



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

PADWORTH COLLEGE

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Padworth College

Full Name of School	Padworth College
DfE Number	869/6009
Registered Charity Number	325023
Address	Padworth College Padworth Reading Berkshire RG7 4NR
Telephone Number	0118 983 2644
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Email Address	info@padworth.com
Principal	Mr John Aguilar
Chairman of Trustees	Mr Jonathan Rawes
Age Range	14 to 19
Total Number of Pupils	92
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (55 boys; 37 girls)
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 9
Number of Boarders	Total: 83 Full: 77 Weekly: 6
Inspection Dates	20 Oct 2015 to 23 Oct 2015

PREFACE

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

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

The previous ISI boarding intermediate inspection was in September 2014 and the previous ISI standard inspection was in February 2011.

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

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

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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

Inspectors

Mr Adrian Underwood	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Susan Court	Team Inspector (Former Head of Department, Society of Heads school)
Mr Richard Palmer	Team Inspector (Head, Society of Heads school)
Mr Richard Gibbs	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The school was founded in 1963 as an international college for sixth-form girls by Peter Fison, an Oxford University tutor whose vision was to provide a unique tutorial approach to school education. Since then, the school has broadened its age profile and curriculum, and in 2005 became co-educational. It is located on an 18-acre site in the hamlet of Padworth, near Reading. The main building is an eighteenth century house that is now used primarily for teaching and administration. All boarding accommodation is on the school campus and is purpose built, with boys and girls accommodated separately in three house units, each with pupils from two or more year groups from Years 10 to 13. The school is a charitable trust company governed by a board of nine trustees.
- 1.2 Padworth College seeks to place great importance on caring for its pupils and supporting them in all aspects of their lives at school. It intends that each pupil should be treated as an individual and to regard their motivation and well-being as its top priority. The school's mission is to unlock the academic and personal potential of all pupils and encourage and enable them to realise their ambitions. The values which the school especially aims to foster are openness, honesty, integrity and concern for others.
- 1.3 Since the previous full inspection in 2011, the school has developed its boarding provision by building a boarding house extension and by converting an existing area into boarding accommodation, most of which comprises single study bedrooms. Almost all study bedrooms are now single rooms with washing facilities. A role of head of boarding has been created and the holder was in post at the start of the autumn term 2015. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and on-site security systems have been extended, and a gymnasium has been created. The senior leadership of the school has been restructured. The principal was appointed in August 2013 and a new chairman of trustees took up post in September 2014.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection, there were 92 pupils on roll aged between 14 and 19, of whom 83 were boarders. The school has identified three pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), none of whom has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. These pupils receive individual learning support. A total of 70 pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), all of whom receive support. Almost all boarders come from one of many international backgrounds, with a small number from British families living in the surrounding area. From the limited evidence available, pupils are in line with the national average in terms of academic ability, but the large majority are working in a language other than their mother tongue.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school is very successful in meeting its aims. The large majority of pupils are working in English as their second language and, as such, their achievements and learning are good. Pupils achieve good results in national examinations and make excellent progress overall. They benefit from a good curriculum, appropriate to their specific needs, although provision for physical education and sport is limited. Teaching is excellent, and its hallmark is the way in which the teaching of subjects is buttressed in all lessons by language and specific vocabulary development. Pupils are enthusiastic and committed learners, and avidly discuss sophisticated topics in English.
- 2.2 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils are welcoming and polite, and engage enthusiastically with each other and adults. Their excellent spiritual and moral development is seen in their tolerance and understanding of different beliefs and philosophies of life. As the pupils report, much of the confidence they develop has a direct correlation with the excellent pastoral and academic care they receive from all the staff in their community. Pupils were clear that all members of staff go the extra mile to ensure that their needs are met. This support is seen equally strongly in the boarding houses. In discussions with inspectors, the pupils confirmed their enjoyment of the school community experience and how much it has strengthened their academic and personal development. Welfare, health and safety are good.
- 2.3 The progress of the school since the previous inspection has been supported by good governance and good leadership and management. The trustees are committed to the development of the school, and improvements to the facilities and the management structure demonstrate their commitment. The required recruitment checks are undertaken for staff and members of the governing body; the countersigned Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check had not been completed through the Department for Education for the chairman at the time of the inspection, although appropriate checks were completed by the school. The good quality of leadership and management is reflected in recent initiatives to enhance the academic and social lives of the pupils. The school stands for individuality and allowing all pupils to be themselves, and this is promoted by senior leaders. In part, this is achieved by the senior leaders being highly visible around the school, engaging with pupils and listening to their views. These leaders are also highly supportive of the teaching and boarding staff, so that their skills can be developed in the best interests of pupils. They plan well and actively consult on changes to procedures or policies, though the involvement of boarding staff in development planning is limited. The eight recommendations from the two previous inspections have, in the main, been successfully addressed. The monitoring of teaching has borne fruit and teachers use ICT effectively in lessons. Participation in the co-curricular programme has increased, though the choice for Years 12 and 13 does not cater well for their age or interests. Policies are centrally located and the governors' annual review of safeguarding is correctly minuted. The standard of decoration across the houses is more consistent, as is the quality of marking, but this is not across all subjects. The recommendation to improve the curricular provision for physical education and games has not been fully met. Internet access across the campus is inconsistent. Links with parents are good.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and therefore it is required to take the following action.

