



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION  
HEREFORD CATHEDRAL SCHOOL**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Hereford Cathedral School

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

Full Name of School **Hereford Cathedral School**

DfE Number **884/6004**

Registered Charity Number **518889**

Address **Hereford Cathedral School  
Old Deanery  
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Hereford  
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Head **Mr Paul Smith**

Chair of Governors **Mr Rob Haydn Jones**

Age Range **11 to 18**

Total Number of Pupils **505**

Gender of Pupils **Mixed (269 boys; 236 girls)**

Inspection Dates **21 Jan 2014 to 24 Jan 2014**

## PREFACE

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

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](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.

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 the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mr Martin Bussey	Reporting Inspector
Mr Richard Biggs	Team Inspector (Head, HMC school)
Mr Robert Chatburn	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, Society of Heads school)
Mr John Coleman	Team Inspector (Head of Department, HMC school)
Mr Robert Decamp	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mr Michael Evans	Team Inspector (Senior Master, HMC school)
Mrs Annie Farrell	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, Society of Heads school)

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

- 1.1 Hereford Cathedral School is a co-educational day school for pupils from 11 to 18 years. The school is a charity and limited company, overseen by a governing body, which currently numbers ten. It has a close relationship with the Dean and Chapter of Hereford Cathedral; whilst not members of the governing body, they have the right to recommend names to be considered by the governing body's nomination committee. The Dean is president of the school. The school traditionally educates the cathedral choristers. It is housed in fourteen listed buildings grouped around the cathedral in central Hereford, with playing fields about ten minutes' walk away. Since the previous inspection the school has opened new science laboratories and a new sports hall and established a development office. Since September 2012 the school has offered study in a defined group of subjects to sixth-form pupils from overseas. The chair of governors took up his post in 2012.
- 1.2 The school aims to offer each pupil an opportunity to develop every aspect of his or her potential and to develop moral values. It seeks to do so within an environment in which pupils feel valued and learn to work co-operatively in a community, through a balanced, appropriate and challenging curriculum and a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. It aims to give central priority to teaching and learning of high quality, provide a high degree of personal care, support and guidance, and respond to pupils' aspirations, and to be attentive to those of parents and to their views.
- 1.3 The school expects pupils to be in sympathy with its ethos as a Christian school in the Anglican tradition, although it welcomes those of other denominations and faiths.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection there were 505 pupils on roll, with nearly equal numbers of boys and girls. There were 154 pupils in the sixth form.
- 1.5 The school is academically selective. Pupils enter from the junior school or local maintained schools. Their ability is above the national average, with almost a quarter of pupils having ability that is well above average. A few have ability that is below average. Pupils joining in the sixth form are of similar ability to those who leave after Year 11. Pupils are drawn from a wide catchment area around Herefordshire and the Welsh borders. They include a number of Chinese pupils who live in home-stays arranged by their parents through an agency, independently of the school. Other pupils are of white British origin and from farming and professional families. There are 15 pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL), of whom 12 receive support. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. All of the 54 pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive specialist help with their learning.
- 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 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent. Those with SEND achieve at levels equal to their peers. More able pupils and those with particular talents achieve at very high levels individually in a wide range of subjects and interests, but such achievement is fostered less effectively in younger pupils when tasks do not provide sufficient additional challenge. Pupils are enthusiastic learners, work with great success in pairs or groups, respond well to high levels of challenge and can reason for themselves. They respond very effectively to excellent opportunities in the curriculum and activities, and to excellent teaching. This results in good levels of progress, and excellent progress in the sixth form. Initial data for pupils from overseas with EAL indicates attainment consistent with that for the sixth form as a whole.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils show strong spiritual and social development. They have excellent moral awareness, and their cultural awareness is enhanced by the diversity of activities provided, from classics to music, and by the cohort of pupils from overseas in the sixth form. The school provides excellent pastoral care. Those pupils who responded to pre-inspection questionnaires were very positive about the school. Excellent arrangements are in place to ensure the pupils' safeguarding, welfare, health and safety.
- 2.3 Excellent governance promotes the school's aims well and supports its role in the city and county. Through perceptive analysis of the school's needs and stimulating challenge, governors, alongside committed senior leadership, enable the pupils' excellent achievement and personal development. All recommendations from the previous inspection have been met. Governors fulfil well their responsibilities for oversight in those areas where they have legal responsibilities. Leadership and management are excellent. The school has made significant progress since the previous inspection, particularly in pastoral systems, and teaching and learning have been strengthened, although monitoring of some elements by academic middle managers, including marking and the use of assessment data, is not yet consistent. The school's links with parents are excellent.

