



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**TRENT COLLEGE**

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## Trent College

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

Full Name of School	<b>Trent College</b>		
DfE Number	<b>830/6000</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>527180</b>		
Address	<b>Trent College Derby Road Long Eaton Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG10 4AD</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>0115 849 4949</b>		
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Email Address	<b>enquiries@trentcollege.net</b>		
Head	<b>Mr Bill Penty</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Paul Macildowie</b>		
Age Range	<b>11 to 18</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>763</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (455 boys; 308 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	<b>11-18: 763</b>		
Number of Day Pupils	<b>Total:</b>	<b>615</b>	
Number of Boarders	<b>Total:</b>	<b>148</b>	
	<b>Full:</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>Weekly: 88</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>10 to 13 February 2015</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 May 2010 and the previous boarding welfare inspection was carried out in March 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.

This inspection contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education, personal development and welfare. Until September 2011, Boarding inspections were carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills.

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

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

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

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

## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mrs Ruth McFarlane	Reporting Inspector
Dr Martin Boulton	Team Inspector (High Master, HMC school)
Miss Margret Connell	Team Inspector (former headmistress, GSA school)
Mrs Valerie Fogarty	Team Inspector (former Head of Department, HMC school)
Mr James Fowler	Team Inspector (Headmaster, ISA school)
Dr David James	Team Inspector (Head of Department, ISA school)
Ms Laura Morrison	Team Inspector (former Deputy Head, GSA school)
Mr Ian Rowley	Team Inspector (former Senior Tutor and Head of Department, ISA school)
Mrs Sue Sowden	Team Inspector (former Headmistress, GSA school)
Miss Sue Duff	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mr Peter Last	Team Inspector for boarding (Housemaster, HMC school)

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Trent College is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged 11 to 18, situated in Long Eaton on the outskirts of Nottingham. Its origin, in 1866, was as a boys' boarding school with a Christian ethos. It is now a co-educational boarding and day school with the same ethos.
- 1.2 The school has a junior school, The Elms, and both are administered as a charitable trust by the same governing body. There is a separate headmaster, but the headmaster of Trent College, appointed in September 2014, has overall responsibility for both schools. Almost all pupils from The Elms progress to Trent following an assessment; they provide approximately half of the Year 7 intake at Trent College.
- 1.3 The school aims for its pupils to acquire the knowledge they need to build their own future; to develop a deeper understanding of their own selves and an awareness of the complex responsibilities that their world demands. It aims to establish a community which nurtures confidence, empathy, spiritual awareness and integrity in every individual. It wants pupils to explore the whole range of their talents and to aspire to, and achieve, success intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally. A further aim of the school is to ensure that pupils leave equipped with knowledge of themselves, of their abilities, and of the world.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection there were 763 pupils on roll, including 215 in the sixth form and 148 boarders (79 girls and 69 boys), the majority of whom board Monday to Friday in one of four boarding houses. Two of the boarding houses are within the main school building and the other two are located nearby on the school site.
- 1.5 Pupils are mainly from the local area: the majority, including boarders, living within twenty miles of the school. Most have parents with a professional background.
- 1.6 The ability profile is above the national average. The school identifies 62 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who require specialist support. None has a statement of special educational needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC). Few pupils are from minority ethnic groups. There are 31 pupils requiring support who speak English as an additional language (EAL).
- 1.7 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. In addition, the school refers to pupils in Year 7 to 11 as being in the senior school, and those in Years 12 and 13 as being in the sixth form.