- Ensure that the DBS check on the chairman of trustees by the Secretary of State is completed [Part 4, paragraph 20.(5)(b), under Suitability of staff and proprietors].

2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015.

(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. Improve the curricular provision for physical education and games.
2. Adapt the co-curricular programme for Years 12 and 13 so that it caters more appropriately for the interests of that age group.
3. Improve the consistency of access to the internet across the campus for pupils and staff.
4. Ensure that the head of boarding and heads of houses are fully involved in any development planning for boarding.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is good.
- 3.2 This meets the school's aim to unlock the academic and personal potential of all pupils, and to encourage and enable them to realise their ambitions by ensuring that the teaching of English is central in the curriculum for those from overseas.
- 3.3 The large majority of pupils are studying in their second language. They rapidly gain competence in English speaking and listening, although their reading and writing skills in the language develop less rapidly. By Year 13, however, they have acquired a fluency in all areas of English. Pupils demonstrate breadth and depth in their subject knowledge and show good skills in logical argument, as in a Year 12 business studies discussion on automation, where they explored benefits and negatives in contemporary society. They exhibit good levels of numeracy, as observed in an A-level chemistry lesson on equilibrium, and their facility with ICT is strong. Pupils have good creative skills, notably in art, but also in designing experiments and presentations.
- 3.4 Success outside the academic curriculum is limited, though some achievements have been made in extra-curricular activities. Recently, individual success was accomplished in winning a sixth-form chemistry university competition, while in a national mathematics challenge, pupils won gold, silver and bronze awards. Several pupils who embarked on The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, newly introduced in the school in September 2015, have already gained bronze awards. The success of leavers includes the recent award of a senior scholarship at a university college.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2012 to 2014. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. The standard analysis of the school's examination results against national examination results are treated with caution because relatively small numbers of pupils follow the traditional two-year GCSE and A-level courses, and the very large majority of pupils are at various stages of learning English. Given that context, GCSE results have been in line with the national average for maintained schools. International GCSE (IGCSE) results in mathematics, English and English as a second language have been higher than worldwide norms. Results in IGCSE geography, history, ICT and business studies have been below worldwide norms overall, although ICT results in 2014 were above worldwide norms. Chinese results are above worldwide and UK norms. Results at A level have been in line with the national average for maintained schools. Results vary between cohorts, with those in 2013 being above the national average for maintained schools, and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. Results in 2014 were below the national average. However, those in 2015 returned to the level of 2013. All Year 13 pupils gain entry to UK or international universities.
- 3.6 Standardised measures of progress are not available for all pupils. Predictive tests were introduced in 2014 and indicated high grades in mathematics and low grades in English. However, these tests do not take into account the English language factor for pupils with EAL. Whilst there are no national comparative figures for the school's own university access course in business studies or the International English Language Testing System, pupils' scores are high and ensure that they meet the English qualifying standard for British universities. From starting-points of