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

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

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

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

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
1. Ensure that all teaching reflects the qualities of the most successful, particularly with regard to marking and the use of assessment data, and provision for more able pupils.

### **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 demonstrate excellent levels of knowledge, skills and understanding in response to a challenging curriculum, in accordance with the school's aims. These are notably consistent in English, mathematics and largely in sciences, stimulated by excellent teaching. Pupils develop good skills in modern foreign languages (MFL) and their work in classics is often strong. Pupils write and speak with clarity, and some analytical work in English is highly developed. They develop good information and communication technology (ICT) skills in Years 7 to 9 and use these fruitfully when teaching demands, for example in music, art, curricular physical education (PE) and history, but such opportunities are limited in some other subjects. Pupils demonstrate excellent achievement in most creative subjects and in curricular PE. The quality of artwork throughout the school is outstanding.
- 3.3 Those pupils with EAL develop a good grasp of language. This enables them to participate successfully for the most part in teaching and learning in the subjects they study. Occasionally, their limited familiarity with subject-specific terminology hinders progress. The school's developing strategies to help them are effective. Those with SEND achieve consistently at similar levels to their peers through excellent support in and out of class. More able pupils and those with particular talents achieve at very high levels individually in a wide range of subjects and interests, including theology, creative writing, photography and flying, and in the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). They regularly gain choral and organ awards for university entry. In some large classes, such achievement by younger pupils is fostered less effectively when tasks do not provide additional challenge. The youngest able mathematicians demonstrated excellent achievement when given imaginative tasks at levels well beyond their age.
- 3.4 Pupils reach excellent levels of achievement in activities. They audition successfully for national instrumental and choral groups. They perform very strongly in instrumental examinations; frequently pupils achieve distinctions at the highest grades. Large numbers of pupils participate enthusiastically in various excellent musical ensembles; the girls' choir performs at an exceptionally high standard, winning international competitions. Pupils have won creative writing and debating competitions, and enjoy success in biology Olympiads, mathematics challenges, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE), and speech and drama examinations. Achievement in sports is excellent. Individuals compete with success in judo, rowing and horse riding at national level, and boys' and girls' teams are successful at regional level, notably in netball, rugby and cricket.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2010 to 2012. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results at GCSE have been above the national average for maintained schools and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. Around 60% of results have been at grades A or A\*. Results at A level have been above the national average for maintained schools and above the national average for maintained selective schools. Over 75% of passes at A level have been awarded at grades A\* to B. Results in 2013 maintained such attainment. Results in the International GCSE have been higher than worldwide averages in English. This attainment, considered alongside the pupils' responses in interviews, their written

work and in that in lessons, indicates that progress to GCSE is good, and that to A level is excellent, in relation to pupils of similar ability, including those with SEND. First results in public examinations for those pupils with EAL show a range of attainment consistent with the sixth form as a whole. Pupils who leave after Year 11 join maintained sixth-form education or other independent schools. Pupils consistently gain places at universities in the UK with demanding entry requirements.