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

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

- 2.1 The school's aims and ethos are clearly reflected in pupils' good achievement. By the time pupils reach age 16, they achieve well academically in comparison with pupils with similar abilities. In the wealth of additional activities, they achieve highly. They attain high standards in response to the broad and vibrant curriculum. All make good progress from their differing starting points. In the sixth form, standards are good and improving further. Pupils' good progress is supported by consistently good and increasingly excellent teaching. This is characterised by excellent subject knowledge and classroom management. A small number of lessons feature less-inspiring tasks that do not challenge the most able, and rely on the pupils' conscientious attitudes and commitment in order for them to achieve well.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils throughout the school show highly-developed self-confidence and a strong understanding of right and wrong. They demonstrate a well-developed understanding of British values through the school's work to ensure that pupils understand democracy, the right to individual liberty and the principles of tolerance and respect. Pastoral care is good. The new pastoral system ensures that pupils have strong care and support. The quality of boarding is good overall and outcomes for boarders are excellent. There are good arrangements overall to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. Work to ensure policies and facilities met requirements took place during the inspection. Staff files contain all the required details and checks are now suitably recorded centrally as required.
- 2.3 Leadership, management and governance are good, promoting the school's aims well. Some aspects of governance are excellent. This has led to astute development of buildings and facilities. Governors' effective support and challenge to the school underpin the pupils' good achievement and their excellent personal development. Governors are well informed about the school's needs. Legal responsibilities are all fulfilled, but changes to requirements are sometimes late in being absorbed into policy and procedures. Governors' and leaders' monitoring, including of boarding, is not fully effective. Progress on the recommendations of the previous inspections has been good overall, so that aspects of leadership and management have strengthened. A key feature is the focus on new, well-devised academic priorities so that the education offered is truly 'all-round'. The wide range of data now gathered on pupils' progress is not organised sufficiently well to be of best use to staff. Parents support all aspects of the school and recognise that their children make good progress and achieve well.

**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. Strengthen monitoring, including of boarding, carried out by the leadership and the governing body.
  2. Ensure that every pupil achieves their best academically, including the most able, by using tracking data more effectively and eliminating the remaining weaknesses in teaching.
  3. Ensure that all the boarding accommodation is of an equally high standard and improve the accommodation provided for pupils who are unwell.



