



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

HORRIS HILL SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of School	Horris Hill School		
DfE Number	850/6072		
Registered Charity Number	307331		
Address	Horris Hill School Newtown Newbury Berkshire RG20 9DJ		
Telephone Number	01635 40594		
Fax Number	01635 39586		
Email Address	enquiries@horrishill.com		
Headmaster	Mr Giles Tollit		
Chair of Governors	Mr Christopher Ball		
Age Range	7 to 13		
Total Number of Pupils	115		
Gender of Pupils	Boys		
Numbers by Age	7-11:	62	
	11-13:	53	
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	20	
Number of Boarders	Total:	95	
	Full:	95	Weekly:
Inspection Dates	07 Oct 2014 to 10 Oct 2014		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in November 2008.

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

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

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.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Serena Alexander	Reporting Inspector
Mr Christian Heinrich	Team Inspector (Head IAPS School)
Mr Jonathan Milton	Team Inspector (Head IAPS School)
Mr Tony Halliwell	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mr Robert Humphreys	Team Inspector for Boarding (Head of Boarding IAPS School)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Horris Hill is a boarding and day school for boys from the ages of seven to thirteen. It was founded in 1888 and has occupied its current site just south of Newbury ever since. It was owned by the same family until 1957, when it became a charitable trust, administered by a board of governors.
- 1.2 The school's aims are threefold. Firstly, it seeks to maintain the school community's unique ethos by encouraging pupils to take responsibility for themselves and each other and offering quick and individual support whenever needed. Secondly, it aims to maintain the best possible boarding environment, by providing the highest possible standards of catering, health care, accommodation and support in a vibrant community, together with high levels of staff involvement. Thirdly, the school seeks to prepare pupils well for entry to their senior school, by providing a rigorous and extensive education, developing the pupils' interests away from the classroom and promoting their personal qualities.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, the school has undertaken a programme of refurbishment, which includes the two senior boarding houses. At the time of the inspection, there were 115 boys on roll, of whom 95 are boarders. A number of pupils join the school at the age of eleven and a high proportion of the day pupils convert to boarding in due course. Boarders are accommodated in four boarding houses, two of which are in the main building and two, for the older pupils, in separate houses in the school grounds.
- 1.4 The results of standardised tests indicate that the ability profile of the school overall is above the national average. There is a wide spread of abilities represented, although there is a higher proportion of pupils with well above average ability in the more senior year groups. Pupils come from a wide range of professional, business, forces and diplomatic backgrounds, in approximately equal numbers from London, the local area of Hampshire and Berkshire, the rest of the United Kingdom and overseas. The overseas boarders represent several European, Asian and African nationalities. There are five pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) and twelve with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive specialist support from the school. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.5 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
8,7	Year 3
8,7,6	Year 4
7,6,5	Year 5
6,5,4	Year 6
4,3,2,1	Year 7
2,1	Year 8

