



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

PAPPLEWICK SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Papplewick School

Full Name of School	Papplewick School
DfE Number	868/6000
Registered Charity Number	309087
Address	Papplewick School Windsor Road Ascot Berkshire SL5 7LH
Telephone Number	01344 621488
Fax Number	01344 874639
Email Address	schoolsec@papplewick.org.uk
Headmaster	Mr Tom Bunbury
Chair of Governors	Brigadier (Retd) Alwin Hutchinson
Age Range	6 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	211
Gender of Pupils	Boys
Numbers by Age	6-11: 133 11-18: 78
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 85
Number of Boarders	Total: 126
Inspection dates	14 May 2013 to 17 May 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 October 2008.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors and another governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and chapel services. 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 Stephen Grounds

Mrs Elizabeth Hill

Mr Oliver Stokes

Mr Jason Hyatt

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Headmistress, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Papplewick School is an independent preparatory school for pupils aged from six to thirteen, initially established in 1947 and since 1964 registered as a charitable trust with a board of governors. Boarding is optional in the lower years and compulsory from the summer term of Year 6. The school is set in spacious grounds on the edge of Ascot, in Berkshire. There are extensive facilities for sporting activities, music and art. The boarding accommodation is divided into several dormitories housed in the upstairs of the main school building. Boarders have complete flexibility each week to stay on a Saturday night or not.
- 1.2 The school aims to enable its pupils to achieve their potential by providing an atmosphere in which they feel secure and confident. It seeks to provide dedicated staff who are committed to enabling pupils to enjoy the broadest possible range of academic and extra-curricular experiences. It aims to put the happiness of each pupil first. The school is attended by 211 pupils, 126 of whom are boarders
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection the school has introduced a Year 2 class, restructured the management of boarding and improved its entrance accommodation where parents can informally meet staff at the beginning and end of the day.
- 1.4 The school is academically non-selective. Its ability profile is above the national average overall, and rises higher up in the school with some older pupils having well above average ability. There is a fairly wide spread of abilities represented in most cohorts. The school has identified 24 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) but no pupils currently have a statement of special educational needs. There are 22 pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) and, of these, 16 receive support for their English. Approximately one in five pupils has an ethnic minority background, and one in seven is from overseas. Most of the pupils come from professional or business backgrounds. All pupils proceed to selective independent schools at the age of thirteen.
- 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 Relationships at all levels are outstanding and pupils and staff have a strong loyalty to the school. All pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, achieve and make excellent progress. Throughout the school pupils display very secure knowledge, understanding and skills, and apply English and mathematics consistently at a high level. They embrace logical thinking and problem-solving as they get older. They are adept in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in music technology and art. The former represents a development in technology recommended by the previous inspection. They achieve excellent results in examinations to independent schools and a fifth are successful in scholarship examinations. The curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of opportunities. It is supplemented by an extensive range of visits, sporting opportunities and clubs. The school has extended its links with the community to the benefit of pupils, as recommended by the previous inspection. Staff are dedicated and hard working. Teaching is excellent and a major strength of the school. The development of more consistent marking and the better use of assessment data were advised at the previous inspection. The school has moved a long way forward with the latter but there is still inconsistency in marking. However, pupils say that they receive good oral feedback which identifies what they need to do to improve. The school is well resourced. The boarding, a major part of the school's provision, is excellent and meets all of the National Minimum Standards.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils are happy and confident and enjoy their life in the school, a feature which fulfils one of its principal aims. Pupils have a good appreciation of the non-material aspects of life, excellent social skills, and a strong sense of right and wrong. They take up opportunities to exercise responsibility. The ethnic diversity of the school contributes to the cultural awareness of pupils. Pupils are supported by excellent pastoral care and welfare arrangements and effective procedures for safeguarding, health and safety. The pupils' pre-inspection questionnaire responses showed a very high level of satisfaction with the provision of the school.
- 2.3 The governance of the school is good and at all levels leadership and management of the school are excellent. The senior management team (SMT) and other staff take their direction from the headmaster, who leads by example and steers the school purposefully. The management of boarding has been reorganised since the previous ISI inspection and its quality is excellent. Self-evaluation is managed well but the systems of following through the monitoring of teaching and learning lack clarity. The school promotes excellent links with parents. The number of pre-inspection questionnaires returned from them was considerable and the responses were extremely positive.

