



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**THE ORATORY SCHOOL**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

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## The Oratory School

The Oratory Preparatory school was inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School	<b>The Oratory School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>931/6034</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>309112</b>		
Address	<b>The Oratory School</b> <b>Woodcote</b> <b>Reading</b> <b>Berkshire</b> <b>RG8 0PJ</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01491 683500</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01491 680020</b>		
Email Address	<b>enquiries@oratory.co.uk</b>		
Head Master	<b>Mr Clive Dytor, MC</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Michael Hasslacher</b>		
Age Range	<b>11 to 19</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>393</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Boys</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>0</b>	5-11: <b>0</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>0</b>	11-18: <b>393</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>191</b>	
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>202</b>	
	Full:	<b>202</b>	Weekly: <b>0</b>
Inspection dates	<b>26 Nov 2013 to 29 Nov 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 October 2007.

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 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, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions. 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
Miss Katherine Haynes	Team Inspector (Head, HMC school)
Dr David Lamper	Team Inspector (Head, HMC school)
Mr James Priory	Team Inspector (Head, HMC school)
Mr Guy Sanderson	Team Inspector (Deputy head, HMC school )
Mr Andrew Williams	Team Inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Ian Rowe	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mr Alan Sturrock	Team Inspector for Boarding (Head of boarding, Society of Heads School)

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Founded in 1859 by Blessed John Henry Newman, The Oratory School is a Roman Catholic day and boarding school for boys, and has been on its present rural site close to Reading since 1942. The Oratory School and the Oratory Prep School are part of the Oratory School Association, a registered charity; they are run autonomously by the head masters but are overseen by the same board of governors. The majority of governors are former pupils of the school.
- 1.2 The school's motto is that of Blessed John Henry Newman , 'cor ad cor loquitor' – heart speaking to heart – and it continues to espouse his aim of providing an academic education, founded on Christian principles, which encourages the development of mind, body and spirit. The school aims to value each boy for his own sake as being endowed with his own special abilities and needs. It intends that every boy, regardless of ability and background, should grow into a successful and happy young man within a busy atmosphere of friendship, cheerfulness and collegiality, reflecting the spirit of St Philip Neri, the first Oratorian. Boarding is at the centre of the school's ethos and all day boys are members of one of the school's boarding houses. St Philip House caters for boys in Years 7 and 8, and Faber, FitzAlan, Norris and St John all have boys in Years 9 to 13. Half of the current pupils are Catholic and the school welcomes boys of other faiths or traditions.
- 1.3 Currently there are 393 pupils enrolled at the school of whom 202 board full time. Pupils are predominantly of White British origin and drawn from the south of England, although there are 80 boarders from overseas, mainly from Spain, Mexico and Nigeria. There are 77 who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and 67 of these receive extra support from the school for their English.
- 1.4 The ability profile of pupils in Years 7 to 10 is above the national average and that of pupils in the sixth form is in line with the national average for pupils in sixth form education. There are 110 boys identified by the school as having a mild special educational need or disability (SEND) and the school provides specialist teaching for 42 of these. No pupils have statements of educational need. Virtually all pupils go on to universities or art colleges.
- 1.5 Since the previous inspection, some new department areas have been built and others refurbished, including the sports hall and theatre. A swimming pool complex is under construction, due for completion in 2014. Arrangements for securing the views of boarders have been improved and the provision of weekend activities extended. The range of GCSE subjects has been expanded, supporting provision for pupils identified as having SEND as well as those identified as able, gifted and talented. There has been investment in information and communication technology (ICT).

- 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.

<b>School</b>	<b>NC name</b>
Form 1	Year 7
Form 2	Year 8
Form 3	Year 9
Form 4	Year 10
Form 5	Year 11
Lower 6	Year 12
Upper 6	Year 13

