



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**MILLFIELD SCHOOL**

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## Millfield School

The preparatory school was inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School	<b>Millfield School</b>
DfE Number	<b>933/6022</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>310283</b>
Address	<b>Millfield School Butleigh Road Street Somerset BA16 0YD</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01458 442291</b>
Fax Number	<b>01458 447276</b>
Email Address	<b>office@millfieldschool.com</b>
Head	<b>Mr Craig Considine</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>General Sir John Reith KCB CBE</b>
Age Range	<b>13 to 18</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>1247</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (761 boys; 486 girls)</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total: <b>312</b>
Number of Boarders	Total: <b>935</b>
	Full: <b>935</b> Weekly: <b>0</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>24 Nov 2015 to 27 Nov 2015</b>

## PREFACE

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

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

The previous ISI boarding intermediate inspection was in November 2013 and the previous ISI second cycle inspection was in November 2009.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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

### Inspectors

Mr Graham Sims	Reporting Inspector
Mr Mark Allen	Team Inspector (Assistant Head, HMC school)
Mr Colin Ashby	Team Inspector (Former Head, ISA school)
Ms Kate Bainbridge	Team Inspector (Head of Sixth Form, HMC school)
Mr Richard Batchelor	Team Inspector (Director of Studies, IAPS school)
Mr David Forster	Team Inspector (Director of Studies, HMC school)
Dr Joanna Goodman	Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, ISA school)
Mrs Lizbeth Green	Team Inspector (Former Head, ISA school)
Mrs Anne Griffiths	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, GSA school)
Mr Timothy Halsall	Team Inspector (Assistant Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mr Stephen Hardy	Team Inspector (Teacher, HMC school)
Mr Jason Lewis	Team Inspector (Director of Academic Administration, HMC school)
Mr David Morgan	Team Inspector (Deputy Headmaster, HMC school)
Mrs Sue Nebesnuick	Team Inspector (Former Director of Studies, Society of Heads school)
Mr David Pritchard	Team Inspector (Former Head of Department, HMC school)
Mrs Sue Duff	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mr Andrew Lee	Team Inspector for Boarding (Former Senior Master, HMC school)
Mr Alan Sturrock	Team Inspector for Boarding (Head of Boarding, Society of Heads school)

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Millfield School is a co-educational boarding and day school for pupils from the ages of 13 to 18. It was founded in 1935 and occupies a large campus in Street, Somerset. It is owned by Millfield, a charitable company, limited by guarantee, which also operates Millfield Preparatory School and Millfield Pre-Preparatory School. All three schools are managed by a board of governors, whose members are directors of the company and charity trustees.
- 1.2 The school aims to discover and develop the potential within each pupil and to encourage each pupil to achieve the highest standards in all aspects of life. It seeks to support and nurture individual pupils with diverse needs and to help them develop confidence and resilience through a wide range of opportunities. Sport plays a central role in the school's mission, and the school also has a focus on supporting pupils with learning difficulties.
- 1.3 The school currently has 1247 pupils, of whom 761 are boys and 486 are girls. Around three-quarters of the pupils are full-time boarders and are accommodated in nineteen boarding houses, separated by gender. Two are dedicated sixth-form houses and three are for pupils in Year 9. Three houses are located a short distance away from the main school. Five additional houses provide dedicated accommodation for day pupils.
- 1.4 The school accepts pupils from a wide range of preparatory schools and also from schools overseas. Just under a third are based overseas; approximately one-fifth are international pupils, with 68 countries represented. Pupils are from a wide range of family backgrounds. The ability profile of pupils in Years 9 to 11 is above the national average, although the ability range is wide. Almost two-fifths of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia, dyspraxia, and difficulties with retention and planning. The large majority of these pupils receive additional support from the school's learning support centre. Five pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Over 200 pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL). Many of these pupils also receive additional specialist support. Three-quarters of pupils in Year 11 stay for Years 12 and 13. The ability profile of these year groups is below the national average for pupils in sixth-form education.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

