



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**SHEBBEAR COLLEGE**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Shebbear College

Full Name of School	<b>Shebbear College</b>			
DfE Number	<b>878/6031</b>			
Registered Charity Number	<b>306945</b>			
Address	<b>Shebbear College</b> <b>Shebbear</b> <b>Beaworthy</b> <b>Devon</b> <b>EX21 5HJ</b>			
Telephone Number	<b>01409 282001</b>			
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Email Address	<b>info@shebbearcollege.co.uk</b>			
Headmaster	<b>Mr Simon Weale</b>			
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Michael Saltmarsh</b>			
Age Range	<b>3 to 19</b>			
Total Number of Pupils	<b>356</b>			
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (189 boys; 167 girls)</b>			
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>12</b>	5-11:	<b>68</b>
			11-19:	<b>276</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>288</b>		
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>68</b>		
	Full:	<b>61</b>	Weekly:	<b>3</b>
			Flexi:	<b>4</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Jackie Biddlecombe</b>			
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>			
Inspection Dates	<b>29 Apr 2014 to 02 May 2014</b>			

## 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 November 2011.

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](http://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.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Education (DfE) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

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.

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

### Inspectors

Mrs Colette Culligan	Reporting Inspector
Mr Richard Dain	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, GSA/HMC school)
Mr David Goulbourn	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Miss Helen Johnson	Team Inspector (Director of Careers, HMC school)
Mrs Susan Jones	Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, GSA school)
Dr Nicholas England	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Susan Rix	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Shebbear College is a day and boarding school for pupils aged from 3 to 19. It was founded in 1841 and remains on its original 85-acre site in the north Devon countryside. All school buildings, including the three boarding houses and the provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), are within the site.
- 1.2 The school is a member of the Methodist Independent Schools Trust (MIST). Responsibility for governance is delegated to a board of local governors and a representative of MIST attends governors' meetings. The school's ethos is based on Christian teachings although it welcomes pupils of all faiths. The school's stated aim is to educate all pupils to achieve their full potential by encouraging the highest possible standards of attainment and behaviour. It sets out to foster responsibility, tolerance, commitment and respect for self and for others, thereby preparing its pupils for adult life as confident individuals with a clear sense of right and wrong.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection there were approximately equal numbers of girls and boys enrolled at the school. Of these, 68 were in the junior school and 12 in the EYFS. There were 66 sixth-form pupils. The 68 boarders live in one of two houses, Ruddle for girls and Pollard for boys. The majority of pupils are from white British families with professional, farming or military backgrounds and live in the north Devon area. The majority of the 43 overseas boarders are from Hong Kong, a small number coming from Germany or other countries in Western Europe or Asia.
- 1.4 The ability range of the school is variable between year groups, with the majority of pupils being of average ability. There are 4 pupils with statements of educational need and a further 102 pupils identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), mostly relatively mild learning difficulties. The 57 pupils who need extra support have specialist help within the school. Forty-three pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and these receive extra lessons in English as required.
- 1.5 Since the previous inspection there have been significant changes in personnel, including the appointment of a new headmaster in 2013 and a new head of the junior school in 2012. A new wing attached to the junior school has been opened, the science labs refurbished and considerable investment has been made in sustainable power sources. A critical thinking course has been introduced for Year 9 and the range of GCSE options extended.
- 1.6 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 tables.

### ***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting***

School	NC name
Kindergarten	EYFS Nursery
Kindergarten	EYFS Reception

### ***Junior School***

School	NC name
Junior 1	Year 1
Junior 2	Year 2
Junior 3	Year 3

Junior 4	Year 4
Junior 5	Year 5
Junior 6	Year 6

***Senior School***

School	NC name
Form 1	Year 7
Form 2	Year 8
Form 3	Year 9
Form 4	Year 10
Form 5	Year 11
Lower 6th	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13



## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 Shebbear College achieves good success in meeting its aims of encouraging pupils to meet their full potential. It adapts its good curriculum to meet the specific needs of pupils. Pupils receive a good education in all the required areas of learning. They are articulate and express their opinions well, orally and in writing. In responses to pre-inspection questionnaires, the vast majority of pupils and parents said that pupils make good progress in their work. Similarly, all expressed great satisfaction with the extra-curricular programme, which is a strength of the school. Good teaching, supported by good use of resources, is very successful in encouraging pupils, including those with SEND, to grow in confidence and understanding. As at the time of the previous inspection, teaching does not always present sufficient challenge to the more able of all ages. Throughout the school, pupils have an excellent approach to their learning.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent and the school is highly successful in enabling pupils to develop into confident, responsible young adults, aware of their obligations to the wider world. Pupils who board are very happy and say that boarding helps them to grow in maturity. Outcomes for boarders are excellent as are the relations between pupils, both day and boarding. Pupils are very fond of their school and proud to be part of it. Attention to policy and practices in pupils' welfare health and safety for day and boarding pupils is unsatisfactory in a number of areas.
- 2.3 Careful financial management by committed governors has enabled the school to invest in new facilities and other improvements recommended at the last inspection. The school's governance and leadership, whilst having a number of significant strengths is unsatisfactory overall. It has not given sufficient attention to safeguarding pupils when recruiting staff or to the oversight of health and safety policy and practice. Senior leadership has embarked on the process of articulating a clear vision for the future and is encouraging more rigorous monitoring of standards of teaching by middle managers. Parental involvement is welcomed in the school and parents are warmly appreciative of all it offers.

## **2.(b) Action points**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:

- ensure that safeguarding policies are up to date, reviewed annually and that safe recruitment procedures are rigorously enforced [Part 3, paragraph 7(a) and (b), 8.(a) and (b) under Welfare, health and safety of pupils; Part 4, paragraph 19.(2)(a)(c) and (e) under Suitability of staff and proprietors; and also NMS 11 and 14];
- implement the school's health and safety policies rigorously in order to secure the safety of pupils at all times [Part 3, paragraph 11, under Welfare, health and safety of pupils; and also NMS 6];
- ensure that fire policies and procedures conform with all required standards [Part 3, paragraph 13, under Welfare, health and safety of pupils; and also NMS 7];
- ensure that access to school buildings is suitably secured and monitored [Part 5, paragraph 23C, under Premises and accommodation];
- provide the local authority with all required information for those pupils with statements whom it supports [Part 6, paragraph 24.(1)(h) under Provision of information].

2.5 The school does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013, as described above. In addition, it must:

- ensure that there is separate provision for boy and girl pupils who are ill or injured during the day [NMS 3.2 under Boarders' health and well-being].

### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure that all policies affecting the whole school are updated regularly to ensure that they reflect the most recent legal requirements and the school's arrangements.
2. Clarify lines of communication in management and ensure that areas of responsibility are unambiguous, understood and effectively conducted.
3. Implement staff appraisal fully so that monitoring of standards of teaching and learning is effective across all areas of the school.
4. For the EYFS, implement the recommendation of the previous report regarding more rigorous evaluation and action planning.

