



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**CANFORD SCHOOL**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of School	<b>Canford School</b>
DfE Number	<b>836/6000</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>306315</b>
Address	<b>Canford School Canford Magna Wimborne Dorset BH21 3AD</b>
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Headmaster	<b>Mr John Lever</b>
Chairman of Governors	<b>Mr Anthony Cottam</b>
Age Range	<b>13 to 18</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>630</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (373 boys; 257 girls)</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total: <b>211</b>
Number of Boarders	Total: <b>419</b> Full: <b>419</b> Weekly: <b>0</b>
Inspection dates	<b>24 Jan 2012 to 27 Jan 2012</b>

## 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 September 2007.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed through the following link: [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Search for Independent School Standards Regulations and enter date 2010, to find Schedule 1, Parts 1-7.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Equality Act 2010 (including race, gender, special educational needs and disability).
- (ii) The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, banning corporal punishment.

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

Under Government arrangements, the inspection of boarding became an integrated part of ISI inspections from 1 September 2011. 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. Boarding inspections were previously carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills. The relevant Ofsted report refers to an inspection in June 2010 and can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) under Children's social care/Boarding school.

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.

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. The grades used by ISI and Ofsted are different to 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 for Achievement the descriptor 'exceptional' is available in addition.** 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', 'satisfactory' 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 chairman of governors and other governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mr Timothy Holgate	Reporting Inspector
Mr David Bell	Team Inspector (Former Headmaster, ISA school)
Mr Timothy Borton	Team Inspector (Head of Sixth Form, HMC school)
Mrs Susan Clarke	Team Inspector (Assistant Director of Sixth Form, HMC school)
Mr Christopher Long	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Mrs Elizabeth Skelton	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, GSA school)
Mr Jason Slack	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Mr Tony Halliwell	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mr Ian Graham	Team Inspector for Boarding (Headmaster, ISA school)

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Canford School was founded in 1923 in what was originally Canford Manor, part of which still includes original mediaeval features. The main building, which forms the nucleus of the school, was designed by Edward Blore and later by Sir Charles Barry in the early and mid 19th century, and is Grade I listed. The school stands in 250 acres of parkland beside the River Stour, close to the town of Wimborne in Dorset. In recent years, the school has developed a wide range of additional modern facilities and buildings. Pupils are allocated to one of three co-educational day houses and seven single-sex boarding houses. The school is a member of the Allied Schools Group which provides some central administrative functions, but is a registered charity in its own right, whose trustees hold proprietorial responsibility.
- 1.2 Canford seeks to educate pupils in the broadest sense, so that they leave as well-motivated and interesting people, keen to develop their talents fully and to contribute positively to society. The school aims to achieve this through the pursuit of both breadth and excellence in a context of mutual support. Particular emphasis is placed on the nurturing of attributes that will enable pupils to become moral, responsible and creative individuals with good judgement and clear purpose. Christian values underpin all aspects of the school's life. Ambition, resilience, tolerance, compassion, flexibility and imagination are amongst the qualities Canford seeks to develop in its pupils, with a focus on trust, encouragement and a strong work ethic.
- 1.3 The school provides day and boarding education for 630 pupils, 257 girls and 373 boys, between the ages of 13 and 18, of whom 419 are boarders and 264 are in the sixth form. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The school has identified 121 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Of these, 35 receive specialist support for learning. Day pupils are drawn predominantly from Dorset and the central south coast. Boarders come mainly from central southern England, and 25 come from families who speak English as an additional language (EAL), notably from south east Asia. Fifteen of these pupils receive support for their English. Pupils take standardised aptitude and ability tests shortly after entry to the school in Year 9. These reflect the selective nature of the school's intake and indicate that the ability profile is above the national average.
- 1.4 National Curriculum 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 (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

School	NC name
Shells	Year 9
Fourths	Year 10
Fifths	Year 11
Lower sixth	Year 12
Upper sixth	Year 13