no or little English, and taking into account observation of progress in lessons, together with results in public and language examinations, and university places gained, pupils' progress is judged to be excellent. The very few pupils who have SEND make progress that is at least as good as their peers, as reflected in their GCSE results. More able pupils make rapid progress. This was observed in lessons and confirmed by the fact that they gain places at universities with a very competitive standard of entry.

- 3.7 Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work, which was observed in lessons and homework in the houses. They are highly motivated and focused, and clearly enjoy lessons. They work well both individually and collaboratively and support each other in their learning, notably in correct use of the English language. Their work is efficiently organised, well presented and of significant volume. Pupils acquire competence in learning skills, and in interviews they expressed their love of learning and research.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.9 Programmes of study support the aims of the school to provide a well-balanced and broad-based curriculum with a strong academic core. The curriculum effectively covers almost all the required areas of learning, and the range of subjects and courses offered at each stage contributes well to pupils' intellectual and personal development. The curriculum, however, does not provide fully for physical education across all years and, thus, the school has not responded fully to the recommendation of the previous full inspection to improve the curricular provision for physical education and games.
- 3.10 The school is not academically selective and the curriculum is designed to meet the needs of all pupils, regardless of their ability, facility with English or point of entry. Pupils are banded on entry according to their ability to access the curriculum and depending on the level of their acquisition of English. The curriculum allows pupils to study a pre-A-level EAL course, IGCSE or GCSE courses in one or two years, or a two-year A-level course. A good range of subjects is available at GCSE, IGCSE and A level. Pupils study combinations of subjects that meet their needs, interests and future aspirations. Excellent guidance is given regarding future careers, and pupils report how much they value the individual support sessions on making applications for university. Pupils with EAL are very strongly tutored in specialist classes, leading to a range of English language examinations. The very few who have SEND receive individual tutoring outside lessons and are well supported by subject teachers. All but a few pupils have specialist support and their specific needs are well known to all teachers through the school's information system, which is also used to monitor their progress.
- 3.11 The school also offers a university access course in business studies with modules in business, finance, law and ICT. This is a one-year 'in house' course that is internally moderated. It offers appropriate preparation for higher education through the usual university application process.
- 3.12 The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) programme is based on weekly assembly themes that are discussed in tutor time following the assembly. The planning of the programme ensures that topics are appropriate for this age group and underpin the pupils' development of English. Pupils confirm that they are

given every encouragement to voice their opinions on topics such as national festivals and the greenhouse effect. Beyond PSHEE, across the whole curriculum, the school actively promotes fundamental British values. In all departments' schemes of work, British values are interlaced with the topics of study and these are well implemented in lessons. For example, a Year 10 EAL class compared the British democratic structures of national and local governance with opportunities for the public to voice its opinions and vote in the pupils' own countries of origin. The school ensures that, in the coverage of political issues, there is a balanced presentation of opposing views in both curricular and extra-curricular activities.

