



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

COLLINGHAM

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Collingham

Full Name of School	Collingham
DfE Number	207/6362
Address	Collingham 23 Collingham Gardens London SW5 0HL England
Telephone Number	020 72447414
Email Address	london@collingham.co.uk
Principal	Dr Sally Powell
Chairman of Proprietors	Mr Robert Marsden
Age Range	14 to 19
Total Number of Students	177
Gender of Students	Mixed (104 boys; 73 girls)
Inspection Dates	13 Oct 2015 to 16 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.

This is the school's first inspection by ISI. It was last inspected by Ofsted in September 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.

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 students and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the board of directors, and observed the registration procedure. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured students. The responses of parents and students to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr George Fisher	Reporting Inspector
Mr Alistair McConville	Team Inspector (Head of Department, HMC school)
Mr Alastair Reid	Team Inspector (Headmaster, ISA and IAPS school)
Mr James Sheridan	Team Inspector (Principal, GSA school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Collingham is an independent, co-educational day school which opened in 1975. The school is based on two sites, about half a mile apart, in Kensington, London. One site is mainly used for students studying GCSE courses; the other is for sixth formers, who study a wide range of one-year and two-year courses.
- 1.2 The school's principal aim is to provide excellent teaching in small tutorial groups, as part of a bespoke programme which addresses the needs of individual students. This should be underpinned by the values of excellence, inclusivity, individuality and support. Collingham is a proprietorial school, and governance is provided through a board of directors, which is appointed by the proprietors. There are two directors, one of whom is also the chairman of proprietors, and both assume various responsibilities for the oversight of the school. The directors are assisted by a board of visitors which provides advice and support on a range of issues.
- 1.3 The principal took up her post in January 2012. More recent changes have seen a restructuring of the senior management team, leading to the appointment of a school development manager. Supervised study sessions are now allocated to sixth-form students, and an activities and careers week is offered to students at the end of Year 12.
- 1.4 Overall ability of the students is above the national average, with a broad spread of abilities represented. At the time of the inspection, the school provided education for 177 students between the ages of 14 and 19, with 145 in the sixth form. There were 104 boys and 73 girls, the majority are of white British heritage; around one student in five come from various ethnic minority backgrounds. Most students come from professional and business families, and are drawn from a wide catchment area across London and the adjacent counties. Around one student in ten comes from overseas, with the majority living with families in the London area. Twenty students receive support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), with six having an education, health and care (EHC) plan, and one having a statement of special educational needs. Of those requiring additional support, the majority have some form of dyslexia. Twenty students have English as an additional language (EAL), of whom eleven receive specialist support from within the school.
- 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 Collingham is successful in meeting its aim of providing a bespoke education which addresses the needs of individual students. The achievements of students throughout the school are good. Students have a strong subject knowledge and understanding, in line with their ages and abilities. Taking into account students' educational varied backgrounds, they make good progress over time. Students in Years 12 and 13 have achieved notable successes in gaining places at highly selective universities and on demanding undergraduate courses. Students demonstrate good attitudes to learning, particularly within the sixth form. Students' achievements are supported by good curricular provision. The diverse and flexible nature of the examination courses are a particular strength of the school. The extra-curricular programme is geared largely to the particular interests of individual students so that there are few opportunities for team or group activities. Teaching is good, and is characterised by strong subject knowledge and excellent relationships. However, specific strategies to meet the needs of those with SEND, EAL and the most able students are not always present in the classroom.
- 2.2 Students' personal development is good overall and is strong within the sixth form. They behave respectfully and supportively towards one another and there is an atmosphere of tolerance throughout the school. Pastoral care is excellent, and is achieved through the dedicated work of the personal tutors, who provide academic and emotional support on a one-to-one basis. Excellent relationships and behaviour are evident throughout. Arrangements to promote students' welfare, health and safety are sound. A recent failure to ensure that all of the necessary checks on staff were completed prior to appointment has been rectified. Routine systems and procedures to promote health and safety are well-established, and the school was quick to remedy some minor issues identified during the inspection.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is sound. The board of directors provides an adequate oversight of the school's work, and it has endorsed the senior leadership's vision for the development of the school. However, directors have not exercised their responsibility for monitoring the school's safeguarding and recruitment procedures, nor for the regular reviewing of school policies. The quality of leadership and management is good. It provides a clear vision for the school's future. However, the monitoring of the implementation of policies is not rigorous enough because of insufficient time allocated for leaders to carry out their management responsibilities. The school maintains an excellent relationship with parents, and communication between school and home is strong.

