



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**ST JOHN'S SCHOOL**

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## St John's School

Full Name of School	<b>St John's School</b>				
DfE Number	<b>936/6070</b>				
Registered Charity Number	<b>312064</b>				
Address	<b>St John's School</b>				
	<b>Epsom Road</b>				
	<b>Leatherhead</b>				
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Telephone Number	<b>01372 373000</b>				
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Email Address	<b>paheadmaster@stjohns.surrey.sch.uk</b>				
Headmaster	<b>Mr Martin Collier</b>				
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Peter Hickson</b>				
Age Range	<b>13 to 18</b>				
Total Number of Pupils	<b>643</b>				
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed ( 427 boys; 216 girls)</b>				
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>0</b>	5-11:	<b>0</b>	
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>0</b>	11-18:	<b>643</b>	
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>451</b>			
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>192</b>			
	Full:	<b>2</b>	Weekly:	<b>99</b>	Flexi <b>91</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>28 Jan 2014 to 31 Jan 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 2008, with a boarding inspection in September 2012.

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.

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', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors and another governor, 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 Thomas Brookby	Team Inspector (Head, Society of Heads school)
Mr Jim Hawkins	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Mrs Karen Hollingdale	Team Inspector (Former deputy head, GSA school)
Mr David Ibbotson	Team Inspector (Former director of studies, HMC school)
Mr Gareth Price	Team Inspector (Headmaster, Society of Heads school)
Mr Mark Robinson	Team Inspector (Deputy head, Society of Heads school)
Mr Patrick Wilson	Team Inspector (Head, Society of Heads school)
Ms Myra Rodgers	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Dr Neil Hampton	Team Inspector for Boarding (Deputy head, HMC school)

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(a) Main findings</b>	2
<b>(b) Action points</b>	3
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	3
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>4</b>
(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
<b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>8</b>
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	8
(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care	9
(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	9
(d) The quality of boarding	10
<b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>13</b>
(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 Originally founded in 1851 as a boarding school for the sons of poor clergy, St John's School moved from London to its current site in Leatherhead in 1872. It admitted girls to the sixth form in 1989. The school became fully co-educational in 2012 and it now provides boarding and day education for girls and boys between the ages of thirteen and eighteen. It continues to reflect its charitable origins by offering a small number of financially assisted places to the children of Anglican clergy. The school is a charitable trust, of which the governors are trustees. The governing Council is made up of up to 24 governors, each of whom serves on at least one of the sub-committees.
- 1.2 The school aims to promote academic excellence and a love of learning. It is a Christian foundation and sets out to provide a caring pastoral environment within which each pupil feels supported. Central to its philosophy is the provision of co-curricular opportunities and an appreciation of the arts as part of a rounded education. It aims to enable pupils to develop a sense of leadership, service and personal responsibility. It intends that pupils become positive, confident and rounded individuals able to face the challenges of adult life.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection there have been several changes in the management structure, including the appointment of the present headmaster in 2011. Departmental self-evaluation and the review of teaching and learning have been introduced, an induction process for governors instituted and changes made to the structure of boarding. Administrative and admissions procedures have been revised. Facilities for sports and the arts have been developed. A new classroom block, a new boarding and day house for girls and a day house for boys have been opened.
- 1.4 Currently 643 pupils attend the school, 427 boys and 216 girls, of whom 192 are boarders. There are 99 weekly boarders and 2 full boarders; 91 pupils are flexi-boarders. The majority of pupils come from professional white British families based in Surrey and London. Three pupils are identified as having English as an additional language (EAL), two of whom receive specialist help from the school.
- 1.5 The ability profile of the school is above the national average; around a sixth of those in Years 9 to 11 are of well above average ability. The profile in the sixth form is considered to include a slightly wider range of abilities, although still above average. The school identifies 148 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and provides specialist support for 50 of these. There is one pupil with a statement of special educational need.
- 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 table.