- 3.13 The curriculum is enriched by trips and visitors, such as those for the sixth form to a university course on alternatives to medicine, the A-level business studies visit to a car factory and representatives visiting the school from a rail franchise to talk about career opportunities. The study of history and cultural and political education are reinforced by observing the House of Commons in session and visits to Buckingham Palace, Stonehenge and Hampton Court. The school is steadily developing opportunities for pupils to engage with the local community. For example, Year 10 pupils with EAL visited a local senior school to celebrate the European Day of Languages by teaching some of their first languages to Year 7 pupils.
- 3.14 In response to the previous full inspection recommendation to increase participation rates in extra-curricular activities, the school has developed a co-curricular programme offering over 30 activities each week. Pupils were seen to enjoy a range of these, including an excellent natural history club where they engaged with the natural environment of the school campus. Sixth-form pupils, however, felt that the programme is not always appropriate to their age and interests. Inspection evidence supported these concerns.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.16 The school fulfils its aim to prepare pupils for the next stage of education, training or employment and to provide the skills needed for life-long learning by maintaining a consistent standard of high quality teaching.
- 3.17 The teaching promotes pupils' achievement, regardless of their individual needs. In just under half of all lessons observed teaching was excellent and in most it was at least good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and communicate this to pupils with energy and enthusiasm. Teachers are well qualified and are also passionate about their subjects. The planning of teaching demonstrates high expectations that are met by excellent pupil engagement. All teaching is alert to the challenges of studying in a second language, and teachers see themselves as teachers of English, as well as of their subject specialisms. This contributes to the rapid progress made by pupils.
- 3.18 The high quality of teaching is consistently characterised by a thorough understanding of individual pupils' needs and a true desire for all pupils to achieve their full potential. This is reflected in careful questioning techniques that ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to answer in correct English, using subject-specific vocabulary. Appropriate resources are employed, including imaginative use of ICT in particular, in the reinforcement of language skills. Thus, the school has responded positively to the recommendation of the previous full inspection to enhance the use of ICT to support teaching. Teaching fosters a genuine interest in

the subject and very good independent work habits. This extends to the setting of homework. Much homework concentrates on reinforcing ideas studied in class, notably ensuring that technical terms are fully understood. Pupils are also given clear guidance about how to research a topic for the next lesson. The response of pupils in class to homework tasks confirmed that they view homework as a positive and enjoyable activity.

- 3.19 The EAL department has a thorough understanding of the individual needs of all pupils with EAL, and provides excellent advice and strategies for classroom teachers. Able, gifted and talented pupils are well supported by more challenging tasks, particularly for homework, and by more searching questions in classes.
- 3.20 The quality of assessment is inconsistent. Some marking, especially in particular subjects, is excellent, with detailed comments and positive suggestions for improvement, while in other subjects marking does not support pupils' progress. Thus, the school has partly implemented the recommendation of the previous full inspection to extend the consistency of good practice in the marking of pupils' work to all staff. The curriculum is delivered without political, religious or cultural bias, and lessons reflect tolerance of different abilities and respect for the views of all pupils.

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 Pupils' spiritual awareness is excellent. It is marked by their confidence in themselves and their abilities, and the strength of their self-esteem. This is reflected in the ease with which they conversed with inspectors and wished to express opinions about the school. Pupils are confident in their personal values, which are enhanced by comparing the values of those from a wide spectrum of nationalities. This ability and pupils' respect for life values different to their own, and for many, to do so in a second language, reflect the quality of pupils' inner confidence. This was exemplified at a meeting of the philosophy society, where pupils discussed whether human beings have a soul and, if so, what purpose it serves.

4.3 The moral development of pupils is excellent. Their awareness of what is right and wrong is reflected in the self-management of the school community. Pupils are aware of rules but articulate the qualities of a community that does not rely on rules to ensure good order. As almost all are boarders, they appreciate that the community life of their boarding houses depends upon respecting all boarders' needs, such as ensuring that sleep is undisturbed. Their awareness of such needs is reflective of their innate sense of law and order, and understanding of the civil and criminal law of England. The school actively promotes fundamental British values. Pupils wish to know about English public institutions and services, reflected in their animated discussion about the recent visit to the UK of a foreign premier. They understood the role of the monarchy and pageantry on such occasions, and also the right in the UK of democratic protest regarding such issues as human rights. Pupils' behaviour towards one another is excellent.

