



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

KINGSWOOD SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Kingswood School

Full Name of School	Kingswood School		
DfE Number	800/6000		
Registered Charity Number	309148		
Telephone Number	01225 734202		
Fax Number	01225 734205		
Email Address	hmsecretary@kingswood.bath.sch.uk		
Head	Mr Simon Morris		
Chair of Governors	Mr Tim Westbrook		
Age Range	11 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	709		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (385 boys; 324 girls)		
Numbers by Age	11-16:	498	16-18: 211
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	532	
Number of Boarders	Total:	177	
	Full:	145	Weekly: 32
Inspection Dates	20 Jan 2015 to 23 Jan 2015		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was of boarding welfare in April 2013.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations, 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.

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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

Dr Joe Tierney	Reporting Inspector
Mr Richard Gibbs	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Nicola Haworth	Team Inspector for Boarding (Head of Boarding, HMC school)
Mr Philip Capes	Team Inspector (Retired Head, HMC school)
Mrs Paula Cross	Team Inspector (Assistant Principal, HMC school))
Mrs Hilary Moriarty	Team Inspector (Retired Head, GSA school)
Mr Stephen Holroyd	Team Inspector (Head of Department, HMC school)
Mr David Pritchard	Team Inspector (Senior Teacher, HMC school)
Mr Jonathan Reddin	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mr David Woodward	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Kingswood School is a day and boarding school for boys and girls aged 11 to 18 years. The Kingswood School Foundation comprises the senior school and its preparatory school, both governed by a single governing body, with the assistance of various sub-committees. Both schools are on the same site in the northern outskirts of Bath.
- 1.2 Kingswood was founded in 1748 by John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. From 1795 to the 1920s it was a school entirely for the sons of Methodist ministers but then started taking boys from other families and, in 1974, girls were admitted. The school gradually increased in size until it outgrew its original site in Bristol and moved to its present location in 1852.
- 1.3 Kingswood is a Christian foundation, which welcomes boys and girls of other traditions and beliefs, as well as those from Christian backgrounds. It aims to encourage its pupils to develop their powers of reason, to value the qualities of integrity, tolerance, courage, judgement and faith, and to believe in the importance of sustainable development and justice. The school seeks to provide a happy, caring and disciplined environment in which pupils can learn the value of living in a community. It aims to help pupils to realise their academic potential, but also to develop their character, talent, responsibility, independence, and foster a love of learning. Kingswood wishes to serve the local, national and international communities, and to encourage an awareness of environmental and global issues.
- 1.4 The school is selective and takes pupils mainly in Years 7, 9 and 12, with specific assessment papers for each year group. The ability profile of the school is above the national average. Most pupils are of at least above average ability, with around a quarter having well above average ability, and very few having ability that is below average.
- 1.5 The day catchment area comprises the city of Bath and parts of Somerset, Wiltshire and south Gloucestershire. UK boarding pupils are largely drawn from the south-west or are resident abroad. Overseas boarders come from a wide range of countries, including China, Japan, Nigeria, and Russia, as well as others.
- 1.6 At the time of the inspection there were 709 pupils on roll, including 324 girls and 177 boarders. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs or Education, Health and Care plan, but 88 have been identified as having some form of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and 36 receive specialist support. There are 62 pupils whose first language is not English, 28 of whom have support with their English.
- 1.7 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 Kingswood is a very successful school which achieves excellence in all aspects of its provision. It meets its principal aims which relate to producing a happy, caring and disciplined environment in which pupils can realise their academic potential and learn the value of living in a community. This is because standards of pastoral care and pupils' achievements are excellent. The high quality care is built upon excellent relationships between pupils and staff and helps the school to 'foster healthy personal relations and to create a positive, caring and supportive community', one of its aims. Pupils respond to this by developing a strong sense of moral purpose, a respect for the beliefs of others, and a willingness to help those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils' experience of boarding is excellent and reflects the high quality of care shown by the head of boarding, heads of houses and their staff.
- 2.2 Excellent teaching has led to pupils achieving consistently high standards in public examinations over the last four years. The teaching is particularly well planned and captures the imagination of pupils. Consequently, they respond well, work hard, progress very well and take a pride in their work. Recent initiatives in teaching, assessment and pupils' independent learning are beginning to have an impact. Pupils enjoy and appreciate the extensive curriculum offered and the wide range of extra-curricular activities available is a major factor in their success outside the classroom. This results in well-rounded individuals with a wide range of interests.
- 2.3 Such successes are achieved through excellent leadership and management at all levels. The senior management team provide strong leadership so that staff are supported and yet challenged at all times. They have created an atmosphere conducive to good development. Heads of houses, house staff and heads of departments all play their part in attaining high pastoral and academic standards. Planning for development is generally good, but is less formal and regular for boarding education and the structure of the whole-school plan does not link well with those of subject areas. Effective governance has ensured that statutory requirements are met, including for robust safeguarding, and that the school has continued to make good progress. Parents are extremely satisfied with the school, particularly with communications, the care of their child, the boarding, and the range of experiences offered. Links with parents and the local and international community are excellent.
- 2.4 There have been major developments in the accommodation for boarding and teaching, improved resources, and a broader experience for boarders. Standards in sport have improved and governors have been more involved in strategic planning. The checking of staff on appointment is secure. The monitoring of pupils' workload, especially homework, continues and their note-making skills have improved, as has the screening of pupils with learning difficulties and the organisation of their provision.

