



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION  
CATS COLLEGE CANTERBURY**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## CATS College Canterbury

Full Name of School	<b>CATS College Canterbury</b>
DfE Number	<b>886/6075</b>
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Email Address	<b>jullmer@catscanterbury.com</b>
Principal	<b>Mr Jonathan Ullmer MBE</b>
Proprietor	<b>Cambridge Education Group</b>
Age Range	<b>14-22</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>406</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (218 boys; 188 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>14-16: 36    16-22: 370</b>
Number of Day Pupils	<b>Total: 35</b>
Number of Boarders	<b>Total: 371</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>01 Mar 2016 to 04 Mar 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 boarding intermediate inspection was in May 2012 and the previous ISI standard inspection was in April 2011.

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

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 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 the proprietor, and observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period. 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 Michael Dodd	Team Inspector (Head of Department, ISA school)
Mr Toby Mullins	Team Inspector (Head, ISA school)
Mrs Claire Osborn	Team Inspector (Head, ISA school)
Mr Richard Gibbs	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mr Liam Copley	Team Inspector for Boarding (Housemaster, HMC school)
Dr Tracey Martin	Team Inspector for Boarding (Former senior teacher, HMC school)

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 CATS College Canterbury was founded as the Stafford House Tutorial College in London in 1952. It moved to its present site near the centre of Canterbury in 1974 and was renamed in 2007. It is a school for girls and boys from the ages of 14 to 22, owned by the Cambridge Education Group (CEG). An executive board comprising four members of CEG carry out proprietorial responsibilities, chaired by the school's managing director. This is a change from the previous arrangement when the board was chaired by the CEG chief executive. The school aims to enable pupils to develop maturity and independence as they prepare for admission to university and for their future as global citizens.
- 1.2 The school has 406 pupils on roll, with approximately equal numbers of girls and boys. The ability profile is slightly below average. Almost all pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL). Pupils are drawn from nearly 60 countries including the UK, and almost all are boarders. They are placed in teaching groups in accordance with the course of study they undertake, rather than by age.
- 1.3 Boarders are accommodated in six boarding houses, known as residences. Two are located a short walk from the main school buildings, and are for boys and girls aged fourteen to sixteen. Of the other four, one is for boys only, one is for girls only and two are mixed in gender. The largest, opened in September 2015, stands in the centre of the school site.
- 1.4 The majority of pupils in their final year follow the University Foundation Programme (UFP), a one-year course leading to admission to a wide range of British universities. The school also offers International Baccalaureate (IB) and A level courses, and a course leading to GCSE and International GCSE (IGCSE) qualifications. All pupils attend at least six lessons a week of English tuition. Eleven pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and all receive specialist support from the school. One pupil has an education, health and care plan. None have a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.5 Since the previous inspection the school has built a new residence with a café in the basement, and invested in other boarding and teaching accommodation.

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

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

- 2.1 The school is highly successful in meeting its aims to develop independence and maturity in pupils in order to prepare them for university and for global citizenship. Achievement is excellent in academic results. Pupils make excellent progress in English in relation to their starting points. They display high levels of motivation and organisation. Most, but not all, have a clear understanding of their current level of attainment and of what they need to do to achieve their targets. Where this is the case they make the most rapid progress. Pupils have excellent numeracy skills. The excellent curriculum is well matched to the pupils' aptitudes and interests. The school has a developing programme of activities which currently concentrates on nurturing leadership qualities, in which the pupils excel. Fewer opportunities are available for other leisure activities. Teaching is excellent and provides pupils excellent support. Time management, planning and use of resources ensure that pupils benefit from all that is on offer. Teachers know their pupils well and are able to accommodate their learning styles and individual needs by skilfully adapting the pace and degree of difficulty in lessons. Occasionally, teaching does not offer sufficient opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work and take more responsibility for their learning.
- 2.2 The personal development of pupils is excellent. Pupils bring a breadth of experience from their international backgrounds and display exceptional courtesy and maturity. They treat one another with tolerance and respect. Pupils receive excellent support and guidance from the school's pastoral care teams. Excellent arrangements are in place to ensure the welfare, health and safety of the pupils. The overall quality of boarding is excellent. Leadership and management of boarding is excellent, and ensures that boarders are safe and well cared for. Outcomes for boarders are excellent and provision is good overall. Staff provide excellent support and guidance which is matched carefully to the individual needs of pupils. The school has excellent measures in place to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- 2.3 Governance, and leadership and management make an excellent contribution to the pupils' achievement and personal development. They keep all elements of the school's provision under constant review. Their planning is based on a detailed knowledge of how the school works and a well-conceived and accurate set of priorities to lead the school forward. The school is sensitive to the views of staff and pupils, and seeks to incorporate their ideas into the planning process. It has dealt fully with the recommendations from the previous inspection; a more rigorous system has been developed to monitor key policies, and more opportunities have been created to share best practice in teaching to develop higher levels of active learning and independent thinking amongst 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.
- 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. Improve the opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work and progress.
  2. Enhance the provision of activities across the age range.

