



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

LUCTON SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

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Lucton School

Full Name of School	Lucton School
DfE Number	884/6007
EYFS Number	EY289937
Registered Charity Number	518076
Address	Lucton School Lucton Leominster Herefordshire HR6 9PN
Telephone Number	01568 782000
Fax Number	01568 782001
Email Address	enquiries@luctonschool.org
Headmistress	Mrs Gill Thorne
Chair of Governors	Mr David Llewelin
Age Range	6 months to 18
Total Number of Pupils	313
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (171 boys; 142 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-5 (EYFS): 66 5-11: 74 11-18: 173
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 236
Number of Boarders	Total: 77 Full: 77 Weekly: 0
EYFS gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	19 March 2013 to 22 March 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 January 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.

Ofsted monitors the work of independent inspectorates, including a sample of inspections, and you can find the latest evaluation of the work of ISI on the Ofsted website.

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 governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Jean Marsland

Mr Paul Bate

Mr Edwin Brown

Mrs Diana Lobban-Small

Ms Alison Horton

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector, Former Head, ISA school

Team Inspector, Head IAPS school

Team Inspector, Deputy Head, HMC school

Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Lucton School was founded in 1708. It is set in over 40 acres of Herefordshire countryside, and located seven miles northwest of Leominster. The school caters for boys and girls aged from six months to eighteen years. Boarding is available from the age of seven. Since the previous inspection, the school has been restructured so that it now has five sections: a nursery, a prep school, a middle school and a senior school, including the sixth form. The original school has been supplemented over the years by a range of Victorian and modern buildings, including the equestrian centre opened in 2010, and the recent development of an area of woodland as an outdoor learning environment. The school is a registered charity and a limited company. A board of governors oversees the work of the school. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for children aged six months to five was inspected in February 2012 and, therefore, was not part of this inspection.
- 1.2 Founded on Christian principles to which it still adheres, the school welcomes pupils of all faiths and none. In line with its founding principles, it “cherishes what is good, wholesome, honest, worthwhile and true”. It aims to bring out the best in every individual, to recognise their unique gifts, talents and abilities and to promote a secure and happy environment in which pupils can flourish academically, socially, intellectually and physically.
- 1.3 There are 313 pupils on roll. Of those, 60 are in the Nursery for children aged six months to four years, all of whom attend part-time. Sixty-two pupils are in the prep school for pupils in Reception to Year 5, and 65 in the middle school for pupils in Years 6 to 8. One hundred and twenty-six are in the senior school for pupils in Years 9 to 13, of whom 51 are in the sixth form. Across the school as a whole, numbers of boys and girls are roughly equal. Day pupils come from a predominantly white British background, with a wide social mix represented. Of the total number of pupils, 77 are boarders who come from the UK and from a wide range of countries, including from Europe, the Middle and Far East and from Africa. Around one-third of boarders come from families serving with the armed forces. Day pupils come from Herefordshire and the surrounding counties with most travelling from within a 15 mile radius of the school.
- 1.4 The ability profile of the pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 is in line with the national average overall, but with a wide range of abilities represented. From Year 7 to Year 11, the ability profile of the pupils is slightly above the national average overall, with a wide range of abilities represented, whilst the ability profile of the sixth form is in line with the national average. The school has identified 54 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disability (SEND), 28 of whom receive specialist learning support. Thirty-one pupils have been identified as having English as an additional language (EAL), all of whom receive additional support. No pupil has a statement of special educational need.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school successfully meets its aims. In all sections of the school, the pupils' achievement has improved since the previous inspection and is now good, and in their activities it is excellent. In the February 2012 inspection of the EYFS, all four aspects were judged to be outstanding. All pupils make good progress, including those with SEND, those with EAL and those who are gifted and talented, who make good and often rapid progress in relation to their abilities because of the high quality support they receive. Throughout the school, the pupils' good achievement is well supported by the good teaching they receive although, on occasion, some teaching is less successful in fully supporting the pupils' achievement and learning. The pupils' achievement is strongly supported by the excellent curricular and extra-curricular provision. It is further supported by the pupils' positive attitudes to their work and activities, by the good level of skills they develop during their time in school and by their almost always excellent behaviour.
- 2.2 At all stages the pupils' personal development is excellent. Their spiritual development is very strong and their moral awareness highly developed. They demonstrate excellent social development and have a very clear appreciation of cultural matters. They have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. They show very high levels of mutual respect and are outstandingly supportive of each other. They willingly take on positions of responsibility and are keen to contribute to the life of the school and to the wider community. The arrangements for pastoral care are excellent and highly effective in supporting the pupils' all-round development. The arrangements for welfare, health and safety are good and ensure the pupils' safety. The quality of boarding is excellent and makes a highly effective contribution to the boarders' well-being and development.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is excellent. The governors are highly committed to the school and its development. They give due care to overseeing the work of the school and take seriously their responsibility to monitor regulatory matters. The quality of leadership and management throughout the school is good, and in boarding excellent, and includes in all parts of the school excellent links with parents. Throughout the school, senior staff work closely together to ensure the continued development of the school and high-quality support for pupils. Should any complaints arise they are handled in line with the published procedure although, as yet, the overall recording of any complaints is not sufficiently detailed to allow any potential patterns to be identified. The school has successfully tackled all the recommendations of the previous inspection and, since then, has made significant progress in what it offers its pupils.

