



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**THE LEYS SCHOOL**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## The Leys School

Full Name of School	<b>The Leys School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>873/6003</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>1144035</b>		
Address	<b>The Leys School Trumpington Road Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB2 7AD</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01223 508903</b>		
Email Address	<b>office@theleys.net</b>		
Head	<b>Mr Martin Priestley</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Sir Tony Brenton KCMG</b>		
Age Range	<b>11 to 18</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>563</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (329 boys; 234 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	11-18	<b>563</b>	
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>194</b>	
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>369</b>	
	Full:	<b>250</b>	Home boarders: <b>119</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>18 to 21 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 2011.

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.

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 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 Carole Evans	Reporting Inspector
Mr Richard Knott	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Miss Phillipa Message	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mr Neal Parker	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mr Nicholas Plater	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mr Kevin Riley	Team Inspector (Head, HMC school)
Ms Clare Trelfa	Team Inspector (Head, ISA school)
Ms Alana Davidson	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Linda Smallwood	Team Inspector for Boarding

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(a) Main findings</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(b) Action points</b>	<b>2</b>
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	2
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	2
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>3</b>
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning	3
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	4
(c) The contribution of teaching	5
<b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>7</b>
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	7
(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care	8
(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	8
(d) The quality of boarding	9
<b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>10</b>
(a) The quality of governance	10
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	10

## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The Leys School, situated on a campus near the centre of Cambridge, was founded in 1875 as a boarding school for boys from Methodist families. The school is now a co-educational boarding and day school. Although strong links with the Methodist church are retained, pupils of all faiths, or none, are welcomed. The governors are the trustees of The Leys and St Faith's Foundation. The Leys Committee deals with matters relating to The Leys School. Many pupils, both day and boarding, come from the surrounding area, though some pupils come from further afield, including from overseas, with small numbers of pupils coming from 31 different countries within Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas. Pupils represent a wide range of social backgrounds.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, two of the houses have been substantially refurbished, Great Hall has been built and a new headmaster has been appointed.
- 1.3 The school aims to provide first-class boarding and day education for boys and girls, building their confidence by enabling them to fulfil their potential academically, culturally, physically, spiritually and socially, in a Christian community where each is seen as a unique individual.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection 563 pupils were on roll, 208 of whom were in the sixth form; 369 were boarders.
- 1.5 The ability profile of the school is above the national average, with most pupils having ability that is at least above average. There are 57 pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL), of whom 41 receive support. The school has identified 84 pupils as having special educational needs (SEND), 53 of these receive specialist help with their learning. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.6 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

### ***Sixth Form***

School	NC name
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

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

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

- 2.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements is excellent in their academic work and in their wider achievements. They demonstrate a high level of knowledge and understanding across all areas of the curriculum. Those pupils who have SEND and/or EAL make excellent progress, as do those pupils who are particularly able. A broad curriculum enables all pupils to have a wide range of experiences. Teaching is good and promotes learning, although in a few lessons teaching does not have enough variety or give sufficient constructive guidance when marking. The extra-curricular programme is excellent. Pupils achieve individual and team successes in a wide variety of sports and competitions. The pupils' achievements are supported by their excellent attitudes to learning.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent. The relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves are excellent. Their spiritual, social, moral and cultural awareness is excellent. They are aware of those less fortunate than themselves and support many charities. They have a strong awareness of the difference between right and wrong and willingly accept positions of responsibility. The arrangements for pastoral care are excellent and pupils are encouraged to have a healthy lifestyle. The arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent. Pupils are well known and confirm that they feel safe and well supported. Boarding makes an excellent contribution to the development of the pupils.
- 2.3 The governance of the school is excellent; governors are committed to the school and have an extensive range of professional skills which they use to the benefit of the school. They have an excellent oversight of all areas of the school and rigorous procedures are in place to ensure the safeguarding of pupils. The quality of leadership and management including links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent. Senior leadership provide a clear vision and sense of direction ensuring high standards are achieved. The recommendations from the previous inspection report have been implemented.

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

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

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

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

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure consistency in the quality of teaching throughout the school so that all matches the excellent standard observed in some lessons.
  2. Ensure that all marking reflects the quality of the best seen and gives constructive guidance to pupils on how to improve their work.

