



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

EXETER SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Exeter School

Full Name of School	Exeter School
DfE Number	878/6033
Registered Charity Number	1093080
Address	Exeter School Victoria Park Road Exeter Devon EX2 4NS
Telephone Number	01392 273679
Fax Number	01392 498144
Email Address	headmaster@exeterschool.org.uk
Head	Mr Robert Griffin
Chair of Governors	Mrs Beverley Meeke
Age Range	7 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	909
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (559 boys; 350 girls)
Numbers by Age	7-11: 202 11-18: 707
Inspection Dates	04 Mar to 07 Mar 2014

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in March 2008.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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

Inspectors

Mrs Carole Evans	Reporting Inspector
Mr Christopher Alcock	Team Inspector, (Head, HMC School)
Mrs Jacqueline Davies	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC School)
Mr Stephen Holliday	Team Inspector (Head, HMC School)
Mr Stephen Jefferson	Team Inspector (Former Director of ICT, GSA School)
Mrs Ann McDonnell	Team Inspector (Former Head of Department, IAPS School)
Mrs Linda Macfarlane	Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, HMC School)
Mrs Caroline Tucker	Team Inspector (Assistant Deputy Head, IAPS School)
Mrs Cathy Williamson	Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, GSA School)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Exeter School is a day school for boys and girls aged 7 to 18. The school dates from the foundation of the Exeter Free Grammar School in 1633. It has occupied its present 25-acre site on the outskirts of the city of Exeter since 1880, when the main building was opened. A preparatory school has operated on site since the early 1900s and in 2000 this became the junior school. The school is a registered charity and a board of governors oversee its work.
- 1.2 The school aims to realise the academic, personal and physical potential of each pupil and to maintain the high standard of academic teaching and pastoral care. The school also aims to promote high standards for the conduct of pupils within a friendly, tolerant and safe environment and to encourage pupils to contribute to the wider community.
- 1.3 Improvements since the previous inspection have included refurbishment and extension of the junior school to include a library, science laboratory and dedicated information and communication technology (ICT) facilities. There has also been an extension to the music school, additional dining facilities, a new art department, and enhanced facilities in the sports hall and for the sixth form. New facilities for athletic field events have been provided and the swimming pool has been refurbished.
- 1.4 The school has a total of 909 pupils of whom 559 are boys and 350 are girls. There are currently 202 pupils in the junior school (Years 3 to 6) and 201 in the sixth form (Years 12 and 13).
- 1.5 Pupils are drawn mainly from the surrounding area; around 95 percent of the pupils come from families that are white British with others being ethnically diverse. The ability profile of pupils in both the junior and senior schools is above the national average. The school has identified 45 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) all of whom receive specialist learning support. Three pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), one of whom receives support. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs

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

Junior School

School	NC name
Form 1	Year 3
Upper 1	Year 4
Lower 2	Year 5
Upper 2	Year 6

Senior School

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

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school is highly successful in meeting its aims, amongst these is to realise the academic potential of each pupil and to maintain the high standard of academic teaching. The quality of the pupils' achievements is excellent in their academic work and their activities. All pupils including those with SEND or EAL achieve at a high level and make progress in line with their peers. Pupils are successful in public examinations. The evidence gained during the inspection demonstrates that the pupils make excellent progress throughout the school, including in the junior school and sixth form. Teaching is excellent and promotes high quality learning. The broad curriculum enables pupils to have a wide range of experiences and the extra-curricular programme is extensive. Pupils achieve individual and team successes in a wide range of activities and national competitions. Pupils have an excellent attitude to their work and this makes a significant contribution to their achievement and progress.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development throughout the school is excellent. They are confident and happy and show genuine concern for both their peers and staff. The relationships among pupils and between staff and pupils are excellent. Relationships are based on mutual trust and respect. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent. The quality of care provided by the school is excellent. Pupils feel safe in the school environment and confirm that they are well known and well supported.
- 2.3 Governance is excellent. The governors have an extensive range of professional skills which they use to the benefit of the school. Governors are fully involved in the strategic development of the school; they are rigorous in monitoring policies and ensuring that all safeguarding procedures are in place. The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent. There is a clear vision and sense of direction setting high expectations and standards. Departmental development plans now reflect more closely the school educational development plan. The recommendations from the previous inspection have been implemented. In some cases reports to parents do not give enough detail of what pupils should do to improve their work.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
1. Enhance the quality of report writing to match that observed in the best examples, which make pupils and parents aware of strategies needed for academic improvement.