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

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

- 2.1 The Oratory school provides its pupils with a good education in line with the school's aim of placing equal value on the development of mind, body and spirit and of valuing each individual regardless of ability or background. The excellent curriculum provides a range of choice which is suitable for all pupils, including those in the sixth form, enabling each to develop his own talents. Pupils are articulate, confident with number, with scientific concepts and with the use of ICT. The range of achievements in sport is considerable and a great source of pride. The school is highly successful in balancing its vigorous commitment to an energetic extra-curricular sports programme with a strong focus on creativity and imagination, whereby the pupils are encouraged to be ambitious in exploring other facets of their personalities. The school has high expectations of boarders and day boarders alike, providing them with opportunities to take responsibility and proving excellent pastoral guidance as they mature. The pupils generally have a good attitude to their learning. When encouraged to do so, they frame thoughtful questions and make astute observations which extend their own and others' understanding. On occasion, however, teaching does not allow for this or present sufficient challenge to the most able. The majority of boys go on to art colleges or to university to study a range of courses.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development, to which the boarding ethos and the school's commitment to pastoral care make a considerable contribution, is excellent. The school is highly successful in creating within classrooms and boarding houses an atmosphere of friendship, cheerfulness and collegiality reflecting the philosophy of Blessed John Henry Newman and the values of St Philip Neri. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents expressed virtually unanimous satisfaction with every aspect of the school's provision. The vast majority of pupils say that they enjoy boarding and get on well together, although a significant number are not happy with the food provided. The pupils are thoughtful; quietly self assured, proud of their own achievements but not boastful; generous in their appreciation of others' successes; fiercely proud of their school. A sense of team spirit and mutual responsibility is evident in their demeanour. Relationships between the pupils themselves and between pupils and staff are excellent, relaxed, friendly, and respectful.
- 2.3 Governors are fully committed to supporting the school and have enabled considerable investment in improved facilities since the previous inspection, although concerns about the accommodation provided by the health centre remain, resulting in a failure to meet one of the National Minimum Standards. The creation of an academic committee has enhanced their understanding of the school's daily life, supporting their decision-making. They have not always been sufficiently rigorous, however, in monitoring the accuracy of some legally required policies. This has now been corrected. Leadership at senior level is inspirational, embodying the ethos of the school and providing excellent role models for the pupils. There has been progress in developing management procedures as recommended by the previous report, although work remains to be done.



## **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 does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013 and therefore it must:
- ensure that the health centre provides suitable accommodation for sick pupils, which includes toilet and washing facilities for their sole use. [National Minimum Standard 3.2, under Boarders' health and well-being].

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

- 2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action point, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that policies for the monitoring of standards of teaching are rigorously implemented.
  2. Develop teaching strategies to ensure that all, including the most able, are consistently provided with sufficient challenge.
  3. Take steps to respond to the pupils' concerns about the provision of food, especially in the evenings.
  4. Ensure that the school's policies are regularly reviewed to ensure they meet legal requirements.
  5. Ensure consistency of management of boarding houses and of house masters' expectations of their prefects and house captains.

### **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' overall achievement is good.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated in accordance with the school's aim of providing an academic education which develops mind, body and spirit. They demonstrate good knowledge, understanding and skills across all subject areas. Their creative skills are highly developed. They are articulate and, when given the opportunity, use their good ability to think logically to make valuable contributions to discussions. They listen closely, make clear and well-organised notes and express themselves well in writing. Pupils use ICT confidently, both when producing written work and when manipulating images to produce creative pieces. They are numerate, showing confidence in manipulating numbers and in applying scientific techniques.
- 3.3 An inclusive attitude to sport provides a backbone to daily life. The school has won a plethora of trophies in recent years, most notably in seven-a-side rugby, but with considerable success across a whole range of sports. Pupils have won national competitions in shooting and real tennis and reached the semi final in rowing at the national schools regatta. A number of boys have been awarded gliding scholarships over the last three years following their involvement in the school's well-supported Combined Cadet Force (CCF). The school places equal emphasis on developing the pupils' creativity and in encouraging them to explore their individuality and talents. The school offers a variety of musical ensembles with pupils who enter Associated Board music exams achieving good results.
- 3.4 The pupils reach good levels in public examinations. The following analysis uses the national data for years 2010 to 2012. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. GCSE results have been above the national average for pupils in maintained schools, with over 40% at GCSE graded A\* or A. IGCSE results have mostly been higher than the worldwide average. At A level, results have been high in relation to the national average for all maintained schools and similar to the average for pupils in maintained selective schools. Over two-thirds of all results over the last three years have been at grades A\*-B. The school's analysis shows that pupils with SEND and EAL, and those who are gifted or talented attain good results in relation to their ability. The majority of sixth form pupils are successful in achieving places at art colleges or at universities to study a range of subjects including medicine, law and business.
- 3.5 Overall, pupils make good progress relative to their ability, those in the sixth form making excellent progress. The school tracks pupils' progress carefully, reporting back to pupils every two weeks on their academic attainment and effort, and has high expectations of those identified as particularly able. The school's analysis provides strong evidence of pupils' progress across most ability ranges, especially for those with EAL and SEND. Observations of lessons and scrutiny of work and the monitoring documentation of the SEND department showing progress throughout the term and in tests confirm this judgement.
- 3.6 The majority of pupils have a sense of purpose in lessons and behaviour is almost invariably excellent. Their attitude to learning is positive; they want to learn, and enjoy pushing the boundaries of their knowledge, especially in the visual arts. When given the opportunity, pupils show developing intellectual curiosity, maturity and wisdom in articulating well reasoned arguments. The pupils throw themselves into

