



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

RADLEY COLLEGE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Radley College

Full Name of School	Radley College	
DfE Number	931/6079	
Registered Charity Number	309243	
Address	Radley College Radley Abingdon Oxfordshire OX14 2HR	
Telephone Number	01235 543000	
Fax Number	01235 543106	
Email Address	warden@radley.org.uk	
Warden (headmaster)	Mr Angus McPhail	
Chair of Governors	Mr Michael Hodgson	
Age Range	13 to 18	
Total Number of Pupils	687	
Gender of Pupils	Boys	
Numbers by Age	13-16:	414
	16-18	273
Number of Boarders	Total:	687
	Full:	687
Inspection dates	05 Mar 2013 to 08 Mar 2013	

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in February 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 chapel. Inspectors visited boarding houses, meals 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

Mr Ian Newton	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Hazel Anthony	Team Inspector (Director of Professional Development, HMC school)
Mr Timothy Borton	Team Inspector (Head of Sixth Form, HMC school)
Dr Helen Brooke	Team inspector (Vice Principal, HMC school)
Mr John Coleman	Team inspector (Head of Educational Links, HMC school)
Mr Ian Davies	Team inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Mr John Orr	Team Inspector (Senior Tutor, HMC school)
Mr Jay Piggot	Team inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Mr Bill Rogers	Team inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Ms Gwen Byron	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mr Keith Metcalfe	Team Inspector for Boarding (Housemaster, HMC school)

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) Recommendation 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	8
(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	9
(d) The quality of boarding	10
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	13
(a) The quality of governance	13
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	13

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The Reverend William Sewell founded St Peter's College, Radley, known as Radley College, in 1847, in extensive grounds five miles south of Oxford. He intended it to provide an independent boarding school education based on the principles of the Church of England. The school seeks to teach boys to live together in a community which values decency, tolerance and gentility. It aims to demand the highest standards from both pupils and staff, to enhance pupils' experience through a range of intellectual and cultural activities, and to provide first class, responsive pastoral care, combined with excellent learning support. The school is overseen by a board of governors known as the Council. Since the previous inspection, it has built two new boarding houses, increasing the number to ten.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection there were 687 boys in the school, all of whom were boarders. Pupils are drawn mainly from business or professional families, with most of white British ethnicity but a small number drawn from a range of other cultures. Almost all pupils move into higher education on leaving the school, either in Britain or overseas.
- 1.3 The range of pupils' abilities is above the national average, with about a quarter of pupils having an ability which is well above average and very few with ability which is less than average. Two pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) but both are fluent in English. Two hundred have been identified as needing some degree of learning support. No pupils have statements of special educational needs.
- 1.4 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

School	NC name
Shell	Year 9
Remove	Year 10
Fifth	Year 11
VI.1	Year 12
VI.2	Year 13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Throughout the school, including the sixth form, the quality of pupils' achievements and learning is exceptional, reflecting the challenging and stimulating curriculum, the excellent provision for pupils needing learning support, outstanding opportunities to engage in a wide range of activities, and the excellent quality of teaching. In particular, pupils think independently, develop high quality literacy and numeracy skills, and show considerable creative imagination and technique. Results in public examinations exceed the national average for maintained selective schools, reflecting the rapid progress made by all pupils, including those receiving learning support. High standards are achieved in sport, music and drama, as well as in a wide range of other activities. Pupils respond extremely well to the excellent use of question and answer in lessons, where teachers draw out and develop pupils' own ideas carefully. Teaching combines enthusiasm and expertise, and lessons almost always proceed with a brisk pace and sense of purpose. Expectations are extremely high. In general, pupils receive excellent feedback on their work either through marking or discussion. Both pupils and their parents are delighted with pupils' progress.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent. They grow into reflective, mature and thoughtful young people who are aware of the needs of others and exercise exemplary care for younger pupils. They are confident without being arrogant, and enjoy excellent relationships both with staff and their peers. The school is implementing an innovative and varied programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). Boarding houses provide an excellent level of care for pupils. Staff know pupils extremely well, providing first-class support. Close pastoral monitoring is complemented by equal care over academic progress. The system of mentoring and the communal life in houses link pupils of different ages well. Bullying is rare and robustly dealt with. Pupils have many ways to express their views, but the informal cocoa sessions at the end of the day provide open and easy discussion of issues. A high proportion of pupils and parents commented favourably on the level of support pupils receive. The school is a community at ease with itself. The arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils are excellent, and safeguarding procedures are very thorough.
- 2.3 The quality of governance, and of leadership and management, are excellent. Governors have a clear vision for the school and its future, based on careful oversight of current practice. Strong leadership at all levels supports excellent standards in academic work, extra-curricular achievement and pastoral care. The strong sense of purpose and clear commitment to regular review ensure continuous improvement. The work of the school is supported by high quality and highly committed staff in all areas, and by excellent arrangements for professional development. Links with parents are excellent and responses to the questionnaires were extremely positive. The school has implemented all the recommendations of the previous report.

