



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION  
ST LAWRENCE COLLEGE**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## St Lawrence College

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

Full Name of School	<b>St Lawrence College</b>
DfE Number	<b>886/6010</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>307921</b>
Address	<b>St Lawrence College College Road Ramsgate Kent CT11 7AE</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01843 572900</b>
Fax Number	<b>01843 572901</b>
Email Address	<b>info@slcuk.com</b>
Principal	<b>Mr Antony Spencer</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr David Taylor</b>
Age Range	<b>11 to 18</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>364</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (218 boys; 146 girls)</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total: <b>174</b>
Number of Boarders	Total: <b>190</b>
	Full: <b>190</b> Weekly: <b>0</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>17 to 20 March 2015</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) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations 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.

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.

## **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, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mrs Maureen Bradley	Reporting Inspector
Miss Margaret Connell	Team Inspector (Former Principal, GSA school)
Mrs Sarah Haslam	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, GSA school)
Mr Richard Lynn	Team Inspector (Headmaster, ISA school)
Mr Michael Punt	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Miss Sue Duff	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mr Andrew Lee	Team Inspector for Boarding (Former Senior Master, HMC school)

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(a) Main findings</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(b) Action points</b>	<b>3</b>
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	3
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>4</b>
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning	4
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c) The contribution of teaching	6
<b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>8</b>
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	8
(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care	9
(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	10
(d) The quality of boarding	11
<b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>13</b>
(a) The quality of governance	13
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	14

## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 St Lawrence College is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils from three to eighteen, divided into two sections, the junior and senior schools. It was founded in 1879 and still occupies its original site close to the centre of Ramsgate. The school has a strong Christian heritage, although it accepts pupils of all faiths or none. The senior school admits pupils from the age of eleven. The college is a charitable trust administered by a board of governors known as the Council. Both the junior and senior schools operate independently on a day-to-day basis under the overall leadership of the principal, who took up his appointment in 2013.
- 1.2 The school aims to recognise the gifts in all pupils and to prepare them for the challenges ahead. It sets out to do this by offering an academic education of the highest standards, encouraging a spirit of service and guiding young people towards an understanding of personal faith. It aspires to develop qualities that include sound judgement, confidence, curiosity, integrity and tolerance. Located within 100 acres of grounds, the school uses 50 acres for educational purposes, and the remainder operates as a working farm. The school occupies purpose-built accommodation, with a chapel located at its centre. Since the previous inspection the school has built a new theatre and an additional senior girls' boarding house.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, 364 pupils were on roll in the senior school, of whom 146 were girls and 218 were boys, and 147 of the pupils were in the sixth form. All of the 190 boarders were boarding full-time. The majority of pupils come from professional and business families and are of white British ethnic origin. The school has a long tradition of accepting pupils whose parents are in the armed services, living in Europe and Asia. There are 141 pupils who originate from overseas, mainly from Nigeria, Nepal and China. Day pupils live within a 25-mile radius of the school.
- 1.4 The overall ability profile of pupils in Years 7 to 11 is above the national average. In the sixth form the ability profile is in line with the national average, with a large number of pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL). Of the 141 pupils in the school with EAL, 81 receive additional support to improve their English. At the time of the inspection, 57 pupils were identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 25 receive specialist support. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

