



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

RENDCOMB COLLEGE

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Rendcomb College

Full Name of School	Rendcomb College
DfE Number	916/6017
Registered Charity Number	1115884
Address	Rendcomb College Rendcomb Cirencester Gloucestershire GL7 7HA
Telephone Number	01285 831213
Fax Number	01285 831121
Email Address	info@rendcomb.gloucs.sch.uk
Headmaster	Mr Roland Martin
Chair of Governors	Mr Rupert Lane
Age Range	3 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	419
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (232 boys; 187 girls)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 25 5-11: 127 11-18: 267
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 304
Number of Boarders	Total: 115 Full: 98 Weekly: 17
Head of EYFS Setting	Mr Martin Watson
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	04 Feb 2014 to 07 Feb 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 September 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.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Education (DfE) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

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

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

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

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

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

inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, 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 Julia Burns	Reporting Inspector
Mr Patrick Atkinson	Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mr Marcus Cliff Hodges	Team Inspector (Deputy Warden, HMC school)
Mrs Jennifer Moran	Team Inspector (Head of Year 6, IAPS school)
Mr Stephen Roberts	Team Inspector (Principal, HMC/GSA school)
Mr Stephen Bailey	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Ms Sarah Williamson	Team Inspector for Boarding (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Miss Jacqueline Scotney	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL	3
(a) Main findings	3
(b) Action points	4
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	4
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	4
3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	5
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning	5
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	6
(c) The contribution of teaching	7
4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	9
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	9
(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care	10
(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	11
(d) The quality of boarding	11
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	13
(a) The quality of governance	13
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	13

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Rendcomb College is a boarding and day school which provides education for boys and girls aged three to eighteen. It is situated approximately six miles from Cirencester on an extensive site with large playing fields. It was founded in 1920 by Noel Wills of Miserden to provide a holistic boarding education for boys aged from eleven to eighteen from primary schools in rural Gloucestershire. Governors are now drawn from the founding family, amongst others. In 1972 the sixth form became co-educational and in 1992 girls were offered places from the age of eleven. The school became fully co-educational in 1997. The junior school was founded in 2000 and the Nursery in 2005. Since the previous inspection in 2008, the appointment of a new headmaster has led to the restructuring of leadership and management and the upgrading of facilities in information and communication technology (ICT), science and outdoor education.
- 1.2 The school aims: to promote academic achievement as a value to be prized and to encourage independent learning; to provide breadth in its co-curricular provision, enabling pupils to identify their strengths and aptitudes; to nurture mutual respect for individualism, promote collaboration and offer support within the strength of a family-centred environment; to provide a pastoral framework that engenders physical, emotional and spiritual well-being; to prepare pupils for life beyond school, fostering confidence, self-reliance and honesty; and to encourage pupils to respect the environment in which they live.
- 1.3 The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is attended by 25 children. The junior school comprises 127 pupils and the senior school 267 pupils, including 85 pupils in the sixth form. In total, 115 pupils are boarders. The ability profile of the school is above the national average. Cohorts vary in ability but overall around two-thirds of pupils are of at least above average ability.
- 1.4 The school has identified 47 senior pupils and 16 junior pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The school provides learning support for 27 senior pupils and 16 junior pupils. Of the 1 pupil in the junior school and 67 pupils in the senior school who have English as an additional language (EAL), 47 receive extra support with their studies. The majority of pupils are from the local area, and come from professional and business backgrounds. Eighty-five pupils are from overseas, many of whom are from Asian countries.
- 1.5 The majority of pupils in the junior school transfer to the senior school at the age of 11. The school has a growing intake of pupils at the age of 13. Many Year 11 pupils stay on into the sixth form after GCSE and are joined by others who choose the school at that stage.

- 1.6 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used by the school for the EYFS and throughout this report to refer to year groups. The year group nomenclature used by the school from Years 1 to 13 and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following tables.

