



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**WELLINGTON SCHOOL**

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## Wellington School

Wellington Prep School was inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School	<b>Wellington School</b>
DfE Number	<b>933/6178</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>310268</b>
Address	<b>Wellington School South Street Wellington Somerset TA21 8NT</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01823 668800</b>
Fax Number	<b>01823 668844</b>
Email Address	<b>admin@wellington-school.org.uk</b>
Headmaster	<b>Mr Henry Price</b>
Chairman of Governors	<b>Mr Philip Nunnerley</b>
Age Range	<b>11 to 19</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>578</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (339 boys; 239 girls)</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total: <b>446</b>
Number of Boarders	Total: <b>132</b> Full: <b>114</b> Weekly: <b>18</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> November 2014</b>

## 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 November 2011.

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 [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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. Until September 2011, Boarding inspections were carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills.

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 governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions, tutor group and house meetings, and chapel services. Inspectors visited the boarding houses, the facilities for sick or injured pupils, the kitchens and the library. 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 Rodney Fox	Reporting Inspector
Mr David Fotheringham	Team Inspector (Academic Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mr Peter Hamilton	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Mr Roland Martin	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Ms Heather McKissack	Team Inspector (Senior Mistress, HMC school)
Dr Ian Selmes	Team Inspector (Former Head of Department, HMC school)
Mr Mark Twells	Team Inspector (Former Head of Department, HMC school)
Mr Thomas James	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Susan Nebesnuick	Team Inspector for Boarding (Former Director of Studies, Society of Heads school)

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

- 1.1 Wellington School is a day and boarding school for boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 19. The school's aim is to provide an excellent all-round education, open to talented pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds. To this end, the school seeks to nurture the spirit and talents of individuals so as to encourage excellence in academic study, creative, aesthetic and physical abilities; to stimulate intellectual curiosity; to inspire a life-long interest in learning; and to provide a disciplined and mutually respectful environment based on Christian values. It aspires to encourage boys and girls to be socially and morally responsible citizens in the 21st century. The school, together with Wellington Prep School, which occupies an adjacent site, is an educational charity, governed by its trustees.
- 1.2 Founded as a boys' school in 1837, Wellington has been fully independent and open for both girls and boys since 1978. It occupies a 35-acre site in the middle of the Somerset market town of Wellington, not far from Taunton. The buildings are a blend of traditional and more recent architecture. They include a chapel, a sports centre and recently-improved facilities for the performing arts. The present headmaster took up his post in September 2014.
- 1.3 Of the 578 pupils, 339 boys and 239 girls, in the school at the time of the inspection, 132 are either full or weekly boarders. The sixth form (Years 12 and 13) contains 153 pupils, 87 boys and 66 girls. Years 9 to 11 form the upper school and Years 7 and 8 the lower school. Day pupils mainly come from business or professional families living within 25 miles of the school; boarders are from many parts of the world, among which mainland China, Hong Kong, Russia and the countries of central Europe are well represented.
- 1.4 Standardised tests taken on entry to the school indicate that the ability profile of the pupils is above the national average, with only a very small proportion being below the national average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need. The school has identified 93 pupils as having a special educational need and/or disability (SEND), 36 of whom receive specialist learning support, mostly for dyslexia. English is an additional language (EAL) for 99 pupils, 52 of whom receive extra help with English language skills.
- 1.5 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 Wellington School is largely successful in achieving its aims. The pupils are well educated and their academic and other achievements are good at all levels of the school. At both GCSE and A level they achieve results that are above the average in maintained secondary schools, and they make progress that is at least appropriate for their ability and, in the sixth form, good. High standards are achieved throughout the school in a range of sporting, musical and dramatic events as well as in outdoor pursuits, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) and the Combined Cadet Force (CCF). The pupils' achievements are promoted by the excellent curricular and extra-curricular programmes provided and by the generally good quality of the teaching; policies and procedures in areas such as marking are not being implemented consistently.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development at all stages is excellent. They are articulate, confident, courteous and considerate in their dealings both with each other and with adults. The pastoral care and guidance provided are good. Arrangements made to ensure the welfare, health and safety of the pupils are sound. In particular, measures to ensure child protection and the safe recruitment of staff are rigorous. Some measures are needed to ensure that welfare, health and safety arrangements are consistently implemented and to comply fully with regulations. The quality of boarding is good. Boarders report that they enjoy boarding and the outcomes for boarders in terms of the development of their maturity and independence are excellent.
- 2.3 The school benefits from good governance, leadership and management, although in a number of areas, including marking, some teaching and the implementation of routine procedures, closer monitoring by senior staff is needed to ensure consistently good practice. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, both pupils and parents strongly endorsed the school, the most positive response from pupils being to the proposition 'I like being at this school'. The most recent inspection was conducted by ISI in November 2011. The report following that inspection identified a number of regulatory deficiencies in the recruitment procedure, which have now all been rectified. It also made two recommendations. These concerned making effective use of tutor periods to ensure a consistent experience of support, of personal, social and health education (PSHE) and careers education, and improving the effectiveness of monitoring processes to demonstrate full regulatory compliance. The school has improved the careers education provided, which is now good, but further steps are still needed to enable a more consistent experience of PSHE and in monitoring by senior managers to ensure that policies are fully implemented, particularly in relation to teaching and learning.