School	NC name
Fourth form	Year 9
Lower fifth	Year 10
Upper fifth	Year 11
Lower sixth	Year 12
Upper sixth	Year 13

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

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

- 2.1 St John's School achieves good levels of success in meeting its aims of promoting academic excellence. Pupils achieve well in response to an excellent curriculum. The co-curricular programme, which is an integral part of the daily timetable, offers rich opportunities to all pupils. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, pupils and parents alike expressed high levels of satisfaction with what the school offers and with the pupils' academic progress, although some felt that homework does not usefully extend their learning. Pupils are articulate, literate and numerate, understand scientific concepts and use information and communication technology (ICT) well in their work. Good teaching presents them with stimulating and imaginative tasks which successfully develop sophisticated thinking skills, although at times some of the teaching lacks pace and challenge. Pupils are usually eager to learn, work assiduously and question carefully. Occasionally their enthusiasm is dampened and they become passive. The pupils' teamwork skills are highly developed. Their creativity is evident in their responses to challenge, their art work and their music making. Virtually all pupils go on to university, with a wide variety of aspirations for future careers.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent and the school is highly successful in helping its pupils develop a sense of leadership, service and personal responsibility. Excellent pastoral care and guidance provided through the strong and highly valued house system supports all pupils and encourages them to aspire to their best in all areas of school life. Pupils feel fierce loyalty to their houses and are proud of their school. Relationships between pupils, whether day or boarding, are excellent. The quality of boarding is excellent. Boarders enjoy staying at school and say it contributes considerably to their work ethic and independence. Sixth-form prefects are respected and take a leading role in setting the example of behaviour and attitude expected of pupils. Pupils in all year groups demonstrate awareness of the needs of others, both in school and in the wider community. They are tolerant, respectful, and have excellent manners. They clearly enjoy each other's company and school life. The school has excellent procedures in place to protect the welfare, health and safety of all its pupils.
- 2.3 Excellent governance has ensured continued development of the school and of its facilities. All the recommendations of the previous inspections have been met. High quality staff are recruited and all required checks are done. Excellent senior leadership and management includes an ambitious vision for the future of the school and provides energetic drive to bring this vision into reality. The commitment of senior leadership to ensuring that the school's curriculum fits pupils for life in an increasingly complex world while retaining its traditional values is moving the school forward rapidly. Most middle managers are effective in monitoring standards of teaching, although there is inconsistency in this area. Links with parents are strong.

## **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 2013.

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

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
1. Ensure that all teaching reflects recent initiatives so that the school's aim to stimulate a love of learning is fully realised.



### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is good.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated in line with the school's aim to promote academic excellence. All pupils, including those with EAL, display good levels of achievement in writing, speaking and listening. They use technology and manipulate numbers confidently. In several subjects, the most able pupils demonstrate advanced study and research skills as well as excellent essay writing. When given the opportunity, and when encouraged into philosophical, critical thinking, many pupils exhibit the ability to reason logically and articulate profound thought, although they are not always encouraged to extend their learning in this way. Pupils speak well in public and are assured in expressing their own views to others. This was seen in well-attended house debates, where pupils willingly spoke from the floor. The pupils develop their physical fitness and aptitudes well through an extensive games programme. They are adept in practical work, showing confidence and a purposeful approach. In aesthetic and creative disciplines, much of their work is excellent.
- 3.3 Pupils have achieved excellent success in co-curricular activities. School sports teams, including rugby, hockey, biathlon and football, win regional competitions, and some pupils gain high levels including national representative honours in a range of different team and individual sports. In music, choral achievements are notable, with both boys and girls gaining university choral scholarships. The Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE) result in military scholarships, places on leadership courses and, in DofE, a good number of gold awards.
- 3.4 The following analysis of examination attainment uses the national data from 2010 to 2012. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. As girls were first entered for GCSE examinations in 2013, GCSE analysis refers to boys' achievements only. Results in these examinations are well above the national average for boys in maintained schools and similar to the national average for boys in maintained selective schools. A-level results are above the national average for maintained schools, and also above the national average for maintained selective schools. Grades awarded at A\* to B show a year-on-year increase, reaching 85% in 2013. Most sixth-form leavers enter higher education and a good number gain places at universities with demanding entry standards.
- 3.5 This level of attainment, confirmed by lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' written work and standardised assessments of progress, show that pupils make good progress in relation to pupils of similar abilities. Progress is more rapid in some subjects than others, often as a result of the quality of teaching. Results in school assessments and public examinations, lesson observations and discussions with pupils indicate that pupils with SEND achieve at high levels in relation to their abilities. Evidence from the same sources indicates that the progress of pupils identified as particularly able is in line with their ability.
- 3.6 Pupils generally show positive attitudes to work, perseverance and application, and enjoyment in working hard. A love of learning is apparent when the environment created by teaching provides stimulating challenge. In the minority of lessons that this is lacking, pupils sometimes become passive and, although they apply themselves well, their progress is relatively limited. Pupils work very effectively together in groups or pairs as required. In many instances, pupils work with

