



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
STAFFORD GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

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Stafford Grammar School

Full Name of School	Stafford Grammar School
DfE Number	860/6009
Registered Charity Number	513031
Address	Stafford Grammar School Burton Manor Stafford Staffordshire ST18 9AT
Telephone Number	01785 249752
Fax Number	01785 255005
Email Address	headsec@staffordgrammar.co.uk
Headmaster	Mr Michael Darley
Chair of Governors	Mr Brian Hodges
Age Range	5 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	498
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (250 boys; 248 girls)
Numbers by Age	5-11: 120 11-18: 378
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 498
Inspection Dates	11 Feb 2014 to 14 Feb 2014

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Inspectors

Mr Robin Lewis	Reporting Inspector
Ms Pat Clayfield	Team Inspector (Headmistress, GSA school)
Mr Stephen Duckitt	Team Inspector (Principal, SoH school)
Mr Andrew Hampton	Team Inspector (Head, SoH school)
Mrs Elizabeth Thomas	Team Inspector (Head, GSA school)
Mrs Deirdre O'Sullivan	Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Kathleen Silvester	Team Inspector (Former Head of Juniors, ISA school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Stafford Grammar School (the grammar school) was founded in 1982 on the outskirts of Stafford as an independent, co-educational day school, for pupils from the ages of 11 to 18. Since then it has grown on its initial site, developing by extending its original historic house, building new accommodation and acquiring more land for playing fields as well as a wood for outdoor activities. In 2007, Stafford Preparatory School (the preparatory school) opened on the same site, sharing some facilities, and currently educates pupils from the ages of 5 to 11. The schools are run as a charitable trust, with one governing board overseeing both schools.
- 1.2 The school's founding objective was to become a co-educational community, with the high academic standards of a grammar school, where happy, confident, caring pupils could achieve their full potential. It aims to achieve this through offering a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities, appropriate to the pupils' needs, delivered and supported with professional diligence. The preparatory school, in addition, strives to provide a primary education which will excite and challenge its pupils, instilling an enthusiasm for learning which will prepare them for the next stage of their education. Pupils come from professional families within daily travelling range and represent the ethnic diversity of the locality.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, the preparatory school has expanded to include Years 1 to 3. Accommodation for this development involved the construction, in 2012, of a new classroom block for Years 1 and 2. In 2013, the school purchased land surrounding the existing rugby pitch to develop more sports fields, increasing its total estate to 47 acres.
- 1.4 The preparatory school has 120 pupils, 68 boys and 52 girls, and the grammar school has 378 pupils, 187 boys and 191 girls. Standardised tests indicate that the school's ability profile is above the national average in both preparatory and grammar schools. Few pupils are below average ability. There is a wider spread of abilities amongst pupils in Years 12 and 13 than in the other parts of the school. Together, the schools have identified 46 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Five receive specialist support in the preparatory school and three receive specialist support in the grammar school. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL).
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Stafford Grammar School successfully meets its aim of being a school where high academic standards are attained by happy, confident pupils. Its pupils benefit strongly from the broad, well-balanced curriculum and the wide and interesting range of extra-curricular activities. In line with its aims, the school encourages pupils to participate, aspire to high standards and develop the necessary skills to equip and enrich them for life beyond school. In addition to contributing to the achievements of the grammar school's pupils, the preparatory school successfully fulfils its aim of instilling in its pupils a love of learning and satisfaction in achieving excellence. High academic achievement is supported by good teaching in both schools. Pupils succeed and reach high standards in a wide variety of sports, music, drama and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Throughout both schools pupils are extremely well-behaved and show excellent attitudes to their learning. Support for pupils with SEND and those who are more able is evolving to ensure their needs are comprehensively met. Marking of pupils' work and assessment of their learning is good in some areas but inconsistent both within and across subjects and year groups in both schools.
- 2.2 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. In line with the school's aim to develop happy, confident, caring pupils, both the preparatory and grammar schools' pupils are highly self-aware and responsible. They readily accept social responsibility and participate in charitable support. Pupils contribute eagerly to the school and local communities. In both schools, pupils are mature for their ages and highly articulate, showing great self-confidence and considerable social awareness. The range of cultures amongst the pupil body enhances well the community's social and cultural awareness. Staff members' knowledge of their pupils is excellent in both schools and this underpins the unstinting and excellent pastoral care they provide. Pupils enjoy being at school. They feel safe and always have an adult to whom they may turn for advice. Welfare, health and safety is excellent and safeguarding of pupils is prioritised.