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) Recommendation for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
1. Implement fully the new programme of PSHCE.

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' achievement and learning is exceptional.
- 3.2 This reflects the school's aim that pupils should achieve the highest standards, and the substantial improvement in the quality of their independent work since the previous inspection. Both pupils and parents said, in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, how pleased they were with the progress that pupils make.
- 3.3 Excellent speaking and listening skills enable pupils to articulate ideas clearly and develop an exceptional grasp of literature. In modern foreign languages, they speak accurately and fluently, showing an excellent understanding of vocabulary and grammar. They build on early facility with number to develop an increasingly good understanding of advanced mathematical concepts. They apply their excellent grasp of scientific concepts to new applications, such as types of laser. Information and communications technology (ICT) is widely used and, in addition, Year 9 pupils develop useful programming skills.
- 3.4 Independent work is excellent, whether pupils research facts, present complex ideas or articulate their own analyses. They think for themselves and defend their views. Extended essays, both in Year 9 and in the sixth form, show excellent research and the drawing of coherent conclusions. Pupils show imagination in art and design and technology; displays show exceptional creativity and practical skill. High standards in physical activity are developed through an extensive sports programme.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses results from 2009 to 2011, the most recent three years for which comparative data is available. Results in GCSE have been far above the national average for boys in maintained schools, and above the national average for boys in maintained selective schools. In 2012, nearly three-fifths of grades were A* and over nine-tenths were either A* or A. Results in IGCSE have been higher than the worldwide and UK norms. A-level results have been well above the national average for boys in maintained schools, and above the national average for boys in maintained selective schools. Over a fifth of grades have been A*, and in 2012 about seven-tenths were A* or A. These results, together with standardised measures of progress up to GCSE and other inspection evidence, show that pupils make rapid progress throughout the school. Pupils receiving learning support make excellent progress, as seen in the way they learn to draw up essay plans and use them to support their work. Able sixth-form applicants responded well to high level teaching, articulating their own opinions, for example on moral philosophy. Pupils are successful in entrance to universities of their choice.
- 3.6 Pupils also achieve the highest standards across an extremely wide range of activities, including high quality performance in music and drama. Individual pupils achieve considerable success in areas such as instrumental diplomas, national poetry and language competitions, engineering scholarships and science. In sport, individuals and school teams achieve exceptional success on the river and in a wide range of other sports. Pupils achieve much through the Combined Cadet Force (CCF), the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE) and through charity fundraising, as well as in rock music.

3.7 The pupils develop into excellent students, who are almost always engaged and responsive, and who are inquisitive and enquiring in their work. They put forward their own ideas, enjoy question and answer, and relish debate and challenge. Their concentration is excellent and they respond extremely well to independent and imaginative tasks. Their written work is well organised and well prepared. They collaborate extremely well with others, both in pairs and in larger groups, developing excellent questioning and discussion 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 This reflects the aim to extend pupils' experience through intellectual and cultural activities, and to provide excellent learning support. Since the previous inspection, the school has encouraged staff to increase the emphasis on independent thinking. Almost all parents are pleased with the curriculum offered.

