



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
PRINCETHORPE COLLEGE**

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Princethorpe College

Full Name of School	Princethorpe College
DfE Number	937/6084
Registered Charity Number	1087124
Address	Princethorpe College Leamington Road Princethorpe Rugby Warwickshire CV23 9PX
Telephone Number	01926 634200
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Email Address	post@princethorpe.co.uk
Headmaster	Mr Edmund Hester
Chair of Trustees	Mrs Mary O'Farrell
Age Range	11 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	851
Gender of Pupils	(Mixed 474 boys; 377 girls)
Inspection Dates	11th to 14 February 2014

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in April 2009.

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

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

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors and other governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited 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	Reporting Inspector
Mr David Bown	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, ISA school)
Mr Peter Grant	Team Inspector (Head of Biology, HMC school)
Mrs Lizbeth Green	Team Inspector (formerly Head, ISA school)
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CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL	2
(a) Main findings	2
(b) Action points	3
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	3
3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	4
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning	4
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c) The contribution of teaching	6
4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	8
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	8
(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care	9
(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	10
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	11
(a) The quality of governance	11
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	11

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Princethorpe College is a co-educational day school for pupils aged 11 to 18. The original school, St Bede's College, a school for boys, was founded by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in the 1950s. In 1966, the school moved to its current two-hundred-acre site at Princethorpe, seven miles from Leamington Spa, Coventry and Rugby, and was re-named Princethorpe College. In 2001, the school merged with St Joseph's School, a Catholic girls' school, at which point, the Warwickshire Catholic Independent Schools Foundation was formed, administered by trustees as a lay foundation, and responsible for the governance of Princethorpe College and its preparatory school Crackley Hall in Kenilworth. In 2011, the foundation changed its name to The Princethorpe Foundation.
- 1.2 The school is housed in a former Benedictine priory, to which has been added a range of purpose-built accommodation; the most recent, a new classroom wing, is currently under construction and due to open in September 2014. The school is a registered charity and a limited company. The headmaster was appointed in 2009, shortly after the previous inspection.
- 1.3 Within its Catholic ethos, the school welcomes pupils of all faiths and backgrounds. It aims to provide a caring, stimulating environment in which children's individual needs can be met and their talents, confidence and self-esteem developed. The school aims to encourage a lifelong love of learning and an understanding of moral values, and to put young people on the road to happy and fulfilled lives.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection, there were 851 pupils on roll, of whom 201 were in the sixth form. In all year groups, slightly more than half of the pupils are boys. Pupils come mainly from the towns and villages of Warwickshire, from a radius of up to 30 miles, and mainly from business, professional and farming backgrounds. Pupils are predominantly from white British backgrounds; a very small minority come from a variety of other ethnic backgrounds.
- 1.5 Evidence from standardised tests indicates that the ability profile of pupils in Year 7 is above the national average, with most pupils being of at least above average ability; in Year 10 it is slightly above the national average, with around half of pupils having ability that is above average; and that of the sixth form is in line with the national average. The school has identified 179 pupils as having a special educational need or disability (SEND), 54 of whom receive specialist learning support. Five pupils have been identified as having English as an additional language (EAL), one of whom requires additional support. Two pupils have statements of special educational needs.
- 1.6 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. Throughout the school, the pupils' achievement in their academic work is good and in their activities it is excellent. Pupils at all stages make good progress. Those who have SEND, EAL and those who are more able and/or have particular talents make good and often rapid progress because of the high levels of support they receive. Pupils of all ages, including the sixth form, are extremely well supported by the excellent curricular and extra-curricular provision. Good teaching throughout the school is characterised by a high degree of care and support for the pupils' all-round learning and development. Teaching makes highly effective use of the school's recently introduced 'da Vinci' programme to motivate pupils to learn independently. A small amount of less successful teaching does not always maximise the pupils' opportunities to learn and make progress. The pupils' achievement is further supported by the good skills they develop during their time in school and their positive attitudes to their work and activities.
- 2.2 Throughout the school the pupils' personal development is excellent. Their spiritual development is strong. They have a high level of moral awareness and their social and cultural development is excellent. They know right from wrong. In their relationships, pupils are highly supportive of each other and of other members of the school community. They are willing to take on positions of responsibility and of service to the local community and beyond. At all stages, arrangements for pastoral care are excellent and are highly effective in supporting the pupils' well-being. Form tutors support pupils well although, on occasion, tutor time is not always used to best effect to fully enhance the pupils' all-round development. The arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent and indicate that a high level of attention is given to promoting the pupils' safety.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is good. The governors are highly committed to the school, know it well and give due attention to overseeing its work. They fully support its ethos and work closely with the school to promote its further development. They recognise their responsibility for compliance with regulatory matters and have arrangements in place to monitor this, although, as yet, these arrangements are not always sufficiently rigorous to ensure that the most recent statutory guidance or regulatory requirements are included. The quality of leadership and management is excellent and includes excellent links with parents. The senior management team (SMT) share a clear vision for the school. They, along with staff at all levels of responsibility, are highly effective in working to continually improve all the school offers. Parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire showed a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the work of the school. The school has fully met the recommendations of the previous inspection.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Improve the overall consistency of teaching so that it even more fully supports the learning and progress of all pupils.
2. Ensure that tutor time is always used to best effect to enhance the pupils' all-round development.
3. Ensure that the governors' monitoring of regulatory matters is sufficiently robust to ensure compliance is maintained.

