



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION  
LOUGHBOROUGH HIGH SCHOOL**

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## Loughborough High School

Full Name of School	<b>Loughborough High School</b>
DfE Number	<b>855/6009</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>1081765</b>
Address	<b>Loughborough High School Burton Walks Loughborough Leicestershire LE11 2DU</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01509 212348</b>
Fax Number	<b>01509 215720</b>
Email Address	<b>admin@leshigh.org</b>
Headmistress	<b>Mrs Gwen Byrom</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Peter Fothergill</b>
Age Range	<b>11 to 18</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>574</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Girls</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>02 to 05 February 2016</b>

## 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](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.

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.

The previous ISI standard inspection was in March 2010.

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

### **Inspectors**

Mr Gregg Davies	Reporting Inspector
Mr Bill Chadwick	Team Inspector (Deputy Headmaster, HMC school)
Mrs Rebecca Glover	Team Inspector (Headteacher, Society of Heads school)
Mr Michael Jacob	Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mrs Julie Thompson	Team Inspector (Head of Department, Society of Heads school)
Mr Stuart Thompson	Team Inspector (Head of Department, GSA school)

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

- 1.1 Loughborough High School is a day school in Leicestershire for girls aged 11 to 18. It aims to provide an excellent academic education in a caring and supportive atmosphere. It seeks to give opportunities for each pupil to develop not only intellectually but also creatively, spiritually and morally, whilst encouraging personal and physical development, and to inculcate a sense of self-belief and esteem. In addition, it aims to provide opportunities for pupils to act as leaders in the school community and to work together with the wider community.
- 1.2 The school was established in 1850 and has been during its history both a grammar school for girls and a direct grant school. In 1970 it became an independent school. Over the years, rebuilding and modification have taken place in response to changing educational needs.
- 1.3 There have been changes in the governance structure since the previous inspection. In September 2015, Loughborough Endowed Schools (LES) added a local independent Catholic girls' school to the foundation, making LES a family of four schools that share the same governing body, known as the Foundation Governing Body. The school also has a local governing committee acting in an advisory role. The school shares the 46-acre campus with Loughborough Grammar School and Fairfield Preparatory School. Pupils represent a wide range of backgrounds and come from the local area, including surrounding villages and the cities of Nottingham, Leicester and Derby.
- 1.4 Since the previous inspection in 2010, the school has moved science fully into new laboratories and has completely refurbished one classroom block and its facilities for the teaching of food. A new reception area and meeting rooms have also been constructed. In 2013 the school supplied tablet computers to all pupils and teaching staff.
- 1.5 At the time of the inspection, there were 574 pupils on roll, 158 of whom were in the sixth form. The ability profile of the school is above the national average. Few pupils have ability that is less than above average, and a notable proportion have ability that is well above average. The ability profile of the sixth form is above the national average for pupils in sixth-form education.
- 1.6 Four pupils come from families who speak English as an additional language (EAL). Of these pupils, two receive formal support for their English. The school has identified 38 pupils who have a variety of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 26 receive specialist learning support.
- 1.7 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 pupils' achievement is excellent. The school is highly successful in promoting excellent levels of achievement throughout all age groups, both in curricular and extra-curricular work. Pupils reach the highest levels of success in public examinations as a result of a balanced curriculum and excellent, often innovative, teaching. The opportunities pupils are given to develop their creative and physical talents are extensive and in line with the school's aims to provide an outstanding all-round education. Pupils are extremely keen to be involved as fully as possible in all that is offered to them. Their levels of attainment are higher than the average for selective maintained schools and progress is excellent at all levels of the school. Pupils with SEND receive excellent support and achieve in line with their peers. Pupils' outstanding attitudes to learning are present at all stages throughout the school and lead them to become motivated and ambitious individuals. Strong relationships are at the heart of the school. Pupils and staff respect each other and collaboration amongst peers promotes an intellectually stimulating environment. Teachers and pupils lack clarification on the purpose and level of homework, and so expectations are inconsistent.
- 2.2 The personal development of pupils is excellent and successfully reflects the school's aim to inculcate a sense of self-belief and esteem in all pupils. They are happy and thoughtful, and develop self-confidence through the challenges that the school provides. They have a strong sense of moral purpose, as demonstrated in their willingness to support charitable work, and their belief in the importance of the community promotes excellent social and spiritual development. They celebrate each other's success: teamwork, whatever the activity, is prevalent. Pupils are aware of the importance of understanding other beliefs and cultures, and value the many opportunities given to them to experience them both locally and internationally. Pupils understand the key features of being British. There are many adults to whom pupils can turn if they need pastoral support, and excellent procedures for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety promote a safe and secure environment.
- 2.3 The quality of governance, leadership and management is excellent. Recent changes in the structure of the governing body reflect an understanding and vision that are closely intertwined with thoughtful leadership. Governors discharge fully their responsibilities for safeguarding and staff recruitment. They provide strong support and appropriate challenge for the senior leaders. Astute financial planning underpins their ambitious ideas for future development. The senior leadership team is well respected by teachers and support staff, who feel that their ideas and views are welcomed and will be used in development planning. Middle management is very effective. The quality of links with parents is excellent. Information is provided by the school through a number of media, and concerns are listened to and responses quickly given. The school has responded effectively to the recommendation made at the previous inspection in 2010 to ensure that all staff are familiar with the range of performance data available in the school in order to challenge and meet the needs of all pupils.