3.10 The ambitious curriculum to GCSE gives pupils challenging and stimulating experiences in all areas of experience, and helps pupils to develop enquiring minds as well as acquiring knowledge. In the sixth form, the wide range of A-level choices includes politics, geology and music technology, four modern foreign languages, including Portuguese, as well as Latin and Greek. Most pupils take four A levels, all in Year 13, providing more teaching time in Year 12. The fourth A level is often a contrast, providing a stimulating and broad education. Creative and expressive subjects are strongly represented.

3.11 Additional academic activities, such as debating in French, creative writing and the Anglo-Japanese science presentation, together with external and internal speakers in societies, offer additional enrichment and challenge; the sixth-form programme "Standing on the Shoulders of Giants" provides particular stimulus, as do opportunities to produce extended essays and presentations. Pupils use the extensive collection of printed and virtual resources in the library widely. ICT skills are widely used across the curriculum.

3.12 These additional activities and the ethos of challenge are of particular benefit to more able pupils, as are special examination arrangements. For example, half of the pupils sit IGCSE mathematics early, with considerable success. There are many visits to plays and concerts; economists enjoy a monetary policy competition. Almost all parents said how pleased they are with provision for the most able pupils.

3.13 Pupils needing learning support receive exceptional help. A well-organised programme of individual and small group support, based on careful assessment, helps them achieve extremely well. Considerable care is taken to ascertain their needs.

3.14 The range of extra-curricular activities is outstanding. All pupils are expected to participate in the outstanding choice of sports, which range from real tennis, racquets and rowing to rugby, hockey, soccer and cricket. There is an increased emphasis on fitness for all. Standards of coaching are high.

3.15 Excellent opportunities for outdoor activity include the CCF and DofE, and looking after the school's pack of beagles. Less energetic choices include video, electronics or animal clubs. In Year 9 all pupils participate in communal singing, supporting confident and enthusiastic singing in chapel. Additional musical opportunities include the piano extravaganza and much-enjoyed house concerts.

Similarly, there are many opportunities to take part in drama, with female parts usually played by girls from the local community.

- 3.16 The school has developed excellent links with communities, both at home and abroad. For example, Year 11 pupils visit local primary schools to help with sport, chess and reading. They visit a home for disabled children and perform music in a local home for the elderly. Local boys, who are choristers, sing in the chapel choir. In Romania, pupils run a holiday club for local children. In India, they support a housing project both financially and with manual labour. In Tanzania, they help in a local school. The school has links with a maintained school, for example enabling its pupils to attend science and mathematics lessons at Radley. Radley also has a formal relationship with Desborough College where it provides academic and extra-curricular support and advice to the Academy and its sponsor.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.17 The quality of teaching is excellent.
- 3.18 A high proportion of teaching is of the highest quality and almost all teaching is at least good, enabling pupils to make rapid progress. This reflects the school's aim to maintain the highest standards in the classroom; it has made significant improvements in the range of teaching styles since the previous inspection.
- 3.19 Teaching is, in almost all cases, extremely well planned with a broad range and variety of tasks and styles, which capture pupils' imaginations well. In the very best lessons, assiduous planning ensures that pupils are on task and fully challenged at all times. Teachers focus very clearly on pupils' needs, whether introducing new work or reviewing recent examinations. The great majority of lessons convey the teacher's enthusiasm, commitment and excellent subject knowledge; clear explanations are given, even of complex ideas. This sense of commitment underlies the brisk pace and sense of purpose which is a feature of the great majority of lessons and which creates an informal, but well-focused and lively ambience. Pupils feel able to share ideas, answer questions, even when uncertain, and thus contribute fully to their learning. This willingness to participate rests on the excellent relationships created by teachers, and the equally good relationships between pupils.
- 3.20 Teachers make excellent use of resources, including ICT, music and video clips, and vinyl records. They work fluently with modern technology, so that it contributes much to the lesson.
- 3.21 Teaching also makes excellent use of both question-and-answer and discussion to develop pupils' thinking and to draw out ideas from them. Frequently it ensures that pupils think issues through for themselves, rather than providing the answer, thus setting high expectations, extending pupils' understanding and ensuring that the most able pupils are fully challenged. Careful questioning also secures progress for pupils to whom work comes more slowly, and for those needing learning support. Teaching is thus carefully adapted to pupils' varying needs.
- 3.22 The assessment of pupils' work and progress is carried out using a range of suitable methods including homework tasks, end-of-unit tests and school examinations. All pupils are screened on arrival, and individual teachers made aware of each pupil's needs. The marking of pupils' work is regular and accurate. The best examples of marking include detailed and helpful comments, which give pupils an indication of how they can achieve higher standards in their work. The quality and depth of

