



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

RUGBY SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Rugby School

Full Name of School	Rugby School
DfE Number	937/6010
Registered Charity Number	528752
Address	Rugby School Lawrence Sheriff Street Rugby Warwickshire CV22 5EH
Telephone Number	01788 556216
Fax Number	01788 578635
Email Address	head@rugbyschool.net
Head	Mr Patrick Derham
Chair of Governors	Mr Robert Swannell
Age Range	11 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	802
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (443 boys; 359 girls)
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 144
Number of Boarders	Total: 658
	Full: 658 Weekly: 0
Inspection Dates	11 Mar 2014 to 14 Mar 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 March 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. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

This inspection contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education, personal development and welfare. Until September 2011, Boarding inspections were carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills.

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

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

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

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

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 governors and other governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr George Fisher	Reporting Inspector
Mr Nigel Carr	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mrs Paula Cross	Team Inspector (Assistant Principal, HMC school)
Mrs Angela Drew	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mrs Valerie Dunsford	Team Inspector (Headmistress, GDST school)
Mr Stephen Jefferson	Team Inspector (Former Head of Department, HMC school)
Mr Richard Lynn	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mrs Kate McCarey	Team Inspector (Former Assistant Head, HMC school)
Mr John Wharam	Team Inspector (Assistant Head, HMC school)
Mr James Wilding	Team Inspector (Principal, ISA school)
Mr Gregg Davies	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Claire Grant	Team Inspector for Boarding (Director of Studies, IAPS school)
Miss Margaret Pepper	Team Inspector for Boarding (Former Head, ISA school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Rugby School is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils from the ages of 11 to 18. It was founded in 1567 as a free grammar school for the boys of Rugby and Brownsover, in accordance with the will of Lawrence Sheriff, Grocer to Queen Elizabeth I. He also left land in London, the rents from which are now used to fund scholarships and bursaries to Rugby. The Arnold Foundation, named after a former Headmaster, Dr Thomas Arnold, and established in 2003, provides additional financial support for pupils who would benefit from a boarding education. The school is situated in the heart of Rugby, with the buildings, including the boarding houses, being concentrated close to School House, the historic centre of the school.
- 1.2 The school's principal aim is to develop rounded individuals who are also useful members of the community. It also seeks to preserve many traditions, including that of constant innovation. The school is run as a charitable trust and administered by a governing body with a number of sub-committees, which report either directly to the main board or through the finance committee.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, the school has expanded the provision made by the Arnold Foundation and created the SpringBoard Boarding Foundation, intended to provide bursaries at independent and state boarding schools. The school has also extended its outreach programme. There is a new building for the teaching of modern languages and a sixth-form facility, the Collingwood Centre.
- 1.4 There are currently 802 pupils on roll, 443 boys and 359 girls, of whom 658 are boarders, so that day pupils make up around one-sixth of the school. A small number of pupils enter at the age of 11, with most joining the school at the age of 13. Pupils are drawn from nearly 300 schools, locally, nationally and internationally. There are 348 pupils in the sixth form.
- 1.5 The ability profile of the senior school and the sixth form is above the national average. Pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds, but with no predominant group. A large majority of pupils comes from business and professional backgrounds, but the various scholarship and bursary schemes provide financial support for one-third of pupils, with around one-twelfth coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. One hundred and twenty pupils are identified as requiring support for special educational needs and/ or disabilities (SEND) and thirty-six receive specialist support; one pupil has a statement of educational needs. Eighty-seven pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) of which twenty receive additional support.
- 1.6 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

