



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

LUCKLEY-OAKFIELD SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Luckley-Oakfield School

Full Name of School	Luckley-Oakfield School		
DfE Number	872/6000		
Registered Charity Number	309099		
Address	Luckley-Oakfield School Luckley Road Wokingham Berkshire RG40 3EU		
Telephone Number	0118 9784175		
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Email Address	registrar@luckley.wokingham.sch.uk		
Headmistress	Mrs Jane Tudor		
Chair of Governors	Mrs Penny Le Messurier Adomakoh		
Age Range	11 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	216		
Gender of Pupils	Girls		
Numbers by Age	11-16:	175	17-18: 41
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	184	
Number of Boarders	Total:	32	
	Full boarders	29	Weekly boarders 3

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 March 2010.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

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

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors and another governor, 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 Gwen Caddock	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Jacqueline Davies	Team Inspector (Assistant Head, HMC school)
Mrs Vivienne Durham	Team Inspector (Headmistress, GSA school)
Mr Richard Lynn	Team Inspector (Academic Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mrs Susan Meek	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Luckley-Oakfield School is a day and boarding school for girls between the ages of 11 and 18. The school is the result of the amalgamation of two schools in 1959: Luckley School, founded in 1918 was established in an Edwardian country house set in a park on the southern outskirts of Wokingham and Oakfield School, which was established in the Lake District in 1895. The resulting school became an independent educational trust regulated by the Charity Commissioners and in 1973 a charitable company limited by guarantee. The governing body is composed of seven governors, four of whom are both governors and members of the trust. A number of new members have recently been recruited to join the board.
- 1.2 The school has a Christian ethos. The core statement of aims and values says that the school is built on the Christian foundations of love and service. The school aims to enable pupils to thrive in a secure and encouraging environment, so that they become resourceful and resilient, ready for the challenges and opportunities of the future.
- 1.3 The school remains on the original site with the house at the centre of the school; the park provides extensive playing fields as well as woodland and countryside. Recent additions and changes include a new music school which opened in September 2010, new science laboratories which opened in September 2012, a fitness suite, and the refurbishment of many areas including common rooms, gardens and parking areas. The headmistress took up her appointment in September 2012.
- 1.4 The school has 216 pupils on roll including 41 in the sixth form. Twenty-nine pupils are full boarders and three board on a weekly basis, accommodated in two boarding houses, one for sixth formers and the other for boarders in Years 7 to 11. The school offers flexible boarding arrangements as required.
- 1.5 Admission to the school in Year 7 is by entrance test, pupils are admitted at other stages if places are available. Nationally standardised tests show that the ability profile of the school in Years 7-11 is above the national average with few pupils below the national average. In the sixth form the ability profile is above the national average but with a wider spread of ability than in the earlier years. Thirty-three pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or difficulties (SEND) and of these six pupils receive specialist learning support. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. There are 21 pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL) and of these 14 are judged to be fluent speakers, and 7 receive specialist support for their English. Pupils come from mainly professional and business families, and the school welcomes pupils from a number of cultural and ethnic backgrounds.
- 1.6 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 the pupils' achievements and learning is good. Pupils work hard to achieve good levels of knowledge and skills, and from an early stage they progress in all the required areas of the curriculum. Pupils are successful in public examinations, particularly at A level. Pupils with SEND achieve well and receive appropriate support. Pupils with EAL achieve well as they progress through the school, but the limited support they receive for their English when they arrive at the school means that initially progress is slow. A wide curriculum gives all pupils a broad experience, particularly in modern languages and provides a good basis from which to make choices as they move through the school. Pupils achieve individual and team successes in a wide range of activities. Teaching is good and successfully promotes good learning although there is some unevenness of standards and inconsistency in applying school policy in marking and assessment.
- 2.2 The personal development of the pupils is good and brings to life the Christian ethos of the school. They become reflective individuals who learn to think of others and work hard for those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils learn to judge right and wrong in many contexts of the school and to take responsibility, which they do willingly. They learn about many cultures in their work and learn to live in a culturally diverse society. Pastoral care has improved considerably since the previous inspection and is now good; pupils say that they feel valued and supported by staff, and systems are in place to monitor their well-being. Health and safety policies and procedures in the school are meticulous and all procedures are in place to ensure the safeguarding of pupils. Boarding makes a positive contribution to the lives of the pupils but there are some inconsistencies in the standard of provision between the two houses, particularly in the way rules are applied in the junior house and in the opportunities for junior boarders to express their views about boarding life. The school has begun to include measures to rectify these in its planning.
- 2.3 The governance of the school is good; governors are well informed about the work of the school and make careful financial plans to support the pupils' academic and personal development. They fulfil all their legal obligations, including those for safeguarding and safe employment. Recently appointed senior leaders have a clear vision for the school, and good structures for management have been set up but these do not yet enable full evaluation and monitoring of school life and school development planning is not yet comprehensive. The school has fully met the recommendation made in the previous inspection report to ensure that pupils feel individually valued, and has made progress in improving teaching. The school has excellent relationships with the parents, a significant improvement on those reported at the previous inspection.

