



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**THE FACULTY OF QUEEN ETHELBURGA'S**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## The Faculty of Queen Ethelburga's

Queen Ethelburga's College and the joint boarding facilities were inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of College	<b>The Faculty of Queen Ethelburga's</b>
DfE Number	<b>815/6037</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>1012924</b>
Address	<b>The Faculty of Queen Ethelburga's Undercroft Administration Centre Thorpe Underwood Estate Ouseburn York North Yorkshire YO26 9SS</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01423 333300</b>
Fax Number	<b>01423 333912</b>
Email Address	<b>info@qe.org</b>
Principal	<b>Mr Steven Jandrell</b>
Proprietor	<b>The Queen Ethelburga's Collegiate Foundation</b>
Provost	<b>Mr Brian Martin</b>
Age Range	<b>14 to 19</b>
Total Number of Students	<b>386</b>
Number of day students	<b>49</b>
Number of boarders	<b>337</b>
Gender of Students	<b>Mixed (235 boys; 151 girls)</b>
Inspection dates	<b>25 Sep 2012 to 28 Sep 2012</b>

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in September 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. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

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

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

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

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

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with the school's leaders, with members of staff and with the provost and advisory governors. They observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents and students to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mrs Ruth McFarlane

Mrs Elaine Brook

Dr Pam Hillier

Mr John Sykes

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Retired Headmistress, Society of Heads school)

Team Inspector (Retired Head of Department, GSA school)

Team Inspector (Former Director of Studies, HMC school)

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

- 1.1 The Faculty began in 2006. It was created to offer day and boarding education for boys and girls aged fourteen to nineteen, who choose to combine a traditional academic education with creative or vocational studies. It is located on a 110-acre parkland site in North Yorkshire, and is part of Queen Ethelburga's Collegiate Foundation, owned by Queen Ethelburga's College Ltd., which was formed in 1991 when the College, dating from 1912, was moved to its current location.
- 1.2 Governance of the Foundation is led by the provost who is the chair of governors, principal trustee of the Queen Ethelburga's Collegiate Foundation and director of Queen Ethelburga's College Ltd. The provost is assisted in the governance of the Foundation by an advisory board of governors.
- 1.3 A new head of the Faculty was appointed from within the Foundation staff and took up his post at the start of this term. The deputy head is also a recent appointment. The head of the Faculty is responsible for all aspects of the education provided, under the control of the head of collegiate management, and through her, to the principal, who has overall responsibility for all parts of the Queen Ethelburga's Collegiate Foundation.
- 1.4 The Faculty is based in a recently completed, purpose-built facility that offers specialist teaching, study, sports and boarding areas and is shared with all students who belong to the Foundation. Indoor and outdoor facilities throughout the Foundation are used for Faculty students, including for performing arts and sports.
- 1.5 The Faculty shares the aims of the Foundation, to provide an excellent and challenging education which is broadly Christian in ethos. It aims to welcome students of whatever background, creed or race and of a range of abilities and aptitudes; to prepare them well to meet the demands of work, leisure and family and to make a positive contribution to society. The Foundation intends that the hallmark of this education will be to instil in all students the virtues of enthusiasm and curiosity, self-discipline and endeavour; courtesy, compassion and tolerance; the pursuit of excellence and service to others; overall, to be the best that they can with the gifts that they have.
- 1.6 Currently, of the 386 students; most (337) board, under the management of the Foundation. There are 209 students (132 boys and 77 girls) in the sixth form (Years 12 and 13). There is a wide range of ability but the ability profile is lower than the national average on entry to Year 10, and also on entry to the sixth form, in Year 12. Usually, over half the Year 12 students are new to the school.
- 1.7 Pupils come from a broad mix of social and cultural backgrounds. Day pupils come from within a radius of 30 miles. Boarders come from the UK, including from families serving with the Armed Forces, and from a wide range of countries, including the Far East, Russia, Mexico and Europe. Twenty-two students have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Two-thirds of the students speak English as an additional language (EAL).
- 1.8 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 The students' academic and other achievements, by the time they leave the sixth form, are excellent in relation to their abilities. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The outstanding support that staff provide to each individual student's learning and personal development means that all students, including those with SEND or EAL, are guided to make rapid progress in academic and vocational subjects over their four year programme, benefitting from an exceptionally vibrant, bespoke and improved curriculum. This is readily adjusted to meet the individual's needs. In 2012 results in GCSE, A level and vocational subjects were the best recorded by the school. Work in art and drama reflects high levels of creativity. A very broad range of extra-curricular activities, including equestrian pursuits, enables students to develop diverse interests in which they achieve well. The students' positive attitudes form a backdrop conducive to classroom learning. Teaching is good overall with some excellent, but this is not yet consistent.
- 2.2 The students' personal development is excellent throughout the school. They are highly confident, articulate and mature young people, eager to learn, with highly developed spiritual, moral, social skills and exceptional cultural understanding. These qualities are developed through the very high-quality pastoral and academic care that enables each individual to flourish. Relationships are usually excellent. Students are well supported by good safeguarding policies and effective health and safety arrangements although a number of details in the arrangements needed adjustment during the inspection before compliance could be confirmed.
- 2.3 Good governance, leadership and management support the school well. The provost provides very strong guidance and support and ensures that initiatives are adequately funded. The advisory governors undergo training as required, for example to develop understanding of the school's priorities. These strengths have led to improved outcomes for students since the previous inspection. Governors are aware of their responsibility to check regulatory matters but, as yet, they do not monitor policies sufficiently carefully. The school has made progress in meeting all the recommendations of the previous inspection report. Consequently, staff have received training in teaching students with EAL, and management structures for the Faculty are now very clear. Faculty leaders work effectively under the experienced direction of the principal and head of collegiate management, although some Faculty leaders are new and just developing into their roles.
- 2.4 Links with parents are excellent. Support for the school is strong. A few parents expressed the view that they are not encouraged to be involved in the school, but inspection evidence showed that there are plenty of opportunities for parents to be involved.

