



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
THAMES CHRISTIAN COLLEGE**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Thames Christian College

Full Name of School	Thames Christian College	
DfE Number	212/6403	
Registered Charity Number	1081666	
Address	Thames Christian College Wye Street London SW11 2HB	
Telephone Number	020 7228 3933	
Fax Number	020 7924 1112	
Email Address	info@thameschristiancollege.org.uk	
Head	Dr Stephen Holsgrove	
Proprietor	Thames Christian College Schools Ltd	
Age Range	11 to 16	
Total Number of Pupils	123	
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (78 boys; 45 girls)	
Numbers by Age	11-16	123
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	123
Inspection Dates	17 Mar 2015 to 20 Mar 2015	

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. There has been no previous ISI inspection; Ofsted undertook a one-day inspection in April 2010.

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.

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 proprietor, 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

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Mrs Jenny Dwyer

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Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Head, HMC/GSA school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The vision of Thames Christian College is to provide an education that challenges pupils to strive for personal character growth, academic excellence and spiritual maturity. It aims to help every pupil attain a broad foundation to their education while also developing their individual skills and gifts, and seeks to help pupils grow in their character and deepen their relationships with others. It aims to educate from a Christian worldview and to provide opportunities for pupils to explore faith for themselves. Many staff and pupils profess a Christian faith.
- 1.2 All aspects of the legal responsibility for the running of the school are vested in the proprietor, Thames Christian College Schools Ltd, and its directors, who are the head and deputy head of the school. The directors act as the governing body of the school. The proprietor is a subsidiary of a registered charity which has no part in the running of the school apart from providing accountability for the head.
- 1.3 Thames Christian College opened in September 2000 with one class of 12 Year 7 pupils in rented accommodation at its current location within walking distance of Clapham Junction station. In 2004 the main building was purchased and refurbished as a school. Use is made of the adjacent Battersea Chapel and local sporting facilities at Battersea Sports Centre, Caius House, Latchmere Swimming Pool and Wandsworth Common.
- 1.4 There are 123 pupils aged from 11 to 16 (78 boys and 45 girls). The ability profile of the school is slightly above the national average, with a wide spread of abilities represented. The school comprises pupils from many different ethnic, social and economic backgrounds and reflects the diversity of the area. Many pupils travel considerable distances to the school from Greater London and neighbouring counties.
- 1.5 The school has identified 44 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), mostly mild dyslexia. Three pupils have an education and health care (EHC) plan. Twelve pupils require help for English as an additional language (EAL), six of whom receive additional support.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Thames Christian College successfully achieves its aim of helping pupils attain a broad foundation to their education while also developing their individual skills and gifts, and seeking to help pupils grow in their character and deepen their relationships with others. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of curriculum subjects, and can apply them effectively. They are excellent and mature listeners and they read and write well, but they lack confidence in speaking. Pupils use numbers with confidence and have good creative skills. Almost all pupils achieve places at their first choice of schools or colleges for post-16 education. Pupils make progress that is good in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities, and pupils with dyslexia make significantly faster progress. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. The presentation and organisation of their work are excellent. Pupils are keen to learn, but are often reticent in initiating questions or challenging a new concept. The curriculum is well planned and suitable for the age range, needs and abilities of the pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan. Together with the extra-curricular programme it actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy. Curriculum plans in many subjects are well developed but not all identify strategies for challenging the most able. More able pupils are stimulated by a range of after-school activities. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and know the individual learning styles of their pupils extremely well. In response to the previous Ofsted report, in the most effective lessons the range of tasks allows all pupils to make excellent progress. In other lessons a lack of flexibility or extension material limits the progress of the most able. Teaching makes good provision for those with EHC plans and ensures good progress in their learning. Most marking is excellent but the school marking policy is inconsistently implemented.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent. They are largely confident, self-aware and emotionally mature for their age. The school's Christian ethos is inclusive. Pupils have a well-developed awareness of their own and others' faiths and cultures, including the Western cultural tradition. The school actively promotes pupils' understanding of fundamental British values and they have an excellent knowledge of British institutions. Pupils of all ages are unfailingly courteous and are socially well adjusted. The quality of pastoral care is good. Behaviour is excellent and pupils feel safe, secure, valued and well supported. In the pupils' questionnaire responses, a minority of pupils expressed the view that sanctions and rewards are not always awarded fairly. The senior leadership agrees and is addressing the issue. In response to the previous Ofsted report the school effectively seeks the views of pupils. Arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent and safeguarding is robust.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is good. The directors of the proprietorial company are forward-looking in their encouragement of educational initiative. They include the school's senior leaders in the monitoring of the implementation of policies, and conduct a full annual review of all aspects of safeguarding with the designated safeguarding lead person. Supporting documentation sometimes lacks sufficient and precise detail, for example in the minutes of the annual review of safeguarding by the whole board of directors, and in this small school this can result in a lack of clarity between the specific responsibilities of governance and leadership. The

