



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION  
THE PREBENDAL SCHOOL**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## The Prebendal School

|                           |   |            |                         |
|---------------------------|---|------------|-------------------------|
| Full Name of School       | <b>The Prebendal School</b>   |            |                         |
| DfE Number                | <b>938/6128</b>   |            |                         |
| Registered Charity Number | <b>307370</b>   |            |                         |
| Address                   | <b>The Prebendal School<br/>53/55 West Street<br/>Chichester<br/>West Sussex<br/>PO19 1RT</b> |            |                         |
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| Head                      | <b>Mr T R Cannell</b>   |            |                         |
| Chair of Governors        | <b>The Very Reverend Stephen Waine</b>  |            |                         |
| Age Range                 | <b>3 to 13</b>  |            |                         |
| Total Number of Pupils    | <b>189</b>  |            |                         |
| Gender of Pupils          | <b>Mixed (108 boys; 81 girls)</b>   |            |                         |
| Numbers by Age            | 0-2 (EYFS):   | <b>0</b>   | 5-11: <b>114</b>        |
|                           | 3-5 (EYFS):   | <b>35</b>  | 11-18: <b>40</b>        |
| Number of Day Pupils      | Total:  | <b>129</b> |                         |
| Number of Boarders        | Total:  | <b>60</b>  |                         |
|                           | Full:   | <b>26</b>  | Weekly/flexi: <b>34</b> |
| Head of EYFS Setting      | <b>Miss Iona Carmody</b>  |            |                         |
| EYFS Gender               | <b>Mixed</b>  |            |                         |
| Inspection Dates          | <b>10 to 13 Mar 2015</b>  |            |                         |

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous whole school ISI inspection was in February 2009. The previous ISI intermediate boarding inspection was in May 2012.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

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

This inspection contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education, personal development and welfare.

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 and chair elect of governors and 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 boarding accommodation 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**

Lady Fiona Mynors

Mrs Susan Clifford

Mr Paul Cozens

Ms Diane Martin

Mr Chris Manville

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The Prebendal School, probably dating back to the 11th century, is the oldest school in Sussex. It educates boy and girls aged between three and thirteen, including the four probationers and fourteen boy choristers for Chichester Cathedral. It is housed in historic and purpose-built accommodation adjacent to the cathedral, in the centre of the city. The school is a charitable trust administered by a board of governors led by the Dean of the cathedral who had been appointed just before the inspection. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is incorporated within the pre-prep department for pupils from Reception to Year 2. The prep school is for pupils from Years 3 to 8. The choristers board, and the school offers flexible boarding to all pupils from Year 3.
- 1.2 Since the previous whole-school inspection, all pupils are on one site and the boarding accommodation has been refurbished. The pre-prep department is under new leadership. Since 2010, when formal Saturday school ceased, pupils have been offered an optional programme of enrichment with extra activities and examination preparation. The school aims to ensure that all pupils achieve their potential through the provision of high-quality learning experiences within a caring, safe Christian environment, where each child is unique and of equal importance. A particular emphasis is placed on the creation of an atmosphere where value is placed on praise, courtesy and consideration for others.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, 189 pupils were on roll, 108 boys and 81 girls, of whom 35 were in the EYFS. There were 30 pupils in Years 1 and 2, 84 in Years 3 to 6, and 40 in Years 7 and 8. Full-time boarders comprised 23 boys and 3 girls, while a further 34 pupils board on a flexible basis. The ability profile of the pupils is above the national average. The pupils' parents are predominantly from professional and business backgrounds who live within a 15-mile radius of the school. A few pupils are of minority ethnic origins. Eleven pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and four receive specialist support. The others are fully bilingual and do not receive additional support. The school has identified 29 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). All are supported either in class or with specialist individual lessons. A few pupils leave at the age of 11 to transfer to local maintained and independent schools. The majority of pupils remain until the age of 13, when they move to senior maintained, independent day and boarding schools.
- 1.4 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.