enjoyment and achieve success in an atmosphere indicative of a cheerful, friendly rapport between them and their teachers.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 The school is highly successful in providing a curriculum which meets its aim to provide opportunities for academic excellence. The school's aspiration to promote a love of learning has resulted in excellent recent initiatives in the curriculum, including the introduction of thinking skills in Year 9 and computing in Year 10. Pupils in Year 12 pursue either the school's own St John's project or the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), recently introduced. The curriculum provides for the development of good skills in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative subjects. The recently restructured Year 9 curriculum now includes German and Greek, further enhancing a broad curriculum. The weekly programme of academic enhancement activities for Year 9 pupils further promotes enquiry, independent and co-operative learning. For example, pupils were seen working together well and using ICT confidently to produce newspapers or videos. A careers programme provides good guidance and support for pupils in making subject and university choices.
- 3.9 A good range of subjects is available for GCSE. Classics, drama and graphics have recently been introduced to extend further the choice of optional subjects in addition to the compulsory core subjects of English, mathematics, sciences and a modern foreign language. More able pupils take three separate sciences. Others may take two, within a timetable allocation which allows additional support. In the sixth form a wide choice of subjects is available, meeting the needs of all pupils and enabling them to progress to higher education.
- 3.10 The learning support department's contribution is highly valued both by the pupils and by the other departments; liaison between the departments is excellent. The curriculum is adapted to suit the needs of pupils identified with SEND or who have a statement of special educational needs so as to ensure high quality provision and optimise each pupil's chances of success. The banding and setting arrangements support the opportunities for all pupils to make good progress within the curriculum.
- 3.11 The breadth of the co-curricular programme is a strength of the school, enabling the school to be successful in providing a fully rounded education. The range of activities at all ages gives excellent support for and extension to the academic curriculum. The many academic, creative and sporting activities available are enthusiastically embraced by the pupils. The timetabling is structured to ensure that all pupils become involved and they appreciate the balance provided each day between formal lessons and co-curricular activities. The school has a strong sporting ethos with a key focus on major sports but with opportunities to engage with many others. The DofE Award attracts large numbers of participants. All Year 10 pupils are required to join the CCF and a sizeable majority continue their involvement in later years. Others involve themselves instead in the community service unit, showing commitment in their work with elderly people, the disabled and with environmental projects. Almost half of pupils take individual music lessons and a strong profile for the creative arts includes opportunities to perform at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The curriculum, both academic and co-curricular, is enhanced by lectures from visiting speakers and trips such as geography field work

carried out both locally and overseas, a visit to a university chemistry department to use spectrometers, choir tours and numerous adventurous sports tours.

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

3.12 The contribution of teaching is good.

3.13 Teaching successfully reflects the school's aim to promote excellence and a love of learning. Teaching is well planned. All pupils undergo baseline assessment and screening on arrival at the school. Teaching uses the information provided to support planning and to provide suitable work. New methods to track pupil progress have been recently introduced and are starting to prove effective. Most work is marked regularly. The best marking is rigorous with constructive comments. Some marking is less thorough and even perfunctory at times. In interviews, however, pupils told inspectors that they receive helpful verbal feedback in lessons to complement the marks in their books and that teachers are always willing to provide extra guidance if asked. Responses to pre-inspection questionnaires indicate the pupils' confidence in the support and feedback they are given to help them make good progress, although a small minority of pupils do not feel that their homework is helping them learn. Inspectors agreed. Half-termly reports focus on the pupils' engagement and indicate aspirational grades for examination success. Termly reports provide constructive commentary and set specific targets, once again helping pupils' progress.