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The achievement of the pupils is excellent and fulfils the school's aims. The pupils are extremely articulate and apply their well-developed speaking and listening skills confidently. They write in a wide range of styles and have strong mathematical skills. The good standard of teaching and the pupils' excellent attitudes to learning contribute to the high levels of achievement. German has recently been added to the curriculum, which is broad and balanced, suitable for all ages and abilities and includes music, design and technology (DT) and art, with frequent opportunities for dramatic performances. Pupils with SEND or EAL are well supported in one-to-one lessons but provision for their individual needs in the classroom is not consistent. The range of sporting provision and number of fixtures has increased since the previous inspection. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities and pupils benefit from an outstanding range of trips as well as an extensive programme of weekend activities for boarders.
- 2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent. The highly effective tutor system encourages each individual pupil to develop his personal qualities. The pupils are self-confident and considerate, showing respect for others of all ages. Throughout the school, pupils exhibit a clear sense of right and wrong. They have an awareness of the need to respect other cultures, developed through the curriculum, cultural days and school trips. The excellent quality of pastoral care is characterised by the mutual respect between pupils and staff and amongst pupils themselves. The quality of arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of the pupils is sound. The safeguarding of pupils is taken very seriously, but current statutory guidance, including for recruitment procedures, has not always been followed correctly. Admission and attendance registers have not been stored correctly and the school does not keep an appropriate record of complaints. Boarding is good overall and excellent in many areas. Boarders are confident and demonstrate a pride in both the school and their four boarding houses. Behaviour in the houses is exemplary.
- 2.3 The quality of governance, leadership and management is sound. Governors have a wide range of professional expertise and provide oversight of the school, effectively discharging their responsibilities for financial planning, investment in staff, accommodation, health and safety and resources. In response to previous inspections, appraisal is now embedded firmly into the school's culture, but the monitoring of teaching and implementation of academic policies is not consistent across all departments. The school development plan does not yet incorporate, with timescales, the evolving curriculum and departmental schemes, with staff training needs appropriately linked. The role of the independent listener has been explained carefully to boarders who know how to make contact should the need arise. The child protection governor carefully monitors safeguarding matters and reports termly to the governing body. However, the governors' statutory annual review does not meet requirements, nor have governors ensured through monitoring that appointment procedures are scrupulously followed before staff begin work at the school. Committed and dedicated leadership maintains the school's aims, celebrates its traditions and implements changes. The school has excellent links with its parents who demonstrate extreme satisfaction with all that the school has to offer.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:
- store attendance and admission registers in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 [Part 3, paragraph 17, under Welfare, Health and Safety of pupils];
 - ensure that references are taken, qualifications checked, checks against the barred list and the list of those prohibited from teaching, and medical declarations are made, and criminal records check certificates seen, before staff begin work at the school and that, where required, these are correctly entered in the school's single central register of appointments [Part 4, paragraphs 19.(2)(a), (b)(ii) (iv) and (e), 19.(3) and 22.(3)(b) and (c) under Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors; and, for the same reason, Part 3 paragraphs 7 (a) and (b) and 8 (a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety, National Minimum Standard 11, under Child protection, and National Minimum Standard 14.1, under Staff recruitment and checks on other adults;]
 - keep a written record of all complaints and whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or at a panel hearing [Part 7, paragraph 25 (j), under Manner in which complaints are to be handled and National Minimum Standard 18, under Complaints]
- 2.5 The school does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013, 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. Ensure the governing body monitors regulatory compliance systematically and robustly, including for boarding, and implements fully the recommendations from the previous inspection.
 2. Implement, monitor and review academic policies in order to ensure consistency, particularly in marking and assessment.
 3. Improve education plans for pupils with SEND by ensuring that these inform teachers of the pupils' individual needs and how to address them in teaching.

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' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The school very successfully meets its aim to prepare boys for entry to their senior schools. Each year pupils consistently gain their places in competitive entry to academically selective independent senior schools and in recent years, several have been awarded academic, music, drama or design scholarships. Pupils demonstrate a very wide range of knowledge, understanding and skills for their age and ability, both in the core curriculum and in extra-curricular activities.
- 3.3 The pupils are extremely articulate and they apply their well-developed speaking and listening skills confidently in lessons, in performances and in discussions. They think logically, they speak fluently and they reason effectively. The pupils' reading is of a high standard as is demonstrated in standardised tests and in the fluency and understanding with which they read in class. Older pupils are able to write in a wide range of styles and they do so with considerable success. Much of the pupils' work is very well presented although this is not consistent across all subjects. They have strong mathematical skills, the most able showing excellent understanding of concepts. In recent years, several have had outstanding results in major national competitions. Their skills and knowledge both in modern foreign languages and in classics are also of a high standard. They achieve excellent results in art and design and, throughout the school, pupils show an imaginative response to their studies often employing humour or wit. They clearly enjoy their learning.
- 3.4 Pupils achieve excellence in a wide range of sporting activities. In recent years, individuals have been chosen to represent their counties in football, hockey and cricket and some have had significant success in national swimming and athletic competitions. In addition to these high level performances, others have also shown consistently high attainment in a range of sports, including success in fixtures against other local schools. High standards of attainment are also achieved in drama and in music. Large numbers of pupils take part in the regular school plays and many gain distinction or merit grades in instrumental exams.
- 3.5 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to performance against a fixed national average, but on the evidence available, it is judged to be excellent in relation to their abilities. Inspection judgements of the pupils' performance in lessons and in their written work in relation to national expectations confirm this evaluation of the pupils' attainment.
- 3.6 Overall, these levels of attainment indicate that pupils sustain a high rate of progress. Standardised tests taken annually in reasoning, reading and mathematics show at least good progress over time and for the older pupils, it is often rapid. Evidence gained during the inspection indicates that pupils with SEND make at least satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points and the more able often make excellent progress, benefitting from the high expectations the school has for them and their own attitudes to learning. Pupils with SEND are challenged effectively by the most successful teaching, and they often motivate themselves to make rapid progress through their own endeavours, although progress can at times be limited by inconsistent provision for individual needs.

