



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**DOVER COLLEGE**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Dover College

Full Name of School	<b>Dover College</b>		
DfE Number	<b>886/6003</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>307856</b>		
Address	<b>Dover College</b> <b>Effingham Crescent</b> <b>Dover</b> <b>Kent</b> <b>CT17 9RH</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01304 205969</b>		
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Email Address	<b>admissions@dovercollege.org.uk</b>		
Head	<b>Mr Gerry Holden</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Joe Sullivan</b>		
Age Range	<b>3 to 18</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>297</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (158 boys; 139 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>0</b>	5-11: <b>67</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>20</b>	11-18: <b>210</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>203</b>	
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>94</b>	
	Full:	<b>89</b>	Flexi: <b>5</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Fiona Donnelly</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection Dates	<b>25 Nov 2014 to 28 Nov 2014</b>		

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in January 2012.

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](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.

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 Colette Culligan	Reporting Inspector
Mr Duncan Byrne	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mr Andrew Colpus	Team Inspector (Headmaster, Society of Heads school)
Mrs Myra Howard	Team Inspector (Former Head of Sixth Form, GSA school)
Mr Stephen Jefferson	Team Inspector (Former Head of Department, GSA school)
Mrs Emma Smith	Team Inspector (Headmistress, IAPS school)
Ms Diane Martin	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mr Christian Daw	Team Inspector for Boarding (Deputy Head, GSA school)
Miss Mary Regan	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Dover College is a co-educational day and boarding school founded in 1871 by a local businessman and reconstituted by Royal Charter in 1923. It still occupies its original site in the grounds of a former Benedictine priory, and many of its facilities are housed in restored historical buildings, some dating from the 12th century. The governing body, who exercise full responsibility for the school, is an extensive body, but in practice most governance matters are in the hands of a smaller group of governors called the council and a number of sub-committees.
- 1.2 The school aims to develop the whole person and to enable pupils to fulfil their academic potential by providing a demanding but flexible curriculum within an atmosphere of tolerance and trust. It aims to encourage in pupils the qualities of respect, a sense of responsibility, self-confidence and leadership skills. In its curriculum and its activities programme it aims to provide opportunities which will assist the spiritual, social and personal development of its pupils.
- 1.3 All sections of the school from the Early Years Foundation stage (EYFS) to the sixth form are located on the same site, as are the four boarding houses. Duckworth House accommodates girls from Year 7 to Year 13, while St Martin's House has girls from Year 9 to Year 13. Boys live in either Leamington House or The School House.
- 1.4 Currently there are 297 pupils enrolled at the school. Of these 20 are in the EYFS, for pupils aged three to five. There are 90 pupils in the sixth form. The majority of pupils come from white British families living within a 20 mile radius of the school. There are 94 boarders, 82 of whom are overseas pupils from a wide range of countries, including China, the USA, and western and eastern European countries. The ability profile of pupils in the senior school is generally in line with the national average, while those in the junior school and sixth form are slightly above average. The school identifies 56 pupils as having special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) and the 24 who need extra support are taught by the special needs department; no pupils have statements of special educational need or disability. There are 85 pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and their needs are also met by the International Study Centre (ISC).
- 1.5 Since the previous inspection the timetable has been reorganised. The curriculum and the weekend activities programme have been extended and boarding facilities in Leamington and The School House have been improved. Stronger links have been created between the senior and junior schools and the senior management team (SMT) restructured.
- 1.6 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 Dover College provides a good education for its pupils and is successful in meeting its aim to encourage the development of pupils' academic potential. All sections of the school, from the EYFS to the sixth form, make good provision for the needs of all pupils including those with SEND and EAL. From an early age, pupils develop confident reading and speaking skills, competence in discussing mathematical and scientific concepts and in using technology. Their creative development is excellent, with a strong tradition of music making and striking work in art and textiles. Pupils develop their physical skills well, although the provision for girls' sports in the senior school is not as good as that for the boys. Pre-inspection questionnaire responses from parents and pupils were positive about pupils' happiness, the availability of information and the way in which pupils are treated as individuals. Teaching is usually good, often excellent, although it does not always provide appropriate challenge for the more able pupils. The individual needs and EAL departments provide excellent support for pupils with SEND or EAL. Teaching in the mainstream classrooms, however, makes limited use of the strategies the departments identify as useful for such pupils.
- 2.2 The school is highly successful in creating an atmosphere in which pupils grow into mature, respectful and socially aware young adults. Throughout the school pupils are kind and thoughtful in their dealings with others. They enjoy being part of an international school; tolerance, respect and interest in others' viewpoints characterise the atmosphere in the school and boarding houses. Incidents of bullying are rare, although the anti-bullying policies of houses and of the school differ. Pupils are proud to be part of the school. They willingly volunteer to help and actively promote the school's tradition of charitable work. Staff are committed to pupils, who appreciate their teachers' support and willingness to give them extra help with their work. Although a large majority of pupils complained in the pre-inspection questionnaire about the quality of the food, inspection evidence did not support these concerns. Fire procedures are thorough and maintenance ensures that the premises are safe from most avoidable hazards. There is a sound plan to improve access for the disabled. The school has not followed its own admissions policy so that not all overseas boarders have a guardian appointed. Senior leadership has incorrectly assumed that all the required records, including those required for boarding, have been properly maintained and has not regularly monitored these. Consequently there are gaps and inconsistencies in procedural documentation.
- 2.3 In pre-inspection responses a small minority of parents expressed concern with the management of the school and the way in which the school has dealt with some issues. Inspectors agreed with these views. Governors are committed but because they have not fully understood their responsibilities they have not ensured that statutory policies have been fully implemented, nor that the school's own policies are being followed correctly. The school's strategic and development plans, especially for the senior school, are unclear about specific actions to be taken. Some but not all departments monitor and evaluate their work effectively. Boarding staff are committed but have had little opportunity for training and there is a lack of clarity about some roles and job descriptions. All staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding matters although their understanding of their professional responsibilities is not always secure. Pupils and parents, however, are clear that

