



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

GRESHAM'S SCHOOL

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Gresham's School

Full Name of School	Gresham's School
DfE Number	926/6003
Registered Charity Number	1105500
Address	Gresham's School Cromer Road Holt Norfolk NR25 6EA
Telephone Number	01263 714511
Fax Number	01263 712028
Email Address	reception@greshams.com
Headmaster	Mr Douglas Robb
Chair of Governors	Mr Martin Smith
Age Range	13 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	473
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (272 boys; 201 girls)
Numbers by Age	13-16: 256 16-18: 217
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 196
Number of Boarders	Total: 277 Full: 192 Weekly: 85
Inspection Dates	09 Feb 2016 to 12 Feb 2016

PREFACE

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

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*. The inspection on which the report is based took place over a period of four continuous days in the school.

The previous ISI boarding welfare intermediate inspection was in December 2013 and the previous ISI standard inspection was in March 2010.

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

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

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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

Inspectors

Dr Christopher Ray	Reporting Inspector
Mr John Aguilar	Team Inspector (Principal, Society of Heads school)
Mr Colin Haddon	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, ISA school)
Mr Martin Kettlewell	Team Inspector (Head of Department, HMC school)
Mrs Emma Margrett	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mr Alastair Reid	Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS and ISA school)
Mr Julian Thould	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Ms Myra Rodgers	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mr Matthew Thornby	Team Inspector for Boarding (Housemaster, HMC school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Gresham's School is situated in Holt, Norfolk. It was founded in 1555 by Sir John Gresham. The school has a strong association with the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers and the City of London. It is a co-educational independent boarding and day school for pupils aged 13 to 18. Along with its linked pre-prep and prep schools for younger pupils, the school belongs to a charitable foundation of which its governors act as trustees.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide a caring, challenging and enlightened education which celebrates British values in a Christian setting. It strives to achieve the highest standards of attainment informed by an ethos that values the whole person and their spiritual and emotional well-being. The school also aims to provide for all of its pupils, encouraging each one to realise his or her full potential. It seeks to cultivate a generation of communicative and enquiring young people with a sense of self-worth, a sense of being valued as an individual in a community and a strong sense of social, moral and environmental responsibility who are able to influence the world around them.
- 1.3 Since the previous boarding welfare intermediate inspection, the governance of the school has been restructured and a new headmaster has been appointed. A large-scale programme of boarding house refurbishment is under way and the sports facilities have been extended with the building of a new pavilion.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection the school had 473 pupils on roll; 201 girls and 272 boys. The sixth form comprised of 217 pupils. There were 277 boarders resident in 7 houses, of whom 192 boarded full time and the remainder on a weekly basis. Each day pupil also belongs to one of these houses.
- 1.5 The ability profile of the school, including for the sixth form, is above the national average. The school has identified 107 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 70 of whom it provides specialist support. Also, 1 pupil has a statement of special educational needs. English is spoken as an additional language (EAL) by 123 pupils and the school provides specialist support for 67 of these.
- 1.6 The large majority of day and boarding pupils come from families in East Anglia with professional or business backgrounds. Just over one fifth come from families living overseas, mostly from Germany or other western European countries, with some pupils coming from East Asian backgrounds. The majority of pupils join the school at 13 from Gresham's Prep School.
- 1.7 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 The achievements and learning of pupils of all needs and abilities are excellent. The school fully meets its aim in that day and boarding pupils should realise their full potential and achieve the highest standards possible in their learning. Success in sport and the creative arts is especially strong. Pupils, including those with SEND or EAL and the more able, make excellent progress. They are articulate, confident and enthusiastic learners. Excellent curricular and extra-curricular provision provides many opportunities for pupils to flourish within and beyond the classroom. The A-level and International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma programmes in the sixth form provide a wide range of subject choices. Teaching, based on expert subject knowledge, is excellent. Since the previous standard inspection and in response to its recommendations, marking and assessment have improved and systems are in place to allow teachers to share best practice effectively.
- 2.2 The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The school entirely fulfils its aim to develop amongst pupils a firm sense of social, moral and environmental responsibility. Pupils have marked spiritual awareness and well-developed self-esteem. They have a strong sense of responsibility for others, both within the school and in the wider community. The contribution of the arrangements for pastoral care is excellent, with day and boarding pupils fully integrated within the house system. Exemplary standards of behaviour are evident amongst the pupils. All forms of bullying are effectively discouraged by the school. The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety, including for boarders are excellent. The school's safeguarding policy is now implemented most effectively in response to the recommendation of the previous boarding welfare inspection to ensure that the school operates safer recruitment procedures. The overall quality of boarding is excellent. Recommendations of the previous boarding welfare inspection have been implemented.
- 2.3 The governance of the school and its leadership and management are excellent. An ambitious vision for the future is detailed within the school's strategic plan which is strongly focused upon school improvement. Recent restructuring of the governance has enabled individual governors, focusing upon specific areas such as boarding and safeguarding, to liaise more effectively with the school. A restructured senior leadership team has successfully implemented the recommendations of previous inspections. Some opportunities for the delegation of key tasks are not taken. Leadership and management at all levels work most effectively together to improve teaching and learning, but as yet the monitoring and tracking of the extra-curricular commitments alongside the academic progress of the pupils is limited. Parents are strongly supportive of the school and its leadership, and many play an active part in school life.