- 3.7 Throughout the school, pupils have a positive and an enthusiastic approach to learning which strongly supports their overall achievement. They are successful in learning both independently and through collaborative work, where they put forward their ideas with confidence. They are consistently well behaved and well-motivated.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of the curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 The school's aim is well met. There is a broad, balanced and suitable curriculum in place, to which German has been added since the previous inspection, along with the opportunity for further individual support in English and French. An enhanced programme of sporting opportunities and fixtures meets the needs of a wider range of pupils extremely well, whilst a refreshed personal, social and health education (PSHE) syllabus ensures that such important areas as citizenship, the British legal system and cultural diversity are suitably encountered. The curriculum currently prepares pupils well for senior school entry examinations; however, the curriculum planning of individual departments has yet to provide for adjustments in response to forthcoming alterations to Common Entrance syllabi.
- 3.10 The most able pupils are well served by the school's termly remove system which enables pupils to progress to the next higher teaching group term by term, according to their attainment, and thus may advance quickly. For older pupils, the greater challenge of the curriculum and smaller classes lead to thorough preparation for scholarship and other entrance examinations. Able pupils are also challenged by internal and external competitions such as in public speaking, general knowledge and mathematics. The resulting articulacy and confidence of these pupils is apparent. Arrangements for pupils with SEND and EAL include support through individual teaching and by teachers in the classroom. Individual support is successful, but the individual needs of pupils with SEND are not consistently met in classes.
- 3.11 Since the previous inspection, the use of ICT has expanded within the curriculum. Good use is made of the ICT room with classes using the facilities to develop work in other subjects. The provision of interactive whiteboards into many classrooms offers further opportunities to pupils.
- 3.12 The curriculum presents excellent opportunities for the pupils to develop their own interests; in particular, the creative subjects such as music, DT and art and frequent dramatic performances enhance the confidence and sensitivity of the pupils. Almost all pupils learn to play a musical instrument.
- 3.13 The school offers an excellent range of additional trips locally as well as abroad. These are often distinctive in their provision for cross-curricular opportunities; the French trip to Montpellier, for example, offered additional enrichment in classics and mathematics. There is a wide variety of extra-curricular activities to explore with such disparate experiences as clay-pigeon shooting, kite-flying, train club and bushcraft, amongst many others. For boarders, there is an excellent range of weekend activities.
- 3.14 The curriculum is further supported by its close links with the local community, whether in hosting a British Legion tea party on Remembrance Sunday or singing in the local church. Further links exist through charitable fundraising to overseas communities, for instance in India, Kenya and Uganda.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.16 The good standard of teaching, as judged in the previous inspection, contributes positively towards the excellent levels of the pupils' achievement and personal development. It supports the school's aims well. Teaching is knowledgeable and committed to helping pupils make progress. Pupils benefit from specialised teaching in a wide range of subjects, and the teachers' enthusiasm for their subjects is evident.
- 3.17 The most effective teaching is lively, engaging and well planned, designed to encourage active learning through an appropriately varied range of demanding tasks. For example, in physical education (PE), pupils were thoroughly engaged in demanding fitness activities using sophisticated technical knowledge. In less successful teaching, learning opportunities are restricted by a lack of pace or by over-directed teaching which limits challenge or the opportunity for all pupils to contribute independently. This restricts the pupils' progress. In the pre-inspection pupils' questionnaire, a few pupils expressed the opinion that their teachers do not give them individual help when they need it and that their homework does not help them learn. Inspection evidence shows clear assistance is given in class but where the pupils' understanding is limited by the lack of a structured explanation or method some are then unable to complete their homework.
- 3.18 Pupils' work is regularly marked and marking, at its best, is very effective in allowing pupils to understand where they have made an error and how to correct it. Where it is excellent, it is in line with the school marking policy, being thorough and including encouraging comments, suggestions for improvement and appropriate targets. This standard of marking is not yet consistent across all subject areas and year groups and the pupils' understanding is thereby limited.
- 3.19 The resources available throughout the school are of excellent quality and used effectively to promote learning. Some of the most effective teaching employs an imaginative use of ICT, making use of interactive whiteboards to engage pupils with stimulating illustrations. The high quality of teaching accommodation allows teachers to be flexible in their approach, tailoring tasks to the interests of their pupils.
- 3.20 Teaching for pupils with SEND and EAL is good overall. These pupils' needs are well met in individual lessons, and they are given sympathetic support from staff in mainstream classes. Their individual education plans (IEPs), although detailed, do not include sufficiently detailed advice to enable classroom teachers to provide consistent support. Tasks are often tailored to individual needs only in terms of what pupils might achieve, rather than being structured to offer different methods of enabling progress. Challenge for able, gifted and talented pupils is good especially in the senior section of the school. The school now uses a range of assessments to monitor the pupils' cognitive ability and attainment in specific areas, but these tools are not yet used by departments to monitor trends or to inform teaching in order to plan for the individual needs of all pupils.
- 3.21 Teaching shows good knowledge of pupils and engages with them in a relaxed but purposeful way. Teaching consistently encourages positive and supportive attitudes between pupils and does much to support the very constructive relationships that exist across the school, fostering excellent behaviour in pupils.