Junior School

School	NC name
Junior 1	Year 1
Junior 2	Year 2
Junior 3	Year 3
Junior 4	Year 4
Junior 5	Year 5
Junior 6	Year 6

Senior School

School	NC name
Year 1	Year 7
Year 2	Year 8
Year 3	Year 9
Year 4	Year 10
Year 5	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school is successful in achieving its aim to remain true to the founder's vision to promote academic achievement, to provide breadth in co-curricular provision and to offer support within a family-centred environment. Throughout the school, pupils achieve well and make good progress in their learning due to their very positive attitudes and the good teaching they receive. The teachers' strong subject knowledge and careful lesson planning enable pupils, including those with SEND or EAL, to make good progress in relation to their abilities. More able pupils achieve well when they are challenged in lessons, but this is still not consistent throughout the school. The quality of marking is variable. Where it is of a high quality it is diagnostic and makes use of target setting and specific advice. In many subjects, however, it is superficial, giving no guidance on how pupils could improve their work. Better use is now made of a range of resources. A broad curriculum, supported by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities and trips, and an outstanding personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, also enable pupils to gain a broad base of knowledge, understanding and skills.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent. They are polite, respectful and mature in their dealings with each other and with adults. They display a keen sense of responsibility for others less fortunate than themselves, demonstrated by their regular fund-raising activities for a wide range of charities. They willingly take on positions of responsibility and are keen to contribute both to the life of the school and to the wider community. The care given by all staff, teaching and non-teaching, throughout the school is excellent. Pupils enjoy excellent relationships with each other and with the staff. Pupils' spiritual development is very strong and their moral awareness highly developed. They demonstrate excellent social development and have a very clear appreciation of cultural matters. The arrangements for welfare, health and safety, including safeguarding, are excellent; they make a highly effective contribution to pupils' well-being and personal development. The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is good. Governors have a good oversight of the school. Strategic and financial planning is strong and suitable provision is made for human and material resources and accommodation. Governors monitor educational standards carefully and provide a measure of challenge for the senior leadership but they do not, as yet, have sufficiently robust procedures for the checking of regulatory compliance. The leadership and management of the senior school have recently been restructured. This has already resulted in strong, dynamic and purposeful leadership. The senior leadership team has members from both the senior and junior schools but there is a lack of cohesion between the two sections; lines of responsibility in the management structure of the school, including the EYFS, are unclear. In response to the recommendations of the previous inspection, all staff in the EYFS take responsibility for children's learning and development and for communicating with parents, while heads of department in the senior school carry out regular and systematic monitoring of work within their subjects. The school promotes excellent links with parents, who are overwhelmingly positive about all areas of school life.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.
- 2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of leadership and management throughout the school, including the EYFS.
 2. Improve the quality and consistency of marking and assessment throughout the school so that pupils are given clear guidance for improvement.
 3. Develop a formal system for the governors to monitor and evaluate the school's compliance with regulatory requirements.