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

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.
- 2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2011.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that the newly established management structures enable the senior team to fully evaluate and monitor all areas of school life.
 2. Ensure that a comprehensive school development plan is prepared.
 3. Bring all marking up to the standard of the best and use all the assessment data available to monitor pupil progress and inform planning.
 4. Strengthen support for pupils who enter the school with limited skills in English to ensure their rapid integration and access to the full curriculum.
 5. Ensure that the current developments in boarding create consistently high standards of provision and care for boarders.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is good.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated in accordance with the school's aims to enable pupils to thrive in a secure and encouraging environment. The quality of the pupils' independent learning has improved since the previous inspection, fostered by increasingly challenging teaching. Pupils work hard to achieve good levels of knowledge, understanding and skills; they speak fluently and generally listen well, both to their teachers and to each other. Reading journals reveal that pupils read and reflect on their reading. They write well in both factual and creative contexts and they display logical thought in self-assessment and in interpretations of data gathered. They show independence in the choices they make about planning and carrying out work. Pupils respond very well to the many opportunities for creativity provided, including drama lessons. Excellent art work using many media, and finished textiles projects of high quality are displayed throughout the school. Pupils use their ICT skills well, and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills in many different contexts, such as science and economics lessons. They benefit greatly from the extended time now devoted to games and physical education (PE) and the new fitness suite, achieving success both in team sports and individually.
- 3.3 The pupils' achievement in extra-curricular activities is good; they take part in many activities related to their studies outside the classroom and have achieved success in a number of areas, for example mathematics and science challenges and recently in the national Teen Tech competition, obtaining a place in the finals. They are successful in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE) and progress through the ranks in combined cadet force (CCF) activities. Pupils achieve success in music and speech and drama examinations, and in polo and other sporting activities. In recent years pupils from the school have competed in national rowing regattas and in horse riding events. A high proportion of pupils gain places at their first choice university.
- 3.4 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2009-2011, the most recent three years for which comparative data was available at the time of the inspection. Results in GCSE were good in relation to the average for girls in maintained schools and similar to the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. Results at A level have improved over the years 2009 to 2011. The 2009 and 2010 results were good in relation to the national average for girls in maintained schools, in 2011 results were excellent. In 2009 and 2010 results were similar, and in 2011 above, those achieved by girls in maintained selective schools.
- 3.5 The progress of pupils is high in relation to the average for girls of similar ability as assessed using nationally standardised measures of examination performance. The evidence from work scrutiny and achievement in lessons supports the judgement that day-to-day progress is good throughout the school, including the most able. Pupils who have SEND benefit both from the specialist support they receive and from the increased self-confidence they gain from the whole school experience. Overseas pupils with EAL who arrive with little spoken English take time to develop the skills needed to access the curriculum, as at present they receive a limited level of both specialist support and specific provision from class teachers. This results in initially slow progress, however once they gain competence in English pupils with EAL make good progress.

