



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**BROMSGROVE SCHOOL**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Bromsgrove School

The preparatory and pre-preparatory schools were inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School	<b>Bromsgrove School</b>
DfE Number	<b>885/6006</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>527450</b>
Address	<b>Bromsgrove School Worcester Road Bromsgrove Worcestershire B61 7DU England</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01527 579679</b>
Fax Number	<b>01527 576177</b>
Email Address	<b>pruben@bromsgrove-school.co.uk</b>
Headmaster	<b>Mr Peter Clague</b>
Chairman of Governors	<b>Mr Stewart Towe</b>
Age Range	<b>13 to 19</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>935</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (537 boys; 398 girls)</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total: <b>501</b>
Number of Boarders	Total: <b>434</b>
	Full: <b>368</b> Weekly: <b>66</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>26 Jan 2016 to 29 Jan 2016</b>

## PREFACE

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

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*. The inspection on which the report is based took place over a period of four continuous days in the school.

The previous ISI boarding intermediate inspection was in March 2014 and the previous ISI standard inspection was in March 2010.

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 children aged under two), 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 two 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

Mr Paul Spillane	Reporting Inspector
Mr Richard Batchelor	Team Inspector (Director of Studies, IAPS school)
Mr Paul Bevis	Team Inspector (Headteacher, ISA school)
Mrs Penny Forsyth	Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Susan Gorham	Team Inspector (Head, GSA school)
Dr Haydn Griffiths	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Mrs Jane Grubb	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Gareth Lloyd	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Mrs Susan Manser	Team Inspector (Head, ISA school)
Dr Tracey Martin	Team Inspector (Former Senior Teacher, HMC school)
Mr Alistair Telfer	Team Inspector (Head of Science, ISA school)
Mrs Linda Smallwood	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mr Karl Wilding	Team Inspector for Boarding (Deputy Headmaster, HMC school)
Mr Simon Wilson	Team Inspector for Boarding (Headmaster, HMC school)

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(a) Main findings</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(b) Action points</b>	<b>3</b>
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
(ii) Recommendation for further improvement	3
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>4</b>
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning	4
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c) The contribution of teaching	6
<b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>8</b>
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	8
(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care	9
(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	10
(d) The quality of boarding	10
<b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>13</b>
(a) The quality of governance	13
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	13

## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Bromsgrove School is a day and boarding school for boys and girls between the ages of 13 and 19. The school is part of an educational charity, governed by its trustees, which includes Bromsgrove Preparatory and Pre-Preparatory Schools, which underwent an ISI integrated inspection at the same time as this inspection, with a separate report published.
- 1.2 Founded in 1553, Bromsgrove School has occupied its present 100-acre site in the market town of Bromsgrove, 15 miles south of the city of Birmingham, since 1693. The school was one of the fourteen founding members of the Headmasters' Conference in 1869. The preparatory and pre-preparatory schools, catering for pupils below the age of 13, occupy separate buildings on an adjacent site. Boarders are accommodated in one of five houses; two for boys and two for girls, together with a mixed house for sixth form boarders. Since the previous inspection, two of the boarding houses have been completely rebuilt, another has been extended and the other two have been refurbished. Major refurbishments have also been undertaken for the six day houses, the science laboratories and the dining hall. A new sports centre and gymnasium have been built. The headmaster took up his appointment in September 2014.
- 1.3 Of the 935 pupils in the school, 434 are boarders, 250 boys and 184 girls, of whom 66 are weekly boarders and 317 are international boarders, coming from over 40 different countries. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plan. The school has identified 70 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive specialist learning support. English is an additional language (EAL) for 339 pupils, 186 of whom receive extra help with English language skills. The ability profile of Years 9 to 11 is above the national average. The ability profile of the sixth form is above the national average for pupils in sixth form education.
- 1.4 The school's stated aims are to produce happy, creative, moral citizens who live motivated, fulfilled lives whilst enriching the lives of others. It seeks to achieve these aims through an enlightened, disciplined and broad education that responds to global change while retaining core values. The school endeavours to foster in its pupils humility and confidence, compassion and ambition, respect and curiosity, and tolerance and vision.
- 1.5 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 NC equivalence are shown in the following table.