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 actions:

- ensure that all of the required recruitment checks are carried out on all staff before they begin work at the school, with particular regard to the checks pertaining to criminal records; identity; previous employment history; references and medical fitness [Part 4, paragraphs 18.(2) (d), (3), and 19 (2) (c) under Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors and for the same reason, Part 3, paragraphs 7.(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety].

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Support the needs of students with SEND, EAL and the most able by implementing specific strategies in all lessons.
2. Ensure that the leadership arrangements provide for the timely monitoring of the school's policies and procedures.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of students' achievements and learning is good.
- 3.2 Students are well educated in accordance with the school's aim of addressing the needs of individual students. Almost all students and their parents feel that they are making good progress.
- 3.3 At all levels, students show strong understanding and knowledge, in relation to their ability. Students' skills for learning are good. They are articulate, evidenced through their presentations and discussions in a wide range of subjects, including modern foreign languages. They listen attentively to their teacher and to each other, sometimes offering constructive feedback to their peers. Well-developed writing skills were observed in extended essays, and logical thinking was evident in the construction of sophisticated arguments in history. Students read quickly and accurately, in both their own and in other languages. There is limited evidence of students reading for pleasure. Students show highly-developed creativity in their artwork, photographic compositions and creative writing. Their ability to apply mathematical concepts with confidence was evident in science topics. Practical skills are developed through experiments within science and within art and photography.
- 3.4 Students have few opportunities to develop their physical skills, and their overall level of achievement in extra-curricular activities is sound. However, support from the school has helped individuals to succeed at the highest levels, with recent representation at county or national level in tennis, skiing, trampolining and football. Further notable achievements include leadership of the National Youth Orchestra, exhibiting at the Royal College of Young Art, and the award of a place on a Nuffield research project. Most students progress to higher education, and gain places at highly selective universities and on demanding undergraduate courses. Several students have also obtained places at art colleges in London.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2012 to 2014, these being the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results at GCSE and A level have been similar to the national average for maintained secondary schools and, at A level, similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. In 2014, they were above the national average for maintained schools. 2015, one in three grades achieved at GCSE were at A* or A, and just over one half of the A-level grades were at A* to B.
- 3.6 Students' levels of attainment, taken alongside other inspection evidence based upon achievement in lessons and students' responses in interviews, shows that students make good progress to both GCSE and to A level. Students who join the school to re-take public examinations are almost always successful in raising their grades, sometimes by a considerable margin, and some successfully complete A-level courses within a year. There is no evidence of significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls. The progress of students with SEND or EAL is also good, and there is a notable development in their linguistic skills and their self-confidence. The most able occasionally make rapid progress, for example when completing a course of study in a reduced period of time. Students' progress is even more significant given their personal circumstances and backgrounds; many are re-

building their academic careers following interruptions or disappointments in their previous schools.