### **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 extremely well educated in accordance with the school's aim to enable all pupils to fulfil their potential academically. Pupils of all ages demonstrate a high level of knowledge and understanding in language and literature. Pupils achieve high standards in physical activities while creative work, on display throughout the school, is developed well through art, music and design and technology. Pupils think well independently and display good scientific knowledge and understanding.
- 3.3 Pupils' numeracy skills are applied well across the curriculum, reasoning skills are used well and skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are applied purposefully. These well-developed numeracy and scientific skills enable pupils to gain success in the Mathematics Challenges and in Mathematics and Science Olympiads.
- 3.4 Pupils' achievements in their extra-curricular activities are excellent and reflect their wide range of interests, their talents and their determination to make the most of the opportunities available to them. Pupils enjoy a high level of success in instrumental music and in speech and drama examinations, and linguists have achieved success in national Language Olympiads. The pupils' chapel choir performs at a high level, and has the opportunity to sing at evensong at some of the university colleges. A large number of pupils participate in the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and many take advantage of attending leadership courses. Significant numbers of students participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE), many continuing to the gold award. In sport, pupils show exceptionally high levels of physical skill across a wide range of activities and teams enjoy local and regional successes with a number of individuals being supported to become junior international players.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2011 to 2013. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. The school's GCSE results have been well above the national average for maintained schools, and above that for maintained selective schools. Results in IGCSE English are higher than the worldwide and UK averages. The A-level results have been above the national average for maintained schools, and above that for maintained selective schools. Results in 2012 were well above the national average for maintained schools. The level of attainment at GCSE, and standardised measures of progress, together with inspection evidence, indicates that pupils make progress that is high in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. The level of attainment at A level and inspection evidence indicates that pupils in the sixth form make good progress. Pupils regularly gain places at universities with demanding entry requirements.
- 3.6 Pupils with SEND and those with EAL are well integrated into classes, are given targeted support if required and attain at least in line with their peers. The terms of statements of special educational needs are met. Those who are able, or are identified as being gifted or talented, make high progress in relation to their starting points. Since the previous inspection, the academic development programme has been introduced and this provides academic stretch for the most able pupils; in addition many pupils do independent research projects.

3.7 Pupils have excellent attitudes to their study and their involvement in activities, and they are enthusiastic learners who work well independently and collaboratively with their peers. They demonstrate very good organisational skills, listen attentively in lessons and show enjoyment in their learning. Pupils are proud of their achievements and have high aspirations both inside and outside the classroom.

### **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 curricular and extra-curricular programmes at all levels enable pupils to realise their academic and personal potential in line with the aims of the school. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, the vast majority of parents who responded indicated that their child was offered an appropriate range of areas of experience.

3.10 The curriculum covers all required areas and is well matched to the age and ability range of the pupils. Pupils in Years 12 and 13 are able to take short courses in languages such as Arabic and Japanese. The school has introduced a pilot scheme with associated activities to promote science, technology, engineering and mathematical (STEM) subjects amongst older pupils. Throughout the school, the most able pupils achieve their potential through strategies designed to challenge them, for example by participating in the independent research project, designed and managed by the school with input from local experts in relevant areas. Pupils in Years 9 and 10 may attend lectures at the academic society, and pupils in Years 11 to 13 attend the headmaster's society which provides the opportunity for discussion and debate. Pupils with SEND or EAL are well supported. A dedicated EAL department puts in place individual arrangements to assist pupils in developing general or subject-specific English language competence. Pupils with SEND receive structured support relevant to the curriculum area and one-to-one support when required.

3.11 A broad range of subjects is offered in Years 7 to 9 which includes the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, plus geography and history, creative and expressive subjects such as art, drama and music, and classical and modern foreign languages. The school offers a wide range of subject options at GCSE, IGCSE and A level. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons are provided in all year groups and pupils follow a structured programme of careers advice from Year 10 onwards. There is a successful careers fair for Years 11 to 13. The curriculum meets the requirements of the statement of special educational needs.