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 quality of all teaching matches the high standard of the best.
 2. Ensure that, should any complaints arise, they are recorded in such a way that any potential patterns could be identified.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is good.
- 3.2 Throughout the school the pupils show good levels of achievement in their work and excellent achievement in their activities. Pupils at all stages demonstrate sound levels of knowledge and understanding; their skills across the curriculum are good. They speak confidently, listen well and have good reading and writing skills. They are coherent in expressing their views and are able to think well independently. They demonstrate excellent creativity, are good at applying their mathematical skills and make effective use of information and communication technology (ICT). The pupils' physical skills are very good. Those with SEND, EAL and the gifted and talented achieve increasingly well as they progress through the school, reflecting the high quality support they receive. In their wider activities, the pupils' achievement is excellent across a wide range of sporting and other fields. Many pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DoE), gaining bronze, silver and gold awards. Excellent results have been achieved in assessments in speech and drama and in music, with many distinctions and trophies gained each year. In sport, pupils have had many successes, both individually and in teams, at both regional and national level. For example, pupils returned unbeaten from a recent rugby tour to Canada and further success has been achieved in the county Sevens. Individual achievements are many, in areas as diverse as judo, the theatre, Nepalese exploration and Latin American dancing. When pupils leave the school at the age of eighteen, nearly all progress on to university, with most gaining places at their first choice.
- 3.3 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 available. Over this period, results in GCSE have been above the national average for maintained schools and have shown improvement from 2009. Results in 2012 show further improvement. Over the same three year period, in 2009 A-level results were above the national average for maintained schools, in 2010 below and in 2011 they were well above the national average for maintained schools and above the national average for maintained selective schools. Evidence provided by the school, from lesson observation and from the examination of work, indicates that attainment in the prep school is good and, overall is above the national average.
- 3.4 Progress is good overall. In the prep school, the pupils' progress has shown a significant improvement since the previous inspection and is now good. From Years 7 to 11, standardised measures of progress indicate that all pupils are making good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability; this is confirmed by inspection evidence. The level of attainment in the sixth form indicates that all pupils are making very good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. Throughout the school, inspection and other evidence indicates that pupils with SEND, EAL and the gifted and talented make good and often rapid progress from their starting points, thanks to the support that they receive.
- 3.5 Throughout the school pupils are effective learners. They behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. They make very good use of the wide range of activities that are available. They settle to work and maintain focus. Their written work shows sound understanding although in some cases their presentation and organisation is not as helpful as it could be in supporting their learning. They value

and support one another to a high degree and work well together and independently. They are keen to improve and are committed to their studies.

