



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**ALDRO SCHOOL**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Aldro School

Full Name of School	<b>Aldro School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>936/6110</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>312072</b>		
Address	<b>Aldro School Lombard Street Shackleford Godalming Surrey GU8 6AS</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01483 813530</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01483 419010</b>		
Email Address	<b>hmsec@aldro.org</b>		
Headmaster	<b>Mr James Hanson</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Philip Robinson</b>		
Age Range	<b>7 to 13</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>211</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Boys</b>		
Numbers by Age	7-11:	<b>131</b>	
	11-13	<b>80</b>	
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>148</b>	
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>63</b>	
	Full:	<b>8</b>	Part-Time: <b>55</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>02 Feb 2016 to 05 Feb 2016</b>		

## PREFACE

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

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

The previous ISI boarding intermediate inspection was in May 2013 and the previous ISI standard inspection was in February 2010.

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

This inspection contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education, personal development and welfare.

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

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

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

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

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with 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 Graham Gorton	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Loraine Guest	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Miss Rosemary Walker	Team Inspector (Former Head of Department, IAPS school)
Mr Jason Hyatt	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Aldro is a day and boarding preparatory school for boys from the ages of 7 to 13. Established in Eastbourne in 1898, it moved to Shackleford near Guildford in Surrey in 1940 during the Second World War and has recently celebrated its 75th anniversary on this site. In 1968 the Aldro School Educational Trust was set up and the school is also a company limited by guarantee. There are eight members of the board of governors who are also members of the Trust, along with one further trustee. A new sports hall, the Aston Sports Centre, was opened in June 2015. A new headmaster was appointed in September 2015.
- 1.2 The school aims to give pupils an outstanding all-round education, offering breadth, depth and quality of achievement, with a balance between the best traditional standards and modern approaches. Its vision is to be a vibrant school that operates with the values and traditions of a boarding school, adapted to the requirements of the 21st century. It seeks to focus on academic excellence and offer a wide range of opportunities for extra-curricular activities to prepare pupils for the next stage of their education. The school has a Christian foundation, and strives to be a caring community, focusing on the individual.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection the school had 211 pupils. Twelve pupils boarded at the school, of whom eight were full boarders and four were weekly boarders. An additional 51 boarders were boarding on a flexible basis, staying for fewer nights each week. There are nine pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, originating from different countries around the world. Most day pupils live within a 20-mile radius. The pupils come mainly from professional and business families. The ability profile of the school is above that of the national average.
- 1.4 The school has identified 39 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 26 receive school support with some aspect of their learning. None has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. The school has seven pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), none of whom is at an early stage of language acquisition.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its NC equivalence are shown in the following table.

School	NC name
Form 3	Year 3
Form 4	Year 4
Form 5	Year 5
Form 6	Year 6
Form 7	Year 7
Form 8	Year 8

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

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

- 2.1 Pupils are extremely well educated in accordance with the aims of the school. This is reflected in their high standards of achievement across the curriculum and in their excellent levels of success in extra-curricular activities, particularly sport. Pupils are successful in gaining entry to senior schools of their choice, often with a good range of scholarships and awards. There is an excellent curriculum which offers breadth and opportunity for all. This is enhanced by an outstanding extra-curricular programme which broadens the educational experience for the pupils. Teaching is good and is generally planned well and delivered with pace, strong subject knowledge and enthusiasm. However, some teaching does not provide sufficient opportunities for the pupils to use their initiative and to develop their independent thinking. Marking is thorough, giving clear indications as to how pupils can improve their work, thus meeting a recommendation from the previous inspection. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support pupils' learning has developed since the previous inspection though is not fully utilised in all subjects.
- 2.2 Pupils display a strong spiritual and moral awareness. They understand right and wrong and readily see the viewpoints of others. Pupils make a valuable contribution to the life of their school community, reflecting their excellent social development. Pupils demonstrate a strong cultural awareness and are respectful to others whose background may be different to their own. The pastoral care of the pupils is good, with strong relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves. However, there is an inconsistency of approach from staff when pupils raise concerns about some bullying and behavioural matters. Arrangements for welfare, health and safety are sound. Safeguarding policies and procedures are generally of a good quality. However, insufficiently rigorous attention is given to the safer recruitment of staff. Matters relating to health and safety around the school site require further attention. The quality of boarding is good overall, with excellent provision and outcomes for the pupils. Their personal development is strongly enhanced by their experience of boarding. However, there are inadequacies in certain aspects of welfare, health and safety. Relationships between boarders and key boarding staff, and amongst the boarders themselves, are extremely positive. Boarders enjoy making a positive contribution to the smooth running of the boarding house.
- 2.3 Sound governance provides effective support and challenge for school leaders. Safeguarding is given a high profile but governors do not have sufficient oversight of all matters relating to pupils' welfare, health and safety. School leadership has successfully introduced many changes to improve the educational provision and outcomes for pupils in recent months. Its work has made a significant impact on all aspects of school life. However, systems to monitor the effectiveness of policies and procedures are not yet sufficiently rigorous. The school self-development plan does not provide clear details of who is accountable for each area to enable governors and leaders to be able to fully evaluate progress. The role of head of department has been further developed to be more effective in the monitoring of the quality of teaching, thus partly meeting a recommendation from the previous inspection.

