



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**THE MANCHESTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

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## The Manchester Grammar School

Full Name of School	<b>The Manchester Grammar School</b>
DfE Number	<b>352/6029</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>529909</b>
Address	<b>The Manchester Grammar School Old Hall Lane Manchester M13 0XT</b>
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Email Address	<b>highmaster@mgs.org</b>
High Master	<b>Dr Martin Boulton</b>
Chairman of Governors	<b>Mr Maurice Watkins</b>
Age Range	<b>7 to 18</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>1506</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Boys</b>
Numbers by Age	7-11: <b>228</b> 11-18: <b>1278</b>
Inspection dates	<b>24 Sep 2013 to 27 Sep 2013</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 January 2008.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](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.

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

### Inspectors

Mr Timothy Holgate	Reporting Inspector
Mr Martin Lloyd	Assistant Reporting Inspector
Mr James Burns	Team Inspector (Assistant Head, HMC school)
Mrs Rosemary Chapman	Team Inspector (Head of Department, GSA school)
Mrs Sue Clarke	Team Inspector (Director of Sixth Form, HMC school)
Mrs Clare Dawe	Team Inspector (Director of Studies, IAPS school)
Mr David Fotheringham	Team Inspector (Deputy Head Academic, HMC school)
Mrs Susan Freestone	Team Inspector (Head, HMC school)
Miss Joanne Green	Team Inspector (former Academic Deputy Head, GSA school)
Mr Geoffrey Hammond	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Mr Stephen Holliday	Team Inspector (Head, HMC school)
Mr Nigel Hunter	Team Inspector (Head of Department, HMC school)
Mr Graeme May	Team Inspector (Deputy Head Academic, HMC school)
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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 The Manchester Grammar School, an independent day school for boys aged from 7 to 18, is situated in a largely residential area of south Manchester, having moved from the city centre in 1930. It was founded in 1515 by Hugh Oldham, Bishop of Exeter, as a charitable foundation. The school is divided into four sections: the Junior School (Years 3 to 6), the Lower School (Years 7 and 8), the Middle School (Years 9 to 11) and the sixth form (Years 12 and 13). The Junior School opened with Years 5 and 6 in 2008 in new premises, and extended to Years 3 and 4 in 2011. All pupils in the Junior School progress automatically to the Senior School, and they are not required to sit the entrance examination to the Senior School. Pupils come from a very diverse range of cultural, religious and economic backgrounds, and more than 200 pupils are supported by the school's own means-tested bursary scheme. The school is a charitable foundation, whose trustees serve as governors, with proprietorial responsibility. A new High Master joined the school in September 2013.
- 1.2 The school's principal aim is to continue to stand alongside the very best academically selective day schools in the country, in terms of its academic standing, the pastoral and welfare support it provides, and its extra-curricular programmes within the school and beyond. In achieving this, the school seeks to remain true to its liberal principles, namely of providing an educational environment in which boys from all backgrounds are challenged to reach their full academic potential without sacrificing their broader development, and a community in which respect and tolerance for individuals and individuality will flourish, and in which a commitment to service to others is deep rooted and far reaching.
- 1.3 The school provides education for 1506 boys, of whom 228 are in the Junior School, and 405 are in the sixth form. The school has identified 110 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 80 receive specific support and 6 have statements of special educational needs. Although some pupils come from families speaking English as an additional language, all are fluent in English and none requires additional support. Pupils take a range of standardised aptitude and ability tests at different stages throughout the school. These indicate that the ability profile is generally well above the national average.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