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

- 3.6 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.7 Throughout the school, the curricular and extra-curricular provision is highly successful in supporting pupils' achievements and in meeting the school's aims. At all stages, the curriculum offered is very broad, balanced and highly effective in covering all required areas of study and beyond, demonstrating significant progress in this area since the last inspection. Of those parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the overwhelming majority said that their child is offered an appropriate range of subjects and areas of experience.
- 3.8 Throughout the school, the curriculum is appropriate for pupils of all ages and abilities. In the prep school, the curriculum includes specialist teaching in a number of subjects such as ICT. Pupils have access to a well-equipped workshop for design technology and the excellent outdoor learning environment gives further breadth to the curriculum. In the middle school, the curriculum retains its breadth. Pupils in Year 6 benefit from a well-balanced mix of class and specialist teaching. The range of choices offered for GCSE is very wide, as are the choices in the sixth form. Whole-school schemes of work have successfully been introduced for English, mathematics and personal, social and health education (PSHE), which ensure continuity of approach across the different sections of the school. The access course, which enables EAL pupils to spend a year improving their English before embarking on sixth-form courses of study, is an excellent provision and effectively supports the pupils' achievements and progress. The school offers excellent additional flexibility to enable pupils to follow highly-individualised programmes of study including at any one time, for example, a mixture of A-level, GCSE and other courses. Themed weeks, for example in mathematics and science, take place during the year and further extend the curriculum. Library provision throughout the school is appropriate and effective in supporting pupils' learning. For older pupils, this is supplemented by subject-specific books kept in subject areas.
- 3.9 At all stages, the provision for those with SEND and EAL is excellent, the pupils being well supported with individual education plans. Gifted and talented pupils also receive excellent support and are offered a wide range of opportunities to extend their learning, including, for older pupils, undertaking work at undergraduate level. The very well-planned programme for PSHE effectively supports the pupils' wider development. Pupils from Year 9 onwards receive helpful careers advice, whilst those in the sixth form spoke very positively of the advice, personal supervision and guidance they receive as they consider their future choices including higher education. Further support for pupils is provided by the school's options fair for Year 9 and, for Year 12, their attendance at a higher-education convention.
- 3.10 Throughout the school, an extremely wide programme of extra-curricular activities provides outstanding enrichment. The recent provision of equestrian activities is a further enhancement of the already very wide range of activities. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, the vast majority of parents and most pupils said the school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, which the inspection findings confirm. At all ages, a wide range of trips is provided, both locally and further afield, including, for example, trips to support work done in the curriculum such as trips to World War 1 battlefields, and a wide range of sports trips. At all

stages, pupils benefit from excellent and wide-ranging links with the community. For example, the prep and senior school choirs sing at local abbeys and cathedrals, many pupils take part in a local performing-arts festival and the school has well established links with a school in Tanzania.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.11 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.12 The quality of teaching in all parts of the school is good and shows an improvement from the time of the previous inspection. Teaching is now successful in promoting the pupils' learning and progress and in supporting the aims of the school. The best teaching is excellent and, on occasion, it is inspirational. This excellent teaching is characterised by strong subject knowledge, excellent use of time and pace and the highly effective use of resources, including ICT, to promote learning. Lessons are well planned and offer a wide variety of activities, including the highly effective use of a plenary session to reinforce pupils' learning. Emphasis is placed on encouraging independent learning, with questioning successfully encouraging pupils to think for themselves. Such teaching also demonstrates a clear understanding of the needs and abilities of individual pupils and provides appropriate levels of challenge so that all pupils' learning needs are met, including those who have SEND, EAL and are more able. In all of this, the teaching shows progress in line with the recommendation of the previous inspection. In the small number of less successful lessons, teaching is characterised by slow pace, lack of provision to meet different needs, lack of opportunities for individual learning and less effective use of questioning to encourage pupils to think for themselves. As a result, in those lessons the pupils' learning and achievement is not fully supported.
- 3.13 Throughout the school, teachers have excellent relationships with their pupils. The learning environment is happy, purposeful and calm, and praise and encouragement are used readily, all of which effectively support pupils' progress and achievement. Pupils in all parts of the school spoke very highly of the level of individual care and support they receive from their teachers. The vast majority of pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that their teachers help them to learn, which the inspection findings confirm.
- 3.14 In line with the recommendation of the previous inspection, the school's policies on marking and assessment are now implemented more consistently. Assessment information is used effectively throughout the school to plan for and support pupils' learning and progress. Marking is generally good although, on occasion, it does not always fully reflect the school policy because it does not always give guidance on what the pupil can do to immediately improve. The best marking is thorough, up to date, offers detailed comments and sets targets to enable pupils to make further progress. However, in some cases, although supportive comments are supplied, there is a lack of target setting and more focused comments to enable pupils to know how to make further progress. In a few cases, comments are not always followed up. Highly effective use was seen of peer marking which was successful in helping pupils know what they had done well and what would make their work even better.