School	NC name
Lower Fourth	Year 9
Upper Fourth	Year 10
Fifth Form	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

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

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

- 2.1 Successful in meeting its stated aims, the school gives its pupils an excellent all-round education. The excellent academic curriculum is unusually broad, providing pupils with a wide range of courses at GCSE and, particularly, in the sixth form. Excellent teaching, together with pupils' positive attitude to their studies, leads to good and often rapid progress at all levels and substantial academic achievement: most sixth-form leavers proceed to degree courses at universities with exacting entry standards. The school has effectively responded to the recommendation in the previous inspection report in identifying best practice in teaching and sharing this extensively across all curricular areas. It should ensure that the marking of pupils' work is of uniformly high quality. Pupils achieve high levels of success across a very wide range of extra-curricular pursuits. Their enthusiastic participation enriches their educational experience and enables them to develop their talents and aptitudes enjoyably and fruitfully. In response to the questionnaire, parents affirmed that they are very pleased with their children's academic progress and with the extra-curricular opportunities.
- 2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent, reflecting the school's highly effective emphasis on their welfare, safeguarding and well-being, as well as the excellent quality of pastoral care. Pupils say they are happy at the school, in accordance with its stated aims; this is corroborated by the parents, who also feel that their children are safe and well looked after. The supportive example set by the staff is mirrored in the way pupils behave towards one another. Relationships are excellent throughout the school. Pupils grow strongly in self-assurance and emotional maturity. Proud of their school, they conduct themselves in a courteous and friendly way; the general movement around the school is purposeful, calm and civilised. Parents commend the high standards of behaviour, and the rare instances of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively. Boarding provision is excellent and parents are very pleased with all aspects of it. Boarders get on very well together. In response to the recommendations of the previous boarding report, the school ensures that boarders' views are regularly sought about the food and the management of meal times, and a consistent routine has been established for informing the health centre when household remedies are dispensed in houses.
- 2.3 The school's success is testimony to the high quality of governance, leadership and management. Ambitious but realistic development plans look imaginatively to the future, while the school runs smoothly and efficiently. Teaching and pastoral staff of high calibre put the best interests of the pupils at the heart of their work. The support staff maintain and present the extensive premises in excellent condition. The school enjoys excellent relations with parents, who, with a few reservations about the manner in which concerns are handled, on the whole express great satisfaction with the education which their children are receiving.

## **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 2015.

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

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
1. Ensure that the marking of all pupils' work is brought up to a consistently high standard.

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

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The school is highly successful in fulfilling its aim to produce pupils with strong creativity, morality, motivation and self-discipline, who enjoy learning. A well-developed atmosphere of mutual respect throughout the school fosters pupils' interest, understanding, reasoning and application.
- 3.3 Pupils have high standards of individual achievement. They develop their knowledge and understanding, frequently in excess of national expectations for pupils of their age, achieving excellence in many aspects of their studies. Pupils write fluently, using a wide vocabulary and taking pride in the presentation of their work. They are articulate in discussion and explain their thinking cogently. When given the opportunity, pupils show an excellent ability to think for themselves and to make perceptive deductions. Pupils are proficient in the application of mathematics, and they make creative and fluent use of information and communication technology (ICT). They benefit from the many opportunities to develop their skills in physical activities.
- 3.4 All pupils, including those with EAL, are highly articulate in written and spoken English. Pupils with SEND and EAL achieve consistently at levels equal to their peers. More able pupils demonstrate excellent levels of achievement, as witnessed in their extended project work both in Year 9 and the Sixth Form.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2012 to 2014. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results at GCSE are above the national average for maintained schools, and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. In 2014, results were well above the national average for maintained schools. Results at IGCSE have been higher than worldwide norms, and are broadly similar to the norms for UK schools that enter pupils for IGCSE. Results in EAL examinations were higher than the UK norms. This level of attainment at GCSE, IGCSE and EAL examinations, and standardised measures of progress that are available, indicate that up to GCSE, pupils in Years 9 to 11 make progress that is at least good, and often excellent, in relation to the average of pupils of similar abilities.
- 3.6 Results at A level are well above the national average for maintained schools, and above the national average for maintained selective schools. Results in IB examinations are well above the worldwide average and above the UK average, with the results in 2014 being exceptional. These levels of attainment at A level and in the IB, together with standardised measures of progress that are available, indicate that pupils in the sixth form make progress that is excellent in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. The majority of school leavers transfer successfully to universities with demanding entrance requirements, both in the UK and across the world.
- 3.7 Pupils' extra-curricular achievement is excellent. They are energetic, and often highly successful, sportsmen and women. Pupils achieve well, both individually and collectively, with a significant proportion gaining representative honours in a range of sports and other activities at county, regional and national levels. Each year, large numbers of pupils achieve success in all levels of and fulfilment in such activities as