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

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

2.5 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

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

2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Raise the consistency of teaching quality throughout the school so that all teaching matches the quality of the best.
2. Ensure governors monitor policies robustly.



### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

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

- 3.1 The students' overall achievement is excellent.
- 3.2 Over the four-year programme, students achieve an excellent grounding that prepares them very well for life beyond school, fully reflecting the school's aim for students to be the best that they can with the gifts that they have. Students are confident, numerate, literate and articulate. Those with EAL quickly assimilate English language skills and this opens the gateway to their broader learning. Students do well creatively, particularly in performing arts. They are competent users of information and communications technology (ICT) and demonstrate well-developed logical and cogent thought, for instance in devising an advertisement for a new washing powder in a biology activity. Students enjoy high levels of success in a wide variety of sports appropriate to their skills and abilities and some have played for the Independent Schools Association (ISA) national rugby team. Many successfully participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, in music festivals, in equestrian events, and in the ISA national sports, art, essay writing and performing arts competitions. The excellent and wide-ranging successes are common to both boys and girls, and those with learning needs, those who are considered by the school to be gifted and talented, as well as those with EAL.
- 3.3 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2009 to 2011, the most recent three years for which comparative data is available. Performance at GCSE has been varied but overall similar to the national average for maintained schools. IGCSE results have been generally lower than the worldwide average, with First Language English results similar to the worldwide average. At A level, results have risen consistently over the three years and were above the national average for maintained schools in 2011. In 2012, attainment rose at all levels. Almost 90% of the GCSE students achieved five grades at A\*-C in GCSE in 2012, and 78% of A levels were graded B or above. In BTEC vocational courses in 2012, just over 90% achieved a distinction. Almost all students go to their first choice university on leaving the school after Year 13, following a wide variety of courses including business, criminology, maths, graphic design, media, sports and management.
- 3.4 This level of attainment, taking 2012 results and inspection evidence into account, indicates that, by the time they leave the sixth form, students make excellent progress relative to the average for students of similar ability. The students' academic progress is closely related to the rapid progress in the development of linguistic skills of the large group of students who have EAL. The progress of those with SEND, and more able and gifted and talented students, is similarly excellent throughout the school.
- 3.5 Such high levels of progress indicate overwhelmingly positive attitudes to learning overall. In the vast majority of lessons and activities, students show enjoyment and gain much satisfaction from their work, whether individual or in cooperation with others. They develop exceptional skills for learning independently and organise their work very well. In just a few lessons, the prevailing attitude was too leisurely and instances of inattention or minor misbehaviour and lack of engagement were observed. These were closely related to variances in the quality of the teaching.