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. Widen further pupils' cross-curricular use of ICT.
 2. Increase consistency in the marking of pupils' work.
 3. Increase the effectiveness of monitoring by the SMT and the governors in relation to systems for the review of teaching and learning.

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 and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The school successfully achieves its aim of enabling pupils to grow in confidence and express themselves in preparation for their senior school.
- 3.3 Throughout the school pupils display very secure knowledge, understanding and skills, and apply English and mathematics consistently at a high level. Pupils have impressive speaking skills. They readily embrace logical thinking and problem-solving, particularly as they get older. Strong evidence of this was seen in a Year 8 class where pupils impressively adopted the role of examiners in setting and rejecting questions for a mock scholarship paper. In music technology and art pupils are adept at using ICT, in the former to digitally create and edit music which can then be shared via email, and in the latter to produce artwork. Pupils enjoy success in the UK Intermediate Mathematics Challenge, where the pupils have recently had significant successes at gold, silver and bronze levels.
- 3.4 Pupils' creative skills are strong. This is evident throughout the school with examples of high-quality two- or three-dimensional art from every pupil on display. Three-quarters of pupils learn a musical instrument with many taking external examinations and the best reaching grade 8 before leaving the school. Pupils perform in various choirs and instrumental ensembles, in addition to playing in orchestral and string events at other schools. A cello performance, observed during chapel, was exceptional. Strong levels of performance and achievement are evident in sport, with pupils from Year 2 having the opportunity to represent the school in competitive sport at their appropriate level and in a variety of sports. The school recently became National Prep School Champions for basketball and achieved third place in the National Arena Polo Championships.
- 3.5 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests, but on the evidence available it is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations. The pupils follow a broad and demanding curriculum which exceeds the level of demand of most schools and on leaving the school they all proceed to independent schools, with roughly a fifth gaining academic, musical, dramatic and all-rounder scholarships to prestigious schools. This level of attainment, as judged by the inspection, indicates that pupils, including the most able, make excellent progress in relation to pupils of similar ability.
- 3.6 Pupils with SEND and EAL make progress which is at least as good as their peers. Overseas pupils whose progress had initially been slow, were making, as a result of support over time in English, at least as good progress, or better, than their English peers.
- 3.7 Pupils have a strong work ethic and apply themselves conscientiously to their work. They eagerly seize opportunities to offer opinions or answers, whether solving algebraic or scientific equations in the upper years or identifying 'ch' sounds in a Year 2 French game. High levels of enjoyment were a major feature of most lessons observed. Final-year pupils display a healthy competitive spirit which, they feel, spurs them on to higher results. Pupils approach work in a mature and conscientious fashion and highlight the negative impact that 'racing' and not checking their work thoroughly has on their achievement. The quality of