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 good.
- 3.2 The school is successful in its aim to promote academic achievement and provide breadth in its co-curricular provision, enabling its pupils to identify their strengths and aptitudes. Throughout the school, all pupils develop a breadth of skills, knowledge and understanding through both curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- 3.3 In the EYFS, children are inquisitive learners. Younger children use numbers confidently in their daily routines, ably counting to 10 and beyond. Older children use and write numbers to 100. Their skills in reading and writing are largely well developed for their age. Across the EYFS age range, children confidently use a variety of ICT equipment. They demonstrate an excellent ability to choose activities and undertake purposeful play. They are keen to explore and engage in critical thinking with their friends; creativity is fostered through a range of activities, including role play. By the end of their time in the EYFS, the vast majority of children meet the expected levels of development across all areas of learning, with a high percentage of children regularly exceeding expectations. Very good progress is made by children with SEND or EAL.
- 3.4 All pupils throughout the school demonstrate strong speaking and listening skills; they are confident and articulate. They listen attentively to each other and work co-operatively in pairs and in small groups, as well as working effectively on their own. Pupils' reading and writing develop well and they apply their mathematical skills in design technology and in science lessons. When given the opportunity, more able pupils display a good standard of logical and independent thought. Pupils' achievement in creative subjects, such as art, music and drama, and in physical education is good. Their skills in ICT are good. It is usual for pupils to go on to higher education at the end of their sixth-form studies, taking up places at a variety of universities and colleges.
- 3.5 Pupils achieve considerable success in extra-curricular activities. There are many and varied opportunities available to them, all of which contribute to their personal development. Many pupils achieve highly: in music and speech and drama examinations, in art and creative writing competitions, at chess, in the UK Maths Challenge at gold level, and in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) at bronze and gold level. On the sports field, school teams play regular fixtures against local schools; they have enjoyed international success in cricket, and in lacrosse have become the National Small Schools Tournament Champions and represented England and Wales. Individual pupils have been selected to join a national academy for both girls' and boys' hockey; others play rugby, squash and tennis at county level and compete successfully in horse-riding, martial arts and fencing competitions. Large numbers of pupils of all ages are involved in the school musical and drama productions each year. Pupils' successes have included entry to the National Youth Theatre and the National Youth Music Theatre, and having music compositions performed by professional ensembles.
- 3.6 In the junior school, pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be good in relation to national age-related expectations. Inspection evidence, including lesson observations and interviews with pupils, indicates that they make good

progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2010 to 2012. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. Results at GCSE have been above the national average for maintained schools. Results in 2013 were better than in 2012 with two-fifths of grades at A* or A. International GCSE results have been higher than worldwide and UK norms in English as a Second Language. In 2012, English literature results were similar to worldwide norms and English results were below worldwide norms. In 2013 results in English improved, with nearly half of the grades at A* or A. The level of attainment at GCSE and the nationally standardised progress data that is available indicate that pupils are making progress that is good in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities, as confirmed by inspection evidence. Over the same period, A-level results overall were similar to the national average for maintained schools, and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. Results in 2011 to 2012 were higher than in 2010, being above the national average for maintained schools, and in 2013 this trend continued, with two-thirds of grades at A* to B.

- 3.7 Pupils with SEND or EAL also achieve well in examinations and make good progress in lessons because of the high quality individual sessions that they have, and when the tasks set are suitable for their ability. The achievement of more able pupils is good when teachers have high expectations and appropriate challenge is provided in lessons.
- 3.8 Good quality teaching makes an effective contribution to pupils' learning and achievement, as do their very positive and enthusiastic attitudes, their excellent behaviour and the outstanding relationships they enjoy with the staff and each other.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.10 Throughout the school the curriculum covers the linguistic, mathematical, scientific, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative areas of learning well. It is consistent with the school's aim to provide a holistic education that prizes academic achievement and enables pupils to discover their strengths and aptitudes.
- 3.11 The EYFS setting makes excellent provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. Staff are extremely knowledgeable about child development and plan broad educational programmes that cover the seven areas of learning and meet children's needs very well.
- 3.12 The junior school curriculum covers National Curriculum subjects, with the addition of French, PSHE and religious education (RE), and the introduction of German in Year 6. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 is further enriched by the woodland learning environment. A good range of subjects is studied from Year 7 to 9. In Year 9, pupils are given the option of studying Spanish, and biology, chemistry and physics are introduced as separate subjects. At GCSE, pupils can choose from a broad range of options. The A-level curriculum provides sixth formers with a wide choice of academic subjects suited to their individual capabilities and interests, together with a varied enrichment programme. Pupils from overseas may also choose to take a pre-A level year in which they take courses in mathematics, physics and chemistry, as well as intensive English language training provided by EAL department staff.