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

|              |           |
|--------------|-----------|
| School       | NC name   |
| Kindergarten | Nursery   |
| Reception    | Reception |

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

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

- 2.1 The school is successful in achieving its aims to provide an environment in which the pupils achieve their individual potential. At all stages they have good knowledge, skills and understanding across their subjects. They make good progress which increases rapidly in Years 6 to 8. Pupils are highly successful in a wide range of team and individual activities, and the outstanding level of their musical achievements is a particular strength, with the choristers' exceptional singing at its core. Pupils with SEND and/or EAL achieve well and make good progress because of the additional support they receive. The most able pupils are successful as they receive additional challenges. The quality of teaching is good, and in a significant proportion of lessons observed it was excellent. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are almost always positive. When the teaching is not sufficiently matched to their needs, and the pace of lessons is too slow, they lose concentration and their progress is restricted. Pupils gain entry to their first choice of senior school, many in competitive entry. Each year an increasing proportion of pupils gain academic and non-academic awards, with music a particular strength. Pupils, including in the EYFS, benefit from the broad curriculum. The extra-curricular provision is excellent and pupils benefit from strong links with the local community.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent, strongly supported by the comprehensive personal, social, health and citizenship programme (PSHCE). In the EYFS, children make a valuable contribution to the life of the school. All pupils understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and know that they should treat people fairly and without discrimination, respecting different traditions and cultures. Pupils benefit from the school's excellent pastoral care and arrangements for welfare, health and safety including the careful implementation of policies to ensure that they are securely safeguarded. All the staff work together to ensure that the pupils' academic and pastoral needs are carefully understood. The quality of boarding is excellent, and particular care is taken to support the choristers.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is excellent. Governors have an excellent understanding of the pupils' education and are effective in discharging their statutory responsibilities. Leadership and management, including in the EYFS, are good. Extremely successful, new systems for pastoral and boarding management have been introduced. An effective appraisal system promotes the professional development of staff. In the EYFS, this has not always been effectively linked to the EYFS development plan. Links with parents are excellent. The school has made significant progress since the previous inspection. The school is now fully integrated as one school. Boarding accommodation and its management are of a high standard. Pupils have access to additional information and communication technology (ICT) resources, and their skills have improved, but they do not yet exploit its full potential across all subjects. Classrooms are now good learning environments with displays to enhance pupils' learning.



**2.(b) Action points****(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- 2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013.

**(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. In the EYFS, identify and share the most effective practice within the setting and ensure that staff training is effectively linked to the EYFS development plan.
  2. Raise the quality of teaching to match that of the best, through consistent monitoring across all subjects by management and the sharing of the most effective practice.
  3. Improve pupils' competence in their use of ICT, including in the EYFS, and ensure that it is used effectively as a tool for learning across the curriculum.

### **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 good.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated in line with the school's aims to enable pupils to achieve their individual potential in a wide range of activities. In the EYFS, children achieve well in all areas of learning and development in relation to their starting points and abilities. Most children reach and sometimes exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the EYFS. Those with SEND and/or EAL make consistently good progress because of the additional support they receive. Children become fluent readers and develop strong writing skills, forming letters and words with increasing accuracy to write short sentences in guided and independent activities. They make good progress in mathematics, combining one and two digit numbers to solve simple sums, and they can identify patterns and name a range of 3D shapes. The children are independent, creative learners who concentrate, explore and investigate using imaginative resources, and making appropriate choices.
- 3.3 From Year 1, pupils have good knowledge, skills and understanding across their subjects. They are extremely articulate, discussing topics vigorously, responding thoughtfully to questions and generally listening well. They read efficiently with good projection and understanding in a variety of settings, including reading lessons in the cathedral. The pupils' literacy skills are well developed, and their writing is frequently of a high standard, using mature vocabulary and good imagination. Most pupils take pride in the presentation of their work. Pupils can think logically and apply their mathematical skills, particularly in problem solving. When given the opportunity, pupils investigate and research successfully. Since the previous inspection, the pupils' skills in the use of ICT have improved, although they do not yet exploit its full potential across all subjects. The pupils' physical development is good, and their creative skills in art and drama are strong. The outstanding level of pupils' musical achievements is a particular strength of the school with the choristers' exceptional singing at its core. The choristers are confident, able and mature musicians of whom their peers are extremely proud. Pupils who need additional support achieve standards which match their peers through the support they receive. The most able pupils achieve well as they are often given additional challenges in lessons and benefit from booster clubs.
- 3.4 Pupils are highly successful in a wide range of team and individual activities. Almost all pupils learn at least one instrument, frequently more, and they achieve excellent results in external examinations and in local competitions such as the Chichester Music Festival. The choristers have won an award with one of their CDs. Pupils do extremely well in external speech and drama assessments. They represent the county in chess, cricket, football, fencing and athletics. School teams are frequently successful, and pupils have been selected for the national youth sailing development squad and have gained parts in local professional theatre companies. The gardening club has been involved in the renovation and re-planting of the bishop's garden. Pupils always gain entry to their first choice of senior school, many in competitive entry. Each year an increasing proportion of pupils gain academic and non-academic awards, with music a particular strength.
- 3.5 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to performance against a fixed national average, but on the evidence available from standardised tests, lesson observations, scrutiny of samples of work and interviews with pupils, it is judged to