4.4 Pupils demonstrate excellent social development. Pupils have a cheerful confidence and are highly supportive of each other. They welcome visitors with a ready smile, and engage them in conversation on a range of topics. Pupils have opportunities to show leadership skills. Student leaders listen to the views of all pupils and contribute to the management of the school in their regular meetings with the principal. In the appointment of these leaders, the school community also understands more about democratic processes. The pupils are proud of the school and would recommend it to friends, because, as they state, their intrinsic worth is valued. Pupils support the local community through a partnership with a local maintained school, and they show concern for others less fortunate than themselves by raising money for local and international charities.

4.5 Pupils' cultural awareness is excellent. The school is a culturally diverse community in which pupils interact positively with each other. Pupils develop a deep understanding of different cultures and beliefs through their daily interaction with each other, ranging from conversations in the boarding houses and debates in class to international evenings. Pupils spoke of their desire to study in Britain to enable them to enter to a British university, but also so that they could compare and contrast the culture of their countries with British culture. Their awareness of nuances of cultural differences and similarities is highly developed. Pupils consider that discriminating against any individuals because of their background or belief is never acceptable.

4.6 Pupils attain an excellent standard of personal development by the time they leave the school. In their final year, they confirm how much they have grown in confidence and understanding. They state that they have been enabled to tackle the next stage of their lives by having been encouraged in their individuality and gained confidence in their English skills, and through building personal relationships.

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

4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.

4.8 This meets the school's aim to care for pupils and support them in all aspects of their lives. Academic and pastoral staff provide a high standard of care and effective guidance for pupils, in accordance with the school's values of openness, honesty, integrity and concern for others. In discussions, pupils stated that they appreciate this support and feel well looked after and valued. Pupils enjoy two strands of support: heads of boarding houses work closely with form tutors, who monitor and support the pupils' academic life.

4.9 Throughout the school, the happy, friendly atmosphere is marked by the relaxed but constructive relationships between pupils and staff, and excellent relationships amongst pupils in lessons, in the houses and in co-curricular activities. Good support for pupils who are new to the school is provided through the 'buddy' system and language mentors. The few day pupils are well integrated with boarders and the school generally. An appropriate plan is in place to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

4.10 Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily, and nutritious meals are provided in the dining room, where catering has a positive presence and is responsive to dietary requests. They are encouraged to take two co-curricular activities a week, which includes various sports, but not all take regular exercise. The school is highly successful in promoting good behaviour. The pupils are unfailingly courteous and respect the behaviour management policy to which they are introduced at induction. Pupils are aware of the anti-bullying policy but say that they do not believe that such behaviour occurs.

4.11 Pupils' views are encouraged and responded to in various ways. The student leaders meet weekly with the principal, and pupils confirm that they can share their opinions with them. The Boarders' Forum meets weekly and the Students' Forum is open to any pupil to attend. Pupils' opinions on food are actively sought.