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE). Pupils perform to a high standard in numerous musical ensembles, including the excellent chapel choir and string orchestra. The debating society recently won a national competition and represented the country in the international finals at the European Youth Parliament.

- 3.8 Pupils have highly positive attitudes to learning and participation. They are diligent, spirited, eager to participate and proud of the high, sometimes exceptional, standards which they achieve. Mature and conscientious learners, they work well together and co-operate willingly, immersing themselves in the many opportunities offered. They listen carefully to their teachers, coaches and to one another, always settling quickly to the task. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is excellent. Their approach contributes significantly to their success and personal development.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.10 The extensive, challenging curriculum covers all the required areas of learning and is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs. It promotes excellent learning, contributing significantly to pupils' high achievements and enables the school to succeed in its stated aims. Almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very satisfied with the range of subjects and experiences on offer.
- 3.11 In Year 9, pupils benefit from a broad range of subjects. Most study two modern foreign languages and, in addition, study Latin or classical civilisation. Pupils may choose from a wide variety of GCSE and IGCSE subjects in Years 10 and 11. In addition, a one-year accelerated learning programme successfully enables international students to gain familiarity with the British educational system prior to entry to the sixth form. Curriculum provision is unusually wide-ranging in Years 12 and 13, where pupils benefit from an excellent choice that includes the IB, A levels or a combined A-level and BTEC programme. Saturday morning support sessions are a valued part of the curricular programme, enabling all pupils to receive appropriate support and extension opportunities closely focused on their needs. Pupils speak very positively about this provision. The programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) is comprehensive and actively promotes fundamental British values. There is balanced coverage of political views in all curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- 3.12 The curriculum fully meets the needs of pupils with SEND, EAL and the more able. Efficiently-organised EAL and SEND departments are highly supportive of pupils. Appropriate and targeted guidance succeeds in enabling pupils to become self-sufficient in English and more independent in their learning. More able pupils greatly benefit from sixth form extension groups and additional learning assignments such as the extended project qualification (EPQ), which provide excellent opportunities for intellectual challenge. A strong and well-resourced careers department provides excellent support and guidance. Pupils value the high-quality learning and resources centre.
- 3.13 An extensive programme of extra-curricular activities enables pupils to develop their social, sporting and cultural abilities and to undertake new challenges. Provision for sport is a strong feature of the school, offering pupils the chance to perform at a high level or to represent the school in teams for those of more modest ability. Other activities include dance, aerobics, yoga and recreational swimming. Pupils benefit

from participation in the wide range of musical, dramatic and artistic opportunities. Debating and astronomy are notable options in an extra-curricular programme, which also includes an on-line school magazine initiated by one of the pupils, a new board games club, a pop choir and a robotics and coding club. These societies enable pupils to develop their particular aptitudes and interests, as well as their oratory and organisational skills.

