



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
CITY OF LONDON FREEMEN'S SCHOOL**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

City of London Freeman's School

Full Name of School	City of London Freeman's School	
DfE Number	936/6061	
Registered Charity Number	0	
Address	City of London Freeman's School Ashtead Park Ashtead Surrey KT21 1ET	
Telephone Number	01372 277933	
Fax Number	01372 276165	
Email Address	philip.macdonald@cityoflondon.gov.uk	
Head	Mr Philip MacDonald	
Chair of Governors	Stuart John Fraser CBE	
Age Range	7 to 18	
Total Number of Pupils	885	
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (437 boys; 448 girls)	
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	5-11: 232
	3-5 (EYFS):	11-18: 653
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	835
Number of Boarders	Total:	50
	Full: 48	Weekly: 2
Inspection Dates	28 Apr to 01 May 2015	

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 2011.

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.

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

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

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

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

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

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for 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/the proprietor/a governors' representative/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 Bill Burn	Reporting Inspector
Mr William Norton	Team Inspector (Director of Sport, HMC school)
Mrs Gillian Proctor	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Ben Edwards	Team Inspector (Head of Sixth Form, HMC school)
Dr Simon Hyde	Team Inspector (Head, HMC school)
Mr Andrew Johnson	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Miss Helen Johnson	Team Inspector (Former Director of University Admissions, HMC school)
Mrs Anne Price	Team Inspector (Former Staff Development Co-ordinator, HMC school)
Mr Richard Gibbs	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding (Former Director of Boarding, HMC school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The City of London Freemen's School is a co-educational school for children aged seven to eighteen. The school was founded in 1854 in South London to educate the orphans of Freemen of the City of London. It has a Christian tradition although it is now non-denominational. In 1926 it moved to its present site, Ashted Park in Surrey. The school is owned by the City of London Corporation, which maintains strong links with the school and provides 16 of the 22 governors.
- 1.2 The school aims to offer an environment in which the academic, creative, physical, social and spiritual development of each pupil will equip them to become confident, fulfilled and happy, providing an education for life in an atmosphere of self-respect and care for others.
- 1.3 There are 390 pupils in the junior school, for pupils aged 7 to 13, and 495 pupils in the senior school, for pupils aged 13 to 18. Most pupils live close to the school and attend on a day basis. There are 50 boarders in the senior school, most of whom are from the Far East.
- 1.4 The school is academically selective. The ability range of the pupils up to the age of 16 is well above average, and in the sixth form above average, for maintained selective schools. Forty-nine pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 17 receive specialist learning support from the school. There are no pupils with a statement of educational needs. There are 53 pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), of whom 21 receive extra tuition in English.
- 1.5 Since the previous inspection the school has built a new boarding house and a new music school.
- 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 tables.

Junior Department

School	NC name
Form 1	Y3
Lower 2	Y4
Upper 2	Y5
Lower 3	Y6
Upper 3	Y7
Lower 4	Y8

Senior School

School	NC name
Upper 4	Y9
Lower 5	Y10
Upper 5	Y11
Lower 6	Y12
Upper 6	Y13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The quality of academic and other achievements is excellent. Pupils benefit from a flexible curriculum that enables them to choose a suitable range of subjects for GCSE, and an option to follow pre-U courses instead of A level. The academic curriculum is supported by a high-quality programme of extra-curricular activities. Pupils achieve success in national competitions such as science and mathematics Olympiads, and excel in music and games, many achieving representative level. All groups of pupils do equally well, since the school identifies any particular needs and ensures that all pupils receive appropriate support. Pupils have an excellent attitude and range of skills to enhance their learning. Teaching is excellent. It is rigorously planned, clear in its objectives, and makes use of an appropriate range and quality of resources. It makes suitable demands of all pupils. Marking is plentiful, constructive and helpful.
- 2.2 Pupils are articulate, mature and responsible at all ages. Relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and teachers are cordial and positive, and contribute significantly to pupils' personal development. Pupils are well prepared for life after they leave school. They are tolerant and respectful of others, and they benefit from excellent support from the adult members of the school. The school has yet to derive full advantage from the new boarding accommodation, opened in 2014. While informal channels allow boarders' views to be sought, more formal structures are not well developed. They have only limited space to personalise their accommodation.
- 2.3 Governance, leadership and management support the school's aims effectively. The governing body discharges its statutory obligations through efficient communication, a system of sub-committees, and delegated responsibilities. Its oversight of the school's educational provision and financial planning has enabled the school to improve its accommodation and facilities to enhance pupils' development. The leadership and management of the school at all levels have established and sustained a clear strategy for the future, based on a strong understanding of the school's needs, and a coherent and ambitious set of aims. Parents' questionnaires indicate a high level of satisfaction with the school. In most respects, recommendations from previous inspections have been fully met. Systems for recognising boarders' positive contributions are not yet embedded.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- 2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Develop more formal means for regular consultation with boarders and recognising their positive contributions.
 2. Ensure that the new boarding house is made more homely, with boarders encouraged to personalise their accommodation.