### **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 good.
- 3.2 The school successfully meets its aim to educate all pupils to achieve their full potential by encouraging the highest possible standards of attainment.
- 3.3 The children in the EYFS, including those with SEND, make good progress in their learning and development according to their starting points. The older children can read simple texts, independently write short sentences and apply their knowledge of number and measuring to practical activities. The younger children communicate well and express themselves clearly during their activities. They are motivated to play and explore, to investigate and to be creative. For example, in a lesson on flight, the children made and decorated their own paper aeroplanes and then went on to see how far they could make them travel, measuring distance in strides, counting and comparing with great enthusiasm and sustained interest.
- 3.4 Older pupils of all abilities display good subject knowledge, skills and understanding. They are articulate and confident in discussion. They possess good numerical skills and use ICT with ease. Pupils have achieved considerable success in the UK Mathematics Challenge in recent years at all levels, including four Gold awards and with representation in the British International Mathematics Olympiad team. Pupils of all ages possess strong reasoning skills and logical thinking in presentations. Pupils recently achieved individual success in the UK Schools Chess Challenge. Their well-developed creative skills are evident in the striking artwork displayed around the school and in the strong success of many pupils in external drama and music examinations. Recent notable musical successes include pupils winning a choral scholarship or places at a music college. Pupils involve themselves enthusiastically in the many opportunities for physical exercise. School sports teams have achieved considerable success, for example in rugby, hockey and cricket, with pupils playing at county level. The girls' football team won the County Independent Schools Football Cup. Large numbers of pupils undertake the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, some completing the gold award while still at school. Teams succeed in the Ten Tors challenge, and have successfully completed the 35 mile, 45 mile and 55 mile course.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the English national data for the years 2011 to 2013, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national tests at age 11 have been above the national average for maintained primary schools in English but below average in mathematics. Results in GCSE have been good in relation to the national average of maintained schools. More than 80 per cent of GCSE results in 2012 and 2013 were at grades A\* to C. Results at A level have been similar to the national average for maintained schools. The pass rate in 2013 was 98 per cent, with the majority of pupils achieving B or C grades. Almost all of last year's leavers obtained places at their first choice of university, pursuing a wide range of academic or vocational courses. The level of attainment in standardised tests at age 11 indicates that pupils make appropriate progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability. The level of attainment at GCSE, and the nationally standardised progress data that is available, indicate that pupils are making good progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability. Pupils with SEND or EAL make good or very good progress, as evidenced in tracking data and work observed. There is less evidence that the school carefully

tracks the progress of particularly able pupils or that all of these make more than sound progress. No standardised ability data is yet available for sixth-form pupils but other inspection evidence suggests that pupils are making good progress.

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

- 3.6 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.7 The curriculum at all levels provides effective coverage of required areas of learning for all pupils. The staff in the EYFS plan topics and activities, covering all the areas of learning, which engage the children's interest and stimulate their curiosity. Children with speech and language needs are well supported. The EYFS curriculum is enriched by regular visits and extra-curricular activities.
- 3.8 Throughout the junior and senior schools the curriculum meets the needs of the majority of the pupils well, supporting the aims of the school to provide an all-round education. The curriculum is sufficiently broad to allow the pupils to explore their own interests. The range of subject options at examination level is appropriate for the size of the school. Subjects offered do not always engage the interest of some of the less academic pupils and the curriculum is under review, as is the way in which careers advice is provided for senior school pupils. Teaching of French begins in the junior school and Spanish is introduced from Year 7. Creative and expressive arts have a strong place within the curriculum. Both a combined science course and separate sciences provision are available. The senior school curriculum includes some additional subjects to provide greater breadth and to challenge the more able, for example further mathematics and astronomy. Visits and trips support and enhance the pupils' educational experiences in a number of subject areas, including English, business studies and history.
- 3.9 The timetable is generally well planned, although the length of the double periods affects the concentration and achievement levels of some of the junior school pupils. The school recognises the need to reassess the timetable allocation for sport in Year 9. In the junior school, planning and assessment files are used to monitor, evaluate and review curriculum provision. The recommendation made in the previous inspection has been met and a clear strategy for departmental monitoring of the curriculum is now in place for the junior school. In the senior school, senior leaders meet with governors in an academic committee to discuss curricular priorities.
- 3.10 All pupils are screened for learning difficulties and their reading and spelling ages are assessed on entering the school and annually thereafter. Individual needs are carefully considered and excellent support provided by the learning support department. The school's individual education and learning plans are disseminated for implementation by teachers. Pupils with EAL also benefit from careful support, through small group classes outside the timetable or individual classes.
- 3.11 Excellent extra-curricular provision offers plentiful opportunities for leadership and team-work. Parents and pupils express great satisfaction with the activities offered. There are numerous activities covering sports, music, drama and art as well as clubs such as mathematics, craft and debating, the Combined Cadet Force and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Attendance at activities is compulsory but enthusiastically undertaken and pupils spoke to inspectors of their enjoyment. Those with particular talents are well provided for and many have participated in county trials for sports, extra gymnastics training classes, concerts, local art exhibitions and school drama productions, either on stage or behind the scenes.