be good. All pupils make good progress which increases rapidly in Years 6 to 8 so that by the time they leave, their attainment is above that expected of pupils of similar age. Pupils with SEND and/or EAL progress well because of the support they receive. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all the parents were pleased with their children's progress, and pupils equally felt that they were making good progress.

- 3.6 The pupils' attitudes to their learning are almost always positive. They usually settle quickly to work and participate eagerly in activities. They work co-operatively or independently, taking the initiative when given the opportunity. In the lessons observed, when the tasks set were inappropriate, or the pace too slow, pupils lost concentration and made less progress.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.8 In the EYFS, extensive carefully selected resources provide opportunities for children to engage in a well-managed balance of purposeful, freely chosen and adult-initiated activities which cover all areas and aspects of the EYFS curriculum. The opportunities for children to use ICT independently are limited. Open access to the stimulating outdoor learning environment enables children to extend their learning beyond the classroom, well supported by attentive staff. This ensures that all children, including those with SEND and/or EAL reach the expected levels of development for their age.
- 3.9 From Year 1, pupils benefit from the broad curriculum which is suitable for their ages and abilities, and supports the school's aim to foster their academic development with high-quality learning experiences. French is taught from Year 1 and Latin is introduced in Year 5. Creative, expressive and practical subjects have a strong place in the curriculum, with excellent provision for music.
- 3.10 All pupils benefit from a comprehensive PSHCE programme which includes an appropriate focus for Year 8 on their future hopes and possible careers. A careful curriculum review has identified the way in which pupils develop a clear understanding of British fundamental values, and are well prepared for their responsibilities and experiences for life beyond school. A balanced view of political issues is fostered through activities such as a mock referendum on the topic of Scottish independence and a visit to the Houses of Parliament. The thorough preparation for entry examinations to a wide variety of senior schools does not limit the pupils' experiences, an improvement since the previous inspection. Year 8 pupils appreciate the Leavers' Programme which enables them to feel confident about their transfer to their senior schools.
- 3.11 Resources for ICT have been significantly increased since the previous inspection. Its use is beginning to become embedded in the curriculum, although it is not yet used consistently across all subjects.
- 3.12 Curriculum planning is thorough, and careful consideration has been given to the time allocation for each subject which is monitored regularly. Provision for pupils with SEND and/or EAL is good. They are assessed and when necessary individual education plans are developed and individual lessons provided as appropriate. The support provided in class lessons is inconsistent. All staff help pupils to learn, but do not always plan tasks to match their particular needs. The more able pupils are well provided for in many subjects when extra challenges are outlined in planning, but

this is not yet consistent in all subjects. The system of support for pupils with additional needs is under review and planned changes are in place for the September following inspection.

- 3.13 The pupils' experiences are greatly enriched by a significant number of trips, workshops and visiting speakers such as the local Member of Parliament and a World War II veteran. From Year 3, the pupils' independence is fostered through a range of residential trips which they greatly value. Parents are highly appreciative of the opportunities provided for their children.
- 3.14 The extra-curricular provision for pupils is excellent. Almost all pupils learn at least one instrument, and the breadth, range and quality of musical activities is exceptional. Music permeates the life of the school. The school's four choirs contribute to the rhythm of the school's worship as well as taking part in a wide range of performances. The standard of all ensembles observed was outstanding, and pupils spoke of their musical activities with passion and enthusiasm.
- 3.15 Art and drama are strong elements of the extra- and co-curricular programme. The popular Forestry Club teaches survival and outward bounds skills. Staff take great care to ensure that pupils do not take on too much, recognising their need for relaxation time in their busy schedules. Games and sports provision is excellent and all pupils in Years 3 to 8 have the opportunity to play for a school or house.
- 3.16 Pupils benefit from strong links with the local community through the cathedral choir, a music outreach programme when pupils make music with many local primary schools, and their involvement in the Transition Chichester project.