- 3.13 The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils. There are effective systems in place for identifying the needs of pupils of all ages with SEND or EAL and providing specialist assistance. Pupils with SEND have individual educational plans and are closely tracked and monitored. Pupils who are under the care of the EAL department are similarly supported and show very good levels of achievement. The most able pupils are identified and the school is beginning to develop greater opportunities to provide stimulus and challenge for them within the curriculum.
- 3.14 The junior school's curriculum policy guides subject co-ordinators in the formulation of their schemes of work. Planning is thorough. In the senior school the best planning is exemplified by specific learning outcomes, methods of assessment, celebration of achievements and details of provision for those with gifts, talents and specific SEND. However, this is not consistent in all subjects.
- 3.15 The well-structured PSHE programme throughout the school covers a range of issues, including staying safe, diversity and e-safety, with an increasing focus on preparation for adult life and future career options. The school has recently extended this programme to include talks on careers options given by outside speakers. The sixth-form boarding house has an extensive library of university prospectuses.
- 3.16 The curriculum is enhanced by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, an extensive sports programme, and rich provision of musical workshops, choirs, orchestras and musical ensembles. Pupils benefit from opportunities to participate in concerts and perform in ambitious plays and musicals.
- 3.17 There are a large number of day and residential visits to places of historical, geographical and scientific interest. Year 3 enjoyed a visit to Chedworth Roman Villa, Year 9 to the Black Country Living Museum and Year 11 to Berlin.
- 3.18 Links with the local and wider community are excellent and include sporting fixtures against local schools, participation in arts festivals, supporting Gloucestershire's wildlife and voluntary work through the DofE award.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.19 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.20 In the large number of good or excellent lessons observed, teaching was characterised by clear expectations, strong subject knowledge, and lively and enthusiastic presentation. All of these factors reflect the school's aim to promote academic achievement. Pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively, either in groups or pairs, and share their ideas, providing mutual support. A smaller number of lessons had less structure, slower pace and insufficient challenge for more able pupils.
- 3.21 In the EYFS, standards of planning are high. This, together with ongoing assessment, helps to identify bespoke learning objectives for each child. Consequently, appropriate support is provided to ensure that all children make good progress according to their starting points. The provision of many interesting resources, both indoors and out, results in children being fully engaged in activities and promotes a love for learning.
- 3.22 The comparatively small class sizes throughout the school allow teachers to establish an excellent rapport with pupils, based on mutual respect. High standards

of behaviour are the norm and pupils are fully engaged across a range of tasks. The pre-inspection questionnaires completed by pupils confirm that the majority find academic work interesting and receive individual support from their teachers when needed. Teachers frequently make skilful use of challenging questioning to stimulate pupils' understanding or assess their knowledge. They ensure that pupils participate and progress well, engaging them in dialogue to develop their ideas. The provision of appropriate support for pupils of all ages with SEND, EAL or a statement of special educational needs combines to produce an environment where pupils develop progressively the skills and confidence to enjoy and engage in their learning.

