



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

BRYANSTON SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Bryanston School

Full Name of School	Bryanston School
DfE Number	835/6005
Registered Charity Number	306210
Address	Bryanston School Bryanston Blandford Forum Dorset DT11 0PX England
Telephone Number	01258 452411
Fax Number	01258 484657
Email Address	sej@bryanston.co.uk
Head	Ms Sarah Thomas
Chair of Governors	Mr Robin Pegna
Age Range	13 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	687
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (384 boys; 303 girls)
Numbers by Age	13-16: 404 16-18: 283
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 83
Number of Boarders	Total: 604
	Full: 604 Weekly: 0
Inspection Dates	22 Sep 2015 to 25 Sep 2015

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 2015. The range of these Regulations can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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 October 2012 and the previous ISI intermediate inspection was in March 2011.

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 the chair of governors and governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Elaine Brook	Reporting Inspector
Mr Shaun Fenton	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Mr Tim Jenkins	Team Inspector (Head of Department, HMC school)
Dr Tracey Martin	Team Inspector (Senior Teacher, HMC school)
Mr Jonathan Reddin	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Dr Andrew Storey	Team Inspector (Director of ICT, HMC school)
Dr Timothy Stubbs	Team Inspector (Second Master, HMC school)
Mr Kenneth Underhill	Team Inspector (Headmaster, ISA school)
Mr John Watson	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Mrs Sally Cunliffe	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mr Paul Johnstone	Team Inspector for Boarding (Head of House, state boarding school)
Ms Suzanne Thomas-Webb	Team Inspector for Boarding (Deputy Head Pastoral, HMC school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Located near the market town of Blandford Forum in Dorset, Bryanston School is a boarding and day school, offering an independent education for boys and girls between the ages of thirteen and eighteen. Originally admitting boys, it became fully co-educational in 1975. The school is a registered educational charity, governed by a Council of Management, which has proprietorial responsibility. There are nineteen members, most of whom are former pupils or parents. Day-to-day management is delegated to the head, who has been in post since 2005.
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1928 by J G Jeffreys, whose educational philosophy derived from the Dalton System. This emphasises equipping pupils with the skills to be resourceful and creative by working independently, guided by a tutor. The principles of this system remain central to the school's ethos. It aims to develop well-balanced pupils who will go on to lead happy and fulfilling lives and contribute positively and generously to the community. It plans to do this by providing every pupil with a programme tailored to their needs, so that they receive the individual academic and pastoral encouragement to achieve their full potential. Through the provision of a rich and diverse academic curriculum and activities programme, the school believes that pupils will flourish and excel. Since the previous inspection, the school has introduced the International Baccalaureate (IB) into the sixth-form programme.
- 1.3 The school occupies a 400-acre site. Pupils are accommodated in the original mansion house as well as in a range of additional purpose-built boarding houses and academic facilities. On arrival, all pupils, including day pupils, are allocated to one of twelve boarding houses. Year 9 boys are accommodated in one of two junior boarding houses, transferring to one of five senior houses in Year 10. Girls are allocated to one of five boarding houses containing all-age groups.
- 1.4 A total of 687 pupils attend the school of whom 604 are boarders. There are 404 pupils in Years 9 to 11, 228 boys and 176 girls. There are 156 boys and 127 girls in the sixth form. The majority of pupils come from professional and business families and are of white British origin. Pupils, mainly boarders, who originate from overseas come from a wide range of countries. Day pupils mostly live within a 25-mile radius of the school. The school retains its Christian heritage but accepts pupils of all faiths or none.
- 1.5 The overall ability profile is above the national average, with most pupils having at least above average ability. The ability profile of the sixth form is slightly above the national average, with a fairly wide spread of abilities represented. Few pupils have ability that is below average. The school has identified 231 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 137 receive additional support. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. There are 49 pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL), of whom 21 receive support.