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

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

- 2.1 The school is generally successful in fulfilling its aim to discover and develop the potential within each pupil. Through an exceptionally wide choice of sports and extra-curricular activities, and a highly flexible, excellent curriculum, the school helps pupils to identify their key talents and then provides opportunities for these to be developed to a very high level. As a result, pupils achieve exceptionally well in areas such as art, music, drama and, especially, sport. Specialist coaching of a high standard enables many pupils to gain regional and national representation in a vast array of sports. The overall quality of the teaching throughout the school is good, and this enables pupils to achieve well academically. Some teaching is excellent but not all is of a consistently high standard. Pupils are sometimes given insufficient guidance on how to improve, and the teaching in some lessons is not adapted sufficiently well to meet the needs of pupils of varying ability. In contrast, the specialist support of the learning support centre and the EAL department provides expert and much appreciated guidance for a sizeable minority of pupils with SEND or EAL.
- 2.2 Highly effective pastoral care contributes strongly to pupils' excellent personal development. An innovative and wide-ranging programme for pupils when they enter the school in Year 9 helps them to settle into senior school and to discover new talents and interests. Excellent boarding arrangements cater extremely well for the needs of boarders, and the boarding houses provide them with a sense of belonging. Separate houses provide a similar level of care for day pupils. Very careful attention is given to all aspects of pupils' welfare, health and safety. Pupils from many different countries live together harmoniously and within a spirit of tolerance and respect, and the behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is excellent. Since the previous inspection, pupils have had more opportunities to put forward their views, although responses from the school are not always communicated rapidly. The pupils are extremely well prepared for moving on to the next stage of education or employment.
- 2.3 The governing body plays a key role in ensuring that the school has excellent levels of staffing, very good resources and exceptional facilities. It fulfils its legal responsibilities extremely well, particularly with regard to the safeguarding of pupils. Senior leaders ensure a clear sense of direction and rigorous planning for the short- and long-term development of the school. They have instigated many improvements since the previous boarding inspection, and have responded effectively to some of the recommendations of that and the previous second cycle inspection, for example strengthening self-evaluation and staff appraisal, and promoting a more consistent approach to positive behaviour. Middle leaders show strong commitment and follow the school's systems for monitoring and reviewing the quality of provision within their areas of responsibility. However, not all are sufficiently rigorous when evaluating the quality of teaching or the outcomes for pupils, a previous inspection recommendation. Links with parents are strong, and the overwhelming majority are positive about the education and care provided by the school for their children.

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

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

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- 2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015.

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

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that all teaching is of a consistently high standard, particularly in providing pupils with guidance on how to improve and in meeting their diverse needs.
  2. Ensure that all middle managers are rigorous in evaluating the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils, and in identifying areas for improvement.

### **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 Pupils are well educated in accordance with the school's aim to discover and develop the potential of each. Pupils of all abilities achieve intellectual growth and acquire good levels of knowledge, understanding and skills across the curriculum. Pupils have good levels of skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. They apply mathematical and information and communication technology (ICT) skills well. For example, pupils in Year 13 were adept at manipulating data in an ICT lesson, while others used their ICT skills well in a music technology lesson. Pupils achieve good levels of creative, logical and independent reasoning, observed in their discussions in different lessons on poetry and ethics. Many pupils achieve excellent levels of skills in physical activity.
- 3.3 Pupils gain success in a wide range of areas. An increasing number achieve excellent levels in national academic competitions, including mathematics, chemistry, physics and linguistics Olympiads, and essay competitions in history and engineering. On leaving Year 13, a large majority of pupils proceed to their first choices in higher education, including to highly selective courses both in Britain and, increasingly, the United States.
- 3.4 Pupils' achievements in extra-curricular activities are exceptional, as much for the range of activities in which they participate as for the levels they reach. The school produces many sports players who have performed with distinction at a very high standard. In the academic year 2014 to 2015, more than 60 pupils represented their country in over 20 different sports. A much larger number gain regional representative honours. The school's teams regularly progress to the latter stages of regional and national competitions and beyond, and are current national champions in a number of sports. There is strength in depth in sports such as swimming, rugby, hockey and athletics, and individual success in many other sports such as biathlon, karting, fencing, skiing, squash and sailing. Significant accolades are won by pupils in music, drama, debating, and art and design.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2012 to 2014, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. At GCSE, results have been good in relation to the national average for maintained schools, and International GCSE results have been mostly higher than worldwide averages. A-level results have been similar to the national average for maintained schools. This level of attainment in external examinations and standardised measures of progress that are available indicate that pupils make progress that is good overall in relation to the average for pupils of comparable abilities. Inspection evidence from discussions with pupils, scrutiny of their written work and observation of their work during lessons confirms this judgement. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, a very large majority of parents indicated that they are pleased with the progress made by their children, and a similarly high proportion of pupils felt that they are making good progress in their work.
- 3.6 Pupils with SEND and those with EAL make at least as much progress as their peers, both at GCSE and A level. This is because of the additional support provided by the school's learning support centre and EAL department. In 2015, all pupils in Year 13 requiring an EAL qualification for university entrance achieved the