- 3.6 Pupils have positive attitudes and approaches to their learning, they find teachers supportive and the majority said that they know they can ask for help and that the teachers help them individually when needed. They speak highly of the activities programme. A number of initiatives since the previous inspection have made pupils more independent in their learning, developing good levels of competence in the skills required.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.8 The school's provision, both within the classroom and beyond it, is broad and supportive for most pupils, although currently pupils with EAL receive limited support for their English. The curriculum is suitable for pupils of all ages, abilities and needs, enabling them to learn effectively and to develop their interests and capabilities in line with the school's aims.
- 3.9 The curriculum covers the requisite areas of learning well. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 follow a broad and balanced academic curriculum which provides a thorough preparation for study at GCSE. In Year 7, pupils are introduced to the study of three modern foreign languages, and study classics including Latin as a basis for future choices. Sciences studied prepare pupils well for GCSE. Creative, expressive and practical subjects have a strong place in the curriculum and pupils develop strong skills in these areas. At both GCSE and A level pupils are offered a wide choice of options and are able to create a personalised curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to choose according to their strengths and inclinations. Further challenge is provided for the sixth form through an enrichment course which includes lectures, practical sessions, careers, information and communications technology (ICT), PE and optional involvement in Young Enterprise and AS-level general studies. Arrangements are made for overseas students to prepare for A-Level examinations in their native tongue. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires a small number of pupils suggested that they received too much homework. The inspection found that the school has a formal homework timetable and records in the pupils' diaries show that homework is of reasonable quantity.
- 3.10 The needs of pupils with SEND are identified well and made known to staff; some good provision is made for them within the curriculum and if appropriate a reduced programme of study is offered. Those with EAL attend a weekly individual English lesson with a specialist teacher and prepare for a variety of relevant qualifications. Some excellent provision is made for them in class but this is inconsistent across the school. Participation in national competitions in, for example, science and mathematics, has created further challenge for the most able pupils.
- 3.11 The well-structured and supported "4U" personal, social and health education (PSHE) tutor programme for pupils in Years 7 to 11 provides valuable opportunities to explore a wide range of issues in good preparation for adult life. In the sixth form, an innovative PSHE programme provides valuable challenge and includes current affairs topics, relaxation techniques, improving vocabulary and debates. Outside speakers and university visits provide opportunities to explore higher education and careers which are appreciated by pupils when making university applications.
- 3.12 In response to the findings of the previous inspection the timetabled day has been adapted, allowing more time to be given to sport. The range of sporting activities is good including team games as well as supporting individuals in pursuing sport at a