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

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is good.
- 3.2 The school is successful in meeting its current academic aims and this ensures that pupils are well educated. Pupils are confident speakers and are able to engage in complex debate to defend their views and ideas; they demonstrate a capacity to listen to others. High quality written work is produced throughout the school. Across a range of subjects, pupils demonstrate a capacity to read competently and widely, to think logically and are able to put their thoughts into written words with fluency and insight. Pupils apply their mathematical skill across the curriculum; in sixth form psychology, pupils were able to use their understanding of mathematics to guide the design of their experiments. Pupils' creative and physical skills are excellent.
- 3.3 Pupils achieve highly in a range of extra-curricular activities. Participation in the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (DoE) show high levels of organisational skills. Last year, 11 pupils achieved the gold award, 50 silver and 55 bronze. School teams have enjoyed success at the highest level. One example among many is the U16 boys' hockey team who are currently double national champions, indoor and outdoor. Individual pupils' achievement in sport is exceptional and includes national representation in hockey, rugby, canoeing, judo and golf. Recent success in music includes places in The National Children's Orchestra. On leaving the school, most pupils gain places at selective universities.
- 3.4 The following analysis is for the years 2011-2013, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. Results in 2014 were broadly similar to 2013. Results in GCSE have been above the national average for maintained schools. Results in 2013 were higher than in 2011-12, being also similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. Results in IGCSE have been above world-wide norms. This level of attainment at GCSE, and standardised measures of progress that are available, as well as evidence drawn from lesson observations, work scrutiny and discussions with pupils, indicates that pupils make good progress in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. In the sixth form, A-level results have been above the national average for maintained schools, and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. The level of attainment at A Level, and standardised measures of progress that are available, and the same range of evidence as for GCSE pupils, indicates that pupils make progress in the sixth form that is appropriate in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities.
- 3.5 Pupils with SEND make similar progress to their peers, and achieve well, due to highly effective support. Pupils with EAL are also well supported so that they make rapid progress in learning and speaking English, and perform as well as their peers. New strategies, such as the High Achievers' Programme, to challenge the more able, have recently been introduced to enable pupils to achieve their best. Currently, the most able pupils achieve well.
- 3.6 Pupils' positive attitudes to their learning contribute well to their good achievement. They work well either independently or with partners, or in groups. They enjoy lessons, are motivated, ambitious and have a strong work ethic.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extracurricular provision is good.
- 3.8 The school's curriculum supports the aims of the school for pupils, including boarders, to aspire and achieve success intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally. It helps to develop pupils' 'all round' education by providing breadth and balance in academic subjects, enriched by an excellent array of additional activities and an extensive personal, social and health education programme.
- 3.9 Provision for academic subjects overall is strengthening, but it is not yet excellent. The best provision for the most able is through the newly formed High Achievers' Programme which includes various special invitations to academic challenges. Day-to-day provision for this group, for instance in some lessons, is not as strong. Provision for pupils with SEND is excellent. Pupils are quickly identified through tests in Year 7. Individual sessions are provided with a specialist teacher based on excellent pupil profiles provided for all staff. Pupils with EAL receive good extra support as necessary.
- 3.10 Curricular planning is well-organised. In the senior school, literacy and mathematics are given appropriate weight to develop pupils' speaking, listening, problem-solving, investigative and thinking skills. Setting by ability in mathematics from Year 7 and in English from Year 10 helps meet pupils' varying needs. Pupils study a choice of languages including French, German or Spanish as well as Latin. Science is well-provided for with individual sciences taught from Year 7. Information and communication technology (ICT) facilities are good and lessons are provided. Humanities, including religious education, and aesthetic and creative subjects and physical education and sports, complete the range of subjects offered.
- 3.11 A good range of choice is available for GCSE and IGCSE courses. The sixth form curriculum is extensive with 24 subjects from which to choose. Good general studies courses are included. Programmes are individually suited to pupils' capabilities and interests. About a fifth of the sixth form pupils take the extended project qualification.
- 3.12 The strong personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme covers all pupils in the school. The topics are wide-ranging, incorporating the promotion of British values. Other subject departments also include this aspect in their schemes of work. Coverage of political issues is balanced in all aspects of the curriculum. Careers guidance is good and is included in provision in all year groups. Pupils are very positive about the assistance they receive for their progression into higher education and career pathways. Pupils are well prepared for transition from year to year. Work experience is completed in Year 11.
- 3.13 Extra-curricular provision is excellent for boarders and day pupils alike. Active and popular CCF, DoE and community service programmes operate alongside pupil leadership awards, all of which afford excellent personal development. The wide range of overseas trips for academic, sporting and cultural reasons also promote pupils' personal skills. Strong emphasis is placed on encouraging the pupils' lifelong participation in sport and physical activity. Drama and music are available for all. An enrichment programme for Years 7 to 9 includes a diverse range of activities that include Japanese, meditation, squash and theatre design.
- 3.14 Pupils benefit from the wide range of visits, locally and abroad, that support the curriculum. Their excellent personal development is underpinned by the good

curricular links with the local community and with communities further afield, most notably through local businesses and the Kenya Schools Partnership. Further benefits are gained from the good number of charities that the school supports through a range of events, many of which are organised by pupils.