pupils feel safe in the school and express high levels of happiness and satisfaction with boarding. Since the previous inspection, the school has established satisfactory procedures for ensuring that all required checks are carried out before staff are appointed and that these checks are recorded correctly. Opportunities for outdoor activities in the EYFS have been extended.

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

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

- 2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:
- strengthen arrangements for safeguarding pupils by ensuring that all staff fully understand the requirement to comply with the school's code of professional conduct in all their dealings with pupils. [Part 3, paragraph 7(a) and 8(a) under Welfare, health and safety of pupils; and for the same reason NMS 11 under Child protection.]
- 2.5 The school does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013, and therefore it must:
- ensure that all overseas boarders have guardians appointed to support their welfare while resident in this country, in accordance with its admissions policy [National Minimum Standard 2.3, under Boarders' Induction and support];
  - ensure that all the required records are monitored so that issues arising can be tracked and quickly resolved [National Minimum Standard 13.3, under Management and development];
  - provide all boarding staff with relevant job descriptions, appraisal and opportunities for further training to develop their boarding practice [National Minimum Standard 15.1, under Staffing and supervision].

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

- 2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Provide governors with further training so that they fully understand and discharge their responsibilities, especially for safeguarding.
  2. Ensure that there is consistency between school and house policies on bullying.
  3. Establish rigorous monitoring of academic procedures throughout the school, reflecting the good practice evident in some departments.
  4. In School House, ensure that the office for duty staff is so organised as to facilitate access for boarders without intruding on staff accommodation.

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

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is good.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated in accordance with the school's aims, showing a sense of responsibility and adopting positive attitudes to their learning. Achievements in literacy and numeracy are good throughout the school. Children in the EYFS are highly articulate. They listen carefully to their teachers and to each other. Nursery class children can count to ten and Reception class children can recognise and count many of the numbers on a 100 square. They write independently, the most able writing sentences using capital letter and full stops. In the junior school, achievement is often excellent, with pupils reaching high standards in English and ICT by the time they reach Year 5. In the senior school, pupils show developing skills in expressing themselves with sophistication, understanding mathematical and scientific concepts and utilising ICT. When given the opportunity to think for themselves and work independently, pupils show logic, creativity and good reasoning skills, which they apply successfully to their work. This was demonstrated in a sixth form class requiring pupils to apply contemporary literary theory to the analysis of poetry, and in a drama lesson in which pupils discussed how to improve their devised work. Pupils' creative skills are highly developed, with some pupils embarking on imaginative projects and achieving high quality results. A tapestry intended for the refectory that was being created in a textile classes showed exceptional ambition, creativity and skill. Physical activity encourages all pupils, from the EYFS to the sixth form, to develop their skills and physical prowess.
- 3.3 Pupils display high levels of achievement in music. During the inspection, an informal concert featured several soloists performing at an accomplished level, many in younger year groups; some pupils reach Grade 7 standards at a very young age. The chapel choir sang evensong recently at Canterbury Cathedral, where an anthem composed as part of a GCSE course was sung. The girls' 1<sup>st</sup> XI hockey team has been unbeaten in the first three months of its 2014 season, and many pupils are involved in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme at Gold and Bronze level. There are some individual successes in sports both at junior and senior levels. Pupils recently were victorious in a regional public speaking competition. The majority of pupils move on to higher education courses; a small number choose to enter the workplace.
- 3.4 By the time they leave the EYFS setting, most children reach the expected level of development while the more able exceed expectation in some areas of their learning and development. Junior school pupils are not entered for national tests and consequently the pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average national performance. However, based on inspection evidence including the school's tests, observation of lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils, attainment for junior school pupils in reading and writing is above national averages.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2011 to 2013, which are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in GCSE are above average for maintained schools; a significantly higher proportion of grades are at A\*/B level than the national average. At IGCSE, results are slightly lower than worldwide norms. A Level results are in line with the national