necessary level. The school's analysis shows that pupils who are identified as academically gifted generally make more progress than their peers.

- 3.7 Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and participate readily in their lessons. They work with good humour and are in general co-operative, organised and productive. Relationships with teachers are friendly, but pupils show appropriate respect and value their effort and expertise. In a few lessons, especially when they are not fully engaged by the subject, a very small minority of pupils are overly passive or display mildly disruptive behaviour. However, when engaged, they are able to achieve very high behavioural standards.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 The broad and balanced curriculum supports the school's aim to provide an education that is pupil centred and that encourages each pupil to achieve the highest standards in all aspects of school life. The curriculum gives pupils experiences in the requisite areas of learning and is effective in helping them to acquire core skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT, contributing to their high levels of achievement. A key feature is its flexibility in meeting pupils' individual needs and aspirations. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 can choose from a broad range of subjects, including classical Greek and additional mathematics for the most able. Coaching is provided as an alternative to an academic subject for pupils capable of pursuing a particular sport to a high level. Others can replace a subject with study support lessons. For pupils in Years 12 and 13, there is a similar flexibility of choice from a wide range of subjects and types of qualification. These pupils are also given the opportunity to study for the Extended Project Qualification, which develops skills in independent learning and critical analysis.
- 3.10 The provision for personal, social, health and economic education is excellent. It covers a wide range of issues and ensures, as do all areas of the curriculum, that British values are not undermined and that a balanced presentation of opposing views is given in the coverage of political issues. The careers and higher education department provides excellent support and advice for the next stage of education, training or employment.
- 3.11 The curriculum is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs. Groups for the very able provide them with extension and challenge outside the curriculum. Pupils with SEND or EAL are supported extremely well throughout the school by the learning support centre and the EAL department. Pupils' needs are assessed when they enter the school and their progress is tracked regularly. Specialist tuition is provided for those who need it. Support groups and lunchtime workshops provide additional guidance to help develop literacy and study skills, and pupils in Years 12 and 13 receive further support during designated private study periods. Each department has an additional educational needs representative who, together with staff from the learning support centre, provides other staff with detailed and clear strategies to support pupils with SEND in the classroom. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an EHC plan are supported particularly well.
- 3.12 The extra-curricular programme is outstanding; it is extensive and supports pupils' personal development very well. It fully meets the school's aim to provide opportunities to develop character, creativity, initiative and enterprise. The programme is highly responsive to the needs and interests of the pupils throughout

the school. The range of sports available is exceptional; it includes modern pentathlon, judo, dressage and triathlon, in addition to more traditional team sports such as hockey, netball and rugby, as well as many others. Specialist coaches, many of whom are nationally renowned, enable the most talented pupils to train and compete at national level.

- 3.13 A vast range of other activities is offered to all pupils, including Years 12 and 13, as part of an activities programme at lunchtime and after school. A large number of pupils participate in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE). Provision for the creative arts is very strong, encompassing creative arts scholars' evenings, an international concert series, a whole-school arts festival, dance shows and drama productions. For Year 9, the innovative and comprehensive Nine at Millfield programme ensures that all pupils have the opportunity to discover and develop their potential through tailor-made provision that supports their personal development and gives them the opportunity to experience an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. Links with the local and wider community are active and effective, for example through the community service groups offered within the weekly activities programme and to participants in the DofE. Pupils also show a strong commitment to local, national and international charity work. Debating competitions provide a platform for pupils to participate in organised events such as the Model United Nations.
- 3.14 In their responses to the questionnaires, almost all parents and pupils expressed a high level of satisfaction with the curricular and extra-curricular opportunities available.