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

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

- 2.1 The school is highly and conspicuously successful in meeting its stated aims. Pupils are not only fully prepared for the demands of public examinations but are well educated in their grasp of wider aspects of learning and scholarship, and of issues confronting them in the wider world. The achievement of pupils of all ages and capabilities in and out of the classroom is exceptional. They are committed and quick thinking, and show a love of learning for its own sake. These high standards are enhanced by a strong academic curriculum and an outstanding programme of extra-curricular activities and trips. The excellent teaching has a highly significant impact on the promotion of pupils' achievement, progress and learning at all levels.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development throughout the school is excellent. Younger and older alike show excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. They have strong emotional maturity for their age, and appreciate the wide range of cultures and circumstances of their fellow pupils. The strong pastoral care and support of form teachers in the Junior School and tutors in the Senior School make a significant contribution to the well-being of the pupils. Arrangements to safeguard and promote their welfare and well-being are effective in nearly all respects, although some areas have not been implemented with sufficient rigour.
- 2.3 Governance, and leadership and management throughout the school is of good quality and provides clear educational direction and a strong stimulus for the pupils' high standards. Staff are well deployed and trained. Some areas of the staff recruitment process have not been implemented thoroughly. Existing best practice with regard to reflection, planning, monitoring and evaluation is not yet fully embedded and extended across all areas of school life. The school has formed an excellent partnership with its parents, and has made appropriate responses to the recommendations of the previous inspection.

## **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 all required checks against the barred list are always carried out before staff start work in the school, and that criminal records checks are always carried out on staff before or as soon as practicable after the person starts work, that these checks and checks on identity are recorded correctly, and that all necessary checks relating to medical fitness, relevant qualifications and staff returning from overseas are completed as required. [Part 4, paragraphs 19.(2)(a), (b), (c) and (d), 19.(3) and 22.(3)(a), (c), (d) and (e), under Suitability of staff and proprietors, and, for the same reason, Part 3, paragraphs 7.(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety];
- ensure that when staff start work before receipt of a satisfactory criminal records check, an assessment of risk is carried out and appropriate supervision arrangements are put in place, and that contract cleaning staff receive appropriate safeguarding training specific to the school [Part 3, paragraphs 7.(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety].

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

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

1. Extend and embed across all areas of school life existing best practice with regard to reflection, planning, monitoring and evaluation.



### **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 exceptional.
- 3.2 Pupils are very well educated in line with the school's primary aim for them to achieve the highest possible standards. Pupils throughout the school, including those with SEND, show a very high level of subject skills and understanding according to their ages. Pupils in the Junior School showed a notable grasp of vocabulary and pronunciation when studying a new foreign language each year. Lower School pupils appreciated the complex double-helix structure of DNA, while those in the Middle School showed great precision in their translation of Latin prose and verse. Pupils in the sixth form demonstrated a marked ability to analyse literature texts critically.
- 3.3 Pupils are highly articulate, fluent and persuasive in their speaking and writing skills. Junior School pupils show a passion for reading and communication. Pupils of all ages show strong numeracy and use number as a natural part of their learning in a range of subjects. Their competence and skills in information and communication technology (ICT) allow them to use electronic media well, when given the opportunity to do so. Pupils' creative skills are highly prominent in the quality of their art, drama and music.
- 3.4 Pupils' achievements and successes in their extra-curricular lives are outstanding and reflect their wide range of interests, the development of their talents and their determination to get the very most from the opportunities available to them. These include the successful treks across deserts in Morocco, conducting the school orchestra, national and international representation in a range of sports, and high levels of success by both junior and senior pupils in many academic competitions and challenges.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2010 to 2012. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results at GCSE have been exceptional in relation to the national average for boys in maintained schools, and above that for boys in maintained selective schools. The International GCSE results overall have been higher than worldwide and UK averages. Results at A level have been exceptional in relation to the national average for boys in maintained schools, and well above that for boys in maintained selective schools. Results in the International Baccalaureate (IB) have been exceptional in relation to the worldwide average and above the UK average. In 2013, over 90 per cent of GCSE results were graded A\* or A while, at A level, over 70 per cent were graded A\* or A.
- 3.6 This level of attainment, taken in conjunction with other inspection evidence and nationally standardised progress data, indicates that pupils make good progress in relation to the average for pupils of similar ability throughout the school to GCSE and excellent progress between GCSE and A level. Pupils with SEND make similar progress as their peers, as shown by their GCSE and A-level results, their extra-curricular success and their contributions to school life, reflecting the high quality of support that they receive. The achievements and progress of the most able pupils are prolific and of an exceptionally high quality, shown for example by their success in gaining places for demanding courses at universities in the UK and USA and, for pupils of all ages, their success in highly competitive external prize competitions.