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

- 4.12 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.13 The systems to safeguard pupils' welfare, health and safety are robust and regularly monitored. Risk management is a priority, particularly for ensuring that all pupils are helped to understand fully their responsibilities as members of a boarding community. Fire prevention is a priority. Staff are trained in the use of fire equipment, and fire drills are held regularly and appropriately recorded. Action points from fire drills are followed up assiduously. Security systems protect pupils but are not intrusive, and pupils stated that they feel safe at the school. The checking of boarders' personal electrical equipment is inconsistent but a scheduled full check is imminent. The health and safety committee, which includes trustee representation, monitors all health and safety issues.
- 4.14 Registration of pupils is appropriately managed and recorded, and the school has effective procedures for following up promptly any unexpected absences. The admission register contains all the required entries and is backed up and stored as required. The medical centre gives good support to all pupils who are ill or injured. The first-aid policy is effective in practice and includes good provision for specialist areas such as expeditions.
- 4.15 All members of staff have regular training in child protection. At the start of the current term all staff received update training, which included strategies for countering radicalisation and extremism, reporting any suspicion regarding female genital mutilation and monitoring pupil absence. New staff confirmed that their induction training included the required elements of safeguarding training. The higher level training of the school's designated safeguarding leads for child protection is up to date, and safe recruitment protocols are undertaken. Records of any child protection issues are fully detailed, including recording links with external agencies as necessary. The school's arrangements for ensuring the suitability of visiting speakers are robust, as are its ICT filtering systems.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.16 The quality of boarding is good.
- 4.17 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. Pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds are integrated into the school and individuality is respected. Relationships are excellent across the community and new boarders feel immediately welcome. Student leaders and boarders who acted as guides for inspectors showed great confidence, courtesy and tolerance. Boarders report that they feel comfortable in their houses, although, in some rooms, the school's limitation on the display of posters restricts personalisation. Pupils can turn to a range of appropriate adults over personal issues, from residential staff to the school nurse and an independent listener, who is known to pupils. Through the Boarders' Forum, as well as through informal discussion and the suggestion book in the dining room, boarders feel that they have a voice. Boarders are articulate, polite and sociable, and state that bullying is not a concern. Sanctions are infrequently needed, but rewards, such as commendations awarded in assembly followed by an email to parents, are much appreciated. Boarders confirmed that they enjoy their boarding experience and that relationships are excellent; student leaders referred to the school as one big family where all individuals know each other.
- 4.18 The quality of boarding provision and care is good. The parents of new boarders are given handbooks in advance of arrival and the induction process is thorough, using 'buddies' and if necessary other pupils to help with translation. New boarders enjoy an activity weekend early in their first term, together with existing boarders. The promotion of boarders' health is effective and arrangements for medical care through the school nurse are good, with appropriate provision for appointments with a doctor at a nearby surgery, as well as for dental, orthodontic and optical treatment. The nurse's surgery is an efficient resource and boarders report that they are well looked after if they feel unwell or are injured. Boarders who are sick overnight are normally accommodated in their own single rooms, with access to private washing and toilet facilities. There are sufficient toilets and showers. Boarding staff are trained in first aid and administer over-the-counter medication if required. Records are accurately kept and the nurse and boarding staff exchange information on the issue of medication. Accommodation is generally spacious and comfortable, though in a few rooms the main lighting is poor and the décor is in need of attention. Maintenance issues have not always been carried out swiftly. The few pupils who need tuition for SEND have strong support and all those with EAL receive specialist tuition of a high standard. Drinking water is readily available throughout the school and boarders make hot drinks or snacks in kitchen areas during their free time. The catering department provides high quality appetising and nutritious meals for all, including those with special diets, and attention is paid to boarders who may suffer from allergies. Boarders use washing machines for their own clothes, and bedding is centrally laundered. The recommendation of the previous boarding welfare inspection for the school to ensure consistency in the standard of decoration across all boarding houses has only been partly met, though ongoing renovation is planned.
- 4.19 Boarders can contact their families and friends by electronic means, but mobile telephone signals are variable within the school and its internet access is inconsistent. Boarders are allowed off site at weekends with parental or guardian permission, and transport is provided to the local railway station and also to shops. There are suitable complaints procedures for pupils and parents. Health and safety requirements are met. Boarders have sufficient free time and there are a number of co-curricular activities on offer within the school day, such as running or pottery, in

the evenings, such as playing basketball off site or using the fitness suite, and at weekends, such as paintballing or football. Uptake of the opportunities for physical activity is inconsistent. All visitors are appropriately monitored and access to the boarding house is restricted. Closed-circuit television is in place to protect boarders but is not intrusive on their privacy. Parents and guardians receive regular communications from boarding staff on day-to-day matters and issues pertaining to their children.