Senior School

School	NC name
G1	Year 7
G2	Year 8
F Block	Year 9
E Block	Year 10
D Block	Year 11
LXX	Year 12
XX	Year 13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Rugby School is highly successful in realising its aims, principally the development of pupils' all-round skills and talents and a strong sense of service to the community. Academic levels of achievement are excellent and pupils make rapid progress, including in the sixth form. The curriculum is broad and offers suitable levels of choice, providing valuable opportunities for self-directed study through individual research projects. The curriculum is complemented by an extensive enrichment programme. Pupils benefit from an excellent range of extra-curricular activities within which there are outstanding successes, both at individual and at team levels. Pupils throughout the school are excellent learners and are well-motivated, articulate, receptive and alert. They show creativity within music, art and drama and are confident users of information and communication technology (ICT). The quality of teaching is excellent, characterised by a scholarly and well-organised approach. The best teaching uses innovative methods to inspire and engage the pupils but there is an inconsistency in the quality of teaching, seen in a small number of lessons. Following the previous inspection, the overall quality of teaching and the quality of marking and assessment have improved, with pupils now receiving more detailed advice on what they need to do to improve the quality of their work.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent, both for boarders and for day pupils. Pupils grow and mature in a supportive environment which enables them to become confident, happy and self-reflective, whilst developing a deep-rooted concern for others. The quality of care is excellent and pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Relationships are based around mutual respect and trust, and the chaplaincy, together with the houses, provides a corner-stone upon which a harmonious community is built. Arrangements for health and safety are good and there is a strong commitment towards safeguarding the welfare of pupils on a day-to-day basis. However, not all of the necessary recruitment checks were made on a number of staff prior to beginning work at the school. The quality of boarding is good overall; the outcomes for boarders and the quality of provision and care are both excellent.
- 2.3 Governance is good and benefits from the commitment, experience and wide-ranging skills of the governing body. The committee structure is highly effective and governors maintain a strong strategic role in helping to shape the development of the school. Leadership and management are good overall, with senior leadership being particularly strong and providing a clear vision for the development of the school. Academic middle management is effective, although there are variations in practice between departments. Pastoral management is excellent. Links with parents are excellent as confirmed by their overwhelmingly positive responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

- ensure that all required checks on the suitability of staff, including references and medicals, and, in the event that the DBS disclosure is delayed, separate barred list check, are made before they start work at the school, and record dates for right to work and overseas checks on the single central register [Part 4, paragraphs 19(2)(a) and (e) 19(3) and 22(3)(e) and (f), under Suitability of staff and proprietors; and, for the same reason, Part 3, paragraphs 7(a) and (b), and 8(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety, and National Minimum Standards 11, under Child protection, and 14.1, under Staff recruitment and checks on other adults].

2.5 The school does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013, as described above.

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

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

1. Ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching so that a higher proportion matches the standard of the best.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils are articulate and confident learners who demonstrate high levels of knowledge, skills and understanding across an extensive range of subject areas. This is in line with the school's statements of values which seeks to unlock and develop pupils' individual skills and talents. All ages and abilities, including those with EAL, SEND and the most able make rapid progress. Pupils write accurately and with imagination, and also communicate fluently in their own and other languages. They are good and attentive listeners, and show high levels of logical thought. They can apply numerical concepts adroitly across the curriculum. Pupils are confident users of ICT, making excellent use of the school's web-based resources. In Years 12 and 13, pupils show highly-developed research skills and are adept at analysing and synthesising arguments. Pupils also show well-developed design skills and imagination in aesthetic and creative subjects; their physical aptitudes are promoted through an extensive sports programme within which they are outstandingly successful.
- 3.3 Pupils are highly successful across a wide range of academic competitions, including Olympiads, mathematical challenges and national essay competitions. The sporting achievement of pupils is outstanding. Teams perform strongly in regional and national competitions across a very wide range of sports and several pupils compete at international level.
- 3.4 Pupils demonstrate excellent creative and performance skills in drama and music, and there are regular, high-level performances, such as at the recently-established concerto concerts, within which pupils demonstrate outstanding instrumental and compositional skills. Membership of national performing groups in music and theatre is common. Pupils tackle ambitious dramatic concepts with flair and a significant number continue their studies at the leading drama colleges and music conservatoires, often with instrumental or choral scholarships. Pupils regularly gain places at universities in the UK, the USA and elsewhere, which have the highest entry requirements.
- 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. GCSE performance has been excellent in relation to the national average for maintained schools, and good in relation to the national average for maintained selective schools. Results in 2012 were lower than in 2010-11. Overall, IGCSE results have been higher than worldwide norms and similar to UK norms, with English results being higher than UK norms. The performance in 2013 saw the school achieving its highest ever percentage of A* grades at GCSE.
- 3.6 A-level results also have been excellent in relation to the national average for maintained schools, and good in relation to the national average for maintained selective schools although results have shown a decline since 2010. The performance of girls exceeds that of boys. The levels of attainment at GCSE, A-level and in the Cambridge Pre-University course (Pre-U) indicate that pupils make excellent progress in relation to pupils of similar ability, as shown by standardised measures of progress. Those pupils with SEND and EAL achieve at levels commensurate with their peers, benefiting from the high level of extra support