- 3.23 Opportunities to challenge the most able pupils have improved since the previous inspection. In the best lessons teachers provide suitably demanding tasks, such as a sophisticated, pupil-led evaluation of treatment programmes for prisoners in psychology, and a high order discussion of good practice in audio mixing and subsequent practical work on recording overdubs in music. A number of sixth-form pupils opt for the Extended Project Qualification.
- 3.24 Some use is made of short video clips, internet research and tablet computers, but overall the use of ICT in lessons is limited. Pupils have few opportunities to develop their skills, and the school recognises a need to increase ICT provision. The range of other teaching resources is well used to support learning. The teaching of practical subjects benefits from well-resourced facilities.
- 3.25 Marking is inconsistent across and within academic departments. Higher quality marking identifies clear targets for development which are revisited periodically and which pupils find useful. Less good marking is restricted to ticks or simple marks, with no evidence of dialogue with the pupil to offer ways to improve. There is an adequate marking policy in the junior school but that in the senior school offers insufficient guidance. Neither policy is consistently followed.
- 3.26 The school is improving its system for assessing pupils' abilities and monitoring their progress. The recent appointment of heads of key educational stages has resulted in more proactive use of data. Pupils benefit from target-setting discussions with their tutors, and a clearer picture of their learning needs helps teachers to support them in the classroom. Academic performance is monitored and pupils feel that their progress is measured regularly by the achievement grades they receive.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 A strong spiritual awareness amongst the pupils and an appreciation of the natural world around them are promoted by the scenic setting of the school and the central location of a church on the school site. The positive influence of the Anglican faith permeates the school and the chaplain offers active spiritual support to the school community. Worship in chapel has a multi-faith dimension and pupils are often asked to reflect on issues such as intolerance and anti-social behaviour. Pupils' spiritual awareness is also fostered through well-planned school assemblies and through RE and PSHE lessons. In group discussions and in interviews, pupils demonstrated a true appreciation for non-material aspects of life.
- 4.3 Pupils display excellent moral development. At all ages, pupils display a keen sense of right and wrong, and they understand and respect the school rules. They are self-disciplined, and listen and respond positively to advice from their teachers. They understand the system of rewards and sanctions and are keen to gain merit points to show loyalty to their house. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and reflects the respectful relationships that exist throughout the school community. Across the school a variety of moral issues is discussed in PSHE and RE lessons, and registration provides an opportunity to discuss aspects of citizenship in a small and supportive group.
- 4.4 The pupils' social development is excellent. From a very early age in the EYFS, they are encouraged to work in teams, make decisions and negotiate ideas. Older pupils, in both the junior and senior schools, act as 'buddies' to younger pupils, thereby creating a sense of family. All pupils in Year 6 become monitors; they carry out a breadth of responsibilities with pride and commitment. In the senior school, there are many positions of responsibility: prefects, school council representatives and membership of various committees. A recent pupil-led campaign assisted in saving a local post office. Pupils' outstanding environmental education is evidenced by the woodland learning environment and the school's Eco-Schools Green Flag Award. Throughout the school, pupils show responsibility for those less fortunate than themselves by contributing generously to a variety of local, national and international charities.
- 4.5 Pupils demonstrate excellent cultural awareness. This is enhanced through a variety of activities, both at home and abroad, and through the celebration of festivals such as Chinese New Year, Diwali and Thanksgiving. They think deeply about their own beliefs and values and also develop understanding and respect for a multi-cultural society and world faiths. Throughout the school, pupils' cultural perspective is developed through a stimulating range of art and music, through visits to galleries, museums and the theatre. Overseas cultural experiences include trips to France, Nepal, Morocco and Dubai, and links with schools in Japan and Uganda offer a wider understanding of the world.
- 4.6 By the time that they leave the school, pupils have an excellent level of personal development.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 The care and welfare of pupils are strengths of the school and reflect its aim to foster confidence, self-reliance and honesty in a family-centred environment. The key person system is firmly embedded in the EYFS and staff know the children in their care very well, ensuring that their needs are met. The recent introduction of heads of key educational stages in the senior school has added a further dimension to the support that pupils receive from caring house staff. All staff, throughout the school, work closely with each other and with pupils to meet the pupils' pastoral needs. Staff demonstrate awareness of specific pastoral matters such as cyber-bullying, and this is underpinned by appropriate staff training and pupil education.
- 4.9 The quality of relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves is excellent. Friendships extend across year groups, fostered by the successful mentor scheme. Pupils show respect for each other, offer encouragement and acknowledge achievement. Senior pupils take their responsibilities for younger pupils, including those in the EYFS, very seriously. Comprehensive induction for new pupils ensures that individual needs are met and all pupils are quickly integrated into school life.
- 4.10 The PSHE programme throughout the school encourages healthy eating. In response to the pupils' pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of the food provided. Inspection evidence does not support this view. Meals are nutritious and healthy choices are available. In interviews with pupils, many were enthusiastic about the food served at mealtimes. Pupils enjoy regular physical exercise through the extensive games and activity programmes. Children in the EYFS are eager to play outside in all weathers and receive valuable lessons on developing good personal hygiene.
- 4.11 The school is very successful in promoting good behaviour in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Excellent standards were observed throughout the inspection. In their responses to the questionnaire, a few pupils expressed the view that teachers are unfair in the way they give sanctions. Inspectors found that sanctions are rarely used and were perceived by pupils interviewed during the inspection to be fair and appropriate. Pupils say that bullying is not a concern and they are confident that any instances would be dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils with SEND or EAL are fully included in the life of the school and are extremely well supported. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.12 In response to the questionnaire, a very small minority of pupils said that the school does not ask for their opinions or respond to them. Inspection evidence, particularly from senior pupil interviews, did not support this view. Senior school pupils actively participate in a range of forums such as the school council, the food committee and the new pupil initiative of the boarders' committee. Suggestions are listened to and result in change. Younger pupils say that they would welcome the opportunity to set up and participate in a junior school council.