- 4.20 The arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are excellent. The school complies fully with regulations and guidance with respect to safeguarding and recruitment checks for boarding staff. Emergency fire drills are practised at least once a term in boarding time and risk assessments are thorough. Boarding staff and other adults associated with boarding, such as cleaning and catering staff, are up to date in safeguarding training and know who to contact should they have concerns. The missing pupil policy is known to staff and the whereabouts of boarders are monitored; roll calls are relatively infrequent at weekends. Suitably trained members of staff take responsibility for boarders in boarding time and there is always an adult on call at night in each of the three boarding houses. The school does not appoint guardians. In discussion groups, the vast majority of boarders stated that they feel safe in their boarding houses, that their possessions are secure and that they knew how and when to report concerns.
- 4.21 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the boarding provision is good. Boarding documentation and policies are up to date, and these and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools are known to staff. There have been some recent changes of role within the boarding leadership, which have included the appointment of a head of boarding and new appointments as heads of houses. Staff have job descriptions, and an annual cycle of professional development review includes appraisal of roles in boarding, with negotiated targets. Boarding staff are encouraged to attend external training courses and several have been supported by the school in their professional development. Records are appropriately kept and information about boarders is shared with medical and academic staff as needed through email and the school database, as well as staff briefings and personal contact. The aims and priorities for boarding are in the process of development. Maintenance needs have not always been promptly responded to and not all boarding staff are included in development planning. For example, residential staff have had limited input into the refurbishment of boarding accommodation.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The school's aims and values are well supported by a board of committed trustees who share their expertise and work as a cohesive team in monitoring the school's development. The trustees regularly meet with pupils and staff formally and informally to ensure that they understand their needs and aspirations. Engaging with parents is more of a challenge due to distance and language, but the trustees monitor parents' communications of concern and commendation, and meet parents who are able to attend school events, including parents' evenings. Trustees respond to direct communications from staff, when that is the most appropriate channel.
- 5.3 The trustees have three committees to oversee the financial, health and safety, and education and boarding areas of the school. These committees report to the full governing body termly to ensure that all trustees are able to discuss current issues and planned developments. Trustees receive reports on all facets of the school and also invite staff to their meetings to discuss current issues, such as the latest government safeguarding requirements in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. Trustees undertake the online safeguarding training provided by the local safeguarding children's board.
- 5.4 Trustees have a very effective working relationship with the school's senior leaders. The trustees have recognised a need to improve the educational infrastructure of the school. In recent years, they have appointed senior leaders to do this and have supported them in initiatives such as the development of the tutorial system, the improvement of reporting to parents and the review of the school's university access course. Trustees meet their statutory duties by reviewing policies regularly, including those for welfare, health and safety. The required Department for Education check of the new chairman was in hand but had not been received back from the DBS at the time of the inspection, although the chairman does have a current DBS check. In response to a recommendation of the previous boarding inspection, the trustees' annual review of safeguarding is carried out thoroughly and their discussions are recorded appropriately in the minutes. Through their committees and close liaison with senior leaders, trustees discharge their responsibilities effectively for prudent financial planning and for investment in staff, accommodation and resources.
- 5.5 The trustees are loyal to the principles of the foundation of the school, but appreciate the need to ensure that its education, in all aspects, meets the aspirations of future generations of pupils, particularly in the arts and sports.