available, including detailed individual education plans and careful monitoring. The excellent progress of highly able and talented pupils is facilitated by an extensive programme, including lectures, academic societies, and participation in a wide range of regional and national academic competitions.

- 3.7 Pupils work with enthusiasm, both individually and with others, have good note-making and organisational skills, and consistently demonstrate an excellent standard of behaviour and determination. They show a real sense of pride in their work.

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 wide-ranging and provides effective coverage of all the required areas of learning. It fully meets the needs of its pupils and offers considerable choice at both GCSE and in Years 12 and 13 where both A-level and Pre-U courses are available. There have been a number of significant changes since the previous inspection. The number of Pre-U subjects has been increased and computing has been introduced at both GCSE and A level, whilst ICT has been re-introduced into Year 9 to develop pupils' skills in this field and to support those subsequently wishing to study computing.

- 3.10 The breadth of the curriculum is highly effective and it makes a strong contribution to meeting the school's aim of helping pupils to develop their individual interests and talents and their excellent achievement. The wide variety of languages available, to which Ancient Greek ab initio in the Sixth Form has been added, allows them to fully develop their linguistic skills. The provision of a broad range of arts opportunities, starting in Years 7 and 8, and further developed through a carousel in Year 9, allows pupils to develop their creative and design skills. Some departments place pupils in sets according to their ability in order to cater better for their needs, and this is effective in most subjects. There is excellent provision for pupils with EAL and SEND. This arises through specialist support, lunchtime "drop in" sessions and one-to-one or small group tutorials.

- 3.11 The school operates a special programme for its scholars which can be joined by other pupils, allowing all to benefit from the enrichment opportunities provided. The extensive programme of day and residential trips, talks by visiting speakers, and the wide range of clubs and societies, provide intellectually challenging opportunities for all ages, further enriching the curriculum.

- 3.12 A programme of thinking skills in Year 9, followed by an independent research project in Year 11, and the opportunity to undertake the Extended Project Qualification in an area of their choice in Years 12 and 13, develop pupils' academic and research skills. The personal, social and health education programme is highly effective and relevant to pupils, and includes issues such as internet safety and the ethics of mobile phone use. There is also helpful and detailed advice on the choices of subject which are available at the various stages of schooling. An effective careers and higher education programme, taught in Years 12 and 13, focuses on options after leaving school, and provides valuable advice, including through the biennial careers convention. It is highly regarded by pupils, as is the one-to-one support which the department provides.

- 3.13 The extra-curricular programme is extensive and of high quality. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme flourishes, many sports are available and the range of activities on Thursday afternoons is outstanding. These provide numerous