3.12 Extra-curricular provision is excellent and it provides extensive opportunities in music, drama and sport. Sports scholars and those identified as having a particular ability in a sport can join the school's sports academy or sports development group, which provide access to additional high-quality coaching resources. The provision for outdoor education is strong, with all pupils taking the DofE Bronze award in Year 9, and joining the CCF in Year 10. There is a range of facilities for adventurous activities, including a low ropes course and a climbing wall. In the arts, a wide range of ensembles and concerts provide pupils with numerous performance opportunities, and a significant number of drama productions provide opportunities to actors and pupil theatre crew club members. There is a highly popular debating society. Extra-curricular trips include regular sporting and music tours, foreign exchanges and many local, national and international visits.

- 3.13 Pupils maintain strong links with the local community. There are community service projects involving placements in local charity shops and nurseries, a litter-picking group working around the local area, and both the outdoor education and first aid club pupils have offered assistance at local primary schools. The annual Lenten appeal gives pupils within individual school houses opportunities to raise money for charitable giving, and often supports Cambridge-based charities.

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

- 3.14 The quality of teaching is good.
- 3.15 Teaching is successful in promoting pupils progress and developing their knowledge and understanding. It is almost always carefully planned and is sensitive to the needs of individuals. In most lessons teaching is challenging, encourages independent thought and pupils are wholly engaged. In a few lessons teaching is less effective and does not enhance the learning experience because strategies used lack variety and do not challenge pupils to think for themselves.
- 3.16 Throughout the school, teaching draws upon the pupils' abilities to articulate their thoughts and discuss in depth to form the basis of many lessons and is a notable strength. Relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils themselves are outstanding; pupils feel able to contribute in a supportive, non-judgemental environment and as a result are willing to try out new ideas. This fosters significant progress in lessons at all levels and for all groups. Teaching is effective in providing targeted support for pupils with SEND or EAL. In addition to planned and targeted support in lessons, the more able pupils have access to a variety of independent study possibilities and specific learning programmes are in place for them in some areas of the curriculum. This fulfils the recommendation from the previous inspection.
- 3.17 Throughout the school staff show excellent subject knowledge. In the best lessons skilful question and answer techniques further learning at a high rate. In most lessons, teaching methods are varied, effectively targeted and much appreciated by the pupils. There is evidence of good cross-curricular work to enhance learning. For example, in Year 13 ICT pupils are constructing their own poetry anthologies from poems and prose provided by the English department. The school's investment in tablet computer technology is welcomed by the pupils and the appointment of a both a head of digital learning and director of teaching and learning emphasises the school's commitment to develop further the pupils' learning experience.
- 3.18 Marking is generally carried out to a good standard, with helpful comments on how to improve being especially effective in Years 12 and 13. In the best practice, marking is detailed, follows departmental guidelines and leads to discussion between teacher and pupil. It also involves pupils in their own assessment, gives guidance on the most effective means to improve and effects a dialogue between pupil and teacher. Not all assessment is as rigorous, however, and the application of marking is inconsistent both across years and within departments. In some cases, it is cursory. A developing tracking system clearly identifies academic concerns which are acted upon by house staff and tutors. Discussions with pupils, and target-setting, ensure that performance is closely monitored. Pupils welcome such close tracking of their progress.

- 3.19 In the pre-inspection questionnaire and in interviews, pupils were very positive about the support they receive both in and out of class and the vast majority believe that their teachers help them learn. Those with SEND or EAL are identified effectively and receive individualised support where required. A comprehensive system of learning support then allows staff to be aware of the particular needs of their pupil. Pupils highly value the strategies offered to aid learning, and staff appreciate the need to accommodate individual needs. Although there were few obvious examples of giving pupils different tasks as part of teaching, in the better lessons this was clearly achieved through discussion and targeted questioning. Teaching successfully fulfils the requirements set out in statements of special educational needs.