- 2.3 The quality of governance, leadership and management is good. The experienced and committed governing body is particularly supportive of the school's aims and, through attending events and listening to parents, pupils and staff, is well informed of all aspects of school life. Strategic planning for the estate is particularly strong and governors work constantly to ensure the necessary financial arrangements are available to carry through these plans. The schools' senior leadership sets a consistent example of high quality care and, with the governors, ensures staff have the resources they need for their various roles. Senior and middle managers do not yet monitor their colleagues' work concerning the quality of teaching and learning with consistency, and there is not yet a robust system for monitoring and evaluating the school's work in all areas. Links with parents are excellent. Parents are especially pleased with the support their children receive, that each pupil is well-known by staff and that they feel safe. The school has met the recommendation of the previous inspection to produce a system of early assessment in the preparatory school to establish each pupil's ability profile. In both schools, in response to the previous inspection's recommendation, greater use is being made of the information provided by standardised tests to monitor pupils' academic progress. Target-setting in the senior school is not yet consistently embedded in assessment and monitoring practice.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure pupils always know how they can improve their written work with suitable annotations, evaluations and constructive comments in the marking.
2. Create, and rigorously implement, robust systems to monitor and evaluate the schools' work at all levels and in all areas.
3. Devise and implement arrangements to ensure the good practice in teaching within the school is shared effectively amongst all teaching staff.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils are extremely well-educated in accordance with the school's aim to enable its pupils to achieve high academic standards. In both the preparatory and grammar schools, pupils enthusiastically set out to attain their goals in lessons, in GCSE and A-level examinations, and particularly in extra-curricular activities, including sports, music and drama.
- 3.3 Pupils of all abilities in both schools display excellent subject knowledge, skills and understanding. They articulately describe their work, using appropriate and subject-specific language, with a confidence and maturity well in advance of their ages. Their reading, writing and logical thinking are strong. Pupils think clearly and critically, listen well to their teachers and peers and use information and communication technology (ICT) with confidence. Their abilities in calculating and other aspects of mathematical study are equally high. Their creative skills are much in evidence on display around the schools and they participate in high quality drama and musical productions with great enthusiasm. The vast majority of the preparatory school's pupils successfully pass the examinations to the grammar school. Virtually all Year 11 pupils attain the entrance criteria into Years 12 and 13 and virtually all Year 13 leavers move on to university in the UK and elsewhere. In sports, the schools excel in a wide variety of inter-school sports, gaining considerable success in the main team sports of girls' hockey and netball, and boys' rugby. School swimmers have gained national prominence winning events at the Independent Schools Association national finals and reached the All England Schools' finals. The school has the highest number of pupils in Staffordshire undertaking The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, gold standard and this work has been recognised recently with a Queen's award. Large numbers of pupils in all age-groups achieve highly in speech and drama whilst pupils regularly win places in county and national youth orchestras and choirs.
- 3.4 The attainment of pupils in the preparatory school cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests. On the evidence available, however, using information from the school's own assessment, curriculum interviews with pupils, examination of their work and lesson observations, attainment in Years 1 to 6 is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations. This level of attainment indicates that all pupils, including those with SEND, make excellent progress in their learning and development, relative to their starting points. They participate with great confidence in class discussions and successfully complete work set for those with higher ability.
- 3.5 The following analysis relates to the grammar school and uses national data for the years 2010 to 2012. These are the most recent three years for which national comparative statistics are available. GCSE and A-level results have been good in comparison with the national average for maintained schools, and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. Pupils sit the International GCSE (IGCSE) examinations in science subjects, and their results have been higher than the worldwide averages overall and, in single sciences over the last three years, similar to the UK average overall. This level of attainment indicates that pupils in the senior school, including Years 12 and 13, make good progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability, as shown by standardised measures of progress.

