



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**TRURO HIGH SCHOOL**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Truro High School

Full Name of School	<b>Truro High School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>908/6080</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>3065772</b>		
Address	<b>Truro High School Falmouth Road Truro Cornwall TR1 2HU UK</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01872 272830</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01872 279393</b>		
Email Address	<b>admin@trurohigh.co.uk</b>		
Headmaster	<b>Dr Glenn Moodie</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Roger Hygate</b>		
Age Range	<b>2 to 18</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>346</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Girls</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>0</b>	5-11: <b>65</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>28</b>	11-18: <b>253</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>292</b>	
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>53</b>	
	Full:	<b>48</b>	Weekly: <b>5</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Alison Miller</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection Dates	<b>14 Oct 2014 to 17 Oct 2014</b>		

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in October 2008.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](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. Until September 2011, Boarding inspections were carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills.

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

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

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

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

inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the 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 Colette Culligan	Reporting Inspector
Ms Rowan Edbrooke	Team Inspector (Former head, GSA school)
Mrs Jane Huntingdon	Team Inspector (Head, ISA school)
Mr Kerry Lord	Team Inspector (Deputy head, IAPS school)
Dr Ruth Weeks	Team Inspector (Head, GSA school)
Mrs Linda Trevethick	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Diane Kimber	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Truro High School was founded in 1880 by Bishop Benson to provide an academic education for girls within a Christian community. Situated close to the centre of Truro, the school continues to occupy the grounds to which it moved in 1896. All sections of the school – Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), preparatory and senior – are on the site. The preparatory (prep) school, which incorporates the Reception class, has its own area within the main building. The school offers boarding for girls from Year 3 and the two boarding houses, Dalvenie and Rashleigh, currently accommodating girls from Year 8 to Year 13, are also on the site, as are the school's sporting facilities.
- 1.2 The board of governors meet termly in the school. There has been a restructuring of governors' committees to avoid duplication of responsibilities; the three committees now in place each met termly and the chairman of governors meets the head regularly.
- 1.3 The school retains its founding links with Truro Cathedral and its commitment to a Christian ethos while welcoming girls of all faiths or none. It aims to bring out the very best in each girl and maximise her potential by encouraging independent thinking, tolerance, integrity and a strong sense of responsibility. It sets out to create a friendly and purposeful environment within which girls can develop confidence, leadership qualities and the courage to take risks, so that they leave with the personal and academic resources needed to play their part in a fast-paced and demanding world.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection there were 346 pupils attending the school. Of these, 93 were in the prep school, of whom 28, including 7 boys, were in the EYFS. There are 52 pupils in the sixth form. Most are day pupils. There are 40 pupils with English as an additional language (EAL), of whom 14 require support within school. The majority of pupils come from Cornwall, some travelling daily from a wide area. The majority of pupils are from White British professional, business or farming backgrounds. The 45 overseas boarders come predominantly from Hong Kong and Germany.
- 1.5 The ability profile of the school throughout is above the national average, although the range of ability in the senior school is relatively wide. The school has identified 42 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The 30 pupils who need specialist support beyond that provided in class are catered for by the school's study support department.
- 1.6 Since the previous inspection, the curriculum has been reviewed and extended. Boarding facilities have been upgraded and a second boarding house created. An integrated studio theatre has been created in a new music and drama building and the provision for modern languages teaching has been extended with a new building. Facilities for information and communication technology (ICT), including those in the sixth form centre, have been upgraded. New outdoor areas have been created for the children in the EYFS. Governance committee structures have been reviewed and a new chair of governors appointed in 2011. The structure of the senior leadership team has changed and the roles of its members redefined. The headmaster took up his post in September 2014.

- 1.7 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 tables.

***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting.***

School	NC name
Nursery	Nursery
Reception	Reception

***Preparatory Department.***

School	NC name
Prep 1	Year 1
Prep 2	Year 2
Prep 3	Year 3
Prep 4	Year 4
Prep 5	Year 5
Prep 6	Year 6

***Senior School***

School	NC name
Year 7	Year 7
Year 8	Year 8
Year 9	Year 9
Year 10	Year 10
Year 11	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13



