



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

TONBRIDGE SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Tonbridge School

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| Full Name of School | Tonbridge School | | |
| DfE Number | 886/6020 | | |
| Registered Charity Number | 1097977 | | |
| Address | Tonbridge School High Street Tonbridge Kent TN9 1JP | | |
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| Email Address | hmsec@tonbridge-school.org | | |
| Head | Mr Timothy Haynes | | |
| Chair of Governors | Mr Jonathan Cohen, QC | | |
| Age Range | 13 to 18 | | |
| Total Number of Pupils | 789 | | |
| Gender of Pupils | Boys | | |
| Number of Day Pupils | Total: | 328 | |
| Number of Boarders | Total: | 461 | |
| | Full: | 461 | Weekly: 0 |
| Inspection Dates | 14 Oct 2014 to 17 Oct 2014 | | |

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in December 2010.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors and two other governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions, house meetings and chapel services. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the medical centre. They took breakfast, lunch and supper with pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory policies, written documentation and handbooks made available by the school.

Inspectors

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Mr Timothy Holgate | Reporting Inspector |
| Mrs Alison Horton | Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding |
| Mr Mark Allen | Team Inspector (Assistant Head, HMC school) |
| Mrs Ann Aughwane | Team Inspector (Former Head, GSA school) |
| Mr Edward Elliott | Team Inspector (Head, HMC school) |
| Mrs Harriet Granville | Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, GSA school) |
| Mr Stephen Holroyd | Team Inspector (Head of Department, HMC school) |
| Dr Tracey Martin | Team Inspector (Senior Teacher, HMC school) |
| Mr William Norton | Team Inspector (Head of Department, HMC school) |
| Dr Millan Sachania | Team Inspector (Head, GSA school) |
| Mr Stephane Talleux | Team Inspector (Assistant Head, GSA school) |
| Mr David Warwick | Team Inspector (Former Head of Department, HMC school) |
| Mrs Sally Cunliffe | Team Inspector for Boarding (Former Senior Housemistress, HMC school) |
| Mr Jeremy Hallows | Team Inspector for Boarding (Deputy Head, HMC school) |

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Tonbridge School was founded in 1553 by Sir Andrew Judde, who ordained that the governors of the school, after his death, were to be the Worshipful Company of Skinners. In 2003, the school became a separate charitable company, whose trustees act as the school's governors and hold proprietorial responsibility. Governors appointed by the livery company represent a majority on the board. The school occupies an extensive site of about 150 acres on the northern edge of the town of Tonbridge in Kent, and is largely self-contained within that site. Since its foundation, the school has been rebuilt twice on the original site. The main buildings of the present school date from the second half of the nineteenth century, a time in which the school grew considerably in size, and much refurbishment and new building have continued until this day.
- 1.2 Tonbridge School seeks to provide a caring and enlightened environment in which the talents of each individual can flourish. The school aims to encourage boys to be creative, tolerant and to strive for academic, sporting and cultural excellence. Respect for tradition and openness to innovation are equally valued. Tonbridge seeks to celebrate its distinctive mixture of boarders and day boys, through a house system that fosters a sense of community and promotes individual and collective social responsibility.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, the school provided education for 789 boys, of whom 461 were boarders and the rest day boys. Three hundred and thirty-eight were in the sixth form. Pupils are allocated to one of seven boarding houses or five day houses. All of the boarding houses provide separate, supervised accommodation nearby for small units of senior boys. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs, but the school has identified 68 with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive specific learning support. Most pupils (day and boarding) are of white British origin and are drawn either from local towns and villages or from London. Eighty-seven boarders come from non-British backgrounds, mainly from China and continental Europe, and have English as an additional language (EAL). Of these, 30 receive additional support for their English. Pupils take a range of standardised aptitude and ability tests on entry to the school in Year 9 and to the sixth form in Year 12. These indicate that the ability profile is above the national average, with around a half of pupils having ability that is well above average.
- 1.4 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

| School | NC name |
|----------------------|---------|
| First year or 'Novi' | Year 9 |
| Second Year | Year 10 |
| Third Year | Year 11 |
| Lower sixth | Year 12 |
| Upper sixth | Year 13 |