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

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.16 Most teaching is good, as confirmed by evidence in pupils' books, and from discussions with them, and from examination results which show the impact of the teaching. However, there is evidence more recently of the positive impact of a well-planned programme to improve its quality further.
- 3.17 All the teaching contributes well to the fulfilment of the school's aims. It is successful in enabling pupils to develop tolerance and respect for all and to make good progress, whatever their abilities. In class, and from a scrutiny of pupils' books, the work for the most able is not always challenging enough.
- 3.18 The most effective teaching uses teachers' strong subject knowledge alongside a range of strategies to encourage learning. Brisk pace, imaginative and creative methods and resources, paired and group work and use of media inspire and challenge pupils of all abilities. Resources are used well. These lessons result in pupils' rapid progress and high achievement. For example, in an English lesson observed, use of an emotive screen picture of life in the trenches, alongside a commentary made up of diary extracts, evoked high-quality, sensitive and emotional writing from the pupils. Resources are often used well to stimulate interest and encourage focused and sometimes independent work from pupils.
- 3.19 The majority of lessons are well planned, with careful attention to the needs of each individual and usually with effective time management. Slower progress is made when teaching includes less pupil interaction, the pace is slow and tasks that are 'one-size-fits-all', rather than being tailored to the different abilities within the class. In these lessons, teachers' questioning does not deepen or extend learning.
- 3.20 Teachers know their pupils. They make excellent use of the high quality detailed profiles and effective advice supplied to them by managers, for pupils with SEND or EAL. Extra time is built into lessons when needed for SEND or EAL pupils. Planning for the most able is less consistent and lessons do not always provide sufficient challenge.
- 3.21 Teachers' marking has improved since the previous inspection and is mostly good. There are examples of excellent marking that helps guide next steps of learning. Often, good use is made of self and peer assessment. However, a small proportion of the marking remains cursory, with little constructive comment.
- 3.22 In their questionnaire responses, a minority of pupils, including boarders, commented that the work given for homework does not help their learning. A small minority felt that the amount of work they are given is not sufficiently monitored. Inspectors investigated through records and discussion with pupils and staff, and found that work is monitored effectively and homework exercises are provided which are well-planned to extend or consolidate a lesson's work or to prepare for the next lesson.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

- 4.1 The pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 The school succeeds in establishing an environment which amply meets its aim to establish a community which nurtures confidence, empathy, spiritual awareness and integrity in every individual.
- 4.3 Pupils have excellent spiritual awareness. They are thoroughly self-aware and conduct themselves with an assured confidence. They have a highly developed appreciation of the non-material side of life, for example, through their appreciation of music and the visual arts. Pupils reflect on difference, and gain much that is non-material from actively supporting those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils demonstrate their deep and mature understanding of the school's Christian foundation through regular participation in chapel services. They show a mature understanding of other world faiths in discussion and debate.
- 4.4 Pupils show a well-developed understanding of British values. They discuss maturely the complex issues relating to diversity and national identity, ranging across year groups, in PSHE lessons. Sixth formers led a Year 8 class on the Holocaust, which showed both age groups' well-developed understanding of the meaning of respect and tolerance. Pupils have a deepening understanding of democracy, individual liberty and the respect for law from their regular opportunities for discussion and experiences. For example, the sixth form politics class broadened their understanding by considering the American system of democracy when they recently met with former members of the American Congress.
- 4.5 The moral development of the pupils is excellent and is apparent not only in how they conduct themselves, but also in discussions in class. Pupils show a clear understanding of what is right and wrong, and can explain why such distinctions are often so difficult to determine. Their ability and maturity in discussing moral dilemmas and ethical values is strong. Pupils' conduct around the campus is invariably good, and frequently exemplary: they are polite, well-mannered young people who clearly take great pride in their school and how it welcomes visitors.
- 4.6 The pupils' social development is exceptionally well-honed. They contribute fully to their own community, including the diversity of the boarding community, and to the world beyond. The long-established and whole-hearted commitment to supporting charities covers local and world-wide events. A tangible sense of mutual respect exists, not only between each year group, but also between pupils and all teaching, pastoral and support staff. As pupils progress through the school they develop a full understanding of the meaning of taking responsibility, whether for their own actions, or relishing taking responsibility for others, through being prefects, or members of the whole school council, or being trained mentors to their peers.
- 4.7 The pupils' cultural development is excellent. Their understanding of the Western cultural tradition is evident through their work in art and their participation in drama and music. Older pupils' projects, such as those completed in art and design technology, broaden their cultural understanding and that of the many pupils who see the works on display around the school. Pupils show a good understanding of world cultures. Older pupils explained that cultural understanding does not simply

focus on religion or traditions, or art. Recently they were captivated by a lecture on the economic situation in sub-Saharan Africa.