Pupils with SEND achieve equally well receiving individual support; their attainment and progress is strengthened as a result. Those with especially high ability progress well receiving strong aspirational challenges in and outside of lessons.

- 3.6 In both schools, pupils' attitudes to learning are most positive. Pupils enjoy their lessons and extra-curricular activities, participating and contributing with willing enthusiasm. Their personal and corporate inquisitiveness is marked. This, coupled with their particularly strong organisational and research skills, linked with their determination and initiative, ensure they readily achieve their aims. An example of this is the highly popular debating society, founded and run by pupils in Years 12 and 13. Pupils' cheerful behaviour and excellent personal conduct, in lessons and around the school, contribute significantly to their high achievements. They listen with respect to their teachers and to the opinions of their peers, with whom relationships are particularly harmonious. Senior pupils enthusiastically embrace the formal and informal opportunities to befriend, help and interact with younger pupils.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 Across all ages, the schools meet their aims of providing a relevant and balanced curriculum and a wide, extra-curricular range of educational, sporting, artistic, social and cultural experiences. The curriculum is broad and balanced, offering an excellent range of subjects especially well-suited to pupils' ages and abilities. As a result, it contributes significantly to all areas of pupils' achievement and personal development. This includes the linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative facets of their learning.
- 3.9 Provision in the preparatory school forms an excellent foundation for all pupils, and includes the introduction of three modern foreign languages. Pupils also benefit from access to some specialist facilities in the grammar school, including those for sport, (ICT) and science. The extensive range of GCSE and IGCSE subjects in the grammar school includes a choice of modern foreign languages, the availability of separate sciences and the option of business studies and psychology. Pupils in Years 12 and 13 choose from an equally broad range of AS and A-level courses, including economics and further mathematics. This enables them to progress successfully to higher education. Pupils also benefit from comprehensive enrichment activities. Examples include 'preparation for university life', which is supported by former pupils visiting the school, talks from a local authority substance advice team, the popular Young Enterprise scheme, voluntary service in the local community, the chance to complete a qualification in teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) and the opportunity to complete the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ).
- 3.10 Special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) in both schools co-ordinate support for pupils identified with SEND, and arrange specialist teaching where required. Individual education plans (IEPs) have been introduced in the preparatory school to support pupils with SEND or specific abilities and talents. In the grammar school, pupils with SEND are identified when concerns are raised. However, the school has recognised that its provision for these pupils and those who are more able is not yet fully developed.
- 3.11 Across the entire school pupils' personal development is strongly enhanced by a well-planned personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme which

reflects the schools' aims and ethos. Careers education is introduced in Years 7 to 9 and additional careers advice forms a strong element of the PHSE programme for Years 12 and 13. It includes extensive links with universities and the recent introduction of a higher education evening with a wide range of institutions represented. As a result, pupils are particularly well prepared for the next stage of their education or career.