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

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

- 2.1 Canford School provides a very high quality of education for its pupils, who achieve excellent public examination results, exhibit exemplary attitudes to learning, and show outstanding commitment to their busy lives, in and out of the classroom. The school thus very successfully meets its aim to blend a rigorous academic education and strong work ethic with a desire to raise pupils' ambitions and to develop their all-round talents. GCSE and A-level results are well above the national average for maintained secondary schools, and pupils make excellent progress over time. Their thirst for knowledge and a love of learning for its own sake are fostered by the excellent quality of teaching, and the stimulating and challenging curriculum. Pupils of all ages are wholeheartedly committed to their extra-curricular activities and the many community service projects available.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent and they show outstanding levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Pupils' relationships with each other and with staff are of a particularly high quality, and this sustains the strong pastoral support and guidance that are a strong feature of the school. Arrangements to promote pupils' welfare are also excellent, and the management of health, safety and safeguarding is highly efficient. The high quality boarding experience is a key feature of the school.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is good, and governors provide excellent support and advice for the school. A formal mechanism for the board to demonstrate its monitoring of the full range of regulatory compliance has not yet been completed. Leadership and management throughout the school are excellent, and the clear vision and commitment of the leadership and the senior staff contribute significantly to the school's success. The school has forged a highly productive partnership with parents. The great majority of those responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire were strongly positive about the school. They identified in particular the individual attention and support given by the highly committed staff, the encouragement given to the most able pupils, the efficiency of management and organisation, and the quality of the subjects and activities offered. A very small minority were less happy with the handling of parental complaints. Inspection evidence did not support these concerns.

## **2.(b) Action points**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is available through the link described 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 a formal and regular process of monitoring by governors in order to maintain full compliance with relevant legislation.

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

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

- 3.1 The overall quality of pupils' achievement throughout the school is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils are very well educated in line with the school's commitment to develop talent and learning, and to achieve excellence. Pupils show high levels of knowledge and understanding in the subjects they study. They are particularly adept at applying previously learnt information and concepts to new situations. They draw on good general knowledge of the world about them to put information into context. They link cause and effect very well in subjects such as science, history and geography. Standards of speaking, literacy and numeracy are high. Pupils demonstrate good competence in information and communication technology (ICT), using a range of computer-based and online resources in many subjects. They show high levels of skill, flair and imagination in aesthetic and creative subjects, and can analyse and interpret information and data presented in different forms. Pupils of all ages show conspicuous success in the many extra-curricular activities and competitions in which they participate in high numbers. Of particular note are the sporting successes at regional and national level, musical events and examinations, many academic challenges and Olympiads, self-reliance competitions in the Combined Cadet Force (CCF), and challenging treks and expeditions. Almost all Year 13 leavers gain places at higher education institutions, including the country's most competitive universities.
- 3.3 The following analysis of examination attainment is based on the three-year period from 2008 to 2010, the latest period for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results at GCSE and A level have been excellent, well above the average for maintained secondary schools, and above that for selective schools nationally. Nearly 50 per cent of all GCSE grades achieved have been at the top A\* grade. At A level, A\* and A grades accounted for 60 per cent of grades achieved. This level of attainment, taken with other inspection evidence and the high quality of teaching, indicates that pupils make excellent long-term progress. This is supported by external standardised data measurements which show that pupils' progress between Year 9 and GCSE is significantly above national norms, compared with pupils of the same ability nationally. Pupils with SEND and those with EAL achieve a similarly high rate of progress, as shown by their performance in examinations and tests, and in the quality of some of their essays in the sixth form.
- 3.4 Pupils respond wholeheartedly to the outstanding opportunities to enrich and broaden their academic experience. These enable them to widen their horizons and raise their level of ambition, to stimulate intellectual endeavour and develop their independent speaking skills and logical thinking. These activities allow the most able pupils to achieve high levels of success over and above their strong performance in the classroom, although many other pupils benefit as well. Many study additional subjects such as philosophy and psychology for enjoyment alone, and achieve high standards in the Extended Project Qualification and critical essay competitions.
- 3.5 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent and many show a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning for its own sake. They respond particularly well to stimulating and challenging teaching, and are keen to take responsibility for their own success. Pupils enjoy discussing the many challenging and interesting ideas and material presented to them. They work extremely well in teams and group endeavours, and support each other's learning strongly. They show outstanding commitment to their extra-curricular

activities and community service projects, which they regard as very significant learning experiences.