## **2.(b) Action points**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

- 2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:
- take steps to comply fully with regulations relating to the safety of the school site [Part 5, paragraph 23C, under Premises and Accommodation and National Minimum Standard 10.2, under Activities and Free Time].
- 2.5 The school does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013, as described above.

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

- 2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Improve monitoring by senior staff so as to ensure that policies and procedures are fully implemented, and to promote the best practice in teaching and marking.
  2. Provide sufficient time for the teaching of PSHE.
  3. Ensure that fire evacuation practices are conducted in all parts of the school early in each new school year.

### **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' achievement and learning is good.
- 3.2 Pupils are well-educated in accordance with the school's aims to provide an all-round education for its pupils and to promote excellence. Pupils throughout the school demonstrate good, and sometimes excellent, levels of knowledge, understanding and skill. They are highly articulate, read and write well, present their views in a confident and well-reasoned manner, and are independent, creative and numerate. The pupils enjoy and are often accomplished in sporting activities, and members of the school have competed at county, regional, national and international level. Nine gold awards were achieved in the Senior Mathematics Olympiad last year and two pupils qualified for the British Mathematics Olympiad; in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) competitions, the school has twice been winners of the regional championships. School drama and music attain high standards and a number of pupils play in the National Youth Orchestra or sing in the National Youth Choir.
- 3.3 Pupils in Years 7 to 9 follow a demanding curriculum and lesson observations and scrutiny of their work confirmed that they achieve good, and occasionally excellent, standards, and progress appropriately in relation to their ability.
- 3.4 The following analysis uses national data for the years 2011 to 2013, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in GCSE have been above the national average for maintained schools. Girls' results have been slightly stronger than boys' and similar to the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. However, since the previous inspection, the school has worked to close the gap between girls' and boys' attainment and recent examination results reveal that this work has been successful. International GCSE (IGCSE) results have mostly been above worldwide norms, with all subjects being above worldwide norms in 2013. In 2014, half of all the grades achieved at GCSE were at A or A\* level. The A-level results have been above the national average for maintained schools, and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. In 2014, half of all grades awarded at A level were at A or A\* level; twelve students gained three or more A\* and A grades. Again, girls' results have been slightly stronger than the boys' and above the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. The levels of attainment in GCSE and A level, together with the nationally standardized measures of progress available, indicate that pupils in Years 9 to 11 make appropriate progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability, and that progress is good in Years 12 and 13. This is confirmed by observations, scrutiny of the pupils' work, discussions with pupils and examination of the school's own analyses.
- 3.5 Lesson observations and scrutiny of the work of pupils with SEND, supported by analysis of their examination results, indicate that the progress made by these pupils is at least in line with, and often better, than that of other pupils, reflecting the good support that they receive. The attainment of pupils with EAL frequently places them among the highest achievers in the school. Able pupils at all levels of the school respond to challenging questioning by teachers, revealing the high level skills that they acquire: fluency in modern foreign languages, for example, or the ability to argue philosophically in religious studies lessons. Virtually all pupils leaving from Year 13 continue to higher education.

- 3.6 Pupils throughout the school demonstrate excellent attitudes towards their work, their teachers and their involvement in school life. Pupils settle quickly to work and are able to work both collaboratively and on their own. They have an excellent range of learning skills, including the use of information and communication technology (ICT), especially by the time that they reach Years 12 and 13. They listen to each other and their teachers with consideration. Most pupils take considerable pride in their work.