average for maintained schools. BTEC results are above average in comparison with maintained schools.

- 3.6 Observations during the inspection indicate that pupils' progress in the junior school is good. The level of attainment at GCSE shows that progress at GCSE is good in relation to pupils of similar ability and at IGCSE it is above the average for British schools. Standardised measures of progress at A Level indicate that pupils make appropriate progress. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. While there is no standardised data analysis for the progress of SEND or EAL pupils, work seen in the inspection, particularly in mathematics and English, shows that SEND pupils make good progress overall, supported by their lessons in the individual needs department. However, the progress of these pupils in some other subjects is limited because planning does not fully reflect their needs.
- 3.7 Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally positive. Their willingness to learn and to work cooperatively with their teachers is evident across the age range. EYFS children are highly motivated and engage enthusiastically in some well-planned activities, which are usually well matched to their individual needs. Junior school pupils are also eager to learn, although their behaviour and concentration slip on occasion. Senior school pupils generally work with concentration. On a few occasions, excessively exuberant behaviour limited pupils' progress. When presented with tasks they find too easy, attention levels drop and pupils lose focus. In the lessons in which they were given more challenging work, pupils responded with interest and showed good perseverance.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.9 The curriculum provides effective coverage of the required areas of learning, and the range of subjects and courses offered at each stage within the school contributes well to pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development. It is suitable for the age, abilities and needs of the range of pupils, reflecting the school's aim to provide a challenging, flexible curriculum that enables pupils to reach their full potential.
- 3.10 In the EYFS, the curriculum provides well for all required areas of learning. A large proportion of time is allocated each day to child-initiated play; on occasions both the range and challenge of these activities are inadequate and limit children's learning and development. More use is being made of the outside areas, as recommended in the previous report, although the resources and activities during outdoor times do not always provide sufficient challenge. All EYFS children, including those with SEND and EAL, receive good support so that they develop the necessary learning skills. The junior school curriculum uses a topic-based approach for many subject areas, linking them together successfully and introducing language skills at an early stage. A good range of subjects is available in the senior school, including two modern languages for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and a suitable choice of modern languages at GCSE. Science is taught in discrete classes for the three disciplines to prepare pupils to take a double science GCSE examination. The sixth form curriculum is arranged flexibly allowing pupils to follow either A level or a BTEC programme or a course which combines both. This degree of flexibility provides very well for the range of abilities and nationalities within the school. The school makes particular efforts to ensure that international pupils unfamiliar with the British educational system can benefit from a curricular programme closely tailored to their needs and aspirations. Comprehensive programmes of personal, social and health

education (PSHE) are provided for all sections of the school. Pupils from Year 11 are given careers guidance by means of individual meetings, visiting speakers, regular briefings and sixth form pupils are supported in their planning for the next stage of their education with information on the university application process.

- 3.11 Curricular enrichment in the form of educational visits and a comprehensive lecture programme helps bring subjects to life. Pupils participate in the Senior Maths Challenge; trips to the theatre, subject specific exhibitions and overseas cities support academic activity. Pupils identified with SEND and EAL are given strong support by the individual needs department. The individual education plans (IEPs) created by the department provide good information and guidance for subject teachers, although these are not always used in lesson planning. The school's International Studies Centre (ISC) is successful in helping EAL pupils bridge the gap between the curricula of their home country and the demands of the British examination system. Some, but not all subject departments, provide good opportunities for the most able pupils to excel.
- 3.12 Pupils benefit from a developing extra-curricular programme which plans to expand the limited provision for girls' games to match that of the boys. The enrichment programme, which operates throughout the week and at weekends, gives pupils the opportunity to acquire a range of skills primarily in creative and sporting areas. Pupils in the junior school also profit from a good range of clubs including dance, reading, sports and riding. Pupils profit greatly from the school's close links with the local and international community reflected, for example, in their fundraising for a local hospice and for disadvantaged children in the Ukraine. Participation by pupils in local theatre workshops, charity walks, and the opportunities provided by the choral society are further evidence of the school's close engagement with the community.