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

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

- 2.1 Truro High School provides a good education, so that pupils leave school with the personal and academic resources they need to play their part in a fast-paced and demanding world. The curriculum is good, successfully providing for the needs of all pupils, including those with EAL and SEND. Pupils are articulate, literate and numerate. They have a wide vocabulary and learn to express themselves with increasing sophistication as they progress through the school. They discuss scientific and ecological concepts confidently and use ICT competently. Pupils participate enthusiastically in physical exercise. Their imagination and creative skills are evident in the art and textiles work displayed around the school. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, pupils and parents alike expressed great satisfaction with the range of subjects and extra curricular opportunities available to them, although a few pupils in examination years viewed activities and clubs as a distraction from their studies. Inspectors judged that the wealth of opportunities available makes a considerable contribution to the pupils' personal development. Well-planned and thorough teaching ensures that pupils of all abilities make good progress, although there is not always sufficient challenge provided for the more able.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent. All pupils, from those in the EYFS to the sixth form, are happy, kind, thoughtful and supportive of their peers. They are friendly and welcoming to visitors and new pupils. The relationships between staff and pupils, whether in classrooms or boarding houses, are excellent, invariably characterised by mutual respect and kindness. In questionnaires a large majority of pupils expressed their appreciation of their teachers' willingness to help them and to see them as individuals. Staff know pupils extremely well and pupils agree that they are given helpful and realistic advice about future choices. All pupils are happy, even eager, to offer help and willingly volunteer to undertake responsibility. The behaviour of pupils of all ages is excellent, with tolerance, empathy and kindness consistently demonstrated. Incidents of bullying are rare. While a minority of pupils complained in questionnaires about the food, evidence shows that the school has listened to their concerns and the food has recently improved.
- 2.3 Fire procedures are established to ensure that the premises are safe from avoidable hazards. There is a sound plan to improve access for the disabled. Some aspects of security relating to boarding accommodation were not fully secure at the start of the inspection. These matters, relating to a door alarm and window closures were swiftly attended to during the inspection and resolved. An issue connected to the supervision of senior pupils who had been given some responsibility for the opening and closing of the school swimming pool for use by non-school adults was also identified which was again resolved by the school before the end of the inspection through specific actions agreed by the head.
- 2.4 Governors are strongly committed to the school and show good awareness of many of their responsibilities, including for safeguarding. Governors are less aware of the limited progress made by the school in response to the previous inspection and have not taken sufficient action to monitor the consistency of expectations between departments and boarding houses. Issues relating to site security and safety have not been given routine attention and oversight by governors. While the overall quality of boarding is good and outcomes for boarders excellent, staff responsible for boarding are generally inexperienced and have not had access to the appropriate training for their roles. There is no senior member of staff with clear responsibility for

oversight of pastoral matters. Staff throughout are committed to the school and its ethos. Teachers are qualified, experienced and trained as required. Parents and pupils express satisfaction with the school, saying that they feel proud to be part of such a happy community.

## **2.(b) Action points**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

- 2.5 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:
- implement all measures to ensure that the premises and accommodation ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils at all times [Part 5, paragraph 23c, under Premises and accommodation; and for the same reason National Minimum Standard 6.2, under Safety of boarders. ]
- 2.6 The school does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013, and therefore it must:
- ensure that inexperienced boarding staff are provided with training to support their boarding practice [National Minimum Standard 13.2, under Management and development of boarding. ]

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

- 2.7 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Establish clear responsibility for oversight of pastoral matters, including the line management of pastoral and boarding staff.
  2. Take steps to share good practice so as to ensure that all teaching includes appropriate challenge for all, including the most able.
  3. Create a clear school development plan with specific, prioritised and time framed actions to reflect the areas identified in the strategic plan.
  4. Facilitate a clear structure for sharing with staff all relevant information about boarders' boarding life, health and welfare.