- 4.8 By the time they leave the school, all aspects of pupils' personal development, including that of boarders, are of a very high standard.

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

- 4.9 The quality of pastoral care is good.
- 4.10 All pupils in Years 7 to 11 are in small tutor groups in the same year group, as part of one of five 'day houses'. The day-house system of pastoral care offers strong support for all pupils, whether day or boarding. It is on the way to becoming embedded. A good referral system, involving a well-qualified welfare team, assures that pupils' day to day minor concerns as well as more serious ones, are addressed well.
- 4.11 Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent with a high degree of mutual respect. The staff are committed to the pupils' achievement in all aspects of their school life in fulfilment of the school's pastoral aims.
- 4.12 The pupils' healthy and active lifestyles are promoted well through healthy eating and exercise. The school offers a wide range of exercise activities, such as climbing and aerobics, for those who are not involved in the school's performance sport programme. The quality of food is excellent.
- 4.13 A small minority of pupils, in questionnaire responses, indicated that they felt that the school does not deal effectively with bullying. However, policies, that are implemented well, support the promotion of good behaviour and guard against harassment and bullying. Detailed records and pupil discussion show that the policies are implemented well and the rare instances of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively. A small minority of pupils felt that rewards are not fairly given, and a minority of pupils felt that sanctions are not fairly given. Inspectors checked records and pupils' books, discussed the matter with pupils, and observed what happened in lessons, the dining room and the grounds. Sanctions and rewards are fairly given throughout the school.
- 4.14 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 4.15 A minority of pupils indicated in the questionnaire that the school does not ask for their opinions or respond to them. Inspectors found that views of pupils are heard and listened to in various ways, including through house councils, the sixth form committee, the food committee, as well as the school council.

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

- 4.16 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety are good.
- 4.17 Policies related to safeguarding pupils, their health and safety and the suitability of staff are comprehensive but needed some updating during the inspection to reflect the latest requirements. A study of records, discussion with staff and pupils and observations showed that the quality of the arrangements and their implementation is good. All staff receive regular and appropriate training in child protection which is updated appropriately.

- 4.18 All necessary precautions are taken to prevent fire and all staff are trained regularly by an external provider. Fire drills occur at the required intervals, including in boarding time. Meticulous records are kept of all testing requirements, training and drills.
- 4.19 Health and safety matters are given good attention and policies and procedures meet the latest guidance. Due adjustment and attention is given for those who have special educational needs or disabilities. Effective risk assessment policies operate so that the assessment of risks is thorough. There is a health and safety committee that reviews policy and an annual audit is carried out. Provision for sick pupils was made adequate during the inspection. It is based in a medical centre staffed appropriately.
- 4.20 The admission and attendance registers are appropriately maintained, and kept for the required period of time.

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

- 4.21 The quality of boarding is good.
- 4.22 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. Relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and staff are thoroughly friendly and constructive. Good communication with parents ensures that boarders with emotional or social difficulties are well supported. Welfare plans and teams provide additional support where necessary. Pupils with EAL are well integrated into the houses and into the school and interact comfortably with other boarders. Customs and significant days from many different cultures are celebrated. Boarders have excellent access to the world beyond the school, through magazines, newspapers, television, mobile phones and suitably monitored internet access. The principle of equality is adhered to throughout the boarding houses. Staff keep a watchful eye on the prefect system to ensure this works well. House prefects have clearly defined roles and provide good role models for the juniors as well as helping manage the house committees effectively. Boarders are therefore able to make their views known and feel they are listened to. Boarders confirm there is a ready choice of staff in school to turn to if needed.
- 4.23 The quality of boarding provision and care is good. Boarders are well cared for and looked after in houses managed day and night by well qualified staff. Laundry is properly dealt with and returned to its owner safely. There are attractive and popular kitchen areas and common rooms. Boarders much enjoy the 'cake box' every afternoon. Pasta and fruit are always available in houses. All meals are taken in the spacious and comfortable dining hall where food is plentiful, nutritious and well cooked. Cultural, sporting elite and other specific diets are well provided for where necessary. The boarding houses are colourful and well adapted, with communal areas and private space personalised. The vast range of sports and other activities available, significantly enhance boarders' wellbeing, but activity and time for quiet relaxation are balanced well. Older pupils also use local facilities, such as sports clubs, appropriate to their age. Boarders enjoy the tuck shop and being able to purchase some stationery items at school, and other personal items from local shops. There is good space provided for boarders to work and relax and all boarders have their own secure safe for valuables, should they wish to use it. The bedrooms, in double or triple rooms, are mostly well furnished. A few parents, in the questionnaire, recognised that in one house, while meeting requirements, bedrooms are not of the good standard found in the other houses. Many boarders report that

