by inspection evidence, although a lack of clarity is evident in the behaviour policy with regard to identifying the sanctions appropriate for specific misdemeanours. Positive rewards, such as letters of commendation sent to parents, are used to reinforce expected standards. Measures taken to prevent bullying are effective. Pupils expressed no concerns in this area and this reflects the staff's active involvement and attitude towards pastoral care and their lack of complacency. When unacceptable behaviour occurs, it is dealt with constructively but firmly.
- 4.11 The school now has an appropriate plan to ensure access to its provision for those with educational or physical disabilities.
- 4.12 In the pre-inspection questionnaires, a minority of pupils felt that the school does not ask for their views or respond to them. When interviewed pupils showed little sense of this frustration. Some opportunities for gauging the corporate opinion of pupils exist, such as a food committee and a boarding house committee, but the structures of these bodies mean that pupil representation and feedback to all pupils are not formalised, limiting their effectiveness. Pupils are confident that they can make their

views known to staff individually and that they will be listened to carefully. Additionally, sixth form pupils represent the views of their juniors to senior staff. One innovation which has received the pupils' support is the opportunity for a different tutor group to have lunch with the principal each week.

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

- 4.13 The arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils are good.
- 4.14 The school has strong arrangements to safeguard the pupils' welfare, in line with its aims, and these are implemented conscientiously to support the pupils' personal development. Designated staff receive regular, effective training, and training for all staff, at the appropriate level, is now similarly effective, with arrangements made to ensure that temporary staff and volunteers are aware of the school's procedures. Relationships with external agencies are strong and advice is sought from them whenever appropriate.
- 4.15 Registration of the pupils is undertaken efficiently and any absence is followed up quickly. The school maintains an appropriate admission register electronically, which is backed up and stored appropriately. Arrangements to ensure the pupils' health and safety are good overall, particularly with regard to checking the extended site, but monitoring of equipment checks is not always consistent. Arrangements for pupils who feel unwell during the day are excellent. Help is provided by the medical centre and there are a good number of staff trained in first aid. Due care is taken to ensure the health and safety of those with special physical or learning needs.
- 4.16 Measures to prevent risks of fire and other hazards are effective. Regular drills are held and equipment checked appropriately. Assessments of risk are effective and wide-ranging throughout the school.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.17 The quality of boarding is good.
- 4.18 The outcomes for boarders are good. Boarders have a good standard of personal development with most having confidence in their ability to make their own decisions. They are articulate and have friendly and supportive relationships with each other as well as with staff at all levels. Boarders all say that they enjoy the boarding experience, which enriches school life. There is a palpably homely atmosphere in the houses, typified by the welcome boarders receive at end of school when staff ask about their day. Boarders speak appreciatively of this. Boarders commented that one of the things that they value most about boarding is the opportunity to mix with those from different cultures to their own. Those with EAL appreciate the extra support they are given, which enables them not only to access the curriculum but also to make new friends. The school's support for these boarders includes extra lessons run by departments for them, and weekend sessions. House committees and a joint food committee exist and all boarders are invited to attend. These provide suitable opportunities for boarders to express their opinions but monitoring of these views and feedback from staff are not formalised. Prefects are well respected and supportive towards younger pupils and play a valued part in the induction process for new boarders. This includes being assigned a "buddy". Boarders are extremely positive about this process. All boarders display a strong awareness of belonging to a community and of their responsibilities to it.

