INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

HEADINGTON SCHOOL

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Headington School

The preparatory school was inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School	**Headington School**			
DfE Number	**931/6064**			
Registered Charity Number	**309678**			
Address	**Headington School** **Headington Road** **Oxford** **Oxfordshire** **OX3 7TD**			
Telephone Number	**01865 759100**			
Fax Number	**01865 760268**			
Email Address	**ea2head@headington.org**			
Headmistress	**Mrs Caroline Jordan**			
Chair of Governors	**Mrs Helen Batchelor**			
Age Range	**11 to 18**			
Total Number of Pupils	**779**			
Gender of Pupils	**Girls**			
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	**573**		
Number of Boarders	Total:	**206**		
	Full:	**162**	Weekly:	**44**
Inspection Dates	**05 May 2015 to 08 May 2015**			

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PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule,* which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous integrated ISI inspection was in May 2011 and the previous interim boarding inspection was in December 2013.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Stephen Cole	Reporting Inspector
Mr Paul Clark	Team Inspector (Former Head of Faculty, HMC school)
Mr David Fotheringham	Team Inspector (Academic Deputy, HMC school)
Miss Karen Hollingdale	Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, GSA school)
Mr Tom Keenan	Team Inspector (Head of Sixth Form, HMC school)
Mrs Jan Scarrow	Team Inspector (Former Head, GSA school)
Mr Roderick Spencer	Team Inspector (Former Senior Master, HMC school)
Mrs Joanne Stone-Williams	Team Inspector (Former Assistant Head, GSA school)
Mrs Eileen Grimes	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mr Alex Balls	Team Inspector for Boarding (Senior Housemaster, HMC school)

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CONTENTS

		Page
1	**THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**	**1**
2	**THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**	**3**
(a)	**Main findings**	3
(b)	**Action points**	4
	(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	4
	(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	4
3	**THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**	**5**
(a)	The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning	5
(b)	The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	6
(c)	The contribution of teaching	7
4	**THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**	**9**
(a)	The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	9
(b)	The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care	10
(c)	The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	11
(d)	The quality of boarding	12
5	**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**	**15**
(a)	The quality of governance	15
(b)	The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	15

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

1.1 Headington School is a boarding and day school for girls from the ages of 11 to 18. The school's principal aim is to provide a stimulating, enriching and empowering education for all its pupils. It was founded in 1915 by a group of evangelical Christians to provide a sound education for pupils to equip them for the demands and opportunities likely to arise after the war. The school originally occupied a number of large houses in Oxford before moving to its present site in 1930. In 2015, the school celebrated its centenary. It is run as a charitable trust, administered by a board of governors.

1.2 The headmistress and bursar have both been appointed since the previous full inspection in 2011. In 2012 a new building was opened, providing 15 classrooms, many computer stations and the school's information and communication technology (ICT) centre. In 2013 the sixth-form centre was modernised in order to improve study and common rooms; facilities now include a coffee shop and terrace. In 2014 an additional boarding house was created and the existing houses are being refurbished on a rolling programme. In April 2015 a new dance and fitness centre was completed.

1.3 At the time of the inspection, there were 779 pupils in the senior school, of whom 206 boarded in 5 boarding houses on site. Of the 162 full boarders, 148 are from overseas; 87 pupils from Hong Kong make up the largest group. In addition, 41 day pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Approximately half of the entrants into Year 7 are from the preparatory school, with the remainder being drawn from local preparatory and maintained primary schools. The number of pupils in Year 9 increases the roll by an additional 50 per cent, with most new pupils joining from other preparatory schools. Almost all day pupils come from families living in the Oxford area, and from professional backgrounds.

1.4 The ability profile of the senior school is above the national average. Most pupils are of at least above average ability; in Year 7 around one-quarter of pupils are of well above average ability. There are very few pupils of below average ability. The ability profile of the sixth form is above the national average for pupils in sixth-form education. There is a slightly wider spread of abilities than in Years 7 to 11, although just under three-quarters of pupils have an ability that is at least above average.