- 3.7 Pupils of all ages exhibit exemplary attitudes to their work, showing high levels of commitment and motivation, and demonstrating a love of learning for its own sake. They are quick to pick up subtle nuances of meaning and use existing knowledge effectively to make predictions and form hypotheses. Able pupils use their deductive powers and reasoning ability very well to analyse textual material. Those with SEND show strong levels of perseverance and effort, and gain in confidence from the support they receive. Pupils' effective research skills enable them to work independently and show initiative in their learning. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, pupils highlighted this as a major strength of the school. Pupils work very productively in small groups and teams, supporting and encouraging each other. They think logically and analytically to a high degree and are able to work out solutions to problems rapidly. Pupils in the Junior School show particularly well-developed reasoning skills for their age.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 This high quality amply fulfils the school's aims to affirm its scholarly and academic traditions and, through the curricular breadth and scope for choice, to provide for individuality and independent thinking. The range and rigour of the curriculum are greatly valued by pupils and their parents. The curriculum provides suitable coverage of all the required areas of learning. The outstanding educational experience identified at the previous inspection has been further enhanced by the addition of Italian, Mandarin and electronics, GCSE additional further mathematics, an intensive GCSE Greek and Latin course, the AS Extended Project Qualification for Year 11, A-level economics and the IB.
- 3.10 In the Junior School, the wide-ranging curriculum is enriched by giving all pupils from Year 3 experience of a different foreign language each year, studying Spanish, French, Latin and Italian successively. Lessons in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in Years 5 and 6 are supported by additional teaching by Senior School specialists. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 can choose from a broad range of modern and classical foreign languages. While nearly two-thirds of pupils at GCSE choose to study three separate sciences, others benefit from the flexibility to choose fewer to facilitate the study of other subjects more suited to their talents and interests. The sixth-form curriculum offers 22 A-level choices, as well as many for the IB, and is enhanced by an excellent enrichment programme, including courses in critical thinking and the community sports leadership qualification, sports such as rowing or golf, and classes in topics ranging from Czech to Britpop.
- 3.11 Pupils with SEND receive individual or group lessons and their progress is closely monitored. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is taught up to Year 9: thereafter pupils' personal development is supported by visits from outside speakers and by the input of tutors. Advice on subject options and higher education choices is given by tutors and the sixth-form staff. Pupils receive formal lessons in ICT until Year 7, after which provision is devolved to other departments. Pupils' capabilities and needs in ICT are not formally monitored and so whilst this approach to provision extends the ICT competence of many it is not equally successful for all. Opportunities for pupils to develop technological skills are improved by the availability of electronics courses, which are very popular.
- 3.12 The enrichment provision to extend able pupils is of an exceptional nature, both in the range and in the quality of what is on offer. All academic departments provide

extension classes, and opportunities to pursue interests and talents outside the classroom are outstanding.

- 3.13 The curriculum is greatly enhanced by a highly extensive programme of flourishing activities available to all pupils, covering sporting, creative and topical areas of interest. Almost all pupils responding to the questionnaire felt that this programme is one of the great strengths of the school. The Junior School's options programme provides outstanding opportunities for pupils to pursue their interests and develop their talents. Pupils throughout the school benefit greatly from the wide variety of trips and outdoor activities, ranging from the Awesome Adventure weekends for the junior years to the series of challenging treks and camps for those in the Senior School. The summer camps and activities week are greatly appreciated by pupils. Opportunities to join academic clubs and societies, and to participate in cultural visits and overseas trips, and involvement in community service projects, such as helping in a residential home for students with complex learning needs, further enhance pupils' educational experience. Charitable giving, supporting organisations both at home and abroad, is also a feature of the school's outreach.