sporting and creative activities with great enthusiasm, relishing this aspect of their education.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of the curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 The school is very successful in meeting the needs of all its pupils through a curriculum that accords closely with the school's aims. The balance and range of subjects at all levels is strong, particularly for a school of this size, and supported by educational trips to local and overseas destinations. A broad programme for personal and social education has been made more coherent since the previous inspection. Since that inspection, too, provision for the more able students has been extended by the introduction of classical Greek at GCSE and at A level. Able sixth form students may also take the Extended Project qualification, study philosophy or follow demanding Pre-U courses in some subjects. Pupils with EAL in Years 7 to 9 are put into discrete classes for English and mathematics to support them while their English improves. Almost all in these years study Latin, although those with EAL or SEND may instead follow a course in classical civilisation. The vast majority of pupils study at least one modern foreign language to GCSE; some also take up Italian or Spanish. The curriculum ensures that the pupils are given every opportunity to develop their interests and skills in physical and creative subjects. Each afternoon is given over to sports, CCF or community service activities. Provision for art is outstanding, with large numbers pursuing the subject to A level.
- 3.9 Tutors and subject teachers provide good advice to support pupils in making appropriate option choices. Careers guidance has been extended since the previous inspection with the introduction of careers fairs, talks and drop in sessions. Pupils say that the advice given is helpful and that they feel well supported. The curriculum support department has been recently reorganised and is providing highly effective monitoring and support for pupils, which they value as enabling them to make good progress in lessons. Pupils with EAL make swift progress thanks to the structure of the curriculum and the specific help provided by the EAL department.
- 3.10 Pupils identified as gifted and talented are provided with challenge and support primarily in activities outside the routine classroom. Those from Year 9 to the sixth form attend a weekly Scholars Plus group which provides additional stretch, as does the Chesterton Society for students in Year 11. There is a wide range of academic societies for sixth form pupils to provide further stimulus and opportunity.
- 3.11 The school is justifiably proud of its excellent extra-curricular provision. This is extensive and inspires a strong level of commitment by pupils. The school is highly successful in providing a stimulating environment for the physical and cultural development of pupils. Sporting provision is outstanding. Large numbers of staff are involved in running teams and are supported by external coaches from Reading Football club and London Irish. All boys participate willingly in team sports and are just as enthusiastic about the triumphs of D teams as they are of A teams' successes. The school also runs all three sections of the CCF, compulsory for pupils in Years 9 and 10, providing stimulating training and leadership opportunities. Some pupils in Years 11 and above choose instead to help with conservation, community services or to go kayaking. There are good numbers of students participating in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, with ambitious gold expeditions taking place in the Black Mountains and Atlas Mountains. The school is also successful in creating a sympathetic cultural environment, with a range of

opportunities in music and drama for pupils. The art studios are a hub of quietly focussed, intense enjoyment and ambitious experimentation. The Hopkins Society runs a successful termly programme of cultural events adding to the rich diversity of extra-curricular provision. The pupils are kept busy, are happy and partake enthusiastically in all that the school has to offer.