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 Pupils are well educated in accordance with the school's aims. They show good levels of achievement in their work and excellent levels of achievement in their activities. Pupils are articulate and express themselves confidently and clearly; they mostly listen attentively. They read and write fluently. They are logical and largely independent thinkers. They show high levels of creativity, especially in their work in art, music and drama. Their mathematical skills are proficient and they are able to apply these effectively across the curriculum. They use information and communication technology (ICT) well. Their physical skills develop well.
- 3.3 Pupils achieve excellence across a wide variety of activities. In sport, a good number are selected to play at national, regional and at county level across a wide range of sports, as diverse as hockey, swimming, polocrosse and clay-pigeon shooting. In music and drama, pupils perform to a high standard and achieve success in external music, speech and drama examinations. Pupils also enjoy success in art competitions. They are successful in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE).
- 3.4 The achievements of pupils with SEND, EAL, and those who are more able and/or have particular talents, are equally strong, reflecting the high levels of support they receive throughout the school. When they leave school, almost all pupils go on to university to study a wide range of courses.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2010 to 2012. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. Over this period, GCSE results were above the national average for maintained schools. In 2010, girls' results were similar to the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. In 2013, GCSE results were similar to those in 2012. Results in IGCSE Mathematics in 2012 were similar to the worldwide average. A-level results over the same period were similar to the national average for maintained schools. Results in 2012 were higher than in 2010-11, being above the national average for maintained schools, and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. A-level results in 2013 were similar to those for 2012. From 2011, in the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), each year a number of pupils from Year 9 upwards have achieved the highest grades.
- 3.6 The levels of attainment at GCSE and A level indicate that pupils throughout the school make good progress in relation to the average for pupils of similar ability. Of those pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the overwhelming majority said they feel they are making good progress. Pupils' work seen during the inspection and discussions with pupils about their work confirm this, including for those pupils who have SEND, EAL and those who are more able and/or have particular talents, whose progress is good and often rapid.
- 3.7 Pupils throughout the school are mostly good and efficient learners. They support each other in their studies and work well both co-operatively and independently. Their focus and organisation are usually good; on occasion, some pupils lose concentration. Many take initiative for their own learning and enjoy their education.

Application to extra-curricular activities is strong, successfully enabling pupils to become accomplished in many new skills.