presentation in the exercise books of a minority of pupils was untidy. Pupils work closely with one another, with one Year 8 pupil stating that co-operative learning enabled strengths to be pooled. The volume of work produced by the pupils is high.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 Pupils benefit from a curriculum that is stimulating and of high quality, which enables them to enjoy a wide range of opportunities, and which thus meets the school's aims. It is well planned and supported by schemes of work. The already wide curriculum has been broadened since the previous inspection to include music technology. The breadth provides pupils with an excellent range of learning experiences and contributes very effectively towards their development of knowledge, skills and understanding. The provision for pupils with SEND is strong, with clear strategies for individual support. For these pupils there are regular meetings with staff and parents so that teachers can adapt work appropriately. As recommended in the previous inspection the amount of technology has been increased, in part, by the introduction of music technology. The resources supporting the curriculum are excellent and pupils now benefit from much improved ICT resources as well as a well-provisioned library. ICT is used effectively with pupils with specific learning difficulties. There has been progress in the usage of ICT by pupils across the curriculum since the previous ISI inspection but it remains limited in some subjects. The curriculum is extremely effective in covering the requisite areas of learning for preparing pupils for life beyond the school.
- 3.10 The breadth of sporting opportunities enables all pupils to develop their physical skills. Sport is fully inclusive, with opportunities for pupils of all ability levels to both enjoy and make progress. At the same time strong sportsmen are well challenged and given lots of opportunities to improve their skills.
- 3.11 The academic curriculum is enriched by an extensive range of well-organised educational trips and opportunities. Languages feature strongly with pupils participating in cross-curricular language days and residential trips to France. Practical experiences in other subject areas occur closer to home. Year 8 pupils explore the geographical features of Swanage, whilst those in Year 4 have had the opportunity to experience life as a Viking and Anglo-Saxon for a day. Recent productions of *Treasure Island*, theatre trips and junior variety performances position drama as an integral part of the school.
- 3.12 The school's extra-curricular programme is comprehensive. This allows the pupils to enjoy a multitude of opportunities to explore existing or develop new interests and talents. The school fulfils its aims of providing opportunities for pupils to succeed and feel valued in anything they do.
- 3.13 The school has excellent links with the local and wider community, which it has developed, as recommended, since the previous ISI inspection. It has forged a longstanding bond with a local day centre for the elderly. Pupils visit the centre on a weekly basis as part of the school's activity programme. They value the experience and the sense of worth that it brings to those they visit as well as themselves. Hospitals, and local and overseas charities, such as a Senegalese orphanage, are supported either through chapel collections or bespoke fundraising events, as illustrated by a 'Shoebbox' Appeal or the whole school's annual sponsored walk and picnic lunch through Windsor Great Park. Local primary schools benefit from the

school's resources and expertise, either through its hosting of geography cluster meetings for primary teachers or by members of staff becoming governors. The school's sporting and adventure tours overseas promote links with schools in South Africa, Chile and Argentina, which are reciprocated when overseas pupils from these schools visit the UK.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.14 Teaching is excellent.
- 3.15 Teaching is effective in helping pupils achieve their potential and thus supports the aims of the school.
- 3.16 Across the school over half the teaching observed was excellent and very little was less than good. There were a small number of weaker lessons in the lower school. Teaching is the principal factor in the progress of the learning, achievements and well-being of the pupils. Following the school's guidelines, teachers have high but not unrealistic expectations and, for the most part, a very secure knowledge of their subject areas. Lessons are generally well planned, and at their best exhibit fun, pace and challenge. The most effective lessons begin with a sharing of lesson objectives with pupils, who, as a result, know exactly what the focus of a lesson is.
- 3.17 A strength of the teaching is the wide array of teaching methodologies, techniques and activities employed to engage and to enthuse pupils in a strongly oral style, which is thoroughly enjoyed by and suited to the entire ability spectrum. This is a particular strength in French lessons where pupils were observed using the language successfully, not only to answer questions on the vocabulary and grammar but were also posing questions in the language about grammatical points. In a third of lessons seen independent learning was prominent. In science very good use is made of a range of equipment appropriate to primary schools. Lessons very frequently and usefully end with a review of what has been achieved. Homework is appropriate to the range of pupils' abilities. Pupils comment positively on the breadth of resources that teachers produce.
- 3.18 Another strength of much of the teaching is the way the tasks of the lesson are varied according to the needs of the groups of pupils. Pupils say that the individual attention they receive is good and this is corroborated by parents.
- 3.19 Teachers know their pupils' pastoral and academic needs extremely well. Relationships between pupils and teachers are an outstanding strength of the school and are seminal in creating the strong sense of a mutually supportive and trusting community. Off-task behaviour was rarely seen.
- 3.20 The integration of ICT into teaching strategies is reflected in the effective use of interactive whiteboards. Pupils with SEND and EAL are very well catered for with small class sizes which allow for informal and formal attention to be widely given. The setting arrangements in the upper school are very effective in ensuring that the school's policy of challenge across the ability range is successfully achieved.
- 3.21 Much teaching is clearly informed by assessment. The school has responded to the recommendations of the previous inspection report and its current assessment regime makes teachers fully aware of pupils' relative progress and motivates pupils. In the classroom there is much informal oral feedback and pupils say that they are aware of the progressions they need to make in order to improve. Written feedback is more variable. In spite of efforts to ensure more consistency in marking there is

still much variability despite effective practice in some subjects where pupils are strongly challenged. This is especially the case as pupils approach Year 8.