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

- 4.13 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.14 Throughout the school, including the EYFS, highly effective policies and procedures for promoting the welfare of the pupils, including safeguarding, contribute to their personal development and the fulfilment of the school's aims.
- 4.15 All staff receive regular training in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety, and the designated senior person for safeguarding and her deputies are trained in inter-agency working. The governor responsible for overseeing child protection regularly meets with the designated senior person to discuss safeguarding issues, and several other governors are trained in child protection. Recruitment checks on new staff adhere to safer recruitment guidance and they all have an appropriate induction in relevant procedures.
- 4.16 The school has produced comprehensive policies covering all aspects of health and safety, including measures to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. Regular fire drills are held and members of staff receive appropriate fire awareness training. Thorough risk assessments are carried out for buildings, curriculum activities and school trips, and there are effective accident reporting procedures. Suitable arrangements promote pupils' safety on site.
- 4.17 First-aid kits are suitably placed in all areas of the school, and the medical rooms provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are injured or fall ill during the school day. Medicines are stored and administered safely and pupils who have specific medical needs are well cared for. A significant number of staff are trained in first aid, including those in the EYFS who have relevant paediatric training. Staff and pupils are well supported by the school's qualified nursing team.
- 4.18 Registers accurately record pupils' admission to, and attendance at, the school. These are suitably maintained and stored as required for three years.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.19 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.20 Outcomes for boarders are excellent and fulfil the aims of the school. Boarders are polite, well informed and engaging. House systems include the boarders' committee, food committee, house prefect appointments and house duty rotas, and give boarders the opportunity to develop confidence, self-reliance and integrity. Boarders are wholly supportive of each other; a 'buddy' system helps new pupils to settle quickly. Boarders have access to an appropriately restricted internet service, quality daily newspapers and television. They have a good knowledge of the outside world, and are keen to support local, national and international charities. The houses operate strict routines with regard to security. Boarders report that they feel safe at all times. They appreciate the opportunity to voice their concerns; they believe that staff are prepared to listen, discuss and act on suggestions for making a positive contribution to boarding life. Boarders know whom to approach with regard to any safeguarding issues, including a nominated adult outside of the school for help and support. The school's pastoral system brings boarders and day pupils together within the house system, and enhances relationships between them. The school's SEND and EAL staff provide an excellent service to the boarders.