opportunities for leadership and team-building, for example within the Combined Cadet Force, whilst also allowing pupils to link very strongly with the local community through activities such as helping in academic clubs for primary school children, visiting the elderly or a young offenders institution, and assisting the disabled. There are strong links with 'Future Hope School', which helps vulnerable children in India, and an agreement with the Coventry Diocesan Board of Education, whereby Rugby pupils act as mentors in local primary schools. Amongst many other initiatives, pupils from other schools are invited to lectures and local primary school children attend music and drama performances. Participation in such activities helps to develop pupils' sense of responsibility to society more widely, and successfully meets the school's aim of serving the community.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.14 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.15 Teaching enables pupils to make rapid progress, and they benefit from the teachers' very clear understanding of their needs; pupils' high levels of achievement are further supported by the strong rapport between teachers and pupils. Teaching is well managed and pupils' behaviour in lessons is excellent. However, there is some inconsistency in the quality overall.
- 3.16 In the best lessons, teaching fosters interest and independence in the pupils, who respond well to taking responsibility and contribute willingly to class discussions. In a small minority of lessons, an exam-centred approach, and a lack of variation in the classroom activity, hinders pupils' opportunity for independence and slows the rate of progress.
- 3.17 Teaching is well planned with clear lesson objectives and this contributes significantly to pupils' high levels of achievement. In a few cases, the relatively short length of lessons inhibits the extent to which ideas can be developed, so reducing the effectiveness of some teaching, and the staggered pupil arrival was also observed to undermine a few lessons. The detailed support sheets for pupils with SEND are used effectively by teachers to aid the pupils' learning. The school makes the required provision for any pupils with statements, ensuring that they receive effective, external support. The most able pupils are clearly identified but specific additional challenge is not routinely provided within lessons.
- 3.18 Teaching utilises a range of methods, including tasks which help to ensure challenge. Collaborative learning was observed in a mathematics lesson, where a carefully designed seating plan and excellent use of the interactive whiteboard, enabled pupils to learn successfully from one another. Innovative teaching methods were observed in a politics lesson in which careful questioning and imaginative resources helped promote an active and challenging learning environment, so leading to rapid progress.
- 3.19 Teaching resources are exceptional and are ably exploited by teachers to provide highly effective support for pupils. In interviews, pupils commented on the variety of resources at their disposal, including the library, language laboratories and music practice rooms, as well as resources held on-line. The extensive range of lectures and seminars does much to provide extra academic challenge for the most able and the increasingly innovative use of web-based resources further supports learning. For example, in music, pupils' individual performances are recorded to enable them

to assess their own work and the use of a 'blog' in modern languages helps to monitor their progress in oral work with language assistants.

- 3.20 Teachers' subject knowledge is uniformly outstanding and helps to provide academic and intellectual challenge for pupils of all abilities. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a minority of pupils felt that they were given too much work and this view was supported in some pupil interviews. Inspectors, however, found no evidence that the level of work set was inappropriate. Within a climate of high expectation, pupils comment that they feel well supported by the teaching staff, some of whom they refer to as inspirational. This support greatly benefits pupils' view of themselves as learners and their self-confidence.
- 3.21 Marking and assessment is generally of a high quality and, although there is a considerable variation in approach within and across departments, pupils feel that the feedback is effective in showing them what they need to do to improve. The best marking is highly supportive, making clear where further action is needed, but in a few cases there is insufficient regularity and depth of analysis in the assessment of pupils' work. Progress has been made with assessment since the previous inspection, with an increased usage of data to set targets and to monitor the progress of pupils. Innovative approaches were observed in lessons, for example in a physical education (PE) lesson, where peer assessment, using the examination board's marking criteria, successfully helped deepen pupils' understanding.

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 development is excellent and strongly reflects the school's Christian foundation. Pupils are also respectful of the beliefs of others. They are unpretentious and tolerant, in line with the school's statement of values. They also show an honest and open understanding of their strengths and shortcomings. Pupils are deeply affected by the majesty of the school, its history and its surroundings, and are inspired by them. They receive a strong spiritual lead from the chaplaincy and through this they explore further their understanding of and commitment to their faith. The sense of oneness and of community is a striking feature of the chapel services.
- 4.3 Pupils' moral development is excellent. They have a clear sense of right and wrong, and feel that the 'Guidelines for Life at Rugby School', a document which encapsulates the moral code which pupils are expected to keep, presents a fair challenge which they willingly embrace. Pupils have an excellent awareness of global issues, and through debate and personal research projects, they explore challenging issues, such as the independence of the judiciary and animal rights, with considerable interest and success. They are respectful of others and accept willingly the need for high standards of conduct.
- 4.4 Pupils' social development is excellent. They engage well in the to-and-fro of school life; they are courteous in their actions and demeanour, and in their respect for the authorities in the wider community. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils suggested there were too few opportunities to take responsibility. Inspection evidence, however, did not support this view; there are ample opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, for example within the houses, and through the school councils and the prefect (Levéé) bodies. Pupils' generosity in supporting charitable activities, including their substantial involvement with the town of Rugby, aids their social development as individuals with a sure sense of self-worth and as unselfish, active members of a team, ready to serve others. Pupils also have a mature understanding of political and economic issues, and they debate such ideas openly and intelligently.
- 4.5 Pupils' cultural development is excellent. There are many occasions throughout the year during which pupils learn about, appreciate and share in artistic and linguistic events, most notably the arts festival at the end of the summer term, and through the myriad of societies, trips and visits within local, regional, national and international contexts. Pupils appreciate the Western cultural tradition, but also show a genuine interest in and respect for other faiths and cultures, reflected in the easy manner with which all nationalities and faiths mingle in houses and the quick and generous assimilation of new pupils into the life of school.
- 4.6 Pupils accept readily the role which the school expects them to play as supportive and valued members of society, something which has been further emphasised in the most recent review of the school's aims. The shared values of the pupils are one of the major unifying features of the school. Pupils believe in the transforming power of education and service, and they assume a personal responsibility for ensuring that life at Rugby is indeed friendly and happy for all, so that, by the time they leave, they have an outstanding level of personal development.