1.5 One hundred and nineteen pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupil has a formal local authority statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. One hundred and thirty-six pupils have English as an additional language (EAL).

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1.6 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its NC equivalence are shown in the following table.

School	NC name
Upper 3	Year 7
Lower 4	Year 8
Upper 4	Year 9
Lower 5	Year 10
Upper 5	Year 11
Lower 6	Year 12
Upper 6	Year 13

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2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

2.1 Headington School very successfully achieves its aim of providing a stimulating, enriching and empowering education for all its pupils. The quality of academic and other achievements is excellent throughout the school. The contribution of the curriculum and extra-curricular opportunity is excellent. The quality of teaching is excellent and contributes positively to the pupils' success, although occasionally the amount and content of the homework set are not appropriately pitched. Pupils are successful in obtaining places at a wide range of universities in the United Kingdom and abroad. They have outstanding reading, speaking and listening skills, and are creative in both art and music.

2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent. They behave impeccably, and enjoy positive, respectful relationships with staff and each other. Pupils of different ages and nationalities integrate easily. They are confident, open minded and tolerant. Pupils engage positively with the school's Christian foundation and talk analytically about religious topics. They are very aware socially. Many engage in community projects in the local area or abroad, and charitable fund raising is embedded in the community. Pupils recognise the cultural impact of art and music. A high proportion sing or play musical instruments and attend outside concerts. The school provides strong direction in ensuring that pupils achieve their full potential and develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. The strong behaviour and anti-bullying policies are rarely invoked. The quality of pastoral care and of boarding provision is excellent. The pastoral leaders of both the day and boarding communities react quickly to the needs of pupils. Boarders thrive in a warm, welcoming environment. The contribution of welfare, health and safety is excellent. Safeguarding and health and safety procedures are rigorous and closely monitored by senior leaders.

2.3 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, is excellent. The school has responded positively to the recommendations of the previous inspection. The proportion of high quality teaching has increased, and the standard of marking is strong. The quality of governance is excellent. Governors discharge very effectively their responsibilities for monitoring standards, financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and learning resources. The investment in new facilities and the upgrading of boarding accommodation since the previous inspection have contributed much to enriching pupils' educational experience.

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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) Recommendation for further improvement

2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Ensure that the amount and content of homework are appropriate.

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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 fulfils its aim to nurture pupils' achievement, enterprise and creativity. Pupils show excellent levels of knowledge, understanding and subject skills, which develop well as they move through the school. In discussions they expressed their opinions cogently. In written work they show a high level of maturity; essays by younger pupils on the role of Lady Macbeth reflected a sophistication beyond their age. Almost all responses to the parent questionnaire indicated that parents are pleased with their children's progress, and in responses to their questionnaire the vast majority of pupils expressed the view that they are making good progress.

3.3 Outstanding reading, speaking and listening skills were observed in a range of subjects. In a sixth-form English lesson pupils fluently compared different literary styles, and in French a younger class was able to use new vocabulary and grammatical rules to develop answers. In response to a recommendation of the previous inspection, many pupils learn independently effectively. The academic scholars' programme requires scholars of all ages to research and present a project based on a particular theme. For example, these pupils developed the theme of gold to both translate Virgil and create a computer game based on the gold rush. High levels of artistic creativity are evident in two- and three-dimensional work and photography around the school. Musicians are inventive and creative when playing a wide range of music to a high standard on their instruments. Excellent mathematical skills are evident across the curriculum; for example in geography, pupils demonstrated complex graphing skills. Pupils are secure in their use of ICT. They confidently use software in music technology and in robotics, and selected their own programmes to design business cards in personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE).

3.4 Individuals achieve notable success in academic competitions, such as being awarded first prize in a university English essay competition and being selected to represent the United Kingdom in a linguistic Olympiad. Headington teams have won the regional championships of the English Speaking Union debating competition for schools and an economic challenge organised jointly by the Bank of England and a national newspaper. A small number of pupils have received Young Scientist of the Year awards. The pupils' robotics team won a European championship in 2014. A significant number of pupils have gained diplomas and distinctions in instrumental music examinations.

