



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

LEWESTON SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Leweston School

The Junior Department boarding provision and the EYFS registered setting were inspected at the same time and separate reports published.

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| Full Name of School | Leweston School |
| DfE Number | 835/6025 |
| Registered Charity Number | 295175 |
| Address | Leweston School Leweston Sherborne Dorset DT9 6EN |
| Telephone Number | 01963 210691 |
| Fax Number | 01963 210786 |
| Email Address | admin@leweston.dorset.sch.uk |
| Head | Mr Adrian Aylward |
| Chair of Governors | Mrs Mary Head |
| Age Range | 11 to 18 |
| Total Number of Pupils | 227 |
| Gender of Pupils | Girls |
| Number of Day Pupils | Total: 97 |
| Number of Boarders | Total: 130 Full: 93 Weekly: 37 |
| Inspection Dates | 10 Feb 2015 to 13 Feb 2015 |

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI standard Inspection was in March 2010 and the ISI boarding welfare intermediate inspection was in February 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. 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.

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair and vice-chair of governors and a governors' representative, 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

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|----------------------|---|
| Mrs Gwen Caddock | Reporting Inspector |
| Mrs Zelma Braganza | Team Inspector (Former Head, GSA school) |
| Mrs Catherine Sams | Team Inspector (Vice-Principal, GSA school) |
| Mrs Elizabeth Thomas | Team Inspector (Head, GSA school) |
| Ms Clare Trelfa | Team Inspector (Headmistress, ISA school) |
| Ms Alana Davidson | Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding |

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Leweston School is a Roman Catholic boarding and day school for pupils aged from 3 months to 18 years, welcoming pupils of all denominations. The Junior Department of the school is co-educational and comprises pupils up to the age of 11, with boarding for girls from the age of 7, and includes a registered Early Years Foundation Stage setting. The Senior School offers both boarding and day places for girls from the age of 11 to 18. There are three boarding houses — junior, middle and senior — on the main school site. The school aims to work with pupils and their parents to provide a contemporary education rooted in the Catholic tradition. It is a charitable trust. A single governing body is responsible for the school, including the Junior Department. All governors act as trustees of the charity, a charitable company limited by guarantee. The governance of the school is supported by the work of two committees, and a number of governors hold specific link responsibilities with areas of the school.
- 1.2 Founded in 1891 by the Sisters of Christian Instruction, the school was opened originally as a junior school. In 1947 the Senior School moved to the present parkland site a short distance from the town of Sherborne. A separate junior school joined the Senior School on this site in 1993. The school occupies the original manor house and a range of modern buildings, including a covered swimming pool, sports hall, and specialist teaching bases such as for sciences and art and design. The grounds provide extensive playing fields and woodland areas. In 2014, the senior and junior sections integrated, with the junior school becoming the Junior Department of the Senior School.
- 1.3 Currently there are 227 girls on the roll of the Senior School; of these, 97 are day pupils and 130 are full or weekly boarders. The school offers flexible boarding options for day girls. Standardised tests of ability indicate that the ability profile of Year 7 is above the national average and that of Year 10 is slightly above the national average. There is a wide range of ability and the profile varies from year to year. The ability profile of the sixth form is in line with the national average. Pupils come largely from the surrounding region but also from many other parts of the world, including Europe, Asia and Central America. A range of cultural backgrounds is represented in the school. Of the 71 pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL) 51 receive support for their English. In total, 41 pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) of whom 24 receive specialist support. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The quality of academic and other achievements of pupils is excellent. Pupils gain high levels of skills and develop very positive attitudes to their learning. They excel in expressive, creative and sporting activities. The achievements of pupils in public examinations are excellent, and the progress they make is high, including those with SEND or EAL and the gifted and talented. This excellence is supported by a very broad and strongly developed curriculum that is structured to allow appropriate courses and choices for all pupils, and effective support for those with SEND or EAL. Pupils participate enthusiastically and reach high standards in a challenging range of extra-curricular activities, with a record of individual and team success at all levels. Teaching is good overall; the best uses strong subject knowledge, varied strategies to include all pupils and highly effective challenge for the more able. In a very small minority of lessons teaching shows weaker organisation and a narrow range of teaching styles, leading to less challenge and to pupils losing interest. Excellent relationships between pupils and staff contribute to the success of pupils in all areas of school life. Inconsistencies in assessment practice, some identified at the previous inspection, are still evident.
- 2.2 The personal development of the pupils is excellent; they have a strong spiritual sense, becoming self-confident individuals who contribute to society both within and beyond the school. They show high moral values and an awareness of the structure and the values of British society, and are well prepared to take their place as adults. They take responsibility willingly and behave very well towards each other, for example valuing the mentoring schemes which are in place in the school. The multi-cultural community is harmonious and no discrimination takes place. Pastoral care is excellent, supported by structures which ensure that staff are well informed about the needs of pupils and respond rapidly when needed. Pupils report that they feel safe and valued in the school. While the school takes good account of their views, for example in the school council, the results of this are not always communicated well to the pupils. All aspects of welfare, health and safety are of high quality; policies to ensure the safeguarding of pupils are fully implemented and safe employment practice is carefully recorded. The quality of the boarding provision and outcomes for pupils are excellent; boarders benefit from high quality care and strong academic and extra-curricular provision.
- 2.3 The good standard of governance supports leadership and management in bringing to life the Catholic ethos and the aims of the school. The governors fulfil their legal responsibilities and are well informed about the life of the school. They have not rigorously monitored the progress towards fulfilment of the recommendations from the previous inspection, and these have not been fully met. Good leadership and management have ensured the continuance of standards rated as excellent at the previous inspection and have raised the quality of pupils' learning and achievement to excellent, both in academic and extra-curricular areas. In response to the recommendations of the previous report, resources for information and communication technology (ICT) have been greatly improved; as yet these are not used consistently in all areas of the curriculum. Other management initiatives have not been fully implemented: a scheme is in place to track pupils' progress but this has not yet developed to provide assessment information to inform teachers' planning or as a tool to monitor pupils' progress and the work of departments. Departmental evaluations provide information but lack rigorous analysis that results