quality of leadership and management is good. The school development plan focuses on improving the quality of teaching and pastoral care. The school has a clear assessment policy and the tracking information is used to set individual targets. Links with parents are excellent. Parents receive clear and informative reports about their children and are extremely supportive of the school.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Develop strategies to improve pupils' speaking skills.
 2. Ensure that all lesson planning and teaching contain additional challenges for the most able.
 3. Ensure that all subjects and staff follow the school's marking policy.
 4. Ensure that the rewards and sanctions policy is evenly implemented.
 5. Ensure the proper recording of the oversight and review of safeguarding by the board of directors.
 6. Ensure that the individual responsibilities for governance and leadership are more clearly defined and delineated.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievement is good.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated towards the school's vision of challenging them to strive for personal character growth, academic excellence and spiritual maturity.
- 3.3 Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of curriculum subjects, and can apply them effectively to challenging problems. They are excellent and mature listeners, remaining silent and attentive whenever another is speaking. Their speaking skills vary: some pupils speak fluently and with clarity but others lack confidence. Pupils read competently in class and many write well, at best showing excellent command of syntax and vocabulary. Pupils work cooperatively: in a Year 8 English lesson they benefited from the opportunity to discuss effective openings of stories. In mathematics, science and history lessons pupils showed logical thought, identifying variables and developing sequential arguments. They use numbers with confidence. The range of pupils' creative skills is evident in the high quality of art throughout the school. Pupils sing well, dance proficiently and perform enthusiastically on stage. Pupils are confident in their use of information and communication technology (ICT) within the classroom. Year 7 pupils are proficient in the use of a range of software and good use is made of word processing skills by pupils with SEND.
- 3.4 Opportunities for team achievement in sport are limited by the size of the school. The boys' six-a side football team has recently won a London School's competition, and an individual won three ISA swimming titles. Many compete in a variety of ISA sporting competitions. The school's art pupils regularly exhibit in the locality. Individual musicians are successful in local competitions and have performed at the Royal Festival Hall.
- 3.5 Almost all pupils achieve places at their first choice of schools or colleges for post-16 education, some achieving scholarships at highly competitive independent schools. The range of destinations and courses reflects the variety of skills that pupils have developed at the school.
- 3.6 Results in GCSE have been above the national average for maintained schools. Girls' results in 2013 were higher than in previous years, being similar to the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. Results in IGCSE English and business studies have been higher than worldwide norms; results in mathematics have been below worldwide norms. Results in 2013 were generally similar to worldwide norms in English and mathematics. In 2014 just over half the pupils achieved grades A* or A in English, and just under half achieved grades A* or A in mathematics.
- 3.7 The level of attainment in GCSE indicates that pupils make progress to Year 11 that is good in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities; performance across the subject range at GCSE is markedly higher than that predicted from their prior attainment. Progress for pupils with EAL and the particularly able is similarly good. Pupils with any form of SEND make marginally greater progress than expected. Pupils with dyslexia make significantly greater progress, achieving on average nearly a grade higher than the average for pupils with similar abilities. In the

parents' and pupils' questionnaires all respondents said that they were pleased with the progress that pupils were making.