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

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.16 The good and often excellent teaching contributes to pupils' good academic progress and achievement, and is consistent with the school's aim of developing the potential within each pupil. Teachers are knowledgeable in their subject areas. Lessons are well planned, with a purpose clear to pupils, and help them to develop their learning skills to a higher level. The knowledge and expertise of those coaching in the extra-curricular programme make a notable contribution to developing pupils' potential.
- 3.17 Small class sizes enable teachers to establish warm relationships with their pupils and to promote tolerance and respect. Teaching is non-partisan in its coverage of political issues. Most lessons are carefully timed, well managed and purposeful. Teaching reinforces and builds on previous learning, and generally fosters pupils' interests. It includes effective questioning that encourages pupils to think for themselves and to exhibit their verbal skills. Opportunities for group work contribute to the pupils' personal development, fostering their social skills through co-operative learning. On occasions, the teaching does not provide pupils with sufficient challenge in their work, and offers limited opportunity for active participation, with the result that pupils are not fully engaged in their learning.
- 3.18 The teaching makes effective use of resources. In many areas, the use of tablet computers, referred to by the school as its Mobile Learning initiative, is having a positive effect on pupils' learning through the development of interesting teaching strategies. When used, technology is not always employed effectively.

- 3.19 Teaching across the curriculum makes appropriate provision for pupils with particular needs, although there is variation in quality within and between departments. For the small number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an EHC plan, the teaching makes the required provision. Specialist teaching and provision in mainstream classrooms for pupils with EAL are good, as is the specialist teaching within the learning support centre for pupils with SEND. Some teaching for these pupils within mainstream lessons is not as effective as it does not take sufficient account of pupils' different learning needs and abilities, despite the guidance provided by the learning support centre on pupils' differing needs. There are, however, instances where work is tailored well to pupils' needs, for example when they are provided with prompts and planning sheets to support their learning. The most able pupils make better progress than others, although there are few examples in lessons across the curriculum of real challenge and extension for these pupils.
- 3.20 The quality and frequency of teachers' marking and expectations with regard to homework lack uniformity across all years and departments. Pupils comment that they find some of the marking helpful and constructive. On occasions, however, comments are not sufficiently detailed to ensure that pupils know exactly what steps they need to take in order to improve their work. Pupils' work is assessed formally at regular intervals in order to keep track of their progress. In their responses to the questionnaire, a small minority of pupils indicated that homework does not help them to learn and that teachers do not ensure that they are given the right amount of work. Inspectors found that good practice in some subjects with regard to the setting and monitoring of homework reinforces learning and provides opportunities for independent learning. However, lack of adherence to formal homework procedures by staff in the setting and completion of work is an inconsistency that some pupils feel places an undue burden on them, and inspection evidence supports this view.

## **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 actively promotes British values such as mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law.
- 4.3 Many pupils' personal qualities are highly developed by the time they leave the school, indicating successful fulfilment of the school's aim to nurture the welfare of individuals. The pupils are confident, self-aware and sensitive to the needs of others within and outside their community. Pupils from a number of different faiths and cultures form a diverse, well-integrated community, although not all pupils avail themselves of the opportunities to develop the spiritual side of their lives, and a very small minority of pupils occasionally display an emotional immaturity in their behaviour. Pupils appreciate non-material aspects of life, benefiting from the aesthetic opportunities that exist within the school at a very high level in art, music and drama.
- 4.4 The pupils' moral development is excellent. Through debates in the classroom and extra-curricular activities, the pupils reveal a growing moral awareness of topical issues such as terrorism, justice, combatting discrimination, animal testing and acceptable behaviour while driving. They show respect for the criminal and civil law of England. The behaviour of a very large majority of pupils is exemplary and reveals a genuine courtesy and respect towards each other and to visitors. Senior prefects set a good example to their younger peers. The pupils develop a strong respect for the norms of good conduct through opportunities for leadership and an emphasis on sportsmanship in the wide-ranging extra-curricular programme.
- 4.5 The pupils' excellent social development creates a community that is harmonious and quick to resolve differences that occasionally emerge. House communities are strong and value members from different parts of the world. Pupils contribute to the betterment of local and international communities, for example by participating in environmental charity work, empathising with victims of recent international events or buying Christmas decorations for people locally. They show empathy for others by supporting a women's charity in Kenya and a school in Ethiopia. Pupils develop a strong sense of social responsibility as they act as representatives on house and school councils or undertake roles such as head of house or school prefect; there are many opportunities for them to undertake leadership roles. Pupils also organise a tea party for house matrons as a mark of gratitude.
- 4.6 The diversity of the school community contributes strongly to pupils' excellent cultural development. The pupils gain great awareness of other cultures, for example through international dinners where they wear their national dress. They show respect for other cultures, actively challenge intolerant attitudes and are interested to find out about other traditions. Pupils of different faiths express how well integrated they feel within the school community.
- 4.7 The pupils develop explicit knowledge of public institutions and services in England and show critical awareness of recent votes occurring in parliament. Pupils in Year 13, for example, explained the difference between the judiciary and the government