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 The school's aims are extremely well met in seeking to ensure the pupils take responsibility for themselves and others. The spiritual development of the pupils is excellent. Pupils benefit from the individual guidance offered to them where needed and develop their personal qualities within a supportive, sensitive and contemplative community. Pupils find moments for stillness and reflection; in the dormitories or in chapel, periods of silence and contemplation were witnessed. The kitchen garden provides both vegetables for the dining table and a space and a time in which to reflect. The pupils are confident, eloquent and calm in discussion, such as when engaged in thoughtful and challenging debate as to whether chimpanzees should have human rights.
- 4.3 At all levels of the school, the moral development of the pupils is excellent. Pupils have opportunities for individual reflection and development. They explore moral issues within relevant contexts and without undue peer pressure at their regular tutorials. Pupils exhibit a clear sense of right and wrong and of how best to behave for the good of the community as a whole. They reflect readily on shared experiences and are encouraged in this by the culture of the school.
- 4.4 Pupils take their many opportunities for responsibility seriously in a variety of contexts, such as monitors or colour captains or as a 'stacker' or 'clearer' for a table at lunch. Pupils sit on the food committee and have a say in the provision and selection of food. When pupils join the school, 'paters' are appointed to guide them through their early days. Pride is taken in this service and in the appreciation that staff show for the role's successful conclusion. The friendly interaction between different year groups is a distinctive and hugely positive feature of the school.
- 4.5 At all levels of the school, the social development of the pupils is excellent. The pupils' growing maturity and social awareness is encouraged successfully through the tutor system. Truly social behaviour was demonstrated at, for example, a post-match tea where pupils wished their opponents good fortune in their next match. Differing charities of particular import to the extended school community at home and abroad are selected as the recipients of the whole school's focus and their physical efforts. Pupils enter whole-heartedly into fundraising, willingly giving up their time, for example, by participating in a recent bicycle challenge for a national charity.
- 4.6 The pupils show an excellent awareness of the need to respect other cultures and religions. Most observe the Christian faith whilst learning of other cultures and creeds and pupils show a tolerance and appreciation of others' beliefs. This is reinforced through the syllabus in religious studies and PSHE as well as through trips abroad, assemblies and cultural days. The pupils' personal development is also assisted by the provision of an extensive programme of external visits including challenging theatrical trips, a visit to a Premiership rugby match and group camps under canvas.
- 4.7 In conversation and in their behaviour around the school, the pupils display an excellent level of personal awareness and moral development and clearly relish their shared responsibility to show consideration and courtesy in their dealings with each