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

- 3.17 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.18 In the EYFS, the most effective teaching is enjoyable, is taken at a brisk pace and holds the children's attention. It encourages them to participate and enables them to cover a high volume of work and progress rapidly. Careful adjustments and focused support ensures that all children, including those with SEND and/or EAL achieve well. When teaching is more formal, the children have fewer opportunities for active involvement, they become restless and progress is slower. At times, adults make good use of open-ended questions to challenge the children's critical thinking and problem-solving skills as they play purposefully outside. However, this quality of questioning is not consistently achieved across the setting, as adults can be too quick to correct wrong answers, leaving little room for children to make their own discoveries or experiment.
- 3.19 From Year 1, the quality of teaching in a significant proportion of lessons observed was excellent. Teachers generally have high expectations, and the most successful teaching includes skilful questioning techniques, opportunities for collaborative learning, support for pupils who need help and additional challenges for the most able. Lively discussions, carefully managed to ensure respect and tolerance for others' views, which tested pupils' individual knowledge and understanding, were a particular feature of many lessons, enabling adjustments to be made to the planning of subsequent activities and tasks. Teaching usually benefits from the setting of a brisk pace and a rotation of tasks to maintain pupils' motivation and interest, using time efficiently.

- 3.20 When teaching was less successful, it was overly directed by the teacher. It did not include opportunities for pupils to work independently, and classroom management was weak. As a result, pupils lost concentration and they made limited progress. The quality of lesson planning varies. At its best it includes engaging activities and incorporates the needs of all pupils, including those with EAL and/or SEND and the most able. However, this is not consistent in all planning although all teachers are willing to assist pupils when they ask for help.
- 3.21 Teaching benefits from extremely positive relationships in which pupils are encouraged to accept challenge and take pride in their work in order to achieve their potential. Pupils' trust and rapport with their teachers are excellent, and the relaxed and supportive environment ensures that pupils can learn with confidence. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subjects. Pupils' understanding is supplemented by the extra information they receive in discussions through the teachers' specialist knowledge and their willingness to explore pupils' ideas.
- 3.22 Teaching in the best lessons made efficient use of available resources including the improved ICT provision. However ICT is not yet fully exploited as a teaching tool in many lessons. Classroom displays are lively and engaging, providing a stimulating learning environment which is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.
- 3.23 In the responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils felt that homework did not help them to learn. A homework review had recently been carried out. The evidence collected during the inspection through discussions with pupils and teachers found that the level of homework was appropriate, helping pupils to learn.
- 3.24 Teaching in the core subject areas has begun to benefit from a comprehensive tracking system to record pupils' progress and attainment. This ensures that assessment information can guide the planning of future work and assist in ensuring that pupils take appropriate entrance examinations. Marking of pupils' work is a strength with constructive comments and useful guidance for areas for improvement with target setting. Pupils stated in discussions that they feel well supported and appreciate the oral feedback and written comments they receive which enable them to learn and improve.