- 3.12 Good links exist with the local community and local church from which pupils benefit. Pupils work closely with local residents on community charity events. Members of the Shebbear shooting club provide specialist coaching to pupils. Senior pupils engage in voluntary service by helping in an exercise class for individuals with neuro-delay, volunteering at a local arts centre, a charity shop and at a local residential care home.

### **3.(c) The contribution of teaching**

- 3.13 The contribution of the teaching is good.
- 3.14 Throughout the school, the teaching is effective in promoting the progress of the pupils and supports the aim of the school to educate all pupils to achieve their full potential.
- 3.15 Almost all the teaching observed was at least good, with many examples of excellence. Excellent relationships, based on mutual respect, lead to a positive and co-operative working atmosphere. Teaching is based on a strong understanding of pupils' needs, with assistance quickly and sensitively offered. The school has made some progress in response to the recommendation from the previous report to provide more opportunities for independent learning but this is not always evident in lessons. Assessment strategies have been improved and most teaching makes effective use of this in planning, as seen in a junior ICT lesson in which fine motor skills as well as mathematics and literacy skills were developed. Generally pupils know how to improve their work, although marking in some subjects is notably more thorough and helpful than in others.
- 3.16 Overall, teaching demonstrates strong subject knowledge. Lessons are planned to make good use of resources and to include a range of different methods such as question and answer sessions, co-operative group work, or problem-solving tasks. The extensive range of methods used in a mathematics lesson, for example, enabled pupils of all abilities to participate and make good progress. Often teaching sets a brisk pace, challenges most pupils and encourages reflective contributions. This was seen in several lessons, for example in junior history teaching, senior school revision sessions and in art, where energetic and stimulating teaching resulted in strong engagement and rapid learning by pupils. Occasionally, slow pace and excessive exposition by the teacher results in pupils making less progress.
- 3.17 Teaching is almost always successful in fostering pupils' keen interest. The excitement of the children in an infant class as they speculated about the contents of a mysterious box was palpable, with exclamations and gasps as the box was finally opened. Older pupils, both junior and senior, were seen thoroughly enjoying work, as they variously explored the complexities of multiplication, literature and language and the concept of analysing population density. Teaching provides good support for pupils with EAL, sensitively providing them with extra support in the course of a lesson. The arrangements for pupils with SEND are excellent. All staff are made aware of the needs of these pupils by individual teaching plans and the learning support department monitors the implementation of these effectively. Regular reviews show that those pupils with statements of educational need are provided for well and make good progress. Some pupils are supported in lessons by teaching assistants; this help is significant in enabling pupils to make good progress. The provision of extension work for more able pupils is routine in some subjects but this is not consistent practice across all departments.

- 3.18 In the EYFS, planning which covers all areas of learning successfully engages the children's interest. Teaching makes good use of the wide range of high-quality resources, both indoors and out, to support the children's learning constructively. Practical mathematics lessons take place in the adventure playground and activities are adapted to support the individual child's interests and particular 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' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils are emotionally mature and confident in conversation with adults. They are very conscious of a non-material dimension of life and contribute to the spiritual life of the school by occasionally planning and leading services themselves, as well as routinely leading school assemblies. In these and in discussions observed, pupils ponder issues such as the nature of a society without rules, how sport can unite a community and the importance of being true to oneself. Throughout the school a display of pupils' artwork bears strong witness to their aesthetic awareness, a pupil's comment comparing these to 'having treasured family pictures around you.'
- 4.3 Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of right and wrong. They are indignant at examples of discrimination or injustice. Senior pupils have sewn 'Activism through Craft' banners to raise awareness of issues such as the use of child labour abroad. They express careful thinking on ethical issues such as the justice of imprisonment without trial or of smacking children. Their honesty and consciousness of the norms of good behaviour are everywhere evident in their dealings with each other and their relationships with staff.
- 4.4 Pupils' political and economic awareness is highly developed. In conversation with inspectors, sixth-form pupils showed intelligent consideration of issues such as the morality of sending money overseas to countries with great poverty but corrupt regimes, immigration, and the pros and cons of Britain's membership of the EU. Pupils' awareness of responsibilities to the wider world leads to involvement in environmental projects, including the generation of biofuels. They happily take responsibility for organising school social activities or charitable events to help local causes. Some volunteer in a local care home and a number of older pupils participate in the Model United Nations or MIST's World AIMS (Action in Methodist Schools) group activities. Pupils are socially adept, even the very youngest welcoming visitors to the school and helping individuals in need.
- 4.5 Pupils demonstrate and appreciate cultural differences, accepting and valuing diversity. Throughout the school pupils support each other and those with specific needs automatically. Their cultural awareness covers that of Western and African traditions, the senior choir singing Vivaldi and Mozart and juniors joining a visiting African choir and learning to appreciate their musical traditions. Older pupils raise money to fund a biennial trip to a partner school in Uganda with commitment, saying that, 'it's good to know that all of the effort you make will go to helping others'.
- 4.6 Day and boarding pupils of all ages are thoughtful, honest, considerate and kind. There are frequent spontaneous moments of kindness, such as a junior pupil offering to swap a chosen activity to be with another pupil who would otherwise have been on his own. The pupils are a great credit to the school; their demeanour and thoughtful approach demonstrate the school's excellent success in fostering responsibility, tolerance, commitment and respect for self and for others. Pupils leave the school very well prepared for the challenges of adult life.