- 1.6 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
D	Year 9
C	Year 10
B	Year 11
A3/IB1	Year 12
A2/IB2	Year 13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Bryanston School is highly successful in meeting its aims to explore and develop the individual talents of pupils to achieve their potential. The quality of pupils' achievements is excellent, evident in outcomes from examinations, in lessons and in other activities. Pupils make notable progress in understanding, knowledge and skills. The quality of teaching is excellent and enables pupils to make good or more commonly rapid progress as they mature. A small number of class lessons in Years 9 and 10 were over-reliant on teacher direction so that more able pupils were insufficiently challenged. The emphasis on individual support for older pupils contributes strongly to their overall achievements and is a significant strength. From Year 11, pupils value highly the individual support they receive and recognise its contribution to their success. The curriculum is wide-ranging and suitable for all ages, abilities and needs. It successfully combines academic studies with an exceptionally wide-ranging extra-curricular programme enabling pupils to pursue their interests and excel in their chosen activity.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent; they show outstanding levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and a growing understanding of British values such as democracy, the rule of law and tolerance of diversity. The relationship between staff and pupils is warm and supportive, characterised by an exceptional level of individual support and guidance. Arrangements to promote pupils' welfare are excellent and the management of health, safety and safeguarding is highly efficient. Arrangements to recruit staff comply with all current regulations, which is an improvement from the previous inspection. The high-quality boarding experience is a strength; pupils and parents agree that the school is their term-time home.
- 2.3 The successful fulfilment of the school's aims and the continuance of the founding ethos reflects the excellence of governance. Governors have strong links to the school and bring a range of appropriate expertise to their role. They discharge effectively their responsibilities for monitoring educational standards and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. The strong direction and clear leadership from senior managers contributes significantly to the school's success. At all levels, managers are highly committed to promoting the school's unique ethos based on the Dalton plan of education. Regulatory policies are updated regularly and implemented effectively. The development plan is focused on continuing improvement and closely linked to the school's aims. Pastoral leadership is strong and the pupils' wellbeing is carefully monitored. The formal monitoring of teaching and learning is inconsistent across all departments so that the recommendation from the previous inspection to share the best teaching strategies within the school has only partially been met. The school's extremely good relations with parents are apparent in the overwhelmingly positive responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Parents believe that the school is well led and managed and almost all expressed great satisfaction with the education and care received by their children.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2015.
- 2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Strengthen departmental appraisal and the monitoring of teaching and learning by academic managers.
 2. Increase the intellectual challenge for the most able pupils in Years 9 and 10.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievement and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The school successfully achieves its aims to enable pupils to explore and develop their individual talents and so achieve their potential. Their high level of success is seen not only in most lessons but also in the wide-ranging activities in which they engage, individually and collaboratively. Pupils are extremely articulate and write fluently. They speak and write confidently in several languages. Pupils excel in creative subjects; their levels of achievement in art and music are high, evident in the imaginative displays and in the accomplished choral singing observed during the inspection. They have a well-developed understanding of mathematical concepts and can think logically and systematically to solve a problem. Their scientific understanding is equally strong. They are proficient in their use of technology and are able to use sophisticated software to extend their learning effectively. Their physical development is excellent, enhanced by extensive opportunities to participate in a wide range of sports and related activities.
- 3.3 Pupils have an excellent measure of success outside the classroom because activities extend well into the evening when they benefit from participation in an extensive range of academic, cultural and sporting pursuits. Talented pupils attain exceptional standards in a wide range of sports, competing at county level or higher. Pupils are equally successful in other endeavours, receiving, for example, scholarships for design and engineering and being awarded gold in the British Biology Olympiad. They enjoy a high level of success in drama and dance. In team games, the pupils' success is notable. In netball and hockey, for example, they are currently North Dorset champions, whilst in kayaking, they were one of the youngest ever teams to complete the Devizes to Westminster race.
- 3.4 Pupils with SEND achieve consistently at a level commensurate with their peers because of the high level of individual care they receive. Similarly, the small number of pupils with EAL achieve excellent levels of literacy and numeracy because of the focused support they receive. Most able and gifted pupils achieve distinction in their academic work, although the level of challenge they are given is inconsistent across all subjects. They are encouraged to pursue their own interests beyond the curriculum at a high level.
- 3.5 The following analysis of examination attainment is based on the three- year period from 2012 to 2014, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. Results in GCSE were above the national average for maintained schools and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. Results in IGCSE were higher than world-wide averages in English, ICT and science, being similar to other UK schools that enter pupils. Results at A-level have been above the national average for maintained selective schools. In 2013, results were well above the national average. Girls' performance is consistently higher than boys, being well above the national average for girls in maintained schools. In 2015, almost a quarter of pupils attained A* or A in eight or more subjects. At A level, the majority of pupils gained A* to C grades. Pupils taking IB achieved an average score of 34 points, with two pupils achieving 41 out of a maximum 45 points.
- 3.6 This level of attainment, taken with the high quality of teaching and standardised measures of progress, indicates that pupils make progress that is good up to GCSE