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

- 3.13 The quality of teaching is good.
- 3.14 Teaching is successful in meeting the school's aim of providing an environment and education which enable pupils to progress and to fulfil their academic potential.
- 3.15 In the EYFS, teaching strategies and timely support ensure that all children make good progress relative to their starting points. Astute understanding of the children enables teaching to be well planned to meet the needs of all pupils. Imaginative use of resources, such as a video camera in the discovery garden and a tray filled with artificial snow instead of sand, provide the children with absorbing activities which they find fascinating. Interactive whiteboards are placed at a good height to allow the children to practise their ICT skills.
- 3.16 Most lessons in the junior and senior school are well planned, indicating the good knowledge teachers have of the pupils' abilities and prior learning. Teaching is characterised by positive relationships between staff and pupils, creating an atmosphere in which pupils feel able to ask questions freely and so make rapid progress. In many lessons the lesson objectives are clearly stated and a plenary checks the pupils' learning and understanding. In a few instances, the learning objectives were not clear to pupils; this resulted in a notable lack of focus and pupils asking each other what they were supposed to do. In a small number of lessons the material was inappropriate to the level of study, with expectations that were either very low or irrelevantly high. The quality of marking and assessment is inconsistent

between subjects. At its best, marking is completed regularly and includes encouraging comments as well as precise suggestions to help pupils improve.

- 3.17 Teaching methods generally demonstrate good subject knowledge, although there were a very few occasions both in the junior and senior schools where uncertainty limited pupils' progress. Enthusiastic teaching, which draws on an evident passion for a subject, usually ensures pupils' swift interest in the subject matter. Lively quizzes were used as good starter activities or to check pupils' understanding. Very occasionally such activities were not sensitive to the needs or abilities of EAL pupils, although they feel well supported overall.
- 3.18 Teaching makes good use of resources. In the junior school, colourful and relevant resources such as a visual timeline were used well, for example to show the development of the aeroplane, and paired use of laptops with appropriate software supported a mathematics lesson on angles. Imaginative demonstrations in the senior school, such as giving molecular models energy by shaking them in a laboratory coat, absorbed pupils and helped them understand how boiling points increase with the size of the molecule. Practical activities in a French lesson in the last period of the day ensured pupils' continued concentration as their energy flagged, and the use of mini whiteboards in mathematics proved to be a useful aid to assessment for learning.
- 3.19 Usually the pace of the lessons is appropriate, allowing pupils time to absorb new material. In the few less successful lessons, the pace was slow and the pupils lost interest. Teaching usually ensures that pupils are kept on track by means of light reminders although there were some rare occasions when poor behaviour was not sufficiently challenged, slowing the learning of the whole class. There was little evidence that planning routinely incorporates the strategies indicated in the IEPs of pupils with SEND, although teaching usually provided some discrete checking of these pupils' understanding. The school recognises that there are inconsistencies in planning for SEND pupils in the senior school and that there is stronger practice in the junior school. In the junior school and in creative subjects such as drama, art and design technology in the senior school, teaching gives pupils many opportunities to work and think independently. In pre-inspection questionnaires, a few parents expressed dissatisfaction with the school's provision for more able pupils. Inspectors judged that, as at the time of the previous inspection, opportunities to provide sufficient challenge for such pupils are still too few in the majority of subjects in the senior school.