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 spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 Throughout the school, the pupils' personal development is excellent and fully in line with the aims of the school. Their spiritual development is very strong. At all stages, they successfully develop high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem. They benefit from the Christian ethos of the school and clearly appreciate the non-material aspects of life as shown by their thoughtful responses in assemblies and in lessons, and in their rich, creative work in music and in art and design where their appreciation of the beauty of creation is clearly evident. Pupils throughout the school show clear evidence of being emotionally mature for their age.
- 4.3 At all stages, the pupils' moral development is excellent and their moral and ethical values well developed. They explore different values and beliefs in lessons such as religious education and in the PSHE programme and are respectful of others who hold values different from their own. They demonstrate a clear sense of right and wrong. They understand the need for a code of conduct and respect the reward system that is in operation in the school. As a consequence, their behaviour is almost always excellent. They take advantage of opportunities offered to consider moral and ethical matters and do so in a mature manner as demonstrated by pupils discussing equal rights to education during a tutor period.
- 4.4 The social development of the pupils is excellent. They are polite and courteous. They place high regard on their relationships with each other and with all members of the school and clearly understand their part in building up the school's family community. Friendship patterns exist across age ranges and pupils are outstandingly supportive of one another. On many occasions, pupils were seen to be taking care of one another and they freely talk about the support they receive from their fellow pupils. In all parts of the school, pupils are very willing to accept posts of responsibility, and by doing so, aid the smooth running of the school. They are equally keen to support those who are less fortunate and have recently been involved in raising money for research into leukaemia and cerebral palsy, and to support abused children in South Africa. In addition, many pupils undertake voluntary work as part of the DofE programme. Pupils take an interest in world affairs and have good levels of social, political and economic awareness.
- 4.5 The pupils' cultural awareness is well developed. They have a strong understanding of and a high regard for other cultures. The wide range of nationalities represented in the school allows them to further develop their awareness of other cultural traditions. They work harmoniously together with those from backgrounds different from their own and are highly respectful of those differences. Their cultural development is further enhanced by their studies and activities, in particular in art, music, literature and drama.
- 4.6 At all stages, the pupils personal development is excellent and, by the time they leave the school, they are well prepared to go on and make a positive contribution to society.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 Throughout the school, staff provide first-class pastoral care which fully supports the school's aims. Progress has been made in this area since the previous inspection and the high quality of care now offered is pivotal in helping pupils to attain high standards of personal development. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Relationships amongst pupils, within and across year groups, are outstandingly supportive. Teachers know the pupils very well. Pupils feel very well supported by them and say they are confident there is always a member of staff to turn to should they have any concerns. Pupils' health and general wellbeing are considered of primary importance and are reviewed frequently; action is taken speedily if any concerns arise. Thorough induction programmes support pupils as they move through the school, with a detailed handover between tutors. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire consider that the school cares well for their child; inspection evidence confirms that this is so.
- 4.9 In all sections of the school, pupils are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits and take regular exercise. Pupils speak appreciatively of the food provided. Menus offer considerable choice. A variety of healthy options is always available, as is catering for special diets. Extensive opportunities are provided for pupils to take exercise both within the curriculum and in activities.
- 4.10 Arrangements are effective in promoting high standards of behaviour. Any unacceptable behaviour is dealt with constructively, taking due account of any related difficulty or disability. A small minority of pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that teachers are not always fair in giving rewards and sanctions but inspection evidence indicates that this is not so. A suitable policy is in place to guard against bullying. Pupils say that incidents of bullying are rare and they say they are confident that, should it occur, it would be dealt with quickly and resolved satisfactorily. The school has a suitable programme to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.11 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a minority of pupils said that they do not feel the school asks for their opinions. Inspection evidence indicates that there is an active school council, which allows pupils to put forward ideas, and which has resulted in a number of changes and improvements, for example, changes to the menus and the introduction of a friendship bench. Younger year groups have a suggestions box. In addition, pupils say they are confident in approaching staff directly regarding any suggestions.