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' learning and achievement is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils receive an excellent education in accordance with the school's aims.
- 3.3 In the junior school a love of literature is encouraged in lessons and through the use of the library. The pupils produce high quality and often imaginative work, they express themselves clearly and use a wide vocabulary. The pupils' high levels of ability to apply their knowledge and understanding are evident. Their ability to apply mathematical skills is excellent, and they have high levels of creativity.
- 3.4 Senior school pupils are highly articulate, demonstrating strong reading and writing skills, and creativity in art, drama and music; they manipulate numerical data well in a range of contexts. Older pupils often show initiative for example in taking notes.
- 3.5 Pupils of all ages and abilities demonstrate strong subject knowledge, skills and understanding. They make use of highly developed reasoning skills and they are confident when explaining their work and ideas. Pupils listen attentively and are focused. Independent research is evident in pupils' work, during lessons and in projects seen throughout the school.
- 3.6 Throughout the school pupils demonstrate the ability to work independently. The pupils' use of ICT is extensive. Good practical skills were seen in areas such as design technology (DT) and science.
- 3.7 Pupils throughout the school are extremely successful in an impressively wide range of activities. Achievements in sport are numerous and a significant number of pupils have competed at county level and in national competitions or are members of a national squad. The Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE) enjoy high levels of participation and a significant number of pupils have been awarded army scholarships or have achieved the Gold DofE Award. Pupils achieve at a high level in music and have many opportunities to perform. Pupils have achieved considerable success in national Mathematics Challenges and science Olympiads. Pupils have been highly successful in a number of Model United Nations conferences. Pupils are highly successful in gaining entry to their higher education institution of choice and regularly gain places at universities with demanding entry requirements.
- 3.8 In the junior school pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations. Inspection evidence from standardised measures of progress, discussions with pupils, lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work, judged achievement to be excellent.
- 3.9 In the senior school, the following analysis uses the national data for the years 2010 to 2012. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Attainment at GCSE for the years 2010 to 2012 shows that performance has been well above the national average for maintained schools, and above the national average for maintained selective schools. Results in all International GCSE (IGCSE) subjects have been higher than worldwide norms. At A level, performance has been excellent; results have been well above the national

average for maintained schools, and above the national average for maintained selective schools.

- 3.10 The level of attainment at GCSE, IGCSE and A Level, together with standardised measures and other inspection evidence indicate that pupils make progress that is high, in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities.
- 3.11 At all levels of the school, able pupils progress well because of the activities and strategies that are designed to stretch them intellectually. Those with SEND and EAL are well integrated into classes and made excellent progress because of the support that they receive, including the careful matching of work to their needs and regular monitoring of their progress.
- 3.12 In the pre-inspection questionnaires an overwhelming majority of pupils said that they felt they are making good progress and an overwhelming majority of parents are pleased with the progress that their child makes at school. Pupils are willing, enthusiastic and co-operative learners who feel very well supported by their teachers. Their level of focus in class is exemplary; they listen attentively and ask thought-provoking questions as well as forming coherent arguments. They work well both individually and in collaboration with each other. This is evident from the youngest age. Their positive attitudes result in a learning environment in which high levels of engagement and progress are the norm.

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

- 3.13 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.14 The broad and challenging curricular and extra-curricular programmes at all levels enable pupils to realise their academic, personal and physical potential in line with the stated aims of the school. The academic curriculum is extensive and covers all the requisite areas of learning.
- 3.15 In the junior school some elements of the curriculum are taught by subject specialists from the senior school, providing continuity of learning across the whole age range. Pupils are taught French in Years 3 to 5 and Latin in Year 6. The development and monitoring of the curriculum in Years 3 to 6 is very effective. There is a well planned scheme of work and dedicated personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons are taught throughout the junior school.
- 3.16 The senior school offers an extensive range of subject options at GCSE, IGCSE, and A- level. The Extended Project Qualification in the sixth form provides additional challenge and opportunities for independent research, making a strong contribution to the academic and personal development of sixth form pupils. This wide range of options is appreciated by pupils and the overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Support in English has been introduced in Year 9 and the modern foreign language provision in Years 7 to 9 has been significantly enhanced by the introduction of Latin and a rotation of three modern foreign languages. In the sixth form, the PSHE provision has been extended, with appropriate teaching time, satisfying the recommendation from the previous inspection report. The careers programme is good and the recent appointment of a new careers co-ordinator in addition to the higher education advisor has enhanced its effectiveness. The Year 13 students appreciate the challenging interview programme provided by external professionals in Exeter.