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

- 3.12 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.13 The teaching clearly reflects the school's aim of valuing each individual pupil for his own sake as being endowed with his own special abilities and needs. In the majority of lessons, teaching is at least good and much is excellent, with teachers' knowledge of and passion for their specialist subjects creating an inspirational atmosphere.
- 3.14 Lessons are usually well planned and demonstrate an understanding of the pupils' needs, including those of pupils with EAL and SEND. There is not yet thorough monitoring of the way in which the recommendations of the curriculum support department are being used in classrooms, however, so that on occasion teaching strategies are not appropriately adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers know the pupils very well and show great care and support for them. This helps establish excellent relationships and an encouraging atmosphere within the classroom, both of which promote good learning.
- 3.15 In many lessons, a variety of tasks is provided to ensure that pupils are suitably challenged. Similarly, a variety of teaching approaches is used widely. These include carefully constructed games and lessons framed as workshops, seminars, tutorials, coaching or including peer review. A small number of lessons were over-dominated by exposition by the teacher, lacked pace and provided minimal opportunities for pupils to contribute. The pupils' consequent passivity significantly limited opportunities to extend their thinking or to learn to take intellectual risks. Opportunities for creative development are a particularly strong feature of the school and here the pupils are actively encouraged to challenge themselves and to extend the boundaries of their imaginations.
- 3.16 Teachers are very generous in giving their time outside the classroom to provide extra guidance, and the pupils speak with warm appreciation of their helpfulness. Classroom exchanges between teachers and pupils are characterised by good humour and encouragement, with pupils being given spontaneous praise which bolsters their confidence and their enjoyment of lessons.
- 3.17 The good level of resources is used well. Recent investment in ICT has ensured that many classrooms are provided with interactive white boards. Sometimes these are used imaginatively, but some teaching fails to exploit the potential of technology to engage pupils' interest and to recognise their different learning styles.
- 3.18 Since the previous inspection, progress has been made in the monitoring of teaching. Some elements of good practice have been shared. Inconsistencies remain, however, including in the standard of marking. Often marking is careful and gives good advice, with work annotated thoroughly. At other times, there is a reliance on numerical marks alone, which pupils said they do not find informative in helping them know what they should do to improve their work. A suitable amount of homework is set, although some pupils commented in the pre-inspection questionnaire that their prep does not help them to learn. While some tasks seen by inspectors were judged to lack stimulus or challenge, others were seen which

provided appropriate tasks to extend pupils' learning. Inspectors judged, therefore, that the pupils' comments are partially justified. The school is now making some use of standardised data to help in the assessment of pupils' abilities and needs. There are good systems for the regular monitoring of pupils' effort and attainment so that pupils are provided with fortnightly feedback on their progress.

## **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 Their awareness of a non-material dimension of life is fundamental to the pupils' development. Their comments make it clear that they rate this aspect of their lives highly as creating a sense of a community united by shared values. The pupils conduct themselves with respect and dignity in house prayers. They participate fully in the Mass, reading, serving at the altar and singing reverently. Their developing sense of awe at the immensity of creation is apparent in comments such as that grappling with the concept of eternity, "makes your head hurt", in exploring whether it is possible for man to destroy his relationship with the divine and in discussions of artificial intelligence and the consequent implications for defining what it is to be human. The pupils explore spirituality not only in religious education lessons but through the daily life of the school, where the buildings and displays subtly enrich their awareness of Christian beliefs. The two chapels, the corridors lined with paintings and photographs of revered Catholic figures and classrooms with posters of Catholic iconography contribute to an atmosphere in which spiritual values are absorbed by osmosis. The pupils' sensitivity to the beauty around them, both in the landscape and in man-made creations, is very apparent in the stunning quality of the art work they produce. The pupils are confident in their worth as unique individuals, self aware and emotionally mature in their dealings with each other and with adults.
- 4.3 Pupils have a strong awareness of the difference between right and wrong, of the moral and ethical issues facing humanity as technological advances push the boundaries of science and of the destructive consequences of making bad choices. Their behaviour is exemplary. They show an instinctive courtesy to guests and their manners are excellent; they are socially adept in conversation. Their natural exuberance is tempered by sensitivity to the needs and rights of others, seen in spontaneously thoughtful gestures to their peers.
- 4.4 Pupils have highly developed social awareness. Younger pupils look up to the prefects, house captains and school captains, who earn this respect by their willingness to show leadership and behave as role models for their juniors. Some pupils felt there were insufficient opportunities for them to undertake responsibility roles. The school's reliance on the roles of prefects, house prefects and sports prefects did not bear out this criticism; pupils' wish for more roles reflects their excellent social development. Duties are undertaken sensibly, pupils understanding that status and responsibility go hand in hand. Pupils throughout the school demonstrate a fierce pride in their school and loyalty to it. They also show a strong awareness of their responsibilities to the wider world and to those less fortunate than themselves. Houses nominate their own charities and raise funds by events such as 'Paupers' lunch'. Some pupils undertake community service activities including helping at primary schools and on pilgrimages to Lourdes. They are conscious of the important British principles of democracy, free speech and tolerance. Their enthusiastic involvement in the CCF demonstrates their pride in the school's history of military service.
- 4.5 The pupils demonstrate an understanding of and respect for differing cultural traditions. The different nationalities in the school work and play together in harmony. Pupils were absorbed by activities which required them to recount Biblical stories or describe their home countries in their own languages. Discussions in