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

- 4.12 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.13 Throughout the school, the pupils' welfare is promoted successfully. The parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire consider that the school keeps their child safe, which is confirmed by inspection evidence. A suitable policy for safeguarding pupils is in place and implemented effectively. Careful attention is given to carrying out all the required pre-appointment checks on staff and these are accurately recorded. Staff receive child protection training at the appropriate level

and timeframes relevant to their roles. Appropriate arrangements are in place for meeting the welfare, health and safety needs of boarders.

- 4.14 Suitable policies and procedures that promote the pupils' welfare, health and safety are now in place and are almost always implemented correctly. A few minor health and safety matters were identified during the inspection; the school took immediate action. Measures to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards are carefully thought through and implemented. All staff receive training in fire awareness. Fire drills, including in boarding time, are carried out regularly and efficiently. These are clearly documented and any points of concern are followed up.
- 4.15 Excellent provision is made for pupils who are ill, injured or who have SEND. Pupils benefit from excellent care provided by staff in the medical centre, who make known to staff those pupils who have medical or other needs. A suitable first aid policy is in place and is reflected in practice. First-aid boxes are located at convenient points around the site and are well maintained, as is provision for pupils with particular medical needs. Almost all staff are first-aid trained. Any accidents, illnesses and provision of medication are recorded carefully. The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and are correctly stored for the required time.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.16 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.17 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. Boarders have excellent levels of personal development. They are articulate and open, relating to fellow boarders and adults with an easy confidence. They are proud of their boarding experience and express their views about it positively. Equality and diversity were rated as outstanding in the last Ofsted inspection; this continues to be a hallmark of the boarding community with its wide range of nationalities, gender mix and age span from seven to eighteen years. Boarders value immensely this aspect of their community; younger boarders enjoy having "boarding siblings" and benefit from having them as role models; older boarders said that the younger ones "bring energy" to the house. Such tolerance and understanding for each other is outstanding. The many cultures represented are recognised in a number of ways. For example, Chinese New Year and the Russian Orthodox Christmas are celebrated by all. Boarders are at ease in observing the practices of their own faiths and, in this, are fully supported by their fellow boarders. The boarders value the breadth of friendships they can make and appreciate the way in which, as new boarders, they were welcomed by their fellows. Boarders of all ages can have positions of responsibility as heads of boarding and corridor monitors. These roles are respected and supported; when a boarder was finding the role difficult another offered to help and they now work in partnership.
- 4.18 Relationships between house staff and boarders are excellent. Most boarders, although aware of all those they can contact if they have worries or concerns, said they would go first to one of the house parents or matron. They feel safe in the houses. The overwhelming majority of parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed with this, and the inspection findings confirm this is so. Behaviour among boarders is generally almost always excellent. Boarders are aware of the house rules. They consider them fair and accept the use of sanctions when needed. In addition to the extensive range of activities offered by the school, boarders of all ages fully appreciate the excellent programme of trips and activities offered at weekends, from the much-enjoyed visits to a local supermarket and many

city centres to more adventurous days out, such as kayaking, paintballing and go-karting.