2.(b) Action points**(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- 2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Improve the use of data management in order to enhance the tracking and monitoring of pupils' extra-curricular commitments and academic progress.
 2. Define senior roles and responsibilities more clearly, so that suitable opportunities for delegation may be identified.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils are very well educated in line with the school's aims to meet the needs of every pupil, enabling them to excel and realise their full potential. The knowledge, understanding and skills of pupils of all needs and abilities across a wide range of subjects and activities are excellent. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, the overwhelming majority of pupils and parents said that pupils are making good progress.
- 3.3 Pupils, including those with SEND or EAL, apply their strong literacy skills throughout the curriculum. They write fluently and cogently. Pupils are articulate when discussing complex ideas. Their mathematical skills are well developed and were seen to be effectively applied in physics and chemistry. Pupils were observed to demonstrate high levels of logical thinking, for example in religious studies (RS) and theory of knowledge classes. Their creative skills are strong and were clearly evident in the art, design technology and music lessons observed. More able pupils are challenged through national academic competitions and many have gained notable successes in UK Mathematics Challenges and the Biology and Chemistry Olympiads. Several pupils have achieved notable creative success including being shortlisted for a national art prize, selected for the National Youth Theatre and the National Youth Orchestra, and awarded an Arkwright Engineering Scholarship. Each year many pupils achieve bronze, silver or gold level in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) scheme and distinctions in externally accredited music examinations.
- 3.4 Pupils extend and develop their physical skills through an extensive programme of sport and other physical activity. Representative sports teams have performed strongly and a number of individuals have been selected for national teams including England girls' football and swimming, and England boys' rugby. The school's rifle club has an outstanding record and in the current year has British champions amongst its members as well as numerous members of other national and regional squads.
- 3.5 During the years 2012 to 2014, the most recent three years for which comparative data is statistics are currently available, results in GCSE were above the national average for maintained schools and results in IGCSE were generally higher than worldwide norms. The level of attainment in A-level qualifications was above the national average for maintained schools, and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. The level of attainment in the IB Diploma examination was well above the worldwide average, and similar to the UK average. Girls' examination results have been higher than boys', and were well above the national average for girls in maintained schools in 2013. Examination results in 2015 demonstrated improvements upon those in the three previous years. Most pupils when they leave the school go on to study at UK universities.
- 3.6 The levels of examination attainment together with standardised measures of progress that are available and inspection evidence, indicate that pupils make progress that is at least appropriate, and good for those in the sixth form, in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Pupils with SEND or EAL make progress in line with their peers in all areas of the curriculum.