they can readily contact parents, carers and guardians using mobile phones and suitably monitored electronic methods. Contact details for outside agencies and an independent listener are provided. Parental complaints are dealt with promptly through well-documented appropriate channels. Health and safety matters are mostly well managed and effective. The medical procedures ensure the individual needs of boarders are well cared for, but the accommodation for overnight stays in the medical centre, while meeting requirements, is limited. There are good fire and other risk assessments and procedures. Well-recorded fire drills include those in boarding hours.

- 4.24 Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are good which ensure that the school complies with the National Minimum Standards for boarding, and the requirements for safe recruitment. The staff are suitably trained and opportunities to share good practice in and out of school are provided. There is an appropriate induction checklist for members of the boarding staff and specific job descriptions. Checks are carried out on resident spouses and other adults living in boarding accommodation with clear guidelines as to their roles. The welfare team, including pastoral leaders, health workers, counsellors and safeguarding personnel, enables the school to support the boarders, ensuring that relevant staff are aware of boarders' concerns. Well-documented policies underpin safeguarding and ensure that positive behaviour is promoted and reward and sanction systems are clear. Consequently, boarders are well behaved and there is a genuine sense of belonging to a community. Thorough protocols for the use of restraint and searching are set out and known to staff. Bullying incidents are rare and records show that where concerns are raised they are quickly responded to and dealt with promptly. The boarders can contact an adult at any time in the boarding house, including at night. Visitors are welcome, and carefully supervised. They sign in and out, and staff ensure that boarders' areas are kept for boarders. Boarders sign out when they leave the house after school as well as there being regular house registrations so staff know where they are at all times. Boarders are kept safe.
- 4.25 Leadership and management of boarding are good and there are effective links between boarding and academic staff. Practices are reviewed regularly. Boarders have a clear and well-written boarding handbook and supplementary house handbooks. Boarding houses are well run in line with the aims of the school. Surveys of boarding pupils have been carried out which help to inform boarding practice. Parents of boarders, and boarders themselves, state that they are happy with the boarding arrangements.
- 4.26 Boarders in discussion were strongly positive about all aspects of their boarding lives. Concerns boarders identified in questionnaire responses were principally that a few boarders indicated that bullying is not dealt with well, that they are not happy with the balance of free time and activities. A few said they are not happy with the snacks and food provided and said that boarding staff do not treat them fairly, and that their belongings are not safe. Investigations into each of these points did not confirm the negative views. The school has responded well to the two recommendations made in the previous boarding inspection in 2012: the small communal areas have all been brought up to the same standard, and additional food is provided to the boarding houses after tea.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 Governors exercise clear oversight of the school's work. They have guided the school with empathy and confidence through a significant period of change. Their commitment has enabled staff to focus successfully on fulfilling the school's aims while maintaining pupils' good educational standards and well-developed personal skills.
- 5.3 Governors receive frank information from the school's leadership, in detailed reports on its performance. Minutes of meetings show that they ask insightful and probing questions to challenge and support the school, stimulating growth and improvement. From these, they have developed clear strategies for the school's future, underpinned by careful and resourceful financial management. Consequently they have made good investments in staffing and in most of the accommodation and good resources.
- 5.4 Governors discharge their responsibilities conscientiously overall. They readily seek expertise externally when appropriate. Participation in committees of staff and governors, for example, for safeguarding and for health and safety, enables risk to be managed effectively overall. All governors contribute to the comprehensive annual review of safeguarding measures but response to the latest requirements was unduly delayed. Because of this, the safeguarding policy and the single centralised record of staff recruitment needed work during the inspection in order to meet requirements. For this reason, governors' monitoring of the school's work, including monitoring of boarding, has not been fully effective.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is good.
- 5.6 The school's leadership and management effectively promote pupils' good, all-round achievement. The various layers of leadership teams work cohesively to ensure that all pupils are well-prepared for their future lives. Recent staff changes at a senior level have brought fresh perspectives and a new clear direction to the school.
- 5.7 A full range of policies, available on the school website, is under constant review. However, governors and leaders had not monitored sufficiently to ensure that the policies all met current requirements prior to the inspection. Policies to safeguard pupils were updated during the inspection to comply with the latest guidance. They are implemented well. All governors, teaching and support staff and volunteers undergo comprehensive checks to ensure their suitability to work within a school environment. Staff files contain all the required details, and after adjustment during the inspection, the checks are now suitably recorded centrally as required. New staff, both teaching and administrative, are given thorough induction, and all staff are appropriately and regularly trained in their responsibilities in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Administrative staff give valued support, whilst a well-managed team maintains the large school site to a high standard.