School	NC name
First Form	Year 7
Second Form	Year 8
Third Form	Year 9
Fourth Form	Year 10
Fifth Form	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is good. Those with EAL or SEND and the more able progress at the same good level as their peers. Achievement in creative, practical and sporting subjects is high for pupils of all abilities. In extra-curricular activities the pupils' achievement is often excellent. Teaching is good and shows a high commitment to ensuring that pupils receive individual help and support; this results in good progress for all. The pupils' excellent attitudes to learning contribute significantly to their good levels of progress, and especially to their good behaviour in the classroom and willingness to engage in their learning, including when teaching does not stimulate their interest. Pupils benefit from an excellent curriculum and extensive facilities, and especially from the wide-ranging opportunities provided by the extra-curricular programme. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is popular with pupils but does not fully cover the planned programme for some year groups due to timetable restrictions. By the time they mature and leave the sixth form, pupils have achieved excellent standards of knowledge, skills and understanding.
- 2.2 Pupils show excellent personal development. They mature into confident, articulate and responsible young people, well prepared for their next phase of education or work. Their spiritual development is strengthened by the school's strong Christian tradition; they appreciate the opportunities that the centrality of the chapel in their lives gives them to reflect on non-material aspects of life. The inclusive and supportive school community allows pupils of all cultures to be comfortable in the celebration and practice of their own faiths. Pupils have an excellent moral, social and cultural awareness; they exhibit a clear understanding of the value of tolerance and respect, and benefit from mixing with representatives of some 30 nationalities within the school. The strong house structure encourages social interaction across all ages. Excellent pastoral care and the good quality of boarding make a significant contribution to the high standard of the pupils' personal development. Procedures to involve the medical staff in the management of welfare matters are not, however, fully developed. While day to day arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of students are good, recruitment procedures have not always been followed correctly.
- 2.3 Governance and leadership and management fully support the school aims. The success of the school is a result of careful strategic planning and strong financial management by a committed governing body that makes it a priority to maintain a thorough understanding of the work of the school and the educational experience of the pupils. The leadership and management have introduced many initiatives that are beginning to improve academic performance and extend the range of opportunities for the pupils. The senior management team (SMT) is ably supported by committed heads of department and senior managers in boarding. The recommendation from the previous full inspection to ensure that appraisal is rigorous has been met, but not all the recommendations of the previous boarding inspection in June 2011 have yet been fully achieved. The governors and senior leadership maintain good oversight of their legal responsibilities but monitoring of recruitment arrangements has not always been sufficiently robust. Links with parents are excellent.

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

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

- 2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and therefore it is required to:
- ensure that all required recruitment checks, including the check against the barred list and obtaining references, are made on all staff before they begin work at the school [Part 4, paragraphs 18.(2)(a) and (f), and paragraph 21.(3)(a)(ii), under Suitability of staff and proprietors, and for the same reason Part 3, paragraphs 7.(a) and (b), and 8.(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety, National Minimum Standard 14.1, under Staff recruitment and checks on other adults, and National Minimum Standard 11, under Child protection];
  - ensure that the leadership and management of the school fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that all independent school standards are met consistently [Part 8, paragraph 34.(1)(b), under Quality of leadership and management of schools].
- 2.5 The school does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013, and therefore it must:
- ensure that boarders allowed to self-medicate are assessed as sufficiently responsible to do so [National Minimum Standard 3.4, under Boarders' health and well-being].

### **(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. Ensure that pupils in Years 7 and 8 have sufficient time to cover the full PSHE programme.
  2. Integrate the senior medical centre staff more closely into the pastoral, welfare and development teams within the college.