## **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 Pupils throughout the school have excellent well-developed personal qualities. They are confident and articulate and take an obvious pride in their own and others' achievements. In the EYFS, children make a valuable contribution to the life of the school. They respond positively to adults' expectations for good behaviour, tidying away and gathering quickly for registration. They are enthusiastic; enjoying the challenges set, and they work well in pairs, showing consideration and tolerance for each other's differences. They make appropriate choices, understanding how to assess risk in their activities. EYFS children benefit from many opportunities to play alongside older pupils. They participate in such activities as whole-school assemblies, carefully escorted by their older 'buddy' partners. This promotes a strong sense of community and makes a significant contribution to preparing children confidently for transition to the next stage of their education.
- 4.3 The pupils' spiritual awareness permeates the community, and is shown through the cathedral choir, and the way that all pupils participate in collective worship in the cathedral. They have many opportunities to reflect on life's meaning and purpose beyond the material through their artistic and creative work, and their participation in the great variety of music and drama events. Pupils have high levels of self-esteem, and can put their point of view while respecting that of others. They share strongly in the celebration of individual and group achievements.
- 4.4 The pupils have a strong moral awareness. They develop independent thinking skills and consider world issues, understanding the needs of people in other countries. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong, and of justice and fairness. In discussion they explored the difference between laws and rules in relation to what they knew of English law. Pupils discuss pastoral matters and think about the consequences of their actions on others. All pupils understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and that they should treat people fairly and without discrimination.
- 4.5 Pupils are extremely socially aware. They develop excellent co-operative team working skills particularly through their involvement in many school activities. The Year 8 pupils arrange a broad range of house competitions to suit the skills and interests of their members. They also choose and organise highly successful charity events. A small minority of pupils' responses to the questionnaires suggested that they did not have the opportunity to take on responsibilities. Inspection evidence judged that pupils of all ages have opportunities to take on responsibilities in class, in houses or school wide. Those in positions of responsibility have a mature and caring attitude. This was particularly observed through the school's buddy system which pairs up senior pupils with those in EYFS and Years 1 and 2 for a broad range of activities including cathedral assembly and shared reading. Year 8 prefects are excellent ambassadors for the school, showing parents round on Open Days and enjoying a wide variety of responsibilities. Pupils in Years 1 and 7 follow leadership courses to help them prepare for the responsibilities they will inherit the following academic year.
- 4.6 Pupils have a strong appreciation and respect of cultural diversity through their religious studies work on alternative faiths, cultures and traditions and the school's

PSHCE programme. They also develop their understanding of other cultures in subjects such as geography, history, art and music. They understand about the festivals and places of worship in religions other than their own, having visited mosques and synagogues, and pupils also develop an awareness of Western traditions through visits to museums and theatres. Pupils' understanding of fundamental British values and democracy is excellent, and they have a good knowledge and understanding of public institutions and services. Year 8 pupils were observed sensitively ranking values of Britishness, contrasting these with those of other nationalities represented in the class. Pupils have an excellent standard of personal development by the time they leave the school.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 Staff provide effective support and guidance for the pupils of all ages, including the EYFS, in accordance with the school's aim to promote pupils' personal development in a disciplined and caring environment providing for each individual's needs. EYFS children benefit from the setting's welcoming environment where they enjoy strong relationships. Adults encourage children to take responsibility and be independent when pouring their own drinks. Occasionally adults are too quick to intervene to help, reducing the children's opportunities to be independent or to take responsibility. Golden rules remind children about appropriate behaviour, and adults consistently reinforce good hygiene practices, enabling children to develop their own. Children are encouraged to work together, take turns and be considerate of each other, through praise and high expectations. Freshly prepared lunches and regular cookery lessons introduce children to healthy eating and they understand that they should take exercise for health.
- 4.9 The quality of relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils themselves is excellent. Procedures for providing support and guidance for pupils are excellent. Staff know their pupils' needs extremely well and pastoral matters are discussed regularly. A highly efficient and well-used pastoral information sharing system is used to highlight pupils who are of concern. In their responses to the questionnaire, a minority of pupils felt that teachers were not always fair in their use of the rewards and sanctions system. Careful scrutiny of documentation and discussion with many pupils indicated that pupils did understand and accept the system, and agreed that its application was fair.
- 4.10 Pupils are encouraged to be healthy by taking regular exercise. They gain an understanding of healthy eating through PSHCE and science, and the provision of school food of good quality. Catering staff are attentive to individual dietary requirements. A significant minority of pupils in their pre-inspection questionnaire responses stated that they did not like the food. Through a review of the menus, from interviewing pupils and sampling the food available, inspectors judge that the food provided is nutritious, varied and offers sufficient choice.
- 4.11 The school promotes good behaviour and guards against harassment and bullying. In the pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a very small minority of pupils and parents felt that bullying was not dealt with effectively. A detailed scrutiny of the meticulous pastoral records relating to incidents of social and friendship issues, and interviews with pupils and staff found that great care is taken to investigate and resolve any difficulties. The anti-bullying policy is routinely reviewed with pupils and staff, the topic is targeted through assemblies and an anti-bullying forum is open to

all pupils. Pupils know to whom they can turn, and in interviews they expressed the view that they are confident that issues are addressed swiftly and effectively by staff.