- 4.21 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. The boarding staff ensure that the houses are well maintained, clean and homely environments. Boarders have access to sports fields, a sports centre, gym and tennis courts; all age groups play a full part in representing the school. A wide range of evening and weekend recreational activities ensures that boarders have extensive opportunities to enjoy physical activity and to stay fit and healthy. Excellent medical facilities are staffed by three registered nurses who work closely with a local GP service. Boarders have access to other external medical, dental and optometric services as required. House staff are fully aware of the policies for boarders' self-medication; individual boarding houses maintain meticulous records of all medicines dispensed. Each boarding house has at least one member of staff who is qualified in first aid and a suitably stocked first-aid kit. All boarders' meals are of an excellent quality. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of boarders raised concerns about the availability of snacks and drinking water outside of mealtimes. Inspectors found that boarders are supplied with additional rations on a daily basis. Each house has at least one kitchen with equipment suitable to the age of the boarders. In pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a small minority of pupils said that it is not easy to contact parents and friends. Inspectors found that pupils have access to house telephones and the school is developing a communication system to enable boarders to have a secure voice and video link to parents.
- 4.22 Arrangements for safeguarding boarders and ensuring their welfare are excellent. Staff recruitment checks are robust and the school has an exemplary child protection policy and procedures. Boarding staff have undertaken appropriate levels of training, documented by the school's designated senior person for safeguarding. Boarders' safety is of paramount importance; house risk assessments are robust and reviewed regularly. The level of boarding supervision is commensurate with the age of the pupil. All boarding houses undertake fire drills at least once a term; fire alarm systems are checked weekly and appropriate records kept. There are comprehensive policies and procedures in place to promote good behaviour and guard against bullying. Boarders are confident that staff take all necessary steps to deal with such issues as they arise.
- 4.23 The leadership and management of boarding are excellent. Boarding staff work extremely well as a team. All boarding staff meet formally every two weeks to discuss key boarding issues and report as necessary to senior leadership. The school is undertaking an ongoing boarding review, which has resulted in the restructuring of staff responsibilities, the introduction of assistant house parents and the reallocation of pupils to houses. All of the changes have benefited the boarders, who express considerable admiration for all boarding staff. All policies relevant to boarding and the safeguarding and care of pupils are reviewed at least on an annual basis. House parents provide senior leadership with an annual house report and this is used to help readjust future priorities for boarding provision. House staff have excellent communication links with parents, and concerns are dealt with promptly. In response to pre-inspection questionnaires and in discussion, parents of boarders commented upon the excellent pastoral care provided. The recommendations from the last boarding inspection of 2011, undertaken by Ofsted, have been addressed.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The board of governors fully supports the aims and ethos of the school, which in turn reflect the founder's vision of an inclusive and broad-ranging education for pupils. The governors bring a wide variety of expertise to the board, and the Governor of the Month scheme, which includes frequent visits, enables them to gain greater knowledge and understanding of the working of the school, staff and pupils, including those in the EYFS. Individual governors are linked to specific aspects of school life, including safeguarding, SEND and boarding. The annual review of the operation of the school's safeguarding policy and procedures is suitably carried out by all governors.
- 5.3 The chair of governors meets with the leadership on a regular basis, and the board supports the senior leadership team with strategic planning, providing some level of challenge for the school's future development. Through the recently streamlined committee structure, the governors are able to discharge effectively their responsibilities for monitoring educational standards, and investment in human and material resources, and accommodation. Evidence of the board's strong financial provision is seen in the refurbishment of several areas of the school since the previous inspection and in the plans being drawn up for the creation of a performing arts centre. Suitable arrangements are in place for the appraisal of the leadership.
- 5.4 The board endeavours to keep abreast of its regulatory responsibilities but scrutiny of evidence prior to the inspection showed that it 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 had been dealt with, and all arrangements now comply with requirements.

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 good.
- 5.6 Leadership and management are effective at all levels and reflect the school's aim to provide an inclusive and broad-ranging education for pupils. Senior leaders throughout the school give clear educational direction, which is reflected in the quality of the pupils' education and the high standard of their personal development.
- 5.7 The highly effective EYFS team meets regularly to discuss planning and the children in their care; the day-to-day work of practitioners is strong. A system for regular meetings where key people have discussions with senior management has recently been developed, although this has yet to be fully implemented. Suitable systems are used to monitor the educational programmes, including the implementation of policies to eliminate discrimination. The Nursery management has an excellent oversight of the planning that key people undertake. The setting has been successful in meeting the recommendation of the previous inspection. Staff now share responsibility for children's learning and development and all key people