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

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 The pupils speak warmly of the Chapel as being core to the school's communal life and those who are actively involved in helping to organise services describe it as a wonderful experience. Pupils lead assembly in Chapel on occasion; in one assembly during the inspection, the boys leading the service spoke with humour and confidence on the meaning of Advent. The congregation listened respectfully and behaved with maturity. Pupils' awareness of a non-material dimension of life is strong, evident in their art work and music making as well as in their enjoyment of philosophical discussion, for example on whether religion is the opiate of the people. The EYFS children were fascinated by their observations of insects and worms in the setting's discovery garden. Throughout the school, most pupils are confident without arrogance and at ease with talking with visiting adults.
- 4.3 The pupils are proud of their school and their houses. They know what is and is not acceptable behaviour and have a strong sense of justice, objecting to what they perceive as unfairness in the treatment of others. Their conduct is almost invariably good. They treat each other, adults and visitors with respect and courtesy. Pupils have a well-developed awareness of ethical dilemmas, seen for example in the way they discussed the complex issue of the responsibilities of governments to immigrants who have undertaken dangerous journeys to arrive in Europe illegally.
- 4.4 Throughout the school, the pupils are keen to accept responsibility. EYFS children help each other, co-operate and share willingly. Junior school children enjoy the opportunity to act as class ambassador for the day, welcoming visitors to their classroom. They carry out their duties as prefects, monitors or sports captains cheerfully. In the senior school, prefects take their status and responsibilities seriously, contributing successfully to the smooth running of daily routines in school and houses. Senior pupils campaigned for election to the recently restructured school council which, in line with its published commitment to act on requests made appropriately, has already effected some changes. Pupils of all ages enthusiastically participate in fund raising activities including sponsored walks, own clothes days and making items for sale in the school's Christmas fair. Their efforts support a range of charities, including a local hospice and a refuge for the homeless. Pupils develop good political and economic awareness. In each house boarders watch the nightly news together, and discussions with pupils showed their keen understanding of matters such as the recent vote on Scottish independence. Some pupils told inspectors of their wish to pursue careers in the police or armed services so that they can serve their country. Textiles students' reflections on the national commemoration of the outbreak of World War One has resulted in them creating acrylic poppies, one for each Old Dovorian who died in that conflict, to be planted outside the Chapel.
- 4.5 The school's international composition means that tolerance of other cultures and interest in others' beliefs and traditions are absorbed by osmosis, becoming an inherent part of the pupils' characters from their earliest days in the school. An assembly concluded with a prayer spoken by a pupil in Spanish; in activities preparing for Christmas, pupils enjoyed exploring their friends' national traditions. Pupils' cultural awareness results in their involvement in much music making,

including instrumental soloists and several vocal groups, acting in Shakespearian productions, and pleasure in exploring different European art movements.

- 4.6 From their very earliest days in the school, the pupils learn to care for each other and to think of others as well as themselves. The school is highly successful in meeting its aims to nurture pupils' personal development, so that by the time they leave at 18, pupils have become young adults who are self confident, respectful individuals imbued with integrity and a strong sense of responsibility to themselves and to society.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 Pastoral care provides excellent academic support and guidance in accordance with the school's aims. In the EYFS, arrangements for transition to the next stage of children's education are well managed, ensuring they continue to feel secure and cared for. Younger pupils are well supervised, including at lunch times, with staff taking meals with the children. Throughout the school, the staff know their pupils very well and create a supportive, welcoming atmosphere. In their response to the pre-inspection questionnaires, a small minority of pupils said that not all sanctions or rewards are administered fairly by staff. Discussions with pupils and scrutiny of records of rewards and punishments did not support this view.
- 4.9 Positive relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves, are evident throughout the school. The children in the EYFS arrive happily at school each day. They have very positive relationships with the staff, including with their key person; they trust them and enjoy being with them. Pupils throughout the school have good manners overall, speaking courteously to adults and treating their peers with respect. The statement on much school documentation and the school website, 'because confidence matters', is reflected in the pupils' demeanour and pleasant sociability.
- 4.10 The school provides nutritious meals, including vegetarian options and choices for those with special dietary needs, with an appealing assortment of fresh fruit for dessert at lunch. The EYFS children are given fresh fruit for their snacks and they eat well at lunch-time. They know the importance of washing their hands before eating and manage their own hygiene well. A large majority of pupil responses in the questionnaire said the food is unsatisfactory. Meals sampled, menus seen and conversation with pupils led inspectors to conclude that the food is good, although they agree there is limited choice for pupils in the junior school. All pupils, including those in the EYFS, benefit from extensive opportunities for physical activity.
- 4.11 The policies in all sections of the school to promote good behaviour and guard against bullying are clear and well implemented. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, a few pupils and parents raised concern over the handling of bullying. Pupils interviewed consider relationships between pupils to be strong and that any rare incident of unpleasantness is dealt with firmly by the school. Observations of behaviour around the school and conversations with staff led inspectors to agree with these positive views. The school has an adequate access plan in place to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.12 In their responses to the questionnaires, a minority of pupils said the school does not take note of their views. However, inspection evidence does not support this. The junior and senior schools both have councils elected by the pupils. Detailed minutes

are kept of their regular meetings that are proving to be an effective conduit through which to express pupils' opinions. These have had an influence, for example in increasing the range and choice of vegetables served at lunch and the extension of town leave to Year 8.