- 3.12 Curricular provision is enhanced by a wide range of visiting workshops, trips locally, nationally and internationally, including a geography fieldwork trip to Morocco, and overseas music tours. Year 9 pupils participate in a business and industry event supported by local companies. Other community links include visiting speakers at assemblies, musical collaboration with local schools and the use of a church for the school's Christmas service.
- 3.13 Pupils benefit greatly from a wide ranging extra-curricular programme at lunchtime and after school and this is enthusiastically supported by pupils. Opportunities include sporting, creative, practical and intellectual activities. A strong feature is the extremely high level of participation in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award which encourages independence, provides personal challenge and facilitates voluntary service in the community. Drama productions and a range of musical ensembles offer pupils across the age range the opportunity to gain experience of performance. An extensive programme of sporting fixtures provides competitive challenge within and outside the school community. The inter-house competition offers opportunities for all pupils to discover and develop their skills and strengths in a broad range of activities such as sport, cooking, and public speaking. Parents and pupils expressed very strong support for the range of subjects, opportunities and activities available.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.14 The quality of teaching is good.
- 3.15 In both the preparatory and grammar schools, teaching quality is variable. Across both schools, teaching is in line with the aims of creating many opportunities for pupils to achieve their potential and to encourage consistently high standards.
- 3.16 Much teaching is well-planned and is always based on a thorough understanding of individual pupils and their various needs. It is often particularly supportive and encouraging, building successfully on previous learning. Examination or test grades and the information gleaned from these is used widely to support pupils' progress. Teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding of the subject matter. This strength, coupled with the highly positive relationships between teachers and pupils, encourages excellent behaviour in lessons and thereby enables pupils frequently to make rapid progress.
- 3.17 In many lessons, in both schools, teachers set high standards and have equally high expectations of their pupils. These qualities help pupils focus well throughout each lesson so that learning is further strengthened. Teachers generally encourage pupils of all ages to use their own initiative to make and take opportunities to listen closely to one another and to respect different views. In the best lessons pupils are allowed to express their views freely being encouraged to discuss and elaborate a topic's facets as they evolve. This was especially seen in Year 13 where both highly able pupils and those with SEND received strong support and high quality challenges from which they rapidly built on their knowledge and investigative skills. In those lessons where challenging work is set and where learning is supported by a

variety of appropriate teaching styles, pupils excel in developing new skills. Across all year groups in both schools, opportunities are not always taken to extend and fully challenge pupils of all abilities, including the most able.