### **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 good.
- 3.2 Pupils demonstrate skills, knowledge and understanding of a good standard across the main curriculum. In their extra-curricular activities, their achievement is often excellent. The school is successful in providing opportunities for pupils of all abilities to gain academic success and develop their individual talents.
- 3.3 The pupils' written work is of a good standard in relation to their ability; some is excellent. Pupils are self-assured and articulate in oral presentations and in their questioning. When the opportunity is provided they put forward their own ideas and often display confident powers of analysis and logical thought. Good scientific and numeracy skills are applied confidently across other subject areas. The pupils' ability to work independently and engage in research is a strength, as is their competence in information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils achieve particularly high standards in the creative and practical subjects; this is demonstrated in the quality of drama and musical performances, and in the displays of art and design technology. Pupils develop these skills, and their knowledge and understanding, as they mature, and in the sixth form excellent standards are notable in several subjects.
- 3.4 The pupils' achievement is excellent across a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Significant success is gained in Olympiads in mathematics and science, and in national competitions in the creative subjects. The school has achieved sporting excellence at national and regional level in a number of team and individual competitions, including athletics, rugby and hockey. A considerable number of pupils are successful in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme at gold and silver level and in the Combined Cadet Force (CCF).
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2011 to 2013. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results at GCSE over this period have been above the national average for maintained schools. Girls performed slightly better than boys in their attainment of higher grades. Results in a small number of International GCSE subjects have been mostly above worldwide norms. A-level results have been similar to the national average for maintained schools. Between 2011 and 2013 almost half of all grades gained were at A\* to B. Inspection evidence revealed good attainment overall both in the classroom and in work scrutiny, with levels of achievement for boys and girls being equally good. The attainment of pupils with EAL or SEND showed that they achieve at least the level expected for their ability, and examination results showed some excellent levels of attainment for individuals. In the 2014 examinations, attainment of the highest grades at GCSE was higher than the average achieved in previous years.
- 3.6 These levels of attainment and standardised measures of progress that are available indicate that pupils are making progress that is good in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities; this is confirmed by inspection evidence. The most able pupils perform to a high standard in the classroom, in their examination work and in their many activities. Responses to the pupils' and parents' pre-inspection questionnaires revealed high levels of satisfaction with the progress being made.

- 3.7 Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. Their exemplary behaviour in the classroom strongly supports their overall achievement. They are receptive learners, capable of working both independently and co-operatively, and can organise their work efficiently. They have the ability to concentrate, including when teaching does not stimulate their interest. Pupils value their relationship with their teachers and are eager to engage in the learning process.

### **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 school successfully meets its aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that gives pupils the opportunity to develop their individual interests and talents. The excellence of the curriculum and the extra-curricular provision is a significant feature in meeting the needs of pupils from a wide ability range and in leading to their good progress and achievement. The considerable choice and the many opportunities offered by the school are reflected in the positive responses of the overwhelming majority of parents and pupils to the pre-inspection questionnaires.
- 3.10 In Years 7 and 8 the thoughtfully and imaginatively timetabled curriculum allows the most practical subjects to be delivered in the afternoon. Year groups are streamed in some subjects to focus the pupils' learning more closely to their ability. In Year 9 a broader curriculum, especially in the sciences and creative and practical subjects, prepares pupils well for examination choices. The GCSE curriculum is generous in provision and timetables are designed around individual pupils' choices. There is excellent provision in the sixth form, and the introduction of new subjects such as photography and music technology has further broadened options for pupils.
- 3.11 Excellent use is made of help from teachers outside lessons and the curriculum is enhanced by departmental clinics that support learning well. A range of academic and cultural enrichment (ACE) activities is organised, including business competitions such as Young Enterprise and a science and engineering week. The PSHE programme is taught through the curriculum, in assemblies and by outside speakers, and is enjoyed by pupils. Key topics on personal and health development, however, are not fully developed in some year groups, for example in Years 7 and 8, where timetable restrictions sometimes limit access to some areas of knowledge.
- 3.12 Careers education is well developed for pupils, especially when they are looking to the next phase in their education or for employment. Guidance for the sixth form is strengthened by 'Futures Week', in which excellent use is made of outside speakers from a variety of professions and universities, and through access to work experience opportunities.
- 3.13 The curriculum for pupils with EAL or SEND is excellent; it provides specialist support, with one-to-one help and small group tutorials. The specific needs of pupils with SEND, including any pupil with a statement of special educational needs, are clearly identified and supported both in the classroom and in extra-curricular options. Challenge for the most able is readily provided through participation in the ACE programme and a variety of national and school competitions.
- 3.14 The extra-curricular programme is a strength of the school. In responses to the pupils' and parents' questionnaires, a very large majority indicated that a good range of activities is available. The tutor-based target setting and review sheets for extra-curricular activities are well used to track pupils' involvement and ensure that all are involved and challenged. The pupils' engagement has grown as the programme has