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

- 4.13 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is unsatisfactory.
- 4.14 Prior to the inspection, the safeguarding policy did not meet the requirements. The school has corrected this and a satisfactory policy has now been put in place. There are three staff members newly appointed in September 2014 to take responsibility for safeguarding. They have been trained as required and fully understand their responsibilities, including the need to take appropriate action and contact external agencies, when alerted to any concerns. All other members of staff have recently been retrained in safeguarding. In EYFS and in the junior school, staff take exemplary care in protecting the pupils and implement safeguarding policies correctly. Some issues of inappropriate staff conduct and behaviour in the senior school have been raised which have had an occasional impact on the welfare of the pupils. All the required checks on staff are completed before they start at the school.
- 4.15 Fire logs and alarm-testing procedures are all in place and the school is making appropriate progress in meeting the recommendations of an independent audit it commissioned. Evacuation drills are carried out regularly across the school. All policies are implemented carefully so as to ensure pupils' safety and well being as far as is practicable. Risk assessment for educational activities in school and for trips is thorough. The admission and attendance registers are suitably maintained and stored.
- 4.16 The school ensures that numerous staff are trained in first aid and nearly all staff in the junior school are paediatric first aiders. The medical centre makes excellent provision for sick and injured pupils and clear policy guidance is provided to help ensure the well-being of children with chronic conditions.

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

- 4.17 The quality of boarding education is sound.
- 4.18 Outcomes for boarders are excellent. The school is successful in providing a boarding education which supports the personal development of boarders, who become confident, articulate individuals. A large majority of boarders say they enjoy boarding. Parents are unanimous in saying that the school keeps their child safe and in their satisfaction with the boarding provision. Boarders are happy and say that boarding is like belonging to a big, international family. A sense of tolerance and mutual respect permeates the boarding community. Pupils' individual needs are respected so that all can make good progress socially and academically. Boarders have good access to information about the wider world, for example watching the evening news together.
- 4.19 Boarders' views are sought informally in the houses and through a newly restructured and well-managed school council which has already shown itself to be effective in bringing about some changes in response to pupils' suggestions. There are opportunities for boarders of all ages to take appropriate levels of responsibility within their community, with prefects having suitable duties. Boarders feel well supported by staff and confidently name those to whom they would turn for help.

Relationships in the houses are cheerfully relaxed and supportive. Boarders' behaviour is good and they report no concerns about bullying. Behavioural policies are clear, respected by boarders and cover all the areas required.

- 4.20 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. Boarders are provided with good information about outside sources of support. There is an informal induction programme for new boarders as well as a house handbook. Boarders say these were helpful. They report that they felt welcomed and settled in very quickly on arrival, thanks to the friendliness of other pupils and staff. They name several staff to whom they would turn for advice or support. Although the school's admissions policy states explicitly that all overseas boarders must have guardians in this country, not all boarders do have guardians, which means boarders have unequal access to support outside school.
- 4.21 Sick or injured boarders are extremely well cared for in a well-equipped, comfortable health centre, staffed by qualified nurses who create a secure, approachable environment. Records of medication and of handovers between the medical centre and houses are very clear, and the protocols for self-medication are thorough. Appointments are made with the local surgery, dentists or opticians as necessary. Boarders' rights to confidentiality are respected. The counsellor visits weekly; the new independent listener has met some pupils informally. Information on contacting her and other outside sources of support, including the Children's Commissioner, is displayed in houses.
- 4.22 Boarding houses are generally maintained to a standard that protects boarders from avoidable risk and risk assessments are secure. However, in one house inspectors found a room which leads to the kitchen and has a large amount of stacked furniture, creating a potential hazard. The recommendation from the last boarding inspection relating to the banister has been partly addressed but there is still concern about the height of the banister on the top landing. Fire drills are carried out at appropriate times.
- 4.23 The majority of pupils indicated in the pre-inspection questionnaires that the food is not good and that insufficient snacks and drinks are available during the day. Inspectors, who sampled all three main meals and visited house kitchens, found no evidence to support those comments. Menus are varied and prepared in hygienic surroundings; the catering staff accommodate any special dietary needs of boarders.
- 4.24 Although a small minority of boarders felt their possessions were not safe, inspectors found that boarders' rooms can be locked from the outside and they have lockable drawers in which to store valuables. Pocket money can be kept by the school and when given out is signed for by both staff and boarders. Arrangements for laundry are efficient. Easy access to the town allows for boarders to obtain personal items while at school. Boarders feel confident that they can report any concerns or complaints to staff and there is an appropriate formal complaints policy for parents to use. Activities are numerous and cater for a broad range of interests and abilities, although some older boarders dislike restrictions on unsupervised use of school facilities or being required to participate instead of being allowed to work during activities times. The grounds and houses provide safe and suitable space for boarders to socialise or to be alone if they wish.
- 4.25 Houses are warm and clean. Boarders are very appreciative of the refurbishment of their accommodation where it has taken place. Some refurbishment is continuing in the boys' houses but the girls' houses are still in need of upgrading. Most boarders