- 3.7 Students' attitudes to learning are positive. They are well-organised, concentrate hard in lessons and persevere with difficult tasks. Students work well by themselves, or with their peers. They take considerable pride in their work, which is usually well presented. Some students show limited initiative in their learning, as they are largely dependent upon their teachers to provide the stimulus for study.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.9 The curriculum is broad, covers all the required areas of learning, and fully supports the school's aim to provide a bespoke curriculum tailored to individual students. It contributes significantly to students' levels of achievement, and successfully meets the needs of all ages and abilities. The extra-curricular programme is less strong, and is constrained by the limitations imposed by the complexity of the timetable and the split-site nature of the school.
- 3.10 The excellent number of courses on offer, currently 26 at either GCSE or International GCSE, and 33 at A level, enable all students to select subjects which are most appropriate to their needs and interests. It ensures that teaching groups remain small, another aim of the school. Additional courses, for example in Italian and Portuguese, are regularly added on request. In the sixth form, the school promotes vocational courses, such as accountancy and law, as well as more traditional subjects, although the latter remain more popular with students. Students can choose to take these courses over one or two years, depending on their particular circumstances. Careful timetabling at all levels enables almost any combination of subjects to be studied.
- 3.11 The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme in Years 10 and 11 uses an imaginative range of resources, and focuses on issues such as healthy life-styles, relationships and citizenship. This contributes significantly to pupils' personal development. The Year 12 programme has recently been enhanced by the introduction of a study skills unit and students comment positively on its usefulness. Throughout the PSHE course, there is an active promotion of democratic values, together with a focus on the British electoral system and English law. Students are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- 3.12 There is adequate provision for information and control technology (ICT), with many students bringing in their own digital devices to supplement the school's facilities. Although opportunities to use technology are restricted, science provision is good, providing the opportunity to study three separate sciences. Creative and aesthetic subjects such as art, film and photography have a strong place within the curriculum, and this is exemplified by the high-quality displays seen in corridors and on staircases.
- 3.13 Students with SEND and EAL are supported primarily through a specialist co-ordinator who identifies their specific requirements and progress is being made in communicating these needs to teaching staff. However, their integration into curricular planning is not consistent. Students with statements and EHC plans are well supported. A structured programme for the most able students, *Electus*, has recently been introduced. The needs of the most able are currently provided for

within classes, occasional enrichment activities, or through taking an accelerated course of study.

- 3.14 A minority of students and parents, in the respective questionnaires, expressed a view that students could not take part in a wide range of activities. It is clear that the school seeks to broaden participation in such activities, but this also requires greater support from students themselves. Recreational chess is much in evidence and there is a boys' football club, an art club, and opportunities to practise public speaking. Inspectors judged that the school's approach was reasonable, given the many academic demands on students, their long working days and the flexibility in the curriculum which is enjoyed by many of them. An activities week in the summer provides Year 12 with a range of options, including museum visits, outdoor pursuits and writing workshops. Furthermore, some students choose the school because the timetabling flexibility allows them to continue with an existing area of excellence alongside their studies.
- 3.15 There are limited links with the local community. Some older students have recently started to help as volunteers at a food bank, and there is an evolving scheme which provides support for children at local primary schools.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.16 The quality of teaching is good.
- 3.17 This enables students to make good progress within their bespoke programmes, and ensures that the school is successful in meeting its aims. Teachers generally have excellent subject knowledge, which is evident in the breadth and depth of reference observed in lessons. They also show a strong awareness of the requirements of examination courses, whilst often showing the ability to extend knowledge and thinking beyond such constraints.
- 3.18 The quality of lesson planning is sound. Long-term planning, as seen in schemes of work, shows appropriate curriculum coverage, with a range of assessments being built in periodically. Some short-term planning, as seen in lesson plans, lacks reference to the adjustments to be made for students with SEND or EAL. However, the needs of pupils with statements or EHC plans are met. Tasks or strategies to stretch the most able students are not used consistently.
- 3.19 Teaching time is generally managed well, with lessons starting punctually, and high expectations are apparent in students' readiness to learn and to concentrate. The pace of lessons is generally brisk and changes to the activity and short breaks are used successfully to break up longer sessions. Lessons are sometimes interrupted by the registration process, resulting in a loss of concentration. The use of resources is good. The limitations of space in some teaching areas are a constraining factor in some lessons. Much teaching makes use of relevant stimuli, such as exemplar examination material, to focus learning. However, little use of ICT as a teaching tool was observed; the interactive whiteboards in classrooms are seldom used.
- 3.20 Enthusiastic teaching and warm relationships between staff and students ensure a high level of enjoyment is apparent. Teaching generally fosters independence by encouraging students to collaborate with one another, or to present their findings from research homework, or to lead discussions. In many lessons a range of learning activities is used to involve all students, allowing them to learn from one another through structured collaborative exercises. In some lessons a spirit of

inquisitiveness and intellectual enquiry is fostered by enabling discussion to extend beyond the confines of syllabus requirements. Teaching within PSHE was noteworthy for the way in which it promoted tolerance and respect, and for the non-partisan way in which political issues were covered.