written comments vary between different year groups and subjects. However, pupils said they frequently receive additional verbal feedback in lessons; in addition, excellent use is made of web-based feedback in some lessons. Pupils are confident that from this combination of advice, they know what to do to make further progress. They are very positive about the help they receive.

- 3.23 The departmental assessments feed into the cycle of three-weekly interim reports and end-of-term reports. These are used by heads of department and form masters to quickly and effectively monitor pupils' progress. Teachers have access to the standardised test scores achieved by pupils in Year 9 through the school's management system, which enables them to monitor pupils' progress well.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils' outstanding personal development, strongly influenced by the Christian ethos which pervades the school, maintains the quality reported in the previous inspection. The voice of thoughtful, confident and mature young people who are comfortable sharing their views and opinions with their peers, is shown by the humorous, controversial or academically challenging articles of the *Radley Chronicle*, the economic and political *In Demand* magazine, and the regular creative writing anthologies.
- 4.3 Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. They are attentive and reflective in chapel, participating fully in the services. This provides a strong basis on which pupils of all faiths and none can develop their spiritual awareness; many from a Christian tradition take the additional step of being confirmed. The school environment, together with the emphasis on art and music, helps pupils develop an appreciation of aesthetic ideals. They grow into self-aware and quietly self-confident young men who appreciate the non-material aspects of life to the full, and who are courteous, respectful and considerate of others.
- 4.4 Pupils' highly developed moral awareness leads them to develop a keen sense of right and wrong. They are quick to praise each other. They express feelings in an unselfconscious way, and show great sympathy for and sense of service to those who are suffering hardship, whether locally or around the world. Their experience of boarding inculcates considerable social awareness and sense of responsibility for others. Pupils respond well to ethical issues in class, for example in a geography lesson about globalisation or in a religious studies lesson about Bonhoeffer and Nazism.
- 4.5 Pupils develop outstanding social skills, and relationships are excellent. Staff and senior pupils provide fine role models, and the care shown by older pupils for younger ones is exemplary. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires a small minority of pupils did not feel they had opportunities for responsibility. Inspectors found that many opportunities exist, and pupils are keen to take responsibility in many aspects of school life. They benefit from a dynamic and developing PSHCE programme, taught by form masters and visiting speakers, which encourages social responsibility and citizenship, giving them a good knowledge of public issues.
- 4.6 Pupils develop excellent cultural awareness. This is reinforced by a wide variety of trips abroad, but is also deeply embedded in the curriculum where, for example, pupils benefit from discussions in religious studies about the middle-eastern conflict and in geography by work on the impact of multi-national companies on life in African countries. Visits to theatres, art galleries, museums and conferences, or lectures about, for example, 'humour in Shakespeare', develop pupils' appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultural traditions. Similarly, opportunities to participate in a variety of plays and concerts helps to promote a love of the arts.

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

- 4.7 The quality of the school's arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.