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 The school is successful in achieving its aim to provide an education of the highest quality in which each individual can reach his or her academic potential. The junior school establishes a firm foundation of knowledge, understanding and skills, which is enhanced as pupils move through to the sixth form. Many teachers work across the age range, helping to give pupils a consistent approach to learning. Pupils of all ages are articulate and able to write with fluency and accuracy. They are confident and express their knowledge and understanding with ease. The pupils' scientific understanding is excellent. They apply mathematical concepts to interpreting data in, for example, physics and geography. They demonstrate excellent use of technical language, such as alliteration and paragraphing in a Year 5 English lesson. Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively to enhance their learning, for example in Latin in the senior school. They have excellent practical skills, as seen in design and technology and science lessons. They display high levels of creative ability in art, music and drama.
- 3.3 The previous inspection reported limited scope for independent learning. Throughout the school, pupils of all ages now report that they are enabled to work more independently, and relish the opportunities to use the libraries and ICT facilities routinely to support their learning.
- 3.4 Many pupils compete in games at a representative level, including national honours in swimming, sailing and fencing. The enrichment programme introduced since the previous inspection enables pupils to be successful in a wide range of activities. They are able, for example, to teach languages in a primary school and organise tea parties for older people, making a contribution to the local community. Pupils have embraced Young Enterprise and the Model United Nations. They reach high levels of achievement in Olympiad competitions in science and mathematics. Participation in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE) is numerically strong, some pupils attaining gold before they leave school.
- 3.5 In the junior school, the pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to national tests, but on the evidence available from observation and the school's own data, it is judged to be excellent. The following analysis in the senior school uses the national data for the years 2012 to 2014, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. Results in GCSE have been well above the national average for maintained schools, and above the national average for maintained selective schools. Results in IGCSE are above worldwide and UK averages overall. Results at A level are well above the national average for maintained schools, and above the national average for maintained selective schools. The 2014 results show improvement over earlier years, with over 80 per cent of A level grades being A or A*. Attainment in the junior school, and at GCSE and A level, together with nationally standardised progress data, show that pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points, and relative to the average for pupils of similar abilities. This is confirmed by the inspection evidence from scrutiny, observation and discussion.
- 3.6 Across the school, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those for whom English is an additional language (EAL) achieve similar levels of

success to their peers, as do those who are able, or are seen to have distinctive gifts or talents. This is because the school diagnoses the needs of individual pupils when they enter the school, and devises strategies to ensure they are given appropriate support through specialist tuition if required and in mainstream classroom teaching. Almost all leavers from Year 13 gain places at universities, many of them with demanding entrance requirements, and undertake a wide variety of courses.

- 3.7 Pupils of all ages have excellent learning skills in the classroom and beyond. They have a positive and committed attitude. They are motivated and they engage fully with what the school has to offer. They take pride in their work, which is well organised and presented. Pupils are excellent listeners and work well in collaboration with others. Almost all pupils in the pre-inspection survey say that they are encouraged by their teachers to do things for themselves. They are supportive of one another and form excellent relationships with their teachers, which further enhances their learning.