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

- 4.7 The pastoral care of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.8 Relationships between pupils and staff and also with their peers are excellent throughout the school, evidenced in the laughter, happiness, mutual respect and relaxed atmosphere in lessons and in the strong sense of integration and community in classrooms and the boarding houses. Ventures such as the joint staff and pupil senior choir and staff involvement in charity fund raising demonstrate staff and pupils working together cheerfully to excellent effect.
- 4.9 In the EYFS, a calm and welcoming environment ensures that children settle quickly and are happy and secure, forming strong relationships with their carers. They are sensitively guided to share, work together and to be polite and considerate. Carefully designed class routines, which are consistently implemented, help the children to develop confidence and independence. For example, at snack times the children organise their place settings, choose their healthy snacks and enjoy helping the teacher to serve out fruit. They follow hygiene routines with increasing independence.
- 4.10 Staff throughout the school provide excellent, highly effective pastoral support. In interviews pupils unhesitatingly confirmed that they get excellent support from committed staff. This reflected the responses in the pre-inspection questionnaire. Nearly all the parents praise the school's care and say that the staff know their children well as individuals. Pastoral support systems are effective, the new electronic log of concerns facilitating a swift awareness of any emerging issues.
- 4.11 A healthy lifestyle is promoted effectively through the wide range of well-attended sporting activities available. In their questionnaire responses the majority of pupils said that they disliked the food, complaining particularly about supper. The meals attended and sampled by inspectors, however, were enjoyable, with a choice of healthy food including vegetarian options, salads and fresh fruit. Menus seen indicated a suitable variety of food provided.
- 4.12 The senior school has a compliant and effectively implemented anti-bullying policy including useful references to cyber bullying. Guidance in the junior school handbook, however, is scant in this latter regard. The school's records show that it deals with any bullying swiftly and in interviews pupils said that any unpleasantness is rare. They were confident that staff or indeed they themselves would intervene rapidly should it arise.
- 4.13 The statutory plan to improve equal access to education and the curriculum for pupils with SEND is fully compliant.
- 4.14 There is a pupils' council in the senior section but none in the junior school. Although sometimes the response to the council's reasonable requests is slow, the school does listen to and act on these, for example in the recent refurbishment of boys' washrooms.

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

- 4.15 Arrangements for welfare, health and safety are unsatisfactory.
- 4.16 Safeguarding arrangements are unsatisfactory as the school has not had appropriate regard to official guidance in this matter. An annual review of the



safeguarding policy by governors has not been completed as required, and prior to the inspection the policy had not been updated to reflect the latest guidance. It has now been made clear that the policy applies equally to all areas of the school, including the EYFS. Senior leaders are trained in safer recruitment but safe recruitment procedures regarding the prompt completion of checks have not always been correctly followed. All staff, governors and volunteers have been appropriately checked and these checks are now recorded as required, following completion during the inspection. All adults on site are trained in child protection issues.