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

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

2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and therefore it is required to take the following action.

- Take steps to comply fully with regulations relating to the safety of the school site [Part 5, paragraph 25, under Premises and accommodation, and National Minimum Standard 5.7, under Boarding accommodation].
- Ensure that all necessary safer recruitment checks are carried out before appointment [Part 4, paragraph 18.(2)(b), under Suitability of staff and proprietors, and National Minimum Standards 11, under Child protection and 14.1, under Staff recruitment and checks on other adults, and for the same reason Part 3, paragraphs 7.(a) and (b), and 8.(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety].
- For the above reasons the proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards and national minimum standards are met consistently [Part 8, paragraph 34.(1)(b), under Quality of leadership and management in schools, and National Minimum Standard 13.4, under Management and development of boarding].

2.5 The school does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015, as described above.

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

2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Improve mechanisms through which governors and leaders have effective oversight of school policies and procedures, including in boarding.
2. Ensure a consistent approach from all staff with regard to bullying and behavioural concerns.
3. Formalise the school development plan, showing clear timescales and areas of responsibility.
4. Strengthen teaching by providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their independent thinking and use their initiative.



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

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' learning and achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils display high levels of subject knowledge across the curriculum and show an excellent depth of understanding. They have excellent skills in a wide variety of subjects and activities, which they apply most effectively, including in extra-curricular pursuits. This fully supports the school's aims to encourage high academic standards and an enthusiasm for learning.
- 3.3 Pupils are accomplished readers and they show intonation and expression when reading aloud. They are articulate and always listen attentively to the views and ideas of others. Pupils become successful writers as they move through the school. They have a firm grasp of the conventions of grammar and punctuation, applying these successfully to writing for a variety of purposes. In both factual and creative writing they are particularly strong, showing attention to detail and the use of mature and inspiring vocabulary. Pupils demonstrate logical thought when working through problems and their application of mathematical skills is of a high order. They relish the challenges set in their numeracy work. Pupils' achievements in music, drama and art are excellent. They have well-developed creative skills and talents that are reflected in the high quality of work around the school, in a variety of music concerts and during drama productions. Pupils' physical development is strong across all age groups. They are accomplished at sport, excelling in a wide variety of games and activities.
- 3.4 The pupils' strong academic progress is enhanced by their excellent achievement beyond the classroom. Pupils achieve highly in sporting events, as exemplified by the rugby, football and cricket teams, which have enjoyed considerable recent success. Excellent standards are reached in a wide range of other individual and team sports at local, county and national levels, including shooting. Individual and team success in chess is significant. Pupils make excellent progress as they move through the school, and gain places at senior schools of their choice, with a good proportion attaining scholarships and awards in areas such as academic achievement, sport, drama, art, design and technology, and music.
- 3.5 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations. Inspection evidence, consisting of lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' written work and discussions with pupils, confirms this judgement. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils make at least a good, and for some an excellent, rate of progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. Pupils with SEND or EAL make excellent progress because they are extremely well supported. They are withdrawn from lessons for individual work, if appropriate, and are regularly supported in class. Those with specific talents achieve highly and good progress is made by the more able. A very large majority of parents are pleased with their children's progress and an overwhelming majority of pupils feel that they are progressing well.
- 3.6 The pupils' attitudes to learning are a strength of the school. They show excellent organisational skills and are enthusiastic learners who are always keen to give of their best. They enjoy their work and rise to the high expectations set. Pupils work well together and instinctively support one another's learning. They share their