- 3.18 The most effective teaching in the preparatory school is well-paced with an interesting and engaging variety of activities. Where ICT is used, pupils are eager to explore the new ideas available in developing their learning with this technology. In the grammar school, considerable emphasis is given to note-taking and using teacher-directed learning or group work. In the best lessons, pace is rapid with a range of study skills being developed, and in these a wide range of resources, including interactive whiteboards and, to a more limited extent, ICT, are used to enliven pupils' learning. In some lessons, where teaching lacks variety or dynamism, pupils' learning becomes passive.
- 3.19 Teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils with SEND. Good provision is made for pupils with statements of special educational needs with the requirements of their statements being followed. The consistent use of IEPs is not yet established. Teachers are encouraged to support these pupils with appropriate resources and specific tasks. They often support pupils with SEND by drawing them into group or paired work and frequently use peers to support them in lessons.
- 3.20 The preparatory school's marking policy is applied inconsistently so that pupils are not always fully aware of their attainment levels nor of the ways in which they may improve. Nevertheless, teachers give supportive verbal feedback on pupils' efforts in class and homework, which is much valued by pupils. In the grammar school, the quality of marking and assessment is inconsistent within and between departments. In the best examples, targets for improvement are clear and relevant, and teachers' comments affirm and celebrate the value of pupils' work. Pupils appreciate the verbal feedback they receive and this, together with the information provided by their regular tests, helps them to understand their progress and gives them confidence.
- 3.21 The schools have made a sound response to the recommendation of the previous inspection in relation to systems for assessment. Standardised assessment systems have been established in the preparatory school and now properly identify each pupil's ability profile after entry. Helpful standardised data on pupils' abilities are now available to all grammar school teachers and is beginning to be well used. In both schools, steps have been taken to improve the use of assessment information in order to monitor pupil's progress and to set targets for improvement.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. Pupils are highly self-confident, articulate, reflective and strongly self-aware. In all age-groups, they show considerable emotional maturity relative to their age and demonstrate excellent inter-personal skills. They display a caring sensitivity to others' needs and show high levels of tolerance. These qualities stem, in part, from the school's supportive and caring ethos, which also provides the focus for school assemblies. Pupils' good understanding of Christianity as well as other faiths and beliefs and their appreciation of the non-material aspects of life is enhanced effectively through the schools' curriculum and extra-curricular activities.
- 4.3 Moral development is excellent. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. They support each other very well and are prepared to offer immediate help when someone is in difficulty. Pupils have, and take, the varied opportunities provided to consider and respect norms of good conduct, and moral and ethical values. Recent topics have included reflections on the devastation of war. Pupils strongly empathise with victims of atrocities, for example by observing Holocaust Memorial Day and holding a special Remembrance Day Service.
- 4.4 Social development is excellent. Pupils are kind, friendly and relate extremely well to each other both within and between year groups and between the preparatory and grammar schools. They are particularly courteous, showing great maturity and respect in their dealings with each other and adults. Prefects in Years 12 and 13 are highly regarded especially by younger pupils who see them as a bridge to staff. Good opportunities exist, and are taken, for pupils to develop leadership skills, particularly in Years 12 and 13 and in the preparatory school. Senior pupils may become house captains or prefects, and Year 6 pupils, as well as serving on the school council, may act as dinner or other monitors. House activities in sport and music provide opportunities for involvement and leadership, and pupils especially enjoy house competitions such as baking.
- 4.5 In addition, pupils throughout the school demonstrate genuine concern for those less fortunate than themselves through a strong commitment to charitable fund-raising; each year, a charity is chosen for support by the pupils in each house and form in the grammar school. In the preparatory school also, pupils raise money to support various charities. Across the two schools, and at appropriate levels, pupils develop a well-balanced social, economic and political awareness through curricular studies and PSHE. This quality is strengthened by debates in different sections of the school, which give pupils a clear awareness of current affairs and enable them to form their own opinions.
- 4.6 The PSHE programme increases pupils' understanding of life and the curriculum is enriched for pupils in Years 12 and 13 by speakers from a variety of organisations. In the grammar school, the service component of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award ensures that the large number of pupils participating gain an acute awareness of their social role. Some senior pupils engage in regular voluntary service, giving them an excellent insight into their local community and its challenges.

- 4.7 Pupils' cultural development is excellent. They respect other cultures very well, this being underwritten by the community's ethnic diversity. Their musical, artistic and dramatic understanding of their own culture is strong, being promoted particularly effectively through curricular and extra-curricular events. Pupils' cultural awareness, across both schools, is significantly enhanced through their participation in the many visits and trips made in this country and abroad.
- 4.8 By the time they leave each school, pupils' personal development is excellent. They are well-rounded individuals, good independent learners, self-assured, articulate and confident in social situations.

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

- 4.9 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.10 All staff, teaching and non-teaching, provide excellent support and guidance for pupils, meeting well the school's aim of creating a community of happy, confident pupils. The arrangements contribute strongly to pupils' personal development. Class and form teachers provide a much appreciated first point of contact for pupils and their parents, and are supported by senior managers and a strong counselling service. Pupils say that they always have a range of staff to turn to when in need.
- 4.11 Throughout both schools, relationships between staff and pupils are founded upon mutual respect and staff are excellent role models. Pupils say they value the care and support of their teachers a great deal. Pupils enjoy excellent relationships with each other, within and across the age range, with older pupils helping, befriending and supporting younger ones.
- 4.12 Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits; the quality, quantity and variety of lunchtime food is excellent. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their meals, and learn about healthy eating in science and other lessons. The physical education curriculum and the extra-curricular sports programme provide many opportunities for all pupils to engage in regular exercise, and these are taken enthusiastically.
- 4.13 The school promotes good behaviour effectively. Its expectations are clearly set out in the behaviour policy, to which pupils respond extremely well. Guidance, policy and procedures relating to harassment and bullying are clear; awareness is raised in assemblies, PSHE lessons and form time. Pupils throughout both schools say that bullying is rare but, should an incident occur, they are confident that it will be dealt with quickly and effectively. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils raised their concerns about the fairness of staff in giving rewards and sanctions. Through formal and informal interviews and discussions, and examination of the school's records of behaviour, inspectors found that sanctions are proportionate and consistently applied. Due account is taken of circumstances for pupils with SEND. At formal and informal interviews, pupils indicated that they feel that sanctions are fair. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.14 In their responses to the pupil questionnaire, a minority of pupils indicated that they did not feel the school asks for their opinions or responds to them. The school councils have recently been revitalised, and inspectors judged that they are now providing effective methods of canvassing pupils' views, to which the school, as a whole, is responding.