- 4.8 This first class pastoral care lies at the heart of the school's aims and is embodied in the house system. Staff know their students extremely well and provide exceptional support and guidance. In return, pupils respond with affection and loyalty; relationships are excellent. Form masters combine close pastoral monitoring with equally careful management of academic progress. The wealth of careers and higher education guidance ranges from the Year 9 business game to sixth form university entrance lectures and interview training. Responses to the pupils' and parents' questionnaires show an extremely high level of satisfaction with pastoral care.
- 4.9 The school actively encourages healthy life styles through PSHCE lessons and through the healthy, nutritious food offered by the school's kitchens. Arrangements to promote fitness and health to bring life-long benefit have been extended recently, reinforcing the culture of physical exercise for all offered by the extensive range of sport and extra-curricular activities.
- 4.10 The strong relationships fostered by houses are a powerful force for good behaviour, promoting positive values and developing young men confident in their moral and ethical standards. Pupils feel safe, and they are happy discussing disciplinary issues with staff. Standards of behaviour are extremely high, underpinned by the culture of mutual respect and courtesy evident in relationships and in the lack of litter and damage across the site. Bullying is not considered by pupils to be a concern, and any issues are dealt with robustly, constructively and in ways that are felt by pupils to be fair and proportionate. Evidence was seen of records concerning behaviour incidents which were detailed and carefully logged.
- 4.11 Arrangements for disability access have been extensively reviewed. Long, medium and short-term action plans and the refurbishment of both houses and teaching areas are improving access in all areas. The school is also quick to react when the need arises: for example, it can house injured pupils in one of the specially designed disability access bedrooms available in most houses.
- 4.12 Although a small number of pupils were critical of the school's response to their views, the school listens to them in various ways: for example, annual questionnaires explore attitudes to a wide range of school issues, from bullying to improving self-esteem and the quality of pastoral and academic guidance. The food committee responds to pupils' requests. House committees meet regularly; in one such meeting during the inspection, year group representatives advised the housemaster on the imminent refurbishment of the house and its grounds.

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

- 4.13 The contribution of the arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent overall.
- 4.14 The school has extremely thorough arrangements for safeguarding pupils. Staff are carefully trained in the procedures to follow should an issue arise, and the school liaises closely with other agencies when necessary. The designated child protection officer and other senior staff give careful attention to pastoral and welfare concerns in relation to individual pupils. Governors oversee the arrangements annually. In almost all respects, the school has extremely robust arrangements for checking the suitability of staff to work with children. Historically, in a very small number of cases, where checks were particularly difficult to complete, staff were allowed to start work

before the full range of checks had been carried out, but this is no longer the case; in those situations, extra care was taken to manage the additional risk involved.

- 4.15 The school has very thorough arrangements for managing the dangers of fire and other risks. Appropriate fire risk assessments are completed and proper attention is given to any areas of concern. Fire drills are carried out at appropriate intervals and equipment is checked regularly. Risk assessments are carried out for hazardous activities; areas visited during the inspection were adequately provided with safety features. Health and safety issues, such as road safety and rugby football, are discussed carefully by governors on a regular basis. Pupils who are ill or injured are cared for extremely well; for example, many members of staff hold first aid qualifications and qualified persons are on hand during sport where appropriate.
- 4.16 The admissions register is properly maintained and backed up. Since all pupils board the school is not required to maintain daily attendance records, but the whereabouts of boarders are monitored in an appropriate way.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.17 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.18 The boarders are polite, confident, articulate and tolerant. In the questionnaires, they were highly positive about almost all aspects of boarding; in interviews, they showed considerable pride and loyalty to both school and house. Relationships between boarders of all ages are excellent, as they are between pupils and staff. Pupils contribute much to their houses, whether through the duties carried out by younger pupils or through senior leadership roles such as being a prefect. The pupils appreciate the sense of community and friendship they experience. They feel strongly that there is fairness and equality between houses, and think sanctions and rewards are largely fair. The practice of sharing cocoa together at the end of the evening fosters strong relationships and understanding between pupils of all ages, and with the staff responsible for their care. It allows pupils to unwind, reflect on the day and share its triumphs and disasters with friends.
- 4.19 The quality of provision and care for boarders is excellent. Boarders say they have a wide range of staff to which they can turn if needed. Staffing levels are good, with two members of staff on duty daily and overnight. Duty rotas are clear and pupils can contact staff at night if necessary. Staff know the pupils extremely well, and excellent communication between boarding staff, academic staff and senior management means that pupils' individual needs are met well. Mentoring of new pupils is a particular strength; it supports those new to the school and helps forge strong relationships between pupils of all ages. Pupils know they can talk to individuals who are independent of the school should they need to.
- 4.20 Sick or injured boarders are cared for in a well-equipped medical centre with twenty-four hour nursing care and access to a range of specialisms as required. Proper care is taken over the use of medicines, both in the house and in the medical centre, and over confidentiality. Staff who administer medicines in houses are appropriately trained. Clothing is laundered and returned promptly with in-house sewing services available. Pupils can obtain every-day items that they need from the school shop.
- 4.21 Boarders occupy well-furnished and comfortable houses, which are secure from intruders and in which pupils feel safe. Study, living and communal space meet pupils' needs. Year 9 pupils are accommodated in cubicles, which afford privacy whilst maintaining a communal spirit. From Year 10, most pupils have their own