ideas enthusiastically. The pupils' love of learning and a desire to succeed are reflected in their excellent achievement in areas of school life.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 The curriculum is planned to suit the needs of all pupils, and is successful in meeting the school's aims of giving pupils an all-round education, offering breadth and quality of achievement.
- 3.9 The curriculum is well balanced and covers all the required subject areas. The delivery of the curriculum by specialists in art, drama, music and games benefits the pupils and strengthens their curricular opportunities. The addition of Mandarin and Latin further enhances the provision. Grouping pupils according to abilities from Year 5 provides opportunities for greater curriculum depth by widening pupils' understanding in core subjects such as mathematics and English. The introduction of hour-long lessons has made a positive impact on the manner in which the curriculum is delivered, ensuring effective subject coverage.
- 3.10 An effective programme for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) is taught through discrete lessons although the economic strand has yet to be formally introduced. When any political issues are being addressed through the curriculum, the school always ensures that it presents a balanced picture of opposing views.
- 3.11 Since the previous inspection, the provision of ICT has been enhanced by the purchase of tablet computers and hand-held pads, and the ICT suite can often be booked for cross-curricular work. All classrooms have interactive whiteboards, which are used effectively by teachers in a wide range of subjects. However, the integration of ICT in the curriculum is not fully realised. The vast majority of parents feel that the curriculum offers an appropriate range of subjects and areas of experience.
- 3.12 Effective individual support for pupils with SEND or EAL is provided both in and outside the classroom. Able, gifted and talented pupils are given opportunities to extend their skills through representing the school in sporting fixtures, art exhibitions, musical events and drama productions.
- 3.13 The curriculum and pupils' educational experience are enriched in various ways. The library provides a valuable resource, both recreationally and for subject-based research. Visiting speakers in areas such as history or media enthral and motivate pupils. Events such as the History Table, where history is brought to life with a themed lunch set on a specific historical date, are key aspects of the rich and varied educational experience. Visits to museums and places of interest add to the diversity of learning outside the classroom. An excellent range of residential trips further extends opportunities for the pupils.
- 3.14 The excellent extra-curricular programme provides opportunities for pupils to be involved in an extensive range of activities, including chess, drama, art, music and numerous sports. The presence of boarders at the school strengthens the extra-curricular opportunities for all pupils. Staff contribute effectively to the activity programme, and the addition of the new sports hall has opened up further opportunities for pupils to engage in indoor activities. In questionnaire responses,

an overwhelming majority of parents and a very large majority of pupils felt that the school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities.

- 3.15 The school is actively involved in the life of the community. Each year it supports a charity with which it has a connection. The school has established links with a local church, where boarders attend a family service once a month. Strong links have been developed with a local primary school, which afford benefits to all. The school hosts annual chess tournaments, invites local schools to a junior drama production, and hosts tournaments in tag rugby and football for local schools. It also supports charities in Africa, thus enhancing pupils' understanding of other cultures and lifestyles.

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

- 3.16 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.17 Teaching is effective in supporting the school's aims to provide an all-round education, offering breadth, depth and quality of achievement, and which is based on a balance between the best traditional standards and modern approaches. Teaching throughout the school is enthusiastic and purposeful, promoting a strong sense of progress and achievement.
- 3.18 Lessons are carefully planned and use a varied range of strategies to engage pupils and to develop good understanding. Relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils are positive. Almost all the pupils indicated in their questionnaire responses that their teachers help them to learn, and stated in discussions that teachers are approachable and supportive. Teachers know their pupils very well, which enhances the pupils' desire to do their best. Praise and encouragement are given regularly, with a credit system proving an incentive for pupils to persevere and to take pride in their work. A recently introduced Headmaster's Commendation recognises the achievement of pupils who have performed beyond expectations.
- 3.19 Since the previous inspection marking is much improved, with clear guidelines and regular book monitoring now in place to ensure rigour and consistency. Marking is thorough, with constructive comments commending strengths but also indicating areas for improvement. Pupils stated in discussions that they feel supported and appreciate the written comments and oral feedback they receive, enabling them to learn and to improve. Longer-term assessment procedures are comprehensive and information about pupils' progress is used successfully to inform planning.
- 3.20 In responses to questionnaires, a few pupils felt that homework does not help them to learn. Evidence collected during the inspection demonstrated that homework, which is completed under supervision at school, serves to consolidate learning at an appropriate level. Similarly, a very small minority of pupils felt that they are not given the right amount of work by teachers, or that teachers do not give individual help when they need it. This was not borne out in evidence from discussions with pupils, lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' books.
- 3.21 Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subjects, and they hold high expectations for their pupils. Specialist subject teaching across the curriculum provides further depth to the pupils' learning. Teaching displays commitment and enthusiasm, which sparks the whole-hearted enjoyment of lessons by the pupils. The most successful teaching includes setting a brisk pace, using time efficiently, skilful questioning to challenge thinking, opportunities for collaborative learning and tasks matching individual pupils' abilities. When teaching is less successful, it is