in strategies with targets to bring all teaching to the standard of the best. Links with parents, guardians and carers are excellent and in their responses to the questionnaire parents were highly supportive of the work of the school in all areas.

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. Extend the whole-school tracking system to set targets, monitor progress and guide teachers' planning across the school.
2. Monitor departmental self-evaluation to ensure that rigorous analysis results in development plans showing clear targets and timescales to improve standards of teaching.
3. Give formal feedback to all pupils on the outcomes of the work of the school council.

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 excellent.
- 3.2 This high standard is in accordance with the school's aims. Pupils develop high level literacy skills and apply mathematical concepts with confidence. They listen well and speak with fluency and conviction. Problem-solving skills are developed across a wide range of subjects. Skills in ICT are developing as opportunities for its use increase. Pupils achieve great success in creative and artistic areas and in many physical activities. A high standard of artwork is displayed throughout the school. By the time they have reached the sixth form, pupils have developed a facility for independent learning.
- 3.3 The extra-curricular life of the school continues to flourish, with excellent levels of participation, achievement and commitment from staff and pupils. There have been many individual and team successes at all levels: in the creative and performing arts, and in academic competitions of all types, from awards in mathematics and science Olympiads to first place in an award for excellence in Pre-U English. Successes in sports and team games include gold medals in national and world biathlon championships, national biathlon, and GB representation in biathlon and modern pentathlon. Staff balance the enthusiastic participation of the many with sustaining the levels of achievement of those with particular gifts and talents.
- 3.4 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2011 to 2013. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results at GCSE have been above the national average for girls in maintained schools and similar to that for girls in maintained selective schools. Over ninety-seven per cent of pupils have consistently achieved five or more GCSE A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, with around two-thirds of these being at A* or A.
- 3.5 Results at A level have been above the national average for girls in maintained schools and above the national average for girls in maintained selective schools, with the proportion of pupils achieving grades A* to B rising to 76 per cent in 2013. Results for 2014, for which national comparators are not yet available, indicate continuing improvement. In 2013, the Pre-U qualification was offered in three subjects, with pupils gaining a distinction in 20 per cent of papers within a 100 per cent pass rate; results for 2014 indicate further improvement. Pupils are ambitious and successful in gaining entry to the courses and universities of their choice, including those with the highest entry requirements. Responses from both pupils and parents to pre-inspection questionnaires showed a very high level of satisfaction with the progress made.
- 3.6 The level of attainment at GCSE and A level, together with inspection evidence, indicates that pupils make progress that is high in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. By these measures, progress in skills, learning and understanding is excellent throughout the age and ability ranges. The progress of pupils with SEND is in line with that of their peers and they fulfil their potential. Pupils with EAL make excellent progress, achieving high levels of proficiency in language, helping them to match the performance of their peers. The most able pupils take the initiative to challenge and further their understanding as a result of the school's provisions, making appropriately high progress.