- 3.6 Pupils throughout the school are enthusiastic, keen to succeed and nearly always responsive to teaching. Pupils' work largely demonstrates excellent presentation and a good volume. Occasionally, some younger pupils are inattentive, and, when not challenged effectively, lose concentration. Pupils work with great success in pairs or groups, respond well to high levels of challenge and reason for themselves. They take pride in their work and often demonstrate great commitment in partnership with their teachers.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 The school's excellent curriculum very successfully meets the aim to offer pupils a broad range of challenging opportunities to develop every aspect of their potential. The curriculum is regularly reviewed. Since the previous inspection the EPQ has been successfully introduced to promote independent learning. The recent change to five A-level option blocks and the introduction of business studies have extended the range of options available. The continuation of ICT studies into Year 9 and the introduction of drama into Year 7 meet the recommendation of the previous inspection. Study of ICT is less formally planned after Year 9; departments are expected to provide appropriate opportunities to develop these skills.
- 3.9 Study in Years 7 to 9 is comprehensive and is suitably balanced. Most teaching is in mixed-ability groups, with extra provision for those with SEND. Options at GCSE, from which pupils choose an additional three subjects, offer suitable breadth, including separate sciences. With the exception of English, pupils are set by ability to suit different needs. The extensive range of subjects offered at A level is complemented by suitable enrichment. Talented mathematicians may complete A level in Year 12 in order to study further mathematics.
- 3.10 The school provides excellent careers advice and support for sixth-form pupils. Its ambitious and comprehensive programme allows Year 12 pupils to participate in a minimum of a week of work experience. This meets the recommendation of the previous inspection. Wide-ranging and structured support for higher education application includes a well-resourced library and visits from former pupils. Year 11 pupils have strong personalised guidance, including aptitude tests. Some support exists for making GCSE choices but inspection evidence supports the comments of younger pupils that they receive limited advice.
- 3.11 Provision for pupils with SEND is excellent. Their needs are identified with care by a dedicated department through a range of screening tests. Individual learning plans are communicated to all staff. Pupils receive one-to-one support and report strong satisfaction with this. Those with EAL are offered good support. They participate in a testing system which enables them to be sufficiently proficient in language to apply to university.

- 3.12 Along with the challenges provided by many academically related clubs, more able pupils and those with particular talents are provided with additional curricular opportunities, such as extra mechanics topics in mathematics and additional extension lessons in chemistry.
- 3.13 The school offers an excellent range of subject-based and non-academic extra-curricular activities that all participating pupils enjoy. They are a key factor in the pupils' personal development. The Combined Cadet Force (CCF) offers opportunities for pupils to go flying and has links with a local maintained school. The DofE enables enthusiastic sixth formers leadership opportunities as mentors to younger pupils. Pupils of different ages participate in a retro-motorcycle construction club. There are active book clubs, and the Cantilupe Society, an enrichment group, considers topics such as the behaviour of ants. The dissection club is well supported and debating is prominent. The photographic club, founded by pupils, contributes to the celebration of the environment. Music is a strength within the school and there are good sporting opportunities for all pupils.
- 3.14 There is a wide range of links with the community. Outreach events, for example classics and MFL projects, create beneficial and warm relationships with local schools. Musically, the school acts as a focus for the county and has initiated a Saturday morning music school. The joint chorus involves the school choir and singers from local schools.
- 3.15 Educational trips are numerous and international links exist through an annual expedition to Nepal. There is a successful French exchange programme and the school's football team recently returned from a tour to Lisbon.

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

- 3.16 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.17 The school has made good progress in implementing the recommendation of the previous inspection to disseminate the strengths of teaching. It has established high standards in most teaching and meets its aims well. The most successful teaching makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' achievement. It enables exciting learning, and inspires and encourages pupils to contribute. It is characterised by well-planned lessons, good pace and challenges that are appropriate to the pupils' individual needs. Such teaching builds on the pupils' strong discussion and reasoning skills, their willingness to work co-operatively and their enthusiasm. Homework is set regularly and usefully. The evident and infectious passion of teachers for their subjects and their excellent relationships with pupils contribute significantly to progress. Teachers draw links between their own subjects and others, such as with religious studies and science in an English lesson considering duality in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Useful connections are made with current affairs, such as considering different political parties' approaches to a budget deficit. The skilful use of higher order, open-ended questions prompts thoughtful and sophisticated responses. Pupils are encouraged and praised.
- 3.18 In the small amount of less successful teaching, insufficient variety and over-reliance on direction by the teacher limit scope for the pupils to think and learn independently, and hinder progress. In the younger year groups there is some over-reliance on photocopied hand-outs. Nearly all teaching encourages good behaviour. A positive atmosphere enables pupils to contribute happily and co-operatively.

Occasionally, insufficient control of over-exuberant or unhelpful behaviour limits achievement.