- 4.19 The quality of the provision and care for boarders is good overall. Excellent pastoral arrangements are firmly embedded. House staff are exceptionally actively involved in their support of the boarders' academic and social needs. Contact details of the independent listener and the Director for Children's Rights are on noticeboards in both houses. Communication between boarding and academic staff is frequent and effective. Medical care for boarders is excellent and greatly appreciated by them. Records of the administration of both prescription drugs and home remedies are kept meticulously with all staff kept fully informed. Drugs are kept in cabinets which are locked at all times and boarders are suitably assessed as to their ability to self-medicate. In such cases the individual's medicines are either kept locked in their own room or in the house staff area. Good procedures ensure the safety of the boarders' belongings, contrary to the views expressed in the questionnaire by a minority of boarders. Boarders have many different methods by which they may contact their families and they make full use of video links, mobile phones and e-mail.
- 4.20 Boarders have access to a range of activities in addition to those available to all pupils. The appointment of a weekend activities co-ordinator has resulted in the successful initiation of a good programme to extend this range. Although a minority of boarders were critical of these arrangements in questionnaires, most boarders speak enthusiastically about the initial steps which have been taken. Boarders can suggest additional activities to the existing sports and cultural opportunities which include attending concerts, cinema visits, trips to London and paint-balling. Boarders are aware of the need to eat healthily and to exercise regularly. They make use of the gym and swimming pool during the week, although training resources specifically suited to girls are relatively limited. No evidence was found to substantiate negative comments made about food or the availability of snacks in the boarders' questionnaire responses. Catering arrangements are well thought through with the specific dietary needs of individual boarders being met. Menus display variety and portions are generous, with pupils being offered the chance for second helpings. Accommodation is warm, well lit and comfortable. Marked progress has been made towards improving the accommodation for boys since the previous inspection. New toilet and shower facilities have been installed which meet the requirement of that inspection. However, there still exists some lack of parity in the provision for boys and girls, particularly in terms of decor. Senior managers have identified the key areas for improvement. Boarders personalise their rooms with photos and items that interest them.
- 4.21 Arrangements for the welfare and safeguarding of boarders are good. Appropriate recruitment checks are made on all staff. Child protection procedures ensure the safety of the pupils and all staff now receive appropriate training. Boarders report that they feel safe. Individual care plans for boarders are well thought out and monitored. Good supervision is maintained at all times. Signing-out procedures are robust; boarders ask permission to leave the site in pairs. Staff can maintain contact through the boarders' mobile phones and they check that boarders have signed back in. Systems for sanctions and rewards are understood by the boarders, who feel that they are applied evenly, and comprehensive records of sanctions are kept. Boarders report that bullying rarely occurs. There is a wide range of risk assessments for boarding which cover all potential hazards, including those related to fire.
- 4.22 The leadership and management of boarding are good. The excellent quality of care for boarders is supported by a team of fully committed, caring and experienced house staff who are the lynchpin of the boarders' experience. There is a clear

statement of aims for boarding which complements the aims of the whole school. Comprehensive policies cover a wide range of eventualities and appropriate records are kept. Policies are implemented well and generally monitored effectively. Any areas that require development are identified by senior managers and action plans are drawn up. These plans show some involvement on the part of house staff but initiative in development at this level is limited. An identified governor linked to boarding visits frequently and provides support for both boarders and staff, as do members of the school chaplaincy. Staff have suitable opportunities for training focused on boarding. The recommendations of the last Ofsted inspection on boarding have been met.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

5.1 The quality of governance is good.

5.2 Governance provides good support for the school's aims. The committed presence of many Cathedral figures on the governing body enhances the governors' support for the school's vision of a nurturing, Christian community. This is realised in the excellent personal development of the pupils. Through the secure provision of human and material resources, governors support the high levels of the pupils' achievement. They ensure consistent maintenance of a range of buildings although some areas of boarding, whilst improved since the previous inspection, lack the refinement of others. Recent extension of accommodation for sport through the acquisition of the sports centre has provided increased support for girls' games. The governing body includes a good range of skills but is vigilant in reviewing its resources and identifying areas where additional expertise would be beneficial. Some governors participate in training courses but this aspect of governance is not fully developed. Many governors are regular visitors to the school. There are plans to increase governors' involvement with particular subject areas to maintain an interest and develop oversight of educational standards. This extends the existing, successful support given by nominating a governor for boarding.

5.3 Governors give effective support to the school through careful financial management. They contribute both to re-evaluation of the aims of governance and to the outline development planning instigated by the school's new leadership. Governors provide good oversight of those areas where they have legal responsibilities, although historically this has lacked consistency in monitoring some practice and procedures. They review welfare, staff recruitment, and health and safety arrangements regularly, including an annual review of safeguarding measures.

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

5.4 The quality of leadership and management is good.

5.5 Strong leadership and effective management by senior leaders ensure that the school's Christian values remain the firm foundation of the nurturing community it successfully maintains. These values are reflected in conscientious fulfilment of its responsibilities for safeguarding pupils.