- 3.8 Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Their organisation is excellent, and the work in exercise books neat and well ordered. They have pride in their presentation. The volume of work achieved reflects their application in class and in homework. They work quietly and with empathy in small groups, often diverting attention from their own work to support others. Their behaviour is excellent, they listen attentively and are compliant. Pupils are keen to learn, but are often reticent in initiating questions or challenging a new concept.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of the curricular and extra-curricular programme is good.
- 3.10 The curriculum is well planned and suitable for the age range, needs and abilities of the pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan. It actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. It covers all the requisite areas of learning and successfully supports the school's aim of providing a broad foundation to their education while also developing their individual skills and gifts.
- 3.11 In Year 7 pupils study English, mathematics, science, physical education (PE), Spanish, history, geography, art, drama, music, computing, Latin, religious studies and personal, health, social and economic education (PSHEE). French and design and technology are introduced in Year 8 instead of Latin, which reappears as an option in Year 9. In preparation for the future all Year 9 pupils take a level 2 certificate in personal finance, and Year 10 pupils undertake work experience. The GCSE religious studies course is examined at the end of Year 10. The choice of subjects at GCSE includes graphic design and music. The PE curriculum offers a broad and balanced range of 15 sports focusing on developing physical skills and personal fitness. Boys enjoy more opportunities for competitive team sport than girls.
- 3.12 GCSE and IGCSE options are supplemented by the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) at levels 1 and 2 and at level 3 for talented pupils. In Year 7 literacy and numeracy skills are reinforced by an emphasis on grammar and punctuation and a linear mathematics curriculum based on taking the best from the Maths teaching in other cultures, particularly Asia.
- 3.13 The curriculum is adjusted to meet the needs of those pupils with SEND. Support for these pupils is strong. Some are withdrawn from class for individual support, and learning support assistants work effectively alongside others in class. A specialist works with pupils with EAL.
- 3.14 Curriculum plans in many subjects are well developed and include suggested extension work for the most able. The content of lessons is strictly controlled and schemes of work follow a six-week cycle. The personalised learning requirements of individual pupils are integrated into lesson plans, but not all plans identify strategies for challenging the most able in the small teaching classes.
- 3.15 More able pupils are stimulated by a range of after-school activity. The history club has researched conspiracy theories in history, and a small group have prepared for the London round of the Spanish spelling bee. Talented pupils in art develop their

screen-printing skills, and choirs, bands and ensembles provide opportunities for pupils to develop musical skills. The annual school musical involves all pupils.