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 curriculum is wide-ranging, well planned and suitable for all ages and abilities, including pupils with SEND, EAL and those who are more able and/or have particular talents. It fully supports the aims of the school. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that their children are offered an appropriate range of subjects and experiences.
- 3.10 In Years 7 to 9, pupils follow a wide-ranging curriculum. Provision for languages has recently been strengthened so that, in addition to French, Latin is now taught from Year 7, with Spanish and German being added in Year 9. Pupils study an excellent range of technological subjects, including food technology, resistant materials, textiles and electronics. At GCSE, pupils have a wide range of option choices. Option blocks are arranged so that, almost without exception, pupils can study their preferred choices. IGCSE is established in mathematics and science subjects and recently introduced for history and modern foreign languages (MFL). Year 11 pupils studying dual award science can follow an additional short course: for example, at GCSE in business studies or psychology, or in sports leadership. Latin is available at GCSE both on the normal timetable and as an additional option in after-school lessons. In the sixth form, pupils can choose from more than 20 subjects, alongside general studies and games. The Princethorpe Diploma successfully encourages sixth formers to maintain breadth in their education by encompassing, amongst other aspects, their academic studies, extra-curricular provision and service to the community.
- 3.11 Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is excellent, covering a wide range of topics including health, relationships and citizenship. Provision for careers is thorough, beginning in Year 9 with advice about GCSE options. Further information is available to pupils from Year 10 at the school's careers fair and to pupils in the sixth form via their general studies programme, along with support for their applications for studies beyond school.
- 3.12 Provision for pupils with SEND and EAL is excellent. Their needs are efficiently identified and shared with teachers, with individual support programmes arranged. The school's recently-introduced, bespoke 'da Vinci' programme aims to inspire all pupils to work hard, be original in their thinking and be fascinated, energised and motivated to engage in an activity primarily for its own sake. This provides outstanding opportunities for all pupils to be challenged, including those who are more able and/or have particular talents. In addition, pupils from Year 9 upwards have the opportunity to study for the EPQ in areas of their individual interests. In sport, the school's top athletes are identified and supported through its Elite Sports Programme.
- 3.13 Extra-curricular provision is outstanding. In the parent and pupil pre-inspection questionnaires, the vast majority of parents and most pupils said the school offers a good range of activities. A wide range of sports, music, and art and drama activities is available, along with a wealth of clubs and societies. The house system widens provision still further offering a range of competitive sporting, social, academic and arts-based activities. The school also provides a broad range of trips both locally

and further afield, including overseas music and sports tours and community-service visits to places such as Borneo.

- 3.14 The school's links with the community are strong. Sixth formers undertake voluntary service in, for example, a local secure unit and in local primary schools. Close international links are maintained with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and with a school in Africa.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.16 Teaching across the school, including in the sixth form, is successful in supporting the school's aims. It provides a highly-caring environment in which the pupils' learning is effectively supported and their talents, confidence and self-esteem developed. The overwhelming majority of pupils, who responded to the questionnaire, said that their teachers help them to learn. This is confirmed by the teaching observed, by scrutiny of pupils' work and in discussions with pupils.
- 3.17 Most teaching is at least good and often is excellent. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong and lessons are usually well planned. The most successful teaching is characterised by rapid pace, imaginative use of resources, including ICT, and a wide range of effective teaching methods. In most lessons, teaching successfully promotes the pupils' interest and engagement and, when opportunities are presented, pupils enjoy and are successful in working collaboratively, often engaging deeply with the subject material. Teaching is largely successful in fostering the pupils' independent learning skills; pupils undertake project work and research tasks which successfully deepen and broaden their learning. In the few instances of less successful teaching, learning is too highly directed and controlled by the teacher, the pace is slower and less varied teaching methods are used. As a result, pupils have fewer opportunities to be actively involved in their learning, their interest and attention are less engaged, and their progress hindered.
- 3.18 Most teaching successfully supports the learning needs of all pupils and is typified by effective assessment of each pupil's needs allied with appropriate levels of challenge to pupils of all abilities. In the most successful teaching, skilful questioning enables pupils to effectively reinforce previous knowledge, consider creative solutions and develop higher-order thinking skills. This questioning was particularly effective at challenging more able pupils. At all stages, teaching successfully caters for the needs of pupils with SEND, EAL and those who are more able and ensures that they make good and often rapid progress. Teaching makes highly effective use of the school's 'da Vinci' programme to offer additional levels of challenge to all pupils.
- 3.19 Marking and assessment, is thorough and provides consistently good, regular, feedback on the pupils' current levels of achievement and identifies the steps required for improvement. In some teaching, and in the pupils' work, peer and self-assessment provide good opportunities for pupils to develop a greater understanding of how to improve their work and to take responsibility for their learning. The tracking of assessment data throughout the school is excellent and is used to good effect to support learning goals. This highlights the pupils' progress and enables under-performance to be identified quickly and an appropriate response made. Responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils said they do not feel that homework helps them to learn. Pupils spoken with during