- 3.14 The ideal of service also features strongly in the extra-curricular programme, with pupils gaining social awareness and maturity through participation in the DofE scheme and the Bromsgrove service programme. All pupils in Year 9 take part in the combined cadet force (CCF) or the *Bromsgrove Badge*, a programme of service to the local community. Foreign links include exchanges with schools in France, Germany and Spain, as well as Bromsgrove International School in Thailand. A rich programme of local and international visits helps to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world. Pupils attend concerts, plays and exhibitions at nearby venues, and recent expeditions abroad have included trips to Asia, South America and , and, during the week of the inspection, a Year 12 group visited the CERN Hadron Collider in Switzerland.

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

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.16 The high standard of teaching fulfils the school's aims, and helps pupils to achieve excellent standards in relation to their abilities. The school has successfully taken steps to develop the variety of teaching strategies and disseminate good practice since the previous inspection, in accordance with its recommendations. Teaching is very well planned, and based on a clear understanding of pupils' needs. Often inspiring, it is imaginative and moves at a brisk pace, with careful management of time. Teachers deploy a wide range of strategies that recognise different learning styles. Many lessons are stimulating and vibrant, and pupils' thinking is keenly challenged and they are required to reason at a high level. Teachers make skilful use of a range of digital technologies and other resources to enhance learning.
- 3.17 Teachers have high expectations of all pupils, helping to promote high levels of effort and progress. Teachers are highly committed and display a strong subject knowledge, which contributes positively to the development of pupils' learning skills. There is an excellent rapport between teachers and pupils, with frequent praise contributing to pupils' enjoyment of lessons. As a result, pupils show resilience in their learning and performance in class, and displaying a high degree of engagement. In a small minority of lessons, pupils have insufficient opportunity to think independently and reflect upon their own learning. Teachers effectively promote tolerance and respect, and do not advocate particular political viewpoints.
- 3.18 Throughout the school, the more able pupils and those with SEND are identified through standardised testing, teacher referral and external reports. The curriculum support department supplies teachers with learning strategies that meet their needs. Teachers also meet the needs of pupils with EAL very effectively. The EAL department provides outstanding support for pupils across the curriculum where students are given expert tuition to allow them to work independently as soon as possible.
- 3.19 In their responses to the questionnaires, pupils were very appreciative of the availability and accessibility of their teachers to help them when they require it,

especially in the Saturday morning sessions which are available for all ages and abilities. Pupils also consider that they are encouraged to learn independently.

- 3.20 The quality of marking of pupils' work is good overall. There are some inconsistencies within and across departments. Most teachers give helpful written and oral feedback. Evidence of this feedback being acted upon by pupils to aid future progress is variable. The school uses nationally standardised data as a baseline from which progress is measured and regularly monitored. A robust system of assessment and tracking collects and analyses data to monitor pupils' progress, and this is used to plan the next steps in pupils' learning.