- 3.22 The centralised record of assessments on the school information management system is a helpful tool in tracking pupils' attainment.

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 pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 In successfully promoting pupils' personal development the school meets its aim of enabling pupils to achieve their potential.
- 4.3 Pupils' spiritual development is good: they display a strong appreciation of the non-material aspects of life and respond to ideas of beauty, as witnessed in their appreciation of a cello piece in chapel. At a more overt religious level pupils respond positively to chapel services, assemblies and divinity lessons. An assembly theme referring to the teachings of Christianity, Islam and Judaism was well received and understood, and in a Year 7 class on the New Testament the pupils showed critical understanding of the text as well as factual knowledge. They show empathy with others, appreciating the problems which make life difficult for others. Pupils have a good understanding of world faiths, appropriate to their ages, and are able to discuss differences and similarities of belief with tact and confidence.
- 4.4 Pupils' moral development is strong. The positive ethos illustrated by the staff carries over to the pupils, who have a good sense of right and wrong. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and make positive choices. Behaviour is good in lessons and the general conduct around the school at lunchtimes, during break and in lessons is excellent. Broader issues of morality are reinforced in assemblies, to which pupils are very responsive. They enjoy opportunities to debate ethical issues in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and religious education (divinity) lessons.
- 4.5 Pupils have well-developed social skills and their social awareness is excellent. Pupils assimilate 'Papplewick values'. They display excellent manners both to each other and to adults and movement around the school is courteous and orderly. Pupils went out of their way to greet inspectors and help them when they appeared lost. Pupils develop confidence and self-esteem which they demonstrate in concerts, drama and assemblies. In interviews the pupils were able to express their opinions clearly and with maturity, and the readers in assembly read with confidence and understanding.
- 4.6 Pupils' personal development is successfully encouraged through opportunities for taking responsibility at a number of levels. Year 8 pupils take on leadership roles, particularly in sport. Older pupils act as buddies to new pupils and as learning buddies for absent pupils. Other examples include committee members, animal monitors in the Snake Club, or those leading personal service activities. Pupils volunteer to be vergers in chapel regardless of their own personal faith. Year 8 pupils leave the school as confident, well-rounded individuals prepared for their next stage of their education.
- 4.7 The cultural development of pupils is of a high quality. They are able to appreciate different cultures through the curriculum in subjects such as music, art, classics and French and through activities such as the Senegalese lunch, Burns supper and the European day of culture. Pupils have an excellent appreciation of cultural diversity through the multi-ethnicity of the school population. A recent set of cultural awareness 'pilot' lessons gave non-British pupils an understanding and appreciation

of British culture. Pupils' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive and showed that they are highly appreciative of the school.

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

- 4.8 The quality of pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 The pastoral care provided by the staff strongly supports the school's aim to ensure that a pupil's happiness comes first. The tutor system is a particular strength of the school and provides very effective individual support and guidance. Tutors use a variety of both formal and informal meetings with their tutees to monitor and support the pupils' pastoral needs. The daily staff briefing to discuss pastoral issues ensures that there is a seamless link between boarding and the school day for pupils. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and positive. Tutors are the first point of contact for parents when dealing with any pastoral issues for their children. The needs of any pupil causing concern are brought before the pastoral care committee and action points are shared with the whole staff. Tutors produce a tutor's advice report each term informing parents of the progress of their child.
- 4.10 Pupils confirm that bullying rarely happens in any part of the school. Should it occur, they have every confidence that staff will deal with it quickly and appropriately. Arrangements to promote positive behaviour and respect towards other pupils work well. These are widely supported by tutorials, circle time, PSHE and assemblies. Pupils with SEND and EAL believe that the teachers understand their personal difficulties. Pupils throughout the school are informed about healthy lifestyles and encouraged to eat healthily. The school offers a balanced and varied diet to the pupils through meal times and snacks. All pupils participate in a wide range of physical exercise on a frequent basis. Pupils are most enthusiastic about the work of the food committee and the pupils' fund that provides them with an opportunity to experience basic democracy and to discuss their views and ideas with the school management.
- 4.11 The school fulfils its duties under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