other as well as with visiting guests. By the time they leave the school they achieve high levels of personal development.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 Staff provide highly effective support and guidance for the pupils in accordance with the school's aims. Pupils have individual tutors and their role is key to the school's pastoral structures; boarding housemasters support the tutors in monitoring the pupils' needs. Pastoral care is seen as a key aspect of tutors' roles and is monitored closely; a conduct file is used to record both positive and negative pupil behaviour.
- 4.10 Relationships between staff and pupils are exceptionally good, characterised by mutual respect, and pupils express a very high level of confidence in their teachers and tutors. Pupils know to whom they can go when they are in need. Pupils are very supportive of one another, are good at listening and value each other's contribution, in and out of class.
- 4.11 The school promotes a healthy lifestyle. The PSHE programme includes units on the benefits of healthy eating and regular exercise and fresh fruit is available to the pupils in both the main school and boarding houses. The popular activities programme provides a variety of opportunities for all pupils to undertake regular exercise.
- 4.12 The school effectively promotes good behaviour and this is demonstrated by pupils within lessons and activities and as they move around the school. A small minority of pupils raised concerns about fairness in the application of rewards and sanctions in the pre-inspection questionnaire. This is not supported by inspection evidence. The school actively encourages a positive reward system to encourage good behaviour which is monitored by senior staff. Pupil monitors are also able to comment positively on their peers. The school has effective measures to guard against bullying. Pupils expressed no concerns about bullying; incidents rarely occur and are quickly and efficiently resolved should they arise.
- 4.13 The school now has an appropriate three-year plan to ensure access to its provision for those with educational or physical disabilities.
- 4.14 A minority of pupils in the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that the school does not ask for their views or respond to them. Inspection evidence does not support this view and pupils were keen to point out that they can join committees, such as the boarding council and food committee, as well as pro-actively use suggestion boxes located across the school. Pupils are confident that they can approach staff individually and that they will be listened to carefully.

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

- 4.15 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety are sound.
- 4.16 Health and safety measures are well established and effective. Thorough risk assessments are carried out regularly and safety in workshops and laboratories is carefully maintained. Buildings and premises are maintained to a good standard with checks on equipment being undertaken by suitably qualified contractors and detailed records kept. Fire safety procedures work well and fire drills are carried out

regularly. A fire risk assessment is undertaken annually and any recommendations arising from this are acted upon. Staff receive appropriate fire training.

- 4.17 Excellent provision is made for those who are unwell or who are injured at school with a well-equipped and well managed medical centre. Most staff are trained in first aid. Medicines are stored securely, any accidents or injuries are recorded and parents are kept informed.
- 4.18 Throughout the school, procedures for keeping children safe are understood and implemented but measures have not always been consistent with current statutory guidance. The school's policy has recently been reviewed and issued to staff with their attention drawn to new guidance; this is clearly understood and is followed. Designated staff receive appropriate safeguarding training from the local authority. New staff have appropriate induction training that includes safeguarding and all staff receive child protection training regularly. Recruitment checks have not always been correctly undertaken on all staff and some checks have not been undertaken at the appropriate time. The recruitment process has recently been reviewed successfully and all correct procedures are now being followed before appointment.
- 4.19 The attendance registers are maintained correctly although neither these nor the admission register have been stored for the previous three years. The admission register did not include all of the required information for all entries but this was completed accurately by the end of the inspection. Arrangements are now in place for this to be backed up regularly.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.20 The quality of boarding is good.
- 4.21 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. The schools boarding aims, written as a statement of principles and aims, are clearly achieved. The boarders quickly develop a sense of confidence and individual responsibility in a safe and healthy environment ensuring that their welfare and wellbeing needs are fully met. The four residential houses make a strong and vital contribution to the distinctive ethos of the school, which is predominately boarding.
- 4.22 Boarders are confident, polite and articulate, and they demonstrate a pride in both their school and the four boarding houses. There is a strong sense of community throughout the campus, including the relatively small number of overseas boarders who are fully integrated into the boarding environment. Relationships between staff and boarders and amongst boarders themselves are excellent, warm and sincere and this is a strength of the school.
- 4.23 Pupils are able to influence boarding provision through the boarders' house council committees, and through the use of suggestion boxes. A small minority of pupils in their questionnaires expressed concerns about the school responding to pupil opinions; however, boarders interviewed during the inspection did not support this view. Pupils are able to keep in regular contact with their families through the internet and parents are able to contact their sons using a boarding house mobile phone.
- 4.24 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. Boarders are encouraged to be fit and healthy and they take advantage of the excellent facilities on the campus available to them. Behaviour in the houses is excellent and boarders thrive in the atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Pupils feel that they are well looked after

and readily confirm that there is access to a range of appropriate adults, including the independent listener, with whom to discuss personal issues. Houses are warm, comfortable, secure and well maintained, and the standards of decoration and cleanliness are good. The senior houses have kitchenettes, enabling boarders to prepare snacks and drinks. Laundry provision is very effective and houses have good recreational facilities with televisions, DVDs and board games together with laptop access for parental communication.