rooms with just a few in twin rooms. Boarders can personalise their space and have lockable safes. Bathrooms are clean and give a good level of privacy. Whilst all houses are adequate, some areas are in need of updating; the school has a structured programme of refurbishment, which aims to bring all accommodation to the standard of the best. Each house provides pupils with access to newspapers, and common rooms are equipped with televisions and games facilities such as table tennis, pool and table football. Pupils can contact home easily and privately, by mobile phones, college landlines or electronically, using the Wi-Fi system in houses. Houses are well-maintained and proper attention is given to safety and to fire precautions. Activities and facilities used by boarders are carefully risk assessed, and fire evacuations are carried out in line with requirements.

- 4.22 A minority of pupils, in their responses to the questionnaires, expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of food; however, discussions with pupils and inspection observations showed that the quality of food is high and a good choice provided; 'house choice', where each house in turn has the opportunity to choose the Friday evening menu, is particularly popular. Pupils can make snacks and obtain drinks in their houses outside mealtimes.
- 4.23 There is an extensive range of activities in the evenings and at weekends, and regular social events are arranged with girls' schools. A small number of pupils were critical in the questionnaires of activities, but these criticisms were not borne out in discussion; activities have improved since the previous inspection. The weekend programme for Year 9 pupils helps them to settle in during their first year. House staff support pupils in their extra-curricular activities, and celebrate their successes in all areas.
- 4.24 The views of pupils are secured through regular in-house committee meetings, and also through the much-valued weekly Warden's (headmaster's) and Sub-Warden's (deputy headmaster's) breakfast with prefects. There is a well-established food committee on which pupils from each house represent the views of their peers.
- 4.25 The arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are excellent. The senior master or one of the other child protection officers provide training in child protection for house staff. The mentoring and duty systems mean that older pupils play an important role in reporting any issues. Older pupils receive training in safeguarding, and the housemaster and one of the school's child protection officers oversee this role. Behaviour is well managed, and procedures are well known to pupils and staff. Both housemasters and the senior master monitor sanctions to ensure parity between houses, and also to ensure proportionate responses from sixth formers who hold responsibilities. There is a clear anti-bullying policy and almost all pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires indicated that the school deals quickly with any bullying that occurs. The school has an appropriate policy on physical restraint, and no incidents have been recorded.
- 4.26 Current arrangements for recruiting staff are secure. Partners and the adult children of house staff are checked appropriately, and have a written agreement with the school as to their role. Visitors are carefully supervised, and both the levels and quality of supervision are excellent; staff have appropriate means of ascertaining pupils' whereabouts. All staff working in house have job descriptions.
- 4.27 The leadership and management of boarding are excellent, based on a clear statement of boarding principles and a constant review of practice. Members of the senior management team (SMT) have worked in houses and understand the

challenges very well. There are regular meetings between the SMT and housemasters, pastoral housemistresses and staff with child protection responsibilities. These meetings support the high level of consistency between houses with respect to behaviour and routines. The senior master monitors incidents and sanctions, and investigates more serious disciplinary issues, with the support of the housemaster. Records are well maintained. The headmaster and deputy headmaster (Warden and Sub-Warden) are actively involved in issues relating to pupils' welfare and discipline.

- 4.28 The communication between all staff involved with boarders is frequent, with frequent informal contact between resident staff and members of the academic and support staff. Staff at all levels report that their views are considered and acted upon. Staff are well trained and the induction of new house staff is thorough. Job descriptions are clear and reflect accurately the roles required. Policies are well developed, known to staff and pupils and followed in practice.