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

- 3.6 The school offers pupils an excellent curriculum.
- 3.7 The curriculum is both broad and balanced, and extends well beyond public examination requirements. It is imaginatively combined with the extra-curricular programme to fulfil the school's aim to develop every pupil's intellect, creativity, independence and social awareness. Pupils in Year 9 study all those subjects available to them at GCSE, with the exception of business studies, as well as a qualification in ICT. They choose between German and Spanish as a second modern foreign language, after a taster course in both. Most pupils in Years 10 and 11 take ten of a possible nineteen GCSE subjects, including a non-examined course in religious studies (RS). Pupils' choices of option subjects are carefully guided and monitored, and they are expected to include at least two separate sciences and one modern foreign language amongst their seven options. The great majority choose all three sciences. In the sixth form, pupils choose from a range of 21 subjects. An inspiring and ambitious general studies course, called Connections, is taken by all year groups. This outstanding programme challenges pupils of all abilities to think more deeply about themselves and the world. Effective careers guidance is given to all pupils and includes valuable training in interview techniques, as well as guidance on option selection and its implications for higher education. Provision for ICT is in the process of being significantly upgraded to enhance its availability to pupils in lessons, private study and the boarding houses. Learning is enhanced by the library that is well stocked with printed and electronic material, and this is much appreciated by pupils. The school organises a very wide range of educational visits and residential experiences, both in the UK and around the world, which provide an exceptional learning experience.
- 3.8 The curriculum is designed very successfully to support and stimulate pupils of all abilities within the school. Able pupils are extended by the school's academic enrichment programme, which succeeds in improving their creative thought and independent thinking, and in stimulating their intellectual enquiry. Scholars are automatically involved, but the programme is also open to others with the enthusiasm for learning. Most of those pupils requiring support for learning receive this through their classroom teachers, for whom clear strategies to meet each individual's needs are carefully drawn up. Some receive more focused specialist support individually or in small groups. An additional learning skills course is available in Years 10 and 11 in place of one of the GCSE options. Pupils with EAL take appropriate specialist English courses and qualifications.
- 3.9 The extra-curricular programme is outstanding. A very wide range of clubs and activities is available, from bee keeping and fishing to real tennis and robots. Intellectual growth is stimulated through learned societies where staff and pupils meet to consider more deeply literary, historical, scientific and philosophical issues. A strong sporting programme offers ten different sports each term for boys and girls. On Monday afternoons, the entire school is involved in a variety of challenging activities that include community service, the CCF and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, adventurous training, conservation work and first aid. The pupils' commitment to community service is exemplary. Pupils regularly assist in several local schools, including schools for children with learning needs. Some pupils take part in an ongoing outreach programme to an inner-city estate, where they develop a first-hand

understanding of social deprivation. Every year, parties of sixth formers travel to India, Tanzania and Argentina to work in local orphanages or schools.

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

- 3.10 The overall quality of teaching throughout the school is excellent.
- 3.11 Teaching draws in particular upon the outstanding subject knowledge of the teachers and their strong relationships with the pupils. In line with the aims of the school, the stimulating teaching encourages a strong work ethic and a culture of intellectual reflection. Since the previous inspection, the school has developed a more consistent assessment scheme and marking policy, understood by the pupils and the parents.
- 3.12 Lessons are carefully planned, with the learning needs of the pupils very much in mind. A wide variety of tasks and activities provides interest and good use of time, and includes video clips, quizzes and competitions, excellent paired work, vigorous class discussions, practical investigations and short written tasks. Teachers are enthusiastic about their subjects and encourage pupils to develop a genuine interest in their work. In many lessons, tasks are designed to encourage pupils to think independently and find out information for themselves.
- 3.13 The great majority of lessons proceed with a brisk pace and great enthusiasm, stimulating pupils' interest and encouraging high levels of involvement. Teachers use question and answer techniques efficiently to draw out ideas, to facilitate pupils' thinking and to build up their confidence. Good use is made of open questions as well as more focused or directed ones. The teaching makes very effective use of resources, from global positioning satellite technology to carefully prepared and visually striking computer presentations. Teachers use assessment techniques and their detailed knowledge of pupils to influence their planning of lessons, often adjusting content spontaneously in the classroom as necessary. Pupils are appreciative of the many subject clinics and teachers who give freely of their time out of class to support them. In the very small proportion of less successful teaching, the pace is slow and variety in content is limited, and lessons fail to give pupils sufficient opportunity to contribute and think for themselves. Very occasionally, opportunities for additional challenge are limited and progress slows.
- 3.14 Strong relationships between teachers and pupils contribute greatly to pupils' confidence, learning and progress. Teachers are aware of pupils' needs, especially those with SEND or EAL, and provide support and help to overcome any difficulties that affect their learning. Teaching methods are carefully matched to the needs of all pupils, including the most able. Teachers often use sequences of short tasks or calculations which progressively become more difficult. Multi-sensory approaches are used, presenting information in both aural and visual media.
- 3.15 Marking of pupils' work is generally regular and accurate, although the quality of comments and textual annotation varies between different year groups and subjects. Much marking is of high quality and gives detailed and helpful comments on how pupils can improve their work, though this is not always carried out consistently. However, pupils state that they are often given verbal feedback and feel confident that they know what they have to do to make further progress. The school tracks the academic progress of pupils through the assessment information it collects, but its use of a wide range of assessment data and standardised measures of progress is limited.