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

- 3.7 The quality of the curriculum is excellent.
- 3.8 The curriculum covers all the requisite subject areas at each stage of a pupil's development and fulfils the school's aim to ensure that pupils experience a balanced academic curriculum. The broad syllabus provided in Years 7 to 9 prepares pupils very well for making informed GCSE choices: they study Latin and add Spanish or German in Year 8 while following a full range of creative subjects including theatre. Pupils have a wide choice of subjects at GCSE, while their breadth of experience is continued as all pupils are expected to study at least one modern foreign language and religious studies. Pupils particularly appreciate the range of 21 A-level options available in the sixth form.
- 3.9 The school provides carefully for pupils of different abilities, and has devised a challenging able, gifted and talented programme. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 enjoy an excellent experience of study skills, problem-solving, independence and self-reliance through the innovative Action, Communication, Exploration and Self-development scheme (ACES). At GCSE, setting by ability in mathematics enables pupils to make progress at an appropriate pace and feel very confident about their learning. The GCSE Greek course is taken by a comparatively large number of pupils as an additional subject. The ablest scientists study three separate sciences while the curriculum is flexibly constructed to allow others to take science and additional science. While the majority of pupils take four subjects in Year 12 and three in Year 13, again there is flexibility to study fewer subjects if appropriate.
- 3.10 Provision for pupils with either SEND or EAL is excellent. The heads of EAL, learning support and English devise a coherent programme for supporting EAL pupils, enabling them to access the curriculum fully. Pupils' SEND needs are identified through a thorough screening procedure and detailed personal learning programmes are put in place. The head of learning support is developing ways to support such pupils in class, where the help currently available is uneven. A range of academic societies and the opportunity to participate in STEM projects provide additional scope for the most able pupils to develop their intellectual curiosity, whilst the presence of a director in residence enables talented actors of all ages to develop their creative skills in a wide-ranging drama programme.
- 3.11 Pupils follow a well-coordinated, free-standing PSHE programme in all years, although the time allocated to this area does not reflect the importance the school lays on it.
- 3.12 Sixth-form pupils follow a rigorous programme of preparation for applying to university; the school has, since the last inspection, devised a comprehensive and challenging programme of careers provision, which is not only informative but focuses primarily on developing pupils' personal and leadership skills. Pupils in Year 12 follow a well-planned programme of enrichment classes which develop ICT

skills and introduce life-skills such as financial planning, whilst those in Year 13 may enrich their programme with an extended project or a critical thinking course.

- 3.13 The curriculum is supported by an excellent programme of extra-curricular activities. While all pupils play the school's major sports, emphasis is placed on pupils' physical fitness and from Year 10 pupils have considerable choice of sports. The CCF and the DofE award scheme are well supported and around twenty pupils per year pursue the Gold DofE award. Pupils participate enthusiastically in a wide range of activities at lunchtime and after school. Many pupils are involved in the challenging drama programme and the extensive music programme which, while encouraging the most talented, also emphasises participation. Year 7 pupils were observed practising with gusto on a variety of makeshift instruments in the 'Junk Band'.
- 3.14 Pupils' educational experience is greatly enriched by the wide variety of trips: for example, to the battlefields and on an expedition to the Arctic Circle trail. Modern linguists benefit from exchange programmes in France and Spain, and pupils have the opportunity to make exchange visits to schools in India and Australia. Their experiences are further enhanced by a wide programme of links with the community, among which are several opportunities to be involved with local primary schools.

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

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.16 Most teaching at all stages makes a very positive and effective contribution to pupils' progress and their interest in learning, in line with the school's aims. Lesson observations, however, revealed some variations in the quality of teaching.
- 3.17 In most lessons, teaching reveals good subject knowledge, thoughtful lesson planning, and makes effective use of stimulating resources that take account of pupils' individual learning needs. For instance, in a Year 12 geography lesson, pupils applied their strong online search skills to discover for themselves, interpret and extract real-life data on social provision in the different wards of Bristol. Successful lessons at all levels of the school are developed at a pace that provides appropriate challenge. Teaching is often characterised by the skilful use of questions that provoke pupils into thinking things through for themselves, develop intellectual enthusiasm and guide them towards high levels of application and achievement. Time is usually managed effectively to reach clearly identified learning goals. Strong relationships between the pupils in a class, and with their teacher, often enhance the impact of teaching, for example by leading pupils through a text with well-focused questions, and encouraging discussion, fostering excellent application and the highest critical standards.
- 3.18 When teaching is less successful, it is often because the pace of lessons is too slow or the learning objectives are not clear, leading to the pupils not being suitably challenged according to their individual learning needs. Very occasionally, inadequate class control fails to ensure that all pupils can learn effectively.
- 3.19 Where a pupil has been identified as having SEND or has EAL, most teaching makes effective use of the information in individual education plans to provide carefully graded tasks to match pupils' differing needs. The school makes the provision set out in a statement of special educational needs.