3.14 Teaching is mostly well resourced and the ICT system is now a reliable and effective support for learning. The library, re-located since the 2008 inspection, is a well-used resource. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and often their enthusiasm encourages pupils to share their passion for a subject. Clear explanations are given and good questioning techniques help the pupils to develop their ideas and opinions. In response to recommendations in the previous report, the school continues to work hard to achieve a wider range of teaching styles. Much teaching shows creativity with careful time management and varied activities. Regular informal observations and staff training sessions have increased sharing of good practice and the general adoption of more varied teaching strategies. In some subjects, however, teaching styles remain too narrow and do not always generate the engagement and intellectual curiosity of pupils. Such lessons are noticeably less successful in generating engagement and intellectual curiosity in the pupils. The most successful teaching incorporates imaginative tasks and is stimulating, enthusiastic and energetic. For example, in English, activities structured to give a competitive edge provide fun and enjoyment and promote rapid progress. In other subjects, word games provide effective and enjoyable starter activities.

3.15 The school has made progress in encouraging independent learning. Strategies such as independent reading logs and relevant research tasks have enabled some pupils to extend their learning but this is not yet the pervasive culture, as a minority of pupils suggest. The learning support department regularly circulates guidance on individual pupils' needs, and strategies to meet them. Teaching usually utilises this comprehensive information to help engage and support the pupils. Pupils are discretely given material which provides extra guidance to help them in approaching tasks; this successfully supports their learning and enables their full participation. Some teaching provides extension activities to challenge the most able but this is not consistent. On occasion such extension work is simply more of the same, lacking higher challenge. Most teaching successfully establishes a purposeful,

focussed and enjoyable classroom atmosphere, with praise and encouragement used to good effect.

## **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 The pupils' awareness of a spiritual, non-material aspect of life is excellent, reflecting the school's Christian foundation. Pupils listen carefully and behave reverently in chapel assemblies, whether led by the chaplain, staff or other pupils. They sing hymns lustily, enriching the experience of communal worship. Older pupils enjoy grappling with complex issues such as the contradictions between the Christian concept of an all-loving and all-powerful God with the existence of suffering and evil, and show maturity and thoughtfulness in their responses. Sixth form pupils lead the Christian Union and during the inspection initiated a debate on evidence for the existence of God. The pupils' self-awareness, confidence and emotional maturity are evident in their poise and willingness to support their views in discussion. They show pride in their school and perceive their membership as placing responsibility on them to ensure the school can be proud of them.
- 4.3 The pupils have a strong sense of moral values, an appreciation of the difference between right and wrong and an understanding of the need for self-discipline. Their behaviour is excellent, in classrooms and in houses, and their sense of loyalty to house, school and friends is highly developed. Pupils are able to share and discuss their views maturely. They reflect keenly on the issues raised by visiting speakers who come to talk about such matters as substance abuse and cyber-bullying. The pupils' awareness of the complexities of the law and of ethical dilemmas, such as those surrounding the issue of abortion, is well developed and was observed in debates and in conversations with pupils.
- 4.4 The pupils' social development is excellent. Their clear sense of belonging to a caring school community is apparent and the need to take responsibility develops as pupils progress through the school. Pupils not only accept but seek out responsibility and aspire to be prefects. Many pupils described their houses as extended families with their juniors being like younger siblings. Some older pupils take leading roles in activities and some sixth-form pupils contribute to lessons for their juniors on topics such as safe use of the internet. The pupils' awareness of their responsibility to the wider world is demonstrated by the importance they place on supporting their chosen charities and the success they achieve. The concern they show for others is evident in the strong community service unit, through which, for example, pupils run a holiday scheme for mentally handicapped children and make regular visits to a local care home. Pupils show a profound compassion and understanding of those less fortunate than themselves when they discuss their involvement in these schemes. They show a confident awareness of current affairs and form balanced views on current political issues such as the situations in Syria and Korea.
- 4.5 Pupils show a good understanding and appreciation of differing cultures and faiths. Relationships between those of various cultural and social backgrounds are invariably excellent. The pupils have a rich understanding of Western cultural traditions, supported by the school's programme of concerts and speakers on cultural issues. The art work pupils produce and their music making shows growing aesthetic awareness.