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

- 4.7 The quality of pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 Tutors and housemasters and housemistresses work closely together to support pupils over both personal and academic matters in line with their aims, and this level of pastoral care makes a strong contribution to their personal development. Both day and boarding pupils express overwhelmingly positive views about the care which they receive, including within Marshall House which is the day house for Years 7 and 8.
- 4.9 The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is excellent. Pupils also have exceptionally good relationships with each other, both within and across year groups. Within houses, staff are committed, know the pupils extremely well and care deeply about their progress and personal development. Record keeping is thorough as is the sharing of concerns. A long established and very effective counselling service is well used by pupils.
- 4.10 Food is nutritious and generally pupils are encouraged to eat healthily. The extensive sports facilities and the commitment of staff to a wide variety of sports, ensure that pupils of all abilities get regular and appropriate exercise. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, a minority of pupils commented that the school did not respond to their opinions. Inspection evidence, including interviews with pupils, found that pupils' voices are heard effectively through the school councils which report to the Levée and senior management bodies.
- 4.11 The school promotes good behaviour very successfully and creates an environment which is effective at guarding against harassment. Pupils report that bullying is rare and that they know how to respond to it and seek help for themselves or others, should it be necessary. Study of school logs and other documentation shows that incidences of bullying are carefully recorded and monitored and managed constructively. Poor behaviour is dealt with appropriately either in houses or by senior managers, depending on its seriousness. A minority of the pupils who completed pre-inspection questionnaires expressed concern over the consistency of application of rewards and sanctions but inspection evidence, including interviews with pupils and scrutiny of school records and documentation, did not support this view.
- 4.12 The school has an appropriate three-year plan for improving access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.13 The school's arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils are good.
- 4.14 These arrangements make a strong contribution to the pupils' personal development. The safeguarding policy is comprehensive. All staff receive suitable child protection training, including on internet safety, and it is updated as required. There are excellent links with local external agencies. Pupils feel very safe in the school environment. A staff committee monitors carefully all potentially vulnerable pupils in the school and referrals for additional support are made where appropriate. Staff recruitment procedures have not always been completed before members of staff began work at the school although all staff have had an enhanced criminal record disclosure.