lessons show their awareness of political issues such as the situation in Syria and the destruction of World heritage sites there. Their pleasure in creating music, be it baroque string pieces or Big Band arrangements, their engagement in theatre ranging from adaptations of Chaucer to Brecht, and their highly sophisticated appreciation of a whole range of artistic styles are all evidence of a heightened cultural sensitivity which reflects Newman's philosophy of developing mind, body and spirit.

- 4.6 By the time they leave the school, boys have matured into responsible, courteous, thoughtful young men who seek success without ostentation. They are grounded individuals with solid values of respect for themselves, for others and of unselfish service.

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

- 4.7 The school provides excellent pastoral care.
- 4.8 Most members of staff are academic tutors and provide pupils with very good guidance so that they feel valued and supported. In the pre-inspection questionnaire many pupils indicated that teachers show concern for them and said that they know how to seek help should they need it. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils, and between the pupils themselves, is excellent throughout the school. Pupils' genuine concern for each other's welfare reflects the school's motto of 'heart speaking to heart'. The house system nurtures a strong sense of belonging for boarding and day pupils alike, promoting high standards of behaviour in a caring and generous-spirited community. The work of the housemasters is ably supported by housemothers and the chaplain's role is significant in the pastoral structure.
- 4.9 Pupils benefit from an enthusiastic sporting ethos complemented by physical and outdoor activities, all of which instil a love of healthy living and exercise. The meals that inspectors attended and the menus that they scrutinised suggested that school food is appetising, wholesome and varied, with a range of choices. A significant number of pupils, however, expressed concern about the quality of meals, especially with suppers, comments which were supported by those of some staff.
- 4.10 The school actively promotes good behaviour and takes a strong stand against bullying and unacceptable behaviour. Issues of cyber bullying and e-safety are explored in talks by outside specialists and tutorial sessions. If bullying does occur it is dealt with promptly and constructively. A range of sanctions is used but there is some inconsistency in the way these are applied by different houses, reflecting concerns expressed in a significant minority of pupils' questionnaires.
- 4.11 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. Although pupils' questionnaire responses showed that they felt their opinions were not recognised by the school, evidence from the minutes of school council meetings and other pupil committees showed that the school seeks pupils' views and responds appropriately. Examples include the introduction of a new sports kit and the development of games facilities in houses.

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

- 4.12 Arrangements for welfare, health and safety are good.
- 4.13 Risk assessments are thorough and the school ensures that all staff, teaching and non-teaching, receive regular safeguarding training. The safeguarding policy now

meets all requirements and the school's procedures are robust. The school immediately began to implement its procedures rigorously in response to a concern raised during the course of the inspection. Very good links exist with the local children's services. Appointments procedures ensure that all necessary checks are carried out and recorded before new staff are allowed to start work. Pupils report that they feel well cared for and safe.

- 4.14 All necessary measures have been taken to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards; building evacuation practices are carried out with appropriate regularity and correctly logged. Since the previous inspection, the school has further strengthened its security procedures. Admission and attendance registers are well maintained, backed up and stored securely.
- 4.15 All staff have received at least basic first aid training and the health centre is staffed at all times by qualified nurses. The school does not yet provide suitable facilities for pupils who are sick or injured, in that the health centre does not have separate bathroom facilities for pupils and staff when pupils are accommodated overnight. The school is conscious of the need to address the consequent failure to meet one of the National Minimum Standards for boarding.