## **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 Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. Pupils are confident within the feeling of security which is engendered by the well-ordered and calm environment. Their self-esteem is strengthened by the school's emphasis on valuing each pupil as an individual. Self-confidence is enhanced by the many opportunities provided by the school, as when pupils lead and participate in assemblies. Pupils demonstrate emotional maturity.
- 4.3 Pupils' moral development is excellent. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and fully appreciate the purpose of school sanctions and the manner in which they are applied. Pupils learn to respect the over-arching nature of the civil and criminal law of England. Pupils are extremely loyal to the school and proud to be part of it, they behave impeccably, and have consideration for others. They are consistently polite and courteous.
- 4.4 The social development of pupils is excellent. Pupils are friendly and at ease in one another's company. Excellent interaction takes place between pupils of all age groups and many outstanding working relationships exist between teachers and pupils. Pupils readily accept the wide range of responsibilities offered to them and the prefects take those responsibilities very seriously; the ongoing training afforded to them by the school is excellent. Pupils show a commitment to the wider community by raising significant funds for local, national and international charities. Pupils gain a suitable knowledge of the public institutions and services of England, for example through their work in PSHE or from educational visits. Pupils have a good sense of social, political and economic awareness.
- 4.5 Pupils' cultural development is excellent. The pupils learn to value the contributions and achievements of those who come from cultural traditions different from their own. At the same time, they understand the values of the Western cultural tradition. They see that the diversity of the local community, and in particular, in its university, demonstrates this, and its achievements are understood by the pupils through their links with university colleges. This enhances the pupils' respect for those with different cultures, faiths and beliefs. A full programme of exchanges and educational visits is organised, for example to the World War 1 battlefields. Recently older pupils completed a successful trekking expedition to Northern India, which included a community project in the area.
- 4.6 The school takes an active part in developing in the pupils a proper balance in their understanding of the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, tolerance and mutual respect.
- 4.7 Pupils have an excellent standard of personal development by the time they leave the school, shown, for example, by the willingness of pupils to lead, the exemplary behaviour they show at all times and the outstanding level of their achievement across an extensive extra-curricular programme. This fulfils the school's mission statement, to fulfil pupils' potential academically, culturally, physically, spiritually and socially in a Christian community where each one is seen as a unique individual.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 The school is extremely successful in meeting its aim to ensure that care for the individual lies at the very heart of what it does. Relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves, are excellent, with every pupil known very well by staff. The chaplain and tutors complement the strong pastoral care offered in houses.
- 4.10 Pupils have a good understanding of the features of a healthy lifestyle, taking regular exercise throughout the school by its extensive sporting and extra-curricular provision. The PSHE programme helps ensure that pupils are also aware of a healthy lifestyle based on a nutritious diet. In the pre-inspection questionnaire a minority of pupils indicated that the quality of food was not good. Inspectors found that menus showed that a variety of healthy foods is available and, in interviews, pupils spoke positively of the balanced menu on offer in the dining hall.
- 4.11 The school values the views of the pupils. This is not always recognised by the pupils, as a small minority of those responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that their views were not being sought by the school. The inspectors found that the excellent relationship between staff and pupils encourages informal conversations, and that formal meetings, such as the senior and junior committees with representatives from each house, offer direct access to the senior leadership. Such meetings have proved effective in making changes, such as with the improved packed lunches.
- 4.12 The school expects good behaviour, and the whole ethos of the school encourages pupils to meet those expectations. In the pre-inspection questionnaire a few pupils said that there was an inconsistency in the way teachers applied rewards and sanctions. Inspection evidence found that there is a clear system of rewards and sanctions which pupils confirmed in interviews as being well understood and judged by them to be fair and reasonable. In the pre-inspection questionnaire a very small minority of pupils and parents indicated that the school does not always deal effectively with cases of bullying. Interviews with pupils indicated that instances of bullying are rare. Inspectors found that when they do occur they are taken seriously and dealt with promptly in line with the school's stated procedures.
- 4.13 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.15 The school has a comprehensive health and safety policy and effective consultative arrangements. All necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. Staff are trained in the use of fire equipment, regular fire drills are held and weekly fire alarm tests take place. Appropriate risk assessments are in place that ensure that the safety of the pupils and the whole school community is a priority. Risk assessments for internal and external school activities are comprehensive. Staff induction training includes health and safety.
- 4.16 There is excellent provision for those who are ill, injured or have SEND. Care is provided in a well-equipped medical centre that has 24-hour hour cover. This is staffed by a team of nurses and many other staff are trained in first aid. First aid

boxes are checked and restocked on a regular basis. Thorough and systematic records of accidents are kept. The first aid policy is implemented effectively and record keeping is comprehensive.

- 4.17 Appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place which have regard to the latest official guidance; this fulfils the recommendation from the previous report. Safer recruitment procedures are implemented rigorously. The school arranges suitable staff training in safeguarding at appropriate levels. Staff provide the highest level of care for pupils and pupils know whom to contact in case of concerns.
- 4.18 Attendance and admission registers are suitably maintained, backed up daily and correctly stored.