### **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 extremely successful in its aim to secure, for its pupils, admission to universities in the UK and elsewhere. A significant proportion of pupils gain places at universities with significantly demanding entry requirements.
- 3.3 Pupils listen attentively, speak confidently and can express views articulately. They display excellent levels of knowledge, understanding and skills across the whole range of subjects. Pupils demonstrate high levels of logical thought, creativity and application in mathematics and physical activity. They organise their written work to a high standard and present it with care. Pupils also show the ability to work independently. In many cases, their motivation is high because they understand clearly what they need to do to achieve their target grades.
- 3.4 Pupils are successful in extra-curricular activities, winning gold awards in recent UK Mathematical Challenges and Science Olympiads. They have gained distinctions in a national computer challenge, and seventeen are completing awards in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) scheme. Pupils are able to pursue individual excellence in sport.
- 3.5 Pupils' progress in English, an additional language for almost all of them, is rapid. This is strongly evident from the increase in difficulty of the material covered in the pupils' work and their success in meeting targets in examination results. Pupils' excellent results in English language proficiency tests provide further confirmation of their progress. Pupils with SEND achieve as well as their peers as a result of the specialist tuition and support that they receive from the school, and because their teachers understand their needs and how to meet them. The more able pupils make excellent progress as a result of teachers providing them with opportunities to lead the learning in class, challenging extension tasks and an excellent programme of academic enrichment.
- 3.6 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2012 to 2014. These are the three most recent years for which comparative statistics are available. Results in IGCSE English and mathematics are lower overall than worldwide norms, although results have improved and in 2014 were similar to worldwide norms. Results in A level examinations over the same period are comparable to the national average, but were well above national average in 2013 and above national average in 2014. Results in IB examinations have been similar to the worldwide average. This level of attainment, judged together with the evidence drawn from work scrutiny, lesson observations and the demands of the curriculum, confirms that pupils' achievement is excellent compared with pupils of similar ability.
- 3.7 Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They work productively on individual tasks and co-operate well in pairs and groups, mutually supporting one another's progress. Pupils respond well to guidance from teachers. They are confident in their approach to study, positive in outlook and enthusiastic when describing their work. Pupils make excellent use of achievement diaries, which encourage them to keep thinking about their current levels of attainment and compare them with their target grades.

### **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 academic curriculum thoroughly covers all the requisite areas of learning for pupils of compulsory school age. It offers IGCSE and GCSE courses in English, mathematics, science and history as well as regular tuition in English for all pupils with EAL. Opportunities are included for physical education, art and music. It is carefully designed to meet the needs of pupils intending to move on to university.
- 3.10 The majority of pupils preparing for university entrance follow the UFP, equivalent to two-thirds of an A level course and accepted by virtually all universities. The content of the UFP is reviewed and adjusted each year to take account of suggestions from universities. It is extremely well suited to the pupils' ambitions and aptitudes. About a fifth of pupils follow the IB and the remainder follow courses leading to A level. Classes to enhance pupils' proficiency in English are carefully matched to pupils' abilities and needs, and levels of attainment are measured through language proficiency tests. The school has a highly effective procedure for identifying those pupils who, on entry to the school, would benefit from additional learning support, and ensures that appropriate strategies to meet their needs are widely used in mainstream classroom teaching. The more able pupils can undertake an excellent range of additional courses including critical thinking, the Extended Project Qualification, or components of the IB diploma programme such as theory of knowledge or the extended essay. The curriculum is inherently flexible and contains fast-track options when they are judged to be appropriate.
- 3.11 The school offers an excellent programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) through tutorial periods. It covers a range of topics including personal safety and internet awareness, bullying and cyberbullying, study skills and university entrance processes. Elements of the provision are focused on enabling pupils to become more familiar with British culture and customs.
- 3.12 The school offers an excellent programme of extra-curricular activities to all pupils, with a particular emphasis on developing leadership skills in music, sport and languages. The DofE award is popular as is Young Enterprise, in which pupils gain an understanding of how economics influences business. Fewer opportunities are available for recreational activities and those not focused on leadership. Pupils have opportunities to play team games through facilities in the local community. They particularly welcome the opportunity to attend activities run by other pupils, such as Japanese or Russian clubs.
- 3.13 The school has close links in the city of Canterbury and beyond. Pupils' experience is enriched by work in charity shops and visits to junior schools to talk about their own countries. They raise money for charity, clean the beach at Whitstable, play music in the city centre, and visit museums and other places of interest in London and elsewhere. Residential trips, such as those offering opportunities for geography field work, reinforce the process of getting to know Britain better.