- 3.21 Teachers often employ effective, seminar-style discussion providing close individual attention. The positive encouragement given to students is a notable feature, and behaviour is consistently excellent. Teaching is strongly directed towards success in public examinations, and the tight focus in this area enables good progress towards this aim. Targeted questioning, to ensure that all students participate, is a feature of most teaching. In a small proportion of lessons, teaching is too reliant on note-taking from the board. The resulting lack of opportunity for students to participate causes some students to become passive.
- 3.22 The majority of the marking and assessment is good, with some excellent practice at sixth-form level. Students have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve because of clear, constructive comments on their work, as well as helpful oral feedback. However, a small proportion of GCSE work showed little evidence of marking, indicating that the school's marking policy is not applied universally. Half-termly reports and regular, timed assessments are helpful in letting students know how well they are progressing. Overall, students report a high level of satisfaction with the feedback which they receive on their work, and are very positive about the role their teachers play in enabling them to make progress.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE STUDENTS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

- 4.1 The quality of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- 4.2 Students' spiritual development is good and can be seen in their everyday exchanges within the school. They are confident and self-aware. Students are emotionally mature for their age and respond warmly to being treated as individuals. They show some inquisitiveness, most notably where it is triggered by the stimulus of academic teaching. There are no formal assemblies, but the school readily gives permission for absence for religious observation and this is respected by the school community. Students are sensitively aware of the tolerance needed over religious observance in the UK's multi-cultural society.
- 4.3 Students have an excellent moral awareness. There are few obvious rules in the school, but the 'be all you can be' posters in corridors which advocate tolerance, respect, punctuality, politeness, safety, common sense and enjoyment, aptly summarise the prevailing ethos. Students show a strong moral development, and a sense of fair play, justice and decency, as seen in their informal conversations in the café. Classroom discussions, including those within PSHE lessons, show a strong environmental awareness, for example with regard to food origins, and a sympathetic understanding of the ethical issues surrounding the current refugee crisis. Students have a clear sense of right and wrong, are proud of their community. They show a good understanding and respect for English civil and criminal law.
- 4.4 Students' social development is good. They are thoughtful, courteous and approachable. A broader sense of social awareness is demonstrated by their occasional support for local charities. Students develop age-appropriate levels of political and economic awareness through the PSHE programmes. Students are aware of their responsibilities within a wider democratic society. A majority of students indicated in their questionnaires that there were few opportunities to take responsibility. There are no formal student positions of responsibility within the school, so that leadership skills are under-developed, and so inspection evidence supports this view.
- 4.5 Students' cultural awareness is strong. British values, such as tolerance, mutual regard, individual liberty and respect for the rule of law, integral to the school's ethos and Western cultural tradition, are well understood. Older students are at ease in talking about the dangers of radicalisation and show a good awareness of current affairs and cultural debates, such as those relating to asylum seekers. Students maintain harmonious relationships with others who come from family backgrounds which are very different from their own, and they understand that any form of discrimination is unacceptable.
- 4.6 Students achieve a good level of personal development by the time they leave, and this is particularly apparent in the maturity of the sixth-form students. The school is therefore successful in meeting its aim that every individual should be valued equally. Their sense of ambition and self-esteem is strong. Lengthy, daily journeys for some, and the need for timetables that are sometimes split across the two sites, ensure that they develop their independence. Inspection evidence, including

responses to the questionnaires and interviews with students, shows how much students appreciate the positive effect which the school has on educational careers which have sometimes been disrupted elsewhere.