- 3.7 Pupils demonstrate a very positive attitude to learning. They co-operate well across the ability range, and discuss and debate with confidence, respecting the opinions and beliefs of others. When given responsibility for their own learning with appropriately targeted work, they concentrate avidly, are eager to learn and show that they have enquiring minds, with the confidence to respond vigorously to intellectual challenge.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 The provision fulfils the school's aim of providing a contemporary Catholic education. The broad subject range supports and stimulates pupils of all abilities and cultural backgrounds. Since the previous inspection the provision of facilities for ICT has greatly increased, but as yet the use of these to promote learning is not widespread across the curriculum. Pupils have opportunities to study three modern foreign languages, Latin and classics. Additional options of three separate sciences or science and additional science, two art GCSEs, drama and sports studies meet the needs of all. Option blocks are constructed according to pupils' choices, to accommodate as many of them as possible.
- 3.10 The needs of pupils with SEND or EAL are met by tailored specialist learning support. Strong support for pupils with SEND enables their success in the main school curriculum; specialist lessons are effectively timetabled so as not to have a negative impact on teaching of the core subjects. Provision for those with EAL enables pupils to succeed in external examinations, to support their applications to universities in the UK and across the world. The most able pupils benefit from challenging work across the extensive curriculum.
- 3.11 The sixth-form curriculum, which includes A-level health and social care, effectively meets the needs of the wide range of abilities. Pupils may opt for the Pre-U or Extended Project Qualification, which strengthen their applications to highly selective universities worldwide.
- 3.12 A well-established personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme encourages respect and tolerance for all, and includes even-handed coverage of political matters. The careers education programme includes pupils of all ages. In Years 9, 11 and 12 external providers profile pupils' strengths and interests objectively and interview them in order to support them in choosing GCSE and A-level subjects, and in university applications. Choices are supported by visits to universities and a biennial careers fair, a two-day event at which former pupils hold workshops to inform current pupils about training, education and occupations beyond school.
- 3.13 The range of extra-curricular activities available to pupils is outstanding, and greatly enhances the curriculum provision. Pupils benefit from musical, dramatic and creative opportunities and from a wide variety of sporting activities. The vast number of achievements in all these areas reflects the quality of this provision and the enthusiastic take-up by the pupils. Societies and clubs flourish, some organised by older girls. Pupils develop new skills, hone leadership qualities and compete at high levels in activities such as The Science Society, which has worked on a joint project with a nearby university. Many sixth-form pupils join the two-year professional cookery course, which leads to a diploma. Participation in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) is highly popular and the success rate at all three levels is

excellent. An example of international volunteering was sixth-form pupils' work on a community project in Peru in the summer of 2014 as part of their gold level award.