## **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.

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

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Ensure that the homework policy is clear about the purpose, timing and amount of homework and is employed consistently by all teachers.

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

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils gain an excellent level of knowledge and understanding, spread across a broad range of academic and extra-curricular activities. They are extremely articulate and eager to express opinions, though not at the expense of others' views. They see the value of reading peripheral but connected information, which allows them to debate and discuss with confidence and conviction. They write well, with increasing fluidity as they move through the school. Although much work is completed on tablet computers, they are careful about maintaining an appropriate register in their writing. Pupils' reasoning skills operate at a high level, particularly when teachers serve as facilitators to learning rather than directors. Creativity is shown clearly in innovative artwork but also in other areas, for example in biology, where three-dimensional DNA models were built.
- 3.3 Pupils' application of mathematical skills is evident across the curriculum, where they are used readily and with confidence. Applied skills are apparent; for example, 18 pupils have been chosen to present their design-and-build projects at the finals of a national science and engineering competition. Success in regional debating and speaking competitions, together with various science and mathematics Olympiads, allows pupils to delve outside the traditional programmes of study and further encourages a love for learning. Pupils enjoy high success rates in gaining entry to their higher education institution of choice, including universities with demanding entrance requirements.
- 3.4 Pupils of all ages combine their achievements in the curriculum with their considerable success in extra-curricular activities. Inspiring performances in music and drama show excellent levels of imagination and commitment. The outstanding music provision is reflected in the numbers of pupils who gain awards in national instrumental or vocal examinations. For example, in the last academic year, 41 pupils achieved grade 6 standard and above. The many opportunities to develop pupils' physical skills are taken up with enthusiasm and elite games players have enjoyed success at local and regional level, with one hockey team reaching a national final. Individual success is also achieved in a diverse range of sports, such as synchronised ice skating and attachment to a professional football club.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2012 to 2014. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results at GCSE are well above the national average for girls in maintained schools, and above that for girls in maintained selective schools. More than three-quarters of all entries were graded A\* or A. Results in International GCSE subjects are higher than worldwide norms. At A level, results are excellent. They are far above those for all maintained schools, and higher than those for maintained selective schools. Over the three-year period, well over four-fifths of all entries were graded A\* to B. These results, considered alongside the pupils' work and achievement in lessons, indicate that they make excellent progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. In their questionnaire responses, almost all pupils said that they made strong progress. Analysis of attainment shows that pupils with SEND make excellent progress in relation to their starting points because of the close support they receive. Pupils who are designated as the most able in a school of able pupils have demonstrated

excellent progress as a result of being given tasks that match their needs, both in class and for private study.