diversified to meet their needs and interests, for example through the introduction of a greater number of sports, academic and creative activities. The sports excellence programme is highly effective in identifying and providing further challenge for the most able in all years. Dramatic and musical performances have increased since the opening of the new theatre. There is considerable pupil engagement in the DofE and pupils reflect readily on the leadership and team-building skills it facilitates. Through the DofE and the CCF, pupils have the opportunity for some community service, and the curriculum is further enhanced by a range of day and residential trips within the UK and overseas.

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

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.16 Teaching is effective in supporting the pupils' progress, and in promoting the school's aim to recognise the gifts in all pupils and to prepare them for the challenges ahead.
- 3.17 Teachers show a high commitment to ensuring that pupils receive individual help and support. They have a good knowledge of their pupils' abilities and this is a key strength, aided by the small size of most classes. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a very high proportion of parents commented that their children are treated as individuals, and nearly all felt that the quality of teaching helps their children to make progress. All pupils interviewed said how much they appreciate the extra help that teachers are prepared to give.
- 3.18 Teachers have a thorough subject knowledge and the most successful teaching is characterised by a dynamic and exciting approach, with a good pace to allow for rapid progress. In such teaching, creative and stimulating resource materials are used, including a variety of tasks well matched to the pupils' needs. Less successful teaching does not consistently challenge pupils, is too teacher-led, and lacks ambition and pace. In such teaching, pupils are not inspired to become engaged in their learning. Pupils continue to make good progress because of their high motivation, good work habits, and exceptional behaviour and co-operation. The genuine warmth in the interactions between pupils and teachers contributes to the effectiveness of teaching.
- 3.19 In the sixth form, good and often excellent teaching extends and challenges pupils to enable them to become increasingly independent. Successful teaching is imaginative and allows pupils to evaluate and develop their own ideas and views. For example, pupils particularly enjoyed lessons that developed their critical thinking using mind maps or allowed them to debate interesting sources of historical or scientific evidence. Some pupils receive valuable specialist support from the SEND and EAL departments, and in the most effective teaching, similar support is planned and implemented. Any pupil with a statement of special educational needs is given the required support.
- 3.20 Teaching is carefully planned to include useful homework. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils indicated that they do not feel that homework helps them to learn. Inspectors found that the homework given is appropriate and pupils agreed in interviews that it helps to consolidate their learning. In some subject areas, assessment data is well used by departments to aid planning and there is good monitoring of pupil progress and target setting. Most work is regularly marked, and the most helpful marking includes detailed comments and

clear advice as to how the pupil might improve. Occasionally, marking is less thorough, although a great deal of valuable individual oral feedback is given to pupils in lessons.

- 3.21 A wide range of resources is available, including ICT, which is used well in some teaching to promote learning. The excellent school facilities are exploited to the full, especially those for sport and the practical subjects.