in relation to the economic appeal system. Pupils understand the significance of democracy; a recent mock election, for example, received a very high turnout.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 The school provides highly effective support and guidance for pupils, both academically and pastorally, in accordance with its aims and as a strong contribution to their personal development. Group tutors, senior tutors, house parents and heads of year contribute strongly to the network of support which the pupils value. Personal relationships between the pupils and their teachers, and among the pupils themselves, are warm, mutually supportive and respectful. Pupils are aware of the wide range of staff to whom they can turn if a difficulty arises, and they value highly the peer mentoring provided by older pupils in their houses.
- 4.10 The school provides a wide variety of nutritious food options at mealtimes and many opportunities for pupils to take exercise to support a healthy lifestyle. The quantity, quality, labelling and choice of food are of high quality at all mealtimes.
- 4.11 Academic, sporting and extra-curricular achievements are celebrated publicly. Discussions with pupils and school and house records indicate that rewards and sanctions are applied consistently and fairly, and with due regard to those who have SEND. However, the automated notification of school sanctions, and their automatic escalation if not completed, may explain the perceptions of a small minority of pupils, in their responses to the questionnaire, that the system is unfair.
- 4.12 The school is successful in encouraging high standards of behaviour and has appropriate measures to guard against harassment and bullying. A very small minority of parents and pupils felt that the school does not deal effectively with bullying. In discussions, many pupils showed awareness of the school's policy and expressed confidence that, were bullying to occur, it would be dealt with promptly and appropriately. The inspection found that the school has provided training and guidance for staff and pupils with regard to bullying, including cyber-bullying. During the inspection, an assembly for pupils in Year 10 focused effectively on the national anti-bullying week campaign, actively linking national messages with the school's own anti-bullying policy. The school takes any bullying seriously and keeps detailed records of any incidents that occur.
- 4.13 The school enables pupils to express their views in a variety of ways, chiefly through school and house councils. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire a minority of pupils felt that the school does not listen to their views. Inspectors found that pupils are consulted on matters as diverse as digital technology, catering, campus facilities, social arrangements and school uniform. However, the outcomes of these consultations are not always communicated rapidly or clearly to the pupils.
- 4.14 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND. The plan is reviewed and evaluated regularly.