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

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is good.
- 5.7 Senior managers ensure that the school's aims are central to its life. The senior managers ensure that the educational programme supports all pupils and offer good leadership in all other areas of the life of the school. The relatively new senior leadership team has tackled a number of educational and boarding issues with commitment and resolve, and acknowledges that, as yet, not all its initiatives have been fully implemented. Senior leaders enjoy a good working relationship with the trustees and value the support they receive from them. Senior staff and trustees share the same vision for the school, which is true to the founder's philosophy of individuality and freedom, but which, they acknowledge, requires adaptation of structures and expectations to serve the needs of contemporary pupils. Pupils enthusiastically report that senior leaders are actively involved in the life of the school and engage with them and with staff in an open and constructive dialogue. A new senior boarding role has been created in recent months and this is beginning to strengthen the community life of a school where nearly all pupils are boarders. A tutorial system has been put in place and is producing results in terms of pupil support, but it is still in development. Policies and procedures and their implementation are regularly reviewed. The school's values, which include honesty, integrity and concern for others, are seen throughout and are reflected in the relationships between all members of the school community.
- 5.8 In response to the recommendation of the previous full inspection, excellent progress has been made in relation to the monitoring of the quality of teaching. Senior managers observe new teachers twice in their first term. A supportive but challenging appraisal programme is in place. This programme links targets with training opportunities, as the school is committed to supporting teachers' continuing professional development. The success of this monitoring is demonstrated in the high quality of teaching observed during the inspection. This commitment to training also extends to the development of the skills of boarding staff. The recommendation of the previous boarding inspection for all policies to be centrally located to enable ease of access by all relevant staff has been fully met through storing these policies electronically, accessible to all staff on the school intranet. The recommendation of the previous full inspection regarding extending consistency of good practice in the marking of pupils' work to all staff has been partially met, and the recommendation to improve the curricular provision for physical education and games has not been successfully addressed.
- 5.9 Development planning is thorough, with appropriate timescales, and departmental development plans reflect the whole-school development plan. The success of development planning in recent years is reflected in the improvement in teaching and learning, the increased use of ICT in teaching, the greater participation in co-curricular activities and the development of additional boarding facilities. Management has plans to develop further facilities to enhance pupils' education, but the development plan reflects the prudence of senior managers and trustees in terms of the timescale for these developments.
- 5.10 The school does not have heads of department for all subjects, and many are taught by a single teacher. Two departments, central to the academic life of the school, have a cadre of staff, and those heads of department feel well supported and

effectively challenged by senior managers. These middle managers work closely together as most pupils are working in a second language and the majority are following science courses. Heads of department monitor the teaching and assessment of members of their departments. Regular minuted departmental meetings provide opportunities for concentrating on educational techniques, particularly for subject-specific vocabulary development. The programme for lesson observation across subjects is in its infancy, but teachers report that those that have been held have been of great value in developing teaching techniques.

- 5.11 Staff recruitment is well managed. New staff are expected to have strong academic teaching, with a commitment to the particular language needs of their pupils. They are fully supported in this area through individual EAL sessions or external courses. Senior managers apply safeguarding principles to all appointments and ensure that the appropriate safeguarding training is given. All staff are trained in their roles in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Equally, senior managers monitor welfare, health and safety, although electrical testing of boarders' personal equipment has not been overseen with sufficient rigour. The management of boarding is good and the school is aware of areas to improve this.
- 5.12 Senior managers make strong efforts to communicate with parents, many of whom do not have English as their first language. This is partly achieved by working through guardians and agents to ensure that key communications are translated. The school's website is available in six languages. The school publishes handbooks for the parents of boarders and day pupils, and these contain much information, particularly for the parents of new pupils. The principal publishes two newsletters each term and the head of boarding sends a welcome letter to the parents of all new boarders.
- 5.13 Parents receive academic grades for their children five terms a year and reports at the end of each term. The report gives a written assessment of progress in each subject as well as grades. For parents who are able to attend, an informal social parents' evening is held each year. A more formal parents' evening also takes place, which is attended by pupils, and often in place of parents, guardians or agents may attend. In addition to these formal events, the school welcomes parents to visit at any time and arrangements are made for them to have discussions with all their children's teachers. Parents are also welcomed to school functions such as an international evening and a presentation day at the end of the school year.
- 5.14 Parents receive email messages on a regular basis from the heads of houses to inform them about the pupils' boarding life, including details of expeditions and outings, and, as necessary, to update them on any issues in a boarder's life. When pupils receive a commendation for an achievement, their parents are contacted by email by the principal detailing this success. A recent initiative from senior leaders is a requirement for tutors to contact parents by email once a week with an item of good news about their children. By this means and all the other communication channels, staff strive to bridge the gap with parents living far from the school.

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