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

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils display excellent spiritual development. They respect the centrality of the chapel in their school life, acknowledge the school's strong Christian tradition and appreciate the opportunities they are given to reflect on non-material aspects of their lives. They sing with fervour in chapel and they readily applaud their fellow pupils, whose skilful musicianship prefaces the time of prayer and reflection to follow. Pupils of other faiths are secure in the practice of their religion within a tolerant and supportive community, where their festivals are recognised socially and within lessons. As they mature intellectually, pupils grow in poise and self-esteem, and they are both confident and considerate in their interactions with their peers and with adults.
- 4.3 The moral development of the pupils is excellent. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong, and develop respect for the law; they acknowledge the need for proportionate sanctions, both within the school community and in the wider world. Younger pupils talked seriously about the consequences of juvenile crime. Pupils are polite and well behaved, and their attitude towards their teachers and others is one of respect and appreciation. Pupils willingly undertake responsibility as monitors, prefects and leaders in their houses, posts to which they are elected democratically. Always alert to the needs of others, pupils spontaneously organise events that raise funds for local, national and global organisations, appreciating that not all areas of the world and of the local community have the opportunities that they enjoy. In an assembly presentation following a visit of sixth-form pupils to Auschwitz, pupils of different nationalities reflected on the nature of forgiveness, drew parallels with modern day extremism, and exhibited a clear understanding of the values of tolerance and respect.
- 4.4 The social development of the pupils is excellent. They work well together and are particularly welcoming to visitors. They are proud of their school and display a strong bond of loyalty to their houses, where most social interaction takes place outside of lessons. Strong leadership and good relationships were evident in rehearsals for the house singing competition. Pupils give service both within the college and the local community, where they are welcome visitors at a home for elderly people. They are confident in putting forward ideas to the school council, and wise in their realisation that not all their ideas can be adopted, but appreciative of the benefits resulting from their suggestions. The school actively promotes esteem for British institutions, such as Parliament and the law courts. The induction of pupils from overseas guides them in understanding British society, enhancing their school experience beyond the academic curriculum. The right to vote is well appreciated by sixth-form pupils, evident in their organisation of a mock election in parallel with national events. Assemblies project a clear message about British values, defending those of free speech and liberty, whilst underlining the right to hold different political and religious views.
- 4.5 The pupils' cultural development is excellent. Pupils appreciate the opportunities to widen their horizons and explore new cultural environments through visits beyond the school, locally and overseas. They appreciate the levels of understanding gained from integrating with their peers from other countries, mixing harmoniously, to the mutual benefit of everyone. They learn from sharing in the celebration of a

variety of traditions and festivals, and from the wide-ranging views of their international peers. Pupils grow in appreciation of the arts through the excellent opportunities provided in the curriculum, which enable active participation.

- 4.6 By the time pupils leave the school, they are well rounded, articulate and confident, ready to go into the world prepared to make mature and responsible decisions for their future lives.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 The staff provide highly effective support and guidance for the pupils, in accordance with the school's aim to instil personal confidence and responsibility, emotional maturity and a sensitivity towards others. The school provides a very caring and nurturing environment, and parents and pupils reported in their questionnaire responses how much they value the care provided.
- 4.9 Pastoral care is well managed at all levels. Comprehensive pastoral policies and procedures are clear and the pastoral system is carefully structured. Staff teams work closely together for the benefit of pupils. Close lines of communication and regular meetings ensure that any concerns are quickly identified and appropriate support offered, although medical staff are not always sufficiently involved in welfare meetings or consulted on welfare matters. Pupils have a good range of staff they can go to with any concerns. Pupils speak warmly of the support offered by the staff, and some pupils formally support their peers through roles as 'buddies', mentors and prefects. Day and boarding pupils are well integrated and there is a very strong sense of community.
- 4.10 The school is effective in promoting good behaviour and guarding against harassment and bullying. Pupils comment that they feel safe and happy at school and do not feel that bullying is an issue. If bullying did occur, they say that they know who to go to and are confident that it would be dealt with sensitively and effectively. Inspection evidence supports this view. In responses to questionnaires, some pupils suggested that some teachers are not fair in the way they give sanctions. Inspection found that incidents of unacceptable behaviour are carefully managed, documented and monitored. In interviews, pupils largely welcomed the new system of merits and demerits, and said that sanctions are fairly administered.
- 4.11 The school promotes a healthy lifestyle. Day pupils report that they are happy with the food and boarders appreciate the care taken to meet different tastes and traditions. Pupils have regular opportunity for physical exercise, both through the curriculum and the wealth of extra-curricular activities.
- 4.12 The methods employed by the school to seek the views of its pupils are effective. A minority of pupils stated in questionnaire responses that the school does not listen to their opinions. Inspection evidence shows that school council, house councils, food committee, suggestions boxes and pupil surveys are all used well to seek feedback and successfully involve pupils in decision making. Pupils have been successful in their requests for improved water dispensers, a healthy vending machine and changes to the roll call system.
- 4.13 A suitable accessibility plan is under constant review.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.15 The health and safety policy and procedures are closely monitored by a health and safety committee and thorough oversight is maintained of the site and areas of risk. Risk assessments for the site and trips out of the school are thorough and kept under review; a suitable policy provides for this. Centralised records allow for health and safety procedures to be evaluated and closely monitored. The buildings and grounds are maintained to a high standard to provide a safe and attractive working environment.
- 4.16 Fire safety is well managed, and fire drills each term in day and boarding time ensure that evacuation procedures are efficient and fully evaluated. The equipment and fire system is regularly maintained by outside contractors and a fire risk assessment is completed annually.
- 4.17 Policies and procedures for safeguarding and child protection within the college are reviewed annually by the governing body. Staff undergo the required recruitment procedures, although on a number of occasions in the past, staff members have been allowed to start work under risk-assessed supervision before their criminal records check has been seen, without a barred list check being undertaken, or have begun work without a second satisfactory reference being obtained. By the start of the inspection, all adults working in the college had undergone the required criminal records and barring checks but not all had a second reference on file. A governor with special responsibility for child protection offers good support to the designated members of staff, who are fully trained in inter-agency procedures. Child protection training for staff is updated at the required times and close links are maintained with local welfare agencies.
- 4.18 The college maintains an appropriate electronic admission register, which is backed up and stored appropriately. Electronic registration of pupils is completed at a minimum of twice a day and any absence is quickly followed up. Staff are aware of the procedure to follow if a pupil were to go missing.
- 4.19 A suitable medical centre, overseen by qualified nurses, ensures efficient handling of accidents and illness. A comprehensive first-aid policy outlines clear procedures for staff, many of whom have first-aid training. The school ensures that excellent care is given for the welfare of those with SEND, including any pupil with a statement of special educational needs or with an education, health and care plan.