- 3.17 In the junior school the “Comets Club” provides exciting opportunities for the most able pupils to explore a topic across a range of subjects in greater depth. In the senior school the provision for the gifted and talented is particularly impressive through a comprehensive enrichment programme to which all departments contribute. Provision for pupils with SEND or EAL is excellent, they are supported by work tailored to their needs, and pupils say that they feel well supported both in and outside lessons.
- 3.18 Pupils benefit from an excellent range of extra-curricular activities which provides extensive opportunities in music, art, sport and drama. Musical groups flourish and there are several choirs and orchestras. Dramatic productions are held three times a year. Sport is strong throughout the school for both individuals and teams and provides opportunities for students of all abilities to participate. All pupils in Year 10 and above participate in either the CCF, DofE or community service activities.
- 3.19 There is a well planned and extensive programme of off-site and overseas trips. Maximum use is made of such visits to promote work in the community. For example on the Himalayan expedition in summer 2013 the group constructed a greenhouse at high altitude to enable the local people to grow vegetables throughout the year. The outdoor pursuits provision is also extensive. The extra-curricular programme caters for a wide range of interests including model railway and animal clubs. The monitoring of extra-curricular participation is excellent, and satisfies the recommendation in the previous inspection report.
- 3.20 Links with the community are good and pupils raise money for a wide array of local, national and international charities. Links with former pupils have been enhanced by the appointment of a director of alumni relations and they are invited to contribute to the careers programme.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.21 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.22 Teaching fully supports the school’s aims to realise academic potential and to maintain a high standard of academic teaching.
- 3.23 Teaching is extremely effective in enabling pupils of all ages and abilities to make significant progress and to develop a secure understanding of their subjects. Lessons are meticulously planned and appropriately targeted to the age, interests and abilities of pupils. The pace of learning in lessons is good.
- 3.24 Staff and pupils enjoy excellent relationships so that learning is seen as a co-operative venture. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of pupils said their teachers helped them to learn. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and pupils feel well supported by staff, who offer much help and encouragement beyond the classroom with drop in sessions, academic clubs, work on the intranet and individual support.
- 3.25 Teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge and are enthusiastic about their subjects, planning lessons that interest and challenge pupils. For example, a Year 9 mathematics class tried to ‘Win a Million’ on the interactive whiteboard by offering increasingly accurate answers to equations with irrational roots. Teachers across the school make good use of ICT resources to motivate pupils and to facilitate their learning. Training and other initiatives have supported this development in the junior school.

- 3.26 In response to a recommendation in the previous report to promote a wider range of teaching strategies to stimulate independent learning and study skills, teachers have given considerable thought to the process of effective learning. This has been channelled through the innovative teaching and learning committee so that a culture of good learning practice is shared by pupils and teachers throughout the school. Teachers contribute to the academic enrichment programme which encourages pupils to explore subjects well beyond the constraints of examination syllabuses.
- 3.27 The school has responded very positively to the recommendations in the previous report concerning provision for pupils in the junior school with SEND and EAL, and those who are able, gifted, and talented. In-service training throughout the school has equipped teachers to support such pupils. Teachers throughout the school plan and make appropriate provision for able, gifted and talented pupils, ensuring that all are offered opportunities to develop their learning or to do independent research.
- 3.28 Marking throughout the school is regular and much is detailed and encouraging with the best offering analyses of weaknesses and strategies for improvement. Teachers assess regularly and pupils say they know how they are progressing because teachers discuss their work with them in class and individually.
- 3.29 In the pre-inspection questionnaire a small minority of pupils said that teachers are not always fair in the way they give sanctions. Inspectors found no evidence to support this view.