### **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' achievement and learning is good.
- 3.2 Pupils receive a good education in accordance with the school's aim to maximise each girl's potential. Pupils of all ages and abilities demonstrate good subject knowledge, skills and understanding.
- 3.3 Children in the EYFS consistently reach high standards, all making good progress in relation to their starting points. They are able to work independently, think critically and creatively. Early mark-making skills emerge in Nursery and children in Reception make confident attempts at writing. Nursery children count their friends as they line up and in Reception children start to add two numbers together. They listen attentively, become immersed in exploration of basic scientific concepts by such activities as discovering whether something is or is not waterproof and what is inside a vegetable, and make some use of ICT.
- 3.4 In the prep school, pupils display strong skills in numeracy and literacy. They are articulate, capable of very elegant explanations, for example in a lesson on ancient Greek life styles in which pupils' portrayal of their chosen characters showed humour and empathy. They apply mathematical concepts well, while scientific understanding is evident in their exploration of such matters as why amphibians lay eggs in water. The high-quality of their art work and music making are evidence of their creativity and they achieve well in their physical education (PE) and swimming lessons.
- 3.5 As they mature, pupils become increasingly articulate and use subject-specific terminology confidently. Older pupils are eloquent when explaining their ideas and frequently enrich learning by contributing examples drawn from their own experience, for example in a geography lesson on the impact of cultural and religious issues on population growth. They are able to think independently and logically and they reason well. A debate on the existence of the soul showed their skill in careful listening and organising their ideas to refute another's argument. Pupils' mathematical knowledge is good as is their knowledge of scientific concepts. In the sixth form, pupils demonstrate a particularly high standard of enquiry with good use of practical equipment. Pupils' work shows competence in using ICT for word processing and presentation, although more extensive use was rarely evident in their learning. Pupils display excellent creativity, for example in textiles and food and nutrition classes. In games lessons they work hard and reach high standards.
- 3.6 Pupils throughout the school are successful in a wide range of activities, whether academic, sporting or creative. They achieve regular success in national maths challenge competitions and science Olympiads. Pupils regularly represent the county or region in a number of sports. Many pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award at all levels, with some each year completing their gold award. Many pupils, including those in the prep school, gain excellent results in speech and drama examinations and pupils achieve well in debating competitions. Pupils' music is of a high standard; for example, the prep school choir reached the semi-finals of a national competition in 2013. Textiles work has resulted in awards being won in local competitions and three-dimensional work has been displayed in a local art gallery.

- 3.7 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2011 - 2013. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in GCSE have been above the national average for girls in maintained schools, and similar to those for girls in maintained selective schools. Results in IGCSE English language in 2013 were higher than the worldwide average; English literature results were similar to the worldwide average. Results at A level have been above the national average for girls in maintained schools, and similar to that for girls in maintained selective schools. The prep school does not carry out national curriculum tests or use standardised measures of progress but the evidence available, including standardised tests in reading, spelling and mathematics, lessons observed and work seen, indicates that pupils' attainment is good in relation to pupils of similar ability.
- 3.8 These levels of attainment indicate that pupils throughout the school make progress that is good in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Analysis of achievement showed no significant difference between the rest of the pupils and those identified with SEND or EAL. The small classes, regular monitoring and strong support beyond the classroom ensure they achieve the same level as their peers. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a very small minority of parents felt that able pupils are not always given enough support. Inspectors found that able pupils achieve in line with their ability and while most make good progress in lessons, those below the sixth form are not always challenged sufficiently well in some classes.
- 3.9 Throughout the school pupils are very willing, eager and attentive learners who expect to work hard. They are inquisitive and enjoy thinking for themselves. They are highly motivated, supportive of each other and work well both individually and collaboratively. Their positive approach makes a strong contribution to the quality of their attainment and progress.

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

- 3.10 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.11 The school is successful in offering a curriculum that supports its aim to create a purposeful environment in which girls can develop confidence, leadership qualities and the courage to take risks, so that they leave with the personal and academic resources needed for their future lives. The curricular and extra-curricular provision is suited to pupils of all ages. All required areas of learning are covered and the timetable structure permits all pupils to benefit from all the school offers.
- 3.12 The EYFS setting provides a high quality programme for all the children. There are specialist lessons for swimming and PE. Outside agencies are contacted to support further the provision for children with SEND or EAL, for example in providing translations for signs around the class. Good use is made of the local environment, with trips to woods and local beaches to support learning. Excellent provision ensures that all children reach or exceed the expected levels of development by the end of reception and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- 3.13 In the prep school, pupils benefit from a diverse curriculum with a good range of subjects. Pupils receive a strong grounding in numeracy and literacy. They benefit from regular and thoughtful PSHE lessons and a creative curriculum that is wide ranging. The use of ICT by pupils within the curriculum is less well developed and there is little liaison with the senior school to ensure continuity and avoid repetition

as pupils move into Year 7. Pupils with SEND and EAL are catered for well, with effective support and care plans in place. More able pupils are appropriately challenged by the work provided.