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

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

- 4.1 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. They display an assured self-confidence and the school's aims are very well met by developing happy, creative and moral citizens who live motivated, fulfilled lives while enriching the lives of others. The chapel is a spiritual centre for many pupils, and regular services, a strong chapel choir and thoughtful presentations enrich the spiritual lives of the whole community. The independence seen in pupils' art work and participation in the performing arts further demonstrates how pupils explore beyond themselves through aesthetic appreciation. Challenging activities such as the DofE scheme and outreach projects, both locally and abroad, provide pupils with a growing sense of their own potential and lead to increased self-assurance and maturity.
- 4.3 The pupils' moral development is excellent. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and a readiness to apply this to their own lives. In PSHEE and religious studies lessons, pupils participate enthusiastically in moral debate and understand the consequences of actions and the need for rules within school and also in the wider global community. The pupils' conduct around school is consistently courteous and polite and poor behaviour is very rare. They understand the importance of English criminal and civil law in governing our society.
- 4.4 The social development of pupils is excellent. They are friendly, confident communicators who demonstrate excellent relationships with each other and with their teachers. They are active members of their community and willingly take on positions of responsibility, for example, as monitors. A small minority of respondents to the pupils' questionnaire stated that they were not given the chance to take on positions of responsibility, and in a school with large year groups there are proportionately fewer opportunities for pupils to be, say, monitors or forum representatives. New pupils are warmly welcomed and supported by older students. Pupils understand what it means to be a good citizen and they involve themselves willingly in the local community. This was seen in the wide range of community projects and charity work that pupils undertake, for example working in care homes for the elderly, supporting children in a local special school and participating in a variety of fund-raising events. Pupils collaborate well in lessons and show respect for one another.
- 4.5 The school successfully promotes British values in a variety of ways. The various school forums generated from the strong house system promote the democratic process and ensure that pupils have a voice. Religious studies lessons develop pupils' understanding and appreciation of a range of faiths. The debating society provides pupils with the opportunity to learn how to argue effectively and defend points of view, and to understand the rule of law and liberty for the individual within a legal framework.
- 4.6 The cultural development of pupils is excellent. With over 40 nationalities represented, the school is a model of harmonious co-existence. Pupils enjoy the range of backgrounds, cultures and faiths, and they appreciate and respect others' beliefs and traditions. The diverse trips abroad encourage an understanding and acceptance of different cultures. Through many initiatives in both lessons and extra-curricular experiences, pupils have a genuine appreciation of global issues and the

wider influences that have shaped British culture and heritage, and appreciate its distinctive institutions and services.

- 4.7 Mature and articulate, pupils benefit from the many opportunities available. They understand their responsibilities to one another and are extremely well prepared for the next stage in their lives.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 Staff throughout the school know their pupils extremely well and are fully committed to the school's aims by providing an enlightened, disciplined and broad education that responds to global change while retaining core values. In questionnaire responses, almost all parents expressed strong appreciation of the pastoral care pupils receive from all staff. All pupils are members of one of the eleven houses, thus ensuring a sense of community and dedicated pastoral care. Pupils say that their tutors treat them as individuals, enabling them to maintain focus on their commitments. Furthermore, pupils benefit from the pastoral care and expertise of the dedicated medical staff, a school counsellor and an independent listener.
- 4.10 Relationships, founded on mutual respect, are excellent across the community. The school is highly successful in maintaining a friendly atmosphere, which enables pupils and staff to enjoy their busy working lives. The conduct of the pupils is excellent, reflecting the commitment of staff, the effectiveness of the pastoral management structures and clear behavioural expectations. Throughout the school, the effective use of rewards and sanctions promotes positive behaviour. The concern registered by a small minority of pupils in response to the questionnaire that teachers are unfair in giving rewards and sanctions is not supported by inspection evidence. Pupils, in discussion, confirmed that teachers are generally fair. The recording of all behaviour, both positive and negative, is comprehensive. The school is effective in minimising harassment and bullying, including cyber-bullying. In the questionnaires, a few pupils and parents felt that the school does not respond to bullying effectively. Inspection evidence, based upon interviews with pupils and staff indicates that such instances are rare and that these are dealt with swiftly and fairly, and this is borne out by the evidence of central records.
- 4.11 Pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and maintaining fitness. The extensive range of extra-curricular activities gives all pupils the opportunity to achieve a high level of fitness. Appropriate plans are in place to improve physical and educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.12 In their questionnaire responses, a minority of pupils said that they do not feel the school listens to their ideas and suggestions. Inspection evidence shows that the school has suitable mechanisms to gather pupils' views, including a recent 'student voice' initiative, the school forum, house forums and suggestion boxes. Interviews with pupils during the inspection indicated they have received a favourable response to concerns and proposals which have been raised.