high level outside school. There is also an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities including: polo, music exams, speech and drama exams, productions, various musical groups, DofE and CCF. Pupils enjoy these opportunities and their personal development benefits through involvement in them. Fund-raising is often organised by the pupils themselves. Work for charity benefits local organisations, for example, carol singing and painting a local junior school and internationally in the shoe box appeal and a cultural trip to Africa. Links with the community are strong; some of the pupils' excellent art work is exhibited in local businesses to raise money for a local charity. Inter-house competitions are enjoyed by the pupils and encourage participation by all.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.13 The contribution of teaching in the school is good.
- 3.14 The most successful teaching is innovative in its approach and planning and fosters independence and interest in the classroom. Such well-planned teaching shows an understanding of the pupils' needs and provides real challenge. When planning is less successful, pupils are not always challenged to think for themselves and a lack of pace limits pupil progress. At its most successful, the teaching incorporates a wide variety of support which enables all pupils to learn. The best marking and assessment is of a high standard. Less effective marking does not make clear to pupils what they need to do to improve. The autonomy given to individual departments by the school assessment and marking policy to define their own marking and assessment policies results in inconsistency. Many pupils are given grades and marks, but the data is not then formally or consistently used to aid pupil monitoring and inform teaching across the school. Pupil self-assessment is used to good effect at times and it is emerging as a useful tool which enables pupils to develop an understanding of what they have to do to improve their work and to take responsibility for their learning.
- 3.15 Subject knowledge is often good amongst teaching staff and this considerable expertise is used well to aid pupil learning. In much teaching a wide range of methods is used to stimulate pupils to think for themselves and to come to their own conclusions but as yet some teaching lacks this variety, limiting progress. The interactive whiteboards are used well in much teaching to access useful resources and to involve pupils fully. Whilst some staff and pupils enthused about the opportunities provided by the availability of tablet computers for use in lessons, the use of the good resources provided for ICT is not fully developed. The library is used well both by teachers and pupils in supporting learning in individual subjects.
- 3.16 In interviews pupils with SEND spoke about the effective support they receive and gave very positive feedback on the progress they have made. There is inconsistency in the teaching of pupils with EAL. Some support is very well directed but help in preparation for exams other than EAL is limited. Pupils expressed their view that the help they receive in teaching is not tailored to meet their needs.
- 3.17 Some teaching shows inspirational ability to challenge the most able and uses individual tasks well to provide particular stretch and challenge, but the planning for the most able is not consistently good across all teaching. A small number of parents raised this area as a concern in the parents' questionnaire and the inspection found provision inconsistent. The school makes excellent provision to meet the requirements of pupils with statements of special educational needs.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The quality of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good.
- 4.2 The pupils' spiritual awareness is good, underpinned by the school's strong Christian principles which are fundamental in shaping the pupils' spiritual development. Whole school assemblies, often prepared and presented by the pupils, cover a wide range of topics encouraging pupils to reflect both on their own lives and on their beliefs. All pupils study the GCSE short course in religious studies (RS), which covers the tenets of both Christianity and Islam; this challenges the pupils to think about some difficult issues about belief and faith and they respond thoughtfully and articulately, developing their own opinions and exploring the ideas of others. The school has recently established a Christian Union which further encourages pupils to explore aspects of religion. A quiet room is used for prayer or silent reflection for pupils and staff. The strong quality of the pastoral relationships between staff and pupils contributes significantly to the pupils' sense of self-esteem and self-worth. Pupils now feel valued as individuals, fulfilling the recommendation given in the previous inspection report.
- 4.3 The pupils' moral awareness is well developed and they have a good sense of right and wrong. They show understanding of and consideration for the feelings of others. Moral and ethical awareness is fostered successfully through many school activities, especially in whole school assemblies and during lessons such as RS, history and English. In an RS lesson small groups of younger pupils thoughtfully discussed the issues of scientific evidence and religious belief as they prepared posters to show their understanding. The PSHE programme developed within the school contributes to pupils' moral understanding through the many topics which are discussed and where opinions and ideas can be explored.
- 4.4 Many activities contribute to the strong social development of pupils. The value of service is widely recognised and appreciated. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their personal qualities. Leadership qualities are fostered by the house structure, for example the head of each house leads house assemblies once a fortnight. Members of Year 12 working as prefects for Year 7 help the new pupils settle in the school and become strong role models for them. Pupils greatly enjoy social events with other schools. Pupils show concern for others beyond the school community, a notable example being a recent contribution to fund-raising for Comic Relief. Each form raises funds for a chosen charity. Assemblies to promote these ventures are presented by pupils and show good research, awareness of the needs of others and presentation skills. Involvement in the local community includes sixth formers undertaking voluntary work. Involvement in the DofE award and the CCF also enable girls to offer service to the community and develop leadership skills. These activities all contribute further to the pupils' feelings of being valued.
- 4.5 The cultural development of pupils is strong. Pupils develop happy relationships with pupils of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds within the school community. Festivals in other cultures and faiths are celebrated, for example, by a visit to London's China Town at Chinese New Year. Pupils are proud of their work in art exploring influences from their own and other cultural traditions. Visits to both local and national art galleries and theatres as well as studies in English and other

literatures enable pupils to experience and develop an understanding of Western cultural traditions.

- 4.6 The quality of pupils' personal development is good, maintaining the standard achieved in the previous inspection.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is good.

4.8 The good quality of pastoral care is well supported by regular pastoral staff meetings with the result that pupils, including those with SEND, feel safe and valued in accordance with the aims of the school and develop well personally. As yet the pastoral meetings are not linked to any academic monitoring taking place in the school and do not have any input from boarding staff, which limits their value for ensuring the boarders' care. Relationships between staff and pupils are generally strong and have improved since the previous inspection. Sixth-form pupils reported that staff 'go the extra mile' to support them. Pupils demonstrate mutual respect and different age groups get on well. Year 7 pupils value those members of the sixth form who act as their mentors.

4.9 The quality of the food provided is excellent and pupils thoroughly enjoy it. Encouraged by the PSHE programme pupils develop healthy attitudes to eating and exercise, and enjoy games and activities. The new fitness room encourages pupils to take exercise and develop good habits for the future.