the inspection were more positive; homework tasks set during inspection were suitable both in content and in the amount of time pupils are expected to spend on the task.

- 3.20 Teaching successfully makes the provision set out in statements of special educational needs.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 The pupils' personal qualities develop to a high degree during their time in the school, fully in line with the school's aims which are grounded in the values of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.
- 4.3 The pupils' spiritual development is strong and well supported by the religious character of the school. Pupils understand the place faith can have in people's lives from their work in religious education and from the ethos of the school. An increasing number of pupils are prepared in school for both Holy Communion and Confirmation and many take the opportunities to reflect on the non-material aspects of life and to discuss and consider spiritual matters offered by the chaplaincy, specifically through retreats, assemblies and liturgies. During their time in school, pupils develop well in self-confidence, in a sense of their own worth and in recognising the worth of others. Pupils spontaneously appreciate and celebrate the successes and achievements of their peers. Pupils at all stages are emotionally mature for their age.
- 4.4 The pupils' moral development is excellent at all ages. They demonstrate a strong sense of right and wrong and of collective responsibility. They understand the need for a community to have rules and they respond positively to the school's code of conduct. They are fully aware of the need to treat others well and understand that bullying of any kind is wrong. Their understanding of moral and ethical values is strong. They learn much about the need for moral living from the ethos of the school which values truth, equality of opportunity, human rights and justice. They successfully explore moral and ethical questions through, for example, their work in literature, the humanities and science.
- 4.5 The social development of pupils is excellent. From their time in school, pupils develop a strong sense of community which fosters their social awareness. Pupils are supportive of each other, of staff, and of those beyond the school. They exercise a high level of social responsibility, for example in their charitable giving, in the time they give to support fund-raising, and in the voluntary service and the responsibility and leadership roles they willingly undertake. From the PSHE programme they develop a good level of economic and political awareness, and from their involvement in school council and other committees, they learn about the democratic process.
- 4.6 The pupils' cultural development is excellent. They gain much from their study of and involvement in music, drama, literature and art and, from that, have a good appreciation of the Western cultural tradition as well as of other cultures. Pupils learn much about other cultures from, for example, their study of languages and geography, and from the many overseas trips the school organises. Their cultural experience is successfully broadened and their horizons widened by the school's international links. Pupils recognise and respect the faiths and cultures of others. They value diversity and have very harmonious relations with those from families different from their own.
- 4.7 Pupils at all ages show excellent standards of personal development. This is particularly evident in the sixth form, from where pupils leave the school extremely