2.(b) Action points**(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

- 2.5 The school meets all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- 2.6 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.7 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Build upon the recent good initiatives in teaching, assessment, and pupils' independent learning by ensuring consistency of excellence in these areas across the school.
 2. Ensure that the school development plan is reinforced by the subject development plans.
 3. Develop the role of leadership and management of boarding to include more regular review and formal planning.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 The school is successful in meeting its aim to develop well-rounded, informed and responsible individuals. Pupils achieve very high standards, both in academic subjects and in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. They are articulate and confident in expressing their views, but also listen respectfully to others. Standards of literacy are high, with pupils producing cogent, reasoned pieces of writing. Likewise, pupils' numeracy is also very well developed, as was seen by the pace of learning and post-GCSE standard of work produced by Year 11 pupils. That pupils possess advanced scientific skills is demonstrated both by their success in external examinations and in lessons seen during the inspection. Pupils show an impressive facility in using information and communication technology (ICT), for example when pupils in Year 7 programmed a computer to reproduce dance moves they had modelled. Creativity is evident in the impressive suite of works of art on display around the buildings, in original work produced in music and drama, and in the fantastic animals imagined and drawn to practise description in German. Pupils are very capable of reasoning and thinking independently, and are prepared to test their ideas in discussion.
- 3.3 Pupils enjoy great success, both as individuals and in teams, in sport, music and drama. Many players have earned representative honours at regional level in all the major sports offered, and a few have played in national squads, including the Great Britain fencing team. The first team went undefeated through the rugby season of 2014 and the school's teams regularly reach the latter stages of competitions. There is a very high standard of musicianship, with a good number of pupils achieving the highest grades in music examinations, and some performing each year with local choirs and orchestras. The regular drama productions are of high quality, as confirmed by an examination board's decision to choose one as an exemplar for marking. Pupils are much involved in outdoor activities, including the Ten Tors expedition, and many are working towards the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) scheme gold or silver awards. They also take part in national academic competitions, such as the Linguistics Olympiad and the Mathematics Challenge, the most able performing with some distinction.
- 3.4 In the period from 2011 to 2013, the most recent for which national comparisons can be made, results at GCSE were well above the average for maintained schools and similar to those in maintained selective schools. Over this period, the percentage of grades gained at A*/A has been steady at around 60 per cent. Statistical comparisons show that in 2012 and 2013 pupils made good progress from Year 9 to GCSE and excellent progress in 2014. The IGCSE results have been higher than world-wide norms.
- 3.5 Results at A level have been well above the national average for maintained schools, and above the national average for maintained selective schools. Girls' results are slightly higher than boys but, given their starting points, both boys and girls make good progress overall. A-level results have been steady over the last three years, with about 80 per cent of pupils attaining grades A*/B. In 2014, 68 per cent of leavers went to Russell group universities including Oxford or Cambridge, a significant increase over the year before.