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

- 3.6 The contribution of curriculum and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.7 The curriculum provides students throughout the four years, including in the sixth form, with an excellent and challenging education as noted in the school's aims. Students are exposed to a broad variety of subjects and experiences, carefully tailored to their needs, in an improvement to the curriculum quality noted at the previous inspection. As a result, they achieve outstandingly well.
- 3.8 The curriculum is precisely fitted to the abilities and needs of students of the four year age-range. A key feature of its success is that, prior to entry, students are carefully assessed and sensitively guided through the range of subject options and helped to make appropriate choices, whether GCSE, IGCSE, AS, A level or BTEC. Quick response to the diverse needs of the school's multi-cultural community provides flexibility and a very wide range of subject choices including IGCSE and GCSE in a student's mother tongue. New entrants to Year 12 are offered a Foundation year if this is appropriate, to give them a firm grounding in basic skills, particularly language skills and study skills. Able students sit GCSE mathematics early to enable them to study Further Mathematics in Year 11. Courses offered to students in the other schools in the Foundation are also available to Faculty students as appropriate.
- 3.9 Because of this vast choice and individual assessment of needs, the curriculum is exceptionally well suited to the ages, abilities and aptitudes of the students. Academic preparation for university, further training or employment is comprehensive, according to individual abilities and aspirations. The school is rightly proud of the excellent personalised and flexible learning plans provided for each student. Each student benefits from a learning mentor, who acts as an academic guide and advisor. Through this process and care, the school aims are fully realised.
- 3.10 Support for students with SEND is excellent through the very strong system of individual support. If a student has a specific difficulty such as poor organisational skills or difficulty in planning revision, an independent learning plan is initiated, where specialist support is given on a one-to-one basis for as long as is required. Students with EAL receive exceptional support from a skilled department. Training is provided for all teaching staff, in response to a recommendation of the previous inspection, and an excellent range of strategies is advised, although application of the strategies in the classroom is inconsistent.
- 3.11 The curriculum is supported by an excellent range of around one hundred extra-curricular activities that broaden and enhance student's experiences significantly and make a strong impact on their spiritual and cultural development. These range from chamber choir to kick boxing. The school regularly reviews and adjusts the programme. Coaching is offered in a wide range of sports. Consequently, many students compete at a very high level. A particular feature of the school is the equestrian centre, where students can stable their own horse or ride one belonging to the school. The school has extensive links with other communities and cultures to enhance the curriculum. Internationally, the school has established community projects overseas in both Gambia and India, involving students in raising money, planning and organising trips, completing projects in schools and orphanages in both countries and enhancing their understanding of world issues.