well equipped to be responsible citizens ready to make a valuable contribution to the wider world.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 The quality of care and guidance provided for pupils is excellent, wholly supporting the aims of the school. Highly-effective pastoral systems promote the pupils' all-round well-being. Relationships between pupils and with staff are highly positive. Pupils are confident that, should they need it, support is readily available. This confirms the views of the overwhelming majority of parents who, in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, said that their children are well looked after and happy at school. In addition to the pastoral team, support staff are available before school, at break times and at lunchtime to help pupils with practical day-to-day matters such as lost property. Form tutors support pupils well and, overall, make good use of the time they have each day with their form groups; however, this time is not always used to best effect to provide activities that fully support the pupils' all-round development.
- 4.10 Effective arrangements promote good behaviour. These arrangements have recently been revised and expectations of pupils' behaviour and the sanctions to be imposed, if needed, are clearly laid down. In the pupils' pre-inspection questionnaire, a minority of pupils said that teachers do not apply sanctions fairly although pupils interviewed gave a more positive view. Inspection evidence supports this view. The school was already aware that there have been inconsistencies in the way the new system has been implemented and it is looking for ways to remedy this. Arrangements to prevent bullying and harassment are clear, understood by pupils and implemented appropriately. The school takes any bullying seriously and responds effectively, as confirmed by school records and by pupils interviewed.
- 4.11 Pupils are encouraged to make healthy life-choices. A wide choice of nutritious food is provided, with hot, cold and healthy options available. All pupils, including in the sixth form, have plentiful opportunities to take exercise.
- 4.12 A small minority of pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire said the school does not ask for their opinions or respond to them. Inspection evidence confirms that the school takes many opportunities to seek the views of pupils and gives a clear response; for example, via school council and food and uniform committees. The pupils' views are also sought during the appointment of new staff and as part of staff appraisals. The school has a suitable plan in place to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.13 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.14 Arrangements to promote the pupils' welfare, health and safety are thorough and well thought through. Of the parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the overwhelming majority said that their child feels safe at school. Inspection scrutiny of welfare, health and safety documentation and records confirms the high level of attention the school gives to keeping pupils safe.
- 4.15 The arrangements to safeguard pupils are well known to staff. The need for child protection is taken seriously. All staff receive child protection training appropriate to their roles at the required intervals and, in addition, they receive frequent refresher training. Staff new to the school receive thorough induction training in child protection and further child-protection training tailored specifically to their roles. The child protection policy has recently been updated and now follows the latest statutory guidance. The required pre-appointment checks on staff are carried out with due care and are now recorded appropriately. In the past, there have been occasions when this was not the case; the school has taken all possible steps to remedy this.
- 4.16 Arrangements to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards are extremely thorough. Staff receive training in fire awareness. Fire drills are undertaken regularly and carefully recorded. Any points arising are noted and speedily acted upon. Health and safety equipment is regularly checked and serviced, and comprehensive records kept. Detailed risk assessments are compiled for appropriate areas of the school and for activities.
- 4.17 Pending the completion of the current building works, appropriate temporary accommodation provides adequate support for pupils who are ill, injured or who have SEND. Clear first-aid policies are implemented effectively and first-aid records carefully kept. A good number of staff are trained in first aid, some at a higher level.
- 4.18 The admission and attendance registers are kept efficiently and stored for the required length of time.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The governors, known as the trustees, are highly committed to the school, to upholding its ethos and to its on-going development. In this, they fully support the school in achieving its aims. They are effective in their oversight of the school and in the discharge of their responsibilities for monitoring educational standards, financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. Governors take good care to inform themselves about the work of the school, including receiving regular reports from the headmaster and hearing presentations from staff on different aspects of the school. Individual governors are linked with specific areas of the school; for example, with the chaplaincy and with the heads of department. Governors regularly meet with staff, both formally and informally. They attend assemblies and have lunch with pupils. They use their insight into the school to good effect to successfully provide a high level of support, challenge and stimulus for growth.
- 5.3 Governors bring to the school a wide range of experience and expertise and regularly undertake training to further develop their roles. They provide strong support for members of the SMT, regularly appraising their work and setting targets for further improvement. The governors are aware of their responsibility for ensuring the school's compliance with regulatory requirements. Together, they carry out the required annual audit of the effectiveness of arrangements for child protection and safeguarding, including checking the carrying out of the required pre-appointment checks on staff. Regulatory matters are monitored by the relevant governor committees; any amendments needed are referred to the full board for approval. Initial scrutiny of policies and other regulatory documentation showed that this monitoring has not always been sufficiently rigorous to ensure that all arrangements followed the most recent statutory guidance or regulatory requirements. By the end of the inspection, the school had taken steps to remedy this.