- 3.14 The curriculum for senior school pupils is good. They are introduced to three modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9 as well as Latin. The curriculum includes lessons in ICT up to Year 9, when pupils take an examination in functional skills. The three sciences are taught as separate subjects in Years 7 to 9. Creative subjects include food and nutrition and textiles. The core curriculum in Years 10 and 11 includes at least one modern language and pupils may choose whether to study three separate sciences or take a combined course at GCSE. Extra support is offered in popular lunchtime clinics for some subjects, including mathematics. Sixth form pupils choose from a suitably wide range of A-level courses, with 22 currently on offer, as is the opportunity to take an extended project qualification. The school makes considerable efforts to accommodate individuals' subject choices when these do not fit into the usual option blocks. Pupils with SEND are well supported through individual or small group work with a specialist teacher, while those with EAL spoke very positively about the assistance from the study support department. Planning to meet the needs of able pupils is inconsistent. Throughout the senior school, provision for physical education is good; the sixth form now have regular sessions included in their enrichment programme. Throughout the senior school, PSHE is a well-established part of the curriculum. A restructured careers programme, including talks from local businesses and trips to careers fairs, ensures that all pupils have access to effective career guidance.
- 3.15 The extra-curricular provision for the whole school is excellent. A wide range of clubs, activities and trips is offered; take-up by pupils is good. Sports and physical activities, including sports tours, feature highly, but not to the exclusion of an extensive range of artistic, creative, cultural and philosophical clubs. Amongst other activities, prep school pupils can learn Mandarin with a native speaker, make cushions or soft toys in a sewing activity or develop their environment awareness in a gardening club. They sing at local care homes and participate in the city's lantern festival, which begins at the school. An enthusiastic group of senior school budding astronomers is taught by an expert from the local observatory, while life drawing classes prove popular. The musical life of the school is strong, with numerous musical groups including a samba band, string orchestra, jazz band and a senior choir involving some 60 to 70 pupils. A well-attended debating club and a weekly 'Poetry Café' further encourage the pupils' awareness of the power of language. Although a few pupils complained in the pre-inspection questionnaire about being expected to participate in activities, inspectors judged that pupils benefit considerably from the school's excellent provision.

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

- 3.16 The contribution of teaching across the school is good.
- 3.17 Teaching supports the aims of the school to help pupils develop the academic and personal resources they need for life in today's world.
- 3.18 Staff in the EYFS draw on diligent observations to plan activities that fully reflect individuals' needs and interests. Practitioners talk and sing to the children in Nursery and use a wide vocabulary to extend their learning. In the Reception class, questioning is used well to ensure that every child is supported and challenged. Resources throughout the setting are good, although children have only limited access to programmable toys and ICT equipment.
- 3.19 In the prep and senior schools, most lessons are well planned, well managed and take account of pupils' prior knowledge. In the prep school, imaginative activities capture the pupils' interest and ensure that their concentration is sustained. In the senior school, much of the teaching fosters the pupils' interest and is often characterised by sensitive strategies to build pupils' self-confidence. Teachers across the school have high levels of subject knowledge. Much teaching uses a suitable variety of approaches to engage and maintain pupils' attention, and makes good use of learning resources such as interactive white boards and projectors, although the use made of ICT by pupils themselves is relatively limited. Since the previous inspection the prep school library has been upgraded and is now a well-used and valuable resource.
- 3.20 Some lessons were excessively dominated by teacher exposition, giving limited opportunity for pupils to become actively involved in their learning. On one or two occasions, the pace was too leisurely, resulting in restless behaviour and limited progress. Lesson plans include appropriate reference to pupils with SEND or EAL, and targeted questioning and work helps support them in class, contributing to the good progress that these pupils make. There is less planned provision for the more able pupils, for example extension work or alternative tasks, and as a result in a small number of cases, teaching is insufficiently challenging for their needs.
- 3.21 The quality of assessment is inconsistent. The senior school has successfully introduced the comprehensive tracking of pupils' progress. Standardised tests at Years 7, 10 and 12, as well as review of internal assessments, are used effectively by subject teachers, heads of year and heads of departments to track pupils' progress. The formalised tracking of attainment is less well developed in the prep school. There is a clear whole-school marking policy but this is not being followed by all teachers. As a result, the quality of marking throughout the school is inconsistent. At its best, marking is regular, offers suggestions on how work can be improved, and in a few examples, makes reference to a pupil's target grade. Some marking was less helpful, for example marks which indicated improvement needed but no comments to help clarify to the pupil what needed to be done. Oral feedback is an important part of the assessment process in the prep school.