- 3.14 The many opportunities available to work within the school and wider communities include mentoring younger pupils in school, joint concerts and other activities with other nearby schools, and volunteering to visit the elderly in the local area. The school supports a large number of local and international charities and raises a significant sum from numerous activities.
- 3.15 In addition to activities on site and educational day visits, a large number of residential trips are organised, including to Cornwall, Spain, France and the USA. The numerous opportunities for overseas residential visits promote diversity and respect for other cultures as well as increasing learning opportunities, which underpin and extend the curriculum extremely well.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.16 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.17 The teaching enables pupils to make excellent progress, enjoy their lessons and feel a sense of achievement, in accordance with the school's aims. Most teaching is well planned with an excellent range and variety of stimulating activities, resources and methods, and employs appropriate challenge to engage pupils' enthusiasm for learning. As a result, enjoyment is evident and the needs of all pupils are almost invariably met within a supportive environment that enables them to develop their understanding. Pupils enjoy and appreciate the opportunity to work collaboratively and to take responsibility for aspects of their learning, where independence of thought is encouraged. In a very small minority of less successful lessons, weaker organisation or an over-reliance on a limited range of teaching styles and a lack of opportunity for appropriately challenging independent work lead to pupils losing interest.
- 3.18 Almost all teaching demonstrates strong subject knowledge and an ability to present this in a clear and engaging manner, which builds the confidence and motivation of pupils. Excellent relationships between teachers and pupils mean that most lessons are delivered in a relaxed manner where good behaviour and high expectations for learning are the norm. Staff know the pupils extremely well and are generous with their time where additional advice or support are required. A good range of resources, including those required for practical subjects, is available to support engaging teaching. The school has improved its ICT infrastructure, and teachers now make greater use of this in their presentations. As yet, the use of ICT by pupils to aid their learning is still developing in scope and range, both within the classroom and beyond. As a result, the recommendation from the previous inspection is only partly met.
- 3.19 Teaching provides well for the needs of those who are identified with SEND or EAL. Teaching staff make productive use of the personal education plans devised and monitored by the individual needs department, and they liaise effectively with the EAL staff, often adapting tasks or providing supplementary materials to support individual pupils. Support and challenge for the most able pupils are appropriate in almost all lessons; at its best, support is highly targeted at individuals, taking into account their particular needs and aims.
- 3.20 A wide range of information, including nationally standardised data, is available to staff but its use is not yet sufficiently developed to guide teaching fully across the

school. Some departments are collating and using data from both routine assessments of work and standardised data from tests and examinations to analyse success, identify needs and inform teaching but this is not consistent practice across all departments of the school. Some marking is of a very high quality, informing pupils of what they have to do to improve; they appreciate and value such feedback but this is not yet seen consistently across the school. This was identified as an area for improvement at the time of the previous inspection; the recommendation has only been partly met. Reports to parents are usually detailed and they include many encouraging and motivational comments, but precise targets for improvement to enable parents to support their children are not always provided.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 This reflects the school's aims, and also its active role in promoting the personal development of the pupils. Pupils' spiritual development is excellent and well supported by the religious character of the school. Pupils are open-minded and have knowledge of and respect for the religious beliefs of others. They show high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem, without arrogance. The need for tolerance is fostered throughout all aspects of school life. Pupils have many opportunities to reflect upon and explore their faith, both in lessons and in chapel, and they participate with sincerity in acts of worship. A number of pupils choose to be prepared for confirmation into the Anglican or Catholic Church each year. Pupils openly share their faith with others; for example, in a school assembly a sixth-form group spoke ardently about how inspirational it was to go to Lourdes as volunteers. Throughout, spirituality is central to the school's life.
- 4.3 Pupils have an excellent moral sense and a clear understanding of right and wrong. They recognise the importance of their individual actions and their effect on the community as a whole. They also understand how the law of the land governs their actions. Their behaviour around school is impeccable; they are helpful, polite and courteous. Pupils are fully aware of the need to treat others well and understand that bullying of any kind is unacceptable. They successfully explore moral and ethical matters through their work in literature, religious studies and PSHE, and assemblies and contact with visiting speakers. They are perceptive in their consideration of lifestyle choices on topics such as e-safety and risk taking.
- 4.4 The social development of the pupils is excellent. Pupils are at ease with one another and with the teachers. They learn that everyone is entitled to a voice and to be engaged in what happens in society; consequently, they exercise a high level of social responsibility in supporting their peers, both socially and through academic mentoring. In their responses to the questionnaire a small minority of pupils felt that they are given insufficient opportunities to take on roles of responsibility. Through interviews with staff and pupils, inspectors found a wide range of opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities. Pupils support a variety of local causes through the DofE and community service. Considerable funds are raised for local and international charities, for example supporting a school in Nepal. Both the curriculum and trips, such as the sixth-form visit to Parliament, ensure that pupils develop a strong political understanding and are aware of their role in, and the distinctive and tolerant character of, British society. An appropriate understanding of English public institutions and services is promoted in PSHE and through interaction with visiting speakers, including the police and Members of Parliament.
- 4.5 Pupils' cultural awareness is excellent. The cultural and personal diversity of the school community is celebrated in many ways and pupils from all backgrounds feel equally valued. Recently, pupils have celebrated Australia Day and Chinese New Year, including a Chinese meal and a lesson in the use of chopsticks. The many visits to theatres, galleries and concerts, and the wide variety of trips to places as diverse as Spain, South Africa and the USA, enhance pupils' appreciation and understanding of their own and other cultures.