and high at A level, in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Evidence gained from pupils' performance in lessons, from a scrutiny of their work and through discussions confirms that pupils of all abilities make at least good or more commonly rapid progress as they move through the school. In recent years, almost all pupils have proceeded to degree courses, many to universities both in the UK and abroad with demanding entry requirements.

- 3.7 Pupils' attitudes to their work are outstanding, characterised by an ability to evaluate and improve their performance. They achieve excellent standards because they are focused and motivated. In their responses to the questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of parents and pupils were pleased with the progress.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 High quality and wide-ranging academic provision covers all of the required areas of learning and is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs. It imaginatively combines academic and creative studies with a stimulating extra-curricular programme to successfully fulfil the school's aim to enable pupils to flourish and excel. Almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very satisfied with the range of subjects and experiences, and pupils agree that the school provides well for the development of new interests.
- 3.10 In Years 9 and 10, the curriculum is broad and balanced, provided by specialist teachers. It includes at least two modern foreign languages. Ready availability of media and technology is a strength, well used to aid research and make exciting displays and presentations. From Year 10, pupils benefit from a wide and varied selection of options from which to make GCSE choices. Pupils in Years 12 and 13 are offered an equally wide range, choosing to study either an A level course or the IB. A distinctive strength of the school's provision is the considerable time devoted to individual instruction which begins in Year 11. This innovative programme of interspersing subject lessons with regular periods of individual or small group sessions, called 'correction periods', provides an excellent opportunity for pupils to be involved in work of an extended nature and to receive support closely targeted to their needs.
- 3.11 Provision for pupils with SEND and EAL is excellent. Pupils' needs are identified on entry and one-to-one teaching provided as necessary. Progress is carefully tracked; teaching staff are given clear guidance so that they can support individuals appropriately in class or in the individual correction periods. Provision for the most able is inconsistent within lessons in Years 9 and 10 because planning is focused on delivering information, so that insufficient consideration is given to offering suitable challenge and extension work. From Year 11, pupils' needs are well met because of the individual support they receive which enables teachers to identify when greater challenge is required.
- 3.12 Pupils benefit from the use of study areas around the school, many of which are located within subject departments. These provide high-quality learning environments where pupils of all ages work independently side by side, having ready access to informal and unscheduled instruction from staff.
- 3.13 The programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) is comprehensive and supplemented by an excellent additional programme in the sixth form. This has an emphasis on character attributes such as resilience and fortitude

which prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. The programme includes in-depth provision to support a growing understanding of fundamental British values such as democracy and tolerance and stresses the importance of balance in the presentation of political issues. For example, an assembly on cultural diversity and tolerance in sport gave pupils a good insight into British values from a British Asian perspective, engendering much subsequent discussion and debate.