3.5 Achievement in extra-curricular activities is excellent and pupils participate very successfully in a wide range of sport, displaying a high standard of physical skills. The rowing squad has won gold medals in the Thames 'Head of the River Race', and gold medals in the National Schools' Regatta. Other pupils have represented Great Britain and achieved international success. Netball and hockey teams regularly win county titles.

3.6 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 excellent in relation to the national average for pupils in maintained schools and good in relation to the average for pupils in maintained selective schools. Results at International GCSE in English, mathematics and history

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are higher than worldwide and UK averages. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make a high rate of progress in relation to the average for pupils with similar abilities, as shown by standardised measures of progress. At A level, about one-quarter of grades are at A* and two-thirds at A* or A. Results are excellent in relation to the national average for pupils in maintained schools and good in relation to the national average for pupils in maintained selective schools. The small number of pupils who take the International Baccalaureate (IB) achieve results that are exceptional compared with worldwide averages and well above the UK average. This level of attainment indicates that, in the sixth form, pupils also make excellent progress in relation to pupils of similar ability, as shown in standardised measures of progress. Pupils are successful in obtaining places at a wide range of universities in the United Kingdom and abroad. In 2014, the vast majority of pupils met the level required for their first choice.

3.7 Against a background where the ability of most pupils is above average, the progress of the most able is good and their attainment excellent. Pupils who have particular gifts and talents are suitably supported and achieve at an appropriately high level. The school's support for pupils with SEND or EAL in and outside the classroom is excellent. As a result they make rapid progress and achieve at a level at least in line with pupils of similar ability.

3.8 Pupils have an excellent attitude to learning. The presentation, organisation and volume of written work reflect their strong desire to achieve very well. They work effectively together, co-operating and enjoying group work. They settle to tasks quickly and maintain focus as a lesson develops, though do not always ask penetrating or challenging questions in class. Occasionally, they are overly dependent on their teachers, too quickly seeking support rather than attempting to solve a problem themselves. They engage in discussions enthusiastically and value the opportunity to express their views and listen to others.

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

3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.

3.10 The curriculum is very effective in its coverage of the requisite areas of learning and makes an excellent contribution to the pupils' achievements. It is suitable for all ages and abilities, and supports the aim of the school to encourage and challenge every pupil. The support provided for pupils with SEND or EAL ensures their rapid progress. Since the previous inspection a rotating programme of modern foreign languages has been introduced in Year 7 to give a wider range of choice in future years; art textiles, computing, ICT and religious studies have been added as option subjects at GCSE. Computing has been added to the existing large portfolio of subjects available at A level, and the Extended Project Qualification is offered in the sixth form. Hence the school is able to accommodate pupils' individual choices from a wide range of options. Almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that the school offers an appropriate range of subjects.

3.11 The school provides a comprehensive programme of PSHEE that reflects its aims and ethos. The range of high calibre visiting speakers ensures that pupils gain respect for all people, opinions and beliefs. The programme's flexibility also allows it to meet pupils' needs and their suggestions.

3.12 The development of a varied and challenging enrichment programme has ensured that the school has moved some way to successfully meeting the recommendation

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of the previous inspection to encourage further independent learning and academic risk taking. For example, pupils researched independently in order to give presentations during a Year 7 day on the theme of crime. A comprehensive curriculum programme targeted at the sixth form and the most able pupils provides a well-supported schedule of regular activities. The Eureka science club is open to all ages, and the philosophy café challenges senior pupils. Life drawing and anatomy classes extend the school's talented artists. The curriculum is further complemented by a vast range of workshops, outside lectures and competitions, which are scheduled throughout the academic year and encourage the pupils to challenge themselves beyond the bounds of their school studies. The school ensures that, across the wide range of opportunity, a balance is achieved in the political views presented. The PSHEE programme and the content of assemblies both actively promote fundamental British values. The extensive and up-to-date careers programme includes opportunities for work experience and prepares pupils well for higher education.