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

- 4.19 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.20 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. They are treated as individuals and encouraged to take responsibility for themselves as well as others. Year 10 boarders act as mentors to younger pupils and Year 13 pupils play a significant role in the running the houses. Boarders are confident, personable, articulate and display admirable pride in both their houses and the school. Boarders express great appreciation for the support given to them by the house staff. They have several adults whom they can approach with any concerns and they say that they always feel listened to. Boarders are encouraged to participate in the acquisition of skills needed for life at university such as doing their own laundry and basic cooking. Boarders contribute to the wider community; individual houses choose different ways in which to raise funds for the school's selected charity for the year.
- 4.21 The quality of provision and care in boarding is excellent, very much focusing on the needs and strengths of the pupils as individuals. There is a thorough programme of induction for new boarders, the lynchpin of which is the allocation of a peer mentor. Boarders say that this, together with the 24-hour visit prior to starting at the school and the letter written in advance by the mentor, makes them feel welcome and part of the community immediately. Boarders are encouraged to participate in at least three of the wide range of activities available to them in the evenings and at weekends including trampolining, rowing, drama, cooking and music centred activities. They have almost unlimited access to the full range of school facilities including the swimming pool, food technology room and purpose-built drama block, as well as the opportunity to go into Cambridge for cultural and recreational activities.
- 4.22 Boarders actively contribute to their own wellbeing via house councils which are mainly led by the pupils themselves. Issues arising from these are raised at whole school committees which are attended by a member of the senior management team. There is a clear system of sanctions and rewards which is fully understood by the boarders who feel that they are treated fairly by staff. Records of all sanctions are maintained carefully.
- 4.23 The school has a rolling programme for improving the boarding accommodation. All houses that have been refurbished have been completed to a very high specification resulting in comfortable, sophisticated and sustainable accommodation in which the boarders take genuine pride, as they have been involved in all aspects of the planning process. All rooms and common areas, including washing facilities, are light, practical and comfortable. There are more than adequate facilities for boarders

to make their own refreshments. In the pre-inspection questionnaires a minority of pupils indicated some dissatisfaction with some aspects of the food provision. Inspection evidence found that all meals in the main dining hall were nutritious and of good quality, and all meals have a vegetarian option. Creativity in meal planning for boarders can be seen in the number of themed nights run by the catering team including delibars, ice cream bars and a 'One Direction' music night.

- 4.24 The arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are excellent. The staff recruitment process is rigorous, all required checks are carried out on those in boarding accommodation, and the school's clear and comprehensive safeguarding policy applies to all staff and visitors. Security arrangements are appropriate and do not impinge on the boarders' privacy. Staff know where boarders are at all times, and know the school's procedures for missing pupils. Staff accommodation is separate from that of the boarders, and access is controlled carefully. The safety of pupils underpins all decision making, boarders know when and how to report concerns and they are extremely confident in speaking with house staff and know that all their concerns are taken seriously and dealt with promptly. The school has a suitable policy on promoting good behaviour which meets the latest guidance. There is a clear commitment from the school to promoting positive behaviour aided by the naturally warm and considerate relationships between pupils and staff as well as among pupils themselves. Boarders say that bullying is rare and cases are dealt with immediately and effectively in line with school procedures. Pupils speak candidly about the importance of values such as honesty, respect, unselfishness and independence.
- 4.25 The school benefits from a well-resourced medical centre which is staffed twenty-four hours a day by a fully trained team and which provides a doctor's surgery three times a week. All medication, including home remedies, is administered by the nurses in this centre. Boarders have access to a school counsellor and specialist medical services when necessary.
- 4.26 The leadership and management of boarding is excellent as evidenced by the high quality of the procedures and smooth running of the wide range of houses. The friendly and positive ambiance of all houses and the trust and loyalty that exists between boarders and staff contributes to this. The leadership regularly reviews the effectiveness of boarding practice. There is a clearly delineated process for the appraisal of all house staff and the school actively supports training and career development. All senior house staff attend appropriate training courses. A governor liaises with the member of the senior management team responsible for boarding. The school has clear priorities for the development of boarding of which the community is aware and consequently feels ownership. Boarders' views are sought formally via house councils and informally via house staff. Lines of communication between boarding staff, academic staff and parents are regular, purposeful and consistent. Boarders are able to maintain contact with home via their own electronic devices.