- communicate with parents. All requirements for children's safeguarding and welfare are met.
- 5.8 The junior school has its own strategic plan, outlining key areas for development over the next five years. Clear policies and procedures are in place to promote the pupils' academic achievement and their personal development. Subject co-ordinators produce detailed schemes of work that ensure a good quality curriculum. These provide yearly overviews, as well as more detailed middle-term plans. Planning is thorough, with some focus upon learning outcomes and assessment of learning. However, the quality of marking remains inconsistent in both the junior and senior schools, within and across subjects. The best marking is detailed and gives clear guidance on how pupils can improve.
- 5.9 Since the previous inspection, significant changes have been made to the leadership structure of the senior school and this has resulted in strong, dynamic and purposeful leadership. The creation of a management team of heads of key educational stages has enabled considerable progress to be made in monitoring pupils' academic performance. In response to the recommendation of the previous inspection, heads of department in the senior school now monitor the work within their subjects more effectively. A rigorous system of review for all staff has been introduced; this ensures that the work of the staff is more carefully assessed. Clear job descriptions for heads of department are also now in place.
- 5.10 The senior leadership team has members from both the senior and junior schools but there is a lack of cohesion between the two sections; roles and responsibilities in the management structure of the school, including the EYFS, are unclear. The senior leadership team, working closely with the governors and in consultation with senior school staff, has produced a strategic vision for the future development of the senior school. However, as yet, the school lacks annual operational plans, with priorities, success criteria, responsibilities and costings, to support the delivery of its strategic aims.
- 5.11 The school appoints staff of a high quality, both teaching and non-teaching, and there is close collaboration between them. A large number and range of support staff play an integral part in the school's success, know the pupils well and give them considerable support. Appropriate measures are in place to check the suitability of staff, governors and volunteers.
- 5.12 Arrangements are in place to train staff throughout the school to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety, and to meet safeguarding needs. A generous budget is available so that staff can improve their skills and, in so doing, are enabled to deliver the strategic aims of the school.
- 5.13 The school fosters excellent relationships with parents. This reflects the strong family feel that permeates the whole school community. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, an overwhelming majority of parents stated that they are extremely happy with the education and support provided for their children. The inspection judgement fully supports these positive views. Communication between parents and the school is excellent. The 'open door' policy in the junior school facilitates regular discussion between staff and parents, and the recent introduction of tutor groups for the older pupils has allowed for greater dialogue between parents and teaching staff. Pastoral staff are approachable and keep parents appropriately informed about their children's well-being.

- 5.14 The school places great importance on dealing with parents' concerns or complaints promptly. A very small minority of parents felt that their concerns have not been handled well. The inspection found insufficient evidence to support this view. Concerns were seen to be dealt with swiftly, in accordance with the school's procedures, with parents praising the purposeful approach the school takes to tackling difficulties. Effective methods for monitoring and addressing concerns are in place and the published procedure for complaints is followed well.
- 5.15 The school provides parents with regular updates of their children's progress through reports and half-term grade sheets. Whilst these provide parents with an overview of achievement in each subject area, some reports lack sufficient detail to identify ways in which individual pupils can improve their performance.
- 5.16 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a few parents felt that they are not encouraged to be involved in school events and other aspects of the school's work. Inspectors found that parents' associations in both the junior and senior schools are active bodies that organise frequent events for parents, pupils and the wider community. They are extremely successful in bringing the school community together at social gatherings such as barbeques and fetes. Parents are also invited to give careers talks in the senior school and to attend regular coffee mornings with senior staff in the junior school, as well as attending the weekly 'distinction' assemblies.
- 5.17 Parents of current and prospective pupils are provided with detailed information about the school, including all that is required: they receive a prospectus, parent handbooks and newsletters, and online information from the school website as well as through formal meetings and social events. Parents feel fully informed about school life and their children's educational experiences.

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