- 4.6 By the time they leave the school, pupils are well rounded, confident and articulate young adults, with a well-developed sense of social responsibility.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 The school achieves considerable success in fulfilling its aim to providing a caring pastoral environment within which pupils feel supported. The house system is central to pastoral care and provides a strong sense of belonging. Houses provide well-organised pastoral care for all pupils, whether day or boarding. The support and guidance that tutors, housemasters and housemistresses provide is warmly appreciated by pupils and parents alike, as reflected in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires. The school continues to work to achieve full integration of girls.
- 4.9 There is excellent rapport between staff and pupils, as seen in classes and on less formal occasions. There is a relaxed and positive atmosphere throughout the school. Tutors clearly knowing their tutees well. The friendly nature of the school is described by some pupils as one of its key characteristics. Behaviour is invariably excellent. The pupils are clear that bullying is not acceptable and confident that any unacceptable behaviour is dealt with swiftly by the school.
- 4.10 Pupils enjoy the daily opportunities for exercise and the curriculum promotes the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The school provides food which is nutritious and appetising, with a good selection of salads and fresh fruit available daily.
- 4.11 The school provides well for pupils identified with SEND and has a suitable plan for further improving educational access.
- 4.12 A minority of pupils expressed the view in questionnaires that their views are not heard by the school. Inspection evidence does not support this. Conversations with pupils and inspection of minutes show that the school, boarding and food councils provide good forums for discussion with senior staff, who respond appropriately. Changes to menus and lunch-time rotas have resulted from points raised by pupils.

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

- 4.13 Arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 4.14 The school places a high priority on the safety and welfare of its pupils and staff. A thorough policy which is rigorously implemented ensures that all relevant health and safety requirements are met. The school now has an updated and satisfactory safeguarding policy in place and measures are fully implemented. An appropriately trained senior member of staff is the designated child protection officer and all staff are trained on arrival at the school and at the required intervals thereafter. The appointments procedure ensures that all necessary checks are made and recorded correctly.
- 4.15 The many outdoor activities are well planned and carefully assessed for risk. Risk assessments for activities in practical subjects are equally thorough and staff take their health and safety responsibilities very seriously. For example, laboratories, design technology workshops and ICT rooms are well provided with safety equipment and free from obvious hazards.

- 4.16 There is a comprehensive first aid policy and many staff hold first-aid qualifications, regularly updated. Great care is taken to provide swift treatment for pupils who fall ill or become injured and the facilities for such pupils are excellent. Comprehensive records of treatments and accidents are systematically maintained. Thorough care plans are established for pupils with identified needs.
- 4.17 Fire drills take place termly for all buildings. Fire equipment and alarm systems are tested frequently. The estates department ensures regular checks of water supplies and temperatures, electrical safety and portable appliance testing. Buildings and the site are secured from unauthorised access. Admission and attendance records are properly maintained and stored.

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

- 4.18 The quality of boarding education is excellent.
- 4.19 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. The boarders' personal development is clearly promoted by their boarding experience and is apparent in qualities such as confidence, tolerance, independence and a sense of community. Boarders say that they love boarding and being with their friends. There is a strong sense of house loyalty, promoted by lively house activities and friendly inter-house competition. The boarders are polite to staff and visitors and mindful of others, so that all are treated with equal respect. Boarders behave extremely well. Relationships between boarders and staff are excellent and boarders are well supported by a committed and caring boarding staff, both academically and pastorally. Boarders are appreciative of the efforts staff make on their behalf. A recently-introduced model of tutoring enhances personal development in all areas and the needs of all boarders are met. Boarders have many opportunities to make their views known, including easy access to staff, a complaints procedure, house suggestion boxes, the boarding committee, the school council and the food committee. Alternations to systems in the school have been brought about as a result, for example a change to ensure equal access to the sports hall and extra eggs provided at breakfast for those who wish them. Boarding house prefects have clearly defined roles and appropriate training enables them to assist the boarding staff and support their fellow boarders. Sixth-form boarders gain independence and feel prepared for life after school. There is a policy for equal opportunities, which is implemented in practice.
- 4.20 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. New boarders receive a comprehensive induction programme, including a taster sleepover prior to joining the school. This is supported by a mentoring system involving older boarders. There are useful boarding handbooks available to help with the settling-in process. Boarders know that there is a range of people they can talk to, including an independent listener. Telephone numbers for this person and for appropriate helplines are displayed in houses, including details of the Children's Rights Director. Boarders feel safe in their environment and access to boarding areas is suitably controlled, benefiting from a range of effective security measures.
- 4.21 The school has good policies in place to support boarders who are unwell or injured. Boarders receive excellent health care, as they confirmed in conversation with inspectors. Medications are securely stored. The health centre, staffed by trained nurses, provides appropriate accommodation for ill boarders during the day and a member of house staff is on call overnight. The school doctor holds a weekly surgery and appointments are arranged with local medical services such as dentists and opticians as required. Appropriate information is shared daily between medical

and boarding staff, meeting the recommendation of the previous boarding inspection.