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

- 3.14 The quality of teaching is excellent throughout the school.
- 3.15 In almost all lessons, teaching has a considerable impact on the promotion of all pupils' achievement, progress and learning at every level. The aim of the school to foster successful, enthusiastic and inspirational teaching and learning is well met. Since the previous inspection, ICT facilities have been upgraded and their use by teachers and pupils has been further developed. Lessons are well planned and are based on an accurate and well-considered understanding of the needs of the pupils and making particular arrangements for the different groups within each class as necessary. In most cases, the teaching is brisk and well focused, using the available lesson time productively, and is highly responsive to the challenge of pupils' spontaneous, perceptive and unusual questions and comments. The teaching thus inspires pupils to value their own contributions and the opportunities to influence the learning process.
- 3.16 Teaching exhibits passion and enthusiasm. High levels of subject expertise are used very effectively, frequently leaving pupils thirsty for knowledge and keen to take the initiative in promoting their own progress. Teaching provides genuine challenge and demonstrates high expectations of pupils, enabling them to persevere with more complex material and to make excellent progress. Group work is often used very effectively at all stages to enable pupils to extract relevant information rapidly from textual and other material. Teaching often goes well beyond the requirements of examination preparation and curriculum specifications, thus providing a broad and stimulating learning experience at all levels. Teaching is delivered with sensitivity, understanding and, frequently, a sense of humour. Teaching methods are very effective in meeting the needs of pupils with SEND, including those with a statement, and enable them to develop confidence and overcome their difficulties.
- 3.17 Effective and skilful questioning by teachers enables pupils to reinforce their previous knowledge, challenges them to consider unusual solutions and stimulates higher-order thinking skills. Pupils' own questions are frequently turned around to enable them to work the problem out for themselves. Lesson planning and teaching methods are flexible but highly effective, thus helping pupils to pursue individual interests and novel lines of enquiry during lessons throughout the school.

Resources are well used. Teachers often employ, for instance, photographs and other artefacts to stimulate interest and place information into a wider context. Pupils with SEND, including those with statements, are successfully involved in all lesson activities. Teaching assistants are used very effectively, and work closely with teachers to plan work for and support pupils with SEND, including those with a statement.

- 3.18 A small number of lessons are less successful than most because learning is too highly directed and controlled by the teacher. As a result, pupils have fewer opportunities to be actively involved in the learning process and their progress slows as a result. Such lessons often use tasks that give little opportunity for follow-up and lack the variety of challenge needed for the different groups of learners within the class.
- 3.19 Arrangements for marking the pupils' work and assessing their progress are excellent, and greatly improved since the previous inspection. Throughout the school a detailed collection of academic data is used very effectively to identify and respond to pupils' learning needs and measure their progress. Test and examination results are used as a tool for identifying targets for pupils to improve their work. This is supported by the constructive comments and feedback that teachers provide to their pupils, who feel clear about their present progress and what they have to do to improve. A new tracking system enables teachers to identify any under-performance quickly and to respond appropriately. Pupils with SEND, including those with statements, are carefully assessed against their specific targets and learning plans.