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

- 4.12 The school's arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 4.13 The school employs a health and safety consultant who continually advises on aspects of policies and practice. Formal reviews of policies and procedures ensure that all necessary aspects of safeguarding, welfare, health and safety are in good order.
- 4.14 Appropriate arrangements secure the health and safety of pupils and thorough attention is paid to child protection in all parts of the school. The headmaster is the designated child protection officer (CPO) and has had recent training to update his expertise in safeguarding. Safeguarding procedures have been strengthened by the appointment of a deputy CPO. The CPO and deputy CPO ensure regular training for the other members of the staff. The school maintains good and productive links with the local authority. A governor takes specific responsibility for overseeing child protection matters and the governing body as a whole annually examines its child protection procedures.
- 4.15 Fire drills take place regularly and the school has used specialist external advice to periodically review its fire prevention arrangements. Effective measures are taken

regarding pupils' safety in organising the evacuation of the school in case of fire or other hazards. Since the previous inspection there has been an inspection of asbestos and a full wiring survey has been completed. Health and safety training for the whole staff takes place annually. Risk assessments are prepared for tours, visits, trips, and activities. In addition, an annual major risk assessment of facilities is carried out and is reported to the governing body. The bursar maintains a constant and systematic review of the school site.

- 4.16 Admission and attendance records are properly maintained and stored.
- 4.17 The facilities for pupils who are sick or injured meet requirements. Systematic records of accidents and the dispensing of medicines are kept. The first aid policy is comprehensive and the school has an appropriate number of staff with first aid qualifications.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.18 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.19 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. The relationships between boarders and the staff are a great strength of the school. The boarders feel happy, extremely safe and very well supported by staff within the boarding community and know who they can approach for personal guidance and help, including the nominated 'outside listener' and the school chaplain. The boarders are courteous and well mannered in their approach and they enjoy being part of the boarding community.
- 4.20 The boarders are keen to express their views, taking an active role in pupil bodies such as the food committee and the pupils' fund. They are proud to contribute to the smooth running of the boarding, supporting new boarders and helping each other to change bedding on a weekly basis. Support for boarders with EAL and SEND is a strength. Boarders appreciate differing cultural and ethnic needs, which result in an outstanding sense of mutual respect. They are cheerful, confident, self-reliant and tolerant, and respect each other and the staff who care for them. They strongly value the friendships they make and enjoy their interaction with friends during the many and varied activities provided. Robust systems of behavioural management are well understood by the boarders. Boarders have the opportunity to listen to local and national news broadcasts during breakfast and they have access to a range of newspapers in the well-resourced school library. Mealtimes are relaxed but ordered; each meal ends with staff announcements and a prayer.
- 4.21 The quality of the boarding provision and care is excellent. The highly nurturing environment supports the individual needs of boarders exceptionally well. Houseparents specialise in particular age groups ensuring that they have a key understanding and knowledge of the boarders in their care. Boarding staff fill in a daily 'Handover' book informing other staff of pastoral and welfare issues. The daily staff briefing ensures that pastoral information on boarders is shared between boarding and teaching staff. The registered school nurse accurately stores comprehensive medical records, including prior medical history and permissions for emergency treatment. The boarders' needs are supported by access to a local doctor, dentist, optician and other specialists. The school offers a nutritious and balanced menu. Notwithstanding this a number of boarders commented that they would like greater choice with their evening meal. There is a broad range of snacks available in the evenings and 'seconds' are offered at most meals.