#### **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 takes all appropriate measures to ensure the welfare, health and safety of its pupils. In this regard, its policies, which include those for safeguarding pupils and eliminating inappropriate discrimination, meet current requirements and are implemented highly effectively. Designated governors have specific oversight of safeguarding and health and safety. The required checks on new staff are carried out and recorded correctly, and on appointment they receive the prescribed induction training. All staff regularly receive the necessary training in aspects of safeguarding and child protection, and this training has most recently covered vigilance regarding the risks of extremism and radicalisation. The pupils themselves are taught about these risks, in the context of wider education about e-safety, cyber-bullying, social media and acceptable use of the internet. Pupils' use of the internet is subject to a range of controls and filters.
- 4.15 All necessary measures are taken to minimise risk from fire and other hazards. Risk assessments are comprehensive and thorough for relevant activities in and out of school, at home and abroad. The site is maintained to a high standard, and any issues are promptly addressed.
- 4.16 The school has a well-equipped and welcoming medical centre, staffed by qualified nurses and a therapeutic dog. Furthermore, 57 members of staff are trained in first aid, 33 to the higher level, and pupils have access to the independent listener and the school counsellor. Pupils who are ill, injured or have SEND are very well provided for. Records of accidents, treatment and medication are accurately maintained; the frequency and nature of accidents is closely monitored by the health and safety committee at its regular meetings.
- 4.17 The admission and attendance registers are accurately completed and kept for the required period. Attendance is closely monitored, with a system of immediate response to a pupil's absence.

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

- 4.18 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.19 The outcomes for boarders are excellent, achieving the school's aims of developing confident, ambitious and tolerant pupils. Boarders are self-disciplined, articulate and respectful of those around them and of the school as a whole. They speak warmly of their boarding experience and are proud of their houses. There is a strong sense of belonging and much respect for their house ethos and values. Pupils demonstrate considerable integrity through their positive behaviour, and care and support of the wider boarding community. This helps to create strong relationships between boarders of all ages. In the questionnaires, most boarders felt that they get on well together in their house.
- 4.20 Boarders also enjoy highly constructive relationships with staff. Within the culturally diverse community, overseas boarders feel welcomed and they integrate extremely well, with cultural differences being appreciated and respected. Pupils contribute much to their houses, whether through duties carried out by younger pupils or as a house monitor. Monitors greatly value their role and are aware of their responsibilities through training and from the clear guidance provided in informative house booklets. Some boarders feel that they do not have an opportunity to voice

their opinions. Inspectors found that there are ample opportunities for pupils to provide their opinions, through questionnaires on food and activity provision, or the regular meetings of the house and school forums.

- 4.21 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. Boarders report that they enjoy living together in a homely environment. Pupils say that they are very well looked after, feel safe and confirm that they have a choice of adults with whom they can discuss personal matters. Contact numbers for helplines, the independent listener and the Children's Commissioner are readily available. Housemothers are considered to be central to the pastoral care provision of a house.
- 4.22 Much of the accommodation has been refurbished to an excellent standard and all of it is well maintained and looked after; boarders and staff highlighted the efficient and quick response of the maintenance department. All boarders have access to washrooms which are clean, well appointed and ensure their privacy, with a number of rooms having en-suite facilities. There is appropriate gender separation by houses and in the co-educational sixth-form house. The boarding houses provide pupils with a variety of attractive social and recreational areas.
- 4.23 Boarders have the opportunity to contact their families with ease through the use of mobile phones and the internet. The medical centre is of high quality, well equipped and comfortable. It is staffed by appropriately qualified personnel and provides 24-hour cover. Robust procedures are in place for housemothers safely to administer and store medicines in the houses. Records are meticulously kept using the centralised information system, available to all house and medical staff in accordance with the recommendation of the previous inspection.
- 4.24 In their responses to the questionnaire, a small minority of boarders were not happy with the balance of free time and activities. In conversations, most pupils did not support this view. Throughout the week and at the weekends, boarders benefit from an extremely wide choice of activities and have access to the school's excellent facilities. Weekend excursions are provided on a whole-school basis with houses also organising their own range of events. On Sundays, boarders enjoy a more flexible regime, with the opportunity to relax or catch up on work.
- 4.25 Boarders have easy access to local shops and are also able to obtain personal and stationery items from the school shop. Laundry arrangements are extremely efficient, as confirmed by the pupils. A small minority of boarders expressed concerns in the questionnaire that their belongings are not safe. Inspectors found that all boarders have access to a lockable space; many were happy not to lock up their possessions as they trusted their peers.
- 4.26 In their questionnaire responses, a large majority of boarders who expressed an opinion felt that the food was not good, while a minority expressed dissatisfaction with afternoon snacks. Inspection evidence found the food provided to be nutritious, plentiful and varied. In discussions, boarders appreciated the renovated dining room and some thought that the food had improved, but this was not a consistent message. In line with the recommendation of the previous inspection, there are a number of ways in which pupils can express their opinions about the food, including a dedicated email address, and the school actively seeks their views. Boarders may prepare their own snacks in house kitchens at certain points in the day. Boarders always have access to drinking water.
- 4.27 The arrangements for boarders' welfare and safeguarding are excellent. Robust procedures ensure that the safety of boarders is promoted and managed effectively.