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 pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The high quality of pupils' personal development throughout the school clearly fulfils the school's aims of promoting high standards of conduct and of realising the personal potential of each pupil by the time that they leave the school.
- 4.3 The pupils' spiritual awareness is excellent. Pupils are friendly, mature and self-aware, and show clear emotional maturity for their age. They have a clear understanding and appreciation of the non-material aspects of life, as seen, for example, in an English lesson which explored the theme of beauty through poetry, or when discussing personal spirituality.
- 4.4 Throughout the school pupils show a strong moral sense, clearly understanding right and wrong and respecting the school's behaviour code. They are unfailingly courteous and have a clear understanding of wider ethical values, for example when discussing the concept of a just war or, in the junior school, when pupils pondered dilemmas such as what to do if they found a sum of money.
- 4.5 The social development of pupils is excellent. They accept responsibility willingly, for example within the house system or the much-valued 'buddy' systems in the junior and senior schools. Senior pupils regularly support pupils in the junior school in mathematics and sport and there are excellent opportunities for pupils to exercise leadership through sport and CCF. In the pre-inspection pupil questionnaires, a small minority of pupils felt that opportunities for leadership were limited, but inspectors found no evidence to support this. In the sixth form, pupils take the lead as prefects and in many activities, including running the charity committee; they demonstrate a strong social conscience. Pupils show consideration for those less fortunate than themselves, illustrated by the many charity events undertaken throughout the year. This desire to care for others in the community is also evident in the programme at sixth form level where pupils volunteer to help in local schools.
- 4.6 Pupils have an excellent awareness of their own and other cultures. As well as the faith-based assemblies, there are many opportunities afforded by the curriculum and by foreign trips for pupils to explore cultures different from their own.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of the arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 Pastoral staff provide high quality support and guidance for pupils and effective lines of communication and co-operation exist amongst all staff with responsibility for pastoral matters. Assemblies and form and house meetings offer additional opportunities for giving guidance and support to pupils. Guidance through the PSHE programme is effective throughout the school and in the junior school playground leaders provide extra supervision and support.
- 4.9 Relationships between staff and pupils during lessons and in the wider context of school life are excellent and typified by ideals of respect for others. Pupils say they would feel confident in speaking to a member of staff about any concerns they had. Relationships are similarly positive amongst the pupils themselves. The "buddy" system in the school encourages older pupils to support the younger ones. The

vertical house system in the senior school and the “playground pal” system in the junior school also foster good relationships across the age groups.

- 4.10 The extensive programme of games and physical education ensures that pupils take regular and varied exercise. Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits and the school meals offer a range of healthy choices.
- 4.11 The school is very effective in promoting tolerance and good behaviour. It has clear expectations of how pupils should behave, and deals effectively with breaches. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils said that teachers were inconsistent in how they dealt with rewards and sanctions. Interviews with pupils across the school and with staff did not support this view. The school guards very effectively against bullying and harassment. Pupils say bullying is very rare and they are confident that if an incident of bullying did occur it would be dealt with promptly and effectively.
- 4.12 The school has a suitable plan to improve accessibility for pupils with SEND.
- 4.13 In the pre-inspection pupil questionnaire a small minority of pupils indicated that they felt their views were not listened to. Inspection evidence did not support this. Inspectors found a number of instances of pupils requesting changes, which the school has then acted on. During the inspection, pupils said they do feel their views are heard and are not reluctant to approach teachers with their concerns and ideas.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of the arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.15 The school has a comprehensive health and safety policy and all necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. Staff are trained in the use of fire equipment, regular fire drills are held and weekly fire alarm tests take place. Appropriate risk assessments ensure that the safety of the pupils and the whole school community is a priority. Comprehensive risk assessments are undertaken for both internal and external school activities, including day trips and residential visits. A health and safety committee, with representation from a whole spectrum of staff, meets termly and considers reports from different sections within the school. Induction training for new staff includes health and safety.
- 4.16 There is excellent provision for children who are ill or injured. This care is provided in a well equipped medical room. There is a school nurse and many staff are trained in first aid. First aid boxes are checked and re-stocked on a regular basis. Thorough and systematic records of accidents are kept. The policy for first aid is effective and record keeping is comprehensive.
- 4.17 Appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place which have regard to official guidance. Safer recruitment procedures are implemented rigorously. The school arranges suitable staff training in safeguarding. Staff provide the highest level of care for pupils, and pupils know whom to contact in case of concerns.
- 4.18 The admission and attendance registers are suitably maintained, backed up daily and correctly stored.