- 4.25 Boarders benefit from the school's extensive programme of extra-curricular activities, including a number of activities that pupils can choose during the afternoon sessions and at weekends.
- 4.26 The catering provision is good. A minority of the older pupils expressed concerns in the pupils' questionnaire about the quantity and variety of food on offer, most especially for the evening meal. Inspectors found the meals to be wholesome and nutritious, however a small minority of the older and more physically active pupils interviewed commented that the quantity of food on offer for the main courses is not always sufficient. Inspectors agree.
- 4.27 Special dietary requirements are catered for, and they are efficiently monitored by the medical centre staff. The medical centre, located in separate accommodation, provides a 24-hour nursing service for the residential community. Boarders may attend at any time and a doctor visits weekly. The atmosphere is warm and welcoming with appropriate facilities for sick boarders. Meticulous attention is given to the management of medication and all medication is correctly and appropriately stored and dispensed, with parental consent in place. The confidentiality and rights of boarders are respected. Patient notes are efficiently recorded and maintained.
- 4.28 The arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are good. Procedures are in place to ensure that the safety of boarders is promoted and managed effectively by boarding staff at all levels; however, the recruiting and checking procedure of a number of school staff has not been sufficiently robust. Effective anti-bullying and behavioural policies and procedures are in place including those for dealing with e-safety. The school's safeguarding policy encompasses all staff, visitors and contract workers. All boarding and other staff are regularly trained in safeguarding and are confident that they know what they should do if a child protection issue arises. Good relationships are evident across the community therefore generating an open and trusting atmosphere in houses. Positive pupil behaviour is encouraged and boarders are extremely confident in speaking with house staff, secure in the knowledge that all their concerns are taken seriously and dealt with promptly.
- 4.29 The boarding houses have clear and effective systems to supervise pupils and staff are readily available to assist them when necessary. Effective communication between boarding staff and parents ensures the safety and welfare of boarders. Appropriate risk assessments are in place. There are regular fire drills, which take place in boarding time, and all buildings and fire extinguishers are regularly checked. Fire logs are up-to-date and correctly maintained.
- 4.30 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the boarding provision is good and is reflected in the quality of the relationships and personal development of boarders. Systems for the monitoring of policies and procedures are good overall but do not benefit from regular review by governors. Strong house loyalties, together with the friendly, positive relationships and atmosphere, are nurtured by highly dedicated and hardworking staff. All resident staff have clear job descriptions

and receive effective induction. Boarding staff are appraised regularly but links between the outcomes of appraisal and staff development are currently insufficiently developed. The boarding community currently benefits from the services of four gap-year students whose support is much appreciated by the boarders. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaires, parents expressed extremely high levels of satisfaction with the boarding provision. The boarding team meets regularly to review arrangements for boarding and discussion is underway regarding the use of self-evaluation and appraisal as a management tool to better support longer term development of boarding in the school. There has been much investment in the upgrading of boarding accommodation to a very good standard for senior boarders in recent years and there is a continuing programme of boarding refurbishment.

- 4.31 The school has responded positively to the recommendations of the 2012 ISI report. The independent listener is well established and the child protection governor carries out a regular review of safeguarding and reports termly to the governing body.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is sound.
- 5.2 Governors have a wide range of professional expertise and many are closely involved with the school; some are current parents. They provide oversight of the school in line with its aims and effectively discharge their responsibilities for financial planning, investment in staff, accommodation, health and safety, and resources. Governors are kept informed by detailed reports from the child protection governor and termly reports from senior managers, as well as through personal attendance at the school for special events and, occasionally, to observe lessons and the daily routine. New governors follow a structured induction programme that includes appropriate training.
- 5.3 All governors have undertaken training in child protection and the pupils' welfare is regularly reviewed. Following a recommendation from the previous inspection, a detailed report on safeguarding and the pupils' wellbeing is made termly; however, the governing body have not referenced their own statutory annual review of safeguarding policies and procedures to current statutory guidance, nor have they ensured, through monitoring, that appointment procedures are scrupulously followed.
- 5.4 A school development plan is in place but this does not fully meet all the recommendations of the previous inspection and does not incorporate timescales. The governing body, through senior members of the board, provides appropriate support to the school, monitoring the effectiveness of overall provision and looking forward to consider potential future improvements. They undertake an annual appraisal of the work of the headmaster.