- 4.22 A minority of boarders who responded to pre-inspection questionnaires were dissatisfied with the quality of food, but inspection evidence does not support these views. Inspectors considered the quality of food to be very good and, when interviewed, the boarders confirmed this. There is a wide choice of food to meet the needs of all, including those with specific dietary needs. Healthy options are always available and the boarders are encouraged to choose them. The dining room is spacious and the school operates a very efficient service, even when at its busiest. Snacks and drinks are available in the houses at appropriate times. Catering staff are responsive to the requests of boarders.
- 4.23 The school operates an on-site laundry and boarders report that this provides an efficient service. Each house has welcoming recreational areas which boarders enjoy during breaks and in the evening. Boarders can visit the nearby town at appropriate times, where they can obtain personal items if necessary.
- 4.24 Boarding accommodation is comfortable and clean and the boarders comment positively about it. Houses are warm, well ventilated and kept scrupulously clean. Bathroom facilities are good and provide appropriate privacy. Boarders have the opportunity to personalise their own areas and each boarder has a lockable space to secure valuable items. Boarders have sufficient free-time in the evenings and there are numerous activities available to them, ranging from martial arts to decorating cup-cakes. The few remaining weekend boarders have suitable opportunities for relaxation. A number of the school facilities are open in the evening for the boarders' use, including the sports hall and the sixth-form centre. Boarders can easily contact their families using mobile phones or e-mail and the school maintains good contact with parents.
- 4.25 Arrangements for the welfare and safeguarding of boarders are in place and are highly effective. All staff, including ancillary staff, receive regular training in this area and are aware of their responsibilities. The school employs appropriate procedures for the safe recruitment of staff. The anti-bullying policy is effective and boarders report that bullying is not an issue in the school. All houses operate an effective signing-in and -out system which allows them to track the whereabouts of their boarders out of school hours. Resident staff are on duty overnight and the boarders know how to contact them if necessary. There are written policies to promote good behaviour, which are effectively implemented by boarding staff. There are always appropriate numbers of staff on duty in boarding houses and staffing rotas are published to allow boarders to know who to go to should they need help during the night. Arrangements for health and safety are good. The school carries out and keeps appropriate records of risk assessments of boarding accommodation. The houses meet fire safety regulations and hold regular fire drills, including in boarding time.
- 4.26 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of boarding is excellent. There is a suitable statement of the school's boarding principles and practice that is made available to boarders, parents and staff and implemented well. Strategic planning includes the development of boarding facilities. While senior staff ensure an appropriate level of consistency between the houses, each house maintains its distinctive character and this engenders loyalty from the boarders. The newest girls' boarding house, Gloucester, is still in its infancy but is already developing strongly. All required policies are in place and are monitored by senior staff. Parents who