- 3.19 The school has begun to improve the quality of teaching through the appointment of 'lead teachers', who introduce new ideas to heads of department and encourage more adventurous approaches, for example in the use of lesson 'starters'. Inspection evidence shows the positive effect of this initiative although these concepts are not yet fully embedded.
- 3.20 Marking is generally diligent and thorough, and gives helpful comments on how pupils might improve. Marking standards are inconsistent, however, across and within departments. In some subjects the quantity of written marking is less, but often supplemented by detailed oral feedback, which is appreciated by the pupils. The school makes baseline test results available to staff but does not yet fully exploit the process to identify pupils' needs, monitor their achievement and inform target setting. This is reflected in the current school development plan.
- 3.21 Most teaching demonstrates good knowledge of the pupils' needs and abilities, and includes appropriate support for those with SEND or EAL. Staff provide one-to-one help where necessary, both inside and outside timetabled lessons. Pupils greatly appreciate this. The most successful teaching provides appropriate stimulus for the more able. In some departments material is produced to ensure additional challenge for these pupils. This good practice is not consistent, particularly in mixed-ability groups for younger pupils.
- 3.22 Resources to support teaching are generally of a good standard, particularly the large, attractive, well-stocked and well-run library. This popular destination and workplace for pupils enriches and supports the school's academic life significantly. The school promotes the use of ICT. The recently upgraded network, together with laptops and personal computers, supports learning. Resources are used well in some subjects. In an A-level PE lesson, pupils developed presentations on improving sporting performance using video clips. Specialist ICT facilities enhance learning in areas such as learning support and design and technology. Classrooms are not all equally well decorated or resourced. The best are in good order and exhibit excellent displays of work and stimulus material.

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

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The high levels of the pupils' personal development by the time they leave the school are entirely consistent with its Christian aims. The pupils' strong spiritual development enables them to comprehend the significance of the school's Christian foundation and they welcome those of other faiths. Pupils greatly value the school's traditions and history. They develop a strong sense of non-material aspects of life. They are responsive to thought-provoking addresses given in the cathedral. They understand that their own gifts can be celebrated in different activities, such as sport, music and drama. Senior pupils develop strong self-confidence when they help at parent-teacher meetings, and the house system enables others to do so by reporting back to their houses about school council matters. Pupils are often guided to explore their own feelings and they respond well to the study of others who encounter challenging life situations.
- 4.3 The pupils' moral development is excellent. They show an exceptionally strongly developed sense of right and wrong. They respond very well to frequent opportunities to consider moral dimensions of life, such as in chemistry when exploring morality in industry. In English, texts prompt such moral discussions as the treatment of women in other societies or ethical implications of fascism. The youngest pupils show their understanding of the need for rules and applaud each other's efforts when playing impromptu games during break times. The pupils' foundation of a society to support victims of social injustice demonstrates their proactive approach. Pupils contribute strongly to the wider world through charitable fund raising to support schools in Nepal and India, as well as local charities.
- 4.4 The pupils' excellent social development is demonstrated in their willing accommodation of visitors and eagerness to answer questions. Pupils conspicuously understand the value of good social relationships and listen to each other with courtesy and interest. They respond well when encouraged to consider social issues such as gender equality, the potential hazards of social networking and road safety. They are mature and sociable, at ease with their peers, adults and themselves. Senior pupils in particular relish responsibility as monitors (prefects) and regard their duties as an essential part of becoming adult. Older pupils attached to tutor groups assist at Year 7 induction weekends during a night expedition where they run activities for younger pupils. Pupils in the CCF are very positive about the leadership opportunities they receive, which they feel help them to develop. Strong co-operative skills, and the understanding that they become stronger as team members, are evident in warm-up drills at netball managed by pupils, and in shared preparations for DofE activities. Pupils feel that theirs is a 'family' school where they are valued for who they are, but also where they are expected, and able, to thrive socially. Pupils' participation in house and school councils promotes their political awareness. This is strengthened by their understanding of civic responsibility, encouraged by a strong personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) programme and activities such as debating.
- 4.5 Pupils develop a strong cultural awareness. Those from overseas are integrated well into school life, including as monitors, and enable all pupils to develop their awareness of other cultures. Tours, such as those by the choristers to the United States and South Africa, enhance this awareness. Art displays throughout the many

school buildings both stimulate the pupils' interest and demonstrate understanding of varied movements in Western European culture. This is supported by the high profile of classics within the school, which many pupils appreciate, including through participation in an annual play. Drama opportunities for different age groups are popular and pupils demonstrate great enthusiasm for all cultural house competitions.