- 3.14 Highly effective careers guidance is given to all pupils so that they can determine career choices. In addition pupils receive focused higher education guidance regarding choices of subjects and applications to higher education.
- 3.15 Pupils' personal development is greatly enriched by the outstanding extra-curricular programme, available for pupils of all ranges and abilities and extending well into the evenings and weekends. The extensive grounds are particularly well used to teach pupils outdoor skills, such as navigation and orienteering. This prepares them well for participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme where around 40 pupils from the sixth form complete their Gold Award each year.
- 3.16 The pupils' commitment to community service is a strength. They gain a real understanding of life in very different communities and cultures through links with local schools for pupils with disabilities, homes for elderly residents as well as overseas charities.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.17 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.18 In line with the school's original founding aims, teaching is effective in promoting pupils' progress through learning to work independently, guided by individual tutoring. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is characterised by the emphasis on one-to-one support as a means of promoting the pupils' personal development. This engenders a positive, encouraging relationship between teachers and pupils which contributes strongly to their overall achievements. The close connection is most clear during correction periods. Teachers know the academic strengths of their pupils well and offer instruction targeted to their needs, often arranging support sessions well into the evening. Pupils value the individual help they receive and recognise its contribution to their rapid progress.
- 3.19 The many examples of excellent teaching observed were marked by the high quality of the teachers' subject knowledge, well-structured lessons, ingenuity in the way content was delivered, and use of well-targeted resources, all of which facilitate understanding or consolidate learning. Methods are varied and thus effective in maintaining interest. For example, in a Year 12 lesson, the teacher used dance as an effective medium to assist pupils in learning how joints work. ICT is a positive learning tool well used in many classes as a means of developing independent research skills, problem solving or note taking. Management of class time is excellent, following a recent focus on prompt arrival at all lessons. Teaching consistently encourages excellent standards of behaviour.
- 3.20 In the best lessons, teaching enables pupils to work independently so that they attain higher levels of understanding appropriate to their ability. A small number of class lessons in Years 9 and 10 focused on the acquisition of information so that more able pupils were given insufficient opportunities to think reflectively or work independently. In most lessons, frequent, targeted questioning elicits

comprehensive responses and work offers appropriate challenge and extension. Pupils are actively encouraged to assess their own work, pinpointing areas which require improvement. Offers of additional help from teachers are the norm and readily taken up by pupils, contributing greatly to their success in examinations.

- 3.21 Pupils with SEND and EAL are well supported. Individual plans to promote progress are accessible to staff and shared with parents. Teachers receive helpful guidance on strategies to support pupils effectively which are incorporated sensitively into lessons.
- 3.22 Marking of work is constructive and encouraging, most commonly given orally during lessons or in individual tutorials. Pupils appreciate the oral feedback and find it helpful because they are given clear suggestions on how to improve further. Whole-school assessment procedures track pupils' development well and provide teaching staff with useful information on previous progress which they use to agree future targets.
- 3.23 All teaching promotes tolerance and respect for one another, the appreciation of other cultures and faiths and is non-partisan in the coverage of political issues.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils have excellent spiritual awareness and appreciation of the importance of the non-material aspects of life. They are confident, mutually supportive and celebrate each other's achievements through house and whole-school assemblies, which promote a genuine feeling of pride and unity, as well as self-awareness and self-knowledge. Pupils, especially those in the sixth form, show an emotional maturity gained through their experiences in subjects such as philosophy, art, music and the performing arts. Pupils recognise their good fortune in living and working in the beautiful buildings and surrounding woodland, using this as an opportunity to deepen their aesthetic appreciation. The school supports a church within its grounds. Attendance at this is voluntary, but many pupils choose to attend, benefiting from the opportunity for peaceful reflection.
- 4.3 The pupils' moral development is excellent. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and display a readiness to apply this understanding in their own lives. Older pupils act as positive role models for younger pupils. Pupils are respectful towards one another and towards the staff. They understand that there is a code for appropriate behaviour both within the school and in the country as a whole, and have a growing understanding of the civil and criminal law of England. The pupils' behaviour and manner around the school are consistently courteous, polite and engaging. They understand the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination. Through the PSHE programme, house meetings and assemblies, pupils shape their own moral sensibilities and they wrestle thoughtfully and rationally with many of the moral and ethical dilemmas facing society. For example, a recent theatre group focused on racial persecution and the holocaust, giving rise to subsequent oral and written debate.
- 4.4 The pupils have particularly strong social development because the school is an inclusive and welcoming place. The small number of pupils from overseas are well integrated, reporting that they have a growing understanding of British culture and traditions through, for example, the many visits to places of historic interest. Pupils speak of the strong sense of community within the school, regarding it as an extended family. Many of the pupils' fund-raising initiatives are directed at making a positive contribution to the lives of those living in the locality and further afield. Pupils help with weekly drama and dance clubs at a local school for pupils with serious learning difficulties, with riding for the disabled and with visits to care homes in Blandford. Further afield, a group of sixth-form pupils recently refurbished and repainted a school in Darjeeling using funds raised by the whole pupil body. In this way, the pupils have a well-developed social, political and economic awareness, understanding the importance of service to others who may have very different lives.
- 4.5 The cultural development of pupils is excellent. They understand, respect and celebrate cultural diversity most effectively within the school community. They learn about other cultures in the curriculum and through assemblies, and about other religions in PSHE so that they develop a deep understanding of the importance of openness and tolerance. Pupils have a rich understanding of Western cultural traditions, supported by the school's programme of concerts and speakers on issues of national importance such as the general election. Through such initiatives, pupils have a highly developed general knowledge and genuine respect for public