All the required safeguarding checks on staff have been completed at the time of appointment and the records meticulously kept. The school's anti-bullying and behavioural policies are successfully implemented. Bullying is not identified as a concern by boarders and procedures ensure that the rare incidents are swiftly investigated and resolved. The school's safeguarding policy and procedures are known by all boarding and support staff, governors and senior pupils in leadership roles. Excellent relationships are evident across the community and boarders feel secure and confident that any concerns are taken seriously and dealt with promptly. Every individual is known by staff and their whereabouts are carefully monitored, while still allowing senior boarders appropriate freedom, independence and responsibility for themselves.

- 4.28 The school's database is used effectively for the monitoring of pupils' progress academically, socially and emotionally. Together with effective communications between staff and parents, this contributes to the boarders' happiness, well-being and success. Safe internet use is assured by appropriate electronic systems. The role of all adults living on site is clearly understood. Comprehensive health and safety, risk assessment and fire safety policies and procedures are effectively implemented. Access to houses is carefully controlled by key code entry.
- 4.29 The excellence and effectiveness of the leadership and management of the boarding provision are demonstrated in the quality of the relationships and personal development of the boarders. This reflects the strong relationships between the house staff and their teams. Regular reviews and evaluation inform plans for improvement. The senior manager and houseparents are all highly qualified and committed to regular reflection and review. A new annual evaluation process has recently been instituted and is establishing a more coherent plan for development and improvement. This self-evaluation benefits from the involvement of a dedicated governor and the interest and support of the governing body and senior leaders. All the house staff have job descriptions, induction, mentoring and regular review, and there is a culture of continuing professional development. The questionnaire responses of the boarders' parents were highly positive. Almost all felt that they could contact their child easily, staff know their child well and that boarding is well led and managed.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The governing body exercises effective oversight and is fully committed to supporting the aims and ethos of the school. The governors diligently discharge their responsibilities for educational standards and investment in staff, accommodation and resources throughout the school. They monitor financial resources very closely and take imaginative initiatives to improve the educational provision; one of the governors' annual meetings is devoted solely to strategic planning. The members of the board have a wide range of experience and expertise, and the board includes former pupils of the school as well as parents of current and former pupils.
- 5.3 Governors provide valued support, advice and challenge to senior management, with whom they have frequent informal communication in addition to the annual schedule of formal meetings. These regular meetings of the main board and its sub-committees help to ensure that the governors are well informed about the many facets of school life. Furthermore, governors have specific areas of responsibility, such as safeguarding, risk management and boarding, which entails close liaison with senior members of staff, frequent visits to various parts of the school, meetings with pupils, and a detailed understanding of particular aspects for which they are responsible. Governors attend many events and functions, thus experiencing the day-to-day life of the school and its high points at first hand.
- 5.4 The governors are conscientious and effective in discharging their responsibilities for child protection, welfare, health and safety: a number of them sit on the school's health and safety committee and the whole board annually reviews the safeguarding policies and practices and the efficiency with which they are implemented. New members of the governing body undertake an induction process, and governors keep abreast of current developments and good practice by attending training courses that cover specific areas of their duties and responsibilities.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.6 The executive committee provides a dynamic educational vision which permeates the school community. Leaders are highly successful in creating a strong academic ethos and nurturing pupils' excellent all-round personal development. Calm, positive leadership maintains a clear focus through the ambitious, yet realistic, strategic development plan, which ensures promotion of the best interests of the pupils. This is based upon a realistic self-evaluation, and includes completion of the day house refurbishments, implementation of a wide-ranging digital strategy and the restructuring of the senior management team.
- 5.7 The clear vision developed by the executive committee, effectively supported by the extended leadership team, ensures that all staff understand the school's values, aims and objectives. Carefully constituted working parties take responsibility for