- 3.20 The school has analysed outcomes for pupils by gender and by learning needs, leading to staff training in how to match teaching more closely to specific types of need. Able and talented pupils are successfully stimulated and challenged by their teaching, particularly when it allows them opportunity for independence and exploration of ideas, often enhanced by insightful questioning at an appropriately challenging level from a teacher.
- 3.21 Pupils' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire showed very strong agreement that teaching helps pupils to learn and that teachers readily provide individual help when needed. Scrutiny of pupils' written work found that the inconsistent frequency and quality of marking between and within subjects, which was noted in the previous inspection, is still apparent. All teachers are supposed to follow departmental policy that encourages them to give constructive comment and advice when marking, but this is not always seen in practice. When marking adheres closely to policy guidance, it is effective in encouraging progress by offering praise for specific achievements and guidance about how to improve in the future.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils**

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 The very strong personal development of the pupils is in line with the school's aim to encourage boys and girls to be socially and morally responsible citizens in the 21st century. Throughout the school, pupils exhibit high levels of emotional maturity, self-discipline and responsibility. By the time that they leave school, their personal development is of a high order and they have many admirable personal qualities.
- 4.3 The pupils show a high level of spiritual awareness. Their self-knowledge and sense of self-worth are apparent in many ways, both in the classroom, particularly in PSHE and religious education (RE) lessons, and in the uplifting environment of the chapel where they respond thoughtfully to opportunities for reflection. The pupils were fully engaged with the Remembrance Day ceremonies that took place during the inspection and were specifically moved by the photographs of former pupils who were killed in the First World War that were placed poignantly on the chapel altar. They appreciate the significance of faith in the lives of many people and are able to talk with empathy and understanding about non-material qualities such as loyalty and honour.
- 4.4 The pupils exhibit excellent moral development. They have a strong sense of right and wrong, as was evident when pupils in Year 11 discussed the moral issues around abortion and euthanasia in a mature, informed and articulate manner. Many lessons include a moral or ethical dimension and the pupils' responses show how they are learning to set their moral compasses and their commitment to doing the right thing. They understand the law of the land and the concept of criminal responsibility, and appreciate that the school's rewards and sanctions serve to promote fair play and justice in all areas of school life.
- 4.5 The pupils' social development is excellent. Their inter-personal relationships are mature, appropriate and supportive. They are decent, thoughtful and considerate and relate extremely well to each other, across ages, faiths and traditions. They strive to take responsibility for themselves and for others as evidenced by their interest in standing for the school council, mentoring younger pupils, captaining sports teams and other groupings, and, especially at the top of the school, serving as captains and vice-captains of school. Many pupils benefit from being able to participate in the CCF or community service activities, giving them a heightened understanding of the concept of service. A team of staff and senior pupils carefully select three charities a year for support, and are active in ensuring that all charity events are well supported and meaningful. Pupils develop appropriate knowledge and understanding of the public institutions and services in England.
- 4.6 Pupils have excellent cultural awareness. They benefit from the international boarders, whose presence enriches the cultural experience of the whole community, and from RE lessons in which they learn about and begin to understand the beliefs and cultural traditions of the major faith communities. As a result, pupils understand and respect other faiths and cultures, and appreciate their achievements. Thanks to the school's provision, they have a good understanding of the Western cultural tradition, and of the fundamental British values of mutual tolerance, respect for the rule of law and individual liberty. Overseas pupils are fully engaged in learning

about important aspects of British culture. Overall, pupils have harmonious relationships with those from families different from their own.

