



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION  
WELLINGBOROUGH SCHOOL**

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## Wellingborough School

The preparatory and pre-preparatory schools were inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School	<b>Wellingborough School</b>
DfE Number	<b>928/6010</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>1101485</b>
Address	<b>Wellingborough School Irthlingborough Road Wellingborough Northamptonshire NN8 2BX</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01933 222427</b>
Fax Number	<b>01933 271986</b>
Email Address	<b>reception@wellingboroughschool.org</b>
Headmaster	<b>Mr Garry Bowe</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Dr Jonathan Cox</b>
Age Range	<b>13 to 18</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>409</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (229 boys; 180 girls)</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>21 Jan 2014 to 24 Jan 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 March 2009.

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 the chair of governors and governors' representatives, 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 George Fisher	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Margaret Connolly	Team Inspector (Former Headmistress, GSA school)
Mrs Myra Howard	Team Inspector (Former Head of Sixth Form, GSA school)
Mr Neal Parker	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mr Jay Piggot	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)

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

- 1.1 Wellingborough School is a co-educational day school which was founded in 1595 as a boys' school and became co-educational in the 1970s. The school, situated close to the centre of Wellingborough, draws pupils from an area within a radius of approximately 25 miles. It occupies the same site as the pre-preparatory (pre-prep) and preparatory (prep) schools, under the leadership of the headmaster of the senior school, all being accountable to the same governing body.
- 1.2 The school is a company, limited by guarantee, and governance is provided via five sub-committees which report to the main board of governors, who are also directors of the company. Additionally, the school has a wholly owned subsidiary trading company, which has its own board, together with a council, of which all governors are members.
- 1.3 The school's aims are expressed within its mission statement, which places scholarly achievement at the heart of a challenging education and seeks to develop pupils' self-awareness and a sense of responsibility. Since the previous inspection, a new art block and all weather sports surfaces have been built, changes have been made to the traffic management system around the site; and a peer mentoring system has been introduced.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection, the senior school had 409 pupils on roll between the ages of 13 and 18. Of these, 147 were in the sixth form. The pupils come from mainly business and professional backgrounds, although many families are dependent upon the rural economy. Almost all the pupils in the prep school transfer to senior school at the age of 13, without a specific examination. External candidates join from a large number of local independent and state sector schools. The vast majority of Year 11 pupils transfer into the sixth form where they are joined by a number of pupils from other schools. The school is organised into houses which act as the pastoral bases for the pupils. There are five houses for boys and three for girls.
- 1.5 The ability profile of the pupils is above the national average, with a significant proportion who are of well above average ability. A few pupils come from minority ethnic groups. Eighty-seven pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) of whom seventy-five receive specialist support from within the school. Two pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), and they receive additional, specialist support.
- 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 Wellingborough Senior School is largely successful in meeting its central aim which places scholarly achievement at the heart of a challenging education. Achievement is good overall, and pupils make good progress at GCSE and A level. Teaching is good and makes a significant contribution to pupils' overall attainment. In the best lessons, there is a fast pace and varied activities are incorporated into the lessons with some good use of information, communication technology (ICT). However, the most able pupils do not always have sufficient challenge in lessons. The use of target-setting, commented upon at the previous inspection, has been developed, although it is not yet fully embedded across the school.
- 2.2 Pupils have mature attitudes to study, settle to work quickly and are well organised. They are articulate and confident to express their ideas with their peers or larger groups. Pupils with SEND achieve in line with expectations, and the quality of support which they receive has improved significantly. The curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent, offering choice and challenge as well as additional support for those who require it. Pupils achieve success in a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- 2.3 Pupils' personal development is excellent. They are engaging, self-assured, polite and enthusiastic about their experiences at school. Responses by pupils to the pre-inspection questionnaire were largely very positive, although a minority expressed concerns about the fairness with which rewards were allocated, and felt that their views were not taken into consideration by the school. Inspection evidence agreed that the reward system was inconsistently applied, but judged that pupil's opinions are valued by the school. The pupils' spirituality has developed significantly and the chaplaincy makes a greater impact than at the time of the previous inspection. The quality of careers guidance has also improved. Pupils' moral and social development remains outstanding.
- 2.4 Governance is good and is characterised by the commitment of governors to the school. The sub-committees work effectively and ensure a sensible balance of support and challenge for the school's leadership team. Whilst all staff have now had appropriate pre-appointment checks, a small number of staff were, historically, allowed to start before full references had been received. Leadership and management are good, but the current structure of senior management leads to inadequate monitoring of a number of school systems. Senior leaders and academic and pastoral managers are effective in their roles. Senior managers are pro-active in looking at ways to develop the school further, but the overall vision is not fully understood by all staff. Measures to promote health and safety are good, but staff have not all had updated training with regard to fire procedures. Since the previous inspection, the traffic arrangements around the school site have been improved, making it much safer. Links with parents are excellent.