- 4.22 The boarders enjoy the wide variety of activities on offer, which make use of the school's excellent facilities and grounds. An exciting recreational programme is planned for the weekends, which is enjoyed by most of the full boarders. These include visits to local attractions and well-planned activities on site. Sunday breakfast is a particular highlight for many of the boarders. In their questionnaire responses, some boarders raised concern over the safety of their valuables. The school has taken measures to deal with this, offering boarders lockable individual storage. Boarders feel that this has made a considerable difference and that their valuables are safe. They are able to contact their parents easily through the use of personal mobile phones, email and school landlines.
- 4.23 The boarding accommodation is comfortable and secure, but the décor in certain areas of the pupils' boarding is slightly dated. There is an appropriate number of toilets and washroom facilities spread amongst the accommodation; these are well maintained and clean. A high proportion of the teaching staff live on the school site and attend meals with the boarders, creating a strong family environment.
- 4.24 The effectiveness of arrangements for welfare and safeguarding is excellent. The National Minimum Standards for Safeguarding are fully met through a clear and comprehensive policy and robust safer recruitment procedures. Safeguarding training for boarding staff is regular and up-to-date. The school carries out regular fire evacuation practices that are reviewed each time. There are appropriate fire risk assessments in place for the boarding houses and the school has good links with the local fire brigade and external fire precaution advisors. Boarding staff have had recent training in fire prevention and the use of extinguishers. In conjunction with the school nurse, catering staff are made aware of individual dietary needs of boarders through photos and care plans that are displayed in the kitchen area. Bullying is not identified as an issue amongst the boarders and they know that there are a number of adults available to whom they can talk. Boarding staff know the whereabouts of the boarders through regular official checks and all staff are aware of the procedure in the event of a missing boarder.
- 4.25 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the boarding provision is excellent. The school has met all of the National Minimum Standards for boarding. Policies in boarding are compliant and the staff are aware of the appropriate procedures. The boarding is led by the headmaster and is supported by the deputy head and three houseparents. There is a strong representation of boarding on the SMT and all staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. The boarding staff meet formally each term to discuss issues relating to the development of boarding. There are regular informal discussions amongst boarding staff to evaluate performance. Boarders know which staff are on duty each evening through well-maintained notice boards and a clear evening structure. Boarding within the school is extremely well staffed and is supported by an extremely efficient ancillary staff adding to the overall care given to the boarders. Staff have appropriate boarding experience and some of the staff have attended boarding-related training courses. Boarding staff give their time willingly, listen to boarders' views and assist in their all-round development.
- 4.26 The views of the boarders and their parents are taken into account by the school. In their responses to the questionnaire the great majority of the parents and boarders expressed their satisfaction with the boarding. A high proportion of the boarders expressed dissatisfaction in responding to the question on the quality of food provided but the inspection found no evidence to support such a view.

- 4.27 The school had no recommendations to address regarding the National Minimum Standards from the previous Ofsted inspection.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The governance of the school is good.
- 5.2 The governing body provides the school with a forward-looking sense of strategic direction. Led with enthusiasm and skill by its chairman, it has a very clear strategic view of the school's future direction.
- 5.3 Termly meetings of the whole governing body are each preceded by a finance and general purposes sub-committee. There are no other sub-committees but governors receive the reports of the school's managerial committees including an annual report from the health and safety committee. They comment usefully on the matters they address. The governing body is in the process of reallocating the roles of its members and is looking towards increasing the extent to which it can review educational matters.
- 5.4 The governors bring a wide and appropriate range of experience to their work. They are informed about the school through regular and full briefings by the headmaster and regular presentations at meetings by school staff. From time to time parental surveys form part of their intelligence and there is annual dinner at which governors can meet staff. Governors attend major events.
- 5.5 The governors understand clearly their legal obligations with regard to the independent schools regulations and to the National Minimum Standards for boarding. The chair scrutinises available advice on regulatory matters and informs other governors of matters to which they should attend. There is a particular governor with a responsibility for pupils' safeguarding. The process of review is becoming increasingly robust. The governor responsible for safeguarding leads the annual review carried out by the governing body of the policy and practice of the school's safeguarding arrangements.
- 5.6 New governors receive an induction pack but training events are presently still work in progress. The headmaster has been appraised informally through termly meetings with the chairman. A more formal structure of appraisal is planned from the autumn term.