overly directed by the teacher and does not include opportunities for pupils to use initiative or to work independently. Resources are used well, but ICT is not fully exploited as a teaching tool in lessons outside the ICT curriculum.

- 3.22 Teaching shows excellent awareness of pupils with SEND or EAL, and these pupils receive highly effective learning support from specialist teachers. The teaching generally challenges those pupils who are more able, particularly when opportunities for independent work are used. Ability grouping in the older classes allows teaching to focus on the pupils' individual needs and abilities in order for them to reach their potential.
- 3.23 Teaching promotes equality, respect and tolerance, and ensures a positive classroom ethos where pupils act responsibly. Teaching is non-partisan in the coverage of political views, and in the mock election during the General Election in 2015, pupils showed respect for differing political viewpoints.

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

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils possess a sense of purpose and self-confidence, reflecting the success of the school in fulfilling its aim to “bring out the best in boys” and for them to become caring members of a school community, underpinned by Christian values.
- 4.3 The spiritual development of the pupils is excellent. Pupils are open and friendly, and show emotional maturity, but are still able to enjoy the excitement and wonder of childhood. They display high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem. They are sensitive to non-material aspects of life, valuing, for example, the high quality art and music in the school as well as the natural beauty of their surroundings. The pupils' spiritual development is strengthened through the daily act of worship in the school chapel and links with a local parish church.
- 4.4 The pupils have a strong moral awareness, with a keen sense of right and wrong. They appreciate the qualities of fairness and integrity, and are respectful of the system of rewards and sanctions in the school, which contributes towards a sense of community responsibility. The pupils' moral awareness is reinforced by the school code of conduct and by talks from visiting speakers. Pupils understand the standards of behaviour expected of them, and the concept of treating people fairly and without discrimination. Their moral development is heightened as they debate and express viewpoints on topics such as whether speed is more important than saving woodlands in relation to a proposed high-speed rail link. They show respect for English civil and criminal law and develop a thorough knowledge of institutions and services and the significant part they play in a cohesive society.
- 4.5 The quality of the pupils' social development is excellent. Relationships are positive, with pupils interacting confidently with each other and with adults. Pupils' strong social awareness is demonstrated as they fund raise enthusiastically for those less fortunate than themselves. They have recently supported charities in Africa and a local food bank. A very small minority of pupils' responses to the questionnaires suggested that they are not given opportunities to take on responsibilities. Inspection evidence showed that although the role of prefect is available to Year 8 pupils, there are opportunities in all years to become form captains or form representatives. Pupils aspire to the responsibility given to their older peers.
- 4.6 Pupils' cultural awareness is excellent. They respect Western cultural tradition through music, drama, literature and art, and also gain appreciation of other cultures through the curriculum, for example in Mandarin lessons. Pupils' cultural development is deepened through opportunities to celebrate other faiths, cultures and customs and through visits to places of worship that may be different to their own. The celebration of specific events such as Chinese New Year strengthens their cultural understanding.
- 4.7 Pupils' awareness is heightened through learning about individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance, and how the democratic process underpins British society. Topics integrated into the curriculum further develop their understanding of Britishness.

- 4.8 The personal development of the pupils by the time they leave the school is excellent. Able, gifted and talented pupils and those with SEND or EAL benefit from the same opportunities for personal development as other pupils. Older pupils said in discussions that they are prepared very well for the next stage in their education.