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

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

2.5 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:

- ensure that all the necessary checks on staff, including the taking up of references, are made prior to appointment [Part 3, Regulation 7 (a), (b) under Welfare, health and safety of pupils].

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

2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action point, the school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure that all teaching makes provision for the most able.
2. To ensure more rigorous monitoring of all school systems, review the structures within senior management.
3. Ensure that staff receive regular training in fire procedures and attendance is recorded.



### **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 of their learning, attitudes and skills is good.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated in line with the school's aim for them to achieve their best in the classroom. Pupils express themselves confidently and clearly orally and in their written work, especially in the sixth form. Their literacy and listening skills are well developed and they show good knowledge and understanding across a broad range of subjects. When given the opportunity, pupils reason logically and show independence as learners. They acquire good ICT skills which they use effectively in note-making, research and in manipulating images. Pupils' numeracy is well developed. In modern foreign languages, pupils speak accurately and fluently. Pupils show good imagination and creativity in art and design technology, and they achieve high standards in their many physical activities.
- 3.3 Pupils have achieved success at regional level in the UK mathematical challenge. They perform well in instrumental music examinations and are also successful in local music festivals.
- 3.4 Pupils show good levels of achievement in extra-curricular activities. A significant number gain silver and gold awards in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE); senior pupils have passed the Air Cadet Leadership course. Girls and boys compete in a very wide range of individual and team sports at county and national level, with some individual success at international level. Pupils are successful in local drama and public speaking festivals, including membership of the National Youth Theatre. Most sixth formers enter higher education, and a good proportion gains places at universities with demanding entry requirements.
- 3.5 The following analysis of examination results uses the national data for the years 2010–2012, the most recent period for which comparative data is available. Results at GCSE level are above the national average for maintained schools and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. Results declined from 2010 to 2012, but results in 2013 show an improvement. Results in IGCSE science were higher than the worldwide norm. A-Level results are above the national average for maintained schools and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. Results improved from 2010-12 and this trend continued in 2013. Pupils with SEND are well supported and achieve or exceed their examination targets. Pupils with EAL are given specialist support to enable them to meet their target grades. In a minority of lessons, however, the most able pupils are not fully stretched and therefore do not achieve the levels of which they are capable.
- 3.6 The level of attainment at GCSE, and standardised measures of progress that are available, indicate that pupils in the senior school make progress that is good in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. At A Level the progress is at least appropriate and in some years, such as 2012, it is good in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Pupils with SEND and EAL make progress in line with their peers.
- 3.7 Pupils are well-motivated, settle quickly to work and demonstrate perseverance. They take pride in their well-organised and carefully presented work. Pupils work co-operatively and share ideas freely, and show initiative and ask appropriate and

searching questions. They demonstrate increasingly sophisticated approaches to note-making and research work as they progress through the school.