- 4.17 The school's policy to guard against risk of fire and other hazards was updated during the inspection and is now compliant. Risk assessments for all areas of the school were also completed. Fire safety equipment is checked annually and maintained, and fire safety exits are kept clear and signed appropriately. Pupils and staff understand the evacuation procedures. There are regular fire practices and testing of the alarm system. However, understanding of the procedural requirements and implementation of the Fire Safety Order 2005 has not been secure. Many risk assessments of other hazards are in place, but these are not always centrally monitored by senior management. Some issues of security were discussed with the school. Policies are not always implemented, so that steps have not been taken to mitigate obvious and avoidable risk.
- 4.18 The school's medical centre is a welcoming haven for those who are unwell. Pupils are well cared for and individual care plans are in place for those with chronic conditions. The college has several members of staff trained in first aid, including those in boarding and EYFS. First Aid boxes are available throughout the school and checked regularly. Accidents are recorded in a log, which is seen by the school doctor who reports any patterns to the headmaster.
- 4.19 The attendance and admission registers are properly maintained and stored as required.

#### **4.(d) The quality of boarding**

- 4.20 The quality of boarding education is sound.
- 4.21 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. The boarding experience makes a strong and positive contribution to the personal development of boarders. They are well-mannered, cheerful, articulate and personable. Boarders come to the school with a clear sense of purpose. They are determined to succeed; they value the structure of the day, which provides lessons, activities, time for study and time for recreation. Some day pupils join the boarding community so that they may benefit from this self-disciplined environment. Boarders say that boarding helps them to become more confident, better organised and independent.
- 4.22 Boarders live together in harmony; they enjoy the company of what feels like an extended family and strong friendships are made. Relationships with the staff involved in boarding are excellent. Pupils are tolerant of other people's cultures, and they respect and support all members of their houses. They are able to make a positive contribution to the life of the school, through joining activities, playing team sports, and sitting on advisory committees or acting as a prefect. Boarders are proud of their school and enjoy being part of it.
- 4.23 The quality of boarding provision and care is sound. New boarders are swiftly made to feel welcome. They receive a helpful pack of information, and fellow pupils make sure they settle in quickly. Boarders are well cared for if they are ill. Good

communication between the sister and house staff ensures that care plans are effectively carried out, and the administration of medicines carefully monitored. The school has effective policies in place for the medical care of pupils, but these are not readily to hand or reviewed regularly. Pupils rest comfortably when they are unwell, but there is no separate accommodation within the sickbay for male and female boarders. The school doctor visits the school twice a week and boarders may also use the services of a local dentist and optometrist.

- 4.24 The management of health and safety in the boarding houses is sound. Boarders say that they feel safe in the houses; security measures in houses are reliable, house staff are always present when boarders are in, and there is an excellent system of signing in and out. Fire drills are regularly carried out in boarding time and boarders are aware of the fire evacuation procedures. Fire logs are monitored by the head of boarding, although not by the school's fire officer. Although there have been few accidents to boarders, not all obvious risks have been properly considered and managed by the school. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire a minority of boarders said that their possessions are not safe. During the inspection, most boarders said that their possessions are safe, but some older boarders reported problems from the past. The school does not provide lockable cupboards, but the house staff look after valuable items and offer the facility of a house bank. The school runs its own laundry which provides a highly effective and rapid service to the boarders.
- 4.25 A majority of boarders commented unfavourably in their pre-inspection questionnaire responses on the quality of food. In interviews, this view was repeated by some senior boarders, who are unhappy with portion size and the quality of the evening meal. Some house staff said they were aware of and understood the boarders' views. Planned menus show provision of a healthy and nutritious diet. The caterers provide individual diets as required and are aware of any boarders with allergies, medical or religious needs. A majority of boarders in their pre-inspection questionnaire responses said that they were not satisfied with the balance of free time and activities in the evening and especially at weekends with too little to do. During the inspection older boarders repeated this view in discussions. However, the boarding staff work hard to provide outings, and boarders do understand that the geographical isolation of the school makes it difficult for them to have the freedom to come and go easily. Many boarders spoke most favourably of the variety of opportunities provided by the school's extra-curricular programme. Boarders keep in regular contact with their families through phone, email and internet calls, and house staff are very efficient in their communications with parents.
- 4.26 The standard of accommodation is excellent, with the girls' house being slightly better equipped than the boys'. The houses are clean and in a good state of repair. The bedrooms are spacious and comfortable; boarders personalise their rooms, creating a homely, friendly atmosphere. Bathrooms are modern and ample in number. Kitchens and common rooms provide a central focus for house life. Some overseas boarders move to a third house over the half-term break under the care of a guardian; this also provides accommodation of a high standard.
- 4.27 The arrangements for the welfare and safeguarding of boarders are unsatisfactory as the relevant policies did not meet requirements prior to the inspection. The boarding house staff were fully checked before appointment. However, there have been shortfalls in the checking of some non-residential staff, which have now been rectified. Staff are well supported and trained when they are new to the job, and there is a commitment to on-going training. The school has a robust anti-bullying