- 3.6 Pupils' attitudes to learning, whatever the activity, are excellent. They are mature, serious about their academic work and at their best when engaged in collaborative work, when they actively seek to find ways to help each other to improve. There is a great sense of striving for collective success.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 The curriculum is successful in meeting the school's aims of creating conditions in which initiative and independent thought and inquiry are welcomed. The extensive curriculum provides effectively for all requisite areas of learning and contributes substantially to the pupils' achievements. The timetable is well planned for continuity of learning as pupils move through the school, and contributes to their excellent progress. The provision is well matched to pupils of all ages, abilities and needs. The curriculum does not undermine British values such as mutual respect, democracy, the rule of law, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. The extra-curricular opportunities add a richness and diversity to the core curriculum, and the exceptional creative opportunities extend pupils' interests in music, art and drama.
- 3.9 From Year 7 to Year 9 all pupils study a wide range of subjects, including both modern and ancient foreign languages. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are able to select from a broad range of GCSE subjects. Since the previous inspection, the curriculum has been reviewed and extended to include GCSE physical education and computer science, and the introduction of separate sciences from Year 10. Greek is also offered, either within the timetable or as an extra-curricular option. These initiatives have further raised the level of challenge offered to pupils throughout the school and reflect the vision of the senior leadership team to provide broader opportunities.
- 3.10 The sixth-form curriculum is highly suitable for pupils and offers an effective range of courses that are well supplemented by a strong enrichment programme designed to prepare pupils for life beyond school. All pupils complete AS examinations at the end of Year 12. Pupils value the excellent enrichment programme, which includes the Extended Project Qualification, general studies, the Combined Cadet Force, Young Enterprise and a variety of recreational activities.
- 3.11 Pupils with SEND, and the most able and those with gifts and talents are identified through testing and are supported in their learning through extra support, extension activities and planned provision within lessons. Individual pupil profiles are created to assist subject teachers when planning for specific questioning and additional support. Pupils stated in discussions that they feel very well supported in their learning.
- 3.12 Effective careers guidance is provided for all year groups. In Year 7 pupils enjoy the Harry Potter activity during a project week and the opportunities it provides for self-reflection. In Years 9 and 11 the advice given allows the pupils to make informed decisions when choosing examination subjects. In addition, pupils are given the opportunity to take part in a careers guidance activity. A well-planned programme in Years 12 and 13 supports pupils in their applications to highly competitive universities and all pupils are offered mock interviews. A biennial careers convention promotes future planning. Whilst a very large majority of pupils

investigate university choices, other avenues are successfully explored, for example apprenticeships and post-school leavers' schemes.

- 3.13 Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) is well planned throughout the school and effectively promotes the pupils' social and cultural awareness, self-esteem and confidence. Healthy lifestyles are covered and examples of this were seen in a Year 9 food lesson, where the sugar content in foods was discussed. Sixth-form pupils support and mentor younger pupils in various clubs and activities, where there are many excellent opportunities to develop leadership skills. The well-established house system promotes both competitive and non-competitive collaboration through art, drama and sporting events. These opportunities develop the pupils' team-building skills. The pupils' extensive charitable efforts, which raise considerable amounts for local, national and international causes, develop a sense of empathy and social understanding across the school.
- 3.14 The extra-curricular programme is excellent in meeting the school's aims to encourage all pupils to participate in activities that encourage personal and physical development and that develop a sense of self-belief and esteem. The programme is well organised and carefully balanced across sporting, cultural and recreational activities. The activities are led by both senior pupils and staff. The school also offers a chance for all pupils in Years 7 to 9 to develop work towards The Adventure Service Challenge Scheme, and in Years 10 to 13, to take part in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Participation is monitored by form tutors to ensure that the pupils have selected a balanced programme that promotes challenge.