### **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 curriculum is broad and well balanced and provides highly effective coverage of all areas of learning. Pupils are set by ability in mathematics, the sciences, languages and English to cater for their differing ability levels. The school is highly effective in identifying the needs of pupils with SEND and EAL and in providing appropriate support for them, including building carefully on the provision made within the prep school.
- 3.10 Since the previous inspection, the school has considerably enhanced its curricular provision. Spanish has become established at all levels within the school, and the school has also introduced an IGCSE course in the science subjects, modern languages and English. The school has established the extended project qualification (EPQ) as an optional, enrichment opportunity in the sixth form.
- 3.11 In Year 9, pupils are given an introduction to the full range of subjects available at GCSE when pupils continue to study the core subjects of mathematics, English literature and language, and at least one modern foreign language. Pupils generally study the three separate sciences, but may be advised to select the dual award science if this better suits their aptitude and ability. Pupils can then choose a further three optional subjects, which allow for their aesthetic and creative development, and they have further opportunities to study humanities and additional languages. In Years 9 and 11, pupils also study ICT. In the sixth form, a similarly broad range of subject choices is offered. At all levels, the school succeeds in allowing the vast majority of pupils a free choice of their preferred subjects.
- 3.12 Pupils in Years 9 and 10 benefit from further enrichment through the personal, social, health and citizenship education programme (PSHCE), games, and timetabled Combined Cadet Force (CCF) participation. In Year 11, pupils continue with CCF, or start the DofE, or take private study. In the sixth form, a well-established programme of enrichment activities and visiting speakers, alongside continued games provision, enhances pupils' experiences. The school offers a wide range of highly effective subject clinics which assist pupils in their learning, as well as bespoke provision, such as a felt workshop for art in the sixth form, and a visit to the First World War battlefields for historians. Since the previous inspection, the school has put in place a comprehensive and highly effective programme of careers advice, and has introduced more formalised work experience opportunities for Year 11 pupils.
- 3.13 A particular strength of school life is the wealth of extra-curricular provision available to pupils. Many of them participate in sporting or outdoor activities, and the CCF and DofE schemes flourish. Sports teams benefit from excellent facilities, including two floodlit, all-weather pitches. The arts are pursued through a variety of musical ensembles; regular drama productions and dance clubs. Societies and clubs provide both intellectual and academic enrichment, and hotly contested house competitions enables pupils to be fully involved in the extra-curricular life of the school.
- 3.14 Community and charitable projects have become an even stronger feature of school life since the previous inspection, and help to develop strong links with other

organisations and institutions within the local area and further afield. This is exemplified by the recently introduced Community Cohesion project, whereby many pupils participate in a range of charitable community projects. The school offers pupils of all ages numerous opportunities to enrich their cultural experiences and academic understanding through sporting tours, trips and visits, either locally, nationally or internationally.

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

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.16 Teaching reflects a good understanding of pupils' needs and is effective in promoting pupils' progress. It fully supports the aim of the school to create an environment in which pupils are given the best possible opportunity to learn and to develop. Lessons are well planned and designed to meet the needs of the whole class. Good provision is made for pupils with SEND and EAL. Since the previous inspection, teachers' awareness of differing learning needs has increased, although not all teaching is sufficiently adapted to the needs of the individual. Sufficient time is allowed for pupils to complete work in lessons, but the desire to ensure that pupils do not fall behind sometimes slows the pace of the lessons and limits the progress of the more able.
- 3.17 Teaching fosters interest and pupils speak with enthusiasm about their academic studies, and the support and guidance that they receive from their subject teachers and tutors. Staff make themselves available for extra classes and clinics after school and at lunchtime, and this contributes significantly to the progress which pupils make. Teaching encourages pupils to develop greater independence as they progress through the school, evidenced by the high quality of work shown within the EPQ.
- 3.18 Teachers use a good variety of teaching methods, with the lesson activity being changed regularly to maintain a brisk pace and retain the attention and interest of pupils. Since the previous inspection, there has been increased use of technology within teaching, for example to promote the innovative use of photography and digital manipulation of images, or to enable pupils to deliver power point presentations based on their own research. Video clips are used imaginatively to provoke discussion of news items relevant to the subject.
- 3.19 Teaching has also benefited from the work of the learning and teaching group which has encouraged the sharing of new approaches and led to staff being able to innovate within the classroom with greater confidence.
- 3.20 Teachers have a good, and in most cases, excellent subject knowledge. Many are passionate about their subject and communicate this enthusiasm within the classroom. Teaching makes good use of the various resources for learning. Teaching encourages pupils to behave with maturity and sensitivity to others' needs and promotes an atmosphere of cooperative learning throughout the school.
- 3.21 Teachers often provide helpful oral feedback on pupils' work and much of the marking is constructive, with written work being annotated with helpful comments and pointers for improvement. The use of target-setting to enhance pupils' achievement is increasingly being used across the school, and in the best lessons pupils are highly motivated to meet, and in many cases, exceed these expectations.