4.10 The school has effective procedures to promote good behaviour. In the pupil questionnaire a small minority of pupils indicated that they feel the application of rewards and sanctions is unfair. The evidence gathered during the inspection does not support this. The system of rewards and sanctions is understood by pupils and in the view of the inspection team is applied fairly although incidents of low-level inappropriate behaviour are not always dealt with effectively according to the school's procedures. The school has effective strategies to guard against bullying. A few pupils indicated that bullying and personal relationship issues exist. Inspection evidence shows that the school provides careful support and monitoring and meticulous recording in this area. In interviews pupils said they feel safe, that few incidents of bullying occur, that they knew who to turn to and that issues were dealt with quickly and effectively by the school. The school provides well for pupils with SEND in its procedures to promote good behaviour.

4.11 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

4.12 The school seeks the pupils' opinions through the school forum and as a result a number of changes have been implemented. Pupils feel that the forum provides them with a voice in the school. Elected representatives attend the monthly forum meetings with members of the senior management team (SMT) and the catering manager. Pupils feel that their views are taken seriously and that discussion at the forum results in improvements. In questionnaire responses a minority of pupils said that they did not feel they were asked for their views, the inspection team judged that the forum gives a good opportunity for pupils to be consulted and to offer their views.

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 Arrangements for welfare, health and safety have improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- 4.15 The safeguarding arrangements have full regard to official guidance. The safeguarding policy and procedures, and safe employment procedures meet all the requirements and are fully implemented. Staff have been trained at appropriate levels and intervals according to their levels of responsibility for safeguarding in the school. The induction process includes child protection training for all new staff. Pupils who hold senior positions in the school are advised of the issues relating to child protection so that they can discharge their responsibilities.
- 4.16 All necessary measures are in place to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. The fire service has recently undertaken a fire report and also paid a familiarisation visit. Professional advisors assess health and safety provision and the school implements their guidance. Meticulous arrangements are in place to ensure high standards of health and safety. Regular risk assessments, checks and maintenance are carefully recorded.
- 4.17 The school has a well-staffed medical centre which makes excellent provision for sick or injured pupils and includes both a surgery and five-bedded sick bay. There is access to counselling services and pupils can contact the independent listener who also provides counselling support.
- 4.18 The admissions and attendance registers are properly maintained and stored for at least the required three years.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.19 The quality of boarding is good.
- 4.20 Outcomes for younger boarders are good and in the sixth form they are excellent. Older boarders have a good standard of personal development, becoming confident, articulate and mature individuals who make decisions for themselves. Their behaviour is good, showing consideration for others. In general, boarders regard their house as their home and they enjoy personalising their rooms. The boarders' representatives express their views at the school forum, and have recently secured several popular changes. In interviews, younger boarders said they would welcome more opportunities to give their views and the school has begun to make this possible in revised arrangements for boarding. Some younger boarders expressed the view that their rules are too restrictive; the inspection judged this to be a fair view as the rules limit the opportunities for these younger boarders to become independent and take responsibility. Sixth-form boarders value their freedom and the opportunities to take more responsibility for themselves in preparation for university life. Older boarders are active and effective in leadership roles; the senior boarder and boarding representative take their responsibilities seriously and make positive contributions to the welfare of younger boarders. Relationships between boarders and with boarding staff are usually harmonious and constructive. The school is a comfortable multi-cultural community; however boarders who join the school with very limited English take time to integrate into boarding life. The school is aware of this difficulty and is taking steps to support their future rapid integration.

Boarders understand the importance of keeping fit, healthy and safe and they enjoy most aspects of boarding life.