- 4.12 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.13 The school has effective methods to seek the views of pupils. A minority of pupils' questionnaire responses suggested that the pupils' views were not heard, but evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that this is not the case. In pupil interviews, the recent reinstatement of the Year 8 common room and changes to the menus were identified as successful outcomes of the pupil voice forum. Inspectors also judged that the school was an open environment in which pupils were observed feeling confident to speak out, in or out of class.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.15 The school takes great care to ensure and promote the welfare, health and safety of all pupils, including in the EYFS. Policies and procedures are implemented and reviewed efficiently. The safeguarding of pupils, including in the EYFS, is a high priority for the school, and the implementation of policy is robust, with appropriate checks and excellent record keeping. All staff receive regular and appropriate training in child protection in line with local and national guidelines. The designated safeguarding leadership has enhanced training, and strong links have been established with local statutory agencies. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that the school keeps their children safe.
- 4.16 All necessary precautions are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards, supporting the school's commitment to ensure that pupils are educated in a safe, caring environment. Fire drills take place regularly, are appropriately recorded, and equipment is checked carefully. Thorough risk assessments, which are regularly reviewed, are provided for all areas of the school and its activities. Trips are rigorously planned, and particular care is taken to escort pupils when they transfer to the cathedral and other buildings outside the immediate core of the school.
- 4.17 The facilities for pupils who are injured or sick are good, and efficient records of incidents and accidents are maintained and monitored. The first-aid policy is appropriate and all staff have first-aid training. A good proportion of staff in the pre-prep have paediatric first-aid qualifications. The newly introduced electronic admission and attendance registers are properly maintained, and backed up daily. Registers have been stored for the previous three years. An efficient system is in place to follow up any pupil absences.

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

- 4.18 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.19 The boarding experience strongly supports the school's aim to help pupils to develop as individuals, by enabling them to thrive in an environment where school life is enriched and full of new experiences. Outcomes for boarders are excellent. They receive excellent care and support which enables them to be confident, caring and articulate. They enjoy boarding and speak of their friends as being like their family. Behaviour is good and boarders generally get on well with each other, becoming more tolerant and resilient as they progress through the house. Boarders with EAL are welcomed and feel at ease with others. Pupils feel confident to seek help, and



that they are listened to by the staff. There have been numerous outcomes from the weekly boarding forum and food committee. Boarders have a strong sense of loyalty to their school and house. Boarders have appropriate access to information about world events as most go home frequently and current affairs are discussed in school.

- 4.20 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. Boarders feel that staff understand them as individuals, and the induction process enables them to feel welcome and settle rapidly. The independent listeners are easily available and so that the boarders always have someone to talk to outside of school staff they also act as mentors. The pastoral care of boarders is extremely effective, carefully linked to whole-school systems. House staff attend weekly school pastoral meetings and any relevant information is shared and recorded as appropriate. Arrangements for sick boarders are efficient and well managed by matrons with paediatric first-aid training who provide 24-hour cover. Boarders' health plans are completed and circulated appropriately. Protocols for storing and dispensing medication are efficient and recorded in a daily record and each pupil's file, and their confidentiality is respected. Arrangements for boarders' laundry work well.
- 4.21 In interviews, boarders agreed that the food provided is good. The questionnaire responses suggested that snacks were not easily available. However, they are always available during the day in the dining hall, and evening drinks are provided. Menus are created by the caterers and are carefully monitored, as are all the necessary checks including the record of allergens in all meals. Boarders particularly enjoy the special events arranged by the catering department such as Chinese New Year. The choristers' families are able to join them for lunch on Sundays, which is a popular event and enhances the family atmosphere of boarding.
- 4.22 The accommodation is suitable, well maintained and pleasant considering the restrictions of the school's historic building. A comfortable common room has recently been introduced for the boarders to give them space for relaxation, which is much appreciated. Boarders can keep their personal possessions safe. Activities in the evenings and especially at weekends are excellent. Boarders have access to the school's facilities. The recently introduced weekend activities are greatly enjoyed by the boarders. Choristers have a heavy timetable, but there are opportunities for free time and visits home. Homework is done in classrooms and supervised by teaching staff. A few choristers indicated that they had too much prep and music practice time. However, this has recently been reviewed, and arrangements are in place for choristers to have extra prep time to ensure that they do not miss work and still have some free time. The situation is under constant review. Most boarders go home frequently, but there is a pay phone and they can use the house phone if they are unable to use a mobile phone to contact their parents. Almost all parents felt that it was easy to contact the house staff if they had any concerns.
- 4.23 The effectiveness of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent, ensuring that all National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools are met. The school has a comprehensive safeguarding policy and efficient recruitment procedures for all staff. This has ensured that the recommendation in the previous inspection report relating to checks done when recruiting new staff has been addressed. All staff are regularly trained in safeguarding, and aware of the procedures to follow. They fully understand their responsibility to safeguard boarders. Cleaners are also trained in safeguarding, which has addressed the recommendation from the previous inspection. Boarders are encouraged to be open