responded to the questionnaire were unanimous in saying that their children enjoy boarding. The friendly, relaxed atmosphere within the houses and the contentment of boarders were equally apparent to inspectors. There is excellent management of boarding across the school and in individual houses, led strongly by senior staff. Regular meetings between senior staff and housemasters and housemistresses are held. Boarding staff are suitably trained, have clear job descriptions and enjoy professional development opportunities, linked to an appraisal mechanism. The new tutorial system fosters links between boarding and academic life, providing a holistic approach for boarders from which their personal development benefits.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Governors are strongly committed to the school and their clear understanding of its ethos ensures that they exercise their responsibilities in line with its aims. Some governors have undertaken training in governance issues. Careful strategic planning, undertaken in conjunction with senior leaders, and wise financial management have allowed for considerable investment in staffing, accommodation and resources since the 2008 inspection. The conversion of the old chapel into a multi-purpose centre is due for completion in March 2014.
- 5.3 The governors' excellent understanding of the daily life of the school is supported by a highly effective committee structure. These committees rigorously examine material presented to them to ensure a thorough grasp of the school's successes and provide suitable challenge. Committees report to the full governing body in detail. Governors ensure that decisions made in the light of modern day realities are consonant with the traditional values of the school. The headmaster and other members of staff present reports which are carefully discussed, so that governors thoroughly probe the conclusions and proposals made. Policies and procedures are rigorously tested to ensure they best reflect the school's aims and ethos.
- 5.4 Governors are vigilant in discharging their legal responsibilities, including for health and safety and pupils' well-being. An annual review of the safeguarding policy is presented to governors and discussed at the governors' full meeting. A presentation by a doctor has further extended governors' understanding of this issue and of the way in which the school manages pastoral concerns.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is excellent.
- 5.6 Leadership and management successfully promotes the school's aims, including the aspiration to academic excellence and a love of learning. Leadership at all levels places a high priority on the safeguarding of children and senior leadership rigorously monitors the implementation of all required policies. The school is highly successful in meeting its aim of providing a Christian foundation within which each pupil feels supported by excellent pastoral care.
- 5.7 The structure of senior leadership has changed considerably since the 2008 inspection. Changes to administrative and admissions procedures have improved efficiency. The new senior management team, including senior staff in bursarial, estates and administrative areas, has a unified, clear sense of purpose and direction shared by staff and understood by pupils. The school is swift to challenge any sign of complacency and there is a shared commitment amongst senior leadership to constant improvement in all aspects of school life. Senior leadership sets an example of energy, self-review and open minded eagerness to consider new initiatives. The good quality of the pupils' education and the high standard of their personal development reflect the strength of leadership and management at all levels. The house system, led by committed housemasters and housemistresses, is

a strong contributory factor in the excellent personal development of the pupils. Pastoral management through the houses is extremely effective in promoting the core values of the school to the benefit of pupils.

- 5.8 A thorough and ambitious school development plan has been created, drawing on departmental development plans and including plans for boarding. Academic departmental management is highly organised. Heads of department are expected to take a clear role in leading as well as managing their departments and are held to account at heads of department meetings and rigorous review of departmental success, including public examinations. Most heads of department are also effective in evaluating and monitoring the effectiveness of their departments' work and standards of teaching, although there is some inconsistency in this. New procedures for departmental self-evaluation and the review of teaching and learning have been introduced. Peer observation is being encouraged in addition to regular formal performance management reviews. Initiatives to share best practice in assessment and tracking of pupils' progress towards meeting their aspirational grades are being developed. The sharing of good classroom practice, both formally and informally, is being actively encouraged. Although recently introduced, these tactics are already having an impact. The vigorous support of such initiatives demonstrates the senior leadership's continuous and energetic drive towards helping pupils achieve the highest academic standards. Senior leaders are aware that this is a work in progress and that there is a need to improve consistency of practice across departments in order to raise academic achievement further.
- 5.9 The school's leadership is very successful in recruiting, supporting, developing and motivating a high quality staff. The school ensures that all members of staff, governors and volunteers understand and are effectively trained for their roles in safeguarding the pupils' welfare, health and safety. Safe recruitment procedures are carefully implemented to ensure that all adults coming into contact with pupils are suitable to work with children. Staff give generously of their time to help pupils outside the classroom, as well as in leading and managing a wide range of co-curricular activities.
- 5.10 Links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent. The school is very successful in including and involving parents. They are welcomed into the school frequently, for parents' evenings, lectures, concerts, plays and fixtures. Parents support a very active and successful Parents' Association and the links with former pupils is well established through the Old Johnians. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about the school and expressed high levels of satisfaction with the education, pastoral care and support of their children, the range of activities offered, the quality of communications they receive from the school and its boarding provision. Virtually all parents confirmed that the school handles any concerns well and gives a timely response to questions raised. The school has an appropriate complaints procedure. Formal parental complaints are few but those that do occur are dealt with promptly and in accordance with the published procedure.
- 5.11 Close communication with parents is maintained in termly and half-termly reports about their child's work and progress. These written reports include a clear explanation of the grading system used and aspirational targets for future improvement alongside current performance. The school provides current and prospective parents with all required information about the school, through the school website. The school also provides information about its daily life and successes in high quality booklets, such as the 'From the Quad' newsletters and the

annual 'Johnian' and the 'Old Johnian' magazines. As a result, the school creates a tangible sense of an extended school community.

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