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

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.5 Highly effective senior leadership and management are characterised by a strong sense of purpose and a shared commitment which enables leadership and management at all levels to contribute to the successful fulfilment of the school's aims. The SMT have clearly-defined roles and responsibilities and are united in creating a vision for the school that inspires staff, pupils and parents alike. There is strong educational direction evident throughout all levels of leadership and management; this is clearly evident in the good quality of pupils' achievements and in the excellent standard of their personal development. All of this confirms the views of almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire who said that the school is well led and managed.
- 5.6 Through highly-effective and reflective practice, including robust review of the school development plan, leadership and management have ensured that priorities are set

and achieved, with the result that significant progress has been made to improve standards and provision for pupils throughout the school. This is particularly notable in the high-quality curricular and extra-curricular provision and in the excellent quality of pastoral care. Staff at all levels of responsibility are effective in ensuring that policies are implemented and that pupils are safe. Working closely in consultation with governors, parents and pupils, the SMT has been highly successful in responding to the recommendations of the previous inspection. In line with those recommendations, departmental monitoring by senior managers has improved significantly, both in terms of consistency and rigour. Focused self-evaluation by middle managers has considerably strengthened the integration of development planning at departmental and whole-school level, improving coherence.

- 5.7 The SMT works closely together and is well supported by a dedicated and highly-effective team of middle managers who actively seek opportunities to evaluate and improve the all-round educational experience for pupils. Communication between leaders and managers at all levels is excellent. All staff have regular opportunities to contribute positively to whole school and departmental self-evaluation and subsequent improvement.
- 5.8 Management at all levels is highly successful in securing, supporting, developing and motivating sufficient high-quality staff. At all levels of responsibility, leadership and management are highly effective in ensuring that staff are suitably trained in their roles to meet the needs of all pupils, safeguarding and welfare, health and safety. Staff new to the school receive detailed induction training, including in safeguarding. The staff appraisal system is comprehensive and rigorous, and includes feedback from pupils. It is valued by staff who appreciate the opportunity it affords for professional dialogue and, in most cases, in identifying further training and areas for development to improve teaching and learning.
- 5.9 The school maintains excellent links with parents, carers and guardians. Parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire show an extremely high level of support for all aspects of the work of the school. Parents are actively encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. They are invited to attend meetings with tutors, parents' evenings and a range of information evenings, including on topics such as e-safety, applications to university and study skills. In addition, the school regularly consults parents about aspects of school life; for example, on pupil behaviour, uniform and homework. Parents are invited to a wide variety of school events including assemblies, fixtures and productions. Some assist with careers opportunities; for example, in offering interview practice. The very active parent teacher association organises a wide range of social and fundraising events, including the Christmas fair and the Year 7 welcome disco.
- 5.10 Both current and prospective parents are supplied with all the required information. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire say they are satisfied that information about the school and its policies is readily available. Parents receive many well-produced booklets which give excellent information about the practicalities of school life, and detailed and helpful academic and option booklets which give excellent information with which parents can support their children's subject choices at key points. The website provides a wealth of information for parents including a comprehensive calendar of events and a news page which chronicles the successes and achievements of the pupils. In addition, the school has introduced a fortnightly electronic newsletter outlining information about forthcoming events and activities.

- 5.11 In response to the recommendations of the previous inspection, the school has improved significantly its reporting to parents. The schedule of reports and parents' evenings has been revised so that parents are now well informed about the progress of their children throughout the year, including the introduction of a meeting early in the academic year with their children's form tutor. Reports are frequent and include a combination of interim, full and examination reports. Reports detail the work covered, indicate progress made and contain targets for improvement, and indicate that staff know the pupils well.
- 5.12 The school has an appropriate procedure for dealing with parental complaints. Any complaints are handled in line with this procedure.

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