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Tonbridge School is highly successful in achieving its ambitious aims to achieve academic, extra-curricular and pastoral excellence and to develop individual and collective social responsibility. Throughout the school, the pupils' achievements in the classroom and in public examinations at GCSE and A level are exceptional. Their attitudes and commitment to all aspects of school life, both academic and extra-curricular, are outstanding. They exhibit a very strong thirst for knowledge and a genuine desire to develop thinking skills and an appetite for independent work that prepares them well for the next stage in their education. Pupils, including the most able and those with SEND or EAL, make a high rate of progress. They enjoy conspicuous success in their extra-curricular activities, especially in music, drama and a wide range of sports. Their success is enhanced by the breadth, rigour and challenge of the excellent curriculum, within which enrichment opportunities including trips and visits abroad, and a strong community outreach programme are especially beneficial. The excellent teaching, nearly all of which provides challenge and inspiration for the pupils, makes a significant contribution to the achievements of the pupils of all ages.
- 2.2 Pupils show outstanding personal qualities, and they demonstrate a very high level of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and development. Sixth-form pupils act as valuable role models to those younger. Pupils acquire a sense of responsibility for themselves and others. These qualities are enhanced by the excellent pastoral care received, based around the strong house system, and the efficient arrangements to ensure their well-being, welfare, health and safety. Relationships between pupils and with staff are excellent. The school expects and ensures high standards of behaviour. Boarding provides an excellent pastoral and educational experience for those living at school.
- 2.3 The high standards of achievement and personal development owe much to the support and far-sighted strategic thinking of the board of governors and the highly effective leadership and management shown by staff at all levels in the school. A clear ethos and sense of purpose are evident within the school, and excellent systems ensure that high standards are maintained and strategies for continued improvement are identified. The school has made good progress in addressing the recommendation in its previous inspection report by improving systems for assessment and feedback to pupils. The school has formed an excellent partnership with its parents.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2011.

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Further develop current teaching initiatives to maintain and enhance the learning experience for pupils.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievement is exceptional.
- 3.2 They are particularly well educated and highly aspirational, both in their thirst for knowledge and in their love of learning for its own sake. Their success bears witness to the fulfilment of the school's ambitious aim to achieve academic, sporting and cultural excellence. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all pupils felt that they were making good academic progress.
- 3.3 Pupils of all ages have outstanding subject knowledge, understanding and skill. They show strong levels of literacy, writing fluently, persuasively and accurately. Their use of language is expressive, confident and articulate. Pupils are highly competent in their use of number, not just understanding abstract numerical concepts but applying them and explaining their thinking in a range of subjects. They show strong logical thinking skills. Pupils display very strong competence in information and communication technology (ICT), known in the school as digital creativity. They use a variety of mobile devices imaginatively to enhance their learning experiences, and show familiarity with a range of applications in different subjects. They engage with their teachers through the virtual learning environment.
- 3.4 Pupils' creative ability is particularly marked, shown in the excellence of their music compositions, art portfolios, original drama performances, design skills and creative writing. Their critical thinking and research skills are well exemplified in the quality and range of extended essays, some of which have received commendation in national competitions. These scholarly essays display meticulous research, are well expressed and cogently argued, and show knowledge and conviction in an eclectic range of intellectual endeavours and interests.
- 3.5 Pupils show conspicuous success in extra-curricular activities and academic events outside the classroom. Particularly notable is the school's strong tradition of sporting success in a wide range of team and individual sports. Pupils have gained representation at regional and national level in many sports, and performed around the country in music and drama. Awards have been achieved in many academic challenges and Olympiads.
- 3.6 The following analysis uses national data for the years 2011 to 2013, the most recent three-year period for which comparative statistics are currently available. GCSE results have been exceptional in relation to the national average for boys in maintained schools, and above the national average for boys in maintained selective schools. In 2014, three-quarters of all grades achieved were at A*. International GCSE (IGCSE) results overall have been higher than both worldwide and UK norms. At A level, results were also exceptional and well above the national average for boys in maintained selective schools. In 2014, eight out of ten grades achieved were at A* or A.
- 3.7 This level of attainment in national examinations indicates that pupils make progress that is high in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Pupils make excellent progress over the short and long term, becoming increasingly sophisticated in their grasp of subject knowledge and its application, and in the understanding of progressively more subtle and demanding concepts. Year 13 leavers have consistently achieved success in gaining entry to the country's most competitive

universities. Pupils with EAL and SEND make rapid progress over time, as shown by their response to the support they receive, the improvement in their written work and intellectual confidence, their performance in specific tests and assessments, and their achievement of targets set. The most able pupils achieve at a conspicuously high level, exceeding significantly the expectations for their age. They relish additional challenges provided for them, and show the ability to reason and debate complex philosophical issues and undertake independent work far beyond that required for examination success. Three pupils presented the results of their scientific research to an international conference in China. Another has written and published a GCSE French textbook.