- 3.7 Pupils' attitudes to learning overall are excellent and strongly supportive of their academic progress. They gain enjoyment from their work and take evident pride in it. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is almost always exemplary. They support one another in their work and co-operate effectively when working in groups. This was observed to excellent effect during a Year 12 physics lesson in which pupils assisted each other when analysing experimental data. Pupils show respect for each other and for their teachers.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 The curricular and extra-curricular provision supports the school's aim to educate the whole person. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, almost all parents agreed that their children are offered an appropriate range of subjects and areas of experience together with a good range of extra-curricular activities. The very large majority of pupils in their questionnaire responses indicated that they can participate in a good range of activities. Those pupils interviewed said that they value the curricular and extra-curricular opportunities available to them.
- 3.10 All areas of learning are covered thoroughly and a strong emphasis is placed on developing oral skills. Pupils are able to study all three sciences; five modern foreign languages as well as Latin are available from Year 9 onwards; and sixth form pupils are able to choose between A-level or IB programmes and from a wide range of subject options including psychology and music technology. Pupils in Years 9 to 11 benefit from an excellent programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE), which incorporates careers advice, money matters and citizenship. An excellent well-being programme for sixth form pupils includes a clear focus upon the importance of maintaining good mental health and making the right life choices.
- 3.11 An extensive list of late afternoon weekday electives provides pupils with a broad choice of subject-related support either individually or in small groups. This programme also provides additional support for those with EAL or SEND and further challenges for the more able. An enrichment programme of lectures and presentations enhances the provision for pupils through opportunities to listen to visiting speakers on a wide range of stimulating topics, such as the character of left-wing socialism and the implications of feminism.
- 3.12 The extra-curricular programme provides outstanding opportunities for pupils of all needs, abilities and talents. Team sports including hockey, football, netball, swimming and rugby are available together with a host of specialist sports including karate, squash, gymnastics, kayaking and rifle shooting. The Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and the DofE scheme are extremely popular, with large numbers of pupils actively involved. A diverse programme of regular lunchtime and after-school activities includes as 'Music and Munch' and evening concerts. During the inspection, challenging master classes and an excellent public performance bringing together professional and school musicians was observed. The recently introduced Gresham's Diploma validates the extent and depth of extra-curricular involvement as well as providing additional levels of challenge for pupils of all abilities.
- 3.13 Fundamental British values are actively promoted through PSHEE classes and are evident in the regular pupil surveys and the activities of house forums. Political and

social views are covered in a balanced way through the PSHEE programme, visits to the Houses of Parliament and pupil-led groups such as the Hodgkin Society.

- 3.14 The links with the local and wider community are extremely strong. Involvement in the Holt Youth Project and support for the Ormiston Venture Academy enable the pupils to work alongside their peers in other settings. Numerous community groups, including six local state maintained junior schools, use the school facilities and interact with pupils and staff. Members of the public frequently attend events in the school's Auden Theatre. Work experience and career opportunities in the locality are provided through the Gresham's Futures programme. Older pupils visit Kenya annually and whilst there they work on community projects and teach in a local school.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.16 Teaching is underpinned by excellent subject knowledge and the considerable enthusiasm which teachers demonstrate for their own disciplines. The particularly warm relationships between teachers and pupils are based on mutual respect and trust, and provide a nurturing environment which enables the school successfully to meet its aim to achieve the highest standards of attainment whilst valuing the needs of the whole person.
- 3.17 The school has successfully addressed the recommendation of the previous standard inspection to share best practice in teaching. The best teaching is excellent, underpinned by expert knowledge and delivered at a brisk pace enabling rapid progress. A very small number of classes observed failed to engage the pupils effectively. Teaching focuses upon the needs of individual pupils both within and outside normal lessons to help them to achieve their potential. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a very large majority of pupils stated that their teachers help them to learn. This was noted in the lessons observed, for example in a biology lesson where pupils were encouraged most effectively to apply their understanding of adaptation to the difference between arctic and desert hares.
- 3.18 Teaching is well planned and offers opportunities for many pupils, including the more able, to challenge themselves and to extend their understanding through independent learning activities. Pupils enjoy advancing their own viewpoints whilst challenging the views of others, as observed in a chemistry lesson where they worked co-operatively to consider mass spectrum fragmentation of organic molecules.
- 3.19 A small minority of pupils suggested that teachers do not ensure that they are set the appropriate amount of work, and also indicated that their homework does not help them to learn. In interview, pupils said that they feel that they received appropriate levels of work and homework which helped them to learn. The work scrutinised during the inspection also indicated that levels of work were appropriate.
- 3.20 The school has raised the standard of marking, meeting the recommendation of the previous standard inspection; much evidence was found of excellent marking and assessment. The best marking is exemplary, providing clear and helpful guidance on how improvements might be made, for example in history and French. In a few subjects marking is more uneven and at times cursory. Teaching makes effective use of assessment for tracking and monitoring the performance of pupils. This