with staff in sharing concerns or queries, and to cooperate with staff in dealing with any relationship or other issue which may arise. They know that they can talk to any member of staff. In the previous inspection, sanctions were seen to be inconsistently applied, but boarders now feel that the reward system is fair. Bullying is not perceived to be an issue by boarders, and they are confident that it would be dealt with by staff should it occur, a judgement supported by inspection evidence. Arrangements to prevent fire are efficient. Fire practices have occurred in boarding time and fire equipment checks are in place, as are risk assessments for the premises, activities and trips. Boarders' whereabouts are known at all times, and visits into town are allowed with age-appropriate supervision. Security systems are robust.

- 4.24 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the boarding provision is excellent. Policies and procedures are well implemented in line with the aims of boarding in the school. A positive atmosphere is promoted by the energetic new leadership in the house, and healthy relationships between boarders and house staff result in the creation of a happy environment. All parents agreed that their children enjoy boarding. Routines run smoothly and boarder's views are actively sought and they feel able to speak freely in the open atmosphere of the house. Records are accurately and robustly kept through the electronic system which covers academic, pastoral and medical details, some of which do have limited access for confidentiality. The necessary records and systems are monitored regularly by senior staff. Plans for the development of the boarding system are in place in order to improve the structure of the facility and to strengthen further support for the boarders. Governors have strong links with boarding through regular contact with house staff and boarders. New staff have a thorough induction process, and teaching staff receive an annual review through the school systems. At the time of the inspection, a process for the implementation of an annual review for the matrons was being developed. The complaints procedure is appropriately maintained. In the parents' and pupils' questionnaires responses there was overwhelming support for all aspects of the boarding provision.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Under strong, shrewd leadership, governance has enabled the school to be successful in achieving its aims to ensure that pupils are well educated and have an excellent standard of personal development. The school benefits from strong links with the cathedral, as a third of the cathedral chapter are members of the governing board. Since the previous inspection, governance has been strengthened by the recruitment of a significant proportion of lay members, including a parent governor, with a wide range of skills to support the school. Through frequent meetings between governors and management, the involvement of staff on regular governors' committees and the detailed information they receive from the school's leadership, governors have an excellent understanding of the pupils' education and standards. Governors have strong links with the EYFS provision to support and challenge staff in striving for continuous improvement. Careful financial planning has enabled the school to make appropriate investment in staff, accommodation and resources. As recommended at the previous inspection, governors have made a significant investment in the improvement of the boarding accommodation and facilities.
- 5.3 Governors have excellent oversight of the day-to-day working of the school through the links that are being developed between individual governors and departments. These formal links, and the governors' attendance at informal occasions, enable them to exercise their monitoring role effectively. They provide strong support and challenge to the school as a stimulus for continuing improvement. Governors discharge their responsibility for child protection, welfare, health and safety assiduously. All governors have benefited from specialist training in governance and safeguarding. Governors receive regular information on safeguarding matters and undertake a detailed annual review of the policy and the effectiveness of its implementation.