- 4.21 The quality of boarding provision and care is good. Junior boarders are well cared for, kept safe and generally have good relationships with staff. In the sixth-form, pastoral arrangements are excellent; staff build strong relationships with the boarders, giving highly effective support to their academic and social development. In the questionnaire responses some boarders indicated that they did not know who to turn to if they were unhappy. The inspection evidence shows that the boarders know that staff and older peers are available to them if problems arise and they are aware of the Independent Listener, as recommended in the last boarding report. Telephone numbers are displayed for appropriate helplines. The medical centre, supervised by suitably qualified, full-time staff, provides excellent 24-hour care for boarders. Medicines and care plans are meticulously administered and boarders who are ill are well cared for in the bright and airy sick bay. Appropriate risk assessments are recorded for boarders who are judged to be competent to self-medicate. Suitably trained staff provide additional care in first aid. The school doctor runs a weekly surgery and the school works successfully with outside agencies.
- 4.22 Boarders enjoy a choice from nutritious menus, and the themed meals on Saturday evenings and the weekend brunch are particularly popular. Specific dietary requirements are carefully catered for and food committee requests have been adopted. In questionnaire responses some boarders said that they were not happy with evening snacks, the inspection found that plentiful snacks, and hot and cold drinks are provided in the houses. Some dissatisfaction was expressed about the activities provided; the inspection found that boarders are consulted about plans for evening and weekend activities and at the time of the inspection were greatly looking forward to going paintballing. They also have access to school facilities for recreation, including the fitness suite, the gym, the art and music studios and ICT rooms. Boarders have plenty of self-directed time and enjoy relaxing and playing games in the attractive grounds. The adventure trail in the woods is a highlight for younger boarders. Boarding houses are comfortable and secure, bedrooms are well-furnished and washrooms are suitable for the numbers of boarders living in the houses. There is good provision for private study, in bedrooms for older boarders and in classrooms and the ICT suites for the younger boarders. Boarders keep in contact with their families by telephone, email or video links but at the time of the inspection a number mentioned the weak internet connection in the boarding houses. Boarders have access to the ICT suites during the evenings and at weekends where good connections are available.
- 4.23 The effectiveness of arrangements for welfare and safeguarding is excellent. All the required policies and procedures are in place and are fully implemented. All the recommendations of the previous boarding report including those relating to medical care and the safe recruitment of staff have been met in full. Policies and procedures for recruitment of staff are rigorous and all appropriate checks are made. Safeguarding training of house staff and support staff is up to date. Effective measures are in place to ensure that the boarders' areas are accessible only to them. Assessment of risk for all boarding areas and recreational facilities is meticulous. Detailed risk assessments are undertaken for all activities and external trips. Full records of risk assessments are kept. Boarders said that any, infrequent, incidents of bullying were dealt with promptly. Positive measures to counter cyber-bullying are in also in place. In the pupil questionnaires, approximately half the responses indicated that boarders felt that staff are not fair, however in all

discussions boarders stated that they feel the house system of cluster groups for rewards and sanctions works well for praising good behaviour and deterring misdemeanours, and encourages boarders to mix more readily with other year groups when participating in house activities and at dinner on Sunday evenings. The boarders said that the differences in the routines of the two houses were the area they felt not to be fair.

- 4.24 The leadership and management of boarding is sound, but it is inconsistent across the two houses. In general, the boarding houses run smoothly. Some self-evaluation that has taken place has resulted in appropriate developments, but these have not been implemented consistently. At the time of the inspection, measures were being implemented to re-structure and strengthen the development of boarding. All the current policies and procedures meet requirements. The school communicates efficiently with parents, through house handbooks and email contact when needed. The parental questionnaires indicate that the majority are satisfied with the boarding provision. A few indicated that that they did not agree that their child enjoys boarding, that boarding helped their progress and development or that boarding was well run. The inspection evidence does not support this view of management and shows that the boarders are happy and getting on well with their school lives. Some aspects of arrangements to integrate boarders with EAL are limited in effectiveness. In their responses a small minority of boarders expressed concerns about making contact with families and keeping belongings safe. The inspection evidences shows that the difficulties in contacting families are largely related to time differences and that boarders have lockable storage for their belongings or are encouraged to hand valuables to staff for safe keeping. The school has implemented the recommendations made in the last Ofsted boarding report and has made significant progress in improving the boarding provision.