- 4.15 All necessary measures are taken to minimise the risks from fire and other hazards. Full and detailed records of fire evacuation drills are maintained, including those within the boarding houses. All main areas of the school have trained designated fire marshals. Call points, fire extinguishers, emergency lighting and electrical equipment are regularly tested and maintained by qualified personnel. Risk assessments associated with the premises, and with school trips and activities, are appropriately detailed, identifying controls needed to minimise hazards, and they are carefully monitored.
- 4.16 The medical centre, where doctors and well-qualified nursing staff are available to assist any pupil who becomes ill or sustains an injury, ensures that the welfare of pupils, including those with SEND, is a priority. Suitably qualified staff with first-aid training are readily available throughout the school.
- 4.17 Pupils are registered three times per day in their boarding houses, and twice a day in the day house. Lateness and absence are recorded centrally. The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained, and correctly stored for the previous three years.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.18 The quality of boarding education is excellent.
- 4.19 The outcomes for boarders are excellent and reflect fully the school's commitment to being a seven days a week school with a strong boarding ethos. The boarders' personal development is very successfully promoted by their boarding experience so that they are engaging, polite, articulate and quietly confident. They are also tolerant and show integrity. Senior boarders undertake positions of responsibility within the house and take their roles seriously. Boarders have a strong sense of loyalty to their individual houses and relationships within the houses are harmonious. Overseas boarders are integrated well into the community and cultural differences are appreciated and respected. Boarders enjoy being part of the community and feel that their views are listened to and acted upon where appropriate, both through regular house meetings and through food and house committees. Boarders have an excellent rapport with boarding staff, including assistants, tutors, matrons and cleaners.
- 4.20 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. House staff carefully monitor the progress, both academic and personal, of those in their charge and the boarding provision is highly effective in encouraging boarders to remain safe, fit and healthy. An induction programme, which includes the use of mentors, helps new pupils to settle in quickly and to make them feel part of the boarding community. House staff are dedicated and know their boarders well, providing excellent individual care and attention. All boarders are confident that they have a number of staff to whom they could turn, should they need guidance or help. An independent listener is available to all boarders and telephone numbers of appropriate helplines, including the Children's Rights Director, are clearly displayed.
- 4.21 The school's medical centre offers excellent care with provision for looking after boarders overnight if they are too ill to remain in their house. Boarders can access a range of medical personnel at the centre, including a counsellor, a physiotherapist and a podiatrist. Other specialists, if needed, are available within the locality. Many boarding staff have been trained in first aid and boarders can be given basic household medicines from locked cabinets in their house matron's room. House

medical records are kept meticulously and are regularly checked by the medical centre.

- 4.22 The tradition of 'in-house dining' is integral to the pastoral care of the boarders. Both boarders and staff eat together regularly in a homely and civilised atmosphere. Menus are published and constantly reviewed to cater for the preferences of the boarders. Food is wholesome and nutritious with a good choice which meets the needs of all boarders, including those with special dietary requirements. Facilities for the preparation of food in all houses are clean and hygienic. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and in subsequent interviews, a small minority of boarders expressed some concerns about the food. In the majority of houses this was not seen to be a problem, but inspection evidence did find that there are inconsistencies between the houses with regard to the quality and quantity of the food. There is good provision for drinking water and snacks which are readily available to boarders within their houses. Excellent laundry provision is made for all boarders' clothing and bedding. All houses have an in-house facility and items of clothing are washed and returned within 24 hours.
- 4.23 The range of extra –curricular activities available to boarders is excellent. Boarders are directed and busy throughout the week, but still have sufficient free time for relaxation. In interviews, all expressed appreciation for the time available on a Sunday. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, a small minority of boarders expressed unhappiness with the balance of free time, but interviews and informal discussions with boarders did not support this view. Social events are organised at weekends for all years and are attended by the majority. The external, communal areas of the school and individual house gardens provide safe spaces for relaxation.
- 4.24 Boarding accommodation is comfortable and well furnished. All boarders have adequate space to study, with younger boarders, who sleep in dormitory-style rooms, still having individual study areas. Older pupils have study bedrooms. Individual notice-boards allow the boarders to personalise their own space with posters and any valuables can be locked away. Suitable rooms are provided for recreation and relaxation. Toilet and washing facilities are provided in sufficient numbers with appropriate privacy. All boarding houses are well lit and suitably heated with high standards of cleanliness. The quality of the decor in boarding houses is variable but there is a scheduled rolling programme of refurbishment. Boarding accommodation is secure and is carefully protected from access by unauthorised persons. CCTV cameras are located near the entrances to boarding houses but do not encroach upon boarders' privacy.
- 4.25 The provision of newspapers, television and the internet in the boarding houses, and the use of mobile phones, enables boarders to keep in touch with the world outside and to maintain regular contact with friends and family. The school communicates highly effectively with parents, carers and guardians, and this is strongly borne out by parental responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire.
- 4.26 The effectiveness of arrangements for welfare and safeguarding within boarding is excellent. Safeguarding training is thorough and regularly updated. Clear procedures and practices, for health and safety and for fire, ensure that the safety of boarders is promoted and managed effectively by all members of the boarding team. Boarding staff are clear about the importance of boarders' welfare and monitor arrangements regularly and carefully on a day-to-day basis. There are detailed and effective policies to promote good behaviour and these are reviewed regularly.