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

- 4.15 The arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils are excellent.
- 4.16 The schools prioritise pupils' safeguarding, health and welfare. Safeguarding arrangements, including policies and procedures, strictly follow official guidance. All appointment checks are carefully administered and recorded, thereby helping to ensure the suitability of members of staff. Staff receive appropriate training in child protection on appointment and this is kept up-to-date. Staff with particular responsibility in this area have the necessary higher grade training which is also diligently updated. The school has close links with the local authority about any safeguarding issues and keeps good records of any referrals that are made.
- 4.17 All necessary measures have been taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. Fire risk assessments are appropriately carried out and fire evacuation drills are practised termly. Risk assessments are undertaken in all areas of school life including external visits as necessary. New parents are invited to attend a presentation on e-safety and attendance has always been good.
- 4.18 A sufficient number of staff members are suitably trained in first aid. Excellent provision is made for those who are ill or injured; this is strongly backed by highly valued counselling expertise. The medical department has effective connections with The National Health Service and local children's services, and has ready access to outside agencies. These are all used effectively in supporting pupils and families, including those pupils with SEND and any who may have other specific needs.
- 4.19 The school community is strongly backed by a committed team of supporting staff who consistently work with pupils' welfare in mind. Admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and correctly stored for at least three years.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The school's governors are highly committed and fully supportive of the school's aims. They take a practical interest in both schools; routine preparatory school matters are handled by a specific sub-committee. Through close work with the leadership team, governors have drawn up a detailed, comprehensive development plan for the buildings and estate. Their strategy encompasses the next decade and aims to ensure that the school continues to be financially well-planned, effectively staffed and plentifully resourced, with good accommodation on a thoughtfully-designed estate. The governors' broad range of expertise includes financial, business, educational, legal and professional skills. This gives specific support and some challenge to the senior leadership, especially through sub-committees for financial and developmental matters. Governors receive regular, helpful reports from the headmasters and, on occasions, from other senior and middle managers from both schools. The chairman maintains close contact with the school's headmaster as does the chairman of the preparatory school committee with the headmaster of the preparatory school.
- 5.3 Governors visit frequently, especially to attend events and, on such occasions, learn much about the attitudes and needs of parents, pupils and staff and their perceptions of the school's requirements. They appraise the senior leaders annually. Governance is given great strength through very long-serving governors' individual and corporate historical knowledge of the school.
- 5.4 Governors discharge their legal responsibilities diligently, including those for safeguarding and welfare, health and safety. They benefit from biennial training to help keep abreast of change. The child-protection policy and procedures are reviewed annually. Few formal systems to evaluate governors' processes and monitor the work of senior leaders have been adopted.