## **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 high quality of pupils' personal development at all ages fulfils the school's aims of developing qualities of leadership, tolerance and a mature responsiveness to changes and challenges. By the time they leave school, pupils display very high levels of personal development as well-rounded, perceptive and confident young adults.
- 4.3 Pupils' spiritual awareness is excellent. They are self-possessed, self-aware, polite and articulate, and the diversity of the school community enhances their experience and enriches their development. Pupils respect and are curious about the views and faiths of others and show high levels of emotional maturity, well demonstrated by their involvement in the long-established tradition of Friday faith assemblies, which they often lead. The Interfaith Forum further develops their awareness and understanding of other religious and philosophical views. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 debated the meaning of truth with skill in a philosophy session.
- 4.4 Pupils throughout the school display a very strong moral sense and clearly understand the difference between right and wrong. Moral and ethical issues are embedded in the curriculum and pupils benefit from an ethical focus presented in many academic subjects. Pupils respond well to the issues posed by the rich provision of visiting speakers who stimulate them to consider wider ethical and moral issues, a challenge that they take up with relish. Pupils are clearly moved by moral injustices and highly value occasions such as Holocaust Memorial Day. Support for school clubs such as the Berkeley Society, aimed at discussing 'life, the universe and everything in between', and for a play that tackled the subject of homophobia, demonstrate that pupils are keen to think about and discuss contemporary moral issues.
- 4.5 Pupils of all ages show excellent social development. They eagerly seize the many opportunities to contribute to the school and the wider community. They raise money for charities both local and international; some forms make annual donation pledges and the most senior pupils help in the community by working at local schools during lunchtime. Their social conscience is strong. All benefit from the rich and varied PSHE programme, which encourages social responsibility and awareness through class lessons, form periods and sessions for reflection from visiting speakers. Pupils benefit from and appreciate the extensive opportunities to take responsibility and care for others: as prefects who act as strong and supportive role models for younger pupils; as mentors or 'buddies', who guide those who would value academic or pastoral support; or by serving as form representatives at all ages on the school council.
- 4.6 Pupils develop outstanding cultural awareness. They recognise and value Western culture and celebrate it in various ways, from the uplifting musical organ performances to welcome early morning arrivals at school, to their appreciation of the many art works on display by pupils and renowned artists. Pupils understand and respect other faiths and traditions and the contributions they make to society, and many cultures are represented within the school community. This awareness is enhanced and developed through a wide variety of trips abroad and by its prominence within the curriculum. It can be seen in the pupils' interest in studies of