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 successful in meeting the school's aim of providing an education that promotes the academic, creative, physical, social and spiritual development of each pupil. Since the previous inspection, more time has been allocated to creative arts in Years 7 to 11.
- 3.10 The curriculum covers the required elements, and is appropriate to the age and needs of the pupils. Pupils of all ages follow a core curriculum of English, mathematics, science and a modern foreign language. From Year 3 in the junior school pupils are introduced to three languages. Latin and three separate sciences are taught from Year 7. Sixth-form pupils are able to choose from a wide variety of A-level and Pre-U courses. Pupils in Year 12 are encouraged to undertake the Extended Project Qualification, which helps them to develop independent research and organisational skills. All pupils enjoy and take full advantage of the enrichment programme, introduced in 2012. This offers a carefully planned range of opportunities and experiences covering culture, leadership, working for the benefit of others, skills and academic challenge. These include signing for the hearing impaired for pupils in the junior school, Mandarin in Years 9 to 11, and outdoor art for Years 12 and 13.
- 3.11 The curriculum actively promotes personal, social, health and economic education and fundamental British values.
- 3.12 Pupils with SEND are well catered for with specialist lessons and appropriate support. Pupils with EAL attend additional lessons that support their learning effectively. The needs of able pupils are met by extension tasks in lessons, enrichment beyond the classroom in the form of excursions and subject-related society meetings, and informal dialogue and direction from teachers outside lesson times.
- 3.13 The academic curriculum is supported by an excellent extra-curricular programme. It encompasses academic, athletic, musical and creative pursuits. It has been broadened since the previous inspection to meet a wide range of needs. Pupils can join, for example, Ancient Greek, debating and philosophy societies, the DofE, or the Combined Cadet Force (CCF). Pupils from Year 3 to Year 13 have the opportunity to take part in sports fixtures. The emphasis is on inclusive participation for the

younger pupils, and a more competitive ethos as they grow older. The new music school attracts nearly half of all pupils to instrumental tuition, and there are ample opportunities for pupils to perform regularly at an appropriate level for their experience.

- 3.14 Pupils in the junior school start residential trips in Year 4, which promote independence and teamwork. The senior school offers a carefully managed three-year cycle of trips so as to enable all pupils to take advantage of all opportunities. Pupils enjoy the programme of regular visiting speakers, which has recently included a monk, an artist and a beekeeper.
- 3.15 Form teachers in the junior school and form tutors in the senior school encourage and monitor pupils' involvement in the extra-curricular programme. The overall programme works well, relying on co-operation among individual members of staff rather than an overall co-ordinator.
- 3.16 Pupils benefit from excellent links with the local community, which contributes to the school's aim to prepare pupils to fulfil their role in society. The CCF was formed in conjunction with a partner maintained school, and shares resources and staffing. Pupils collect for a local food bank and work in charity shops. They develop their social awareness by working as classroom assistants at a special school and readily acknowledge that this is an opportunity for personal growth.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.17 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.18 Since the previous inspection the school has made excellent progress in encouraging independent learning through teaching which is challenging, varied and stimulating. Pupils are enabled to develop confidence and to make the most of their abilities, in line with the school's aims.
- 3.19 Almost all lessons are characterised by excellent subject knowledge, clarity of objectives, and ambitious pace. Teaching has high expectations of the pupils, as seen in the constant use of the target language in modern languages in the senior school and instructions in the junior school on how to organise an introductory paragraph. Careful planning, tight structure and excellent management of time are strong features of most teaching.
- 3.20 Introductions to lessons enable pupils to understand their aims and their role in the learning process. Teaching often demands that pupils think hard for themselves, work independently or collaboratively and use the teacher as a resource when clarification is needed, rather than depending on the teacher's input. This approach engages pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Teaching encourages excellent behaviour.
- 3.21 Teaching makes use of a suitably wide range of resources and techniques, from flash cards and mime in a Year 4 language lesson to imaginative use of the libraries in sixth-form religious studies. The use of ICT to enhance learning was seen to good effect in the bespoke Latin course 'Cyber Caesar' in Years 9 to 11. A very small minority of pupils surveyed did not feel that their homework helped them to learn. Inspectors found that the level and type of work set is appropriate. During interviews, pupils indicated that they accept that homework is central to their progress.