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

- 3.12 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.13 Teaching reflects the school's aim to prepare students of whatever ability they have, to meet the needs of work, and leisure and make a positive contribution to society.
- 3.14 Some excellent teaching was observed, including in the sixth form. Teachers use their enthusiasm and excellent subject-knowledge to spark and inspire learning through a variety of tasks. Thorough planning in lessons across the full age range ensures that the students' learning progresses rapidly. Pace is brisk and time is managed well. In a performing arts activity observed, fast-moving tasks and the creation of short scenes offered students good opportunities to perform and reflect on their performance. Excellent questioning by the teacher led to rapid progress in stagecraft. In a range of subjects, a variety of activities were offered, successfully stimulating, extending and challenging the students' thinking. In the most successful teaching, activities are lodged between clear explanation of the objectives and regular checks on understanding, enhanced by teachers and students making good use of ICT. A high proportion of time is given over to students finding things out for themselves and sharing their knowledge, fostering interest and independence. Excellent use is made of resources, such as performing arts rooms, the theatre, sports and outdoor facilities, as well as ICT.
- 3.15 The school rightly judges its teaching as good and is taking a range of steps to improve some remaining satisfactory teaching at all ages that does not reach the standard of the best because it leads to reduced progress, in lessons, for those students affected. This is evident in students' work books as well as lessons. There are two main characteristics of this less successful teaching. Firstly, although staff are trained well in how to teach EAL students, in a few lessons, teachers did not fully apply this training. For instance, subject-specific vocabulary lists relevant to the lesson, which are noted as a strategy in the excellent EAL policy, are not always provided in those lessons where this extra help would assist students to make more rapid progress in their understanding. Secondly, occasionally, pace is pedestrian, combined with too little stimulus or variety of task. This leads to slower progress because the volume of work diminishes.
- 3.16 The extensive system of monitoring the students' work and tracking their progress is a strength of the Faculty and includes excellent use of standardised data. Input from mentors and tutors ensures that teachers have the information to focus on the needs of each individual student. Assessment of on-going work, tests and examinations provide teachers with an understanding of the students' progress and they feel strongly that teachers inform them comprehensively of how to make further progress. In the majority of lessons there is a very good rapport between teachers and students.
- 3.17 Teachers support students with SEND well. The small class size enables individual attention and ongoing assessment of needs and adjustment of content within a lesson. For more able students, teaching often provides excellent independent study opportunities with good levels of challenge across the curriculum supported by essay competitions and activities such as debates. The width and depth of the opportunities for able students to carry out their own research and learning is evident in many of the vocational courses and provides excellent learning opportunities for gifted and talented students.