have single rooms, providing them with suitable space for study and to be alone should they wish. However, resources in the houses to support prep and research are limited, despite the fact that the school's learning resource centre is not open after school. Rooms are suitably furnished and pupils may personalise them if they wish. Arrangements for washrooms and toilets ensure privacy. Security arrangements do not intrude on boarders' privacy. Staff maintain good contact with parents and, although some boarders complained about unreliable internet access, there are ample means for boarders to contact their families.

- 4.26 Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are unsatisfactory. Housestaff provide nurturing, supportive care for boarders. However, serious concerns which arose recently about staff's comprehensive understanding of matters relating to safeguarding were not addressed expeditiously. All staff have since been retrained. All safe recruitment checks have been carried out and all resident adults, including spouses, are aware of the terms under which they are provided with accommodation. There are job descriptions for some, but not all boarding staff. Formal training records for boarding staff are not available. Staff have not been encouraged to engage with any professional development training to enhance their skills. There is no appraisal system for boarding staff although the school says it plans to introduce this.
- 4.27 Boarding houses are protected from unauthorised access by visitors. The school does not appoint guardians but its admissions policy requires all parents of overseas boarders to appoint a guardian in the UK. It has not always followed this policy.
- 4.28 A small minority of responses from parents and pupils to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated they do not feel the school handles bullying well. However, in discussions, boarders told inspectors that bullying incidents are very rare and that any bullying or other misdemeanours would be dealt with fairly and promptly. No examples of unpleasantness were observed. The definition of bullying in the boarding house handbooks does not reflect the school's definition of bullying, resulting in a lack of clarity about appropriate levels to impose sanctions.
- 4.29 The daily electronic diary in the houses adequately covers all information needed on record and also information for all staff at handovers. This is monitored to some extent by the senior staff. There is good communication between school and houses, supported by visits by year group tutors to the houses at various times of the day.
- 4.30 Notice boards carry all the necessary information, including which sufficiently experienced member of staff is on duty at any time, so that boarders know where to go to seek help should they need it during the night. In one house the staff office is within the house master's flat which is not appropriate. Security is excellent and the system of signing in and out ensures that staff know where the boarders are at any time. Staff are confident in applying the missing child policy. Boarders say that they feel very safe.
- 4.31 The leadership and management of the boarding provision are sound. The school's boarding principles are available on its website and displayed in the houses. Staff ensure that these are observed in the running of the houses. The houses are well managed, organised and run efficiently. House masters and mistresses meet weekly to share information and good practice.
- 4.32 Currently there is no governor with specific oversight of boarding and governors lack a full understanding of the need for them to oversee the implementation of policies

for which they are responsible. The arrangements for the formal appointment of a head of boarding have yet to be agreed. Prior to this academic year, there is no evidence that required records, for example medical and accident records, have been monitored by senior staff. This is now in place. Current house handbooks have not been updated with details of the new deputy head, safeguarding leads, independent listener or the recent changes in the rules relating to the use of alcohol.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is unsatisfactory.
- 5.2 There is a good range of skills represented amongst governors and the council of governors meets regularly to discuss the reports of sub-committees on various aspects of the school. These meetings ensure that governors have a sound understanding of the school, based on reports from the senior staff. They also visit classrooms on occasion. Governors' financial oversight has been thorough and they have added or improved resources as finances have allowed, for example in refurbishing some of the boarding facilities and parts of the junior school.
- 5.3 Governors are committed to the future development of the school but have not worked effectively with senior leaders to ensure the construction of an overarching prioritised, time framed and costed development plan to assist the school in achieving its aims. Governors have some limited understanding of the legal requirements for boarding and the governor linked to the EYFS and junior school has visited on occasion to further governors' sound understanding and support of these parts of the school. There is little evidence that governors have provided appropriate challenge or have monitored the implementation of school policies, instead believing and trusting that all is going well. Where governors have made efforts, for example in viewing the records of staff checks, they have not been sufficiently rigorous in carrying out their legal responsibilities.
- 5.4 Governors' oversight of the school's approach to protecting pupils and promoting their welfare has been inadequate. They have reviewed the safeguarding policy annually but it was not satisfactory prior to this inspection and governors have not ensured that the school has acted with sufficient speed when dealing with a recent significant safeguarding concern. Governors' communication with parents on managing recent changes in staffing has not been sufficiently clear to provide reassurance. This was apparent in responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, where a minority of parents said they do not believe the school to be well led or managed.