5.6 Since the previous inspection the school has made significant progress in the quality of pastoral care it provides for pupils. This makes an important contribution to their excellent personal development. The provision of clear, highly effective structures and procedures is enhanced by strong monitoring of their effectiveness at all levels of management. Monitoring of teaching and learning has developed substantially to support the pupils' high achievement. This has been strengthened in particular by recent initiatives to make full use of assessment information to monitor the pupils' progress. This development is supported by observation of teaching and scrutiny of the pupils' work by middle managers to give good information about the effectiveness of teaching. This meets the recommendation of the previous inspection. However, this monitoring is not yet fully effective in ensuring that the

characteristics of the most successful teaching in the school are reflected across all subject areas. Similarly, scrutiny of the school's effective implementation of its clear policies and procedures in the areas of welfare, health and safety is not always tight enough. All areas of the school's work are supported by firm financial provision.

- 5.7 Recent evaluation of the school's provision and practice by senior managers is acute and well-informed. It has identified clearly those areas where development is needed to promote further progress and enhance its characteristic high standards. This has resulted in several initiatives for the immediate and long-term future, including a curriculum review, which are realistic, suitably ambitious and include criteria to judge success. These initiatives, together with development planning at middle management level, meet the recommendation of the previous inspection. Planning of middle managers is well formed as a result of good self-evaluation, but sometimes lacks initiative. Where this quality is evident, the pupils' experience is enhanced considerably, such as through opportunities to link with conservatoires in music or develop independent reading through provision of book lists in English by former pupils.
- 5.8 The school appoints well-qualified staff, both teaching and non-teaching, throughout the school. Recent senior appointments have ensured that transition has been managed to excellent effect. Staff training needs are identified and met effectively throughout the school through a suitable appraisal system. Specific focus in training on teaching and learning styles, designed to identify those elements which distinguish the most successful teaching, is currently under-represented. Arrangements to train staff in their roles to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety, including safeguarding procedures, are now implemented effectively. Current checking procedures to ensure the suitability of staff, volunteers and governors to work with children are secure although timescales for some checks have been inconsistent in the past. All staff, including a wide range of efficient and welcoming secretarial, administrative, medical and other non-teaching staff stationed across the school's wide-ranging site, work hard to ensure the success of the school and take an active interest in the pupils' personal and academic development.
- 5.9 Links with parents are excellent. Parents showed high levels of satisfaction with the provision, education and support provided by the school in their responses to questionnaires. They particularly appreciate the curriculum, the provision for the most able and the progress made by their children. They consider standards of behaviour to be high and that their children feel well looked after and safe. Inspection evidence supports these views. A very high proportion said that they would recommend the school to another parent.
- 5.10 A few parents were critical of the way in which their concerns are handled. Evidence shows that the school takes parental concerns seriously and responds constructively and within acceptable timescales. The school has an appropriate complaints procedure but it has not been necessary to implement this formally recently.
- 5.11 The school is very active in communicating with parents, both on academic and pastoral matters concerning their children, via housemasters and house tutors, and also more generally within the parents area accessible through the school website. Additionally, there is a weekly newsletter which contains notices and school news items, as well as information about the week ahead. Participation in school events is encouraged and parents attend activities which include services in the Cathedral, school productions, concerts and sporting fixtures. The Friends is the parents' association and they are active in organising fund-raising events to support the

school. Parents and former pupils contribute to weekly careers lunches for senior pupils.

- 5.12 Information which is required to be available to parents of pupils or prospective pupils is published on the school's website.
- 5.13 Annual parents' evenings are held for each year group, which provide the opportunity for parents to discuss their children's progress in detail. In addition the school provides information evenings, for example about course options, which are carefully planned and provide good quality guidance. Full reports twice per year, as well as four grade/effort assessments, provide parents with regular summary and assessment of their children's progress. Targets are agreed between the pupil and their tutor and these are communicated to parents, who are invited to contact housemasters or tutors if they have any concerns. The school values the partnership it has with parents and the reports, assessments and targets ensure that parents are equipped to work with the school to support their children's learning.

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