## **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 pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The school is extremely successful in meeting its aims of encouraging tolerance, integrity, confidence and a strong sense of responsibility.
- 4.3 Pupils are confident and emotionally mature for their age. They are down to earth, practical, non-materialistic and not distracted by superficialities, strongly valuing their friendships and their time at school. They have a strong awareness of a spiritual dimension of existence, as demonstrated by sixth form pupils in a vigorous debate on the philosophical and moral arguments for virtuous behaviour and the existence of the soul. A good understanding of Catholicism was demonstrated as costume design for a musical was discussed in another class. Pupils in the prep school reacted with genuine awe and wonder as they peered into an Egyptian tomb created in their classroom.
- 4.4 Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and respect for the norms of good conduct and fairness within the school. They understand and respect the need for rules in the school community. Children in the EYFS know how to share, happily taking turns; they behave well and are kind to each other. Senior school pupils listen to each other carefully so as to reach consensus on group activities. In the pre-inspection questionnaire a minority of pupils said they feel that staff are not consistent in setting sanctions or giving rewards. Inspectors found that the school is aware of this concern and that the girls appreciate the recent restructuring of the systems used by teachers.
- 4.5 Social development is a strength of the school. Pupils clearly feel a sense of moral responsibility to help those less fortunate than themselves and pupil-led fund raising for local and national charities has a high profile within the school. Girls show a strong awareness of ecological issues. This is seen in organised activities such as the school's 'Green Car Challenge' and informally as when they told inspectors in passing conversation that they wondered if humans can be considered intelligent when they are dumping plastics and polymers. Many pupils are keen to volunteer and to take responsibility as when sixth form pupils volunteer to act as peer mentors and form prefects. Other positions such as house captains ensure that older pupils learn from taking on positions of responsibility. Pupils share a strong team spirit; they take pride in, and are fiercely loyal to, their school. They feel successfully prepared for adult life by the well-developed work experience programme and elements in the PSHE programme on financial awareness. They show an innate understanding of British values of tolerance and democracy, along with a sound awareness of English public services and institutions.
- 4.6 Pupils demonstrate excellent cultural development. They show good cultural knowledge, appreciation and understanding of the Western tradition. At the same time, they also value the achievements of those from different faiths and cultural backgrounds. They benefit from the perspectives brought to the school by overseas pupils with their own cultural traditions to share, and enjoy such activities as celebrating Diwali in the EYFS and Chinese New Year in the senior school. At all ages, pupils enjoy harmonious relations with those from different backgrounds to their own.

- 4.7 By the time they leave the school, pupils have grown into self-confident, articulate, courteous young women, well-equipped to face life in a fast-paced and demanding world.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 The school is highly successful in creating a supportive, nurturing environment and pupils of all ages are palpably happy and confident. They feel very well looked after and receive high quality support and guidance which they greatly appreciate.
- 4.10 Children in the EYFS thrive in a warm, nurturing atmosphere within which they form strong attachments to those who care for them. They are actively encouraged to do things for themselves, such as pour their own drinks, and develop the confidence they need to explore the world around them. The children are extremely well cared for by a dedicated staff who consistently demonstrate the highest aspirations for the children's well being.
- 4.11 The school has strong pastoral structures within which pupils develop the confidence to be themselves. A welfare plan team works closely to ensure suitable care and support for vulnerable individuals, with an awareness of the tension created by a wish to preserve confidentiality and a need to ensure the safety of vulnerable pupils at all times. Records are now kept electronically but their organisation does not always allow overall patterns of pastoral concerns to be easily identified. In the pre-inspection questionnaire the majority of pupils said staff care for them as individuals and discussions with staff demonstrate solid awareness of pupils' personal as well as academic needs. Some pupils in Years 10 and 11 suggested that staff are not aware of pressures on them created by their work load. Conversation with pupils and pastoral leaders during the inspection showed that this is not the case.
- 4.12 Relationships between staff and pupils are relaxed, positive and based on friendly, mutual respect, as are those between the pupils themselves. Staff know the pupils extremely well and pupils of all ages report that there are many staff to whom they would turn for advice or help should they have a concern. The house system also fosters excellent relationships across the age groups. The pupils mix easily, resulting in a close knit, happy, supportive community.
- 4.13 Pupils understand the need to stay healthy. The range of sporting activities provides many opportunities for regular exercise, and the food provided offers pupils a suitable range of healthy and nourishing choices.
- 4.14 The school is effective in promoting excellent behaviour. It has established a positive ethos in which kindness, tolerance and empathy are strongly evident. Bullying incidents are very rare. Pupils indicate that they know who to turn to in the event of any such concerns and they are confident that if an incident of bullying did occur it would be dealt with promptly and effectively. The school has a suitable plan to improve accessibility to the school and its curriculum for the disabled.
- 4.15 In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a minority of pupils reported that the school does not seek or respond to their opinions. Inspectors judged that while attempts have been made to seek and listen to pupils' views through a pupil school council, pupils do not receive sufficient feedback on the school's responses to their concerns. During the inspection pupils said that some changes have been made as a result of their suggestions, for example to menu choices.