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

- 4.20 The quality of boarding is good.
- 4.21 Outcomes for boarders are excellent. Boarders are confident, self-reliant, polite, calm and appropriately self-possessed. Warm and friendly relationships exist amongst boarders. The strong sense of community within each house is fostered by the examples and values established by boarding staff, with whom boarders enjoy excellent relationships. Each house is a culturally diverse community and differences are valued and respected, whilst individual needs are acknowledged and catered for. Effective channels exist for boarders to express their views and play a part in the running of their communities; house staff are careful to feed back on suggestions or respond to worries or concerns. Boarders have good opportunities to serve the house community as mentors for pupils new to boarding, although there are few other roles of responsibility for younger members of the boarding community. Prefects are well trained to support and oversee boarders' welfare. Boarders make considerable use of the many opportunities on offer; they serve both the school and wider community, as well as engaging in their particular interests, such as textiles or yoga.
- 4.22 The quality of boarding provision and care is good. The four boarding houses and their staff provide an excellent, homely environment where the boarders flourish. On arrival, a comprehensive induction programme helps boarders to establish themselves in the school. Additional help is provided to those from different cultural and language backgrounds. Supervision is effective and boarders report that they have a number of people to turn to with any concerns. Contact information is clearly posted for sources of advice from outside the school, including the Children's Commissioner and an independent listener. All four houses provide excellent en-suite single bedrooms for older pupils, whilst younger boarders share en-suite rooms. Rooms are colourful and personalised, and provide good study areas. The boarders have varied social and recreational areas within houses and the wider school, supplemented by excellent facilities for their extra-curricular programme. The pupils say that they feel safe and secure within the school, as well as in their boarding houses, and security measures in place do not intrude on their enjoyment.
- 4.23 The internal laundry service is excellent and boarders commented on its speed and efficiency. The boarders highly appreciate the coffee shop provision, where they can also buy personal effects and stationery. Opportunities to travel off site at weekends are provided through occasional organised trips. In response to the questionnaire a small minority of boarders expressed the view that their belongings are not safe; inspection found that rooms have lockable facilities if boarders choose to use them. Most boarders contact their parents through the internet or using mobile telephones; boarders are also able to use the office telephones. Special consideration is given to time-zone differences between home and the school. In their questionnaire responses, a majority of boarders indicated dissatisfaction with the food. Inspectors found food to be appropriately varied and nutritious, and suitable snacks and drinks are provided in the evening. Special dietary and cultural needs are met and there is always a choice on offer. The medical centre has bright, colourful décor and informative displays; it offers excellent 24-hour healthcare by qualified nurses and visiting doctors. The procedure for self-medication by more senior boarders is weak, and has not been thoroughly reviewed since the previous boarding inspection. The assessment of the boarder does not involve the house staff and lacks sufficient detail regarding previous health and welfare information. The school has now begun to develop a more thorough procedure.