- 3.8 Pupils of all ages show exemplary attitudes to learning. They need little encouragement in lessons to think imaginatively and critically. They demonstrate great enthusiasm for independent learning and enjoy showing their initiative and independence of mind, often suggesting novel and innovative approaches to completing tasks and solving problems. They show appreciation for the encouragement of their teachers and are tolerant and forgiving on the few occasions when the pace is not fast enough for their liking. They develop strong collaborative skills and enjoy the cut and thrust of intellectual debate with their peers.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.10 High-quality, wide-ranging and enriching provision is made across all year groups and enables the school to meet its aims. The curriculum makes an important contribution to the pupils' high level of achievement. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were satisfied with the range of subjects on offer. The curriculum review group is effective in ensuring that the broad curriculum is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs.
- 3.11 In Year 9, pupils benefit fully from this breadth when they are exposed to all of the possible GCSE subjects available, including the chance to sample Mandarin, before making any choices. A mixture of GCSE and IGCSE subjects are studied in Years 10 and 11. All pupils study English, English literature, mathematics, at least one modern foreign language and the three sciences. Separate science IGCSE subjects are taken by the majority of pupils. Both Latin and Greek are available and pupils in one of the two top French sets also study Italian. Sixth-form pupils enjoy a free choice of 23 wide-ranging A-level subjects. All programmes of study provide challenge well beyond the requirement of public examinations.
- 3.12 The curriculum fully meets the needs of SEND, EAL and the most able pupils. The Athena and creative writing societies, amongst many other intellectual societies, provide excellent opportunities for pupils to be involved in work of an extended nature. The provision for learning support is excellent and closely targeted to pupils' learning needs. Innovative multi-sensory strategies are used to enhance the learning and progress of pupils with SEND, and those with EAL are effectively prepared for examination success.
- 3.13 Non-examined aspects of the curriculum are equally well provided for. The excellent, extensive and well-planned programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) underpins and strongly promotes the aims of the school. PSHE is presented through a broad range of activities and experiences, and involves contributions from the academic curriculum as well as discrete lessons for younger

pupils, an imaginative seminar programme for older pupils, house input, tutor time, chapel and assemblies. The seminar programme is particularly effective and is highly regarded by pupils. A strong and well-resourced careers department provides excellent higher education and careers guidance, particularly comprehensive for the sixth form. The school is pro-active in encouraging reading for pleasure and the library is an important resource in supporting this initiative. The developing virtual learning environment has been well received by pupils and is highly effective in enabling the ready exchange of learning materials between pupils and also with their teachers.