- 3.22 Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent. Pupils are grateful that teachers are invariably available to help beyond lesson time and to offer support where needed. Teachers know their pupils well, and seek to ensure that all pupils' needs are met appropriately, enabling them to make good progress. In some academic departments effective use of assessment data enables aspirations to be challenging but realistic. This is not consistently true across all departments. Marking is assiduous and helpful, with suggestions about how to improve, and plentiful and justifiable praise. Teachers adhere consistently to a marking policy that the pupils understand. Pupils appreciate the emphasis the policy gives to dialogue in preference to raw scoring.
- 3.23 Pupils with SEND benefit from specialist tuition and appropriate support in mainstream lessons. Those for whom English is an additional language are enabled to participate fully in lessons.
- 3.24 Most teaching matches work well to the differing needs of the pupils, including the able, for example by setting different tasks in class or giving able pupils extra support beyond lesson time. In a very small number of lessons, over-prescriptive tasks limited the progress that the most able pupils could make.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The school meets in full its aims to foster an atmosphere of self-respect, producing confident, fulfilled and happy people, and to prepare pupils to identify and fulfil their roles in society. Pupils are well prepared for life after leaving school.
- 4.3 The school actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. A carefully structured programme of personal, social, health and economic education throughout the school enables pupils to acquire a broad knowledge of and respect for the English legal system together with its public institutions and services.
- 4.4 Pupils develop excellent self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. They benefit from the enrichment programme, extra-curricular opportunities and the academic curriculum. Pupils in Year 3 begin with the question: 'Who am I?' and senior pupils say they benefit from discussing habits of mind, stress management and self-image in later years. Pupils by their own account take pleasure and advantage from the way the school encourages personal exploration, improves confidence and instils resilience. A pupil in Year 13 was delighted and proud that he can now sew on a button and arrange flowers, while another in Year 8 was thrilled to have made a perfect docking station for her MP3 player after several setbacks. In lessons, self-evaluation and peer assessment contribute to pupils becoming reflective about their own practices, while encouragement and praise from teachers sustain their self-confidence. Pupils' spiritual awareness is highly developed through the academic curriculum. This understanding is reinforced by house assemblies, mindfulness as an element of the enrichment programme, visits to a Buddhist temple and a mosque, the work of the newly appointed chaplain, and regular visits by a Benedictine monk.
- 4.5 Pupils have an excellent understanding of right and wrong. Their behaviour and manners are exemplary, and they are already, at a young age, articulate, mature and responsible. They acquire knowledge of the wider justice system through an enrichment module entitled 'Rights and the Law'. Pupils see the need for rules to protect their personal rights at school and in the world at large. Any inappropriate behaviour is most often dealt with by a discussion regarding the right course of action. This encourages pupils to accept responsibility for their own behaviour, promoting high personal standards.
- 4.6 Social development is strong. Pupils are aware of their responsibility to improve the lives of others. They contribute to the local community through links with the church, and they prepare meals for a night hostel. Pupils initiate charity fundraising, for example a coin collection for the victims of the recent Nepal earthquake. Pupils believe in tolerance and actively promote it in their daily lives. The school encourages them to confront instances of discrimination or prejudice, which would be at odds with the prevailing atmosphere of inclusivity. The warmth of relationships among all members of the community permeates the life and work of the school. Pupils at all levels are articulate, polite and equitable. Pupils in Year 4 ran an assembly on forgiveness with confidence and enjoyment. Debate is a feature of many academic lessons, and pupils are encouraged to express their views from entry to the school. The pupils' understanding of democracy is excellent, with the