3.13 The quality of extra-curricular activities and their contribution to pupils' personal development is excellent. The inclusive thrust ensures that all pupils have opportunity to develop talents in creative arts or sport, and to apply skills learnt in class. Pupils' commitment is monitored by staff. The lively music department organises a very large range of high quality groups, embracing many different styles and including large and small instrumental ensembles and numerous choirs. School concerts are supplemented by cathedral performances and overseas tours. Just under a half of the pupils represent the school at sport. The Combined Cadet Force and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award provide leadership openings. The activities programme is enhanced effectively by work in the local community. Pupils perform music at a local hospital and care homes. They help children to learn mathematics in primary schools, in preparation for similar work in Botswana. A university initiated programme enables senior pupils to help children with SEND in drama and sporting activities. In interviews, many pupils spoke appreciatively of the chances provided to gain experience of life in a less privileged environment.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

3.14 The contribution of teaching is excellent.

3.15 Teaching fully supports the aims of the school and makes a significant contribution to pupils' progress and achievement. Teaching in lessons is excellent overall and very rarely less than good. The strong rapport between teachers and pupils fosters very good application and enables pupils to enjoy their learning.

3.16 The most successful teaching is well structured, proceeds at a brisk and challenging pace, and uses a wide range of stimulating methods and resources that encourage pupils to think and to work independently. For example, in a sixth-form further mathematics lesson, pupils solved complex connected problems and created their own questions. Passionate subject knowledge and high quality open-ended questioning encourage pupils to participate fully, to extend their learning and to accelerate their own progress. In French lessons observed, use of the target language by the teacher had a very positive impact on pupils' accents and comprehension. In many subjects, excellent teaching through the use of very well-planned resources engages pupils in a variety of activities, including peer learning through collaborative work and enables them to develop good subject knowledge and skills. In a sixth-form politics lesson, pupils conducted a lively debate on the possibility of European influence on UK politics, with staff ensuring that the coverage

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of these political issues was non-partisan, and that tolerance and respect were promoted. However, in a small number of lessons observed, a lack of pace and of challenge when questioning limited the ability of the most able to make more rapid progress.

3.17 Most teaching has high expectations of pupils of all ages and abilities, and understands their needs. Pupils with SEND or EAL are clearly identified and their needs are very well met through rigorous monitoring, planning and individual support. Opportunities for extension work, such as sixth-form pupils making illustrated presentations in history and designing an investigative study in psychology, support the most able pupils and promote independent learning. Teachers frequently give additional help beyond lessons in subject clinics, which the pupils value. This was confirmed by pupils in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire.

3.18 Teachers' excellent understanding of the requirements of GCSE, AS-level, A-level and IB specifications benefits all pupils in focusing on examination technique. Innovative and stimulating revision lessons in Years 11, 12 and 13 enabled all pupils to consolidate their learning and to prepare effectively for imminent examinations.

3.19 In their responses to the questionnaires, a small minority of pupils and a few parents expressed concern with the volume and relevance of the amount of work the pupils are required to do, including homework. This was confirmed by pupils in some year groups in interviews. Inspectors found that pupils complete a high volume of written work, but that the content of some homework set does not focus sufficiently on enhancing progress.

3.20 In response to a recommendation of the previous full inspection, the school has taken very successful steps, including a regular scrutiny of work, to improve the quality and consistency of marking. This recommendation has been fully met. High standards of marking and evaluative comments give clear direction and set targets for pupils to improve and develop their work in response to feedback. Baseline data is used effectively to set targets in many lessons, and assessment is used effectively to monitor individual progress.

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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 Pupils fulfil the aims of the school by showing mutual respect in lessons and in conversations with each other. In all year groups, they are self-confident, open minded and tolerant. By the time they leave the school they have strong self-esteem and they demonstrate an excellent standard of personal development.

4.3 The pupils' spiritual development is excellent. They appreciate and enthusiastically follow up topics introduced in religious assemblies and in boarders' Sunday services; they know about other faiths and are tolerant of those who hold different views. Pupils of all faiths or of none use the chapel for private reflection. Pupils talk analytically about their attitudes to spiritual and moral issues very well, and find substance for their own views about religion and faith through their academic study of religion in lessons.