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

- 4.7 The contribution made by the arrangements for pastoral care is good.
- 4.8 The pastoral care provided by the school strongly promotes the school's aim of providing a disciplined and mutually respectful environment. In its policies and handbooks, the school provides very clear guidance to both staff and pupils about its expectations with regard to treating other people with courtesy and respect. The result is a happy and caring community in which pupils are confident that they can discuss any concerns with members of staff and that they receive the help and guidance that they need. Since the previous inspection, a restructuring of tutor time and the development of the PSHE programme has increased opportunity to discuss issues of concern and provide a consistent programme of support, but the time available each week still limits what can be included without eroding the PSHE programme.
- 4.9 Very positive and constructive relationships between pupils and adults and amongst the pupils themselves are a characteristic of the school. Day and boarding pupils are well integrated and the school community shows genuine regard for all, celebrating effort and achievement at every level in many areas of curricular and extra-curricular activity.
- 4.10 Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits and a good choice of nutritious meals, often made from fresh local produce, is provided throughout the day. A majority of the pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed dissatisfaction with the food. In comments and at interview, the cause of their dissatisfaction was chiefly about the size of portions and inspection evidence confirmed that, although pupils can often help themselves to additional vegetables, the main portions are small. Pupils understand the benefits of exercise and take advantage of the many and varied after-school and Saturday morning activities to participate in sport.
- 4.11 The school has high expectations of good behaviour and measures to promote it are effective. Pupils respond positively to the system of merits and demerits. Well devised anti-bullying procedures mean that such incidents are rare, but should they occur, pupils confirm that they are promptly and effectively managed. Pupils have ready access to support and guidance from their tutors and from outside sources, including an independent listener, a counsellor and the staff in the health centre.
- 4.12 The school has an appropriate plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND, and goes to considerable lengths to make suitable arrangements to enable access for pupils with disabilities.
- 4.13 Pupils have a variety of ways in which to express their views, including through the school council, the food council, house meetings and boarding surveys. Minutes of these meetings are published and action is taken as appropriate, for example over access to water fountains. A minority of pupils in their questionnaire responses said that their views were not listened to, but inspection evidence indicated that the strong relationship between tutors and pupils enables them to raise issues and concerns more informally.

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

- 4.14 The arrangements for welfare, health and safety are sound.
- 4.15 The school has good policies and procedures for safeguarding its pupils, which reflect official guidance. All staff receive appropriate training in child protection on appointment, and further training at suitable intervals. Properly trained senior members of staff are designated as safeguarding leaders and have established effective lines of communication with local referral agencies. The school adheres rigorously to its policy when handling any concerns. Since the previous inspection, the single central register of checks on staff is now an accurate record of the recruitment checks made. Rigorously applied recruitment procedures protect pupils well. Protection from the internet is effective. The school uses two systems of network filtering to restrict technical access to unsuitable services and websites.
- 4.16 Well considered policies and systems are in place to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. At the time of the inspection, however, although all the boarding houses had held evacuation practices during the first weeks of the new school year, most of the other school buildings had not. Fire safety equipment is regularly tested and maintained.
- 4.17 The school is generally vigilant over health and safety procedures. A comprehensive policy defines areas of responsibility and a designated safety officer monitors implementation. Risk assessment is conducted on all buildings, laboratories and workshops at appropriate levels, sometimes with the assistance of expert consultants, although the inspection identified one safety issue relating to the school site requiring further action. Clear procedures are set out for those planning off-site trips and expeditions. Risk assessments are required, usually conducted by the staff planning the trip, and monitored by a designated senior member of staff. Although all those seen were at least adequate, a wide variation in rigour was apparent. Policies for first aid and the care of pupils who are injured or sick are clear, and staff are trained to appropriate levels. A health centre, staffed by qualified nurses, is available to pupils during the day.
- 4.18 Attendance is checked efficiently through properly kept registers, reinforced by further checks taken throughout the day. The admission and attendance registers are suitably stored for at least three years.