individual religions or their ability to compare and contrast cultural differences, such as an illuminating discussion by younger pupils on diets around the world in a general science lesson. Cultural and religious variety is celebrated throughout the school, in the wish of pupils to experience different faith assemblies, through the various flourishing religious societies and at events such as the Middle Eastern culture day. This helps to explain the warm relationships and understanding within the diverse school community.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 The care provided is in full accordance with the pastoral aims of the school. Tutors in the Senior School and form teachers in the Junior School provide very effective support and guidance. They encourage and nurture pupils and have a genuine concern for their well-being. A well-planned and effective induction programme ensures a smooth transition between all stages of the school. Pupils settle in quickly and say that they feel safe, happy and fully supported.
- 4.9 The quality of relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves, is outstanding. Pupils appreciate the cultural and social diversity of the school, and firm and supportive friendships are made. Excellent relationships are formed between pupils of different ages, through mentoring and the 'buddy' system.
- 4.10 Pupils show a clear understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Guidance, appropriate to their age, is given to pupils in areas such as substance abuse and healthy eating through the PSHE programme for younger pupils, and through assemblies, presentations and tutor time for older pupils. The school places emphasis on educating pupils to make informed choices, whilst understanding the resulting consequences. An excellent choice of freshly prepared food is available at lunchtimes. Regular exercise is promoted through the curricular and extra-curricular sports programmes.
- 4.11 Measures to promote good behaviour are effective and include clear policies and a well-regarded system of rewards, such as commendations and Junior School house points, which motivates pupils of all ages to achieve and behave well. Any unacceptable behaviour is dealt with appropriately and utilises a clearly understood system of escalating sanctions, taking account of the age and the circumstances of pupils. The school proctors make a significant contribution to the maintenance of good discipline around the school. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire a small number of pupils reported inconsistencies in the award of rewards and sanctions. Inspectors found that rewards and sanctions are carefully recorded and monitored by heads of year to ensure comparability. Pupils consider bullying to be extremely rare but any that does occur is dealt with effectively. Detailed records of rewards and behavioural issues are kept.
- 4.12 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.13 In questionnaire responses, a significant minority of pupils felt that there are too few opportunities for them to express their views. Inspectors found that pupils across all year groups have a range of options available to them. Each year has pupil elected representatives on the school council, where opinions are expressed and changes to school routine have been made. Joint staff and pupil committees, and meetings of pupil groups with senior staff, enable the sharing of opinions and views.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.15 The safeguarding policy complies with official guidance, although it has not been fully implemented. Pupils' safety and welfare are given a high priority amongst staff, and all except some contract cleaning staff have received the required safeguarding training from the school. Contract cleaning company staff had received child protection training from the company. The school has formed very good links with local welfare agencies. However, safer recruitment procedures have not always been sufficiently rigorous in appointments made since the previous inspection. All staff currently working in the school have the required criminal records check, but some other checks were completed after they started work, and the record of medical fitness checks is incomplete.
- 4.16 Health and safety policies are well implemented, including tests of electrical equipment, surveying and monitoring potential hazards, and preparation of suitable risk assessments that are detailed, effective and reviewed regularly. The school has effective policies and arrangements to reduce risk from fire and all members of staff receive updated fire awareness training on a regular basis. Regular fire drills are held and recorded. Fire detection and fire fighting equipment is regularly tested and maintained.
- 4.17 Appropriate provision is made for pupils who are ill or injured. The medical room is centrally located and well staffed. Records are carefully kept. The nursing staff includes a trained counsellor. Sufficient numbers of staff are trained in first aid, some at a higher level and with specialist qualifications. First-aid boxes are available at key points on the school site and are well maintained. The first-aid policy outlines suitable practical information. Staff respond appropriately to pupils' welfare needs. Policies do not, however, provide formal guidance on specific medical conditions or on recognising and dealing with childhood and adolescent mental health issues.
- 4.18 The admission and attendance registers are suitably maintained and past records are stored appropriately.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 Much of the work of governors is excellent but their monitoring and scrutiny of the school's implementation of the safeguarding policy have not been sufficiently effective. Governors share a strong corporate ethos and are fully committed to the aims of the school, including the expansion of bursary provision. They work closely with the strategic management and leadership team to articulate their vision for the school and chart its onward direction. They understand clearly the differing roles of governance and management. An effective committee structure served by well-qualified governors ensures careful oversight of financial planning, provision of appropriate resources and management of the estate. It also provides expertise for strategic projects such as the creation of the Junior School and the quincenary appeal. The board as a whole takes a close interest in pupils' academic achievement and personal development and is committed to maintaining standards and providing impetus to enhance the school's many strengths.
- 5.3 Governors are well known in school: they attend events regularly and observe lessons annually. They provide support and challenge to the leadership and senior staff, and listen carefully to the views of staff, pupils and parents, particularly before making key strategic decisions.
- 5.4 Governors have delegated significant responsibility for checking policies and regulatory compliance to the strategic management and leadership team, and also approve many policies themselves on an annual basis. However, the governing body has not ensured that all delegated responsibilities have been properly carried out, for example, that all recruitment checks have been correctly completed. Governors have undertaken their required annual review of safeguarding but this has focused more on policy than on implementation and practice. Induction training for governors is comprehensive but, thereafter, training is irregular.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is good.
- 5.6 Leadership of the school is overseen by a strategic management and leadership group that includes the High Master, Deputy High Master, Academic Deputy Head, Pastoral Deputy Head, Surmaster (the deputy responsible for extra-curricular activities), Head of Junior School and Bursar, supported by the Assistant Head, who is responsible for compliance.
- 5.7 Most aspects of leadership and management are excellent and contribute significantly to the high standards of achievement and personal development of the pupils. The strong sense of purpose and shared commitment to the school's ideals enable leaders and managers at all levels to contribute to the successful fulfilment of the school's aims. However, there have been some historic weaknesses in the implementation of the recruitment process, identified by the new leadership prior to inspection. Existing best practice has yet to be further extended across the school with regard to reflection, planning, monitoring and evaluation.