policy which is well understood and effective in promoting considerate and kind behaviour. The presence of three adults in each house every day contributes significantly towards good behaviour and good care of the boarders.

- 4.28 The effectiveness of day to day leadership and management in the boarding house is good. Effective policies are now in place for the management of the house, but not all of these have been effectively monitored in the past. A recent self-evaluation shows a commitment to improvement. The day-to-day running of the boarding houses is excellent. A dedicated team of house staff demonstrate strong commitment to the job, and they have the well-being of their boarders as their greatest priority. They support and nurture them and encourage them strongly with their work and personal development. The boarders are universal in the praise of their house staff, are deeply appreciative of their care, their ready availability and willingness to lend a listening ear. This view of the house staff is strongly supported by the parents in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) The quality of governance**

- 5.1 The governance of the school is unsatisfactory.
- 5.2 The governors recognise that they have not been sufficiently rigorous in their oversight of the school since the time of the previous inspection. They have relied on meetings between a nominated governor and the staff responsible for safeguarding for assurance that the school is meeting its responsibilities in this respect. Governors were not aware that prior to the inspection the safeguarding policy was several years out of date. The full governing body has not reviewed the policy and procedures annually as is required. Governors' awareness of the specific requirements of the EYFS is not secure, nor is their understanding of their responsibilities under the NMS for boarding. Minutes of the school's health and safety committee meetings have been sent to governors but these have not been rigorously interrogated by governors to reassure themselves that the school's practice complies with health and safety legislation.
- 5.3 Governors have exercised astute and successful financial management of the school. This has ensured the availability of appropriate resources and accommodation. A good range of expertise is represented on the governing body and governors are committed to and proud of the school. The committee structure, recently created and in its infancy, is intended to enable governors to have a deeper understanding of the school. Reports from the head provide governors with information on the school's daily life and examination successes. Minutes of the governors' academic committee show thoughtful discussion of educational standards and issues reported by the school.

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

- 5.4 The leadership and management of the school, including links with parents and others, are unsatisfactory.
- 5.5 Scrutiny of documentation prior to and during the inspection shows that many policies had not been revisited since the time of the previous inspection and awareness of the importance of meeting regulatory requirements had slipped. School leadership has been insufficiently attentive to these requirements in welfare, health and safety, safe recruitment and safeguarding, affecting all areas of the school. Several of the policies and procedures were inadequate. By the end of the inspection, the school had taken steps to deal with a number of identified issues but had not been able to rectify all failings or have sufficient time to demonstrate effective implementation.
- 5.6 Leaders at all levels are committed to providing an education which meets the school's aims and they are successful in providing an atmosphere in which pupils are prepared for life as confident individuals with a clear sense of right and wrong. Senior leadership is providing a clear educational direction. At all levels, school leadership is successful in reflecting the school's aim to encourage pupils to achieve their full potential and develop the personal qualities they will need to succeed in adult life. The pupils' happiness and self-confidence is evidence of the school's

success in these areas; pupils told inspectors that they feel that the school has high expectations of them and supports them as they strive to meet these.