Boarders' relationships are positive and they report that bullying is rare. Achievement within any area of school life is praised and rewarded within the boarding houses. Sanctions, when necessary, are given sensitively and fairly. Communication between members of the boarding team is excellent. Day-to-day information is shared verbally, often over a meal, as tutors have meals with the pupils along with the housemaster/mistress and matron. This informal communication is augmented by appropriate logs and diaries. Boarders are extremely well supervised, and they are supported throughout the day and night by qualified and caring staff. Emergency alert buttons at the side of each boarder's bed enable immediate contact with resident staff. Groups of boarders are often invited into the homes of resident staff, something which is appreciated by boarders and enjoyed by staff.

- 4.27 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the boarding provision is excellent. There is a clear statement of boarding principles and practice which is fully met and reflects the strong boarding ethos of the school. Boarding houses are led by a team of dedicated professionals who all have, intrinsically, a passion for boarding education. The leadership and management given by housemasters and housemistresses encompass boarders, support staff and colleagues in a community of mutual trust. Experienced house staff mentor and support colleagues who are new to boarding management roles, providing helpful and pragmatic advice. The role of senior housemaster/mistress enables the views of house staff to be represented at senior management team meetings, and also ensures that the needs of houses are appropriately reported and considered. The close relationship between boarding staff and visiting tutors ensures that boarders' needs are discussed and that action plans are implemented. Annual house development plans are not yet routinely produced, but dialogue between the house staff and senior staff means that self-evaluation and feedback take place regularly. Boarding staff, including matrons, have extensive opportunities to further develop their pastoral skills, for example through attending national conferences. The previous Ofsted inspection made no recommendations.

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 governing body benefits from a valuable range of expertise, which is appropriately deployed across the various governors' committees, including the academic committee, introduced since the previous inspection. Individual governors, with suitable training, are readily available to provide support and advice in specific areas such as financial matters, safeguarding and health and safety. Leadership of the board is committed and dedicated, and maintains close contact with the headmaster. The commitment to the Arnold Foundation is testimony to this relationship and to maintaining a broad social mix within the school. Governance benefits greatly from rigorous self-review, undertaken annually, and planning days which are devoted to strategic issues.
- 5.3 Governors show a clear and shared understanding of the school's values and are highly effective in ensuring that the school has the necessary financial, staffing and other resources available. Governance provides appropriate challenge and support to leadership and is kept well informed through detailed reports from the senior management team. Academic standards are carefully reviewed by the education committee which also receives regular reports from staff to enable governors to keep abreast of educational issues.
- 5.4 Governors meet all senior staff over the course of the year and there are regular opportunities for them to meet with other staff, for example when they stay overnight in the boarding houses, prior to governors' meetings. Policies are monitored with appropriate regularity, including the annual review by the full board of the policies for safeguarding and health and safety. However, oversight and monitoring of the process for recruitment checks has not been sufficiently rigorous.
- 5.5 The arrangements for governor induction are comprehensive, and governors are alerted to relevant training opportunities. Biennial child protection training is provided and governors also attend external courses to endeavour to discharge their responsibilities as required.

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 provides a clear vision, strongly focused on achieving the school's principal aims to create a distinctive community which welcomes pupils of all backgrounds and interests, and develops rounded individuals who play a full part in society. This vision is strongly supported by the staff and pupils who are committed to the spirit of service which pervades the school. This was highlighted as an important factor in the school's achievement at the previous inspection and continues to be a significant contributor to its overall success. Leadership and management are effective at all levels and are very successful in ensuring that the school's aims are met. Senior leadership provides excellent channels of

communication, creating an open and supportive environment which is appreciated by staff and pupils.