institutions and services in England, displaying appreciation of the wide range of influences that have shaped British culture and heritage and respect the fundamental English values of parliamentary democracy, the rule of law and liberty for the individual within a legal framework. The school fulfils its aims that pupils will leave as well-balanced 18-year-olds, ready to go out into the wider world, to lead happy and fulfilling lives and to contribute, positively and generously to their community.

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

- 4.6 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.7 The personal development of each pupil's potential is at the heart of the school's ethos and is a major strength of provision and care. Staff work tirelessly to provide support and guidance. A well-informed awareness of individual needs allows pupils to flourish because they feel valued within a warm and supportive environment. Personal relationships between staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves are exceptionally positive. In their responses to the questionnaire and in meetings, pupils expressed sincere appreciation of staff support which they consider to be a major contributory factor in their progress. Almost all pupils are confident that they are made fully aware of the range of people to whom they could turn if they have a problem.
- 4.8 A programme of seminars for older pupils, managed by senior leaders, offers training in safeguarding procedures. This pastoral support of pupils from their peers complements extremely well the oversight provided by the school.
- 4.9 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils felt that teachers are not fair in the way that they give rewards and sanctions. Inspection evidence did not support this view. School records and interviews with pupils demonstrate that rewards and sanctions are proportionate and used consistently.
- 4.10 The school provides an excellent range and variety of healthy food choices, in addition to plentiful opportunities for physical exercise which help pupils to develop healthy lifestyles.
- 4.11 The school is effective in promoting high standards of behaviour so that pupils report very few instances of bullying, including cyberbullying, and state that, when this does occur, measures are put in place to remedy any problems. A house assembly was used most effectively to educate the pupils about the dangers inherent in the misuse of the internet.
- 4.12 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.13 The school seeks pupils' views in a wide variety of ways, which include representation by several committees as well as an anonymous questionnaire. A small minority of pupils felt that their views were not heard, but the inspection found that they have appropriate opportunities to express their opinions. They have been consulted recently about the quality of food, the development of technology systems and the arrangements for the annual leavers' ball. The school has therefore fully met the recommendation from the previous inspection.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.15 The school prioritises the welfare and safety of pupils. The policy and procedures for safeguarding pupils meet all current regulations and are implemented effectively across the school. Staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding. The overwhelming majority of parents agreed that their children are happy and safe. Documentation demonstrates that any concerns about pupils' safety are taken seriously, with appropriate advice being sought and action taken. There is a well-established and highly detailed induction programme for new staff.
- 4.16 Health and safety measures are monitored regularly through a committee which is led by a governor with appropriate expertise. Risks connected to specific activities such as educational visits and trips abroad are carefully assessed and appropriate measures taken. The school takes highly effective measures to reduce risks from fire and other hazards. Documentation is meticulous. Fire drills take place regularly and are well documented leading to an excellent process of continuous review. The security of personnel and accommodation is effective, well supported by the vigilance of security officers who monitor access carefully and patrol the estate at all times. Once alerted to the enhancements that must be made to security in some accommodation, the school acted immediately to put appropriate arrangements in place so that by the end of the inspection all regulatory requirements were fully met.
- 4.17 Excellent systems and facilities are in place to care for pupils who are ill, injured or with SEND. A well-equipped and well-staffed medical centre adds greatly to the comfort of sick or injured pupils. A large number of staff have first-aid training. Staff are informed about the needs of pupils with SEND and those with specific medical conditions so that they are not disadvantaged.
- 4.18 The admission and attendance registers are maintained and stored in accordance with the regulations.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.19 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.20 Outcomes for boarders are excellent. Confident and independent, almost all boarders report that they greatly enjoy their boarding experience and are at ease with one another and with adults. A powerful community spirit is evident because boarders take a sincere pride in their own and others' achievements and in the distinctive ethos of the school. Boarders cultivate strong friendships across ages, cultures, and beliefs. Tolerance of individual difference is high, with emotional and social maturity evident across all age groups. Deep levels of trust are seen among peers and adults, reflecting their commitment to the family spirit prevalent in the school. Boarders with EAL gain rapid mastery of the English language and are assimilated quickly and sensitively into their house; those with SEND are equally well integrated. Boarders contribute strongly in age-appropriate ways to the development of boarding life through regular meetings. They are able to raise concerns and their views are given appropriate consideration. For example, the soft furnishings for one of the houses due for refurbishment were chosen by the boarders. Older pupils are given appropriate responsibilities within the house, for which they receive suitable training; they act as mentors to younger boarders and organise house events, as in the annual inter-house drama competition.