- 4.6 By the time they reach the sixth form pupils show an excellent level of personal development. The Catholic values and the contemporary nature of their education prepare pupils to contribute fully in the next phase of the education and to play a full and responsible role in modern British society.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 Staff provide excellent support and guidance for the pupils. The pastoral structures ensure that the needs of all pupils' are met very effectively and fully accord with the school aims. Pupils appreciate the care and attention given to them by all staff, and feel consistently well supported. Parents agreed with this view in response to the questionnaire and were unanimous that the staff treat their children as individuals. A small minority of pupils, in response to the questionnaire, felt that their workloads, including homework, are not well monitored. Inspection evidence does not support this view. Inspectors judge that the expectations of staff are reasonable. Very good communication amongst house staff and with senior management ensures that provision is fully co-ordinated and recorded. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent, and great mutual respect is evident.
- 4.9 Pupils are encouraged to be healthy through the PSHE programme and healthy menu choices, including plentiful fresh fruit and vegetables. Pupils enjoy and benefit from regular exercise within lessons and extra-curricular activities.
- 4.10 The school is very effective in promoting excellent behaviour, and in response to the questionnaire parents agreed with this view. The policy and practices to prevent bullying are effective. Pupils report that little bullying takes place and that any issue is dealt with swiftly and effectively: this view is supported by school records. In response to their questionnaire a small minority of pupils felt that rewards and sanctions are not always fairly applied by teachers. This was not supported by evidence, which included a scrutiny of school records and discussions with pupils.
- 4.11 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.12 In questionnaire responses a small minority of pupils said that the school does not ask for their opinions or respond to them. Inspection evidence did not support this view. Many opportunities, including the school council, exist to consult pupils; changes made include the installation of water dispensers and changes to the summer uniform. In interviews, pupils reported that their views are sought by the school and that they feel listened to but they do not receive regular, formal feedback. Inspectors agree that communication about the work of the school council is not fully effective.