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

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.16 The quality of the teaching fulfils the aims of the school to provide an excellent academic education in a caring and supportive atmosphere. Teaching strongly enhances the learning process and is highly successful in promoting pupils' progress. It allows pupils to learn with enthusiasm and enjoyment, and makes a strong contribution to their excellent achievements.
- 3.17 Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and demonstrate strong subject knowledge. A wide variety of teaching techniques, using excellent resources, caters for different learning styles and abilities. All pupils are given a tablet computer when they start in Year 7 and are encouraged to use it to support their learning. The teaching in lessons supported the confident use of technology in providing opportunities for pupils to use their mobile devices. Independent learning is encouraged, and in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire almost all pupils indicated that they are frequently encouraged to investigate solutions without the teachers' direct input; they value this independence.
- 3.18 Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Teachers and support staff promote an atmosphere of mutual respect with pupils and there is an easy openness towards others' views in curricular and extra-curricular activities. The supportive and purposeful environment engages and motivates pupils, and promotes excellent attitudes to learning. It develops exemplary behaviour, sensitivity, tolerance and respect. Lessons are well planned and are conducted at a good pace. Pupils frequently work in pairs or groups, and opportunities for independent learning are plentiful. Pupils enjoy their work and engage with it purposefully.

- 3.19 In response to their pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils did not feel that homework helps them to learn and that teachers do not ensure that the right amount of homework is set. In response to their questionnaire, a few parents felt that their children do not receive appropriate homework for their age. From discussions with pupils, work scrutiny and lesson observations, inspectors found conflicting evidence for these views. The school's expectations of the role of homework are not always clear. However, pupils do understand the need for homework as a method of consolidating their learning. The school's homework timetables are clear, although some pupils reported that teachers do not always adhere to them.
- 3.20 The marking of pupils' work is of a high standard, with helpful comments, very good oral and written feedback, and target setting, all intended to show pupils how they could improve. It provides pupils with tailored support that enables them to make excellent progress in their studies. In response to the recommendation of the previous inspection, the school now ensures that all staff are familiar with the wide range of performance data available in the school, and it is used effectively in planning and teaching. The academic assessment and monitoring of pupils are highly successful in tracking the progress of pupils and informing planning.
- 3.21 There is excellent provision and progress for pupils with SEND or EAL and the more able. Teaching provides targeted support for pupils with particular educational needs. Extension work is available for more able pupils, providing greater breadth, depth and challenge.
- 3.22 Classrooms are bright and well resourced, providing spaces which are conducive to learning. They encourage an enthusiasm for the subjects taught. Corridors are areas of learning too, as they are used creatively to display excellent examples of pupils' work.

## **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 is highly successful in its aims to foster in pupils good standards of behaviour, and mature, responsible and considerate attitudes, both in and out of school. It takes active steps to promote both the personal development of the pupils and their understanding of the key values of Britishness, such as democracy, the rule of law and individual freedom.
- 4.3 The pupils throughout the school have an excellent sense of the spiritual. Pupils learn to become understanding of people of other faiths and those of none through opportunities provided in the curriculum, especially religious studies lessons and the comprehensive PSHEE programme. They understand clearly the place of faith within British culture. In a Year 8 English lesson, for example, pupils were able to clearly articulate religious symbolism in two poems by William Blake. Pupils demonstrate high self-esteem and have an acute awareness of self-knowledge as a result of the opportunities to debate issues internally and to interact with knowledgeable external speakers. They are very aware of the many spiritual moments that occur in school, for example in the excellent musical ensembles and dramatic performances.
- 4.4 The pupils demonstrate excellent moral development. This was evident in a Year 10 drama lesson where, in response to schizophrenia stimuli, pupils were able to articulate the effects that a crime would have had on each of the characters with a clear sense of maturity. Pupils are extremely polite, well mannered and confident. Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils themselves are founded on mutual respect and genuine warmth. Pupils have a very clear sense of right and wrong, both within the context of the school's rules and the wider legal framework of England. Pupils display a broad knowledge of the public institutions and services of England, with comparisons being made with school structures to aid comprehension where required. Pupils have a strong understanding of the concepts of justice and fairness, often using role play and other activities to explore moral issues such as enforced migration and asylum. In questionnaire responses almost all pupils agreed that they are given the chance to take on responsibility. Inspectors found enthusiastic participation on many committees such as the school council, eco group, and food and e-safety committees.
- 4.5 The social development of the pupils is excellent. Pupils show genuine empathy for those less fortunate than themselves. They raise substantial amounts of money for charities both locally and in the wider world. Year 11 pupils demonstrated clear social conscience whilst discussing which local charity their form should support.
- 4.6 Pupils celebrate the diversity of the school community and this enables them to articulate an appreciation of, and respect for, their own and other cultures. The school actively encourages its pupils to be aware of current affairs. Debates and discussion on issues such as democracy, trial by jury and Britain's future in the European Union are used to stimulate a wider interest in, and appreciation for, cultural diversity. There are many opportunities for involvement in the local multi-cultural environment and this is complemented by a comprehensive programme of international trips, including the opportunity for pupils to visit their link school in Sri