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

- 4.15 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.16 These arrangements are in line with the school's aims and make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. The safeguarding policy takes full account of the most recent official guidance and the circumstances of the school. The designated safeguarding lead and deputy maintain rigorous oversight of safeguarding issues and constructive links with the local safeguarding children's board; they keep detailed records of any referrals. The school provides comprehensive training, which is regularly updated, in child protection, including risks associated with abuse or radicalisation, and many aspects of health and safety for all members of staff, governors and volunteers. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire indicated that their children feel safe and are happy at the school.
- 4.17 The school has comprehensive arrangements for reducing risks from fire. Every building has a designated fire warden, all of whom have been trained in the procedures for carrying out emergency evacuations, and termly fire drills are conducted for every building within the school's large campus. External specialists have carried out detailed fire risk assessments for every building and ensure that fire alarms and extinguishers are serviced regularly.
- 4.18 Very careful consideration is given to all aspects of health and safety, as reflected in an extensive suite of policies. The school records carefully accidents and 'near misses', which are analysed by the health and safety officer in order to improve procedures and reduce the likelihood of future accidents. Risk assessments are undertaken for all activities, for off-site visits and for all areas of the school site, thus helping to ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils.
- 4.19 The provision for pupils who are ill or injured is excellent. Almost all staff are trained in basic first aid. Nursing provision in the medical centre, available 24 hours a day, ensures that illness and accidents are dealt with promptly and effectively. A doctor visits every day and is present on games afternoons. Excellent attention is given to meeting the needs of athletes through physiotherapy support, specialist guidance on nutrition and diet, and extensive strength and conditioning programmes. Specialist provision for pupils with SEND ensures that these pupils are looked after well and are fully integrated into the life of the school.
- 4.20 Admission and attendance registers are appropriately maintained and correctly stored.

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

- 4.21 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.22 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. They are promoted by the role models and boarding structures provided by committed, thoughtful boarding staff and senior managers. Boarders are very positive about their boarding experiences. They spoke highly enthusiastically about life in a boarding community and their houses, which they find warm and homely, and through which they derive a very strong sense of identity and belonging. Boarders gain independence, confidence and enjoyment from their boarding experience, and develop friendships and self-reliance. They have excellent relationships with adults. Their relationships with each other are caring and supportive across year groups. When difficulties arise, boarders have full confidence that they can be addressed effectively. Boarders are from diverse backgrounds, with many different qualities and talents, and feel equally valued and at home.
- 4.23 Boarders have much opportunity to make their views known, thus partly fulfilling a previous inspection recommendation, but still do not always receive sufficient feedback on the suggestions they have made. Senior pupils assist with the running of their houses and are respected and trusted by their fellow boarders. Their functions are primarily pastoral, and they are appropriately trained in their roles. Boarders contribute to their community in a variety of ways, acting as representatives on various councils and committees, and organising and participating in teams, activities and social events.
- 4.24 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. New boarders receive thorough induction, procedures for which have improved since the previous inspection. Boarders feel safe in their houses. They have access to excellent pastoral care at all times, day and night. The staff within the well-equipped medical centre maintain excellent communication with the houses, and boarders have access to external medical services arranged through the medical centre. Procedures and practice relating to medication are excellent; all protocols for the storage and dispensing of medicines are tightly controlled. Medical provision for those involved in sport is excellent.
- 4.25 A small minority of boarders said in their responses to the questionnaire that the food is not good and snacks are not available outside mealtimes. The inspection found the range and quality of food to be excellent. Boarders are given advice on their diet, and many are given guidance on dietary plans specific to their sporting interests, which can be accommodated through the usual school menu. In boarding houses well-equipped kitchens are available to prepare a range of snacks, including fruit. Boarders with special dietary needs or requests have their requirements met.
- 4.26 Laundry is managed centrally on campus, but boarders also have access to washing facilities in their boarding houses. Pupils in Year 13 are encouraged to do their own laundry in preparation for later life. Personal items can be easily obtained from the well-stocked and centrally located school shop. In their responses to the questionnaire, a small minority of boarders said that their belongings are not safe. The inspection found that personal possessions can be locked away in a lockable drawer or the small safes provided in some houses; money and other significant valuables can be kept safe by house parents. In some houses, it was apparent that clothing is occasionally taken or used without the owner's knowledge, although it is ultimately returned.