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

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

- 4.1 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils benefit significantly from the many social and educational opportunities in the curriculum, extra-curricular activities and projects, thus fulfilling the school's aim to produce moral, responsible and creative people with good judgement and clear purpose. By the time they leave the school, pupils have acquired a very high standard of personal development.
- 4.3 The spiritual development of pupils is excellent. The school strongly fulfils its aim to nurture faith where it exists while arousing curiosity in all pupils towards a spiritual dimension. Pupils clearly see that the school's values are based on Christian principles, expressed through RS lessons, chapel services and the example of the chaplaincy team, and act on these through the extensive charity work and care for others that are engendered by the community service projects and partnership schemes. The pupils have a strong understanding of different faiths, developed through RS lessons, and of spirituality in a wider context, from dedicated weeks and other events. Most pupils recognise living and working in the beautiful surroundings of the school as an opportunity for reflection and spiritual awareness, which is formalised each year with a particular whole-school focus on the inspiring quality of their immediate environment.
- 4.4 The pupils demonstrate an outstanding moral awareness, similarly firmly based on Christian principles. They have a clear sense of right and wrong, showing respect for the school rules, the community and the environment. They respond well to the many opportunities provided to explore and discuss moral choices in RS, personal, social and moral education, and subjects such as drama, English literature and history, as well as through the Connections programme. Pupils are self-aware and reflect maturely on personal choices and ethical and moral dilemmas facing them and society. They are challenged and learn within a very supportive environment.
- 4.5 The pupils have particularly strong social development, enthusiastically accepting the many opportunities to lead, serve and take responsibility that are available in the houses, and through charity work, sports teams and community service activities. Pupils serve as school and house prefects or as mentors helping younger pupils with their work. The Combined Cadet Force and outdoor pursuits help pupils to show initiative and develop self-reliance. Pupils express their opinions effectively through the school and house councils, their own publication *This Week* and directly to staff. Emotionally mature for their age, they are confident and articulate, able to think clearly and to listen carefully to others. The pupils show great respect to each other, teachers and visitors.
- 4.6 The cultural awareness of the pupils is outstanding. Pupils look outwards beyond the school and home to the local area and internationally. The whole-school Chinese New Year festival, the partnership work in Argentina, India and Tanzania, and involvement with the inner-city Northam Project in Southampton enable pupils to appreciate the values and needs of others. A sixth-form pupil commented that the Christmas party organised for the Northam children was the best day in his experience at Canford. Another felt that his two weeks' stay in India was a life-changing experience. Students from overseas are warmly welcomed into the community. The pupils' cultural

awareness and aesthetic appreciation are enhanced through art and many music and drama activities.