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

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

- 4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils' spiritual development is excellent, reflecting the primacy of the Christian message in the school, with the chapel at its heart. Pupils are sensitive to the non-material aspects of life, and readily acknowledge the role of spirituality for individuals and communities, whether or not they have a strong religious faith themselves. They are open-minded and accept that others' views may differ from their own. Pupils enjoy discussing the central questions of human life, and their excellent listening skills spring from inter-personal respect, nurtured by the high levels of personal development shown throughout the school. The attractive school grounds, and the many interesting displays of artwork, encourage pupils to develop a heightened aesthetic awareness.
- 4.3 Since the previous inspection, the school has made a successful effort to extend the range of opportunities for pupils' spiritual development. The strengthening of the chaplaincy team has been significant in encouraging pupils to engage with all aspects of personal development, including through an out-reach programme. A *Sacred Spaces* initiative is planned to encourage pupils to seek a quiet place for reflection, and the presence of a governors' chaplaincy committee highlights the significance attached to this aspect of school life.
- 4.4 The moral development of pupils is excellent. They have strong ethical values and a clear sense of right and wrong, which is further developed by the many opportunities to discuss moral issues within their academic subjects. In their houses, they care for each other, and engage in charity work, emphasising their concern for those less fortunate than themselves. They are proud of the school and feel a keen sense of responsibility for its good name.
- 4.5 Social development is also excellent. Pupils relate extremely well to each other, are mutually supportive, and form friendships both within and across year groups. Pupils are emotionally mature for their age. Enrichment programmes and the lively and well-planned PSHCE course increase pupils' understanding of modern life, and prepare them very well for life after school. The many different activities available provide pupils with a rich diet of opportunities for strong personal development, including leadership skills. Pupils develop strong social, political and economic awareness through the curricular and extra-curricular provision, including the time spent with their tutors.
- 4.6 Pupils' cultural development is excellent. Both formally and informally, pupils relish the many opportunities to take part in drama, music and other cultural events. While some are very talented, the school actively encourages everyone to become involved in the wide range of cultural activities, either within a team, band or drama company, or as individual performers. The school puts on a variety of plays and concerts to show-case the considerable talents of its pupils. Pupils show a lively curiosity about other cultures and are keen to investigate and become better informed about a broad range of cultures both in the UK and elsewhere.
- 4.7 Pupils' cultural development has improved since the previous inspection. Visitors from Argentina recently stayed in the homes of current pupils, enabling both groups to learn more about each other's country. Pupils are encouraged to think of

themselves as citizens of the world, with a responsibility for their environment. They appreciate the achievements both of the Western cultural tradition and those of the wider world.

- 4.8 The quality of pupils' personal development is excellent and a great strength of the school.