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 governing body, known as the Council, brings a wide range of expertise and experience to their work. They know the school well, as a result of the full and regular reports they receive from senior staff, the time they spend at the school, and, in some cases, their experience as parents. They understand the school's special features and share a common vision for its future. Frequent contact between the chair and headmaster maintains communication on key issues.
- 5.3 Governors combine effective oversight of educational standards with proper management of resources, staffing and finance. They scrutinise reports from the school carefully, providing a rigorous check on the quality of the education it provides. The structure of its two-day meetings enables governors to give time not only to formal business but also to more general discussion of priorities. Finances are prudently managed and they maintain the flexibility to respond positively to new challenges and opportunities. The development of facilities has been both imaginative and effective, so that the school is extremely well resourced in all areas. They are committed to the achievement of high standards set in the context of a broad education, and to providing a proper preparation for the challenges of adult life and work. They give attention to the regular oversight of health and safety, and review child protection and safeguarding arrangements each year.

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

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management throughout the school is excellent.
- 5.5 The work of those with leadership responsibilities makes a major contribution to the successful fulfilment of the school's aims, and the pupils' excellent achievement and personal development. Senior staff and middle managers demonstrate a very strong sense of direction and purpose, and are fully committed to excellence both in and out of the classroom. Senior staff ensure effective implementation of day-to-day policies and procedures to enhance pupils' welfare and well-being.
- 5.6 Key senior staff have a significant impact on setting standards, whilst delegating much authority for implementation to others. Staff thus feel able to develop policy and practice further; for example, the independent learning committee has made major improvements in the way pupils' work. The culture of self-evaluation and reflection helps the school to progress; for example, the school development plan and the annual surveys undertaken in boarding houses both support this process. Communication throughout the school is particularly strong, and enables a vast array of daily activity to run smoothly. The school's commitment to the breadth of an all-round education is seen in the enhanced quality of existing and new facilities, including the new real tennis court and art department.
- 5.7 Regular review gives senior leaders and governors a sharp awareness of the school's strengths, weaknesses and areas for further improvement. Rigorous departmental reviews each autumn enable the progress that has been made and areas for further development to be identified clearly. The annual appraisal system,

and the headmaster's briefer reviews for staff, promote the sharing of good practice and continued professional development. High levels of trust and the fact that appraisers know the work of their appraisees well make the process positive. Staff retention and recruitment is excellent and the school makes imaginative use of connections with universities to employ staff of high quality and excellent subject knowledge.

- 5.8 The provision of training and professional development is excellent and supports a variety of personal training needs well. The procedures for inducting new staff are well thought out and effective. Newly qualified teachers receive excellent mentoring. Recently appointed staff spoke particularly highly of the help they received when joining the school. All staff receive the required training in child protection, welfare, health and safety.
- 5.9 The quality of links with parents is excellent. The results of the questionnaires show that parents are extremely satisfied with the education and support provided for their children; there were no concerns raised by significant numbers of parents. Parents were particularly pleased with the curriculum and range of activities, the progress their children make, the support for able pupils, the quality of pastoral care and the arrangements for boarding. They also appreciated the quality of leadership and the way they could be involved in the school. Inspectors agreed with all these views.
- 5.10 Since the previous inspection, electronic communication with parents has improved and they appreciate the range of information they can find on the new website. Discussion with parents confirmed that communication is excellent and that they feel fully informed. Parents feel welcome and have many opportunities to visit their children. They find the house staff approachable and easily available for discussion, either by telephone or when they visit. They feel fully involved in their children's education.
- 5.11 The school maintains a constructive relationship with parents and few formal complaints by parents were seen. Those that were scrutinised were dealt with quickly and in a straightforward manner. Parents say that issues with their children are dealt with promptly. Parents find the process of application and entry into the school very efficient and they receive the required information in good time. The website and prospectus are extremely informative.
- 5.12 Parents receive clear and detailed academic reports about their children every term, which are supplemented by a personal letter from the housemaster. These give very good encouragement and guidance for improvement. An interim report on each year group is sent every three weeks. The self-appraisal section completed by the Year 12 and 13 pupils is particularly valued by parents.

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