informs members of the teaching staff about pupils' ability levels and progress, allowing realistic target grades to be set for the pupils.

- 3.21 Since the previous inspection, the school has developed a well-resourced virtual learning environment which enables teachers to share with pupils extensive resources for teaching and learning. The use of these resources in teaching is becoming widespread across the school and has a positive impact on the standards of learning. Some excellent examples of the use of information and communications technology (ICT) resources were observed, both in lessons and in the work scrutinised. For example, in a music lesson pupils made effective use of ICT in composition work.
- 3.22 Specialist members of the teaching staff, with their detailed understanding of the pupils' individual needs, provide excellent support for the more able pupils and for those with SEND and EAL. This understanding underpins the informative strategies provided for teachers to enable them to support pupils of all needs and abilities. Teaching meets the requirements of the statement of special educational needs.
- 3.23 Teaching promotes tolerance and respect for British values, for example through PSHEE and the well-being programme, and deals with political issues in a non-partisan way.

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 school fully meets its aim to develop self-worth so that pupils become valued individuals within a supportive community, each with a strong sense of social, moral and environmental responsibility. By the time they leave the school, pupils have excellent personal development. They are well-mannered, tolerant, self-aware and self-confident young adults ready to take their place in the world.
- 4.3 Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. They have a strong sense of personal identity, and of respect for themselves and others. Pupils have high levels of self-esteem, developed in part through PSHEE and the well-being programme. Pupils appreciate the opportunities to engage in chapel services, which foster an awareness of religious faith and provide them the opportunity to reflect on their own spirituality and celebrate the achievements of others. They further explore spiritual values and beliefs in RS lessons and in assemblies. In interview, pupils said that they appreciate the spiritually uplifting opportunities afforded by art, music and geography.
- 4.4 Pupils' moral awareness is excellent. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Pupils know that bullying in all its forms is unacceptable. They are unfailingly courteous and considerate to each other and to visitors. Pupils have a respect for the civil and criminal English law. In lessons they discuss and develop an awareness of the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. Topics in the PSHEE and well-being programmes reinforce the moral awareness of pupils exploring issues such as emotional well-being, human rights and prejudices. Links to organisations such as a local youth project allow pupils to understand how they can make a real difference to the lives of others living locally.
- 4.5 The social awareness of and relationships amongst the pupils are excellent. They are at ease with one another and with their teachers; tolerance and inclusivity permeates the school. Through PSHEE, the well-being programme and lessons in humanities subjects, pupils develop a marked understanding of public institutions and their role in British society. The link with a school in Kenya, visited by older pupils annually, provides thought-provoking opportunities for them to see the impact that they can have on the wider world. Each year considerable sums are raised for various charities. A small minority of pupils in their questionnaire responses said that the school provides them insufficient chances to take on responsibilities. Inspection evidence does not support this view. Many senior pupils lead activities or academic societies and thereby serve the community of the school as a whole. Pupils make excellent use of the opportunities provided by the CCF to learn how to lead and how to co-operate, and others enthusiastically accept responsibilities within a range of community service activities.
- 4.6 The cultural awareness of pupils is excellent. Pupils from a variety of European and wider backgrounds are made welcome in the school, and their cultures are respected and celebrated. Pupils are mature and relate very well to one another, mixing freely throughout the school. Cultural diversity is accepted as the norm. A variety of cultural traditions become familiar to pupils through academic subjects such as art, music and RS. European and wider cultures are promoted through the