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

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

- 4.1 The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 Maintaining the high quality noted at the previous inspection, students throughout the school show highly developed personal skills, meeting the school's aims very well. By the time they leave the school, the students' standard of personal development is excellent.
- 4.3 Students respond very well to the music, drama and sports and they develop exceptional spiritual skills including self-confidence. Through the personalised learning programme they develop first-class awareness of their own personal strengths; they think out their aspirations for the future and what they need to do in order to achieve them. This emphasis on philosophy develops in them a very mature attitude to life. All students who responded to the questionnaire agreed that they were encouraged to be self-reliant and to work independently.
- 4.4 The students have a very clear sense of right and wrong. They show a mature respect for others. The school's code of conduct: 'LEARN': Listen, Engage, Attend, Respect, Never give up, is well-understood by students who respond with courtesy and tolerance for all. Students praise the recent introduction of a new reward system for excellent behaviour and academic progress. This successfully emphasises the value of maintaining good manners and diligence, and developing a strong moral code for life.
- 4.5 The students' excellent social development is drawn from the maturity with which they take on the many roles of responsibility they fulfil within the school. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire students said they appreciate the opportunities to take on responsibility but that they would like more. However, in discussions, students reported plenty of opportunities to take responsibility, and a strong sense of being valued as decision-makers. They particularly value the link they have directly with the provost, who conducts written surveys directly with them, to garner their views. The role of prefects develops clear understanding of a working society. Sixth-form students submit a letter of application, are interviewed and, if successful, are offered appropriate training. Older students show excellent maturity in taking on roles as mentors for younger, being the class representative for the school council or joining the food or sports committee. Many show highly developed economic awareness through their business studies training. They show a keen awareness of the needs of those less fortunate than themselves through involvement in a wide variety of local and international fund-raising.
- 4.6 The students' awareness of both western and other faiths and cultures is excellent, drawn in part from their multi-cultural environment which allows them to experience a diverse range of cultural values and traditions, including many different religious beliefs. Local cultural events contribute to their breadth of understanding, for instance, recent involvement in the torch-bearing ceremony for the London Olympics. The students celebrate many different festivals and regularly have themed dinners; most recently Mexican, Italian and Chinese suppers have been much enjoyed, and help overseas students to feel settled and valued. The students' broader cultural development is further enhanced through the extensive programme of visits to museums, galleries, theatres and exhibitions.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 The school has made significant improvements since the previous inspection so that the very comprehensive systems for supporting students work exceptionally well in fulfilment of the school's aims. The provision for day students gives a base for support equivalent to that enjoyed by the boarders. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 4.9 Form time is used well to allow tutors to get to know their tutees and to provide practical guidance at the start of the day. The 'buddy' system, (a pairing of new students with existing ones), enables new students to settle in quickly, giving the 'buddy' a significant role of responsibility. The depth of attention given to each individual student sets the expectation for relationships and underpins the excellent relationships between staff and students and among the students themselves.
- 4.10 The development of healthy eating and exercise habits is seen as a priority to aid the students learning and development. The high quality of the food and dining facilities, together with the range of physical activities available, ensures that these goals can be attained.
- 4.11 The school's systems of rewards and sanctions works well in recognising effort and progress as well as academic and sporting achievement. Measures to prevent bullying are comprehensive. Records show that any incidents of bullying are dealt with very thoroughly and due regard is paid to ensuring that any students with difficulties related to behaviour are adequately supported.
- 4.12 The school successfully seeks the views of students in some innovative ways and is constantly reviewing its practices in this area. As well as the opportunities to join various committees and the school council to enable their views to be heard, students are invited to respond to the provost's questionnaire.

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

- 4.13 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.14 Measures to reduce the risk of fire, including a fire risk assessment and regular fire drills, are carried out highly efficiently and clearly documented. An annual health and safety audit is carried out and responded to and the health and safety committee meets regularly and any concerns raised are speedily addressed. Detailed risk assessments are in place for all aspects of Faculty life, both on site and for external visits, so that all health and safety hazards are minimised. Welfare, health and safety policies have been recently revised and now include all necessary details.
- 4.15 The well-equipped medical centre offers twenty-four hour care and caters well for the needs of those pupils who are ill or injured or have difficulties or disabilities and an appropriately detailed first aid policy is now in place. A good number of staff are first-aid trained. Training for all staff in child protection procedures is carried out at the required intervals and is clearly understood and efficiently implemented. Thorough attention is given to carrying out the required pre-appointment checks on staff and these are meticulously recorded. The admissions and attendance registers are properly maintained and are correctly stored for the required time.

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

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

- 5.1 The governance of the school is good.
- 5.2 The provost, assisted by the advisory board of governors, provides highly effective oversight of the Faculty; the keen interest taken in all the school's work has made governance instrumental in fulfilling the vision of leaders to develop the vocational education with great success. Governors carefully discharge their responsibilities for educational standards, financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. They have an excellent insight into the work of the Faculty and are highly successful in providing support, challenge and stimulus for growth.
- 5.3 The provost and the advisory governors fulfill their responsibilities for meeting statutory requirements, including conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the Faculty safeguarding and child protection arrangements. They ensure that the necessary pre-appointment checks on staff are carried out scrupulously and that the central register of staff is thoroughly maintained. In other areas, including health and safety, they are largely effective in exercising their overall monitoring role although policies are not currently monitored sufficiently carefully.
- 5.4 Governors bring to their role a wide range of experience and expertise although, at present, there is no member of the board from an educational background. They are conscientious in undertaking training for their roles and, when appropriate, they seek external expertise pertinent to their needs at the time. They are a strong support for the principal and regularly evaluate his work informally although, as yet, there is no formal process of appraisal. The provost and the advisory governors work closely with the principal and on occasion, directly with the students, in reviewing and developing the work of the Faculty.