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

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is good.
- 5.5 This has enabled the school to be successful in achieving its aims. All policies and procedures reflect the school's caring ethos, in which pupils are encouraged to respect each other and appreciate democratic processes. The safeguarding of pupils, including in the EYFS, is an important focus for the whole school community.
- 5.6 Strong yet approachable leadership has a clear vision for the continuing development and improvement of the school. This vision is shared and supported by senior managers and all staff who work together for the benefit of the pupils. Extremely successful new systems for pastoral and boarding management have been introduced. The senior leadership team work collaboratively with governors to consider the strategic development of the school. They are effectively supported by the senior management team in the creation of shorter-term development plans which incorporate departmental aspirations. This sense of cohesion in team working has been enhanced by the creation of a staff committee which considers potential

new policies and developments for the school suggested by management, as well as contributing ideas to management for the development of the school.

- 5.7 Leadership and management in the EYFS are good. Strong leadership has ensured that children benefit from the welcoming, stimulating and safe environment. Collaborative self-evaluation, involving contributions from all staff, forms the basis of reflective practice across the EYFS. Managers evaluate the quality of the educational programmes through regular classroom observations, but do not make full use of the data available from the EYFS profile scores to identify areas for development. A formal appraisal scheme, including support meetings, promotes staff professional development. Staff are encouraged to undertake training, although this has not always effectively linked to the EYFS development plan. Staff feel well supported within a close-knit team, and are able to discuss any concerns about children because of the approachability of management. The setting has responded positively to the recommendation of the previous inspection to provide appropriate training for staff in the EYFS framework. The provision for ICT has been improved, although the resources are not yet used consistently to enhance children's learning.
- 5.8 Senior managers monitor teaching and learning from Year 1 through lesson observation and scrutiny of pupils' work. Subject leadership has been strengthened. Subject documentation reflects the school's aims, and good teaching and curriculum links, which include the pre-prep, are now firmly established. Peer lesson observation supports teachers. The scrutiny of samples of pupils' work is used efficiently to strengthen consistency in planning within subjects, and the potential for stronger cross-curricular links is under review. Subject leaders observe lessons informally, and more formal observations are undertaken, but not yet consistently across all subjects.
- 5.9 Excellent induction procedures for new staff ensure that they are well integrated into the school, and mentored efficiently. An appropriate appraisal system, involving all senior managers, identifies staff strengths and areas for development and training. Staff are suitably trained for their roles in meeting the needs of all pupils, and ensuring that health and safety and safeguarding are priorities. Efficient systems are in place for checking the suitability of staff, governors and volunteers, and these are recorded carefully.
- 5.10 Links with parents are excellent. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire show that an overwhelming majority of parents are strongly supportive of all aspects of the school, including the EYFS. They are highly satisfied with the progress their children make, and the range of extra-curricular activities available. Almost all parents who responded would recommend the school to other parents.
- 5.11 The school develops and maintains constructive relationships with parents, and most parents who expressed a view stated that communication with the school is good, and that they receive timely responses to their questions. Parents are encouraged to contact the school with any concerns, and the administrative team are welcoming and readily answer questions. An elected parent governor represents the views of parents on the governing body.
- 5.12 A few parents expressed concern over the handling of their concerns and complaints. Inspectors investigated these concerns and found that the few formal complaints are well documented and have been dealt with appropriately in line with

the published procedures. Records show that the school takes great care to respond to any concerns raised by parents.

- 5.13 In the EYFS, highly effective communication between home and school ensures that parents feel fully involved in their children's learning. Well-established links have been developed with outside agencies which enable appropriate support to be provided for children who need additional help.
- 5.14 Parents have good opportunities to be involved in the life of the school. The active Parent Teacher Association organises a range of social and fundraising events, raising significant funds to provide additional resources for the school. Sports fixtures, concerts, assemblies and other performances are very well supported by parents. A particular feature is their attendance at assemblies and the whole-school Eucharist in the cathedral.
- 5.15 The school provides comprehensive information for the parents of current and prospective pupils through the website. Further information is provided in the form of a detailed prospectus and accompanying documentation. Parents are kept well informed about activities and events within the school through notice boards, regular newsletters, email updates and homework diaries.
- 5.16 Parents can discuss their child's progress at annual consultation meetings and there are many opportunities for informal dialogue with staff. Reports, supplemented by regular grade cards for effort and attainment, are detailed and provide an indication of how pupils can make further progress.

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