- 4.19 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. House staff have an excellent rapport with boarders and know each individual extremely well. Excellent communication between boarding staff and with teaching staff ensures that individual boarders' personal, social and academic needs are known and responded to quickly. Thorough care plans are in place where required. Despite a busy routine before and after school, boarders have appropriate time to eat well, complete homework and have recreational or private reflective time, and have access to school facilities such as the sixth form centre and the swimming pool. The boarding houses are secure. Where CCTV is in operation, it does not have an adverse impact on the boarders' privacy. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of boarders said that their belongings were not safe. However, inspectors confirmed that good arrangements are in place for keeping valuables safe. Boarders have access to a suitable number of communal spaces: areas for relaxing, with television, games, pool and table tennis areas and the recently-opened, excellently-appointed café where boarders can prepare their own drinks and snacks and socialise. A rolling programme of re-decoration and upgrading is underway which, where completed, has enhanced the quality of the accommodation. Most boarders are accommodated in single rooms, although some share two or three-bedded rooms. Single rooms are small but recent improvements to storage have been well-received by the boarders. Boarders say they are content to have less space in return for a single room. A minority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that the boarding accommodation was not comfortable; however, inspection evidence does not support this. Boarders are able to maintain good links with their families through a variety of technologies: landlines, internet and mobile phones. Boarding staff communicate effectively with parents and guardians. An excellent support-staff network operates within the houses; cleaning takes place every day and boarders' laundry washed on a rota and returned within twenty-four hours. Food for boarders is plentiful and nutritious with a wide choice available at all meals. There is a four-weekly menu cycle and boarders' views on the food provision can be put forward via the boarding committee which meets regularly. A minority of boarders responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that the food is not good, but inspectors do not agree.
- 4.20 Arrangements for boarders' welfare and safeguarding are excellent. All required pre-appointment checks on staff are carefully carried out and the school implements effectively the safeguarding policy and all other relevant policies. The matron, who is the school's designated senior person for child protection, and all house staff, have a sound understanding of safeguarding and of their responsibilities in this area. All have received training appropriate to their roles. Effective arrangements are in place to prevent bullying. Boarders are clear how they can access external help lines, should the need arise, and have the contact details of an independent listener.
- 4.21 The medical provision and care for boarders are excellent. The overwhelming majority of boarders who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that they were well looked after when ill or injured, which is confirmed by the inspection findings. The medical centre has suitable facilities for boarders who are ill, and arrangements are in place for boarders to access other local services or provision if required. All visits to the medical centre are detailed in the daily medical diary. The administration of medicines in the houses is clearly recorded; medicines are securely stored and amounts are recorded whenever dispensed. All boarding staff are trained in the safe handling of medicines. Fire drills are carried out termly during

boarding time. They are clearly documented and any follow-up actions addressed. Trips and activities are carefully assessed for risk, and appropriate permission sought from parents. More than sufficient staff are always on duty, and available to attend to boarders' needs.

- 4.22** The leadership and management of boarding are excellent. There is a strong emphasis on the welfare and safeguarding of boarders and on evaluating and improving the provision. The head and deputy head meet weekly with the boarding team. Boarding is fully supported by the governors, who are committed to boarding and have a well-considered development plan for this area of the school. A small minority of the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that boarding is not well-organised and managed, but this view was not confirmed by the inspection findings. The recommendations made at the last Ofsted inspection have all been successfully implemented. Communication between boarding and academic staff is highly effective. All boarding staff know individual boarders well. This was corroborated by the overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, who also said that the boarding experience helped their child's progress and development, both of which were confirmed by the inspection findings. Routines and arrangements are consistent across both houses. The small group of boarders resident in School Cottage feel equally at home in the communal areas of Croft House. Contact with boarders' parents is regular, with clear records kept. The vast majority of parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that they could contact staff easily. This was confirmed by the inspection findings. Other records relating to boarders are comprehensive and kept securely.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent
- 5.2 The governors are highly committed to the school and fully support it in achieving its aims. They exercise effective oversight of all sections of the school and take seriously the discharging of their responsibilities for maintaining educational standards, financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. They have an excellent knowledge of the work of the school. They are highly supportive in providing support, challenge and stimulus for growth and work closely with the senior management team (SMT), including on joint strategy days, to identify areas for future development.
- 5.3 The governors are fully aware of their responsibilities for monitoring regulatory matters. They check policies and procedures and their implementation, including reviewing annually the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding and child protection arrangements. They ensure that the necessary pre-appointment checks on staff are carefully carried out and recorded accurately.
- 5.4 The governors have a very wide range of experience and expertise to bring to their role as governors. A very effective induction training is provided for new governors and all governors are conscientious in undertaking further training to support their roles. They provide strong support for the SMT, acting as highly effective critical friends of the school. Governors are frequent visitors to the school, attending meetings, working with the SMT and other staff, observing lessons, visiting the boarding houses, assisting with the appointment of staff, attending events and meeting socially with staff.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents and carers, is good.
- 5.6 Throughout the school, the quality of leadership and management is good and includes excellent links with parents. The SMT fully support the school's aims and its members are highly committed to continuing to develop all aspects of the work of the school. In response to the previous inspection report, the SMT has been restructured to better meet the needs of the school. A number of new posts have been created to ensure more focused leadership and management of each section of the school. Throughout the school, members of the SMT work closely together and are successful in providing clear educational direction and high quality care and support for pupils, including in the boarding provision, where the leadership and management are excellent. Since the previous inspection, the school has made significant progress in what it offers to its pupils, as shown by their now good levels of achievement across all sections of the school and by their now excellent personal development, so that the school is now successful in meeting its aims.
- 5.7 Self-evaluation is accurate, and the SMT sets suitable priorities and ensures they are achieved. The school development plan, drawn up in consultation with staff and governors, clearly identifies priorities and what the school needs to do to achieve