study of modern foreign languages, arts and humanities. Pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of individual liberty and democracy within this broad range of cultural perspectives. Beyond the classroom, pupils learn about the religious and cultural traditions of other societies. They enjoy sharing traditional foods at celebrations such as Chinese New Year. Pupils understand the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination, and articulately discuss such issues in PSHEE lessons. Local and overseas trips, including visits to Australia and South Africa, further broaden pupils' cultural horizons.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 The pastoral care provided meets the school's aims to value the whole person and their emotional well-being. Day pupils are fully integrated into boarding houses. In interview, day and boarding pupils said that they fully appreciate the dedicated and caring approach of house staff and the strong sense of community in the houses, effectively bringing together younger and older pupils. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, an overwhelming majority of parents said that their children are happy, safe and well looked after.
- 4.9 Pupils lead active and healthy lives, and understand the importance of regular physical exercise and good nutrition. The extensive sports programme and wide range of extra-curricular activities is well received and pupils need little encouragement to participate.
- 4.10 In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a small minority of pupils said that the school does not always ask for and respond to their opinions. Inspection evidence demonstrated that pupils take part in a range of forums and committees where their opinions are canvassed and many of their ideas are acted upon. Pupils have been involved in discussions seeking to improve the quality of the food served in the dining hall.
- 4.11 A small minority of pupils said in their questionnaire responses that rewards and sanctions are not always issued fairly by teachers. Pupils said in interview that sanctions are generally fair, proportionate and for the most part consistently applied, the disciplinary records provided by the school supports this view.
- 4.12 The school implements an effective anti-bullying policy which seeks to create an open and secure environment for all pupils. In their questionnaire responses an overwhelming majority of parents and a very large majority of pupils said that the school deals effectively with any bullying that occurs. In interview, pupils said that instances of bullying are rare. The school's strategies for the promotion of e-safety are strong. The PSHEE and well-being programmes play a crucial role in supporting pastoral care within the school. Effective pastoral guidance is available to pupils from house and medical staff as well as from the chaplaincy and counselling services. A suitable disability access plan is in place.

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

- 4.13 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.14 Extremely careful attention is afforded to the safeguarding of pupils, and the school's comprehensive policy is implemented effectively. In the previous boarding welfare inspection the school was recommended to ensure that it operates safer recruitment procedures. Following a period in which historical errors and omissions were rectified, the school now undertakes thorough, comprehensive pre-appointment checks which are carefully recorded. All staff, governors and volunteers receive regular and effective child protection training. An appropriate safeguarding governor is identified. Records relating to any concerns about pupils' welfare are stored carefully. Suitably trained designated members of staff maintain close and appropriate contact with local agencies. Appropriate steps are taken in all parts of the school to prevent radicalisation or extremism.
- 4.15 The necessary measures to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards are thorough. Fire risk assessments and training records are up to date, fire drills are held regularly at different times of the day and evacuation procedures are clear. The procedures are well known and understood by pupils and staff.
- 4.16 Risk assessments associated with the premises, with traffic and movement around the school, and with school trips and activities are thorough and detailed. They identify the hazards and the controls needed to minimise risk. Maintenance of the buildings and sites is managed well. The health and safety committee meets regularly and recommendations are implemented as and when required.
- 4.17 The first-aid policy provides very clear guidance for the care and welfare of pupils. The medical provision for ill and injured pupils, and for pupils with SEND is excellent. A significant number of staff is trained in first aid and this training is updated at least every three years. Accidents, illnesses and provision of medication are recorded carefully.
- 4.18 Registration of the pupils takes place in each house in a calm and careful manner. The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and appropriately stored.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.19 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.20 Outcomes for boarders are excellent. The boarders' personal development is clearly promoted by their boarding experience, enabling them to develop key qualities such as tolerance, confidence and independence. Boarders who were interviewed expressed that they enjoy living in the houses, and praised the homely atmosphere and the quality of the boarding staff. The relationships between staff and boarders of all ages and all nationalities are extremely positive and natural. The care provided is sensitive to different needs. Boarders are polite and considerate, both to each other and to all visitors.
- 4.21 The academic performance of the pupils is monitored closely by the resident house team, supported by the work of visiting tutors who represent a wide range of subjects. Boarders say that they have several highly approachable members of staff to whom they would contact in times of need. The telephone numbers for the