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

- 4.9 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is good.
- 4.10 The pastoral care reflects the school's aims and is given high priority by the leadership. Relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst pupils themselves, are good. There is a clear level of mutual respect, and pupils display great loyalty to their school. Form tutors are at the centre of the school's pastoral system. Regular pastoral care team meetings ensure that the needs of all pupils are shared and discussed thoroughly. Specialists, such as counsellors and mentors, provide excellent additional support for any pupils with specific needs or for those who may be vulnerable. Senior pupils, in the roles of prefects, effectively support the pastoral well-being of younger pupils at break times. The junior department provides thorough information on the pastoral needs of pupils in the transition to Year 5. The school has a comprehensive plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND. A vast majority of parents feel that their children are well looked after at the school.
- 4.11 In response to questionnaires, a few pupils did not think that the school seeks or responds to their views. Inspectors found that pupils are able to share their opinions in many ways through the school council, boarders' forum or tutor time discussions. A recent non-uniform day and an introduction of fruit juices have resulted from ideas generated by the pupils.
- 4.12 The school's reward system is effective in promoting good behaviour. In response to the questionnaire, a few pupils said that rewards and sanctions are not given fairly by teachers. Inspection evidence showed that rewards and sanctions are fairly and consistently applied and carefully recorded on the school's management information system. Pupils understand why they may receive sanctions and sometimes undertake reflective work to improve any aspect of behaviour which falls below the expected standards.
- 4.13 A very small minority of pupils and parents indicated in response to the questionnaires that cases of bullying are not dealt with effectively. Through discussions with pupils of all ages and inspection of procedures, evidence showed that there is not a consistent response to pupils' concerns amongst the staff.
- 4.14 Pupils have a thorough understanding of the importance of healthy eating and exercise. This is reinforced in PSHEE, science and the highly effective sports programmes. Freshly prepared food of outstanding quality is available at all mealtimes, and is supplemented by a wide range of healthy snacks on offer during breaks. Pupils appreciate the high quality of the food.

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

- 4.15 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is sound.
- 4.16 Senior staff with a responsibility for safeguarding receive regular updated training that reflects the official requirements. Other staff are fully trained, understand the systems that the school has in place and know how they should follow up any safeguarding concerns. Recent training has reflected the national strategy, with an emphasis on issues surrounding the potential radicalisation of pupils. The school has developed strong links with the local designated officers and this reflects the importance it places on the safeguarding of pupils. Informative documents highlight the school's procedures for visitors to the school. The school undertakes most checks to ensure that everyone is vetted before working with children. However, some key checks had not been undertaken at the appropriate time but had been rectified prior to the inspection. Minor administrative errors were also identified on the school's single central register of appointments, which were also corrected promptly.
- 4.17 All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk from fire, with alarms being regularly tested, and fire safety and evacuation notices displayed in all key areas. The school grounds are well maintained, reducing the risk from hazards. The inspection has identified further issues for attention relating to the welfare, health and safety of the school site.
- 4.18 Records and checks relating to health and safety are generally maintained and logged carefully, including detailed risk assessments. However, some documentation does not reflect the care taken. The provision for pupils who are ill is of a good quality. The school has a designated sick room that is adequate, is close to amenities and is fully staffed by qualified practitioners. The school makes excellent provision for those pupils with SEND.
- 4.19 The school's admission and attendance registers are appropriately maintained and correctly stored for the previous three years.

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

- 4.20 The quality of boarding is good.
- 4.21 The outcomes for boarders are excellent and their personal development is strongly enhanced by their experience. Pupils speak with confidence about their enjoyment of boarding at the school. The many and varied opportunities available enable them to develop excellent interpersonal skills with staff and their peers. Boarders display great confidence when they greet visitors, and are courteous and well mannered. They are at ease and enjoy life within their different boarding areas. Boarders are keen to contribute to the smooth running of the houses, supporting new pupils and helping each other to change bedding on a weekly basis.
- 4.22 Boarders with EAL are fully immersed into the life of the boarding house. They engage in the many activities on offer and have strong relationships with other house members. Boarders relish the opportunity to take responsibility for looking after several house pets. In questionnaire responses a small minority of boarders felt that their opinions are not considered. Inspectors found that the school council and boarders' forum, and informal discussions with house staff, offer opportunities for pupils' opinions to be heard. A number of recent boarders' trips and additional activities have resulted from these discussions. Older boarders have the opportunity