Lanka. The development of English culture in the pupils is enhanced by many visits to art galleries, concerts and theatrical productions.

- 4.7 Pupils leave the school as eloquent, confident and well-educated individuals, ready to face the challenges which lie before them, and are equipped to face the demands of life beyond school, becoming active citizens of the 21st century.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 Provision strongly supports the pupils' personal development, in accordance with the school's aim to provide an excellent academic education in a caring and supportive atmosphere.
- 4.10 Relations between staff and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves, are excellent. Pupils speak warmly of the relationship they have with their teachers and feel particularly well supported by them. Younger pupils also value the support and encouragement offered by older pupils.
- 4.11 Pupils are encouraged to be healthy and to take exercise. They enjoy a wide and varied choice of food at lunchtime and are aware of the healthy choices available. Pupils have a broad range of opportunities for physical exercise in both curricular and extra-curricular activities. They value the choice and are pleased that they can participate in sports that might otherwise only be offered to boys.
- 4.12 The school employs effective methods to seek the views of pupils through both a school forum and school council. In questionnaire responses a minority of pupils indicated that they feel the school does not listen to their opinions or respond to them. Inspection evidence showed that the school has suitable mechanisms to gather pupils' views, and discussions with pupils indicated that they do feel something has been done in response to their concerns. For example, when pupils raised the possibility of counselling support being available, the school sought help from professionals who have been able to offer assistance.
- 4.13 The school is effective in promoting good behaviour and guarding against harassment and bullying, including cyber bullying, and it deals constructively with any unacceptable behaviour, taking due account of any related difficulty or disability. This is supported by responses to the pupil questionnaire, where most pupils agreed that the school deals appropriately with any bullying that occurs.
- 4.14 A small minority of pupils indicated in response to the questionnaire that teachers are not fair in the way they give rewards and sanctions. Inspectors examined records and discussed the matter with staff and pupils. They found that sanctions are appropriate and, as with rewards, are given in line with the school's policy.
- 4.15 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.16 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.17 The school is thorough with regard to the safeguarding of its pupils. Leadership on safeguarding matters is at a senior level. The designated safeguarding lead and three deputies are well qualified for their roles and receive training at the appropriate level from the local safeguarding authority. All staff receive training on safeguarding matters when they join the school and at regular intervals thereafter. Some senior pupils who assist in local primary schools also receive training. Records are kept assiduously and stored securely. The governing body ensures that the safeguarding policy and procedures are reviewed annually. The school is rigorous in ensuring that safer recruitment practices are followed; all required checks on staff have been completed in a timely manner and the results recorded accurately in a single central register.
- 4.18 Regular health and safety meetings are held to ensure that the school's policies and procedures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards are up to date and action points are followed up promptly. The minutes from these meetings are reviewed by governors. Regular fire drills are held and evacuation improvements are informed by monitored feedback. Subjects such as food and chemistry are taught in safety-conscious learning environments. Chemicals are safely and securely stored.
- 4.19 A well-equipped first-aid room is staffed throughout the day by a qualified nurse who provides a listening ear as well as medical care. A number of responses to the pupil questionnaire suggested that the school should provide additional mental health care and education. The senior leadership is currently reviewing the provision. The school recognises its responsibilities for pupils with SEND and the accessibility plan is regularly reviewed.
- 4.20 Admission and attendance registers are suitably maintained and stored in accordance with regulations.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Governance provides focused, knowledgeable and committed oversight, enabling the school to achieve its wide-ranging aims for both the pupils' academic and personal development. It provides an effective vision for the future development of the school and its pupils. Financial planning is astute and helps to inform excellent strategic planning, both within the school and the wider foundation. Governors monitor the implementation of plans and review their effectiveness. They undertake regular training, including matters of safeguarding and child protection, which enhances their skills and knowledge and enables them to monitor the work within the school more effectively.
- 5.3 Governors have a detailed insight into the working of the school. Recent additions and changes to the Foundation Governing Body have strengthened links between the school and the full board. The members of the local governing committee know the school, its pupils and staff extremely well, visiting regularly and supporting many school events. Close working relationships between the committee and the school's leadership ensure that the leadership is both supported and challenged. The communication of ideas and concerns is excellent: there is much trust between the two groups. Members of staff make presentations to the local committee on a range of topics, increasing the governors' understanding of educational issues.
- 5.4 All statutory requirements are met, and governance has a clear focus on the safeguarding and welfare of the pupils, ensuring that the safeguarding policy is reviewed annually and that the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements is maintained.