- 5.7 Senior leadership has now embarked on the process of creating a strategic plan to replace that which was in place at the time of the previous inspection and which expired in 2012. Leadership is making strenuous efforts to ensure that all staff are involved in this process and a consultation document has been circulated asking for comments and additions. Senior leaders have reviewed the school's performance across a number of areas in constructing this document and have established priorities based on identified strengths and areas for development. There is still work to do before an overall strategic plan, to which departmental development plans are linked, is created. Lines of communication between the EYFS and the rest of the junior school, and between the junior and senior schools, are not sufficiently clear. There has been some progress towards meeting the recommendations of the previous report regarding encouragement of independent learning and challenge. However, monitoring at all management levels is not always sufficiently rigorous to ensure that teaching is consistently providing such opportunities. Some progress has been made in constructing a staff appraisal system, although this is not yet fully in place. The school collects standardised data on pupils' ability but limited progress has been made since the previous report in utilising this.
- 5.8 The leadership and management of the EYFS are satisfactory in evaluating practice and securing continuous improvement, although appraisal and the rigorous self-evaluation recommended in the previous inspection are not yet firmly established. Whilst there is some constructive monitoring of practice and self-evaluation in the setting, lack of governance and senior management involvement means that monitoring and self-evaluation are not yet sufficiently rigorous to ensure continuous improvement. The recommendation concerning improvements in the outdoor area has been met.
- 5.9 The school has been successful in recruiting able teachers. Appointment checks have not always been completed before staff have taken up their posts as is required and senior leadership has not ensured that the full governing body has been involved in reviewing the school's safeguarding policies and procedures. School leaders are successful in creating an atmosphere in which staff, both those experienced and those new to the school, feel valued and supported. The commitment of the staff is a strength of the school and they provide excellent day to day care and support of pupils throughout. Leadership ensures that staff act as role models for pupils in living out the ethos of the school and that they meet the needs of the pupils. Staff are trained in health and safety matters, although their compliance with school policy is not monitored. There are regular updates on safeguarding issues given by senior leaders to staff. All staff demonstrate a good understanding of their responsibilities and the majority understand the procedures the school has put place. All have been given the recently updated safeguarding policy.
- 5.10 The school has not provided the local authority with an annual account of income and expenditure for pupils with statements of special educational needs as required. It has undertaken a thorough annual review of the way it is meeting the needs of such pupils and provided this to the local authority.
- 5.11 Links with parents are excellent. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the vast majority of parents expressed great satisfaction with the education and support provided for their children and with the quality of

communication with the school. The informative website and school prospectus now contain all the required information. Regular mailings, contact by email, the recently introduced weekly newsletters and the school magazine ensure that parents are kept well informed about school activities. The weekly newsletters, covering activities, events and successes in all parts of the school, are much appreciated by the parents. Parents say that they find the staff extremely approachable. The school maintains a constructive relationship with parents, who are encouraged to contact the school with any problems. However, the complaints procedure required amendment during the inspection to bring it to the required standard. The few complaints have been handled with care and in accordance with the published procedure.

- 5.12 Throughout the school parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning. In the senior school there are introductory meetings for parents at the beginning of the school year for all year groups as well as parent consultation evenings for each year group. Parents receive informative and detailed full reports at the end of each term and a half-termly short report giving grades for effort and achievement. Tutors contact parents at the start of each term and ensure there is regular exchange of information. In the junior school there are parents' consultation evenings twice a year and a more informal open evening in the spring term, where there is an opportunity to view the children's work. Class teachers and other staff are in regular contact by letters and email and the head of juniors writes regular newsletters. In the EYFS parents are invited to contribute to their children's personal records and to share significant moments of children's achievement with the school.
- 5.13 At all stages the school welcomes parental involvement in school life and invites them to a rich selection of events, including assemblies, concerts and performances. A thriving parents' association, which has its own website, organises a wide range of social events and supports the school by raising funds for a wide variety of educational resources, from which the pupils benefit directly. It also raises funds for charitable purposes.

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