### **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 school quite rightly judges that this aspect is good and that links with parents are excellent. Self-evaluation is carried out thoroughly in all areas of the Faculty's work and demonstrates that leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's quality and how much it has improved its outcomes since the previous inspection. A great strength of the leadership and management of the Faculty is its work towards fulfilling the aim for students to be the best they can with the gifts they have. This is achieved through systems which ensure very careful diagnosis of individual students' needs and very strong support, and a highly tailored curriculum that meets these needs exceptionally well. The constant support provided throughout the students' time at the Faculty through well-managed academic and pastoral mentoring leads to the students' excellent achievement and levels of personal development.
- 5.7 Management at all levels is successful in securing, supporting, developing and motivating sufficient high-quality staff. New leaders are at an early stage of development in their roles. They are supported by the expertise and experience of

the head of members of the Foundation's Senior Leadership Team. The school has dealt well with the recommendation of the previous inspection to develop more effective links with leaders across the Foundation. As a result, middle managers are very clear in understanding their roles as part of the whole Foundation and they support the school's aims effectively. The heads of phase (sixth form and Years 10 and 11 combined) form a strong team whose skills are developing. The whole management team works together with great commitment to drive the school forward.

- 5.8 Teaching and learning are managed well with particular strength in the management of the curriculum. Inconsistencies in teaching exist and checks are not yet robust enough to ensure that all training is translated fully into classroom practice, and that all staff teach as well as the best. High-quality pastoral management ensures that the very strong overriding support systems for students are effective.
- 5.9 The development plan sets clear priorities for the school, well understood by all managers. A four-day training programme for all staff prior to the start of the school year ensures that they thoroughly understand the priorities, and leaders monitor progress meticulously towards achieving them. As a result, the students' achievement has improved sharply over the last three academic years. Established systems for assessing, monitoring and reporting the students' progress have increased consistency across departments and have driven up standards.
- 5.10 The appraisal scheme facilitates professional discussions and improvements in practice. Opportunities for training are good; they provide for the continuing professional development of staff, helping to ensure that new initiatives, for example, those concerned with behaviour management, are implemented effectively and that training for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety is kept up to date. There are efficient and appropriate arrangements for checking and recording the suitability of appointments to the school.
- 5.11 The school has established excellent links with parents. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire stated that they believe their child is offered an appropriate range of subjects and experiences and that they are satisfied with the information given about progress. Minor concerns are dealt with rapidly and sensitively. Any serious concerns are handled by the school with great care and follow detailed published procedures, available to parents on the website.
- 5.12 A very few parents indicated that they do not have enough opportunities to be actively involved in the school. However, inspectors judged that, if they wish to do so, parents have good opportunities to be actively involved with the work of the school and the progress of their children. They are invited to support their children at the numerous sports events and concerts. Because many of the students have parents who live abroad and may not speak English, the school makes regular written and telephone contact, using an interpreter where necessary.
- 5.13 Parents of students and prospective students are provided with a wealth of written information about the school and the website offers documentation in a wide range of languages. Parents have easy access to their children's school life, including medical care given during the day, via their unique log-in to the parents' part of the school's website. This contains not only whole-school policies and activities but also gives details of individual student timetables, examination dates and recent successes. In addition, staff are easily available by telephone or by email. Staff contact parents with any concerns that arise and, also, when there is good news to

report such as sporting and artistic successes and these achievements are also reported in newsletters and in the school magazine.

- 5.14 Parents receive clear and useful reports about their child's work and progress. Updates are sent regularly, either as a brief statement of academic grades achieved or as a comprehensive account of progress. The full reports are very detailed, clearly stating present achievement levels and setting out clear targets for improvement.

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