- 3.16 Frequent visits by outside speakers enrich the curriculum and provide balanced political arguments. A graphic designer regularly runs extra sessions, and a holocaust survivor talked to Year 7 during religious studies.
- 3.17 Good use is made of the school's position and transport links. The religious studies group have visited St Paul's Cathedral; the language pupils the French Institute in London and geography pupils looked at the impact of the Olympics on East London and investigated land use in Canary Wharf. Year 9 artists have taken part in a local art project, and cultural and linguistic awareness is enhanced by overseas visits to Western Europe and recently Tanzania.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.18 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.19 In most lessons observed the teaching was at least good and in nearly half it was excellent. The teaching in a small minority of lessons was unsatisfactory.
- 3.20 Teaching is effective in working towards the school's aim to offer excellent teaching and a stimulating working environment. It engenders respect and tolerance and promotes non-partisan views. In the best lessons teachers demonstrate good time management and subject knowledge and allow independent learning. In a biology lesson observed pupils used differentiated worksheets to devise their own experiments and revision plans using ICT. In the less successful lessons seen too much individual learning was directed rather than allowing pupils to use their initiative and explore their understanding. In a science lesson seen a teacher prevented a pupil from following an individual line of enquiry and no extension work was available.
- 3.21 Teachers know the individual learning styles of their pupils extremely well and the majority plan their lessons meticulously, with detailed personalised learning targets for all pupils including those with SEND or EAL. In the most effective lessons the range of task allows all pupils make excellent progress. In a Year 8 geography lesson observed the starter activity used targeted questions to support and challenge different pupils. In a Year 9 Latin lesson seen more able pupils were given higher level vocabulary and more complex sentences to write. In a small minority of lessons tight adherence to planning hampered progress. In a Year 9 science lesson observed there was no intervention when a debate between pupils started to drift. In the most effective lessons baseline test data and target grades are integrated into planning so that the more able pupils are given different extension tasks. This is not yet a consistent approach in all subject areas.
- 3.22 Teaching makes good provision for those with EHC plans. Learning support assistants are used effectively in classrooms to support pupils with SEND and to ensure good progress in their learning.
- 3.23 In the less formulaic lessons, pupils are encouraged to take a more active approach to their learning, in response to the recommendations of the 2010 Ofsted report. In a Year 8 English lesson observed pupils were encouraged to create a learning resource on how to write an effective opening to a short story.

- 3.24 In the responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires both parents and pupils were overwhelmingly positive about the help teachers give in supporting their progress. A small minority of the pupils considered that the homework did not help them to learn but in interviews during the inspection pupils were unanimous in their view that it was almost always relevant.
- 3.25 Teachers encourage pupils to take pride in their work and the volume of work is good across the age and ability range. The clear school marking policy is inconsistently implemented across and within subject areas and year groups. At best the marking is excellent, giving the pupil clear feedback on what went well in addition to specific targets for improvement. Excellent examples of pupil/teacher dialogue were seen in some mathematics books, where suggestions for further progress were followed up by both the pupils and the teacher. In a minority of books marking is limited to a series of ticks.

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 are largely confident, self-aware and emotionally mature for their age. In pupil interviews they were sensible and mindful of the school and wider community. Pupils have a well-developed awareness of their own and others' faiths and cultures, which is promoted in the teaching of world religions and ethics. An assembly led by Year 10 focused on the diverse background of the pupils, their parents and grandparents, and the positive impact of a multi-cultural population. They show an appreciation of the Western cultural tradition through the study of composers such as Handel in music and artists such as Matisse in art.
- 4.3 The school's Christian ethos is inclusive. Prayers in assemblies are reflective and appropriate for pupils of any or no faith. Many lessons begin with a Christian blessing in which all take part. Pupils of all ages are unfailingly courteous and helpful both to visitors and younger pupils and are socially extremely well adjusted.
- 4.4 The school very successfully promotes the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination. Study of the work and lives of David Hockney and Alan Turing led to discussions about the changing attitudes towards sexual orientation. Year 9 design pupils have produced posters promoting diversity and inclusion in football linked to the national *Kick it Out!* campaign. In English pupils discuss racism and sexism in their study of *Of Mice and Men*. Year 11 pupils organise an annual *Black History* month.
- 4.5 The pupils' strong community responsibility is evident in a mentoring programme with a local primary school. In 2014 pupils' work on charity projects in Tanzania widened their grasp of social and economic issues beyond the United Kingdom.
- 4.6 Pupils' clear understanding of right and wrong is reinforced in the PSHEE, religious studies and the ethics curriculum. For example, in English the values of freedom and the corruption of power are examined in *Animal Farm*, and the ethics of stem cell research are tackled in Year 9 science.
- 4.7 The school actively promotes pupils' understanding of fundamental British values and they demonstrate good knowledge and respect for British institutions and public services. In interviews pupils spoke knowledgeably about the path taken by government bills through parliament and the difference between criminal and civil law. In a history lesson they were seen to debate rigorously the differences between democracy and dictatorship and in business studies they applied equal opportunities law in various recruitment scenarios successfully.
- 4.8 In responses to the pupils' questionnaires a small minority of pupils expressed the view that they were given insufficient responsibility. The representatives on the pupil council are democratically elected. Pupils lead assemblies, supervise lunch, lead warm-ups in PE periods and organise charity events.