- 3.6 Pupils with SEND make good progress, as do both the most able and those with English as an additional language (EAL). This is because of improved screening and effective communication between support staff and class teachers.
- 3.7 Pupils are very willing to learn. They cheerfully complete work, have a consistently positive attitude during lessons, organise their files, books and notes with pride and maintain strong concentration and application. They progress very well at all ages, co-operate fully with their teachers and peers and are willing to help each other. They appreciate and take full advantage of the opportunities to participate in activities, and put a great deal of time and energy into them.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 The school succeeds in its aim of providing a broad and balanced curriculum which is enhanced by an outstanding programme of extra-curricular activities.
- 3.10 The distinctive and flexible curriculum in Years 7 to 9 covers all the required areas of learning very well, with modern foreign languages and creative and practical subjects well represented. Pupils may choose two modern foreign languages from French, German or Spanish; Latin is introduced in Year 8. All three sciences are taught. A wide range of subjects is offered at GCSE and A Level, complemented by an effective general studies programme, much valued by pupils. The provision for careers guidance in the sixth form in preparation for higher education or the world of work is excellent. Careers education is provided effectively within personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) in Years 7 to 9 and in the general studies programme in Years 10 to 11.
- 3.11 The provision for pupils with EAL and SEND is excellent, enabling them to access appropriate internal and external professional support. Drop-in and one-to-one sessions are available, as appropriate. Pupils are supported and developed without impinging on curriculum time. Class teachers demonstrate a clear awareness of their needs and receive good information because of good communication with the head of study support.
- 3.12 Academically gifted pupils are identified through baseline tests, their school and national examination performance, and discussions within departments. Their needs are very well met, both through the curriculum and a range of co-ordinated programmes and enrichment activities, including the Sackett and Wesley Societies. The needs of talented pupils are very well met through the extra-curricular programme.
- 3.13 An excellent range of extra-curricular activities extends throughout the day and includes 100 different activities each term. The provision for sport, music and drama is excellent and many pupils participate in the DofE scheme and other outdoor pursuits. Drama and music follow well-developed programmes and pupils regularly participate in local and regional concerts. There is continual evaluation of the provision by the school and new activities are added, most recently the textiles club and the Ocean Awareness Society. Those with academic interests are offered a variety of opportunities, including Science Olympiads, lectures delivered by external organisations, and visits to universities. The school also hosts an annual Model United Nations and a youth climate summit conference. Pupils' involvement in the extra-curricular programme is highly valued by the school and pupils alike; it is monitored carefully and reported to parents.

- 3.14 Charitable and voluntary work are conspicuous throughout the school. The Open Arms charity initiative provides a unique vocational opportunity for pupils in Years 11 and 12 to help vulnerable children in Malawi. Pupils also raise funds within their houses, for example Westwood House held a sponsored walk for a hospital in India, and pupils have volunteered to mentor disadvantaged children in Kenya.
- 3.15 Pupils take part in a variety of trips through sporting, cultural and aesthetic activities, such as language exchange visits to Spain and France, a geography trip to Iceland and a history trip to Berlin. The biennial senior sports' tour inspires pupils throughout the school. All these activities complement the curriculum very well and widen pupils' horizons. Links with the local community are numerous, and include partnerships with primary and secondary schools, sports clubs and universities, as well as academic and cultural societies.
- 3.16 The attractive and well-resourced library provides an excellent study area for all pupils, supporting the work of academic departments while promoting a love of reading to all. The library staff teach a programme of research skills within the personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) curriculum.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.17 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.18 Teaching fully meets the aim of the school to challenge pupils to meet their academic potential. Excellent and imaginative planning is at the heart of a majority of lessons observed throughout the school and teachers have a good understanding of pupils' needs. Relationships between teachers and pupils are cordial, pupils are well focused and they benefit from high expectations and enthusiasm from teachers, both for their own subjects and their pupils' learning.
- 3.19 Teachers show an in-depth understanding of pupils' needs and use regular and well planned assessments. National data is used to track and monitor pupils' progress, with specific target grades set by teachers in consultation with tutors and pupils.
- 3.20 The quality of marking and assessment is, in many cases, detailed and informative, and informs planning for both teachers and pupils. Teachers' marking often clearly indicates areas of success as well as areas for further improvement. Since the last inspection, marking and assessment have clearly benefitted from a focus on their development. However, the most effective practice is yet to be applied consistently across all areas. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire a small minority of pupils said that teachers did not make sure that they have the right amount of work to do and that homework did not help them to learn. Inspection evidence did not support these concerns.
- 3.21 Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent and their approach to lessons is frequently enthusiastic, which helps pupils to focus and apply themselves. In a majority of lessons observed teachers employed a good variety of teaching methods and materials, including ICT. This ensured a high rate of progress for all pupils and well-paced lessons. Excellent teaching enables all pupils to access and enjoy lesson material and experience creative ways of learning, challenge and extended reasoning. In a small minority of lessons seen less effective planning resulted in slower progress by pupils. Pupils appreciate a range of academic clinics and one-to-one tuition provided by teachers.