- 4.21 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. New boarders and parents speak highly of the induction process, the warm welcome they receive, and the support from house staff and other boarders. Prior to arrival, each new boarder receives a house handbook which clearly details daily routines. In their responses to the questionnaire, almost all boarders confirmed that they know what to do if they are worried or unhappy and that they are able to talk to staff if they need personal guidance or help with a problem. Contact numbers for helplines, the Independent Listener and the Children's Commissioner are prominently displayed. Boarders are able to make regular contact with home using land-line phones, personal mobiles and the internet so that they do not feel isolated from their families.
- 4.22 Boarders are well cared for, with the overwhelming majority reporting that relationships are good within each of the houses. Each of the twelve boarding houses is clean, secure and comfortably furnished. All have spacious communal areas which create a welcoming and homely feel. Toilet and washing facilities are sufficient in number, are well-appointed and ensure privacy. Pupils can personalise their own space. There are plenty of areas where boarders can enjoy time by themselves for personal reflection.
- 4.23 Medical provision is excellent and most boarders speak highly of the care they are given. Those too ill to attend school are cared for by a qualified and dedicated team of nurses. The medical centre has excellent facilities with separate accommodation for boys and girls. In addition, there is a daily doctor's surgery and physiotherapy clinic. Appointments can be made with other health professionals as necessary. Medication is stored carefully. Minor irregularities in the recording of the dispensing of non-prescription medicines were remedied by the end of the inspection. Boarders who self-medicate are risk-assessed appropriately. Confidentiality is respected appropriately.
- 4.24 Boarders have easy access to local shops but are also able to obtain personal and stationery items from the shop sited in school. Laundry arrangements work efficiently and boarders can use the machines to do their own laundry, which prepares them well for life after leaving school. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, some boarders stated that they did not feel that their belongings were safe. From discussions with boarders and observation by inspectors, it was evident that this was most commonly because boarders do not lock away their personal possessions. Evidence during the inspection shows that appropriate care is taken of personal possessions because each boarder is allocated a lockable area and tuck boxes and valuables can be securely stored.
- 4.25 Inspection evidence confirmed boarders' views that provision for catering is of high quality. Food is varied, nutritious and plentiful. Facilities are clean and well managed. The dining area is spacious and valued as a place to relax and socialize with friends. The needs of those boarders with special medical and dietary needs are readily accommodated. A few boarders were unhappy with the availability of snacks and drinking water. Inspection evidence did not support this view. Each year group has a designated kitchen in which to make drinks and snacks out of lesson times. In addition, the café is a popular area to meet, contributing significantly to the overall enjoyment of boarding life. Drinking water is available in each house and pupils can refill their water bottles in the dining hall and café.
- 4.26 In their responses to the questionnaire, a very small minority of boarders were not happy with the balance of free time and activities. In conversations with boarders, they did not agree with this view. Inspection evidence confirms that most boarders

benefit greatly from opportunities to participate in an exceptionally wide range of activities during the evenings and at the weekend. They also value ready access to areas such as the libraries, music rooms and sports facilities, which enhance their recreation time. There are sufficient opportunities to rest, with the school grounds being much appreciated by boarders as an opportunity to reflect and enjoy the natural beauty all around them. Boarders have appropriate access to information about the world through daily newspapers, the use of technology to report events of importance and through in-house discussions.