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

- 4.7 The pastoral care of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.8 This aspect of provision is a major strength of the school, and the aim to provide a nurturing environment in the context of mutual support is successfully met. The housemasters and mistresses, together with their teams of tutors and the sixth-form academic tutors, provide outstanding and highly effective support and guidance for pupils, and monitor their academic and pastoral progress closely. Pupils are also very well supported by the school counselling provision and the health centre staff.
- 4.9 The quality of relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst pupils themselves, is outstanding, and this lies at the heart of the strong school and house communities. Pupils value very highly the supportive nature of their relationships with staff. Older pupils form positive and friendly relationships with those who are younger.
- 4.10 The school provides an excellent range of healthy food options. This, and the many opportunities each week for exercise and physical fitness, helps pupils to develop healthy lifestyles. They demonstrate a very good understanding of healthy living and value the guidance they receive through a variety of subject areas.
- 4.11 Measures to promote good behaviour work well. Codes of conduct and expectations of behaviour are well known to pupils and staff, and are respected throughout the school. Any unacceptable behaviour is dealt with appropriately in accordance with the clear sanctions procedure. Rewards such as merits and commendations are used effectively to motivate the pupils to achieve and behave well. The anti-bullying policy ensures that incidents are dealt with swiftly, although pupils consider that these are extremely rare.
- 4.12 The school provides suitable access for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the required three-year plan is in place. Those requiring learning support benefit from the structured programme available to them.
- 4.13 Pupils feel able to express their opinions and views through the school council and food committee, or through informal discussion with staff, and confirm that their opinions are listened to and considered.

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

- 4.14 Arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils are excellent.
- 4.15 The school takes these matters very seriously and this supports its aspiration to deliver a broad and varied education in a safe environment. The school is conscientious and thorough in its attention to issues of safeguarding and child protection. The safeguarding policy and procedures are comprehensive, detailed and well implemented. Three designated child protection officers oversee safeguarding matters and ensure that all staff receive appropriate high quality training. Pupils' welfare is suitably safeguarded during times when visitors use the swimming pool and sports hall.
- 4.16 Rigorous precautions are taken to minimise risks from fire and other hazards, and procedures and equipment are regularly checked by house and estate staff. Fire drills

are practised regularly and comprehensive records compiled and stored centrally. All systems and equipment are checked routinely by an external agency. Fire training is provided to new staff as part of their induction. Safety protocols in laboratories and workshops are stringently applied. The health and safety policy, which is reviewed regularly by governors, is comprehensive, as are the numerous subsidiary documents. Thorough risk assessments are carried out across the school and for all extra-curricular and off-site activities. Trips and expeditions are carefully planned. The school's health centre is held in high regard by pupils and promotes very well the health and welfare of those who are sick or injured. It has excellent protocols and extensive policies in place. Admission and attendance registers are suitably maintained and correctly stored for the previous three years.

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

- 4.17 The overall quality of the boarding experience is excellent.
- 4.18 The school comprehensively fulfils its boarding aims to provide a safe and healthy environment, allowing pupils to reach their full potential. Boarding makes a strong and key contribution to the distinctive ethos of the school. The strong community spirit fosters in the pupils a considerable loyalty and pride in their houses. The school had no recommendations to act on from the recent Ofsted boarding welfare report.
- 4.19 The outcomes for boarders are excellent and a strong sense of community is evident amongst them. Both younger and older boarders feel fully integrated into their houses, and together the boarding community contributes significantly to the life of the school. This reflects a strong commitment to equal opportunities, diversity, harmony and tolerance, with the younger boarders regarding those older than themselves as good role models. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities feel fully supported and integrated into the boarding community, as do those with EAL. Relationships amongst boarders are excellent and most regard their houses as their term-time homes. Boarders greatly enjoy each other's company and acknowledge the beneficial effect that boarding has on their independence and self-reliance. Social gatherings such as prefect suppers and house dinners are valued occasions, and they promote house unity and enhance the residential experience.
- 4.20 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. The promotion of boarders' health and arrangements for medical care have a high priority, and the introduction of a new electronic medication monitoring process is further enhancing the service provided. Boarders feel that they are well looked after and readily confirm that they have access to a range of appropriate adults with whom to discuss personal issues. Boarders report that the quality of food on offer is generally very good and nutritious, with breakfast and lunchtime meals being the most popular. The boarding houses have designated kitchenettes for the preparation of food and drinks, in addition to the main school provision. The school health centre offers an excellent service for injured or ill boarders, as well as a confidential counselling service. House staff are alert to the individual health needs of the pupils in their charge. Boarders are actively encouraged to contribute to the life of the school and benefit enormously from the excellent facilities and activities on offer in the evenings and at weekends. The school grounds are much appreciated by boarders as a valuable learning and recreational environment, and they appreciate the opportunities to organise their own lives during periods of free time. The recent investment in boarding accommodation ensures that boarders are comfortable. They feel safe in their houses. The ongoing programme of refurbishment ensures continuous further improvement. Information for parents is disseminated through regular emails and newsletters, enabling them to feel involved in