- 4.24 Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are good. The boarders consider the school to be a friendly place and that bullying is minimal; they have every confidence that any would be taken seriously and dealt with effectively. Inspection evidence supports this view. Anti-bullying guidance is included in the PSHE programme. The merits and house point systems facilitate instant reward, usually in the form of coffee shop vouchers, and sanctions are viewed to be fairly applied. Boarding staff are well qualified and have detailed job descriptions. The boarders know who to contact both day and night should the need arise. Reliable procedures for signing in and out across the houses are supplemented in the girls' house by an efficient card system for additional security. The school effectively implements its safeguarding policy although not all recruitment checks have been fully implemented in the past.
- 4.25 Leadership and management of boarding are good. Senior managers maintain good oversight of boarding provision and practice, including planning for improvement. The four boarding houses each have their own character and identity, led by staff with care. Increased sharing of good practice, and initiatives to enhance the lives of boarders, are examples of the determination of boarding staff to ensure that the boarders are happy, safe and well looked after as individuals. The aims of boarding and of each house are available to all parents and pupils through handbooks, electronically and on house notice boards. Communication is good, facilitated by weekly meetings and many informal exchanges throughout the day. The roles of the senior team are clear. Boarding staff have a wealth of professional development opportunities; they are well trained and up to date with legislative requirements and good boarding practices. Boarding policies are reviewed and implemented efficiently and records are appropriately kept and monitored internally. Most of the requirements of the previous boarding inspection have been met but those relating to assessment of boarders to self-medicate and to safer recruitment practice and improvements to the PSHE programme have not been fully met.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 Governance provides strong support for the school aims to provide a high quality Christian education that recognises and promotes the individual strengths of each pupil. The pupils' good achievements and excellent personal development are promoted by the governors' shared vision for the school and the successful implementation of their strategic planning.
- 5.3 The governing body has a detailed knowledge of the school through long-term service and from personal experience. Governors offer a wide range of experience and skill, especially in education and business. They make sure that they are fully informed of the school's work through an effective relationship with the senior management team, frequent meetings and detailed reports, and through the work of committees for education and finance. Strong financial management has ensured successful investment in well-qualified staff, new buildings, facilities and resources. A priority for governors has been to make sure that they have a thorough understanding of the pupils' educational experience through a regular programme of class visits to observe lessons and to engage in discussion groups with pupils. This has been successful in providing a good understanding of the school. Governors are in frequent attendance at school events. The governing body undertakes regular reviews and evaluation of its work, and a priority is given to training and development in key areas of governance. Governors receive a comprehensive induction into the work of the school and all are trained in child protection.
- 5.4 The governors provide good oversight of those areas where they have legal responsibilities. The boarding and welfare, health and safety arrangements are regularly reviewed in full Council meetings, and an annual review of the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures is undertaken by the full governing body. However, governors' monitoring of all recruitment procedures has not been sufficiently robust, as staff have sometimes started work without all required checks having been carried out and recorded.
- 5.5 School development planning continues to offer challenge and support to the senior management to ensure the successful educational future of the college. This includes the implementation of a rigorous appraisal process, as recommended at the previous full inspection. The governors, however, have not yet ensured that all the recommendations from the previous boarding inspection have been fully met.