- 5.8 Many different committees and groups, some involving pupils, provide staff with the means to draw up policies and procedures to enhance the education offered by the school, as well as the opportunity to assess their effectiveness. Formal systems to evaluate academic success, relying on data on pupils' performance, are well developed, whereas the evaluation of pastoral priorities and improvements, which are effective in responding to the needs of individual pupils, rely mainly on less formal methods of communication. Many, but not all, academic departments demonstrate rigorous analysis of their progress. Appropriate guidance is given to staff to enable them to discharge their responsibilities. Some areas, such as the work of tutors and monitoring of lesson quality, do not yet benefit from a consistent and widespread sharing of best practice. The school has made appropriate responses to the shortcomings identified at the previous inspection. Systems for assessment and marking of pupils' work have greatly improved and significant investment in ICT facilities has resulted in improved use of available technologies by teachers and pupils, although the quality still varies from subject to subject.
- 5.9 The distinctive ethos of the school is strong and very much evident in the way that staff at all levels support pupils, appreciate their distinctive talents and backgrounds, and provide them with high levels of academic and personal challenge. Senior leaders provide inspiration and clear direction. Broad strategic goals and targets to guide the school through its next phase of development are progressing into concrete steps for action, particularly in the Junior School and some academic departments.
- 5.10 A strong element of self-reflection is built into the individual review programme for staff. This contributes to the planning of staff professional development. Staff are deployed appropriately in all areas and functions of the school. New employees benefit from a comprehensive programme of induction which continues throughout their first year. The school is committed to the continuing professional development of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, through support for various qualifications and higher degrees. Training from external providers enables acquired expertise to be shared with other colleagues. The school lacks a central record of staff development, which means that attendance on different courses cannot be easily monitored. All employees except a few contract cleaning staff are trained as required in child protection, and many staff have undertaken training in first aid, fire safety and other health and safety areas.
- 5.11 The systematic recruitment process was not correctly followed in a small number of cases, which meant that recruitment checks were not all carried out in a timely manner. The procedure has yet to be reviewed and formalised as a policy. There has been inconsistent assessment of risk when staff start work before receipt of a criminal records check. When the school recognised these shortcomings it reacted promptly to correct them. All staff currently working in the school have the required criminal records checks.
- 5.12 The school has formed an excellent partnership with its parents. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire show that a very high proportion are satisfied with the education, care and support provided by the school. Parents are particularly pleased with the progress made by their children, the information and communication provided by the school, the standard of pupils' behaviour, and the range of subjects and activities. They are happy with the way in which the school handles complaints and concerns. Informal and formal complaints received are carefully logged and the school makes much effort to resolve them to the complainant's satisfaction in accordance with the published policy.

- 5.13 Parents have many and varied opportunities to be involved in the work and progress of their children. They receive weekly information bulletins outlining activities and events across the whole school and newsletters informing them of the successes and achievements of the pupils. Parents of those in the Junior School have excellent opportunities to share in the work of the pupils, with a celebration day and grandparents' afternoon in addition to assemblies, plays and concerts. An active parents' association organises social and fund-raising events, including, for example, a Burns Night supper. Forums are held for parents where the High Master and other senior staff are available to answer questions on any aspect of the school. Parents have also been asked for their views on plans for major developments.
- 5.14 Hitherto, much information and the policies available to parents on the school's website had been considerably out of date. This has now been remedied and all required current information may be found on the school website.
- 5.15 A small number of parents felt that they would appreciate better information about their children's progress. Inspectors found that parents receive detailed written reports twice each year and these include clear indications of pupils' achievements as well as comprehensive comments on ways to make further progress. Clear explanations of effort and attainment criteria are also included. The relationship between parents and form tutors is well developed, with meetings held at the beginning of the academic year in many year groups. A form tutor day in January which is attended by parents and pupils provides a forum for extended discussion and an opportunity to experience a range of activities around the school. In addition, annual parents' evenings for each year group are held to inform parents of academic progress. In the Junior School, parents enjoy a close and productive relationship with their children's form teachers, and informal meetings may be arranged with them at any time.

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