- 3.14 The outstanding extra-curricular provision encompasses an especially diverse range of activities and opportunities. It enriches and extends the wider educational experience and personal development of the pupils. The programme is felt by pupils to be an integral and central part of the whole curriculum.
- 3.15 Pupils are well motivated and enthusiastic about the programme and plan their involvement constructively. A busy schedule of sport, drama, music and service activities (including three different Combined Cadet Force sections) exists, together with a wide range of academic clubs and leisure activities, such as debating, film studies and chess, and a varied programme of visiting speakers. Community service opportunities are excellent. A great deal of charity work takes place throughout the school as a whole, and within individual houses. Pupils are enthusiastically involved with the local community through the school's community action scheme. This includes conservation work, swimming lessons with autistic children, links with primary schools and the whole-school community day. Links with the wider community are also particularly strong. Pupils help organise and take part in events and trips elsewhere in the UK and abroad, such as working with street children in Sri Lanka. These and other trips lead to cultural enrichment and a deeper appreciation of academic subject matter. In the last year alone academic, sporting and cultural trips have visited 14 different countries.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.16 The quality of teaching is excellent.
- 3.17 Dynamic and dedicated teaching that pupils say is frequently inspiring was observed in all year groups. It makes a significant contribution to the pupils' educational experience and achievement. It fulfils the school's aim to encourage pupils to strive for academic and creative success, and to think and learn for themselves. A significant foundation for this success, and a hallmark of the school, is the mutual warmth of the relationships which teachers establish with their pupils. This results in highly effective, sensitively managed lessons of well-judged pace and rigour, where the rate of progress is rapid, and where the pupils clearly relish their opportunities to learn. Almost all pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that the teachers helped them to learn and provided individual help when needed.
- 3.18 Teachers have an excellent knowledge of their subject which they use in imaginative ways and which they clearly enjoy sharing with pupils. The teaching sets high expectations and significant challenge to which pupils respond enthusiastically, both in the development of their learning skills and in the depth of their subject understanding. Teaching is generally imaginative, inventive and creative, genuinely engaging pupils in constructive dialogue, a notable feature of most lessons. It encourages high-order questioning and reasoning, diligent and well-presented note-taking and written responses, and mutually supportive collaborative learning. It

stimulates scholastic inquisitiveness in the pupils, many of whose questions and comments are used as important teaching points in their own right. In this way, pupils are frequently involved in setting the pace for their own learning. Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and resources to meet the different learning styles preferred by pupils. Learning opportunities provided for the most able, and those with SEND and EAL who require more focused support, are particularly effective. Pupils expressed appreciation for the ready availability of teachers outside lesson times for one-to-one help and support.

- 3.19 Teaching frequently uses novel and innovative techniques to illustrate and reinforce learning points, especially in the use of ICT and the new virtual learning environment. These enable pupils to show strong independent learning skills and initiative in preparing for lessons, carrying out research, and pursuing particular interests well outside the specific context of a given learning task.
- 3.20 In a small number of lessons observed, teaching was less effective. In such lessons, opportunities for extending pupils' thinking were sometimes missed, as interesting and challenging points raised by pupils were not developed further by the teacher. A few lessons were not carefully planned, and inefficient time management slowed the pace of the lesson, although pupils were sometimes able to compensate for this themselves.
- 3.21 The quality of assessment and the provision of feedback to pupils are excellent. Since the previous inspection, the school has made considerable progress in addressing the recommendation concerning assessment, marking and feedback. Effective monitoring of pupils' progress over time uses standardised assessments, GCSE grades, and the school's own internal grading system through which pupils' achievement and learning are assessed twice each term. Through close monitoring of internal and external assessment data, and the consequent tracking of pupils' progress, the school swiftly identifies pupils who are not meeting targets set. These concerns are then acted on appropriately by housemasters, tutors and classroom teachers. Detailed marking policies allow teachers to employ a variety of forms of assessment within different subject areas, which pupils understand and find helpful for identifying targets for improvement. Day-to-day marking of pupils' work is supplemented by helpful oral and written feedback, both from teachers and from peers.