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

- 4.9 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is good.

- 4.10 In pupil interviews a very large majority of pupils spoke highly of the availability of teachers and the care taken by them. Tutor groups are subdivided into smaller units ensuring a quick response to issues and heightening the focus on individual pupils. Communication in school and between parents and school is excellent and the electronic record system ensures that any trends can be identified and addressed.
- 4.11 Behavioural and anti-bullying policies are made available, and are effective in cultivating an environment where all feel safe, secure, valued and well supported. Younger pupils in particular expressed confidence that bullying was rare, but that should it occur it would be dealt with swiftly and effectively. The inspection team concurred with this view. The PHSEE programme includes modules on respect and anti-bullying as well as e-safety and street safety. New entrants settle quickly. The new pupils' welcome pack is a recent pupil innovation.
- 4.12 The example set by the staff in their relationships with the pupils and each other has a positive impact on the pupils' consideration for others. Policies to promote good conduct and reward good behaviour are effective. In the pupils' questionnaire responses, a minority of boys and a small minority of girls expressed the view that sanctions and rewards are not always awarded fairly. The senior leadership acknowledge the problem and are seeking a solution.
- 4.13 The PE programme effectively encourages physical fitness through a range of activity. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily, with modules on healthy eating and eating disorders included in the PHSEE programme. This also includes sessions addressing mental health issues, body confidence, drugs and alcohol awareness, and sex and relationships education.
- 4.14 In response to the previous Ofsted inspection the school now employs effective methods to seek the views of the pupils, although in the pupils' questionnaire responses a small minority expressed the opinion that their requests are not listened or responded to. The newly-formed pupil council, which has evolved from the previous leadership council, has representatives from each year group. As a result of recent requests, the girls' cloakroom has been re-decorated and Years 10 and 11 now eat lunch in their form rooms.
- 4.15 The school has a suitable plan to improve the educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.16 The arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 4.17 Safeguarding arrangements follow official guidance and are given high priority. Reporting procedures are clearly followed and recorded and there are good links with the local safeguarding authorities. The designated senior lead has received appropriate training in a wide range of safeguarding issues, and all staff receive regular and appropriate training and the staff code of conduct has been reviewed in line with the requirements of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. The single central register is scrupulously completed and recruitment procedures are robust.
- 4.18 The supervision arrangements of pupils ensure their safety outside during lunch and breaks, and the risk of intruders is limited by strong security access arrangements. Pupils attend sessions in street safety. The risk assessment policy is thorough. Risk assessments in science have recently been reviewed, and measures are taken to limit harm to pupils travelling to the offsite sports' facilities.

- 4.19 The health and safety arrangements are robust. The records of checks are systematic, and audited annually by Wandsworth Council. The fire policy content satisfies all the regulatory requirements. Fire prevention and evacuation plans appropriate to the building limit the risk from fire. Exit routes are clearly marked.
- 4.20 Most staff are first-aid trained, and a small medical room is available for sick pupils and those with SEND during the school day. The accident book is accurately maintained and shows no trends.
- 4.21 Admission and attendance registers are methodically completed and stored.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 As directors of the proprietorial company the head and deputy head provide a strong strategic overview in line with the aims of the school. Careful financial planning has resulted in bright, well-decorated teaching accommodation and modern learning resources that enhance the educational experience of the pupils. All classrooms are well resourced and equipped with whiteboards, and ICT equipment is plentiful.
- 5.3 The directors are forward-looking in their encouragement of educational initiative. They provide challenge and stimulus for improvement, and, because of their day-to-day involvement have a clear insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the school, including with regard to educational standards. There is a successful emphasis on investing in the recruitment and training of high-quality staff. The directors have a well-researched strategic vision for the future of the school.
- 5.4 Child protection, safer recruitment, and welfare, health and safety policies and their implementation are regularly monitored by the board of directors and senior leadership team, and there is a full annual review of all aspects of safeguarding by the two directors together with the designated safeguarding lead person, although the records of the review do not reflect that the review is by the whole board. The dual responsibility of the head as a director, without a board of advisors, means that there is a lack of external challenge or evaluation at governance level.