- 4.27 Boarders have access to an outstanding range of facilities and provision for sport, music, art and drama throughout the week. The boarders' enjoyment and personal development are enhanced by comprehensive activities programmes in the evenings and at weekends, in addition to their access to a vast array of extra-curricular opportunities. Houses make excellent provision for both work and relaxation, and any onerous demands on boarders' time, for example for sports training, are monitored in terms of boarders' welfare. In response to the questionnaire, a small minority of pupils said that they are not happy with the balance of free time and activities. Inspectors found that, although pupils are very busy, they have opportunities for relaxation and socialising.
- 4.28 Boarding houses are of a consistently excellent standard. Bedrooms are warm, well lit and well furnished; many boarders choose to personalise their space. Washrooms and showers offer suitable privacy. Houses celebrate the success of their resident boarders. Boarders can contact home regularly using mobile telephones, email, other internet means of communication or, if needed, landline telephones. Communication between house parents and boarders' parents is maintained effectively through telephone calls, email and the recently launched online parents' portal.
- 4.29 The arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are excellent. All staff are checked for their suitability to work with young people. Regular visitors to boarding houses and any residents over the age of 16 are also checked. A culture of safeguarding permeates the school. All staff are familiar with the processes for keeping pupils safe. Stringent policies and procedures exist to prevent bullying and to provide support and guidance for those who experience difficulties. The pastoral network provides excellent support for those who need it, with the school effectively monitoring behaviour through a more consistent approach since the previous inspection. The estates department ensures that health and safety are a top priority when carrying out maintenance work around the boarding houses. Risk assessments are undertaken, monitored and evaluated for all boarding activities. Fire drills are carried out during boarding time in every house. There is always adequate supervision of boarders by suitably qualified and experienced staff. In their responses to the questionnaire, almost all boarders indicated that they feel safe in their boarding houses.
- 4.30 The leadership and management of the boarding provision are excellent. The school fulfils its boarding aims and principles extremely well. The management structure enables the boarding houses, both on and off campus, to operate collectively, but allows each house to have its own distinct personality. Written policies are comprehensive and are monitored and evaluated regularly. House parents have weekly formal meetings with senior leaders to ensure equality of provision, to raise common issues and to ensure that houses operate in line with the aims of the school. Each house has its own development plan. There is a formal appraisal system for house parents who, in turn, appraise their house staff each year, thus fulfilling a previous inspection recommendation. Governors visit the houses regularly and have ensured that other recommendations from the previous boarding inspection have been largely implemented. Communication between the school's senior academic and pastoral leaders and the houses is excellent. House parents are rigorous in carrying out agreed policies and procedures, and exercise exacting professionalism to ensure that support is available for all boarders and boarding staff.

- 4.31 A very large majority of parents of boarders indicated in their responses to the questionnaire that the experience of boarding helps their children's progress and development, and that their children are treated as individuals. They stated that boarding is organised well and managed effectively, and the vast majority consider that the boarding accommodation is comfortable.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The aims and values of the school are strongly supported by a board of committed governors who bring a wealth of experience in education, finance, law, business, property and the armed forces. They provide excellent oversight and guidance, promoting careful financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources.
- 5.3 Governors play a very active part in the life of the school. They gain considerable insight into the working of the school by visiting regularly to monitor and report on the implementation of strategic plans. Governors maintain close liaison with senior leaders and commission presentations from staff to help them to understand the school's needs. They subject development plans and proposals to rigorous scrutiny and ensure that agreed plans are implemented. They have ensured implementation of appropriate responses to the recommendations from the previous second cycle and boarding inspections.
- 5.4 The governing body provides stimulus for growth and improvement, as seen in the recent successful introduction of the programme for pupils in Year 9, and the development of the Mobile Learning strategy to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. It has ambitious plans for the school's future development, both in the shorter and longer terms. Clear lines of communication exist between governors, teaching and boarding staff. Governors receive monthly updates on educational matters, and undertake an annual survey of parents' views.
- 5.5 Governors take their statutory responsibilities very seriously, particularly for welfare issues, health and safety. They review policies on a regular basis and any regulatory amendments are referred to the full board of governors for approval. A thorough review of safeguarding and child protection arrangements is carried out annually.

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

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.7 At all levels, managers are generally effective in realising the school's mission to discover and develop the potential within each pupil. This is demonstrated by the personalised nature of much of the school's provision for its pupils, which accommodates a considerably diverse range of talents. Leaders ensure that values that encourage respect for others and democracy are embedded in the ethos of the school.
- 5.8 Senior leaders share a strong and clearly articulated educational vision focusing on seven key goals, ranging from the availability of innovative academic programmes to judicious financial planning. This is reflected in the high quality of the pupils' education and the mature and constructive way in which the vast majority interact

with their teachers and each other. This vision underpins the school's policies, which are followed effectively and are subject to regular checking.