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

- 4.9 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.10 The school is highly successful in its aim to develop in pupils a healthy respect for others and themselves. The corner-stone of the school's excellent pastoral care is the house system. Through this a strong sense of loyalty and commitment to the school is engendered which leads to the cultivation of positive and friendly relationships between the staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves. The peer mentoring system, introduced since the previous inspection, is also highly effective in providing support for pupils. It gives older pupils many opportunities to develop leadership skills and to take on roles of significant responsibility.
- 4.11 Pupils are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles through the PSHCE programme, a wide range of sporting opportunities, and a variety of healthy food which is available in the dining hall, including a very popular breakfast service.
- 4.12 The school is highly effective in promoting good behaviour, and has comprehensive policies on combating bullying and harassment. A very small minority of pupils and parents commented that the school had not dealt well with cases of bullying, but interviews with pupils, and scrutiny of the school's records, suggest that any such cases are dealt with quickly and appropriately. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a minority of pupils expressed a concern over the consistency with which rewards were awarded and inspection evidence, including conversations with pupils and staff, confirmed that there was unevenness in this regard.
- 4.13 The school has a suitable and detailed plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.14 A minority of pupils questioned the school's willingness to listen to their views. Inspection evidence did not support this concern with pupils valuing the school council, as well as more informal methods, as a means of communicating their opinions.

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

- 4.15 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.16 The policy to safeguard the welfare of pupils is thorough, accurately reflects current practice and has been revised recently. The designated child protection officers ensure that all staff have knowledge of their responsibilities for safeguarding, and all staff have received necessary training. New staff receive essential induction training, and there are helpful links with Northamptonshire children's services.
- 4.17 A secure system for checking the suitability of staff is in place and previous flaws in recruitment procedures relating to the provision of some staff references have been fully resolved. There is an appropriate health and safety policy which is usefully cross-referenced to other school-based policies. The fire policy establishes lines of

responsibility and clearly defines emergency evacuation procedure; fire drills are conducted regularly and appropriately recorded. Annual training in fire procedures is provided, but the level and record of training is not always targeted at the level pertinent to specific staff roles. Fire and electrical equipment is systematically tested and deficiencies are remedied. However, the recording of this testing is not maintained in a form which enhances oversight. Risk assessments are carried out for activities, off-site visits and the site itself, although some are generic in nature, and therefore are less effective as tools for reducing the risk of accidents. Since the previous inspection, the system for managing traffic flow onto the site has been completely revised, which has significantly increased safety.

- 4.18 The medical centre provides excellent care for sick and injured pupils and there are good channels of communication with teaching and non-teaching staff. Medicines are stored correctly and any accidents are appropriately reported. Many staff are trained in first aid.
- 4.19 Admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained and stored.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 Governance very strongly supports the distinctive aims and ethos of the school. The governing body benefits from members from a wide range of relevant professional backgrounds, and from their dedication and commitment to the school. Several governors are former pupils themselves, or parents of current or former pupils, and this serves to strengthen further the links between the governing body and the school.
- 5.3 Governance is structured into five sub-committees with highly qualified chairs which have ensured that governors fully discharge their responsibilities for academic standards, financial planning and investment in staff and resources. Reports from the sub-committees are given careful consideration. Governors monitor educational provision very carefully and there is strong support and challenge to senior managers in this area. However, there has been insufficient oversight by governors of the recruitment procedure for staff, to ensure that all necessary pre-appointment checks are undertaken by the school. Recently instituted meetings between the chairs of the committees, alongside senior school staff, have helped to ensure better communication between the sub-committees and the school leadership team. This has enabled them to work together more effectively in planning and developing provision and policy.
- 5.4 Governors have a high profile within the school, and they regularly attend school events as well as familiarising themselves with the day-to-day operation of the school, including visiting lessons.
- 5.5 With the exception noted above, governors meet their responsibilities for child protection, welfare, health and safety. They are kept well informed through the work of the safeguarding committee and conduct an annual review of the safeguarding policy and its implementation. Governors undertake training appropriate to their role and there is an effective induction programme for new members.

### **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 leadership is highly successful in ensuring that the school's ethos and sense of community as a family of schools is upheld, and it works with great dedication to this end. The work of those with leadership responsibilities makes a strong contribution to the successful fulfilment of the school's aims and the excellent personal development of its pupils. Senior staff and middle managers demonstrate a strong sense of commitment to the school, although the overall vision for the school is not currently understood by the whole school community. An imminent restructuring of the leadership team is intended to provide a clearer sense of purpose and clarification on strategies and priorities to guide the school's future development, whilst ensuring effective implementation of day-to-day policies and procedures.