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

- 4.7 The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 The high quality of support and guidance strongly supports students' personal development. Personal tutors play a key role in the pastoral system, taking care to build a relationship with their tutees quickly, and to meet them regularly on a one-to-one basis. Students feel confident that there is a member of staff to whom they may turn for help. Personal tutors also provide helpful career guidance. This is important in helping students to understand their options for further study or employment.
- 4.9 Relationships between staff and students, and amongst the students themselves, are excellent. The atmosphere in lessons is friendly and supportive. This encourages community integration and students clearly enjoy each other's company. Many students said how much they look forward to coming to school each day.
- 4.10 Students are encouraged through the PSHE programme and visual reminders to be aware of the importance of regular exercise and healthy eating habits. The school café provides an excellent selection of meals, with a range of healthy choices. The school is fully alert to those students who may have an eating disorder.
- 4.11 The school has established a very positive ethos that promotes good behaviour. Any misbehaviour is dealt with appropriately, and in line with school policy. Students said that the school guards effectively against bullying, including cyber-bullying, and harassment. They indicate that bullying is rare and is swiftly dealt with. This was confirmed by interviews with staff and a scrutiny of behaviour records.
- 4.12 In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of students said that they felt that the school did not ask for their views. Inspection evidence noted that students are encouraged to provide feedback on their experience and, furthermore, students themselves said that they felt confident to raise matters informally, either through their personal tutors or through teaching staff.
- 4.13 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for students with SEND or other disabilities.

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

- 4.14 The school's arrangements for welfare, health and safety are sound.
- 4.15 The procedures which are now in place are effective in safeguarding and promoting the welfare and well-being of students. The safeguarding policy was reviewed prior to the inspection to bring it into line with current requirements. There is a suitable programme of training for all staff and new members of staff receive a briefing on safeguarding as part of the induction process. Detailed records are maintained. However, within the recent past, there have been deficiencies in the recruitment procedures for staff, whereby some staff have begun work before all of the required pre-appointment checks have been carried out. A robust system is now in place, and all of the necessary checks have now been carried out and are properly recorded.

- 4.16 Arrangements to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards are effective. Emergency evacuations are properly recorded and equipment and fire safety measures are regularly monitored. Several staff have additional training in their role as fire wardens.
- 4.17 The school has appropriate measures in place to promote the health and safety of students. Risk assessments for trips off-site, and for all areas within the school, are carried out and reviewed annually. Some tend to be generic in nature. The sites themselves, whilst crowded at times, are generally clean and maintained well. The school responded immediately to a few weaknesses which were noted during the inspection. The school buildings are secure, and visitors are carefully monitored.
- 4.18 Arrangements for the medical and health care of students, including those with particular needs, are co-ordinated centrally and several staff across both sites have first-aid qualifications. The medical rooms both provide an adequate facility for the temporary care of students. Following the previous inspection by OFSTED in 2011, the school has now created an outdoor area on the GCSE site which acts as a suitable place for students' recreation and relaxation. This regulatory requirement is therefore met.
- 4.19 The school records students' attendance at lessons throughout the day. However, the centralised record of attendance on the sixth-form site is sometimes incomplete. The admission register is maintained correctly, and both records are stored for the required three-year period.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is sound.
- 5.2 The board has a good overview of the school's work, and provides suitable challenge to its leadership. It has a clear understanding of the strategic priorities which senior leaders have established and meets its responsibilities for financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and learning resources. It has an adequate balance of skills and experience. Academic oversight is provided through the occasional involvement of those from an educational background within the board of visitors.
- 5.3 The safeguarding arrangements are reviewed by the board of directors on an annual basis. One board member, suitably trained, has recently taken on a specific role for safeguarding. However, the board's oversight and monitoring of the safeguarding policy and the required recruitment checks has not been sufficiently rigorous.
- 5.4 The directors are regular visitors to the school. They have only a limited insight into its daily operation because they rarely meet students or staff. They are informed by regular reports from the leadership instead. The monthly management meetings include members of the school's senior leadership team, ensuring that there is good communication. These meetings are helpful in shaping overall school policy. However, the board is not effective in ensuring the regular review of routine policies, and their implementation. One board member has recently taken on the responsibility for chairing the health and safety committee so that governance in this area has been strengthened.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians is good.
- 5.6 The senior leadership is successful in providing clear educational direction, in accordance with the school's aim to develop the key values of excellence, inclusivity, individuality and support. A respect for others and democracy can be seen in the ethos of the school. The school is undergoing a period of transition from a tutorial college to a school, and senior leaders are highly committed to achieving this vision, which is fully supported by staff.
- 5.7 The senior management team is dedicated and hard-working. They are seen as being highly approachable by other staff. The team has recently been re-structured to bring fresh ideas to the school's development processes, with additional emphasis on the PSHE programme and on providing additional professional development. The roles of senior staff are clearly defined and are understood by the whole school community, thus enabling the team to be effective in bringing about necessary change. However, several members of the team have a large number of responsibilities, in addition to significant teaching and pastoral roles, so that hitherto the team has not been fully effective in monitoring all aspects of the school's policies.