- 5.9 The senior management team has been expanded since the previous inspection; this has facilitated a constructive reallocation of areas of responsibility. Roles and structures are well defined, and responsibilities are delegated with appropriate levels of autonomy. There is a clear sense of the academic and pastoral hierarchies working in tandem for the good of the pupils. An extensive programme of meetings ensures a culture of mutual support and strengthens communication. Leadership is responsive to the needs of the school.
- 5.10 The school's management culture is reflective, with self-evaluation at its core. Middle managers produce extensive self-evaluations as part of an annual reporting cycle. When an aspect of the school's management is identified as requiring review, such as the appraisal system in the current year, there is widespread consultation across the school. This consultative culture is seen in the management of significant changes since the previous inspection, such as the introduction of dedicated houses for pupils in Year 9. In this and other initiatives, a flexible and sensitive response to individual needs is evident.
- 5.11 Development planning is subject to input from all members of staff and is effective at all levels. The multi-layered system of strategic and operational planning is comprehensive; sub-divisions of the scheme ensure that key aims retain appropriate attention within the wide-ranging approach. The planning embraces all areas of school life and identifies clearly the main focuses for each year.
- 5.12 Leaders have partly responded to the previous inspection recommendation by strengthening the systems for departmental review, support and training. However, although middle managers are committed and follow the school's systems, they are not all consistently effective in carrying out their roles. A small minority are not sufficiently rigorous in identifying ways in which the quality of teaching and pupils' work might be improved, especially for very able pupils and those with learning challenges. Departments are well resourced, and heads of department feel well supported by the senior strategic group and the senior management team.
- 5.13 Pastoral management in the school is extremely strong; the extensive structure includes heads of year and senior tutors for each cohort, who establish the tone of nurturing and supportive guidance which help the pupils to thrive. The creation of additional posts for overseeing the work of house parents has enhanced provision and contributed to the excellence of pastoral care.
- 5.14 Considerable attention is given to the implementation of policies for the safeguarding of pupils and for welfare, health and safety. The system for checking the suitability of new staff, governors and volunteers to work with children is rigorous, and the single central register of appointments is accurately maintained. All staff are trained in safeguarding and welfare, health and safety as appropriate to their responsibilities. The school achieves its aim of appointing and motivating highly able members of staff. The new staff induction system features the use of mentors and is much valued by teachers new to the school, who are able to settle quickly. All staff are encouraged to pursue their own professional development; this is supported by a generous budget for staff training. The work of non-teaching staff is valued highly and is subject to annual appraisal.
- 5.15 Responses to the questionnaire indicate that the vast majority of parents are positive about the quality of education and the support provided for their children. They are

particularly satisfied with the ready availability of school information and policies. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved the range of its communications with parents. For example, a twice-termly newsletter is now published to keep parents up to date with life at the school, and the new website provides a wealth of detailed information. The online portal, reviews and magazines also keep parents well informed. House parents and group tutors keep in touch with parents by email and telephone. Parents of current and prospective pupils are provided with the required information about the school.

- 5.16 The school encourages parents to be involved in events and other aspects of its work. For example, parents are offered well-being activities, including circuit training and bicycle spinning classes. The online parent portal provides a quick and ready means of communicating with staff. In their responses to the questionnaire, most parents said that they receive timely responses to their questions. A very small minority indicated that their concerns are not handled well by the school. Inspection found that the school's complaints procedure is made available to parents, and that complaints are handled in accordance with this. The school keeps detailed records confidentially of all complaints that proceed to the formal stage, and these are few in number.
- 5.17 Parents have good opportunities to be actively involved in the work and progress of their children through termly parents' evenings and consultations. The online portal enables parents to keep up to date with their children's academic progress, their level of achievement and their involvement in sport. Parents receive clear and useful reports about their children's work and progress. These are produced at least once a term, although they vary in style and detail. For example, a full report with detailed comments about progress and targets for improvement may be followed by a summary of grades for effort and expected attainment, or a letter from the house parent. In their responses to the questionnaire, a very large majority of parents were satisfied with the information they are given about their children's progress.

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