- 3.22 Since the previous inspection report the school has made note-taking skills a clear priority. Teachers are given clear guidance on how to structure their teaching so that pupils become effective and independent note-takers. The positive impact of this initiative is evident in pupils' work. Pupils are clearly confident in their ability to work independently, showing interest in their work and talking enthusiastically about their learning experiences. A committee on independent learning, comprising teachers from a range of departments, is working to further foster pupils' independence.
- 3.23 The teaching of pupils with SEND, EAL and the particularly able and talented is excellent and responds effectively to individual pupils' needs. Indeed, there is a clear awareness of care shown by subject teachers and this is much appreciated by pupils. The teaching of particularly able and talented pupils is supported by very effective monitoring and an extensive academic enrichment programme.
- 3.24 In response to the previous inspection report, thorough screening on entry to the school, and again in Year 9, ensures that pupils' needs are identified well in advance of the examination years. Teachers have access to detailed individual education plans and these guide their planning so that pupils with particular learning needs are well supported. There is regular and careful monitoring of pupils' progress both in and outside the classroom.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The spiritual development of the pupils is excellent. Pupils have a keen awareness of their spiritual lives and appreciate the regular assemblies, which are wide-ranging but firmly rooted in the school's Christian ethos. Pupils enjoy their chapel services, as evidenced by the minutes of the school council. They benefit from the time and space for personal reflection, and learn from the guidance on the application of biblical precepts, such as caring for each other and supporting those less fortunate than themselves.
- 4.3 The school promotes in pupils a strong sense of the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect for those with different faiths and beliefs. The presence of boarders from other cultures increases pupils' awareness and knowledge of other beliefs in the context of a fundamentally British Christian school.
- 4.4 The moral development of the pupils is excellent. They understand right from wrong and have respect for good conduct, justice and fairness. They appreciate the need for rules and their value in a community, subjects which they have the opportunity to explore and discuss in the PSHCE programme. They accept responsibility for their own behaviour. In classes they listen attentively to each other, help one another, and are quick and generous to applaud success. The Monday assembly regularly celebrates the success of many pupils in many different activities.
- 4.5 Pupils' understanding of their world and their part in it is well supported by a structured tutorial programme. They feel a moral responsibility for others less fortunate than themselves, specifically supporting, both by active fundraising and by volunteering, major charities in Malawi, Kenya and Southern India. They are in touch with children in Africa, whom they mentor via the internet. Pupils enjoy supporting a range of local and national charities and respond sympathetically to frequent charity presentations in assemblies.
- 4.6 The social development of the pupils is excellent. Pupils develop a sense of responsibility in roles such as house or school prefects, and are proud to support their school in this way. House prefects, who are attached to the junior boarding house, exhibit a sense of responsibility in this role and organise the house singing competition. They also show initiative in contributing to whole-community activities, such as re-cycling and in their membership of the school council, which considers matters of health and safety, as well as pupils' concerns throughout the school.
- 4.7 Pupils have a good general knowledge of, and respect for, public institutions in England, effectively promoted by recurring focus in the PSHCE syllabus. They understand the democratic principles governing Britain and are well prepared to take on the responsibilities of citizenship. The general studies programme of outside speakers on topics ranging from drug awareness to higher education is much appreciated and valued by pupils.
- 4.8 The cultural development of the pupils is excellent. Pupils appreciate and respect the faiths and beliefs of others, but also explore their own cultural assumptions and

values. They value the presence of pupils from other faiths and societies and enjoy debate, as well as celebrating, for instance, Christmas with Orthodox pupils.

- 4.9 Pupils benefit from the breadth and depth of the school's cultural activities in music, art and drama, which are supported by an actor-in-residence and the use of a purpose-built theatre. Frequent trips to the theatres, museums, concerts and art galleries all extend their cultural awareness. Senior pupils are well-rounded, confident, articulate and persuasive young people, well equipped with a strong sense of the contribution they can make to the world.