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

- 4.16 The school makes unsatisfactory provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils.
- 4.17 Prior to the inspection, the safeguarding policy did not meet the most recent requirements. By the end of the inspection, it had been updated and approved by governors. In the EYFS, health and safety procedures are well known by staff and fully implemented to ensure that children's welfare and well-being is given the highest priority. Staff throughout the school have been trained as required and governors have also attended training. Support from external agencies has been sought as necessary. The school has ensured that all governors, staff and volunteers are subject to the required checks before taking up their appointment and that these checks are correctly recorded. There are detailed policies for ensuring the welfare and safety of pupils but these have not been consistently implemented in practice. Inspectors became aware that some senior pupils had, inappropriately, been given supervision responsibilities in the swimming pool where there was access to adults from outside the school. When this matter was raised the school took immediate steps to stop this practice.
- 4.18 The school successfully seeks to reduce the risks from fire and other hazards. Risk assessments for activities on and off site are thorough. The buildings are clean, warm and well maintained. The EYFS buildings provide a safe and secure environment for the children. Parents and pupils alike say that the school provides a safe, caring environment. All procedures for prevention of risks from fire are thorough. Fire alarms are tested weekly and evacuation drills are carried out regularly, including some in boarding time. An unscheduled evacuation after the end of the formal day, however, revealed some issues with the management of the procedure. The school took immediate action to resolve the situation and established an action plan to strengthen current arrangements. The effectiveness of this plan was not tested by inspectors.
- 4.19 There is a suitable medical room for pupils who are sick or injured during the day. All medical records are maintained as required. The school has an appropriate plan to improve access for the disabled within the constraints presented by the site's many levels. The admission register has the necessary information. Attendance registers are taken carefully, although afternoon registration in the prep school is not always sufficiently formal. All registers are stored as required.

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

- 4.20 The quality of boarding is sound.
- 4.21 In line with its aims, the school successfully enables boarders to develop into happy, confident and independent individuals and outcomes are generally very good. Boarders know that they can turn to staff when they need help or guidance. Their behaviour is exemplary; they are sincere and genuine in their dealings with each other. They have an enthusiastic approach to life and say they love boarding and get on very well together. Boarders are extremely friendly and polite, interested in meeting new people. They integrate well, although some overseas boarders are reluctant to become fully involved in school and house life. Boarders develop strong friendships and quickly feel great loyalty to their house. They appreciate the family atmosphere in the houses and the warm relationships they have with boarding staff, who clearly know the boarders very well. The head boarder and her assistants are

expected to provide support to other boarders and to help house parents in the smooth running of houses. Their roles are clearly defined and they apply for the positions; boarders then vote for their preferred candidates. These boarders refer to the house parents on all matters and do not give sanctions. Boarders have daily access to information about the wider world through newspapers, television and other technology.

- 4.22 The quality of boarding provision and care is sound. A new induction programme very effectively assists boarders to settle quickly and provides the opportunity for them to be briefed on the general routines and expectations in the houses. All boarders know they have a range of adults to whom they can turn for help and guidance. House noticeboards provide comprehensive information and contact details for sources of help, including an independent listener and all pertinent outside agencies. Medical care of boarders is good; secure records are kept electronically. Medication is correctly and appropriately stored and dispensed. There is adequate provision for boarders who are ill. Boarders can attend sick bay without an appointment and the nurse is on duty during the school day. A doctor attends regularly and appointments can be made to visit the local surgery, dentist or optician at any time. There are suitable arrangements in place to assess pupils' competence to self-medicate although some of those allowed to do so display a lack of awareness of the need to store their medication safely in their room. The rights of boarders to medical confidentiality are respected.
- 4.23 Arrangements to ensure boarders' welfare, health and safety are unsatisfactory. A thorough maintenance programme ensures that buildings are well maintained. However there has been insufficient overview of some aspects of premises and safety including window closures, door alarms and implementing the policy concerning which electrical equipment boarders may have in their rooms. Many of these matters were swiftly rectified although not all proposed action could be completed before the inspection ended. Appropriate fire risk assessments and fire prevention measures are implemented; regular fire drills take place during boarding hours and these are recorded as required.
- 4.24 In the pre-inspection questionnaire a minority of pupils expressed dissatisfaction with meals. However, minutes of the recent food committee meeting with the school caterers indicate high levels of satisfaction from the pupils. This was confirmed in conversation with pupils and the inspection team found the meals to be healthy, appetising and attractively presented. The food committee has had a positive impact on the menus of main meals and the snacks provided in the houses. All meals are taken in the central dining room. Vegetarian options are available and the provision for those with special dietary requirements is improving. Catering staff are approachable and interact well with the girls, providing suitable alternatives on the spot if necessary. There is a wide variety of high-quality fresh fruit available in the dining room and houses. Drinking water is freely available at all times. House kitchen areas are well lit and modern, providing facilities for making snacks and drinks.
- 4.25 There is a wide choice of on-site and locally based activities offered both during the week and at weekends. The programme is flexible, responds to individual needs and offers something for everyone who chooses to get involved. Boarders are encouraged to keep fit and healthy, particularly through outdoor activities. Boarders confirm they have sufficient free time which they can spend in the lounge areas or in their own bedrooms. There is access to quiet spaces if boarders want to be alone. Money and valuables can be kept in boarders' lockable wardrobes or handed in to