## **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 excellent oversight, challenge and stimulus provided by governors enable the school to achieve its aims for both the pupils' academic and personal development.
- 5.3 All members of the governing body are highly committed to the school. They come from a range of professional backgrounds, and their shared expertise contributes to the development of the school. Many governors have a previous association with the school either as former pupils or parents. Governors receive appropriate induction and many have undertaken further training.
- 5.4 Governors provide effective oversight of the school, and discharge the responsibilities vested in them. They are prudent in managing the school's finances, enabling them to invest in new and improved accommodation and facilities and in high quality staff. Governors are linked to members of the senior management team; this gives them a keen insight into the working of the school. Governors contribute to the strategic development plan and review the operational plan. Governors have received presentations from staff and some have "shadowed a pupil for a day", and they also support a large number of school functions and activities.
- 5.5 Governors are highly effective in discharging their responsibilities for welfare, health and safety, and in addition to receiving the regular reports from the health and safety committee, they monitor relevant policies. As a body they undertake a thorough annual review of the safeguarding and child protection arrangements throughout the school.

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

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management and links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent.
- 5.7 The leadership and management of the school ensure that the aims of the school are achieved with great success and promote the pupils' excellent achievements, personal development and care. The senior leadership team provides a strong vision for the school's continued improvement, and the school has a clearly articulated development plan.
- 5.8 In the pre-inspection questionnaire, the vast majority of parents indicated that they felt that the school was well led and managed. Senior staff form an effective team with strong working relationships and enjoys the confidence of the staff. Middle managers feel that links with the senior leadership team are very good and that the lines of communication are clear. The academic advisory committee allows for discussion and debate of strategic matters by middle managers; feedback from this committee is then considered by the senior management team. School self-evaluation is effective and has input from all staff. Senior staff had already identified the areas covered by the recommendations of this report as ones needing further development and are currently implementing appropriate strategies for improvement.

Delegated responsibilities are discharged in a thorough manner, including policy implementation and matters of safeguarding.

- 5.9 The academic work of the school enjoys strong leadership at both senior and departmental level. Middle managers play a key role, monitoring the work of the members of their department and participating in the review of staff; this includes some lesson observation and subsequent target setting. Leadership is strong in the pastoral and boarding life of the school, where the teams of house staff and tutors work together to provide a carefully crafted blend of support. The management of support staff is effective.
- 5.10 The school is highly successful in appointing and retaining high quality staff. All required checks are carried out in line with the most recent requirements and recorded in a suitable central register. A comprehensive induction programme is in place for new staff. All staff are aware of, and trained for, their responsibilities in matters relating to meeting the needs of all pupils in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety.
- 5.11 Links with parents are excellent and fully support the school's aims. The school maintains a constructive relationship with parents and communications with parents are detailed and frequent. Parents of both prospective and current pupils, receive all required information, whether electronically, by telephone or in hard copy format. All printed material, including the prospectus, is well produced and informative. The website has a parents' portal with a school directory which provides pupil reports, calendars, events booking, information booklets plus extra-curricular and external examination timetables. Letters on the website are hyperlinked to other site sections for ease of access.
- 5.12 The school has a clear complaints procedure that is effectively implemented and parents know who to contact if necessary.
- 5.13 Parents have good opportunities to be actively involved in the work and progress of their children. There is an active parent-teacher association, which in addition to raising funds for additional equipment and resources, is very active in organising events that are well supported. Parents are regularly invited to share in a rich selection of varied events including concerts, drama productions as well as academic and pastoral information sessions. During the year parents are also invited to attend religious services. An example of parent-school co-operation is the parent focus group, which worked in consultation with the school to change the dates of parents' evenings.
- 5.14 The annual careers fair benefits greatly from parents who attend in a professional capacity to advise pupils. Parents also play a significant role in providing work experience for the pupils, a large number of pupil placements are arranged by parental contacts.
- 5.15 In the pre-inspection questionnaire a very small minority of parents indicated that they did not receive sufficient information about their child's progress. Inspection evidence did not support this. Parents receive clear and useful reports about their child's work and progress, half-termly grades, two full informative reports and there is an opportunity to attend an annual parents' evening.

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