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

- 4.19 The quality of boarding is good.
- 4.20 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. The boarders develop and mature into confident, open, honest and tolerant young women and men. They are courteous and grace the school and their boarding houses with their sense of fun and natural good manners. The boarders enjoy being part of the house and school community, valuing the friendships they have made and the support and care of their teachers and tutors. While the one-year GCSE pupils find it harder to integrate, the fact that many decide to stay on for their A levels is testament to the efforts by the school to help them to settle in and enjoy school life.
- 4.21 Each house has a house captain and a deputy. They are regarded by other members of the house as sources of counsel and they represent the views of the house to the house staff. Each house has a council where pupils can submit items for discussion, which can then be taken forward, if necessary, for consideration by the boarding and school councils. Consequently, boarders have a variety of ways in which they can make their views known to the school.
- 4.22 Results from the boarders' questionnaires suggested that nearly all the pupils enjoyed boarding life. Discussions with overseas boarders supported this view and revealed a school where those from other races and beliefs are fully engaged and involved; representing the school in sporting teams, drama and music. They feel valued and justly proud of their house and school. Relationships between boarders and with the house staff are characteristically positive and constructive.
- 4.23 The quality of boarding provision is good. Before the start of term, new boarders, and their parents, receive a helpful house handbook. On arrival, they are given a thorough induction by staff as well as an older pupil 'buddy' to guide them through the first few weeks. Each boarder could name a number of adults they would turn to for help; particularly their tutors. The school employs a counsellor and the pupils knew how to contact her and that they could do so confidentially. A highly experienced senior nurse manages a team of well-trained nurses in the school health centre. The centre is suitably equipped for day-to-day needs and, when it is closed, an on-call nurse is available for medical emergencies, and an on-call matron can be called upon to take pupils to hospital. The houses do not have sick-rooms, although there are a limited number of beds in the health centre if pupils need isolation at night. Pupils can self-medicate if assessed as safe to do so. After a risk assessment by nursing staff, they are trusted to take the medicine according to prescription instructions.
- 4.24 Boarders are supplied with four meals a day as well as fruit, bread and spreads in the houses. The quality of food, according to the boarders, has improved since the previous inspection. Although portion size was raised as a concern at the previous inspection and had been discussed at the food committee, interviews with boarders and responses from the pupil questionnaires suggested that it remains a cause for dissatisfaction amongst a majority of boarders. Inspection evidence supported the boarders' view that portions of the main course are small. Special dietary needs are well accommodated by the catering team. In the houses, two well-equipped kitchens enable pupils to prepare their own snacks and meals. A minority of boarders responding to the questionnaire were dissatisfied with the availability of snacks and drinking water outside mealtimes. Discussion with boarders in interviews indicated that their concern was largely with the availability of drinking

fountains, an issue that has been recognised by the school after representations through the school council and which is being rectified.

- 4.25 The boarding houses are very clean and well decorated. The refurbishment of Lights House is almost complete and so the accommodation, across the houses, is now of a comparably good standard. This represents significant progress since the previous inspection. An efficient laundry service cleans boarders' clothing and bedding once a week. Washing machines in some houses enable boarders to wash personal items of clothing, if they so choose. All the houses contain well-equipped common rooms, which promote integration between the various year groups.
- 4.26 Almost all boarders responding to the questionnaire, and those participating in interviews with the inspectors, agreed that they feel safe and protected in their houses. Fire checks are carried out at suitable intervals, and the boarders report that they have frequent fire drills during both day and boarding time.
- 4.27 The programme of after-school and evening activities for the boarders is extensive, well-run and supervised by staff. A comprehensive and varied programme of activities takes place on Saturday morning and on Sunday. All pupils have access to the local facilities, at appropriate times, providing they sign out from their house, so that staff know where they are.
- 4.28 The arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are good. The school has thorough staff recruitment procedures and staff-induction programmes. Visitors are required to sign-in and are always supervised. The boarders benefit from having a number of experienced and committed staff supervising the boarding houses. The school does not appoint guardians for pupils nor does it monitor any arrangements made by parents.
- 4.29 Boarders report that bullying is rare and is always effectively dealt with. House sanctions are rarely used as the levels of self-discipline are very high amongst the boarders, who value the relaxed atmosphere in the houses.
- 4.30 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of boarding is good with some excellent elements. A clear statement of boarding principles and practice is well implemented. Excellent systems create effective links between the academic and boarding staff. Any concerns are shared appropriately between house-staff, tutors, heads of year and the deputy heads. Consequently, the boarders are well supported. The annual boarding review process has helped build strong ties between the various housemasters. The review contributes to the annual plan for boarding. The strong support and involvement of senior staff and governors means that boarding has a suitably high profile within the school. The excellent, fortnightly, pastoral reports from housemasters are monitored by the pastoral deputy head and so problems, when they arise, are quickly and effectively dealt with.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The school benefits from good, and mostly excellent, governance. Individual governors, or committees of governors, take a particular interest in all key aspects of the school's life, visit the school and talk with staff about their work. Consequently, governors are well-informed and well able to exercise effective oversight over all sections of the school, to assess its success in meeting its aims, and to monitor educational standards, engage in prudent financial planning and ensure appropriate resources are provided to support the school's educational aims.
- 5.3 Governors have very clear insight into the functioning of the school and are well known to many of the staff, which enables them to exercise their monitoring role effectively. The staff recognise and appreciate the role that the governors play in providing support, challenge and the stimulus needed for continued development and improvement.
- 5.4 The governors take their responsibilities for health and safety and safeguarding seriously, and in both areas have nominated a particular governor to liaise closely with the staff over how their policies are implemented. Health and safety is a regular item for discussion by the governors, although the inspection has identified one issue relating to the safety of the school site that requires further work. As part of their annual review of the safeguarding policy and the effectiveness of its implementation, governors receive a detailed written report on how it is executed, although the brevity of their minutes does not properly reflect the care with which they discharge their responsibility in this area.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is good.
- 5.6 The school's senior managers provide good leadership, believing strongly in, and promoting assiduously, the aims, values and ethos that characterise the school. At all levels, those with responsibility seek to optimise the personal development, the achievements and the constructive attitudes of the pupils towards learning, towards each other and towards others.
- 5.7 The daily life of the school runs smoothly but some areas of routine administration are not fully efficient because the monitoring of arrangements is not focused sharply enough. The previous report recommended that the school improve the effectiveness of administrative and monitoring processes to identify and accurately record more rigorous evidence to demonstrate full regulatory compliance. Suitable monitoring structures exist at departmental and senior management levels, including the scrutiny of pupils' work by senior managers, and the deficiencies in regulatory compliance identified in the previous inspection report have been fully rectified. Some inconsistencies in policy evaluation and implementation remain, however, and this is still work in progress, particularly in the arrangements made for overseeing welfare, health and safety, marking and assessment, and the quality of teaching.