house staff for safe-keeping. In each house there is a laundry room with suitable washers and tumble dryers; boarders very much enjoy taking responsibility for their own laundry and ironing. Staff will give support to any girl requiring help with this.

- 4.26 Boarders confirm that they can easily share any concerns or dissatisfaction with the school. The effectiveness of house meetings is unclear and there is little evidence that much progress has been made in meeting the recommendation of the previous boarding report in this respect. Houses are clean and well maintained. Bedrooms are appropriately furnished, comfortable, and adequately heated. All boarders may personalise their own space although some choose not to do so. Houses are very well equipped with comfortable lounge areas. Spacious, high quality en-suite bathrooms are provided for older boarders and there are plenty of toilets, showers and hand basins for all the boarders, meeting the recommendation made in the previous report. Boarders can contact parents very easily; most use their own mobile telephone or the internet. House parents have good lines of communication with parents and guardians.
- 4.27 Staff safeguarding training is up to date. Appropriate checks and agreements are in place for additional adults living in the boarding houses. Boarding staff are very accessible to the boarders both day and night. House parents occupy suitably separate accommodation within the houses. The anti-bullying policy and behavioural policies are effective, demonstrated in the respect, kindness and tolerance boarders show in their dealings with each other. In interviews, they confirm that there are very few instances of bullying and, should any occur, they are dealt with quickly and efficiently. There are effective procedures for signing in and out, ensuring awareness of boarders' whereabouts at all times. The missing child policy is well understood by staff.
- 4.28 The leadership and management of boarding are unsatisfactory. A committed, caring head of boarding has an instinctive understanding of boarders' needs but the overall effectiveness of the leadership and management is limited because the members of the boarding team are inexperienced and have not had the necessary training to support their understanding. Although information is shared electronically about boarders' welfare and their academic progress, senior leaders do not yet work effectively together with house and welfare staff to direct, monitor and develop boarding provision and practice. There are regular meetings to communicate issues and ideas but formal minutes of meetings in boarding are not completed. There are not yet clear goals for the development of boarding. In their responses to the questionnaires an overwhelming majority of parents expressed strong satisfaction with their child's boarding experience.

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

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

- 5.1 The overall quality of governance is sound.
- 5.2 Governors are strongly committed to the school and to sustaining its ethos. They place a strong emphasis on ensuring that all school procedures focus on the happiness and well being of the pupils. Minutes of governors' meetings show a good awareness of academic matters and also of general health and safety matters. However, governors had not considered some safety issues and were unaware of some practices that created a potential risk for pupils. They exercise astute financial oversight of the school and have invested in improved facilities, for example in boarding accommodation and the provision of more computer equipment.
- 5.3 Governors have a suitable insight into the workings of the school, accompanying pupils on trips, visiting lessons and the school's facilities. Some governors have a particular interest in areas such as safeguarding and boarding and show sound understanding of the relevant regulatory requirements. There is a designated governor for the EYFS who takes an active role in ensuring that the setting's work is reflected properly in the work of the governing body.
- 5.4 The governors have a thoughtful strategic plan which they reviewed in summer term 2014. There is little linkage between this and the school development plan, improvements to which formed a recommendation in the 2008 inspection report. Governors have not been sufficiently challenging in ensuring that the school has met this and the other recommendations of that report. Governors have worked effectively to manage changes in senior leadership over recent years. They have provided good support for the senior leaders throughout a period of transition and continue to do so for the new leadership.
- 5.5 The governing body is effective in discharging its legal responsibilities for statutory requirements, including conducting the annual review of safeguarding arrangements. Governors responded swiftly when alerted to deficiencies in the policy and had ratified the recently changed policy by the end of the inspection.