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

- 4.16 The overall quality of boarding is good.
- 4.17 Outcomes for boarders are excellent. Boarders have an excellent standard of personal development. They are confident, self-reliant and supportive of their peers. A very large majority of boys say they enjoy boarding and virtually all agree that boarders get on well together in the houses. High standards of behaviour are observed throughout the school, and boarders demonstrated an excellent ability to live together in harmony within their houses. The cultural mix within the boarding houses is seen as a strength of the school and all minority groups are fully integrated into their community. Boarders show a good awareness of events in the wider world, facilitated by television, internet access and newspapers in houses. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are excellent. Boarders are able to contribute to the successful running of the boarding houses, both formally as prefects or by offering help informally; many volunteer regularly to help their housemothers. Boarders are proud of their boarding houses and of their school. There is a close and loyal community spirit in all boarding houses. Boarders are well prepared for the next stage in their life.
- 4.18 The quality of boarding provision and care is good. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, many parents commented favourably on the support provided for their sons by housemasters and housemothers. Communication between the boarding house staff ensures that information about boarders' care is shared appropriately. Boarders all reported that they had at least one member of staff that they could turn to if they required help and outside sources of support are publicised to pupils. Housemothers were identified by boarders as particularly supportive. The academic and pastoral well-being of boarders is well catered for through the tutor structure. Care plans for boarders are used both by pastoral staff and the health centre to ensure that extra support or care is provided as required. Medical provision is good overall, although it does not provide appropriately separate bathroom facilities for pupils and staff, resulting in a failure to meet one of the National Minimum Standards. Boarders feel safe and secure in their boarding houses. In the pre-inspection questionnaire some boarders said that their possessions are not safe.



Inspectors found that pupils have means to lock personal possessions away but do not always use these. The school agrees that this is a frustration. Fire practices are carried out regularly, some at times when boarders are asleep. Boarding house risk assessments are carefully undertaken to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to protect boarders from danger. Boarders are provided with good facilities in all the boarding houses. A programme of redecoration is in place and all houses are well maintained. CCTV surveillance is not intrusive on the privacy of boarders.

- 4.19 Boarders enjoy a wide range of opportunities outside the curriculum and timetabled sports sessions. As recommended in the previous inspection, more weekend trips are arranged for boarders, although many pupils and parents commented in the pre-inspection questionnaire on the limited nature of the provision. While some boarders choose not to participate, the outings provided are particularly appreciated by the younger boarders. All boarders are eager to join in the many activities that are available in the evenings and enthusiastically support their boarding houses in inter-house competitions. The timing of these activities, which encourage the development of many skills, also allows for free time and individual choice.
- 4.20 Boarders live very active lives and the promotion of healthy living is evident both in the taught curriculum and in boarding house life. A significant proportion of pupils in the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed dissatisfaction with school food. In interviews, boarders identified supper as the meal causing most dissatisfaction. The meals that inspectors observed were nutritious and varied with provision for those with special dietary requirements. There are facilities for boarders to make snacks in the evening, although the school does not routinely provide foodstuffs for them to use. Boarding staff, parents and carers are in close partnership; contact between them is regular and easy. Boarders are able to contact home easily using telephones provided in the boarding houses or their own mobile phones and email.
- 4.21 Arrangements to provide care for the boarders' welfare and safeguarding are good. The school operates safe recruitment procedures properly and the safeguarding policy now meets requirements. Procedures for safeguarding are robust and all staff are suitably trained in child protection. They know that the safety of the boarders is paramount. Acts of bullying rarely occur and incidents are dealt with quickly. Suitable sanctions are imposed should a boarder be guilty of bullying, along with support to help him modify his future behaviour. Boarders understand the school's anti-bullying policy and support its principles, which are based upon respect, forbearance and consideration for the feelings of others. The general standard of behaviour is very good.
- 4.22 Sanctions for misbehaviour are properly recorded. These records are now monitored, as recommended in the last boarding inspection. In interview and in the pre-inspection questionnaire, however, boarders said that there are variations in the application of punishments across the boarding houses. Housemasters are well supported by house captains and prefects. These are active in promoting the ethos of the school and are role models to the younger boys, although their duties and housemasters' expectations of them varied between the boarding houses. There are always suitable numbers of staff on duty in boarding houses. There are appropriate arrangements to know the whereabouts of boarders when on and off-site, and the routine for finding a missing boarder is clearly established and understood.
- 4.23 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of boarding is good. However, there are inconsistencies in housemasters' management practice and awareness of

the National Minimum Standards of which the school is aware. Housemasters and housemothers usually work well together to respond to boarders' needs and ensure the smooth running of the house. The positive relationships, commitment of the staff and caring atmosphere within the houses contribute considerably to the boarders' personal development, a key priority in the school's boarding ethos. They reflect the school's statement of boarding principles.