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

- 4.6 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.7 The pastoral support and guidance for the pupils meet the school's aims very successfully. Staff know the pupils well and create a happy, friendly atmosphere, in which the pupils feel safe, secure and supported. They provide a high standard of help, guidance and monitoring, valued by the pupils and parents, as they confirm in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires. There is also very effective liaison with the cathedral, enabling the choristers to be fully supported.
- 4.8 Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves are conspicuously strong, in lessons, at break times and around the school. The successful house system facilitates interaction between year groups. Tutor time is well used. The strong, relevant and well-monitored PSHCE programme helps to promote the school's caring atmosphere. Additional care is provided by supportive matrons and a school counsellor.
- 4.9 Pupils are encouraged to be healthy through participation in sports; all have the chance to play for a school team if they so wish. There are further opportunities for sport within the extra-curricular programme. Nutritious meals are provided and pupils understand the importance of choosing a healthy diet, assisted by guidance in the PSHCE programme.
- 4.10 The school is highly effective in promoting good behaviour and the conduct of the pupils themselves nearly always shows that they respond to high expectations. The school has strong procedures to guard against bullying. In responses to pre-inspection questionnaires, most parents and pupils considered that bullying is dealt with well. Record keeping is careful and shows that very few incidents have arisen; any that occur are dealt with swiftly and effectively, in accordance with the school's procedures. A small minority of pupils challenged the fairness of the rewards and sanctions system in their questionnaire responses. Inspection evidence shows the system to be robust, fairly operated and well monitored. The pupils themselves are invariably polite, friendly and helpful.
- 4.11 In their responses to the questionnaires, a minority of pupils disagreed that the school asks for their opinions and responds to them. Discussions with pupils and scrutiny of the school's procedures do not confirm this view. In interviews and in conversations around the school, pupils expressed content with opportunities for their views to be heard. The school council is seen as increasingly effective and the school seeks and responds to the views of pupils, acting upon them in their best interests. It has led, for example, to increased provision of lockers and water fountains.
- 4.12 A suitable plan exists to promote access for those with particular SEND, within the confines of the historical nature of most of the school's buildings.

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

- 4.13 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.14 The school has good arrangements to safeguard the pupils' welfare. Designated staff receive regular child protection and inter-agency training. Child protection training is provided for all other staff at the required intervals, with written confirmation from them that they have attended. Additional details of the school's procedures are now provided to all part-time staff. Good working relationships with local agencies promote the pupils' welfare well.
- 4.15 Registration of pupils is appropriate and an efficient system to follow up absence operates well. The school maintains a suitable admission register electronically, which is backed up and stored appropriately.
- 4.16 Arrangements to ensure the pupils' health and safety are strong and have due regard to the school's city location. Pupils who feel unwell are accommodated in a spacious medical centre and receive excellent, sympathetic care. The first-aid policy provides well for emergencies. Appropriate numbers of staff are qualified in first aid. Due care is taken to ensure the health and safety of those with SEND.
- 4.17 Measures to prevent risks of fire and other hazards are very thorough and checks recorded efficiently. Regular drills are held and the outcomes evaluated. Equipment is checked by outside consultants and appropriate actions taken. Assessments of risk are thorough. Health and safety measures are regularly monitored and reviewed.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Governance promotes the school's aims well; it supports and promotes the school's role in the city and county, for example through successful outreach projects. The governing body includes a broad range of experience; it plans for the appointment of future governors with care and benefits from the effective operation of a well-designed committee structure. Governors are well informed through regular discussion with senior staff, presentations from a range of staff at governors' meetings and frequent visits to the school. They analyse the quality and standards of education provided by the school perceptively, offer stimulating challenge, and their consequent decisions support the pupils' excellent personal development and achievement. All have received safeguarding training, some have undertaken other training and individual governors' expertise is used very effectively to inform decision making.
- 5.3 Financial systems ensure that provision of human and material resources meets the school's needs and these areas are kept under constant review. Governors work with senior staff to plan strategically for the future, including for building development within the limitations of the school location.
- 5.4 Governors provide strong oversight of those areas where they have legal responsibilities. They review welfare and health and safety arrangements regularly, including through an annual tour of the site by all governors, and they audit the school's register of staff recruitment checks. Minutes record well-informed discussion of the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding policy and procedures in a suitable annual review.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.6 Committed senior leadership demonstrates integrity and promotes strong care for pupils and their academic and personal development, ensuring that the school's aims are met successfully. It has begun to develop stronger links with the junior school to enable smooth transition into the senior school, for example through some teachers working in both schools. Since the previous inspection, significant progress has been made through academic initiatives, reflected in the pupils' excellent levels of achievement. Similar, highly effective initiatives in pastoral care have promoted development of the tutor system and increased monitoring of provision for the pupils' welfare, particularly of rewards and sanctions systems. These have consolidated the pupils' excellent levels of personal development. Overall, increased monitoring by senior managers meets the recommendation of the previous inspection. The requirement to improve monitoring by middle managers has resulted in strong pastoral oversight by heads of house and increased effectiveness of heads of department. Peer review and regular scrutiny of the pupils' work have been introduced but not all heads of department demonstrate equal rigour in implementing these schemes, or in ensuring consistent application of policies,