- 5.8 The school has a comprehensive development plan and has conducted a suitable self-evaluation, based on wide-ranging consultation processes, including parental surveys. These reveal good insight into the needs of the school and have enabled the effective setting of priorities. Working relationships amongst staff are strong and middle managers feel that their views are actively sought. They contribute fully to the planning process, as is apparent in the overarching priorities outlined in the school plan and in departmental development plans, with their focus on teaching and learning.
- 5.9 The school is successful in recruiting and retaining high quality teaching and support staff who are in harmony with the school's stated aims and objectives. Staff are trained appropriately for their roles in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Recruitment procedures are rigorous and reflect official guidance, with correct safeguarding checks on staff, governors and volunteers being accurately recorded in a centralised register. The induction processes for newly qualified teachers and qualified teaching staff are comprehensive. Teaching staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to their pastoral and academic work and are adept at supporting pupils with individual needs. Middle managers review formally and support fully their departmental staff. Professional development is appropriate and functions in both proactive and reactive manner. Similarly, support staff management is effective and training appropriate.
- 5.10 The school has formed good links with the parents. In the pre-inspection questionnaire parents emerged as overwhelmingly supportive, stating that the school is well managed and led and that they would recommend it to prospective parents. They are strongly complimentary and supportive of the quality of education the school provides. They are very pleased with the provision of extra-curricular activities, with levels of pastoral support and guidance, and with outcomes in terms of personal development and behaviour as well as in public examinations. They are satisfied with the communications that they receive from the school. They have no significant criticisms to make of the school. Parents receive regular, highly professional newsletters, colourful magazines and educational updates. The parent portal is an important tool in allowing parents to engage with the tracking of pupil progress.
- 5.11 The school sees the relationship with parents, carers and guardians as an open partnership. Any complaints and concerns are handled sensitively and appropriately in full accordance with the school's published policy.
- 5.12 Parents are able to participate in school life and are actively encouraged to become involved in the work and progress of their children. They are invited to attend concerts, drama performances, sport fixtures, various educational briefings and parents' evenings and feel very much part of the wider Wellington community. The Friends of Wellington School (FOWS), open to parents and the wider community, energetically organises well supported fund-raising and social events.
- 5.13 The parents of current and prospective pupils are able to access detailed, relevant and up-to-date information about the school, its workings and the pupil experience. This is readily available in high quality electronic and print forms as well as on the very informative website which captures and celebrates pupils' achievements, group and individual, in vivid manner. The website also provides parents with access to the requisite school policies.

- 5.14 Parents receive regular written reports on the progress of their children which contain detailed and helpful comments and offer advice for improvement, with clear information on grading and pupil progress and attainment. Parental consultation evenings are held regularly.

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