- to complete homework in boarding time and have access to a well-resourced library, helping to develop an independent approach to learning, in preparation for their next stage of education.
- 4.23 Mealtimes are relaxed, organised events, bringing the boarders together. They are kept abreast of events from around the world through the use of the internet, PSHEE lessons, house quizzes and daily newspapers, thus meeting the recommendation from the previous intermediate inspection of boarding. Boarders who have birthdays during school time can have a 'birthday table' to celebrate the occasion with their friends.
- 4.24 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. Boarding accommodation is comfortable, with pleasant facilities that are maintained well, including a common room and recently refurbished washrooms. New boarders and their parents receive comprehensive documents regarding all aspects of boarding. Senior boarding staff are represented on the school's pastoral care team, which discusses the needs of the boarders through regular meetings. Staff have positive relationships with boarders. Boarders feel that their relationships with key house staff are a particular strength of the boarding provision.
- 4.25 There is an excellent range of facilities for boarders to use in their free time. Boarders particularly enjoy the use of the new sports hall. The meals are of a consistently high quality and boarders report that they enjoy the exciting range on offer. A small minority of boarders indicated in response to the questionnaire that snacks are not always available to them. Inspectors found that in addition to main meals, boarders are offered a range of healthy and nutritious snacks and drinks at different times of the day. Boarders are encouraged to stay fit and healthy through the extensive range of activities and the high quality of meals provided. A comprehensive and detailed range of weekend activities ensures that boarders have access to pursuits of their choice. The quality of medical care and provision is excellent. Thorough procedures are established for the recording of medical treatments given and the administration of medicines. There is adequate separate accommodation for boarders who are unwell.
- 4.26 Boarders have access to a number of ways to contact parents and families, which are straightforward and private, although a minority of boarders indicated in response to the questionnaire that contacting families is not easy. There is a suitable amount of time given to ensure effective communication with families of boarders from overseas. In questionnaire responses, a few boarders felt that their belongings are not safe. Inspectors found that all boarders have access to lockable storage for their valuable possessions.
- 4.27 The effectiveness of arrangements for welfare and safeguarding is sound. Sanctions and rewards encourage boarders' good behaviour and pupils are consistently well mannered. A few pupils indicated in their questionnaire responses that they did not agree that sanctions are given fairly by the school. Examination of school records shows that appropriate sanctions are adopted on the occasions when they are required. These sanctions are recorded on the school's management information system, but there is not a thorough oversight of this process. Additional issues relating to health and safety need attention. The school has a safer recruitment policy that highlights effective practice, but some key checks have not been undertaken at the appropriate time.



- 4.28 All staff have received appropriate training in safeguarding and understand the required procedures in the event of a boarder making a disclosure. The staff and visitors receive a leaflet explaining the processes for safeguarding which also provides contact details for the designated safeguarding lead. Posters on display around the boarding accommodation ensure that boarders have the names and contact details of appropriate adults to whom they can turn should the need arise. Detailed risk assessments for fire safety are clear and regular practices are carried out within the boarding house. A few parents and boarders indicated in response to the questionnaires that cases of bullying are not dealt with effectively. Inspection evidence showed that although the school deals with reported incidents of bullying, there is inconsistency of response amongst staff.
- 4.29 Efficient and thorough procedures are in place to ensure that the staff know the whereabouts of the boarders at all times. In discussion, staff understood the procedures to follow in the event of a missing child. Posters displayed around the school and in boarding accommodation give clear and simple instructions of what pupils should do if they feel unhappy. Boarders have access to an independent listener who is known and trusted by them and who has a clear understanding of what to do in the event of a concern. A thorough process is in place for the planning and assessment of risks to boarders on trips and visits.
- 4.30 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the boarding provision is sound. Regular meetings and informal discussions are held amongst boarding staff regarding the pastoral needs of the boarders, but the process of review is not yet formalised. Boarding staff have appropriate qualifications and levels of experience. They are encouraged to take part in training and conferences in order to develop their skills and knowledge. A comprehensive induction process is in place for new members of staff. There is no formal appraisal system for boarding staff. Boarders clearly know which staff are on duty through well-maintained notice boards and the visible presence of those on duty each evening. The duty rotas of boarding staff are carefully constructed to ensure a high level of cover throughout the building at all times. Contact with parents is efficient and relevant when dealing with boarding issues. In questionnaire responses parents were unanimous in their support of the boarding provision.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is sound.
- 5.2 The board of governors, although relatively small in number, has strong knowledge and experience that equip governors well to undertake their duties and responsibilities and to meet the aims of the school. The committee structure, focusing on areas such as finance and general purposes and estates, provides a strong framework to ensure that all matters are effectively covered. The minutes of both the full board of governors and committees show a thorough and in-depth understanding of their responsibilities and these are generally executed well. However, their oversight of all matters relating to health and safety and the safer recruitment of staff is insufficient. Effective governance ensures that the school accommodation is of an extremely high standard and that there are adequate resources.
- 5.3 The governing body has strong links with the leadership and management of the school. Links are particularly strong between lead governors and key personnel within the senior leadership team. Governors are generally effective in their roles as monitors of the leadership and as a source for challenge, innovation and support. They are regular visitors to the school in many different capacities, including observing lessons to deepen their understanding. Governors play a significant part in maintaining the strong sense of community that exists at the school. Attendance at key events, such as concerts, sports days and services, further strengthens these links.
- 5.4 The governing body is generally effective in discharging its responsibilities to ensure that the school meets regulatory requirements but some aspects relating to staff recruitment and the school site need attention. It carries out a thorough annual review of safeguarding policies and procedures.