### **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, is unsatisfactory.
- 5.6 The evident happiness of many of the pupils, coupled with their academic and other achievements, is testament to the hard work of the school's leadership at all levels and their success in supporting the pupils' progress. Since the last inspection there have been changes to the senior management team, which has brought sections of the school closer together. The new team has been in place since September and are working closely together, with a clear sense of educational direction and priorities. However, the changes to the team have led to a degree of uncertainty amongst the wider school community, so that there is not yet full confidence amongst parents or staff in the new structure.

- 5.7 Senior and middle leaders throughout the school are committed to furthering the school's aim to develop the whole person. Senior leadership has ensured that qualified and experienced teachers are appointed using appropriate procedures and that all are trained in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Clear policies and procedures promote the pupils' academic achievement, personal development and general welfare in most areas. However, the implementation and understanding of safeguarding procedures have been inadequate, allowing the development of a culture in the senior school which has not vigorously supported a thorough understanding of the professional responsibilities of staff in their care of pupils. The newly appointed safeguarding team is suitably trained; evidence shows that they fully understand their responsibilities and are taking the required actions when concerns are raised. Until the start of this academic year there was insufficient formal monitoring of required records, including those logging any bullying concerns or complaints. Clear procedures have now been put in place but their implementation is at an early stage.
- 5.8 The school has outlined a strategic plan which outlines the major areas for development over the next five years. This is supported by separate development plans for each section of the school. Those for the EYFS and junior schools are detailed; however, whilst they identify the key areas, they are not costed. Staff in the EYFS have clearly identified development priorities. They are committed to evaluating their practice and to securing continuous improvement. There has been good progress in the EYFS provision since the previous inspection. Key stage coordinators have been involved with the construction and development of the junior school plan. In the senior school, departments construct their own development plans in line with the overarching aims in the development statements. However these are not then combined into a single comprehensive, coherent plan giving success criteria, costings or a prioritised time frame. As a result, middle managers in the senior school have limited understanding of how departmental plans contribute to the overall development of the school.
- 5.9 A programme of work scrutiny is carried out each half term, but at present the monitoring of teaching and learning across the school is insufficiently rigorous, resulting in inconsistencies both within and across departments. For example, some schemes of work provide clear details of the key concepts and associated skills, activities, resources and suggested time allocations. Others are barely more than a list of topics. Across all schemes of work there are few examples of tasks specifically designed to meet the needs of SEND or EAL pupils or of extension activities for the more able, as was the case at the time of the previous inspection. The academic policy committee has identified the need to introduce a greater uniformity of approach, including in the marking of work. Senior school heads of faculty and department contribute actively to the development of teaching and learning; for example members of the academic policy committee have developed a whole school literacy policy.
- 5.10 The quality of links with parents is good. A very large majority of the responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire were positive; parents were particularly pleased with quality of pastoral care and with the school's boarding provision. The school seeks to deal with complaints in line with its published policy, although it has not always done so promptly.
- 5.11 A minority of parents said that they are not encouraged to be involved in events and other aspects of the school's work. Inspectors found that the school provides numerous opportunities for parents to be actively involved. There is an open door

policy and parents are welcome to speak to staff by appointment, or when dropping off or collecting their children. Parents are invited to informal music concerts, plays, sports fixtures, social events such as the summer ball and numerous charity events. Junior school parents are invited to attend their child's class assembly as well as the weekly celebration assembly. Parents have also contributed to such school activities as the recent 'healthy school' week.

- 5.12 A small minority of parents indicated on the pre-inspection questionnaire that they were not satisfied with the information they receive on their children's progress. Inspection evidence did not support this view. Informative and detailed written reports for all pupils throughout the school, which give parents opportunities to share any concerns about their child's report on a reply form, half termly assessments in the senior school and parents' consultation evenings, all ensure that parents are kept very well informed about their child's work and progress.
- 5.13 Current and prospective parents now have access to all required information on the school's website, although the school does not always follow its own admissions policy for overseas boarders. Informative prospectuses and handbooks for each of the different sections of the school, useful weekly bulletins, comprehensive termly newsletters, the parent portal on the school's website, and the termly calendar give parents easy access to a considerable amount of information.

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