developing key areas of school life, including academic development, pastoral care and the extra-curricular programme. This enables the staff to be involved in decision-making and contribute to strategic planning, and shows leaders respect for the opinions of others, and the democratic process.

- 5.8 Excellent provision for professional development of staff has focused, in line with the recommendation of the previous inspection, on further improving teaching and learning, in order to enable pupils to demonstrate greater intellectual ambition and curiosity, and this is a continuing process. Staff track pupil progress against benchmarks and employ a wide range of teaching approaches to provide increased challenge and extension opportunities. A number of related initiatives, such as the extended learning assignment in Year 9, have been introduced, resulting in some excellent practice which is not yet fully and consistently implemented across all departments. Continuing curriculum review has led to an increased range of options for pupils at the school, such as the introduction of BTEC and greatly increased participation in the EPQ.
- 5.9 Members of the leadership team regularly visit the houses in order to evaluate the quality of care and welfare. Excellent management by support staff ensures that welfare, health and safety procedures are efficiently managed, and that the premises are maintained to a very high standard.
- 5.10 All classroom teachers receive formal appraisal at regular intervals. The head of department normally observes lessons, reviewing information from house and extra-curricular appraisals, pupil survey results and the appraisee's self-evaluation. The whole process being completed by an interview with the headmaster. All senior staff are also formally appraised, as is the headmaster, whose annual appraisal is conducted by members of the governing body.
- 5.11 The school is successful in recruiting suitably trained staff of high calibre. A rigorous recruitment process ensures that all staff employed at the school have undergone the required statutory checks for their suitability to work with children before taking up employment, and appropriate records are kept. Once appointed, staff undertake thorough induction. Policies are monitored closely and implemented effectively. The procedures for safeguarding are efficiently managed and thoroughly monitored. Staff are fully aware of and understand their roles in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety, including their obligation to educate pupils about the risks of radicalisation and extremism.
- 5.12 The school enjoys highly constructive relationships with parents. No areas of dissatisfaction were raised by significant numbers of parents, except that a very small minority felt that their concerns were not well handled. The school's complaints procedure complies with requirements, and formal complaints are carefully and professionally addressed, with full records kept.
- 5.13 The school provides the required information for parents of both current and prospective pupils. Pupils and parents new to the school receive helpful information and guidance, and thereafter useful advice about subject choices at appropriate stages. In their responses to the questionnaire, a few parents expressed dissatisfaction about the way in which the school reports pupils' progress. Inspectors found that regular and informative reports about the progress of their children are complemented by regular parents' meetings. Pupils and their parents welcome the list of awards and achievements which introduces the reports, and the telling graph of effort grades over time displays clear trends. The school provides

effective communication through social messaging, the weekly e-newsletter, the three-weekly on-line news review, the end-of-term letter and a comprehensive, informative school website.

- 5.14 Parents have many opportunities to be actively involved in the life of the school. They are invited to the multitude of sports fixtures, plays, concerts and exhibitions, as well as other school functions. The parents' association actively supports the school through social events and fund-raising for such facilities as the school's automated weather station.

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