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 and others, is good.
- 5.6 The leadership and management of the school are effective in promoting the aims of the school to provide an education which challenges pupils to strive for personal character growth, academic excellence and spiritual maturity to equip them with the complexities of living in the 21st century. The senior leadership team provides clear educational direction and has a vision based on the school's Christian values.
- 5.7 The members of the senior leadership team have a detailed knowledge of the background and potential of every pupil, allowing them to impact quickly and directly on their personal development and achievement. The head is supported by the deputy, two assistant heads and a special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). The inclusion of the SENCO on the senior leadership team demonstrates the emphasis given by the school on supporting pupils with SEND.
- 5.8 The school development cycle ensures that all policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated. The school development plan focuses on improving the quality of teaching and pastoral care. Hence the plan aims to help each individual pupil attain a broad foundation to their education while also developing their individual skills and gifts.

- 5.9 The size of the site and that of the senior leadership team relative to the teaching staff allows it to make frequent learning walks and formal lesson observations to monitor the implementation of policies. Departmental managers focus on producing curriculum plans, schemes of work and monitoring academic progress in their subject areas.
- 5.10 The school has a clear assessment policy and the tracking information is available to all staff through the online management system. The SENCO has responsibility for the monitoring and implementation of individual education plans. These have clear targets, teaching strategies and success criteria and are regularly evaluated.
- 5.11 The school has a rigorous recruitment process for new teachers including trial lessons and a full day in school observing pupils and lessons. All safer recruitment checks are in place before staff begin work at the school. Staff are all appropriately trained in their roles regarding safeguarding and welfare, health and safety.
- 5.12 The school has recently implemented an appraisal system to give teachers autonomy in their own development and a focus on improving teaching and learning. Each member of the senior leadership team has a weekly peer mentoring role with specific teachers. In these sessions different aspects of school policy are discussed. Professional development of all teachers is linked to the outcomes of these sessions and the school's teaching and learning objectives. The impact on the pupils is yet to be measured as the process is just becoming embedded.
- 5.13 Links with parents are excellent. In the pre-inspection questionnaire responses the vast majority of parents indicated that the school encourages parental involvement and all that information about the school is readily available. The parents have access to an online system giving information on rewards and sanctions, forthcoming homework and pupils' progress and are strongly encouraged to take an active interest in the progress of their child.
- 5.14 All policies are made available to current and prospective parents. The safeguarding and complaints policies are available on the website. There have been no formal complaints reaching level 3 of the procedure and any concerns have been handled proportionally and quickly by the school. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses almost all parents expressed satisfaction with the handling of concerns. The parents have access to staff by email and most issues are resolved within 48 hours. The parental website has been developed to include more detailed information and the introduction of an e-newsletter has enabled parents to be more involved with the school.
- 5.15 Parents receive clear and informative reports about their children three times a year. A full, detailed report from every subject teacher giving information on targets for improvement and levels of achievement is written annually, whilst reports from form teachers containing attainment levels are written at another two points in the year. Parents are given the opportunity to meet teachers at the beginning of the year and have a formal parents' meeting mid-year. An options evening is held for Years 8 and 9 and a careers fair is organised biennially. Parents are encouraged to contact individual teachers at any time and personal tutors have regular contact with parents.
- 5.16 Parents are invited to attend concerts, awards night, the summer show and sports day. Whilst there is no formal parent teacher association, in their pre-inspection questionnaire responses a very large majority of parents said that the school encourages parental involvement.

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