- 5.8 Systems for tracking pupils' progress and the college's data management system are currently under review. They are thorough, and well used by managers. However, their complexity means the systems are not fully effective. They are not easy for staff to use to guide their work in lesson planning or in identifying promptly any pupils whose progress may be falling behind or those who need extra challenge.
- 5.9 The recommendations of the previous inspection have largely been met except in regard to strategic planning. A greater focus on the work of heads of department ensures that monitoring and planning roles at this level of management are now good. This means that effective practice is consistent within each department. Peer observation and a fortnightly teaching and learning forum promote the sharing of effective strategies within and across departments. Regular lesson observation and work scrutiny add to the formal quality assurance cycle undertaken annually by all staff. Provision for continued professional development enables staff to undertake appropriate training more systematically than at the time of the previous inspection. The enrolment of several heads of departments in nationally-recognised academic management courses is bringing new authority to their work.
- 5.10 Departmental improvement plans are strong. As at the time of the previous inspection, the departmental plans are not yet linked into an overall school plan. This is because the new leadership quickly recognised that the necessary improvement on academic standards could only be made by starting with the development of teaching, and middle leadership skills. The aspirations published on the website reflect the clear vision of the new leadership team, as well as those contained in the individual department plans. An overarching strategy as to how they will be implemented, monitored and evaluated, a recommendation of the previous inspection, is still unclear.
- 5.11 Links with parents are strong. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire were extremely positive. Parents are highly satisfied with the education, support and communication provided. They are particularly pleased with the all-round nature of the school's provision, with the boarding, and with the supportive role played by teachers. The concerns of a few parents regarding boarding comfort and the way the school deals with bullying have been dealt with elsewhere in this report.
- 5.12 There is a constructive relationship between school and parents so that working together, they can ensure the school aims are fulfilled. Staff actively encourage parents to voice their opinions and concerns. The school deals sensitively and thoroughly with complaints it receives, following the appropriate policy published on the website and available at school.
- 5.13 Parents have good opportunities to be involved in their children's work and progress. Many act as careers advisers or as providers of work placements. They also take part in a range of activities organised by the Parents' Association. Parents appreciate the recent addition of parent/tutor meetings that supplement the regular parent/teacher meetings.
- 5.14 Communication is good and improving further, for parents and prospective parents. Parents welcome the 'Trent App' on the website, using it to access a wide range of school information including all the required information. Reports are informative and regular to enable parents to be kept informed about their child's work and progress.

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