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 It contributes strongly to the school's aim of heightening the pupils' sense of individual and collective social responsibility, based on considerable self-knowledge and an excellent awareness of others. Throughout the school, pupils' personal development is excellent and, by the time they leave, they are well equipped to make a valuable and important contribution to society.
- 4.3 Pupils' spiritual development is particularly high. The open and honest relationships pupils have with staff foster confidence and also lead to a high degree of self-awareness and emotional maturity. Pupils reflect on their own experiences with sensitivity and honesty. They are readily self-critical and are able to consider non-material aspects of their lives, such as the existence of God, with insight and confidence. Although a Christian ethos is integral to the school, the chapel is used by pupils not just for regular Christian service but also for self-reflection. Pupils do not consider themselves as being indoctrinated by religion but rather view the religious element of the school as presenting opportunities for spiritual thought and consideration, and many use the chapel at non-service times for this quiet reflection. Pupils benefit from other opportunities, such as the mindfulness initiative, to develop a reflective approach to learning and living. The mindfulness programme teaches valuable skills to Year 10 pupils to improve their quality of thinking and feeling and their concern for others.
- 4.4 Pupils' moral awareness is outstanding. They display a strong sense of fairness and right and wrong. They have an instinctive understanding of the principles underpinning the school's expectations of behaviour, and those of the world beyond. Pupils also display a strong sense of responsibility and appreciate their own role in making the community a positive and happy place for all. Pupils learn quickly to make sound judgements, often based on the examples of older boys. They readily trust staff with information relating to others, if confronted with concerns about their safety or welfare. The pupils' behaviour and manner around the school are consistently courteous, polite and engaging. Pupils wrestle thoughtfully and rationally with many of the moral and ethical dilemmas facing society.
- 4.5 Pupils display a particularly strong awareness of social responsibility. They show leadership and accept a high level of responsibility throughout the school. Heads of school and house, team captains and activity leaders, prefects, and senior pupils in general, all make an important contribution to the society and community spirit of the school. Younger pupils value the guidance and leadership shown by the senior pupils, who act as positive role models for them to aspire to. Pupils have a high degree of awareness of the society of the school and the world beyond. Through a wide range of outreach activities, whole-school charity and community days, charity sports matches, and links with local primary schools, pupils benefit greatly from opportunities for community service and fund raising. They develop excellent social, political and economic awareness through the broad and rich curriculum and extra-curricular provision.
- 4.6 Pupils develop a high degree of cultural awareness and respect for others, learning about other faiths and cultures through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. Pupils respond very positively to opportunities to travel abroad to study different

cultures and diversity. These include a visit to the Great War battlefields, a cultural and volunteering trip to China, and trips to Morocco and South Africa. Pupils benefit greatly from these and other opportunities to understand and respect other faiths and cultures. Pupils appreciate their own cultural traditions through their studies of art, music and literature. The school's overseas committee plays an important role in achieving harmonious integration and helping pupils to build relations with those from overseas and families different from their own.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 The school is extremely successful in achieving its aim to provide a caring and enlightened environment. The house system lies at the heart of the pastoral care provided. It supports and nurtures both day pupils and boarders, generating the cohesiveness of a small close-knit community that strengthens the pupils' sense of trust and well-being. Pastoral support, mutual tolerance and respect are fostered by the houses through their consistent focus on the individual pupil.
- 4.9 Relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves, are excellent. Housemasters and tutors know their pupils extremely well and, in return, the pupils place great trust in those staff who care for them. The chaplains and the school counsellor complement the strong pastoral care provided. Tutors meet with pupils formally and informally, including at meal times. Pupils are quite clear to whom they can turn for support and guidance. A mentoring system for Year 9 pupils by those in Year 12 benefits both in building supportive relationships.
- 4.10 The school expects and ensures a high standard of behaviour. The behaviour policy sets out a clear procedure for dealing with minor and major misdemeanours and this works effectively. Records are kept and monitored on a regular basis. Procedures to guard against harassment or bullying are effective, strengthened by the successful anti-bullying council initiative, which actively involves elected pupils of all ages with a co-ordinating member of staff. Pupils say that rare instances of bullying are taken seriously by the school and dealt with firmly and promptly.
- 4.11 Regular exercise is provided throughout the school by its extensive sports provision and extra-curricular activities. All pupils understand the importance of physical activity and need little encouragement to take part. The house-based dining system plays a vital community role. Pupils are aware of the value of good nutrition and adopting healthy lifestyles. The school has a suitable plan and clear policies to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.12 A minority of pupils' pre-inspection questionnaire responses suggested that their opinions were not sought and acted on. Inspection evidence does not support these views. The school is highly sensitive to the views and needs of pupils. Many opportunities, including regular committee and council meetings with elected pupil delegates, encourage pupils of all ages, day and boarding, to express their opinions. Interviews with pupils indicate that the school and house councils and food committees are effective; and they cited a number of resources and initiatives that had resulted from their deliberations. The prefects' weekly meetings provide a constructive conduit for communication, and pupils' views have been sought in the planning of major projects such as the new library and refurbished facilities for ICT.
- 4.13 A minority of questionnaires also indicated that the issuing of rewards and sanctions was not fair. Inspection evidence does not support this view. Pupils spoken to were

convinced that the rules and expectations of behaviour are clear; they know what to expect in terms of sanctions and rewards, and feel that both are generally proportionate and consistently administered. This was supported by the records kept by the school and by evidence that these are regularly monitored and reviewed.