- such as those for marking and the use of assessment data to track the pupils' progress.
- 5.7 Senior managers evaluate the success and the needs of the school successfully and have begun to demand equally effective evaluation by middle managers. Planning is good and combines aspirational change with consolidation of the school's current educational and financial position. Policy making is thoughtful and well focused, particularly in areas concerning safeguarding, welfare, health and safety, and is implemented successfully. Effective budgeting ensures that all areas of school life receive good human and material resources, although some teaching rooms offer more inspiration than others.
- 5.8 The school appoints staff of good quality, both teaching and non-teaching. Staff development procedures include an annual appraisal process, generating targets for the next year. The introduction of 'lead teachers' has given a largely successful focus to professional development in teaching and learning. The role of middle managers is now intrinsic in the strategic planning of staff development, and all departments have this as a standing item on their departmental agendas. These items are then brought to the half-termly heads of department meetings. This has resulted in an improvement in the targeted professional development of staff. Induction procedures are well documented and adhered to thoroughly. They ensure full integration into the school's life and its procedures. Checking procedures to ensure the suitability of staff, volunteers and governors to work with children are secure, although some inconsistencies have occurred in the past, and recording is now comprehensive. All staff are well trained in their responsibilities in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety.
- 5.9 Non-teaching staff, often long serving, show strong loyalty to the school and take pride in its work. They support the pupils' development and enable the school to provide a wide range of activities by giving excellent technical, administrative and pastoral support.
- 5.10 The quality of links between the school and parents is excellent, and strongly supports the school's aims. The school's outstanding relationship with parents is reflected in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire; they express extremely high levels of satisfaction with the school's provision. Inspection findings confirm this view. Parents are encouraged to make contact with the school if concerns arise and to this end are given the email addresses of all teaching staff. They feel that any concerns are dealt with swiftly and effectively, and this is confirmed in records of correspondence. The school has an appropriate complaints procedure.
- 5.11 An effective reporting system ensures that parents are kept well informed of their children's academic and social progress. Every year parents receive a written report and these complement parent-teacher consultation evenings, which are well supported. Parents are required to sign the report and feedback from them is welcomed. The reports form an effective dialogue between home and school, fostering the pupils' academic and personal development well.
- 5.12 A new initiative by the school which facilitates instant electronic communication with parents has been successful, for example informing them of a late return to school from a ski trip. Other effective means of communication with parents include the website, which was reviewed in 2012 following a parents' survey. Parents of

prospective and current pupils are provided with all required documentation. Parents also receive a school magazine annually.

- 5.13 Parents are able to be involved in the school's work through a very active parent teacher association, which plays a key role in the organisation of several school functions such as Sports Day.

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