4.4 The pupils' moral development is extremely strong. Their behaviour is of the highest standard both inside and outside the classroom; they understand and accept as fair the school's system of rewards and sanctions, and are aware of the importance of respecting the law. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire believe that the school achieves high standards of behaviour. The wide-ranging PSHEE programme makes a very strong contribution to pupils' personal development at all levels; pupils showed an awareness of the moral and legal issues raised in lessons on drugs awareness and sex education. Pupils' sensitive discussion and awareness of human relationships were used to very good effect in their mature written analysis of *Romeo and Juliet*.

4.5 The social development of the pupils is excellent. They collaborate effortlessly with each other in lessons and thus enhance their understanding of their work. They mix well and develop strong friendships across year groups. Pupils take a keen interest in social issues beyond the school and are aware of responsibilities to those less fortunate than themselves; they support trips with a clear element of service, such as one to a school in Ethiopia where they helped to build a toilet block. The pupils' charitable giving is a strength of the school and it brings the pupils together in a common purpose: in the week of the inspection they raised over £I000 to support victims of the earthquake in Nepal. Pupils choose charities to support through their house groups; they regularly support a local children's hospice through their fund raising, and some have engaged with local agencies to support the homeless in Oxford. Pupils take particular interest in environmental issues and through their initiatives the school is working towards becoming a recognised 'eco-school'. Pupils embrace the opportunity to represent their form on the school council and see how considered argument can significantly effect change.

4.6 The pupils' cultural awareness and development are excellent. They appreciate and learn from the different cultural backgrounds of their peers through daily conversation and through international evenings where they explain and celebrate their different heritages. Pupils appreciate tolerance as a key British value. Senior pupils make much use of cultural opportunities in Oxford to supplement the extensive range of activities provided by the school. Boarders gain a wide cultural perspective through a planned activity programme that includes visits to museums

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and theatres in Oxford and London. Pupils respond perceptively and critically to the high quality art and music evident as they move around the school.

4.7 The school actively promotes British values through an audited and integrated programme across the curriculum. Younger pupils spoke of their greater awareness of current affairs through the promptings of speakers in assemblies. Pupils are aware of services and institutions in England and respect individual liberties. They have a well-developed respect for other people, and they have established a strong gender awareness group, with links to a university women's group. Pupils' presentations in house groups in the recent election week enabled others to hear and consider critically opposing political views.

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

4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.

4.9 The arrangements for pastoral care are in keeping with the school's aim of providing a warm, welcoming, international atmosphere where each pupil is seen as an individual, and they make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. The pastoral leadership has been restructured since the previous inspection and provides a framework that quickly identifies and addresses pupils' concerns. Communication among pastoral staff is excellent and information about boarders and day pupils is shared effectively. The progress of pupils in need of support is recorded and monitored closely through formal pastoral or academic care plans.

4.10 The vertical house system encourages strong friendships between different year groups. Senior pupils act as mentors to younger pupils in academic work or extra-curricular activity. Age-specific specialists in the pastoral team assure high quality advice for pupils at key points in their school careers. Staff receive training to inform their approaches to pupils from overseas and to support their integration into class and extra-curricular activity. In a house meeting, pupils from overseas and the UK were equally engaged in an election quiz. The school has strategies to ensure that no individual is invisible and that all pupils are acknowledged.

4.11 The respectful and warm relationships between staff and pupils, and among pupils themselves, are a strength of the school. The behaviour, anti-bullying and cyber-bullying policies are rarely used resources in an environment in which the vast majority of pupils feel safe, valued and well supported. Pupils are quick to challenge perceived injustice. Records confirm most pupils' confidence that instances of bullying are rare and have been resolved quickly, constructively and successfully in line with stated procedures. Posters prominently displayed identify key staff who pupils can approach for support, including the school counsellor. Policies to promote good conduct and reward good behaviour are effective. In their responses to the questionnaire, a small minority of pupils expressed the opinion that rewards and sanctions are not awarded fairly. There is no evidence to support this view. Inspectors found that rewards are more visible than sanctions, and that recognition takes many forms. Success is acknowledged in assembles and house meetings. Sanctions are rarely needed.