the lives of their children whilst at school. Pupils report that contact with parents is readily available through mobile telephones, email and the internet.

- 4.21 The arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are excellent. Procedures and practices ensure that the safety of boarders is well promoted and managed effectively by boarding staff at all levels. Effective behaviour policies and procedures for boarders are in place, and staff demonstrate a clear commitment to identifying and challenging any anti-social behaviour. All boarding house staff are up-to-date in safeguarding training and know the correct procedure to follow should an incident occur. Every boarding house produces its own internal risk assessments, and the school takes its health and safety responsibilities very seriously. Clear sanctions for any misbehaviour are in place and are well recorded. Such incidents are usually identified at an early stage and quickly resolved. Good behaviour and achievement are recognised and rewarded within the houses. Prefects take a prominent role in the organisation of the houses and contribute effectively to the overall personal development of the boarders. Pupils appreciate the contribution of the significant numbers of staff who are actively involved in the houses, and feel that the boarding staff are both very approachable and willing to provide help or offer guidance as necessary.
- 4.22 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the boarding provision is excellent. Boarding houses are effectively led by highly professional and dedicated staff teams, including matrons who are well regarded by the boarding pupils. All boarding staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and the very positive relationships between boarders and staff are a strength of the boarding community. The house teams, including matrons, meet regularly to discuss the needs of individual boarders, and record keeping is of a high standard. Boarding documentation and policies have been progressively reviewed and clear priorities have been identified to ensure ongoing improvement. Good progress is being made in the use of self-evaluation as a significant tool to support the long-term development of boarding. Training for boarding staff is encouraged; however, not all staff are familiar with the format of the new national minimum standards. Boarders are routinely encouraged to contribute their views on the quality of their boarding experiences, and they feel that they have a voice at both house and school level. The recent formation of a student union is an example of a consultative group set up as result of boarders' representation. Other school-wide consultative committees, such as the social, food and environmental groups, involve boarders as well, and they take an active role in contributing to whole-school improvement. Parents of boarders feel that the houses are well led and managed, and that the school keeps their children safe.