them. A well thought-out programme of meetings ensures clear communication among the SMT. This, along with the rigorous systems employed to monitor the pupils' overall well-being and academic progress, ensures that any concerns are quickly identified and acted upon. The academic committee has been successful in developing continuity of curricular provision throughout the school in a number of subjects. In line with the recommendation of the previous inspection, the school has ensured that those middle managers with responsibility for the curriculum have received appropriate training towards developing their roles. Also in line with the recommendation of the previous inspection, the quality of teaching has improved so that it is now good throughout the school. However, as yet, the monitoring of teaching is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that the standard of teaching is always consistent and matches the high quality of the best, with the result that pupils' learning and achievement is not always fully supported.

- 5.8 At all levels of responsibility the leadership and management are effective in the discharging of their delegated responsibilities. All required pre-appointment checks on staff are carried out carefully and recorded accurately. Policies are regularly reviewed and, in line with the recommendations of the previous inspection, are now almost always implemented effectively. Management at all levels is successful in securing, supporting, developing and motivating sufficient high quality staff and in ensuring they receive appropriate training for their roles, including in the safeguarding of pupils and in welfare, health and safety. An appropriate induction programme supports new staff. Further support for staff is provided by the appraisal system which allows them to reflect on their work and to set targets for further development which, in line with the recommendation of the previous inspection, are linked to the school development plan.
- 5.9 The school has excellent links with parents, an improvement from the previous inspection. Throughout the school, parents have many opportunities to be involved in its life and work. Regular parents' evenings are held at which parents discuss their child's work and progress. In addition, they are invited to information evenings at key points such as choosing subjects at GCSE and A-level options. Parents are also invited to many events organised by the school, including concerts, productions, special services and assemblies, as well as being invited to a wide range of events organised by the very active parents association.
- 5.10 Parents of both current and prospective pupils are provided with all the required information about the school. Of the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the overwhelming majority expressed satisfaction with the ease of obtaining information about the school. The school website contains much useful information as well as reporting on events and celebrating pupils' successes. These are also reported on and celebrated in the *Luctonian Magazine* and in *Lucton News*, an eight-page weekly newsletter which reports on events and activities in all parts of the school. In addition to discussions at parents' evenings, parents receive frequent reports and grade cards detailing their child's work and progress. Reports are helpful, detailed, and personal to the child and set targets for further improvement. Should parents have any concerns they have ready access to staff, including to members of SMT, who make themselves available to parents at the start and end of each day. The school has in place an appropriate complaints procedure. Any complaints that might arise are dealt with in accordance with the procedure. Should any complaints arise, records are kept of the school's response although, currently, the overall recording of any complaints is not sufficiently detailed to ensure that any potential patterns could be identified.

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