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

- 5.7 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.8 At all levels the quality of leadership and management of the school is highly successful, fully supporting its aims. Senior staff take their lead from the headmaster, who provides strong leadership and steers the school purposefully. His open door policy to staff and his collaborative approach are key to the success of the school. Parents were unanimous in their responses to the questionnaire that the school is well led and managed.
- 5.9 Responsibility for the management and monitoring of the delivery of the curriculum and pastoral care across the school is divided across the SMT. Beneath them the

heads of department manage schemes of work, budgets, and systems of assessment, and monitor practice in their departments. On the pastoral side the tracking and monitoring of pupils is managed through the valued tutorial system. Detailed policies are in place to cover the life and work of the school. In teaching and learning they define general principles whilst leaving autonomy on implementation to heads of department and individual teachers.

- 5.10 The key to the school's process of its self-evaluation of policy and practice is a four-yearly staff conference held for this purpose. As well as this questionnaires are given to new staff and there is an on-going electronic suggestions/ideas sheet as to how the school could be improved. Since the previous inspection the SMT has used the ISI self-evaluation document to assist in focusing on the strengths and areas for development necessary for the school's success.
- 5.11 The school has several ways in which teaching and learning is monitored at classroom level. The director of studies carries out termly scrutiny of pupils' written work, heads of department observe their staff teaching and provide informal feedback and staff are encouraged to undertake peer observations of other teachers and again to give informal feedback. Whilst there are strengths in the informality of these processes, there is a lack of clarity as to how this is reported back to the SMT and how common features are identified and acted upon. The processes are not yet sufficiently robust to eliminate the variability of the quality of marking or pupils' presentation seen by the inspectors.
- 5.12 The appraisal system has a two-yearly cycle and staff appreciate the opportunities to review their performance with the headmaster. Staff said that the feedback they receive makes them feel valued. There is excellent provision for continuous professional development for staff. New staff, including newly qualified teachers, have an effective induction programme. Induction procedures for new staff also provide an introduction to the ethos of the school.
- 5.13 Management at all levels ensures that staff are suitably trained for their roles in meeting the needs of all pupils, including in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety and their continued professional development is encouraged. All staff can request to attend relevant courses and the school offers in-service training to meet need, as seen in the recent training initiative in ICT, where staff sign up for weekly sessions. The school adopts safe recruitment procedures. Staffing levels are excellent and, as a result, high-quality support is given to pupils. The school is efficiently and well supported by the work of the administrative and support staff.
- 5.14 The school has developed excellent links with parents, carers and guardians and this was borne out in discussion during the inspection, in observations and in the unusually extensive and very positive responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires. Parents strongly value the care and education their children receive, the ready availability of information about school events and the way in which the school handles any concerns or queries promptly. They receive clear and useful reports about their children's progress. Since the last inspection parents' evenings have been introduced at the beginning of term and have been highly successful.
- 5.15 Strong relationships between home and school are supported by the free availability of staff to listen and provide advice when necessary. Nearly all parents are extremely satisfied with the education and support provided for their child and with the quality of communication with the school. The school website, new since the last inspection, is extremely clear and easy to use. The launch of Parentmail has

improved communication. Parents of both day and boarding pupils are able to contact staff by letter, email, phone or in person.

- 5.16 There are many opportunities for parents to be actively involved in the life and work of the school. Parents regularly attend school events, including Saturday assemblies and lunches, matches, plays and concerts, father and son camps, parties and the summer ball, which in turn allow parents to be involved effectively in their children's education and relate strongly to the school. Parents feel welcome at these events, which are open and hospitable and free from fundraising.
- 5.17 Parents of pupils and prospective pupils receive valuable information about the school before their child starts and whilst their child is at the school. The website, along with the prospectus, gives parents important information, including all the policies required by regulations. Comprehensive and informative newsletters and the excellent school magazine highlight the events of the term as well as the successes of the pupils.

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