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

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

- 5.1 The overall quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 Many aspects are excellent and governance makes a strong contribution to the successful fulfilment of the school's aims. Governors provide a wide range of valuable expertise and experience, and new governors are identified with skills to strengthen the board further. Their vision for the school is well promoted through discussion and debate, and their subsequent approval of the school's strategic plans. Astute financial planning continues to enable investment for the maintenance and development of accommodation and resources, and the recruitment of high quality staff. The efficient committee structure enables effective oversight of different areas of the school's day-to-day operation.
- 5.3 Governors have considerable insight into the workings of the school. Meetings are held with the school's leadership, as well as annual formal meetings with senior staff to discuss strategy. Since the previous inspection, a consultative committee has been formed at which governors discuss relevant issues with members of the school staff to aid communication, awareness and identification of potential developmental needs. Governors use various success criteria for the school, concentrating mainly on tangible and quantifiable indicators. Governors gain an understanding of boarding life through regular visits to the houses, and many governors spend a day in school each year meeting pupils and staff.
- 5.4 A designated governor supports the school with safeguarding issues, ensuring that other governors are well informed on all necessary matters. The effectiveness of health and safety provision is also thoroughly monitored. Several governors have attended relevant courses to increase their understanding of statutory responsibilities. The governing body and Allied Schools make an annual assessment of risk, prepared by the bursar, and this is linked to some aspects of regulatory compliance. Governors rely on the school's administrative team to take a lead in monitoring changes in regulations and minimum standards, but a structured and proactive approach to the systematic and regular review and approval of specific policies is not fully in place. A formal mechanism for the board to demonstrate its monitoring of the full range of regulatory compliance has not yet been embedded, and governors are aware of the need to ensure more detailed recording of their response to regulatory matters in the board's minutes.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management throughout the school is excellent.
- 5.6 Staff responsible for school life, at all levels, enable pupils to achieve high standards in and out of class, to develop into confident and tolerant young people, and to flourish within a supportive and nurturing school community. The strong leadership and management make a vital contribution to the successful fulfilment of the school's central purpose and aims. The recommendations of the previous inspection have been appropriately addressed through a new assessment grading system and improved opportunities for the monitoring of teaching.
- 5.7 The leadership and management ensure that the school's vision, sense of purpose and individual character, together with a shared commitment to enhance the breadth of experience and culture of excellence through which pupils' aspirations are raised, are effectively communicated to staff, pupils and parents. Academic rigour and a strong work ethic have been successfully blended to ensure that pupils benefit from a well-rounded educational experience, in which talent is developed and service to others expected. The excellent levels of achievement and the outstanding personal development of pupils are testament to the high quality of leadership and management throughout the school. Although some aspects of the management structure are not formally laid out, staff are clear about lines of responsibility and accountability. The management of health and safety and safeguarding welfare are particularly effective.
- 5.8 Efficient communication, regular meetings, consistent expectations and shared information ensure the smooth running of the school and enhance pupils' well-being and learning environment. Effective policies and procedures are successfully implemented, and ensure consistent responses and successful resolution of pastoral and academic issues.
- 5.9 The school recognises a need for continued effort and commitment in order to achieve high standards, and staff are positively self-critical and dedicated to improvement. Heads of department evaluate the academic success of their subjects regularly throughout the year. Housemasters and housemistresses, together with their teams of tutors, continually assess the support frameworks in place within the school. Staff at all levels contribute to the identification of key priorities and targets and the means to put them into practice and sustain continued success. The school's strategic plan is an evolving and dynamic process, appropriately recorded, rather than a single document. It provides good stimulus for maintaining the current steady momentum for change and improvement. The school is strongly responsive to the needs of its pupils.
- 5.10 The highly committed and dedicated staff give generously of their time and energy, both in and out of the classroom, to enhance the pupils' educational experience. All teachers are regularly observed teaching by their colleagues, which provides mutual support and a sharing of effective strategies to enhance teaching and learning. Regular appraisal enables the refining and development of professional skills. All staff have received necessary training in matters of first aid, health and safety, fire precautions and child protection. The school carries out rigorous recruitment procedures, ensuring that all required checks, including those through the Criminal Records Bureau, are carried out promptly and recorded efficiently.
- 5.11 The quality of the school's links with its parents is excellent. The school maintains highly productive relationships with parents, in accordance with its aims, and parents

provide strong support for the school's provision for their children. The great majority of those responding to the pre-inspection questionnaires expressed strong satisfaction with the education provided. They particularly approved of the individual attention and support given by the highly committed staff, the encouragement given to the most able pupils, the efficiency of management and organisation, and the quality of the subjects and activities offered. A very small minority were less happy with provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the handling of parental complaints. Inspection evidence did not support these concerns.

- 5.12 Opportunities for parents to become involved in school life are extensive and appreciated by them. The Canford School Society organises fund-raising and social events, such as a lecture from a renowned Everest climber and a performance from the Bournemouth Sinfonietta, which are enthusiastically supported by many parents. Parents benefit from annual consultation evenings with staff. The school holds open days twice a year.
- 5.13 Parents are provided with high quality information about the school's life and work. The school's website and dedicated parent portal are particularly informative, providing electronic newsletters and documents that are regularly updated. The school makes available all required items of information to parents and to those of prospective pupils using a wide variety of media. Full reports and interim grade cards are issued several times each year. Reports are detailed and comprehensive, and are easily understood by pupils and parents. Good advice is given to pupils on how to improve their work and progress. Any concerns or complaints are handled sensitively and thoroughly by the headmaster and the pastoral teams, in line with published procedures.

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