independent listener and Children's Commissioner are displayed and acknowledged by the pupils. Senior pupils are in positions of responsibility for which they are suitably trained and closely monitored enabling them to develop leadership skills.

- 4.22 Various boarding-related committees, such as the house forum, the dining hall committee and the overseas forum, enable pupils to express their views. House representatives are carefully chosen and canvas the opinions of their peers before scheduled meetings. Minutes of meetings are recorded and swiftly circulated. Changes brought about as a result of pupils' input include the provision of 'crunchy apples', a change to packed lunches, improvements to house fixtures and furnishings, and widening the range of weekend activities offered. Boarders have access to the world around them through newspapers, television and appropriate internet facilities.
- 4.23 The quality of boarding provision and care is good. Prospective boarders are invited to join a taster boarding session; they are issued with helpful booklets and each has a mentor selected from older boarders. Those new to the school say they were welcomed into the community and settle in extremely quickly. By the time they leave the school, boarders are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Effective policies are in place regarding the care of boarders who are unwell. The health centre, which is open continuously, is exceptionally well resourced and staffed at key times by qualified nurses. Boarders say that they are well looked after by the medical staff should they be ill or injured. The school counsellor can be accessed directly by boarders and provides another layer of support. Members of the boarding house staff are well trained in the administration of medications in house and are easily accessible at all times. At the time of the previous inspection the school had implemented new arrangements for recording the use of over-the-counter medicines within houses and the health centre. These arrangements have been successfully implemented, meeting the recommendation for further improvement. Local services may also be accessed including the local medical practice, dental surgery and opticians.
- 4.24 In their questionnaire responses, a majority of boarders said that they are unhappy with the quality of food provided. During the inspection, the food was found to be of a variable quality but many pupils said in interviews and discussions that standards are rising. Fresh baking is done on site, including baking bread. A minority of pupils were unhappy with the provision of snacks and water outside meal times. No evidence was found during the inspection that water and snacks were unavailable; the houses have a variety of healthy snacks delivered and fresh fruit is always available. Special dietary needs are catered for. On occasion themed meals are served, such as a Chinese New Year banquet, which the boarders enjoy. Boarding accommodation is good and a rolling programme of refurbishment is in place. Suitable sleeping accommodation is provided which is light, airy and clean, and there have been further improvements to the standard of toilet and washing facilities, this fully meets the recommendations from the previous boarding welfare inspection. Boarders have the freedom to personalise their own areas, adding to the homely feel. In their questionnaire responses, a very small minority of parents felt that the boarding accommodation is not comfortable. No evidence was found during the inspection to support this. Houses have comfortable common rooms, where boarders enjoy relaxing.
- 4.25 A small minority of boarders said in their questionnaire responses that they were unhappy with the balance of free time and activities in the evenings and during weekends. In interview, boarders said that they appreciate the range of activities,

which includes recreational and competitive sports and off-site weekend trips including paintballing, go-karting and cinema visits. Boarders also enjoy visiting the nearby town in their free time. They have the opportunity to play table tennis, pool and board games in house and in the whole-school recreational facility. Laundry is carried out to a high standard on site and older pupils have the opportunity to do their own washing. In their questionnaire responses, a small minority of boarders said that it is not easy to contact family and friends. Regular contact with parents is readily and frequently maintained by telephone, email and internet calls.