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

- 4.10 The contribution of the arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.11 Pastoral care is of very high quality and in line with the school's aims to 'foster healthy personal relations and to create a positive, caring and supportive community'. There is a strong sense of this aim throughout the school and while the work of dedicated house staff and tutors underpins pastoral provision, it is seen as an integral part of every teacher's role. Both day and boarding pupils feel extremely well supported. They value the role of the medical centre staff and access to an independent counselling service. Parents who commented were also overwhelmingly positive about the pastoral care provided by staff.
- 4.12 Relationships amongst the pupils and between pupils and staff are excellent. Pupils report that staff are approachable and generous with the time given to pastoral or academic concerns. They are appreciative of the mutually respectful rapport that exists. Prefects undergo appropriate training to provide additional pastoral support to younger pupils within the houses, acting as mentors and valued role models. Pupils are happy, open and relaxed, and clearly proud of their school. They feel safe and well looked after.
- 4.13 A wide choice of carefully prepared and nutritious food ensures that pupils eat healthily. Pupils and staff alike comment very positively on the high quality of all meals. All pupils take regular exercise, making the most of the school's extensive sports provision.
- 4.14 There is a plan in place to improve educational access for pupils with SEND and this is now under review for re-development as it approaches the end of its three-year term.
- 4.15 There are clear policies to promote good behaviour. Pupils on the school site and in class behave very well. They are welcoming, courteous, confident, and show strong respect for the individual and support for one another. Serious sanctions are issued when required and are appropriately recorded. Anti-bullying procedures are clearly published and include a process of questionnaires and feedback, which works effectively. A minority of some pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that they felt the school did not respond effectively to bullying and that teachers were not always fair in the way they allocated rewards and sanctions. Inspectors found no evidence to support these views. Pupils spoken to reported that any bullying or harassment was tackled effectively and that their opinions are listened to and considered.
- 4.16 Pupils feel able to express their opinions and views through the school council, or through informal discussion with staff. Senior prefects also meet regularly with members of the senior management team and house staff.

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

4.17 Arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils are excellent.

4.18 The school takes these matters very seriously and this supports its aspiration to provide a broad and varied education within a safe environment. The school's health and safety policy is comprehensive. Matters are effectively supervised by the health and safety committee which reports to the board of governors. The school is conscientious and thorough in its attention to issues of safeguarding children. Policies and procedures are comprehensive, well implemented, and have full regard to the latest government guidance. All staff receive appropriate training and the necessary recruitment checks are carried out and recorded. The school premises are well monitored with CCTV and are appropriately secured. Arrangements to ensure safe use of the facilities, such as the swimming pool, are effective.

4.19 Rigorous precautions are taken to minimise risks from fire and other hazards, and procedures and equipment are regularly checked by the maintenance manager and deputy head. Fire drills are practised regularly and comprehensive records compiled and stored centrally. Training in fire safety is given to new staff as part of their induction. Senior staff meet on a weekly basis to review health and safety and they undertake a monthly review of the site. Safety protocols in laboratories and workshops are stringently applied. Thorough risk assessments are carried out across the school site and for all extra-curricular and off-site activities. The school's excellent medical centre ensures that pupils who are sick or injured are well cared for. It has excellent protocols and extensive policies in place.

4.20 Admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and correctly stored.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

4.21 The overall quality of boarding is excellent.

4.22 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. A strong sense of community exists amongst the pupils and boarders feel an essential part of the school. The results of the pre-inspection questionnaires and interviews showed that pupils enjoy boarding. Relationships across the community are very strong and new boarders settle quickly and are made welcome. Boarders have a range of appropriate adults to turn to over personal issues, from residential house staff, medical staff, and the chaplaincy. They have many opportunities to voice their views, for example through the school council and the role of prefects. Their comments on catering issues have been swiftly acted upon. Prefects, who are confident in talking to adults as well as sympathetic in helping younger boarders, are keen to accept responsibility. They play an important role in supervising younger pupils and in duties in the dining room and in the houses. Boarders are self-reliant, mix well, and are loyal to each other and to the school. Bullying is rare but is quickly dealt with; sanctions are infrequently needed, but in discussion pupils reported them to be fair.

4.23 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. New boarders are given a comprehensive and welcoming induction. The promotion of boarders' health is effective and arrangements for medical care are thorough. The medical centre has excellent facilities and in responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire a very large majority of boarders stated that they are well looked after if they feel unwell or are injured. Boarders are registered with a local medical practice and two surgeries are

held in school every week; boarders are taken to medical appointments off site when required, such as to an optician or dentist.