- 5.8 The school development plan identifies a large number of areas for consideration over a rolling, five year period and is subject to an annual review and evaluation by senior staff. Responsibility for implementation rests with a number of staff, including those with academic, pastoral and administrative responsibilities. Heads of houses and academic departments produce their own development plans which are designed to complement the school development plan. The quality of overall planning is good, but measures to identify success are not always clear, and monitoring of outcomes is not always rigorous enough.
- 5.9 The school has made progress since the previous inspection in clarifying its objectives for improvement and in evaluating performance more rigorously. Senior staff and middle managers demonstrate a strengthening culture of self-evaluation. Progress has also been made in the monitoring of pupils' academic progress and in setting meaningful targets, although there is still unevenness in the effectiveness of this process, including the establishment of a commonality of approach between the preparatory and senior schools.
- 5.10 Heads of department produce a detailed annual report on achievement within their subject areas, including an evaluation of examination success and targets for future departmental action. Housemasters and housemistresses produce an effective, annual house review for discussion with the senior leadership team and this provides an appropriate focus for future development. Form tutors are responsible for following up under-performance by their tutees and they report any issues to house staff. However, the quality of this monitoring is uneven, and it excludes heads of department from immediate responsibility for standards within their department.
- 5.11 Teaching and non-teaching staff are committed to the school's success and are well deployed throughout the school. All necessary checks, including criminal record checks, are carried out, although, historically systems for recruitment were not robust enough. Staff are provided with the necessary training in child protection and other welfare areas, and undergo an effective induction process.
- 5.12 The school's structure of accountability between the senior leadership team and the bursary has hindered the effective running of the school. As a result, insufficient monitoring of a number of important systems, including records of appointment, risk assessments and training records has taken place. Staff development procedures include a biennial appraisal process, linked to whole-school development areas, and this process is effective in identifying training and professional development needs. A culture of peer lesson observation is developing, as is a formal system for staff to share and discuss strategies to enhance pupils' learning.
- 5.13 Parents are highly satisfied with the education and support provided for their children and with the quality of communication with the school. In their response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the very large majority of parents expressed approval of the range of available subjects, the availability of information about the school, the happiness and safety of their child and the excellent extra-curricular programme. A very small minority of parents were not satisfied with the information provided on their children's progress. However, inspection evidence, including the detailed reports to parents and parents' evenings, does not support this concern.
- 5.14 The school fosters an excellent partnership with parents, and a constructive relationship is maintained in accordance with the school's aims. This is achieved through regular contact with parents, and excellent communication with house staff and tutors concerning academic, pastoral and social issues. Parents' concerns are



effectively dealt with, and the school has a suitable complaints procedure which records appropriately any issues which have been raised.

- 5.15 Parents have good opportunities to be involved in the work and progress of their children, recently enhanced through the parent portal on the school's Management Information system. Many parents attend sports fixtures, school plays, concerts and a variety of social events. Regular parents' meetings occur where teaching staff discuss progress in academic subjects.
- 5.16 The website is an effective resource for keeping current parents, and those of prospective pupils, informed about school life; and a digital screen in the school car park provides up-to-date information in a form easily accessible to busy parents. The Wellingburian, a comprehensive handbook for new parents, and the headmaster's regular blog, provide parents with a clear view of the school and the values it holds.
- 5.17 The school provides and makes available to parents all items of information required by regulations. The written reports on pupils' achievements and academic progress are frequent and of high quality, and include summaries of the work completed in academic subjects, comments on achievement, progress and attitudes, and useful pointers for improvement. Half-term assessments also give grades for effort and achievement, and these are available to parents on-line.
- 5.18 Overall, the school has developed still further the excellent links with parents which were noted at the previous inspection.

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