- 4.26 The effectiveness of arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are excellent. The school operates safe recruitment procedures and vets staff in line with regulatory requirements, meeting the recommendation from the previous inspection. All members of staff, including ancillary staff, receive regular and appropriate safeguarding training and demonstrated an awareness of their responsibilities. Boarding houses are well staffed during the evenings. Boarders are registered regularly throughout the entire day and an emphasis is placed on signing in and out, ensuring that members of staff are aware of the whereabouts of boarders at all times. Regular fire drills are held at various times of the day and night, and boarders demonstrated a knowledge of evacuation procedures. They have access to lockable facilities for safe storage of belongings. An effective anti-bullying policy is in place and boarders say that bullying, including cyberbullying, is rare. Pupils are regularly reminded of the dangers of internet use through whole-school assemblies, PSHE lessons and tutor periods. Suitable policies are in place to promote good behaviour and boarders were observed to behave impeccably.
- 4.27 The effectiveness of leadership and management in the boarding provision is excellent. The school has a suitable statement of the school's boarding principles and practice which is successfully implemented. One of the governors has a designated responsibility for boarding. The senior leadership team hold regular meetings with boarding staff to discuss matters pertaining to boarders' welfare and to review policies and procedures. Regular staff meetings are held to discuss matters pertaining to the welfare of boarders, further enhancing boarders' academic and personal development. Members of the boarding staff are suitably trained, both before and when in post, and have access to a tailored scheme of professional development which addresses key areas in boarding welfare. In their questionnaire responses, parents of boarders were extremely positive about the boarding provision.

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 governance is entirely successful in fulfilling the school's aim to provide a caring, challenging and enlightened education for its pupils. Governors are committed to an ethos of inclusivity within a Christian context. Building upon the considerable strengths of the school, the governors have developed a clear vision for the future contained within a detailed and comprehensive five-year strategic plan which includes an ambitious building and refurbishment programme.
- 5.3 Since the previous inspection, the governance of the school has been restructured with a strong and effective focus upon the improvement of educational standards. The governors know the school extremely well. They are frequent visitors to the school, attending many events and functions as well as meeting members of staff, pupils and parents. Many are present or former parents of pupils in the school.
- 5.4 The governing body is able to draw upon a wide range of skills and experience including financial, legal, business, marketing and educational. This enables it to maintain effective oversight of the school, including over its financial affairs. Individual governors liaise effectively with the school on most aspects of its work including safeguarding, boarding and staff welfare. The governance provides excellent support for senior management, including through regular appraisal of the headmaster. Several committees effectively monitor the administrative and educational work of the school. School buildings are maintained effectively and any issues relating to health and safety are dealt with promptly. A nominated governor is in attendance at meetings of the health and safety committee.
- 5.5 The governors acting as a corporate body understand their legal responsibilities to the school. They maintain careful oversight of policies and procedures. The governing body receives and scrutinises an annual safeguarding report. They are appropriately trained.

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 senior leadership provides a clear and purposeful direction for the school, successfully fulfilling the school's aim to achieve high standards of academic attainment whilst sustaining a broad education for the whole person. Almost all parents said in their pre-inspection questionnaire responses that the school is well led and managed.
- 5.8 Since the previous inspection, the senior management has been restructured. This has been effective in improving educational standards. At times some key roles are overloaded and appropriate opportunities for delegation are not taken. Links with the foundation's preparatory and pre-preparatory schools are well established, with the heads of the three schools meeting regularly. The recommendations of the previous inspection have been successfully addressed through an all-embracing

strategic development plan rooted in wide-ranging consultation. Better opportunities for the monitoring of teaching, and enhanced means for effective assessment and marking, now exist. There is also a growing culture of sharing good practice through such activities as the school's teaching and learning breakfast and the widespread use of opportunities provided through regional cluster groups and local universities.