- 4.24 Pupils who need EAL tuition or who have learning difficulties are supported appropriately and an independent listener regularly visits the school. A small minority of boarders suggested, in responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, that they are not happy with the availability of snacks, although this was not supported by evidence from the interviews with pupils. Boarders are provided with refreshments in their common rooms at breaks, after school, and after prep; drinking water is readily available throughout the school. Each boarding house is equipped with facilities for preparing snacks and meals and at weekends many boarders enjoy a meal together. The catering department is sensitive to boarders' wishes, provides for special diets, and creates thoughtful and healthy menus. Older boarders can launder their clothes but the bulk of boarders' laundry is managed centrally, with a good service. House matrons ensure that the premises are kept to a high standard of hygiene. In their questionnaire responses, a small minority of boarders said that their belongings were not safe, but valuables may be secured and, in discussion, pupils did not agree that safety was a problem.
- 4.25 Information for parents is disseminated by electronic mail and newsletters; boarders report that contact with parents is easily made. There is a suitable complaints procedure and health and safety requirements are all met. In their questionnaire responses a small minority of boarders stated that they were not happy with the balance of free time and activities, but the general opinion in discussion groups was that the balance was fair. There are many sports and activities on offer in the school day and boarders may also have many opportunities to exercise in the evenings and at weekends. Full boarders report that there are enjoyable activities on offer at weekends, although many like to spend time in town or relaxing in their houses. The vast majority of parents and boarders concur that boarding at Kingswood is enjoyable.
- 4.26 The arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are excellent, with secure procedures and practices ensuring that safety is managed effectively by boarding staff. Evacuation drills are practised at least once a term. Effective anti-bullying and behavioural policies and procedures are in place and behaviour is very good. All boarding house staff and other adults are suitably trained in safeguarding and know the signs to look for and the procedures to follow. The whereabouts of boarders is regularly monitored and the missing person policy is known by all staff. At all times boarders are under the responsibility of suitably trained members of staff and there is always an adult on call each night in each house. Visitors are signed in to school and access to the boarders' rooms is restricted. The families of members of staff living on site have been appropriately checked and have signed agreements with the school. In response to the questionnaire the overwhelming majority of boarders and all parents stated that they feel that boarders are safe.
- 4.27 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the boarding provision is good. Boarding documentation and policies are up-to-date and are well known to staff. A statement of the school's boarding principles and practice is available to parents and staff. Boarding houses are led by dedicated house staff and residential staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. All academic staff have opportunities for training, but training for house matrons is not formally planned. The heads of houses attend regular meetings but there are fewer opportunities for other staff to meet formally with colleagues or line managers. Some accommodation is excellent, some has been improved through a major

building project, and there are plans to refurbish and extend three of the existing houses. There is no strategic action plan for boarding overall, and no audit of needs. This means that, whilst minimum standards have been sustained, some areas for improvement have not been expedited quickly. For example, the water pressure in one house has been low for some time, and has been reported by staff and boarders.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Governors exercise their responsibilities for both the preparatory and senior school through a main governing body, effectively supported by sub-committees, such as those concerned with finance, education, pastoral issues, strategic planning and risk management. Their business is conducted with professional integrity and ensures that the school meets all regulatory requirements, including those for health and safety and the safeguarding of pupils.
- 5.3 Careful financial management has allowed governors to maintain a high standard of staffing and accommodation. Governors have a good range of expertise and have conducted an audit of their skills, with training provided where required. One governor has taken specific responsibility for safeguarding and works very effectively with the school's designated safeguarding lead, as well as checking the school's central register of appointments. An appropriate annual review of the safeguarding policy is undertaken by the governing body in conjunction with the designated safeguarding lead.
- 5.4 Governors have a good insight into the working of the school. There is mutual respect between the chairman and the head and they are in regular contact on school matters. Examination results and statistics on pupils' progress are analysed and governors have had presentations on aspects of school life, such as the monitoring of pupils and the provision for special educational needs. Governors also keep themselves informed through a governors' day, when they visit the school to see it in operation.