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

- 4.13 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.14 The school has adopted detailed policies and procedures to ensure the safeguarding of the pupils. Procedures are implemented well and the school has a practical working relationship with local agencies for both consultation and training as required. Training at the appropriate level has been undertaken by the senior staff working as designated safeguarding leaders and they in turn regularly train the staff of the school and carry out induction for new staff in all aspects of safeguarding. All the required checks are undertaken to ensure the safe employment of staff; detailed and accurate records are kept. Thorough attention is paid to teaching pupils about cyber safety and girls were seen signing a 'cyber pledge' during a lunch hour, following training. Many staff have undertaken first-aid training and the policy provides clear guidance and safety protocols for administering first aid, fully supported by the trained staff in the medical centre.
- 4.15 Detailed risk assessments minimise risks to pupils across their activities in the school, including the many trips and visits which take place. A full fire risk policy is in place, a detailed fire risk assessment undertaken and recommendations implemented. All the necessary checks and servicing are undertaken regularly and careful records are maintained, including those of fire drills carried out at various times of day. A very clear and detailed health and safety policy is fully implemented, supported by meticulous records. The health and safety committee has a monitoring role and ensures that buildings and grounds are maintained to a high standard. Staff report that any faults are quickly repaired.
- 4.16 Admission and attendance records are compiled and maintained as required.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.17 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.18 The outcomes for boarders are excellent; they are happy, well balanced and appreciative of the opportunities that the school provides for them. Boarders of all ages and nationalities are confident and articulate, and display a healthy curiosity about events and individuals. In the school's diverse population, they experience no discrimination on the grounds of either race or disability. Boarders are genuinely interested in each other and thoroughly enjoy celebrating the cultures of others in their close-knit community by involving themselves in events such as Polish Independence Day, Chinese New Year and Australia Day. They experience constructive relationships with each other and with staff, display a genuine desire to protect those who are experiencing difficulties and enjoy playing an active role in fund raising for chosen charities, for example by baking cakes or participating in sponsored fun runs. Boarders play an active role in the running of their houses and those in the sixth form visit local residential care homes or help elderly people in their own homes.
- 4.19 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. House staff support the attendance of gifted and talented boarders at events to extend and challenge them. An excellent support and developmental programme ensures the full integration of boarders who have EAL into the school and the curriculum, with specialist staff working on a one-to-one basis with boarders in the house several times a week. Those spoken to expressed their appreciation of this. A suitable range of

enrichment activities includes Columbian dance aerobics, swimming, hockey and classics club in the evenings. At weekends there are visits to places such as Bournemouth for ice skating, quad biking and shopping, as well as the opportunity for quiet relaxation. Boarders' views are sought through a boarding council and changes have been agreed, such as an extension of free time in Sherborne. Sixth-former boarders are given greater freedoms, including bringing their cars to school and encouragement to participate in life skill classes such as a diploma cookery course, to enable them to move on to the next stage of their lives in an empowered, independent and responsible way. House staff support the attendance of gifted and talented boarders at the extension events. The well-equipped medical centre is staffed by a fully trained team that provides high quality care for sick or injured boarders and that sleeps on the premises when a boarder needs to stay overnight. The bedrooms and common rooms are light, airy and comfortable; each boarder has a study facility in her room and facilities to provide secure storage. Menus are planned with care to achieve a balanced and nutritious diet for the boarders. Inspectors found no evidence to corroborate negative comments from a small minority of pupils in response to the questionnaire. Pupils with special dietary needs are well catered for. All boarders spoken with said that they are happy with the food provision. Boarders are able to maintain contact with their families; the school communicates well with parents, carers and guardians.

- 4.20 The school's procedures for ensuring the welfare and safeguarding of its boarders are excellent. All statutory requirements are met. Staff involved in interviewing have received formal training in safe recruitment and records show that great care is taken in checking the suitability of staff during the recruitment process. Staffing levels are suitable at all times, including at night. Boarders instinctively look out for each other and alert staff to any concerns; staff know their whereabouts at all times. Boarders say that they feel safe and well cared for; bullying is rare and cases are dealt with well, in line with the school's clear policy and procedures. Pupils know how to contact staff at night. Boarders are fully conversant with house regulations and say that sanctions are applied fairly. They receive personal praise when they have done something well, saying that they prefer this to a more formal system. The school has suitable policies for raising complaints and for the use of physical restraint, as required. Due regard is given to the risk of fire; practice evacuations take place at a suitable range of times. Risk assessments are in place for all activities, and boarders are encouraged to be sensible and aware of potential dangers to themselves. Individual welfare plans are monitored on a regular basis and boarding staff are aware of the whereabouts of the boarders, using books for signing out and mobile telephones.
- 4.21 The excellent quality of leadership and management in boarding is manifested in the extremely high quality of all policies, procedures and record keeping, which are regularly reviewed. Self-evaluation is undertaken well; improvement is regarded as always possible. The school seeks to maintain a friendly, family atmosphere and this was borne out in all house visits. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm but respectful, and reflect that the school is keeping pace with changes in society without compromising its Catholic principles and ethos. Staff at all levels are clearly fully aware of their responsibilities and dedicate themselves to fulfilling them with a high degree of enthusiasm. Boarders are very happy and feel supported and cared about, while having the space to think for themselves. The school is fully committed to supporting the professional development of boarding staff, several of whom have attended bespoke training sessions or a two-year diploma course. Staff

extend any newly acquired knowledge or skill to their colleagues, ensuring a knowledgeable and forward thinking team.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance.