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

- 3.14 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.15 Teaching makes an excellent contribution to promoting pupils' progress, especially the many with EAL, and fully supports the aims of the school. Teachers in all classes demonstrate strong subject knowledge and use it to great effect to provide clear explanations and to foster enthusiasm for their subject. They manage time well and use an appropriate range of resources to support pupils' learning. Teachers make effective use, for example, of the large number of computers in the library.
- 3.16 Teachers plan their lessons well. They base their planning on an excellent understanding of pupils' needs. Teachers use an effective variety of methods to ensure that pupils of all abilities make good progress. They actively promote collaborative and independent learning, and enable pupils to develop confidence in their ability. Teachers take full account of the learning support strategies in place for pupils with SEND, and these pupils all make rapid progress.
- 3.17 Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent, and this creates an atmosphere of trust and mutual support. Teaching encourages pupils to think hard, to question and to use their analytical skills. In a small proportion of lessons observed the pace was slow and limited pupils' progress, but the briskness of the vast majority of lessons kept the enthusiasm and the quality of learning high.
- 3.18 The marking of pupils' work is excellent. Throughout the school, marking is regular and frequent. In most cases, teachers offer carefully crafted feedback that includes praise and encouragement as well as clear targets for improvement. In many cases, but not all, teachers encourage pupils to evaluate their own work. Where this is the case, pupils embrace the opportunity with enthusiasm and they demonstrate through their written responses that they have an excellent understanding of where they can make further progress. All pupils know their current and target grades, which are determined through the use of baseline testing and kept under constant review. Teachers monitor pupils' progress against these targets.
- 3.19 Teachers are able to keep abreast of excellent practice within the school by regular meetings and observation. A professional practice group has been set up in conjunction with a local university, and student teachers are encouraged to contribute new ideas and current educational thinking.
- 3.20 Teaching is sensitive to the pupils' wide range of cultural backgrounds and creates a supportive environment in the classroom. Teachers often arrange pupils in pairs or groups. This enables more able pupils, or those with better developed language skills, to lead the learning and translate if necessary. The more able pupils are encouraged in lessons to attempt extension tasks and to answer questions more fully, in line with their abilities.
- 3.21 Teaching throughout the school is instrumental in promoting tolerance and respect in pupils, and is scrupulously non-partisan in the coverage of political issues.