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

- 5.5 The leadership and management of the school, including links with parents and others, are excellent.
- 5.6 The senior management team form a strong group; they have a set of complementary skills and lead the school well in all aspects of its work. The style of leadership is characterised by an atmosphere of openness where staff are supported, encouraged and yet challenged to achieve well. Strong leadership and management have ensured that the school succeeds in achieving its principal aims, particularly that of providing a happy, caring and disciplined environment in which pupils can learn the value of living in a community. The school's examination success helps pupils to realise their academic potential, but the strength and nature of the management are major factors in the excellence of the personal development of pupils. This ensures that the school's aim of developing pupils' character, talents, sense of responsibility, tolerance and justice and their independence is met. The health and safety of pupils is secure, and procedures for their safeguarding are effective.
- 5.7 The school's development plan is detailed, ambitious and largely revolves around the functions of the senior staff. Subject areas have their own plans which reflect the industry of the staff, but they vary in quality and format. The structure of the

whole-school plan means that it is not easy for the subject plans to dovetail into it. There is no development plan for boarding, although there is a rolling programme of reviews of individual houses.

- 5.8 The quality of management of subject departments and by pastoral staff, including boarding, is a significant factor in the school's success. These committed middle managers appreciate the support they have from senior staff and this gives rise to an atmosphere conducive to the effective development of not just the whole school but also of individuals. Heads of departments have a healthy collective engagement with recent initiatives. There are good procedures in place for heads of departments to monitor their teams. Similarly, senior managers know the school well and use the system of staff review and an annual analysis of examination performance to monitor and improve performance.
- 5.9 A number of initiatives have been introduced recently, such as the improvement of teaching, developing pupils' independent learning skills, and the assessment of pupils' work. There are examples of excellent practice in these aspects in many areas of the school. The challenge for the future is to embed these initiatives so that a greater degree of consistent excellence is established.
- 5.10 The school has been very successful in recruiting high-quality staff. The provision for their professional development is very generous and beneficial. Needs are often identified through a staff review, but appropriate training can be requested at any time. There is an exemplary programme of mentoring for newly-qualified teachers and teachers new to the school value the excellent support they receive from their colleagues. Staff have received appropriate training in matters of health and safety and in the safeguarding of pupils. Arrangements for checking staff on recruitment are secure and conducted and recorded in accordance with regulatory requirements.
- 5.11 Parents are extremely satisfied with the school, particularly with communications, the care of their child, the boarding, and the range of experiences offered. Links with parents and the local and international community are excellent. The school is conscious of its responsibility to help and support the local community and links with primary schools and an academy are in development. A strong partnership exists between parents and the school. It is promoted by the use of electronic media, including increased information on the school website and the use of the parent portal. Both staff and pupils are encouraged to utilise the virtual learning environment as a means of communication.
- 5.12 Parents receive regular and full reports on their child's progress. The best are very comprehensive and give excellent guidance on what the child needs to do to improve. There are also regular consultations between parents and staff at formal parents' evenings, and the open-door policy means that staff are always available for parents to discuss their child's progress. Pupils' diaries also provide direct opportunity for written communication between home and school.
- 5.13 The school handles any concerns well. The close links with parents ensure that most difficulties are resolved informally and quickly. The school's complaints policy, which is in line with current guidance, is available should any parent wish to invoke the formal process.
- 5.14 Parents are encouraged to take part in the development of their children and some help with careers. They have access to the head's weekly bulletin via the parental portal on the school website and the annual *Kingswood in Focus* magazine describes the many activities which take place. Parents are always welcome at the

school and the thriving Friends Group organises and supports a variety of fundraising and social events. There is also a group of parents known as the Development Group who meet regularly to discuss future initiatives of the school.

- 5.15 Good progress has been made since the previous inspection, with major developments in boarding and teaching accommodation, improved resources, a broader experience for boarders, the development of sport, more strategic planning from governors, and the maintenance of high academic standards. The recommendation of the previous boarding inspection concerning the checking of staff on appointment has been addressed. The previous whole-school inspection in 2011 recommended that the school should monitor the workload of pupils, particularly in relation to homework, develop pupils' note-making skills, and improve the screening of pupils with learning difficulties and the organisation of appropriate provision. The school now monitors the workload of pupils. There are still some pupils and parents who think too much homework is set, but pupils report that, if a problem should arise, then teachers are willing to be flexible with deadlines. Parents may also sign a homework diary to indicate that their child has worked for the allotted time. Successful work has been done on improving pupils' skills of note-taking. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties has improved and screening is now comprehensive and thorough.

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