4.27 The effectiveness of arrangements for welfare and safeguarding is excellent. Almost all boarders confirmed that they felt safe and happy. The school implements its safeguarding policy with great care so that all standards pertaining to boarding are fully met. Evidence from meetings and a scrutiny of documentation show that staff understand their responsibility to promote the welfare of boarders. They receive regular training in safeguarding procedures and are confident that they know what to do should a child protection issue arise. Each house is appropriately staffed at all times. Arrangements for tracking the whereabouts of boarders at any time are secure, and staff are aware of the protocols regarding missing pupils. Access to boarding houses is carefully monitored by security personnel and other safety measures. Some irregularities noted at the time of the inspection were swiftly remedied so that the safety of boarders is not compromised. Regular compliance checks of fire prevention systems and frequent, unannounced fire drills are standard practice. Risk assessments are carefully monitored and boarders are encouraged to assess their own safety to ensure that they understand potential areas of danger. Boarders report that they have easy access to staff if they are needed during the night. The school has a clear policy to promote good behaviour, with most boarders reporting that the system of rewards and sanctions contributes to the smooth running of their house. The warm and friendly atmosphere in the houses and across the year groups creates a culture that will not tolerate bullying of any kind. Should it occur, most boarders are confident that it is quickly dealt with by staff and pupils. Records of any such incidents are carefully documented so that any trends or patterns can be easily identified and resolved.

4.28 The leadership and management of boarding are excellent. Senior leadership has effective oversight of boarding provision, monitoring standards carefully and checking compliance with all current regulations. Senior leaders are a familiar presence within the houses so that staff feel well supported and able to discuss freely any concerns or issues. A detailed staff handbook sets out the aims and ethos of the boarding provision. There is an excellent induction programme for all new boarding staff, and support and guidance is ongoing. The process for appraisal and review for all staff has been reviewed and formalised, fully meeting the recommendation from the previous inspection. Boarding houses are efficiently led by appropriately experienced and qualified staff teams, who dedicate a considerable amount of time to establishing excellent relations with their boarders so that their experience is positive. Arrangements for managing the houses on a day-to-day basis are extremely effective because the staff work as a united team, having a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Regular, formal and informal meetings take place so that common issues are dealt with and a consistent approach to behaviour is in place. The inclusive, family-like atmosphere is a strength of boarding provision, greatly appreciated by parents who appreciate the individual care each child receives. Links between boarding and academic staff are excellent; any concerns about boarders' welfare are quickly shared and an appropriate response agreed. An overwhelming majority of parents felt that the

boarding experience is beneficial to their child's development and would recommend the school to others.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Governors have strong links with the school and are deeply committed to maintaining its special ethos and qualities. They bring a valuable range of experience and skills to their role, which is used well to provide effective guidance and oversight of all areas of the school, including boarding. In close collaboration with senior managers, they have formulated a perceptive strategic plan which includes future development and ensures that the school remains true to its aims. A strong committee structure makes certain that the main board is well-informed about all aspects of school life. In this way, governors discharge their responsibilities for monitoring educational standards, financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources.
- 5.3 Governors receive a comprehensive induction and all have benefited from relevant training. They understand their role in providing a stimulus for growth and improvement and do this effectively by providing support and challenge to senior leaders through regular meetings and because they are a well-known and valued presence within the school. Governors regularly visit the school for formal events. Additionally, they have observed lessons and reviewed policies and procedures within the boarding houses. This gives them a detailed understanding of the pupils' experience so that they can make informed judgements about future needs.
- 5.4 Governors provide effective oversight of their regulatory responsibilities. They review safeguarding arrangements at least annually, staff recruitment and health and safety arrangements frequently and with great efficiency so that the overall wellbeing of pupils is actively promoted. School buildings are maintained effectively and new facilities are carefully planned which contribute significantly to the provision of a stimulating learning environment for pupils.