## **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 good.
- 5.7 The members of the leadership and SMT have been appointed since the previous inspection, and provide strong guidance and support to all staff and pupils. A very large majority of parents reported in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire that they feel the school is well led and managed. Inspection evidence supports this view.
- 5.8 The new senior management structure ensures that responsibility for key areas is clearly defined. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Many of the recently introduced initiatives are beginning to further extend the academic experience and promote and improve the well-being and personal development of the pupils. The school has undertaken an evaluation of its aims for the future and has involved the pupils and parents, canvassing their views through surveys and questionnaires. A clear educational direction for the school has been established through a good school development plan, and ambitious goals have been set for the future for all aspects of educational provision. A renewed focus on teaching and learning recently has provided challenging targets and has improved pupil performance. The effective use of academic data and improved academic monitoring has successfully ensured that the pupils' different needs are being met. Strong support has been established for pupils with EAL or SEND, and the learning needs of the more able are also being more closely identified. Heads of department have good knowledge and understanding to help support and promote this greater rigour and closer monitoring of teaching. A rigorous biennial appraisal of staff includes targets for teaching and learning. There is a readiness to share the most effective practice in teaching and a system of peer observations has been established. Teachers now share good practice, and they are encouraged to take advantage of the generous access to continuous professional development.
- 5.9 Methods of communication are good across all sections of the school, and focused SMT, house and departmental meetings ensure that the individual pupil is well cared for, although links with the medical centre are not fully developed. Senior management in boarding and in day houses provides good pastoral and academic care, and ensures that boarding and day house teams have opportunities to train and extend their experience. Whole-college training, including that for child protection and safeguarding, takes place regularly, alongside other opportunities for professional development.
- 5.10 The general management of the estate and financial management are excellent, providing invaluable support to all sections of the school. Welfare, health and safety procedures are efficient in most respects; recruitment check procedures, including documentation on the central register of appointments, have not always been secure. The school management has ensured that all other child protection procedures are implemented effectively. The school policies have been reviewed and updated annually, and the child protection and safeguarding policy was more clearly defined during the inspection.
- 5.11 The quality of links with parents and guardians is excellent. Parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire showed extremely high satisfaction with most

aspects of the education provided, especially with the level of communication, curriculum provision and pastoral support.

- 5.12 Links with parents are established well before a pupil's arrival at school. Guidance is given on how to communicate with the school and how to raise concerns. Clear lines of communication exist and the school has a protocol on prompt response to contact from parents. A few parents reported in response to pre-inspection questionnaires that the school does not handle their concerns well. Inspection evidence indicates that the school has resolved most concerns quickly and efficiently. The complaints procedure is suitable and formal complaints are handled accordingly. Governors and senior staff have recently undertaken training on handling complaints.
- 5.13 Parents are kept well informed by the school and detailed information is readily available, increasingly through electronic communication systems that include a recently introduced parents' portal on the school website. All required policies and information are provided for parents. Termly newsletters are produced by the school and all boarding houses, highlighting information about the life of the school and activities current and future. The Friends of St Lawrence College provide a channel through which parents past and present can support the school and be informed of developments. Parents are actively encouraged to come into the school through events such as sports matches, drama and musical productions, and art exhibitions. The school also tries to communicate effectively with and involve parents based overseas, especially those who may not speak English or who have to be contacted through agents or guardians.
- 5.14 Good quality written reports and frequent grade cards provide useful information on pupils' progress. Parents' meetings are held for all year groups, and house parents are always willing to discuss pupils' progress and development with their parents and to arrange meetings with teachers as necessary.

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