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

- 4.14 Arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 4.15 They make a highly effective contribution to securing pupils' safety and well-being, and support the aims of the school.
- 4.16 Procedures for child protection and safeguarding pupils' welfare are comprehensive and effective. The school's policy has regard to current official guidance; it is implemented well by staff at all levels in the school and by the designated child protection staff. Appropriate training in safeguarding has been carried out for teaching and non-teaching staff and is in line with local guidelines. Staff know the correct reporting procedures if they have concerns about pupils' welfare. The school has promoted internet safety and the appropriate use of digital technology strongly among pupils. Staff are aware of the need to promote the emotional health of the pupils, and suitable policies are being developed through a review of the school's mental health strategy. A well-led welfare group brings together pastoral, medical and therapeutic members of staff to monitor the well-being of pupils.
- 4.17 Measures to reduce and manage risks from fire and other hazards are detailed, highly effective and rigorously documented. Efficient monitoring and review of practice, through regular meetings, appropriate risk assessments, site visits and audits, enable the school to keep this aspect of its work as a high priority. Arrangements for the health and medical care of day pupils are provided by the well-equipped medical centre, staffed by qualified nurses.
- 4.18 The school maintains accurate admission and attendance registers which contain the required entries, and which are carefully stored for the statutory three years.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.19 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.20 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. Boarders are charming, self-assured and thoughtful, and are highly respectful in their conduct towards both their peers and members of staff. They develop self-reliance and behave with a very high level of maturity, which is fostered by the trust that is afforded to them. The boarders benefit from the many opportunities available to take on new and age-appropriate responsibilities. Exceptional social skills are developed through house life generally and, in particular, through the communal dining arrangements. The professional and caring support offered by housemasters, tutors, domestic staff and matrons forges strong and open relationships with boarders. The excellent and regular communication with members of the staff team ensures that boarders are able to contribute effectively to the improvement of house life. Boarders demonstrate a high level of personal commitment when preparing for the house events that they so enjoy. Significant contributions to house life are rewarded with innovative and well-received awards. The positive ethos and norms evident in each house ensure a high standard of behaviour. The boarders develop a wide range of interests whilst enjoying appropriate time for rest and social activity. Their strong awareness of events in the wider world is achieved through the provision of newspapers, reliable

internet connection and the rich extra-curricular programme. The strong relationships between boarders from different backgrounds lead to a good appreciation of different cultures and lifestyles. The pupils grow into young people of well-rounded character, with highly developed interpersonal skills and deep integrity as they move up through the house. Boarding ensures that the pupils are exceptionally well prepared for life after school.

- 4.21 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. The house staff know the pupils well and treat them as individuals, which allows them to develop their social and academic potential. New boarders and international pupils receive excellent and sympathetic induction and early support, which takes account of the needs of each individual. Outstanding provision for the needs of international boarders enables them to integrate successfully into the life of the house and the school. The high-quality medical centre offers 24-hour care with excellent overnight facilities. In addition to the well-qualified nursing staff, a doctor visits daily and excellent relationships have been formed with local specialist providers. Good liaison between the house matrons and the medical centre ensures safe and high-quality care of the pupils. Procedures to ensure appropriate confidentiality, safe self-medication and the use of non-prescription medication are clear and scrupulously observed, and boarders' personal files are conscientiously maintained. House kitchens allow for a personalised catering service and the opportunity to cater for specific dietary needs. The pre-inspection pupil questionnaires suggested that a significant minority of boarders did not feel that the food was good and that facilities for preparing snacks were insufficient. Inspection evidence does not support these views. Inspectors sampled breakfast, lunch and supper across the houses and found the food to be nutritious and plentiful. The great majority of boarders spoken to appreciate that the huge social and pastoral value of individual house dining outweighs any concerns about limitations of choice. Snacks and drinks are readily available at other times and the pupils regularly enjoy and appreciate edible treats. All houses have suitable kitchen facilities for boarders.
- 4.22 Boarding accommodation is excellent, each house having its own individual welcoming feel. Pupils appreciate the differing characters of the houses, but the overall provision remains consistent. The good-sized rooms, predominantly either single or double, provide excellent space for study, sleeping and relaxing. Some Year 9 boarders are accommodated in large, comfortable dormitories of five or six, and these are supplemented by well-resourced separate study areas. The plentiful bathroom and toilet facilities are hygienic and offer privacy. The decoration and furniture is of a high standard and, clearly, the boarders are proud of their environment. The well-designed common room areas provide good space for socialising and recreation, with facilities for television, table football and snooker. Access to sports facilities is excellent, with dedicated times for boarders. A lively weekend activities programme to offer the boarders a range of opportunities and experiences is appreciated by them. Boarders maintain regular contact with family and friends by telephone and means of electronic communication.
- 4.23 The effectiveness of arrangements for welfare and safeguarding of boarders is excellent. The National Minimum Standards are met and the school implements effectively its safeguarding policy, the prevention of bullying policy and all other relevant policies. Recruitment procedures for staff living and working in the boarding communities are thorough. The close-knit house communities, which are at the heart of each boarder's life, create an environment where excellent behaviour and mutual respect are the norm. The outstanding relationships enable emerging concerns to be identified and addressed effectively. This approach, which is pre-