### **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 sound.
- 5.6 School leaders, a number of whom are relatively new to their roles, have a positive impact on the high levels of pupils' academic achievement and on their excellent personal development. The leadership and management of the school ensure that the school's aims are met, and that values of respect and democracy are encouraged. They are effective in ensuring that all required policies are in place and, in almost all cases, are fully implemented, including those relating to the safeguarding of pupils. However, there are some aspects of health and safety and of checks on the safer recruitment of staff that have not been overseen or implemented properly. Safeguarding is given extremely high prominence by all members of the school community and the procedures put in place reflect high levels of concern for the well-being of every pupil.
- 5.7 School leaders and managers are successful in the process of self-evaluation. They regularly review school procedures and practices in their pursuit of excellence. The

current school development plan is still in its infancy and does not include roles and responsibilities, suitable timelines or success criteria. There have been many new initiatives which have been embraced by all staff, showing how the new leadership structure is focused on improving the educational provision for all pupils. School leaders are dedicated and enthusiastic, and are aware of what the school must do to strengthen the provision.

- 5.8 The role of head of department has been developed since the previous inspection. At that inspection the school was recommended to develop further the monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure consistency of high standards and the sharing of best practice. There is evidence that teaching is benefiting from a more organised and thorough system of tracking and assessment, which analyses pupils' strengths and weaknesses in detail in order to inform planning. Teachers are keen to share information and best practice to enable pupils to reach their potential.
- 5.9 The school is successful in recruiting and retaining suitable staff. Staff are well qualified for the roles that they undertake and receive appropriate training in safeguarding, welfare, and health and safety. A good range of professional development opportunities ensures that they are kept up to date with current educational practice as well as being able to develop their personal career interests. The school's appraisal system of teaching staff, coupled with the triangular peer observation programme, provides good opportunities to develop and share effective teaching practice. A thorough staff induction programme, including the good use of mentors, effectively supports new members to the school team. Recently appointed staff understand fully their roles in relation to the safeguarding of pupils. New staff value the time and attention that are given to their integration into the school community. In questionnaire responses most parents felt that the school is well led and managed.
- 5.10 There are excellent links with parents in the school. In response to the questionnaire, an overwhelming majority of parents were satisfied with the education and support that are provided, and were extremely pleased with the school's 'open door' policy, whereby they feel that they can communicate with teachers when needed. A very small minority indicated that they are not satisfied with the information they are given about their children's progress. Inspectors found that half-termly and end-of-year reports provide detailed information on pupils' progress.
- 5.11 A large majority of parents felt that the school handles concerns with care, in accordance with its aims and published procedures, and were confident that matters would be dealt with efficiently and sensitively. A very small minority of parents thought that they do not receive timely responses to questions, and inspection evidence showed that there are minor inconsistencies across the school.
- 5.12 Parents unanimously agreed that they are encouraged to be actively involved in many aspects of school life. A thriving parents' association, Friends of Aldro Association (FOAA), raises money for a variety of school projects and to make charitable donations through functions such as the Christmas Fayre, quiz nights, the Summer Ball and coffee mornings. The FOAA also has members who are class representatives. They provide other parents with information on school functions and hold a parents' tea once a year for parents who are new to the school. Parents also help on school trips, and at chess tournaments and sporting fixtures. The role of the parents' association has grown significantly since the previous inspection.

5.13 All parents of current and prospective pupils are provided with the required information about the school. In questionnaire responses almost all parents felt that this information is readily available. The FOAA also holds information meetings with parents before their children start at the school and provides day-to-day information to support new families' successful integration into the school community.

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