general election providing topicality. Many posts of responsibility are allocated through peer elections, and pupils believe they have the right to be heard. Most report that the school listens to their opinions and responds to them. The school has, for example, supplied furniture for the social area of the main teaching block, and extended the sex education programme. Pupils take advantage of the many opportunities to develop excellent awareness of their own and others' culture, and show exemplary tolerance and respect as a result.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 The staff provide effective support and guidance for the pupils in accordance with the school's aims. Since the previous inspection the school has increased tutor time and reduced the size of tutor groups. Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent, and pupils are especially appreciative of the help their tutors give them. The appointment of a chaplain has increased the number of ways pupils can seek support. Pupils also know where to turn; this is especially true of younger pupils who have a buddy system, peer mentors and volunteers from Years 12 and 13 who attend their assemblies and make themselves available to offer guidance. The school has improved induction procedures for new pupils. Team-building exercises and guest barbecues in boarding help integration at all levels.
- 4.9 A very small minority of pupils suggested in the pre-inspection survey that teachers are unfair in the way they give rewards and sanctions. Inspection of rewards and sanctions records indicated that teachers are generous with rewards and use sanctions rarely.
- 4.10 Throughout the school pupils have ample opportunity for healthy exercise within the curriculum and beyond. The school encourages healthy eating through its personal, social and health education programme (PSHE) and food technology lessons in Years 7 to 9.
- 4.11 The school is effective in promoting good behaviour through a clear policy and high expectations. It guards against harassment and bullying through consistent swift and effective intervention in line with the published policy and procedures, and seeks to handle disciplinary matters in a constructive fashion as far as possible. The school provides e-safety training to all pupils and offers it to parents to prevent cyber-bullying. The school also conducts an annual bullying survey to obtain the pupils' perceptions of how effectively it deals with bullying.
- 4.12 The school has a plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND. The plan is due for review in July 2015. Managers in both junior and senior schools make appropriate arrangements to support pupils with a range of needs.
- 4.13 In their pre-inspection returns, a minority of pupils felt that the school does not listen to their opinions. Inspectors found that the school employs effective methods to seek the views of pupils, including surveys. Monthly meetings of the junior and senior school councils allow pupils' views to be heard and have influenced, for example, the provision of playground equipment and planned changes to the enrichment programme.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.15 The school has effective measures for safeguarding, implementing a clear policy that reflects the most recent official guidance. Training of all staff is current, at an appropriate level and properly recorded. All staff, including those newly appointed, know what to do if they need to raise an issue to do with safeguarding. The staff who lead on safeguarding matters are all of sufficient seniority; liaison with external bodies takes place when required. Year heads and form tutors meet at least once every three weeks and safeguarding matters are always on the agenda. Appropriate systems are used effectively to ensure that staff appointments meet current legislation; all required checks are carried out and recorded correctly.
- 4.16 Information about legislation in general and individual pupils' needs in particular is disseminated judiciously to those directly concerned. Clear lines of communication link the safeguarding leader to a suitably-trained governor, who makes sure that the governing body is well informed and able to exercise effective oversight on policy and practice.
- 4.17 Pupils are fully informed about matters to do with internet safety, bullying, alcohol and drug abuse, and sex education through visiting speakers and particular focus in tutorial sessions.
- 4.18 All risk assessments including those for fire and off-site activities are thorough, and monitored and reviewed effectively. The school is also effective in identifying current site-specific risks such as road safety when parents are arriving by car.
- 4.19 A small number of staff are fully trained in first aid ensuring that injuries are treated promptly if necessary. Accidents and near-misses are recorded appropriately. Medical information about pupils is supplied to staff when necessary, and provision for sick and injured pupils in the medical centre is good. Pupils can raise matters of health and safety through the central committee, for example the distance of muster points in the event of fire from the main house.
- 4.20 Admission and attendance registers are maintained and stored correctly as required.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.21 The quality of boarding is good.
- 4.22 The school meets its published aims and satisfies the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.
- 4.23 The outcomes for boarders are good. Boarders feel integrated into the school but a minority state in response to the pre-inspection questionnaires that they do not always enjoy boarding. Inspection evidence suggested that this was related to a number of minor issues following the recent move into new accommodation. Examples of such issues are the availability of keys and a perceived lack of urgency in responding to requests for repairs. Relationships with staff, and between boarders themselves, are good. Pupils have a suitable range of appropriate adults to turn to over personal issues, from residential staff to the chaplain; they are given information on how to contact helplines and the Office of the Children's Commissioner.