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 excellent oversight, challenge and stimulus provided by the governors enable the school to fully achieve its aims. All members of the governing body are highly committed to the school. They come from a range of professional backgrounds, and their shared expertise contributes on a regular basis to the development of the school. Many governors have a previous association with the school, either as former pupils or as the parents of former pupils. An induction programme is in place for new governors and regular opportunities are available for further training.
- 5.3 Governors provide effective oversight of the school, and discharge the responsibilities vested in them. They are prudent in managing the school's finances, enabling them to invest in new and improved accommodation and facilities and in high quality staff. Governors have a keen insight into the working of the school and contribute highly effectively to its strategic development including the educational development plan. A committee structure allows detailed scrutiny of various aspects of the school, including one to oversee the work of the junior school, In addition, departments regularly give presentations to the governors, and governors visit departments and observe lessons. There is excellent communication between the governing body and staff. The governors also support a large number of school functions and activities.
- 5.4 Governors are highly effective in discharging their responsibilities for welfare, health and safety, and in addition to receiving the regular reports from the health and safety committee they monitor relevant policies. As a body, they undertake a very thorough annual review of safeguarding and child protection arrangements throughout the school.
- 5.5 The governors have implemented all the recommendations from the previous inspection report.

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 The excellent leadership and management of the school ensures that the aims of the school are achieved with great success and promote the pupils' excellent achievements, personal development and care. In the pre-inspection questionnaire the vast majority of parents felt that the school was well led and managed. Senior staff form an effective and open team with strong working relationships, and enjoy the confidence of the staff. Middle managers feel that their opinions and contributions to planning are valued. Delegated responsibilities are discharged in a thorough manner, including policy implementation and matters of safeguarding.
- 5.8 The senior leadership team provides a strong vision for the school's continued improvement. Self-evaluation is thorough and all staff have the opportunity to contribute, and there is therefore much greater cohesion within the whole planning

process. The school has a clearly articulated development plan which, in response to a recommendation made in the previous inspection, is now clearly reflected in departmental development planning. There is also careful follow-up to ensure that plans are implemented in an effective manner.

- 5.9 Middle managers play a key role in the school's work in academic and pastoral areas, regularly monitoring the work of members of their departments, and participating in an annual review of staff within departments involving lesson observation and subsequent target setting. The management of support staff is also highly effective.
- 5.10 The school is successful in appointing and retaining high-quality staff. All required checks are carried out and recorded in a suitable centralised register. All staff are aware of, and trained for, their responsibilities in matters relating to meeting the needs of all pupils and in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety.
- 5.11 Parents are overwhelmingly complimentary about the quality of education and level of support provided for their children. Parents believe that the school has a measured and balanced approach to procuring academic excellence which ensures that pupils have the time and opportunity to profit fully from the comprehensive extra-curricular programme. They are confident that the school places the strongest priority on developing the whole individual in accordance with its published aims. Since the last inspection the school has continued to expand the high quality of its parental liaison through the regular use of e-mail and the more recent introductions of the weekly newsletter, and the parent portal. Parents feel that this valuable tripartite communication strategy not only helps them to keep well abreast of their children's progress but also enables them to engage with the development of the school as a whole.
- 5.12 The school maintains a highly effective partnership with parents, carers, and guardians. In the pre-inspection questionnaire a few parents felt that their concerns were not addressed by the school but inspectors found no evidence to sustain this view. The school has a clear complaints policy that is effectively implemented and parents know whom to contact if necessary. Parental concerns are addressed promptly and appropriately. Parents praise the sensitivity of the school's response to pastoral anxieties that may arise as well as the tact displayed in achieving the resolution of such matters. Parental confidence stems in large measure from the conviction that pupils' personalities and needs are exceptionally well known by the staff in general and by house staff in particular.
- 5.13 In the pre-inspection questionnaire a small minority of parents also felt that opportunities to participate in the life of the school were restricted but inspectors found no evidence to support this view. Parents have excellent opportunities to become involved in the progress of their child's education and in the life of the school. They are regularly invited to induction events and to educational briefings related to key transitional moments in the academic life of their children. These include preparation for transition from Year 5 to Years 6 and 7, opportunities for new pupils and parents to meet each other, opportunities for new parents to meet with staff, and specific briefings regarding academic choices at entry to Years 10 and 12. Parents value the accessibility of staff and the several opportunities for discussion which arise during the school year. Many parents support sports activities, others contribute to careers interviews, to the community choir, to drama productions, and to the events organised by the parents' association such as the Christmas Fair. Parents feel that their contributions are recognised and valued by the school.

- 5.14 Parents of current and prospective pupils are provided with detailed information. Parents receive regular reports and feedback relating to their children's progress via a combination of full reports, grade sheets and parents' consultation evenings. Written reports show a detailed knowledge of individual pupils and their pastoral needs. These reports offer encouragement and outline clear expectations, but do not always show what pupils need to do to refine the distinctive quality of their academic performance.

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