## **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 pupils develop independence and maturity in accordance with the school's aims. They also develop tolerance and respect as members of an international community, and readily embrace the common values that underpin British culture including democracy, the rule of law and individual freedom.
- 4.3 Pupils are encouraged to practise their own faith. They make excellent use of the prayer room, which is available to all. Pupils are able to take advantage of transport provided to local places of worship. Their excellent spiritual awareness is also developed through their work to recognise and celebrate religious festivals in periodic assemblies. Pupils develop excellent self-awareness, self-esteem and confidence.
- 4.4 The moral development of the pupils is excellent. They demonstrate courtesy and respect for staff, visitors and one another. Pupils understand and value the school's code of conduct, recognising the need for norms of behaviour and the system of rewards and sanctions. They have a highly developed sense of right and wrong as observed in a lively and sensitive debate on the consequences of theft in their home countries, and a classroom presentation on the legality of torture. Pupils understand their moral responsibility for those less fortunate than themselves. They make an excellent effort to provide time to partake in charitable causes, including cake sales and sleeping outdoors to raise money.
- 4.5 The pupils' social development is excellent. Those of differing ages mix well and they are supportive of one another. Pupils are generally thoughtful, considerate and assured. They develop independence through living abroad and working in a foreign language, and they relish the relative level of personal freedom as they prepare for university life. Pupils also embrace the opportunities to serve as heads of house, peer mentors, ambassadors and school council members. Pupils without formal posts of responsibility develop leadership qualities through the school's extensive leadership programmes and PSHE.
- 4.6 Pupils' cultural development is excellent. They derive benefit from the multicultural nature of the school community and are open-minded about perspectives from other countries. Pupils celebrate their diversity through international evenings, wearing national dress, cooking food and performing music. During their induction week, pupils begin to acquire an understanding of British culture and a broad knowledge of English public institutions and services from a series of guest speakers. This is supported further by the PSHE programme and regular educational visits. Pupils' standard of personal development by the time they leave school is excellent.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 The school is successful in achieving its aim to develop pupils' independence and maturity. Staff provide excellent support and guidance which is tailored to the individual needs of pupils. Personal tutors know their tutees well. Relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst pupils themselves are excellent. Pupils know who to turn to if they have a concern and tutors, houseparents, a counsellor and a matron are all available, as well as the welfare desk which is staffed during the school day and beyond. The school makes excellent use of an electronic information system to ensure that all concerned with a pupil's welfare are fully informed about even minor details. Welfare staff are then enabled to identify and address patterns of behaviour.
- 4.9 The school's induction programme promotes the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle and pupils are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits and to take regular exercise. A large majority of pupils in their questionnaire responses expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of food provided, and a minority disagreed that snacks and water are readily available. Inspection evidence concluded that the school ensures a sensible and balanced diet, and that the food is nutritious, plentiful and varied, and snacks and water are suitably available. The school is always willing to accommodate pupils' tastes.
- 4.10 Sanctions and rewards operate well. Pupils understand and accept the consequences of their behaviour. The school is successful in promoting high standards of conduct. Pupils report few instances of harassment and bullying, including cyberbullying. Where instances are identified they are followed up immediately and effectively. A suitable plan is in place to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.11 The school has a wide variety of ways to seek pupils' views including surveys, interviews, discussions and the school council. The 'tell us' button available through the school's electronic application is well used and an excellent means of expressing immediate concerns.

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

- 4.12 The contribution of the arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.13 Arrangements for safeguarding and child protection fully meet official guidance, including measures to prevent radicalisation and extremism. They take account of the local context and are appropriately adapted to the needs of international pupils. All staff are suitably trained to meet their responsibilities for safeguarding. The designated safeguarding lead has an excellent level of training and has a good working relationship with local children's safeguarding agencies. Matters of pupil welfare are dealt with quickly, effectively and sympathetically by a dedicated team.
- 4.14 The school takes excellent precautions to reduce the risk from fire and other potential hazards. All fire equipment is maintained and checked by external contractors in accordance with a schedule agreed by the health and safety committee. Fire drills are carried out at regular intervals. Their frequency reflects the changing pupil population and ensures that everyone including recent arrivals is fully aware of the procedures.

- 4.15 The school has good provision for any pupils who are ill or injured, and has suitable arrangements to meet the needs of all pupils who have SEND. Staff have appropriate training in first aid.
- 4.16 Admission and attendance registers are maintained and stored appropriately. Patterns of attendance for individual pupils are monitored closely and any concerns are followed up systematically. The central register of staff appointments is accurate and meticulous, supporting the school's aim to promote and safeguard pupils' well-being.