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

- 5.5 Leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians is good.
- 5.6 The strong commitment that the leadership team has for the whole school motivates the entire community. It ensures teachers and pupils work harmoniously and effectively thereby producing excellent results in many areas of their work. Their attention to pupils' welfare and emotional well-being creates an environment in which pupils thrive and are very happy. Senior leaders in both preparatory and grammar schools have created, and maintain, a caring environment which nurtures excellent standards in pupils' personal development.
- 5.7 Close links and effective communication between the leadership team and the governing body has led to a strong vision for the school and the creation of ambitious plans. Annual self-evaluation work by senior managers leads to the setting of clear goals and priorities for improving the quality of education being delivered across the schools. Some monitoring is carried out through a staff

appraisal scheme which aims to include lesson observations and scrutiny of departmental policy implementation, and is linked to staff training as appropriate. Comprehensive arrangements are in place for checking the suitability of staff, including volunteers and governors. All staff members are suitably trained for their roles in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety and in meeting the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities. Staff are deployed appropriately and the induction programme for new staff is thorough.

- 5.8 The preparatory school headmaster has operational responsibility for his area whilst liaising closely with the grammar school headmaster who is in overall charge. This ensures consistency in the overarching vision and functioning of the entire community, whilst ensuring that the preparatory school's particular ethos is valued. The specific recommendation from the previous inspection concerning the preparatory school has been met, the school having devised and implemented an assessment system to establish each pupil's ability level at, or soon after, entry.
- 5.9 Senior leaders have overseen many improvements across both schools which have considerably enhanced the educational experience of pupils of all ages and abilities. These have embraced much of the teaching and learning in both schools as well as the pastoral care system. Policies have been reviewed and updated very recently. The school's leaders, working with governors have focussed investment so that the transport fleet has been extended, cafeteria facilities have been improved and additional staff have been engaged to support design and technology (DT), art and the smooth running of the ICT network, all of which benefit the pupils strongly.
- 5.10 In both schools, the implementation and monitoring of policies and oversight by senior managers are not always rigorously undertaken and, in consequence, have limited strength in supporting and guiding staff in their work. This results in some inconsistency in standards across the school, in particular in the following of assessment and marking policies. In addition, effective systems to share the good working practices of some departments and teachers are not developed. Thus, the high quality provision for the most able pupils and those with SEND, and the use of a variety of teaching methods, are not reflected consistently throughout both schools.
- 5.11 Links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent. Relationships between the school and families are highly constructive and strongly support the school's aims
- 5.12 Parents of pupils and prospective pupils are provided with comprehensive information, especially through the website. Parents receive weekly updates and newsletters, giving thorough information of the schools' and pupils' successes and forthcoming events. A helpful school/parent texting service increases the information flow. Preparatory school parents use their child's communication book to sustain daily contact with teachers.
- 5.13 In all year groups, pupils' parents are kept well informed of their child's progress and achievements. Preparatory school parents receive full reports twice in each academic year and three interim reports. In the grammar school, one comprehensive report is backed by several interim reports. Preparatory school reports are of high quality. The written reports of the grammar school demonstrate the acute understanding teachers have of every individual pupil, but do not consistently set targets for pupils to improve their work. In both schools, parents are invited to parents' evenings or consultations year on year. University entrance and higher education evenings for Years 11 to 13 further enhance the quality of information provision and thereby the support the school gives to pupils and families.

- 5.14 Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that parents are positive about the school and consider it well led and managed. They are confident that their children are treated as individuals and are in a safe school environment; they would not hesitate to recommend the school to others. They also appreciate the easy communication routes. A very small minority of parents indicated that they do not feel that the school encourages them to be involved in events or other aspects of its work. Inspectors found that parents are welcomed and encouraged to attend school events and, especially in the preparatory school, volunteer to help in classrooms and on school visits.
- 5.15 In the preparatory school, a flourishing parent-teacher association runs a variety of social and fund-raising events. Recent projects from which pupils have benefited included the purchase of library books and playground equipment. The grammar school is endeavouring to re-invigorate the grammar school association which has been successful in the past.
- 5.16 Parents in both schools much appreciate the easy access to senior leaders and staff both before and after school. Any concerns raised by parents are given immediate, assiduous attention and are dealt with quickly. Concerns are handled with great care and sensitivity, detailed records are kept, and complaints are resolved in full accord with the school's clear, informative complaints policy.