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The governing body has a relevant range of expertise and seeks new members who can complement the current contingent of skills. The governing body fully supports the Catholic ethos and aims of the school, and has clear understanding of the ways in which the school achieves these aims. They have undertaken self-evaluation of their role and in response have developed new strategies to ensure an insight into the working of the school. Governors receive regular reports from the leadership; all heads of departments give presentations to the education committee. Governors have particular areas of interest, including safeguarding and boarding, and meet with members of staff to understand and support the work of the staff in the school. However, governors have not ensured that the recommendations of the previous inspection have been met in full. The governors visit lessons and attend many functions in the school. The five-year plan supports the school development plan in setting out the strategy for the future.
- 5.3 Governors discharge their statutory and other responsibilities very well; all statutory requirements are met. Safe employment protocols and records are carefully monitored. Suitable training has been undertaken to ensure that the governing body is fully conversant with its responsibilities for safeguarding across the school; the annual report and review of safeguarding by all governors are in place, along with the review and adoption of the policy.

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

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, is good.
- 5.5 Leadership and management effectively promote the aims of the school. Pupils achieve excellence in academic and extra-curricular activities, and a high standard of personal development. The leadership and management of the school are highly successful in discharging their responsibilities for policy implementation and for all aspects of safeguarding and safe recruitment.
- 5.6 A clear vision for the development of the school, including its Catholic ethos, promotes and values pupils' spiritual development within a multi-cultural community. Self-evaluation is good, but is not yet a wholly secure feature of the school's work. The evaluations are not always fully rigorous, and the school development plan does not focus sufficiently on setting criteria for successful implementation and analysing the information available to set quantified targets for improvement. In part, this is because the school has responded incompletely to the recommendations of the inspection in 2010. Progress has been made in some areas, for example in establishing a tracking system to collect and use the educational data available to identify areas where support is needed and to analyse the progress and outcomes for the pupils. However, to date, the information gathered is not yet being used well enough to evaluate the success of the school in a sufficiently comprehensive manner. The school was previously recommended to undertake more thorough evidence gathering through lesson observation and the scrutiny of pupils' work. There has been some progress in this area, including department self-evaluations,

which has improved standards in some areas, but inconsistencies remain. Teaching is not consistently of the highest quality. With support from the governing body, considerable investment has been made in the ICT infrastructure of the school, as recommended at the time of the previous inspection. Progress has been made in some areas in the use of the facilities now available, but as yet this is not extended consistently across the work of all departments.

- 5.7 The management of the school has worked hard to recruit well-qualified staff and to maintain a continuing programme of staff development to support staff in their work. Safer recruitment procedures reflect official guidance and accurate records of checks required are in place. The school ensures an appropriate induction for new staff, together with suitable and timely training for all staff to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met, and to promote their safeguarding, and welfare, health and safety throughout.
- 5.8 Links with parents are excellent, reflecting the school's aims and mission. Parents were highly supportive of the school in their questionnaire responses. They are very appreciative of the all-round education their children receive. There is a general consensus that concerns or complaints are dealt with sympathetically and swiftly. There have been no formal complaints during the last year, but the school has an appropriate policy and procedures to deal with concerns should they arise.
- 5.9 Parents, of both current and prospective pupils, receive all the required information, electronically or in printed copies. The new website has a wide range of relevant information for parents. Communication with parents is comprehensive and regular, using email, telephone, newsletters and social media. Parents receive informative pupil progress reports termly and half-termly electronically, and are invited to attend a parents' evening once or twice a year. In responses to the questionnaire, parents expressed great satisfaction both with the information they receive and the progress made by their children.
- 5.10 Parents actively support the school as members of the Friends association or through parent committees, which organise events such as a clothing sale and evening occasions to raise money for charities. Over £1 million has been raised for school projects by parents.

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