- 4.24 The quality of boarding provision and care is sound. New boarders are given handbooks on arrival and the induction process is comprehensive. As a result, new boarders settle quickly. The accommodation is appropriate and boarders speak positively about the improved facilities. However, the small size of noticeboards limits their ability to personalise their accommodation; they are reluctant to damage walls. The promotion of boarders' health is effective and the school has, and implements, suitable policies for their physical and mental health. During the week, the medical centre looks after sick boarders. At weekends, houses look after them, though they have only limited facilities to do so. In the pre-inspection questionnaire a majority of boarders state that they are well looked after if they feel unwell or are injured. Boarders are registered with a local doctor who holds a surgery in school every week; if needed, boarders are taken to medical appointments off site, such as to an orthodontist or dentist. Medication is suitably stored and dispensed, with appropriate records being kept. Boarders are well motivated, polite and sociable. Bullying is almost unheard of. Sanctions are rarely needed but a minority of boarders suggest that these could be more fairly fitted to misdemeanours. The 2013 intermediate boarding inspection recommended that the school should develop a consistent system of rewards to recognise positive contributions by boarders. This has only partly been met.
- 4.25 In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a large majority of boarders felt that the evening and weekend meals are not enticing, while a minority expressed dissatisfaction with evening snacks. Inspection evidence found the food to be nutritious and acceptable in variety and quantity, and the catering department provides for special diets. Boarders have access to kitchens if they wish to prepare snacks at other times. Inspectors judge that although there are informal opportunities for boarders to voice their views on food and other matters at house meetings and in conversation with staff, the lack of formal channels of communication contributes to their concerns. The predominant approach of boarders is culturally deferential, and so they do not always take advantages of the informal opportunities available to them to voice any concerns they may have. Arrangements for the laundering of clothes are appropriate; pupils also have suitable access to laundry equipment if they wish to wash their own clothes. Although a small minority of pupils felt that their belongings were not safe, inspectors found that boarders are able to keep their belongings secure in lockable storage or ask staff to look after them. Boarders can contact their families and friends via landline or electronic means, but mobile phone signals are weak within the new building. Boarders are allowed off site and transport is provided for shopping trips. In the questionnaire responses a small minority of boarders state that they are not happy with the balance of free time and activities in the evenings and especially at weekends. Inspectors found the opportunities to be appropriate. Boarders have access to the sports' hall on four nights a week. There are many extra-curricular activities on offer in the school day and boarders make use of the extensive school grounds in fine weather. Almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were fully satisfied with boarding at the school.
- 4.26 The arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are good. The school has and implements a suitable risk assessment policy, and there are suitable arrangements to safeguard against the risk of fire. Fire practices are undertaken regularly, including during boarding time. Effective anti-bullying and behavioural policies and procedures are in place and behaviour is good. Boarding staff and adults associated with boarding, such as cleaners and catering staff, are subject to proper checking arrangements and their safeguarding training is up-to-date; they know who

to contact should they have concerns. The whereabouts of boarders is regularly monitored and the missing person policy is known to staff. Suitably trained and named members of staff take responsibility for boarders in boarding time and there is always an adult on call at night. Access to the boarding facilities is restricted. The school does not appoint guardians. In response to the questionnaires and in discussion groups, boarders say that they feel safe in the boarding house.

- 4.27 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the boarding provision is good. Boarding documentation and policies are up-to-date and these and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools are known to staff. There have been some very recent changes of role within the boarding leadership. Staff have job descriptions and there is an annual cycle of professional development review which includes appraisal of roles in boarding. Staff are encouraged to attend external training courses. Records are properly kept and information about boarders is shared with medical and academic staff as needed. Due to recent and forthcoming changes in leadership, the aims and priorities for boarding are in process of development. There is a suitable complaints procedure and health and safety requirements are met.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The overall quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The governing body takes responsibility for the whole school, and provides effective oversight of all sections in line with its aims. Governors undertake their responsibility for educational standards successfully, seeking always to establish high expectations and to support the school in meeting them. The emphasis is unambiguously on achieving an appropriate balance between academic success as measured by public examination results and the broader development of the pupils through an excellent programme of extra-curricular activities and high-quality arrangements for pastoral care. They discharge their responsibility for financial management in such a way as to support these aims. They have a suitable strategic plan to develop the school site and accommodation in the future so as to enhance the opportunities available for the pupils. They invest appropriately in providing resources to assist staff to work effectively.
- 5.3 The governors make every effort to achieve an excellent insight into the way the school operates, through a developing system of committees to monitor standards in every aspect of educational provision, including boarding. In addition they attend lessons and activities informally. They are visible at major public events, and concerts and plays, and make themselves accessible to parents where possible.
- 5.4 The governors keep in close touch with senior leaders and managers to provide support and advice where needed, and likewise to challenge and stimulate development.
- 5.5 The governors are effective in discharging their responsibilities for statutory requirements, including the annual review of safeguarding and child protection arrangements by the full body. They take advantage of opportunities for training appropriate to their responsibilities, and have taken pains to ensure that collectively they bring a wide range of skills to the role.