emptive and pro-active, ensures that the well-being and welfare of the boarders are of high quality. The main boarding houses benefit from having a minimum of two adults on duty at a time, and the senior student houses have at least one, supported by direct access to staff at the pupil's main house. Effective arrangements ensure that the whereabouts of boarders are known, and records are kept appropriately. All house staff, including domestic staff, understand and take pride in their role in supporting the development of the boarders. They demonstrate a clear awareness of their safeguarding responsibilities, and all, including spouses or partners, have been appropriately trained in child protection.

- 4.24 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of boarding is excellent. Housemasters run their houses efficiently and sensitively, in line with the school's statement of boarding principles and practice, ensuring that boarders do indeed acquire "tolerance, self-reliance, and a sense of duty and values". The housemasters' effective management of their respective teams, comprising a matron, and a good number of house tutors, together with house caterers and cleaners, ensures welcoming homes for boarders. Although the seven boarding houses are quite individual in style, there is a high degree of consistency in promoting the school's ethos. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, parents say they appreciate that boarding staff are helpful and responsive, dealing promptly and effectively with matters of interest or concern which demonstrates a high level of care on the part of staff. Regular meetings between housemasters and senior staff enable the sharing of good practice and the continuing development of boarding provision. A robust programme of termly formal reviews of the houses by senior leaders, coupled with an annual self-evaluation of each house, demonstrate the commitment of senior leadership to developing and improving boarding. A rolling programme of refurbishment takes place, in which housemasters are actively involved. As a consequence, their close knowledge of the boarders' needs and the most effective way of running their house are at the forefront of decision-making.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 A board of committed governors provides far-sighted and strategic leadership that enables the school to achieve its aims. It discharges its responsibilities for maintaining high educational standards, achieving careful financial planning and providing investment in staff, accommodation and resources to a very high level. The governing body constitutes a rich source of professional expertise, bringing experience of law, medicine, higher education, accountancy, corporate finance and commercial property to its work. The recent completion of the Chadwick Building and the ambitious plans for the refurbishment of the Smythe Library and science facilities demonstrate the governors' success in identifying, planning and providing for capital development projects to meet the school's present and future needs.
- 5.3 The governors have a strong and comprehensive knowledge of the school. Each year they conduct exit interviews with a sample of Year 13 leavers, providing appropriate feedback to the headmaster. They regularly shadow pupils in order to gain further insight into the day-to-day work of the school. Governors also undertake and document a number of formal termly visits. They take lunch with pupils in boarding houses prior to board meetings, and gain valuable understanding of academic and pastoral matters through a wide range of presentations by staff, as well as through informal and formal reports from the headmaster and his senior team.
- 5.4 Governors take advantage of many training opportunities, including in safeguarding matters, and each member of the board undergoes a periodic review with the chairman. An external body has also recently audited the school's governance. A committee structure facilitates governors' highly effective and strategic oversight of the school's affairs, including matters of pastoral care, welfare, health and safety, and its partnership with a local academy. Minutes of meetings and discussion with governors indicate that the board efficiently discharges its statutory responsibilities, such as the annual review of the school's safeguarding and child protection arrangements and their implementation.