- 5.8 There is a comprehensive five-year development plan, and the senior management team has an annual strategy day where the school's progress in meeting its priorities is evaluated and targets for the following year are identified. Staff have the opportunity to contribute to these priorities through pastoral and academic committees; this ensures a commitment towards continuous improvement, whilst always keeping the needs of the pupils at the centre.
- 5.9 Teaching and learning are integral to both departmental plans and the whole school's academic action plan. The quality of departmental action plans is variable, with the best having clear goals, timescales, staff responsibilities and criteria for success. Since the previous inspection there has been an increased focus on pedagogy and sharing good practice amongst staff, although a small amount of less successful teaching remains. In addition, the use of pupil questionnaires in a number of subjects is emerging as a useful tool in providing feedback to teachers and is also beginning to have a positive impact on teaching and learning. In line with the school's aims, curricular innovation is further encouraged and has resulted in Rugby being at the forefront of developments in the Pre-U and Extended Project Qualifications.
- 5.10 Departments enjoy a sense of autonomy and appreciate the trust which senior managers place in them. The senior management team monitors the work of subject departments and boarding houses through annual performance reviews, informal observations and, where appropriate, via the examination of pupils' work. This is carried out in a supportive manner with a strong focus on self-evaluation and the setting of agreed targets. Middle managers have their own systems for assuring quality and sharing best practice within their departments, although there is some inconsistency in the rigour of the processes being used.
- 5.11 The overall quality of pastoral leadership is outstanding. The school ensures that close communication between teachers and house staff is rapidly established, for example by arranging that new teachers are invited to lunch at every boarding house in the course of their first term. Excellent pastoral leadership and management in houses is underpinned by a thorough and thoughtful induction programme for housemasters and housemistresses.
- 5.12 The school is very successful in recruiting and retaining high quality staff. All staff, including support staff, receive comprehensive training in safeguarding and in welfare, health and safety, and they undergo a thorough induction process. During the inspection it was identified that some processes, such as references, barred list and medical checks, were not completed on some staff before they began work at the school, and the single central register did not record the dates for right to work and overseas checks. However, the school has now strengthened its management procedures with the intention of ensuring that this failure is not repeated.
- 5.13 Since the previous inspection, the frequency of teacher appraisals has been increased and these are now conducted on a biennial basis. Appraisal targets are not always explicitly and systematically linked to the priorities of the school development plan, but their outcomes are supported by a generous staff development budget. Support staff undertake a brief annual appraisal. Following the Arnold legacy, senior leadership is committed to developing the skills and

professional profile of staff both within the school and in contributing to developments in education at a local and national level.

- 5.14 Parents are overwhelmingly positive regarding the quality of education and degree of support provided for their child. Their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed high levels of satisfaction with the school's provision and achievements. Parents say that the school creates a stimulating environment for pupils through a wide range of academic and extra-curricular activities, that it sets high expectations for all pupils and that it cares equally for every ability level. During interviews, parents said that the school manages the setting of intellectual challenges with a great deal of success. Parents are clear, too, that pupils with SEND receive structured and effective support.
- 5.15 Excellent communication exists between the school and parents. Parents single out the warmth of the school environment as central to the ease with which informal contact can be made with a range of school staff. They value highly the quality of information which the school provides, including house newsletters, social media, the parent portal, the 'blue book' which is a comprehensive listing of governors, staff and pupils, e-mail, and the parents' section of the school website. Parents emphasised the particular importance of the portal, appreciating the immediacy of the information and the way in which it enables them to keep abreast of their child's development.
- 5.16 The school has a clear complaints policy which is effectively implemented. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents praise the speed with which their concerns are addressed and the sensitivity of the school's responses. Inspection evidence, including a study of the school's detailed records, and interviews with parents themselves, confirms this view and supports the school's tripartite approach to the resolution of problems, involving close communication between staff, parents, and pupils.
- 5.17 Parents have excellent opportunities to become involved in the progress of their child's education and there are numerous events at which parents are welcomed, thereby ensuring that they quickly become integrated into the life of the school. These events include meetings for new parents, social activities coinciding with the weekends of parents' meetings, sports fixtures, concerts, careers and higher education briefings, house plays, and even participation in the long-established Crick run.
- 5.18 Parents receive regular reports and feedback with regard to their child's progress via a combination of full reports, interim reports, exam reports and parents' meetings. Since the previous inspection the quality of subject reports has come to match the high quality of the pastoral reports and they provide parents with a very constructive picture of their child's progress, while the detailed suggestions for academic enrichment or improvement help parents to assess accurately the future direction to be pursued.

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