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

- 5.6 The leadership and management of the school, including links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent.
- 5.7 In line with the school aims, effective strategic leadership from senior managers has enabled pupils to achieve high academic standards as well as continuing to enhance the quality of pastoral care and the range of extra-curricular activity.
- 5.8 Clear educational direction is provided by a dedicated senior team whose complementary skills and collegiate style ensure that school improvement remains a focus for teaching and support staff. The contributions of all teaching staff are solicited through the recently introduced staff forum as well as the usual management channels such as the heads of department committee. Senior staff balance care for individuals with a professional approach and this high standard of leadership has produced an excellent working environment which underpins pupils' personal development.

- 5.9 The school's leadership is particularly successful in delivering major development projects such as the new music and boarding accommodation. Priorities are reviewed in the light of changing circumstances. Plans for a new swimming pool and an extensive refurbishment of the Main House are ambitious and can be undertaken with confidence in light of the sound financial planning of the school's senior leaders. Both initiatives are intended to make tangible contributions to the quality of students' education and their experience of the school.
- 5.10 A rigorous culture of self-evaluation and target setting has been established and is exemplified by the school development and master plans as well as thorough departmental planning. While departmental plans vary in scope, they are regularly reviewed and focus on issues of central importance to teaching and learning.
- 5.11 Management responsibilities are clear and the high quality of middle management is a significant factor in the school's success. Heads of department are seen to be accountable for standards and results, but also pro-actively manage their colleagues and report successes to the senior leadership team. All school managers share the school's key priorities and contribute to them whilst maintaining day-to-day performance through monitoring and support. Work scrutiny and lesson observation is an integral part of the routine of the strongest departments, as is shared lesson development and planning.
- 5.12 Staff appointments follow clear procedures which are successful in recruiting high calibre candidates who are enthusiastic about their subjects and suitable to work with children. Provision for professional development, if unequally adopted across all departments, is appreciated by the teaching staff and underpins many areas of school development. Needs are identified either by individuals or through the school's appraisal system. An exemplary programme of induction for new recruits is highly valued as is the support and recognition afforded to new colleagues by their peers. Recent appointees are encouraged, as are all staff, to undertake initiatives, such as the Junior Mock Election, whilst those wishing to develop their careers can do so through programmes such as 'Moving On Up', designed to give middle managers experience of whole school initiatives. All staff are suitably trained for their roles in safeguarding and welfare, health and safety.
- 5.13 Links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent. They are extremely satisfied with the quality of the education and support provided by the school. Communication, a concern for some at the time of the previous inspection, has been improved through email and newsletters. The parent forum and food committee offer an opportunity for two-way communication between home and school, though the involvement of overseas boarders' parents presents a greater challenge.
- 5.14 In line with the school's aim to work in partnership with parents, support is actively solicited and enthusiastically welcomed. Parents contribute to pupils' success in many ways. The Freemen's School Association, the school's parents' association, raises funds for an impressive variety of projects, including a recent bursary to support an overseas trip. Junior school parents help out with drama, including costume production and set design. In the sixth form, parents conduct interviews as part of the assessment of the Extended Project Qualification and many others contribute to the school's outstanding enrichment programme either by providing transport or by offering academic lectures and talks. The wide-ranging nature of parental support is indicative of the high regard in which the school is held.

- 5.15 Helpful information is distributed to parents on joining the school. The website makes a wealth of required and supplementary material available, including a suitable complaints policy. The very small number of complaints has been resolved in accordance with the policy. Serious concerns are rare and the parents' survey confirms that difficulties are often resolved speedily. The senior leadership team is involved in more substantial matters. Their responses can be detailed and are always professional and courteous.
- 5.16 Arrangements for reporting on pupils' progress are regular and clear. Twice-yearly written reports cover pupils' effort and achievement and are supplemented by interim grades. Reports offer helpful suggestions on how to improve as well as an overview of current levels of attainment. The school has a plan for more systematic internal tracking of pupils' progress to help them maximise their progress. Parents are invited to consultation evenings each year. They are encouraged to seek guidance about their children's progress at an early stage and the school is also pro-active in bringing issues to the attention of those best placed to resolve them.

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