- 5.9 A warm and supportive senior management style has permeated into middle management. This is balanced by firm and consistent expectations that high academic, extra-curricular and behavioural standards should be maintained throughout the school. The leadership and management has effectively encouraged members of staff at every level to help pupils not only to achieve high standards both in and beyond the classroom but also to develop into self-assured and open-minded young people, thriving in a supportive and nurturing school community where they are encouraged to value others and respect democracy. Respect for others and for democratic ideals are strongly valued and encouraged. The outstanding personal development of pupils is a testament to the high quality of both senior and middle leadership and management, informed by a culture of consultation, reflection and a refreshing willingness to be open to the views of parents, members of staff and pupils.
- 5.10 The leadership and management encourages amongst staff a self-critical ethos with a deep-rooted desire continuously to improve the educational provision for pupils in the school. Pastoral management within the houses continually assesses the arrangements to improve the welfare provision for pupils. Heads of department regularly evaluate the success of teaching and learning. Much of the communication amongst the various levels of leadership and management is informal. This limits the extent to which pupils' academic performance and extra-curricular commitments are tracked and monitored to provide a more effective balance in the demands upon pupils.
- 5.11 Members of the teaching staff are appraised each year; their teaching is regularly observed and they are fully supported in their professional aspirations. Arrangements for the induction and monitoring of newly appointed staff are highly regarded by those who have recently begun their careers at the school.
- 5.12 All members of staff have suitable training in first aid, health and safety awareness, fire precautions and safeguarding. Members of the senior leadership team have been trained to an appropriately high level in safeguarding and safer recruitment. The school carries out rigorous safer recruitment procedures, ensuring that all required checks are carried out promptly and recorded efficiently. Sensible and effective mechanisms are in place to ensure that policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and successfully implemented to create a safe and secure educational environment for all.
- 5.13 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a very large majority of parents expressed satisfaction with the education provided for their children and with the availability of information. Members of staff throughout the school have a constructive relationship with parents in accordance with its aims. In particular, parents express confidence in the relatively new senior leadership team and how it is enabling the school to steer in the right direction. Parents say that the school is quick to respond to any concerns raised and that these are handled sensitively. Almost all parental concerns are resolved informally without the need to invoke the formal and suitable complaints procedure. The school's records demonstrate that when needed the procedure is followed effectively.

- 5.14 Parents have many opportunities to become involved in the life of the school and to support their children; for example through the Friends of Gresham's which raises funds for school projects and equipment. The choral society, plays, musicals and attendance at sports fixtures are also avenues for parental involvement. The school has an effective staff-parent forum where each term the senior leadership and management staff meet with parental representatives from each year group. The forum discusses a variety of topical themes concerning pastoral and academic matters.
- 5.15 Parents of pupils and prospective pupils are provided with all the required information about the school. A regular flow of information is provided through comprehensive newsletters containing photographs and useful modern foreign languages links for example, parental and pupil guides, pastoral care and information booklets about universities, as well as through the use of a range of social media.
- 5.16 Parents receive six reports each year, providing helpful details of the progress of their children. The character of the reports ensures that parents are confident that the staff know their children as individuals. In the case of international pupils, care is taken to ensure that information is also sent to a nominated relevant person who can assist parents who may not speak English. Formal parents' evenings are held every year for each year group, with additional meetings arranged to discuss key transitional stages such as sixth form options. Parents of international pupils who are unable to attend meetings are accommodated. Arrangements are made for them to meet teachers or to be contacted personally by telephone.

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