4.12 The new dance and fitness centre ensures that all pupils have the opportunity to stay fit and they enjoy physical exercise. The PSHEE programme encourages healthy eating. School lunches provide a range of dishes, including a selection of healthy options. In their responses to the questionnaire, a minority of pupils expressed the opinion that their views are not listened to or actioned. Inspectors

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found that pupils' suggestions are actively sought and followed up where possible. School councils meet regularly, and have prompted the introduction of more water fountains, enhanced wi-fi and 'eco-bins'. Pupils stated that the reasons for suggestions being unsuccessful are always fully explained. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND, including sight and hearing impairments.

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

4.13 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.

4.14 The school gives very high priority to the safeguarding of pupils of all ages and hence supports their personal development, in line with its aims. The leadership of safeguarding is strong. The school has a close working relationship with the local safeguarding children's board, and arrangements are transparent and in line with official guidance. Child protection procedures are followed rigorously and records are detailed. All governors and staff are given thorough induction and are regularly trained to an appropriate level. Staff are very alert to any pupils at potential risk of harm or in need, and to the potential self-imposed pressure of high achieving pupils. The comprehensive staff code of conduct is appropriate to the context and specialisms of the school.

4.15 Scrupulous health and safety procedures are actively implemented to promote the safety of both day and boarding pupils. Risk assessments are undertaken effectively, and all necessary actions are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. Fire testing and evacuation drills are held regularly and procedures reviewed. Records are comprehensive and reflect the school's sharp focus on further reducing risk. Accident reports are detailed and trends monitored. Access to the internet is filtered and all pupils receive guidance on 'e-safety'. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, all parents said that the school keeps their children safe. The security of the pupils is a high priority.

4.16 The provision for sick pupils and those with SEND is of an extremely high standard. The health centre is staffed by qualified nurses, and a large proportion of staff are trained in first aid. The first-aid policy is clear and medicines are securely stored. Pupils with SEND are very well supported.

4.17 Admission and attendance registers are efficiently completed and archived, and any unexplained absence is immediately followed up.

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4.(d) The quality of boarding

4.18 The quality of boarding is excellent.

4.19 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. Boarders are confident, articulate, tolerant and considerate. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire almost all parents indicated the view that the boarding experience helps their children to progress and develop. A few parents said that their children do not enjoy boarding, although almost all pupils expressed that they enjoy the experience. In all five houses pupils are happy and thrive within a caring and supportive atmosphere. Each boarding house exudes a strong sense of community. Boarders are keen to express their views in conversation in a friendly way, relating to fellow boarders and adults with maturity. They are able to influence the boarding provision through various committees and informal communication with a wide range of house staff. Each house has a housemistress, a resident graduate assistant, a nurse and visiting tutors, and very positive relationships are evident between staff and boarders. There is also a wide range of other people to whom boarders can turn for support and guidance. Boarders contribute to the smooth running of their house. Senior boarders have the opportunity to develop their leadership skills either as prefects or 'house sisters', or through organising house events. They live and work well together and develop a mutual respect that permeates all aspects of their lives. Each house has a distinctive character but, in line with the boarding principles, all are friendly and welcoming places. Boarders enjoy access to and are involved in the local area. Newspapers, magazines and house activities encourage boarders to reflect on the world around them and contextualise various cultures. Those from overseas are fully integrated into their houses and wider school life, and their views and cultures are valued and celebrated.

4.20 The quality of the boarding provision and care is excellent and provides for each pupil's needs. A thorough induction programme for all new boarders, including a 'buddy' system, helps them to settle into their new house. The quality of the medical facilities and care ensures that boarders are exceptionally looked after. Each house has a dedicated health area in which boarders stay when unwell. There is a meticulous system for recording the administration of all prescription and non-prescription medication. Well-established lines of communication between the health centre and boarding house staff ensure cohesive support for boarders with a range of medical needs. All medicines brought from overseas are authenticated before being administered.