#### **4.(d) The quality of boarding**

- 4.17 The overall quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.18 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. Pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds are integrated into the school and individuality is respected. Relationships are excellent across the community and new boarders are immediately made to feel welcome. Heads of house, members of the school council, and boarders who acted as guides during the inspection all displayed confidence, maturity and courtesy, which are qualities clearly promoted by their experience as boarders. Boarders report that they feel comfortable in their houses and have good relationships with their houseparents. They have a range of appropriate adults to turn to over personal issues, from residential staff to the school matron, as well as a counsellor and independent listeners who are known to the pupils. Boarders feel that their views are heard through regular informal meetings in residences, as well as through the electronic application which is used by all. Boarders are articulate, polite and sociable. They enjoy being a part of their community and making a contribution to it. Sanctions are infrequently needed and are regarded to be fair, and rewards are much appreciated.
- 4.19 The quality of boarding provision and care is good. New boarders and their parents receive handbooks before they arrive, in appropriate languages. The week-long induction process is thorough and takes place in September and January, the two main times when pupils are admitted. The care for boarders' health is effective and medical arrangements through the school matron are good, including those for medical appointments and emergencies. The medical centre is an efficient resource. A minority of boarders report that they are not well looked after if they feel unwell or are injured. Inspection evidence does not support this view; boarders who may be sick overnight or at weekends are suitably accommodated in their own single en suite rooms and appropriately supervised by suitably trained duty staff. In case of infectious or contagious disease, pupils are isolated in the medical centre. Pupils have access to sufficient toilets and showers, with most rooms having en suite facilities. Accommodation is generally spacious and comfortable although laundry, kitchen and common room spaces vary in quality between houses.
- 4.20 The majority of boarders' pre-inspection questionnaire responses indicated dissatisfaction with the food on offer and a minority were dissatisfied with the availability of snacks and drinking water. Inspection evidence, gained through the checking of menus and the sampling of food in the dining room, found that the school provides a good choice of healthy, nutritious meals including for those boarders with special dietary needs or allergies. In addition to main meals, boarders have the means to prepare food of their own at appropriate times. The school is sensitive to boarders' individual needs in this respect. Drinking water is readily available. Laundry facilities are appropriate. Boarders' bedding is washed for them.

Boarders can easily contact relatives and friends in other countries when they wish. Parents and pupils have access to suitable complaints procedures. Excellent attention is paid to boarders' health and safety requirements. Boarders have sufficient free time. Activities are offered in the evenings. The school organises cultural and recreational trips at weekends although many boarders prefer to spend their free time studying or socialising. Links with the local community enable pupils to keep fit. Boarders' security is assured through effective procedures for visitor access and the protection of buildings. Parents and guardians are kept informed about the life of the school and about any particular concerns which may arise about their children.

- 4.21 The arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are excellent. The school complies with regulations and guidance in respect of safeguarding and recruitment checks for boarding staff. Emergency fire drills are practised at least once a term in boarding time and risk assessments are thorough. An effective anti-bullying policy is in place but it is rarely needed, as behaviour is generally well managed. Boarding staff and adults associated with boarding, such as cleaners and night staff, are up to date with training in matters of safeguarding. They know who to contact in case they have any concerns. The policy on missing pupils is known to staff and the whereabouts of boarders are carefully monitored. Suitably trained members of staff take responsibility for boarders during boarding time, with adults always on duty at night in the houses. The school does not appoint guardians. In discussion groups and questionnaire responses, most boarders stated that they feel safe in their boarding house and that their possessions are secure.
- 4.22 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of boarding provision is excellent. Boarding documentation and policies reflect the most recent guidance. Staff are fully aware of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. Houseparents have access to more senior members of staff in case of need. New or inexperienced staff are suitably inducted and trained. Staff have job descriptions which are clear and helpful. All staff take part in an annual cycle of professional development which includes negotiated targets. Boarding staff are encouraged to attend external training courses and several have been supported by the school in undertaking nationally recognised boarding qualifications. The school keeps appropriate records. Information about boarders is shared among all staff in the school including medical and academic staff, often through the school's bespoke information system. Senior leaders and governors collaborate in reviewing the development plan for boarding. The leadership and management of boarding establishes clear priorities for boarding in line with the school's aims to develop boarders' maturity and independence.
- 4.23 The school has met in full all the recommendations of the previous boarding welfare intermediate inspection: to assess the medical training needs of staff, including the monitoring of boarders' self-medication; to review the regularity of the testing of boarders' portable electrical appliances; and to monitor more rigorously the use of signing-out books.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The proprietors of the school nominate four members of an executive board to act as the governing body and to discharge the responsibilities of governance. The managing director of CEG Colleges acts as the chair of governors. The recent appointment of a governor with a background in education has strengthened the effectiveness of governance and supplemented the existing expertise in financial matters.
- 5.3 The board provides excellent oversight of educational provision in line with the school's aims. In addition, it fully meets its obligations for maintaining educational standards. It ensures that financial planning enables the school to appoint sufficient staff of the required standard, and to develop accommodation and resources to improve provision for pupils.
- 5.4 Governors ensure that they are familiar with the work of the school. They monitor the work of senior managers rigorously through a system of formal appraisal and through frequent and regular informal visits. Communications between the board and senior managers are excellent and this enables the board to offer stimulus, challenge and support for growth and development.
- 5.5 The board ensures that the school meets all statutory requirements. A designated member of the board assumes particular responsibility for policy and procedure in matters of safeguarding. This enables the full board to be properly informed when conducting the annual review of the safeguarding policy.