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 provides effective oversight of the school through direct contact and through the work of a range of committees which provide good links between staff and governors. These committees support the governing body in discharging its responsibilities in a number of areas including educational standards; the recently formed welfare and education committee has been set up to further this oversight. As yet, although there is no governor appointed with specific responsibility for boarding matters, these currently are overseen suitably within the remit of the welfare and education committee and the full board. Careful financial planning enables investment in staff and in accommodation with a number of projects and refurbishments completed since the previous inspection. The governors ensure that the school is provided with excellent resources which support the pupils' good academic achievement and personal development.
- 5.3 The governing body has a good insight into the working of the school, gained from reports to the full board and to committees and from effective minutes of meetings. The school has an annual Governors' Day during which the governors spend the day in the school. Some governors visit the school frequently and meet the staff both formally and informally, seeing the working of the school at first hand. As yet there is no formal programme for such visits by the governors but they are aware of many aspects of the work of the school. The governors' strategic plan identifies areas for development of the school and provides well-directed challenge and stimulus to the senior team.
- 5.4 The governing body is effective in discharging its responsibilities for statutory requirements, including the annual review of safeguarding and child protection arrangements throughout the school.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is good.
- 5.6 A new leadership team has been appointed with a two-tier structure of senior leadership and senior management teams which has strengthened the various functions of management in the school. New senior leaders have a clear vision for the future which is fully supported by the governors, in accordance with the aims of the school. They provide energy and direction with well-defined roles and responsibilities in place, and high standards are evident in all areas of the daily operational running of the school. The team has moved into the next phase of formal development planning, and has begun to address the need for further development of management roles to ensure comprehensive and rigorous policy implementation and monitoring.
- 5.7 The new leadership team has begun to establish self-evaluation throughout the school but this is at an early stage. A number of specific priorities have been set as a result of initial self-evaluation; these include monitoring of teaching, a whole-school tracking system, and the creation of a comprehensive school development plan.

The development plan is not currently in place in a form which includes the priorities for the next stage of the school's development, appropriate actions, timescales for completion and allocation of responsibilities. Available assessment data has begun to be collated in preparation for formal tracking of the pupils' progress, effort and pastoral welfare as a basis for monitoring progress and to inform teachers' planning but these structures are not yet consistent. Current departmental planning is inconsistent; the best includes self-evaluation and plans for development but this is not the practice in all departments, including boarding.

- 5.8 Implementation of the recommendation of the previous inspection that all teachers should follow the school's teaching policy to bring all teaching to the level of the very best has begun. A number of specific training sessions and initiatives have taken place with the result that improvements have been achieved in extending teaching in order to encourage pupils as independent learners and thinkers. Some inconsistencies remain in the implementation of the school's teaching, assessment and marking policies and fully effective monitoring has not yet been implemented.
- 5.9 The senior team is highly effective in the discharge of its responsibilities for safeguarding pupils. The school is staffed by well-qualified and experienced teachers who are suitably trained for their roles in meeting the needs of all children, including safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. The centralised register of appointments is well maintained. All appropriate checks are made to ensure the suitability of staff and governors to work with children.
- 5.10 The quality of the links with parents, guardians and carers are excellent. The responses to the parental questionnaire indicate a high level of support from parents for the school and this has improved since the previous inspection. A very high proportion of parents indicated that they hold the education provided by the school in high regard, including the progress made by their child, the range of subjects and areas of experience provided, and the information received from the school. They feel that their children are happy and feel safe at the school, and that information about the school is readily available. Parents feel that the school responds in a timely fashion to their questions and that concerns are dealt with well. The relationship between the school and the parents is a constructive one, and records show that concerns are handled with care and in accordance with the published procedures. Careful records are kept of concerns expressed to the school and the measures taken to resolve complaints, as required by the complaints procedure. These records show that concerns and complaints are properly dealt with in line with the published procedures.
- 5.11 Parents receive a wide range of publications from the school and are invited to many different events in the school calendar, ranging from matches, drama productions and concerts to information evenings, most recently a meeting to inform parents about the work experience opportunity for Year 10. The parent email system provides easy contact and a new online service enables parents and pupils to access homework set and resources online.
- 5.12 Parents and prospective parents are provided with all the required information about the school. In addition they receive a wide range of publications from the school, including newsletters and handbooks and the website is regularly updated with current information about the school and the activities of the pupils.
- 5.13 Parents receive clear and useful termly reports about their children's work and progress, and a brief report is sent to parents at the first half term. Parental

involvement is supported by many opportunities to meet with staff, both formally and informally, to discuss their child's work and progress.

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