4.21 Boarders feel safe and secure in their houses. A programme of refurbishment of boarding houses is carried out and this has created some high quality accommodation and recreational areas, which are both modern and welcoming. Boarders can personalise their own living space and almost all the rooms are spacious and well furnished. A small minority of boarders said in their responses to the questionnaire that their belongings are not safe, although in interviews boarders disagreed with this view. Inspectors found that each boarder has storage for personal belongings and a lockable space for valuables. Houses have fire drills once a term during boarding time and fire safety is taken seriously, with appropriate records being maintained. A minority of boarders in their responses to the questionnaire disagreed that the food is good, and a small minority were unhappy about the availability of snacks and drinking water. Inspectors found that food is of a high quality and that there is much choice to cater for individual dietary needs. The catering department is keen to respond to the suggestions of boarders wherever possible and readily support the house dinners arranged by pupils. Each house has

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a well-appointed kitchen with plentiful supplies of snacks and drinks. Boarders can choose between a centralised laundry system and access to house washing machines.

4.22 Throughout the week and at weekends, a wide range of school and house-based activities, themed events and a broad variety of off-site trips are provided for boarders. Senior boarders avidly make use of the new dance and fitness facilities. In their responses to the questionnaire, a small minority of boarders were unhappy about the balance of free time at weekends and in the evenings. In conversation, some senior pupils said that they would like to stay up later to study. Inspectors found that most boarders enjoy a mixture of directed and free time and have access to a quiet, safe and private space. There are many areas for relaxation and private study in houses, with numerous computers in each house and good wi-fi coverage. All boarders are able to maintain private contact with their families by telephone or through the internet.

4.23 The arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are excellent. Procedures for promoting the welfare and safety of the pupils are extremely well managed by all the staff. Supervision arrangements are thorough; those looking after boarders are suitably experienced and sufficient in number. Each house has resident staff, and the arrangements for overnight duties are clear. Boarders know who is in charge of them and can access help quickly if they are sick at any time of the day or night. All adults with access to boarders are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities, and have detailed job descriptions. The role of spouses, partners and other members of boarding households is made clear. Staff know the whereabouts of boarders and what to do if a pupil goes missing. Recruitment checks are completed on all staff, which are supported by rigorous induction procedures. All boarding staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding procedures, have access to safeguarding training and are supported by an attentive pastoral team. The excellent behaviour of the pupils is a strength, managed by staff who are confident and committed to challenging the very rare instances of inappropriate conduct. Boarders know and understand what is expected of them. They report that sanctions and rewards are fair and transparent, and they are aware of the consequences of and sanctions for any misbehaviour. They are extremely happy as they move around the whole school and meet freely with other pupils. Boarders say that they feel safe. They report no instances of bullying but they are fully aware of how to address any concerns, confident that they will be dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. Risk assessments are systematically created for all activities. Arrangements to promote the security of pupils in the boarding areas are excellent.

4.24 The leadership and management of the boarding provision are excellent. In response to the questionnaire, all parents said that staff can be easily contacted. The leadership of boarding is strong and the headmistress and governors have a clear vision for boarding within the school. They are committed to developing and enhancing the provision. The head of boarding carries out weekly monitoring visits to the houses, and holds regular meetings with staff. All staff within the school provide a wealth of expertise and support for boarders. Boarding policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated. A variety of mechanisms exists for pupils to make a contribution to their environment, through the boarders' council and food committees, and directly through staff. They are confident that any suggestions made are taken forward and acted upon. House staff have regular meetings, and this ensures that areas for development are explored and opportunities for sharing good practice within the school are maximised. Appraisals ensure that professional development is identified in a range of areas so that boarding staff can acquire

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accredited professional qualifications. In the 2013 intermediate boarding inspection, a recommendation was made in relation to the guiding principles of boarding. This has been fully resolved and these principles are now embedded in boarding practice.