- 5.8 In conjunction with the directors, senior management has recently created a school development plan which successfully identifies the key academic and pastoral challenges for the school. This plan is now to be shared more widely with staff to create a coherent approach to planning at all levels, and to pull together the separate aspirations of the various sections and departments within the school. Furthermore, the senior management team has recently developed a comprehensive set of policies to inform all aspects of the school's work. Senior management recognises the need for these policies to now become fully embedded in the day-to-day life of the school. The safeguarding policy required some minor amendments to ensure that it meets all current regulatory requirements. Until recently, the system for ensuring that the necessary pre-appointment checks for staff was inadequate. The current leadership has rectified this failure and, as far as possible, all of the necessary checks on current staff were completed prior to the notification of the inspection. Additionally, there is a thorough and effective safeguarding training programme for all staff, including their induction, and training records are properly maintained.
- 5.9 Senior staff have recently completed a formal school review process, including a thorough evaluation of the effectiveness of recent changes. In addition, the small size of the school and the excellent rapport between staff at all levels enables frequent informal discussion to take place about areas which require development. Staff value the openness of senior management and their willingness to listen. The informal nature of staff meetings encourages all staff to feel equally valued. Overall, senior management has created a climate of trust which inspires loyalty amongst staff.
- 5.10 Senior managers have secure strategies in place for monitoring pastoral care. The personal tutor's role and actions can be seen in meticulous recording on the school database. This underpins the highly effective pastoral management, which fully supports the aims of the school in accommodating the individual needs and requirements of the students.
- 5.11 Senior leaders are appraised by the board of directors, and other staff are appraised by senior leaders. The appraisal process is intended to be a supportive process which reinforces the excellent communication and relationships between senior management and staff. At all levels, staff are challenged through their own professionalism and desire to do their best for the school, rather than through the imposition of targets for improvement. On occasion, however, there is insufficient monitoring of outcomes, for example in the lack of sufficiently detailed planning in individual lessons.
- 5.12 The school is successful in recruiting and retaining high quality staff. Staff are appropriately trained in their roles with regard to safeguarding and health and safety. The large number of staff with teaching roles elsewhere means that other whole-school in-service training is difficult to plan. The school is developing a range of on-line resources to support the training needs of staff so that their needs can be met more flexibly. Scrutiny of training records shows a readiness on the part of all staff to undergo training specific to their roles, particularly where this relates to enhancing understanding of the requirements of the examination boards.
- 5.13 The school maintains an excellent relationship with parents. The parents who responded to the questionnaire are highly satisfied with the education and support which is provided for the students. They particularly highlighted the progress being made by their children and the high quality of the pastoral care which the school

provides. Many commented on how happy their children are at the school. A small minority of parents indicated that they did not feel they were encouraged to be involved in events and other aspects of the school life. However, other inspection evidence, including parental interviews, suggested that many parents are happy with the present arrangements.

- 5.14 All of the required policy information for parents of current and prospective students is available on the school website, as well as in paper form when requested. There is a clear complaints policy, and all such concerns are centrally recorded in line with published procedures. The school sends occasional newsletters to parents to keep them abreast of developments at the school. A parents' section of the website has also been developed so that parents can easily access further information about the school, and about the progress of their children.
- 5.15 Parents are provided with clear and useful reports on their children's progress on a half-termly basis. These reports identify specific targets for improvement, and in the questionnaire parents said that they were very satisfied with the current arrangements. Furthermore, there is a termly opportunity to discuss progress directly with staff, and parents are actively encouraged to make contact with the school at any time, should they have a concern.

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