- 4.24 Currently it is not routine practice for houses to engage in self-evaluation against the National Minimum Standards, which contributes to inconsistencies in practice. However, boarding staff are alert to opportunities to improve. Senior leadership ensures that staff have regular appraisals, are experienced or are supported when new to boarding. All boarding policies, including those for behaviour, have been reviewed as recommended in the last boarding inspection; they are suitable and well implemented. Records are properly kept and are now monitored regularly by the senior leadership team. Boarding is a vital part of the ethos of the school and boarding staff are proud of their part in providing a supportive, happy and busy environment for boarders.

## **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 majority of governors are former pupils. Their intimate understanding of the school's traditions and ethos enables them to be confident that they are discharging their responsibilities in line with the school's aims. Astute financial management has enabled significant investment in facilities, accommodation and resources since the previous inspection, with more planned for the near future. Governors balance the differing priorities of the two schools for which they are responsible skilfully, ensuring that the needs of each are fully considered. The creation of an academic committee since the previous inspection has provided the governors with greater insight into the daily working life of the school. It ensures that they have a good understanding which enhances the decision making process. Meetings alternate between sites, enabling governors to have a further understanding of the schools. Despite this, some staff do not feel that the governors are familiar or approachable figures.
- 5.3 A number of governors, including the designated child protection governor, have undertaken training course in governance and safeguarding issues. Governors have not been sufficiently rigorous, however, in responding to issues relating to the health centre or in carrying out their responsibility for ensuring that the school meets all statutory requirements. Consequently, prior to the inspection some policies, including that for child protection, had not been monitored sufficiently and did not reflect the latest guidance. This has been rectified and policies now meet requirements. Governors have reviewed safeguarding procedures annually.
- 5.4 The governors have a good relationship with the head master and bursar, who provide them with detailed and useful reports. Governors in their turn provide useful challenge, support and stimulus for development and the school benefits from their heartfelt commitment to its future success.

### **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 Senior leaders are a positive and inspirational presence in the school. They provide excellent leadership of the school's ethos, their demeanour and relationships embodying its values. They are highly effective in promoting the aims of the school. Senior leaders understand the school's key strengths and provide combined expertise that benefits the school. There is a strong understanding of safeguarding practice, although evidence seen before the inspection indicated that this policy and others had been allowed to fall behind current requirements. This has been swiftly corrected. Within demanding multiple roles, senior leaders provide a purposeful sense of educational direction. The school has a strong identity; in boarding houses, the core values of the school are promoted well. The pupils' excellent personal development and the good education they receive are clearly apparent and supported strongly by the commitment and determination with which senior leaders approach their work.

- 5.7 There is often consistency between policies and practice in the school, but this is not universal. Clear procedures for monitoring by heads of department of academic progress have been introduced but are not always implemented. Consequently, the effectiveness of departmental management is inconsistent. For example, although the structures indicated in policies are clear, the monitoring of department work and standards is undertaken largely on the initiative of individual heads of department, rather than being consistent across all subjects. The senior management team is aware of the need to ensure that expectations of heads of department are clearly articulated and then met, and to implement a thorough review of the effectiveness of the curriculum.
- 5.8 The whole school development planning, identifying academic and pastoral priorities, is much improved since the previous inspection although it lacks defined time scales and responsibilities for future actions. Some development planning at departmental level is evident, although it is not sufficiently detailed as to be fully effective. Care has been taken to incorporate department thinking into the whole school plan. The staff appraisal process, revised since the previous inspection, follows a three-year cycle. This is starting to move the school towards achieving its ambition of raising academic standards. There is some effective use of data, so that pupils and departments can be set targets for improvement.
- 5.9 The school is very successful in recruiting and supporting high quality staff. Staff training needs are identified, but a comprehensive system for training is not yet fully effective, particularly for new staff. Appropriate attention is given to issues of child protection, welfare, health and safety in staff training. Staff, once appointed, give generously of their time to work with pupils and they take pride in their pupils' successes. The pastoral care provided by staff at all levels results in a happy and supportive school community where the well-being and happiness of pupils is the central focus.
- 5.10 Links with parents are strong. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were almost unanimously supportive and appreciative of all elements of the school's provision and the care it gives to pupils. Parents are welcomed to attend matches and other school events. All of the required information for parents is now fully available on the website. The few formal complaints received have been well handled by the school in accordance with its policy. Reports are regular, and provide welcome and informative feedback on pupils' progress, targets and achievements. Additional contact is made as necessary. Parents' evenings are well attended. The school is very successful in remaining true to Newman's educational philosophy of sustaining good relationships with the families of the pupils who are entrusted to its care.

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