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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 governing council comprises an excellent blend of professional expertise in education, finance, business and medicine. It provides stimulus for improvement and gives strong support to the leadership and senior team in advancing further the excellent breadth and quality of educational opportunities for pupils. Governors discharge very effectively their responsibilities for monitoring standards, financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and learning resources. Their strategic vision is realised in the capital developments that have taken place since the previous inspection. The new building provides spacious teaching rooms for the humanities and extensive ICT resources. The recently completed dance and fitness centre reflects the school's focus on sport for all, whilst providing exceptional indoor training facilities for rowing.

5.3 All newly appointed governors attend an external training day. A regular programme of governor visits covers all aspects of school life. They observe lessons, visit boarding houses and attend school events, especially in the current centenary year. Governors meet formally with staff and informally with pupils to discern their views of the school, and analyse examination performance in detail. They have been fully supportive of the leadership's successful drive to improve the quality of teaching.

5.4 The full governing council is well informed about safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. It reviews the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding policy and procedures annually. In addition, the nominated safeguarding governor meets frequently with the designated safeguarding lead and reports at the subsequent council meeting.

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, is excellent.

5.6 Senior and middle leaders make a significant contribution to the successful fulfilment of the school's core aims. Leadership at every level is committed to excellence in all aspects of school life. The sustained focus on excellence is a significant contribution in supporting pupils' achievements in public examinations and extra-curricular activities, and their outstanding personal development. A strong sense of direction and purpose permeates the school. The established culture of self-evaluation and reflection underpins the school's progress. Whole-school priorities are established and well researched using data and feedback from parents and pupils. The approach reinforces values that promote respect for others and that a democratic society listens to all, in line with the ethos of the school. A succinct school development plan generates coherent academic and pastoral targets. Close monitoring by senior and middle leaders has contributed to improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. The sharing of ideas, mutual lesson observations and marking audits are well embedded. All managers take the lead on using assessment data to improve pupils' achievements. Middle leaders analyse test results and compare them with baseline data. Results are used to ensure that teaching strategies enable achievement and to implement support

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mechanisms. Communication throughout the school is clear and rapid so that potential issues are quickly identified. The pupil monitoring system is sophisticated and results in early informal intervention if pupils are under-achieving academically. If required, formal academic mentoring programmes involve teachers, parents and pupils. Pupils' progress and achievement improve as a result, reinforcing the school's aim to encourage, challenge and value every individual.

5.7 Senior leaders regularly review the effectiveness of policies and their impact on pupils' welfare and well-being, particularly safeguarding. Policies affecting regulatory compliance are formally monitored by the executive committee and governors. The school places great emphasis on recruiting and retaining high calibre staff, which contributes to the high quality of teaching and pastoral care. The school is proud of its commitment to professional development; staff are encouraged to pursue further qualifications and progress their careers in both academic and pastoral areas. This positive approach to professional development also helps to attract reflective and ambitious staff. Training needs are highlighted through performance management reviews, within departments and through line management, and most needs are met. A comprehensive induction programme is carried out for support and teaching staff, including for newly qualified teachers, and teachers new to the school are allocated a mentor outside their department. All staff have been trained at or above the required level in welfare, safeguarding, health and safety. The arrangements for checking the suitability of staff and governors are stringent. Safer recruitment procedures are meticulously carried out and the single central register is accurately completed.

5.8 Links with parents are excellent. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all parents were extremely satisfied with the information provided by the school. Parents of current and prospective pupils are given all the required information about the school. Electronic communication between parents, house staff and tutors is prompt and effective. Current parents are kept fully informed of their children's progress and activities. Reporting is frequent and detailed, and targets are clear. The bi-weekly newsletter from heads of section ensures that information is current. Senior staff have visited Hong Kong to ensure that parents of pupils from that area understand, among other things, reports and grades. Parent form representatives meet frequently with the headmistress to exchange ideas and opinions. The Parents' Association arranges myriad social events, ranging from a bonfire evening to parent and staff prayer meetings. Parents are actively involved in providing work experience for the pupils and in offering careers advice and mentoring.

5.9 The school keeps a detailed log of any parental concerns, which are handled carefully and addressed rapidly, in line with published procedures.

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

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