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 The leadership and management of the school give firm educational direction as is confirmed by the excellent personal development and attainment of the pupils. Every child is known to the leadership team; each has a conduct file and receives praise or sanctions directly from leadership. Individual consideration is given termly to the progress of each child and possible progression through the system of termly remove. Excellent links with parents are maintained. The sense of community that is central to the ethos of the school stems from committed and dedicated leadership that maintains the schools aims, celebrates its traditions and implements changes when these are of benefit to pupils.
- 5.7 The recommendation of the previous inspection, to embed staff appraisal more firmly into the school's culture to support and develop individual staff teaching and their extra-curricular strengths, has been met and individual appraisals take place annually. The induction of new members of staff is carried out effectively, welcoming them into the school community with its distinctive routines and practice. The monitoring of teaching, assessment and marking is not carried out continuously

or effectively by the leadership team. The results of standardised testing are not yet used by departments to track the progress of all pupils, including those with SEND and EAL. Scrutiny of the school policies prior to the inspection showed that the school has not always been rigorous in ensuring that it keeps up-to-date with the most recent regulatory requirements. By the end of the inspection, the school had taken suitable steps to ensure that identified shortcomings in policies had been rectified.

- 5.8 Periodic parent questionnaires inform the school's self-evaluation and this is thorough in reviewing provision, but middle management roles do not contribute sufficiently to oversight of all aspects of the school to enable priorities to be set for improvement. The school development plan, which is produced and reviewed annually, touches on educational provision but does not fully meet the recommendation of the previous inspection to include evolving curriculum and departmental schemes. Such schemes lack awareness of recent educational changes and their potential impact on senior school entry requirements. There is no reference in curriculum documentation to staff training as recommended by the previous inspection.
- 5.9 The pupils' welfare, health and safety are high priorities for leadership and management and there are careful procedures in place that are monitored and reviewed regularly. The school successfully recruits and retain suitable staff, who are trained in their roles in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. However, policies for safeguarding and child protection, including recruitment and the maintaining of registers, have not always met current regulatory requirements.
- 5.10 The excellent links with parents enable the school to maintain productive relationships in accordance with its aims. Parents are extremely happy with the school's provision for their children. The parents' responses to pre-inspection questionnaires showed that they are overwhelmingly positive about the level of pastoral and extra-curricular activities offered by the school. There is an effective complaints policy in operation. Almost all parents reported that the school had handled any concerns well and most received timely responses to their questions, although a written record of all complaints and whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing, for which the complaints policy provides, is not kept and monitored.
- 5.11 Parents receive regular and detailed information regarding their child's progress, the pastoral care delivered by the school, and the high standards of behaviour achieved by the pupils. Many parents take the opportunity to meet with their son's teachers when returning pupils to the school after weekends at home. Inspectors concur with the many parental comments referring to pupils being very happy and that the school's environment is one in which the quality of education provided and the pupils' personal development is of a high standard.
- 5.12 The weekly newsletter home provides a complementary view of the school and gives insightful information regarding weekly activities. The website is modern and functional and contains recent news articles. Social networking provides instant updates on school activity to parents located throughout the world. The parent handbook provides all the necessary information. Parents are very happy with the termly detailed, comprehensive and regular reports about their children's progress. Many of the parents commented positively about how their children are known as individuals by staff, which has promoted their children's self-confidence and independence.

- 5.13 Information provided to parents of prospective pupils is comprehensive. Parents receive high-quality prospectuses detailing the aims of the school and providing the key information required when sending their children to the school.
- 5.14 Parents are invited to activities arranged by the school that encourage them to participate in important moments in the school life. Parents attend chapel services and sports fixtures as well as annual events such as bonfire night and Christmas carol services. They can also call into school during sports fixtures and informally meet with staff. Parents appreciate their involvement in the school.

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