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

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management is sound.
- 5.7 Leadership and management at all levels are highly effective in sustaining a friendly, happy, purposeful environment in which pupils feel valued and develop self-confidence, a sense of responsibility and leadership qualities. This is evident throughout, from the Nursery to the sixth form. The pupils' excellent personal development is testimony to the whole hearted commitment of all school staff to this aim. Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated strong support for the school's leadership and for the values staff teach both overtly and by personal example. In questionnaire responses and in conversation, parents and their children were eloquent in their appreciation of the palpably happy atmosphere which characterises the school; pupils say they love coming to school and miss it during holiday periods.

- 5.8 Senior leadership has ensured that all required policies are in place and these now reflect current requirements. All staff have been suitably trained in safeguarding procedures. The EYFS is a welcoming, stimulating environment in which the safeguarding of children is given the highest priority. Those staff with pastoral roles show a strong awareness of their responsibilities for their charges. The structure of systems to record concerns, including any incidents of unkindness, does not allow easy monitoring of emerging problems or patterns. The monitoring at all levels of leadership of the way in which policies are implemented is not consistent. In their responses to questionnaires a minority of pupils commented on inconsistencies of expectations between academic departments and between boarding houses; inspectors agree with their views.
- 5.9 The school has undergone significant change in leadership over recent years. The uncertainties created by this have contributed to the school's limited progress in dealing with many of the areas identified in the previous report. There is now a member of the senior team with clear responsibility for oversight of the curriculum. The school has made significant progress in establishing effective procedures for assessment, monitoring and targeting of pupils' academic performance in the senior school, although this is less well established in the prep school. The school development plan still lacks specific annual action plans with explicit strategies for all the areas identified in the governors' strategic plan. There are regular meetings between the EYFS staff and the head of prep, but little evidence of careful curricular planning to ensure continuity and avoid repetition as prep school pupils move into the senior school. The school has heightened its awareness of the need to provide appropriate challenge for the more able pupils. This is not consistently translated into teaching that provides stimulating extension activities. Departments undertake an annual review of their academic results but there is little evidence of regular monitoring of teaching by middle managers or senior leaders. There is a strong sense of a staff and senior team which has become closely united, is highly committed to the school and keen to support the priorities which are emerging under new leadership.
- 5.10 Senior leadership has been successful in securing and motivating experienced staff who have good subject knowledge. Effective appraisal systems are in place for the EYFS staff, who undertake regular training and are committed to continuous improvement of the setting. The staff appraisal system for staff in other areas of the school is currently under review. All staff have been suitably trained in safeguarding matters and the majority have a sensible awareness of health and safety matters. On occasion insufficient thought and a lax approach has allowed practices that compromised the safety and welfare of senior pupils. The school has taken immediate action in response to the safety concerns highlighted by inspectors. However, the fact that such practices were originally countenanced and the inconsistencies in the implementation of policies, especially in boarding, highlights the fact that there is no-one currently with clearly designated responsibility for the oversight of pastoral and boarding matters.
- 5.11 The school has excellent relationships with parents, the majority of whom indicated in the pre-inspection questionnaire high levels of satisfaction with the school's curriculum, its behavioural expectations and its communication with them. The majority of parents feel that the school handles any concerns well. It does so in accordance with its complaints policy, although it is not always clear from records at which point an agreed resolution was reached.

- 5.12 Parents have many opportunities to be involved with the school. There is an active parent-teacher association that organises events and raises funds for the school. There are parent forums to discuss relevant issues on a variety of topics such as exam revision and body image awareness. Parents are also involved as parent class representatives and parents of pupils in the prep school are invited to attend many events, including assemblies, speech day, concerts and performances.
- 5.13 All required information is available for the parents of pupils or prospective pupils on the school's website and is also available in hard copy from the school. Parental handbooks for each section of the school have information appropriate for the age of the pupil. Weekly bulletins, monthly and termly newsletters further ensure parents are kept well informed about the school's life. Parents' evenings, interim reports and full written reports provide information about their children's progress. Staff in the EYFS have forged strong links with parents, sharing information on the children's progress. Senior school reports give parents good information about what their child needs to do to improve. Staff also make themselves available to talk to parents informally and will contact them directly to arrange for a meeting should there be concerns about a pupil. A very large majority of parents say they would recommend the school to another parent.

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