### **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 excellent.
- 5.6 Leaders and managers at all levels are highly effective in the discharge of their delegated responsibilities, in accordance with the aims of the school. Senior and middle managers have clearly defined roles. The senior leadership team has an appropriate range of skills and expertise. Teachers report that they are well supported, in addition to being closely monitored by middle and senior managers. A very small number of parents responding to the questionnaire felt that the school is not well led and managed. Inspection evidence did not support this view. Inspectors found that there is clear leadership, resulting in high quality academic and personal outcomes for the pupils. Senior and middle leadership gives the school clear educational direction. Recent innovations such as comment-only marking, the use of mobile devices for teaching and learning, and the drive to introduce more independent research and analysis indicate the desire of the school's management to help the pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. The inspection team found evidence that these developments are already having a positive impact on learning.

- 5.7 Self-evaluation is accurate in identifying the school's priorities. Very effective procedures are in place to evaluate the school's outcomes and to monitor the work of managers and leaders, and of departments. Regular meetings, gathering of information and data analysis allow appropriate targets for improvement to be set. Middle managers are closely monitored and well supported by members of the senior leadership team. In turn, the middle managers offer similar support to those they line manage. The school development plan reflects input from all teachers through their heads of department. The senior leadership team monitors the implementation of plans and evaluates their impact.
- 5.8 The school is very successful in recruiting and retaining suitable staff. The staff are very well trained in their roles in safeguarding and welfare, health and safety. Thorough arrangements are in place for checking and recording the suitability of staff when they are appointed. Newly qualified teachers and other new staff undergo an effective induction period and enjoy strong support from their colleagues.
- 5.9 The previous inspection in 2010 recommended that the school should ensure that all staff are familiar with the range of performance data that is available in the school in order to challenge and meet the needs of all pupils. The recent inspection found that the school management has been successful in fulfilling this recommendation. All lesson plans include references to the baseline test scores of the pupils in each class and this data informs planning. The pupils' attainment is tracked as they progress through the school, allowing trends to be identified and interventions to be made as appropriate.
- 5.10 The school places a high value on its relationships with parents. An overwhelming majority of the parents who responded to the questionnaire were extremely positive about the information made available to them. Parents of current and prospective pupils are provided with the required information about the school in a number of different formats. The school's website is effective in making publications and school policies available to parents. All letters and other forms of communication are sent electronically, including a half-term newsletter and a weekly mail update.
- 5.11 Parents' concerns are initially handled informally and most are dealt with successfully at this stage. Responses to their questionnaire indicated that a small minority of parents feel the school has not handled their concerns effectively. Inspection found that all formal complaints and concerns are well documented and show that the issues were resolved according to the school's policy.
- 5.12 Parents are kept fully informed of their children's progress and activities through a range of reports and parents' evenings. Full reports detail pupils' progress and attainment, and targets are clear. Parents are actively encouraged to become involved in the work and progress of their children at evening meetings, such as the careers convention and higher education presentations.

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