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 At all levels of responsibility, leadership and management are highly effective in promoting the school's unique ethos, based on the Dalton plan of education, to enable pupils to flourish and excel, going on to lead happy and fulfilling lives and contribute positively and generously to the community. They are committed to achieving the school's ambitious aims and to ensuring that comprehensive policies are regularly reviewed and consistently implemented, including the safeguarding of pupils.
- 5.7 Senior leadership provides clear and purposeful educational direction and support, and is highly regarded by parents, almost all of whom felt that the school was well led and managed. This high quality is evident in the excellence of pupils' achievements and standard of personal development.

- 5.8 Senior leaders have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths, and of its needs, constraints and opportunities. The school's development plan is focused on continuing improvement and is closely linked to the school's aims. Each section includes a well-informed assessment of the current situation, and then clearly identifies aims and priorities for the ensuing year. Staff have the opportunity to contribute to the planning process through a wide range of academic and pastoral committees, all of which include governors. Staff are committed to the school's success and appreciative of the support and guidance readily offered by senior leaders and of the trust invested in them, so that their contribution to the life of the school is extensive.
- 5.9 Pastoral leadership is strong and enables highly attentive monitoring of pupils' well-being. All policies are up-to-date and implemented well. This includes the policies pertaining to the care and welfare of boarders, thereby meeting the recommendation from the previous inspection which required the inclusion of a written policy for searching pupils and their possessions. Academic managers provide experienced and diligent leadership of teaching and learning. Some inconsistencies exist in the formal monitoring of teaching and scrutiny of pupils' work by middle managers and in the rigour of departmental self-evaluation. The school has therefore only partially met the recommendation from the previous inspection that it should ensure that the best teaching strategies are shared amongst all departments.
- 5.10 The school is successful in attracting high quality and well-motivated staff, who are committed to the school's ethos, providing a rich educational experience for pupils, individually tailored to meet their needs. They act as excellent role models, demonstrating in their relationships with one another and with the pupils, values which encourage respect for others and tolerance of individual differences.
- 5.11 Leadership of a large and highly qualified support staff is excellent, and well-organised teams contribute most effectively to the pupils' welfare. Systems to recruit and retain staff are thorough. The suitability of staff, governors and volunteers is rigorously assessed and the central register is maintained meticulously. Recruitment arrangements are robust and have regard to official guidance. All pre-appointment checks on governors, staff and volunteers are carried out and carefully recorded, thereby meeting the recommendation from the previous inspection. Staff are suitably trained for their roles in meeting the needs of all children including safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Financial resources are well managed, and this has enabled the imaginative provision of attractive accommodation and outstanding facilities. These meet the needs of pupils but also greatly enhance their educational experience.
- 5.12 The school has excellent links with parents, carers and guardians. In their responses to the questionnaire, parents expressed overwhelming satisfaction for almost all aspects of the education and care of their children, including the information they receive.
- 5.13 Communication with parents is highly effective, being well maintained through easy access to an effective combination of digital and printed material so that they understand the school's aims. Boarding staff encourage a regular and open exchange of information with parents, providing helpful and informative updates between home and school. The newly implemented head's blog keeps parents informed of school issues and its inception has been received warmly. The trial of a pupil house blog is in its early stages and further extends communication from the school. Documents seen during the inspection show that the school handles any

concerns with great care, implementing its published procedures. Questionnaire responses confirmed that almost all parents feel that they receive timely responses to their questions.

- 5.14 The strong community feel of the school is strengthened by opportunities for parents to be actively involved in the work and progress of their children. An active parents' association organises fund-raising and social events, which receive enthusiastic support. Parents' expertise is welcomed as they offer workshops or help with school projects. For example, pupils were invited to visit a local factory as an extension of their work in technology.
- 5.15 Parents receive comprehensive academic and pastoral reports throughout the year, which provide a clear, effective and all-round picture of progress. The school's accessible, on-line assessment system provides parents with detailed information about the academic performance of their children most effectively. Formal consultation meetings are regular and supplemented by frequent informal communication, providing a fruitful partnership between home and school which contributes greatly to pupils' overall personal development.

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