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 senior leadership team and the governing body have defined four clear strategic objectives that underpin the distinctive ethos, operation and development of the school. The objectives of academic excellence, extra-curricular breadth and depth, pastoral excellence and individual and collective social responsibility are well understood by pupils, parents and staff, and permeate all of the school's life and work. An outstanding process of development planning links strategy statements to a regularly reviewed management plan, which includes prioritised actions. Teachers, support staff and pupils are appropriately involved in the development planning process. This participation leads to high levels of engagement which, in turn, facilitates considered decision-making and support for resulting actions.

- 5.7 Senior leaders promote a strong culture of self-evaluation and reflection which fuels a cycle of continuous school improvement. Quantitative and qualitative performance data are systematically collected and reviewed to inform planning and decision-making. Departmental performance is reviewed annually and clear action plans are produced. Whilst tradition is respected, the school successfully evolves and innovates to meet the needs of its pupils, as recent improvements to facilities, the curriculum and tracking procedures demonstrate.
- 5.8 Senior leaders have clearly defined roles and work effectively as a team. Appropriate policies ensure the excellent operation of the school including the safeguarding and personal development of pupils. The school is especially well served by its support staff management. Pastoral management is particularly strong and policies are implemented effectively. Housemasters work closely with senior management, teachers and support staff to ensure pupils are both well educated and well cared for. Leadership and management of academic departments are excellent overall. The school employs exceptionally well-qualified teachers who benefit both from management guidance and from the freedom to be innovative and original. Usually this leads to an excellent diet of varied and stimulating teaching, which the pupils thoroughly enjoy. The school has a developing programme of classroom observation, lesson monitoring and feedback that promotes much excellent teaching. However, some inconsistencies exist in the implementation of this programme across subject areas.
- 5.9 The senior leadership is highly successful in appointing excellent staff and ensuring they are appropriately inducted and trained. The school operates a rigorous and efficient staff recruitment process and carries out all the required pre-appointment checks on its large workforce of teaching and support staff, as well as on volunteers and governors. These include criminal records checks on all adults working with pupils. The induction process for staff is very thorough and supportive, equipping them to fulfil their roles successfully. The school invests significant resources in training and developing staff to meet the needs of all pupils, including in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. The leadership encourages the sharing of the best practice within the school and is currently reviewing the teacher appraisal process to maximise opportunities for professional development.
- 5.10 The school forms an excellent partnership with its parents. A very high proportion of those who responded to the questionnaire were extremely positive about their son's education. Progress in academic subjects, the range of subjects on offer, extra-curricular provision, the quality of pastoral care and the way staff treat pupils as individuals were the principal areas of satisfaction. Strong links with parents are established before entry to the school, including a widely appreciated two-day induction for Year 9 pupils, and constructive relationships are maintained, especially through the house system. Regular contact with housemasters and easy email access to subject teachers and other staff keep parents abreast of their son's challenges and successes. Each year, the school initiates and reflects upon its own questionnaire to glean further comments and observations from parents. The school's complaints policy for parents complies with regulations and the school handles parental concerns carefully and sensitively. Written records and documentation associated with any formal and informal complaints received are kept. However the format of these records does not enable quick and easy monitoring of relevant patterns and trends.
- 5.11 Parents have excellent opportunities to be involved in school life. Many watch their children at sports matches, concerts and plays, and the well-established and vibrant

Parents' Arts Society organises an extensive array of educational, cultural and social events which engage parents with the facilities of the school, with the teaching staff and with each other. Parents have attended enthusiastically over fifty workshops, lectures, concerts and evening classes in the current term alone. Many parents are active participants in the careers mentoring scheme.

- 5.12 Parents have good opportunities to be informed about the academic progress of their sons with assessments every half term, reports every term and effective parents' meetings at least once each year. Reports generally offer plenty of encouragement and recognition of achievement, but do not always consistently identify targets or provide constructive advice for further improvement. Housemasters' comments on pupils' personal development and ambitions display a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of their pupils.
- 5.13 Parents receive plentiful information about the school, including all that is required, largely through handbooks and the detailed website, on which full pastoral and academic information and a variety of policies are available. The parent portal and the fortnightly e-newsletter are excellent resources for keeping parents informed about school life, and the new sports portal helps to direct parents to the correct venues on match days.

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