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

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent.
- 5.7 Leadership at all levels of responsibility is dynamic and inspiring. It is instrumental in enabling the school to fulfil its aims. In 2015, all pupils who applied to university obtained at least one offer and all were able to go on to higher education. The senior leaders display vision and energy, and their commitment to improvement has resulted in considerable investment since the previous inspection. The leadership team has been expanded to meet the increased demands imposed upon it. The school has successfully met the recommendations of the previous inspection. In doing so, it has introduced a robust system for the monitoring of policy requirements. Governors have all the necessary information to ensure regulatory compliance in all areas, including safeguarding. A range of initiatives has contributed to continuing improvements in the standard of teaching, and pupils frequently demonstrate the ability to take initiative and develop independent thinking skills.
- 5.8 Leadership and management provides exceptionally clear educational direction, which is observed in the improved opportunities and outcomes for pupils. Nearly all pupils' and parents' questionnaire responses confirm that pupils are making good progress in their work. A very large majority of parents who responded to the

questionnaire indicated that the school is well led and managed, and that the school has handled well any concerns they may have had.

- 5.9 The school has developed a highly effective integrated system for tracking pupils' progress and monitoring their well-being. This has enabled the school to develop its provision, and to match the courses it offers to the pupils' abilities and needs. It also enables efficient communication between academic staff, tutors, pupil support services and houseparents. Academic and pastoral concerns are quickly identified and addressed, enabling the school to offer appropriate support to pupils.
- 5.10 Leaders and managers are committed to a culture of constant self-evaluation and improvement in all aspects of school life. The school's planning processes are excellent, including all staff and based on a thorough knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and with a clear set of priorities. The implementation of the plan is monitored and discussed regularly to ensure that targets are met. Curriculum directors have all successfully participated in a development programme to enhance their leadership skills. They are effective in taking responsibility for achieving key objectives. Middle managers attach a high value to the contribution that they are able to make to the continuing development of the school.
- 5.11 Leadership has been successful in securing a body of well-qualified and dedicated staff who are well equipped to meet the needs of the pupils. The induction process for new staff is thorough. Staff appraisal is successfully embedded in the school at all levels. All appraisal findings, including individual targets, are recorded electronically and managers meet all staff regularly to discuss progress and identify any training needs.
- 5.12 Leaders place importance on training and developing staff, and make excellent use of formal links established with teacher training bodies and universities. This enables the school to emphasise regularly the importance of safeguarding and child protection as well as pupils' welfare, health and safety. Coaching programmes and weekly training on teaching strategies and effective approaches to marking make an excellent contribution to developing excellence in teaching. Teachers have plentiful opportunity to contribute their own expertise to the training of others.
- 5.13 The school has established an excellent constructive relationship with parents. Parents and prospective parents are provided with all required information about the school. The school ensures that all material is available in twelve languages in addition to English.
- 5.14 Parents' pre-inspection questionnaire responses indicate that they are highly satisfied with the education and support provided for their children. Many parents live at a great distance from the school and hence it is difficult for them to become closely involved in their children's work and progress, and they are appreciative of the efforts made by the school to keep them informed despite this. The school magazine and half-termly newsletter provide useful and relevant information. The school website offers access to news about current and future events, as does the electronic application available to all parents and pupils.
- 5.15 Parents are kept fully informed about the educational progress of their children through reports of an excellent quality, issued twice each term. The school has a clear procedure for dealing promptly with any concerns.

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