



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
THE PORTSMOUTH GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

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The Portsmouth Grammar School

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

Full Name of School **The Portsmouth Grammar School**

DfE Number **851/6004**

Registered Charity Number **1063732**

Address **The Portsmouth Grammar School
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England**

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Email Address **headmaster@pgs.org.uk**

Headmaster **Mr James Priory**

Chairman of Governors **Mr Brian Larkman**

Age Range **11 to 18**

Total Number of Pupils **1143**

Gender of Pupils **Mixed (679 boys; 464 girls)**

Numbers by Age
0-2 (EYFS): 5-11:
3-5 (EYFS): 11-18: **1143**

Number of Day Pupils Total: **1143**

Number of Boarders Total: **0**

Full: Weekly:

Inspection Dates **26 Jan 2016 to 29 Jan 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 integrated inspection was in February 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.

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

Inspectors

Mr Adrian Underwood	Reporting Inspector
Miss Rachael Allen	Team Inspector (Headteacher, ISA school)
Mr Keith Barron	Team Inspector (Formerly Senior Master, HMC school)
Mrs Diana Bendall	Team Inspector (Formerly Deputy Head, GSA school)
Mr John Cox	Team Inspector (Head of Department, HMC school)
Mrs Paula Cross	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mrs Linda Horton	Team Inspector (Assistant Head of Sixth Form, HMC school)
Mr Richard Milner-Smith	Team Inspector (Headmaster, ISA school)
Mrs Caroline Pellereau	Team Inspector (Teacher, GSA school)
Mr Stephen Pugh	Team Inspector (Senior Deputy Headmaster, HMC school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The Portsmouth Grammar School, founded in 1732, is a co-educational school for pupils from two and a half to eighteen. A non-denominational school with close connections to Portsmouth Cathedral, it is a registered charity with the governors as trustees.
- 1.2 The school's vision is to have an outstanding reputation as a school in which young people are inspired to learn and develop with confidence to believe in their ability to make a positive difference to the world. The school wishes for its pupils and its staff to be happy and successful, and in that order. It emphasises its commitment to being a family school with an international outlook and aims to be at the forefront of educational development as one of the UK's most successful co-educational schools. The school seeks to provide excellence in all areas of school life, encouraging pupils to think not only about where they will be at the age of 18 but where they aspire to be at 25 years old.
- 1.3 The school is situated in Portsmouth High Street in former military barracks. The school has sports facilities at Hilsea, three miles away. Since the previous inspection, the senior school has completed two major building projects: a science centre consisting of 19 laboratories and a lecture theatre and a sixth-form centre with a cafeteria, library, careers and universities department, and departmental suites for economics, business studies and physical education and psychology. Information and communication technology (ICT) facilities have been centralised and upgraded to support digital learning.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection, the senior school had 1143 pupils: 792 in Years 7 to 11 (494 boys and 298 girls); and 351 in the sixth form (185 boys and 166 girls). Entry is academically selective at eleven plus, thirteen plus and age sixteen. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Fifty pupils come from families where English is an additional language (EAL). Of these eight receive formal support for their English. The school has identified 240 pupils who have a variety of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Of these 53 receive additional support.
- 1.5 Pupils come from Portsmouth, the Isle of Wight, and a wide area to the east, west and north. Parental occupations are varied and mainly in the professional, business and service sectors. The pupils are largely of white British origin. The ability of pupils in Years 7 to 11 is above the national average with a minority well above the national average. The ability profile of the sixth form is above the national average for pupils in sixth-form education, with most pupils having ability that is above or similar to this average.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. On occasions, the sixth form is used to refer to Years 12 and 13.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Portsmouth Grammar School is highly successful in meeting its aims. The pupils' achievements and learning are excellent. Pupils achieve excellent results in national and international examinations and make good progress at GCSE and excellent progress at A Level and in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB) in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Pupils are equally successful in achieving high levels in national competitions. They benefit from an excellent curriculum, offering a wide range of subjects and complemented by an outstanding programme of activities. Teaching is excellent overall. At best teaching is dynamic and actively supports independent learning and research and the needs of all pupils. The needs of more able pupils are addressed in lessons, but not consistently in all teaching. In response to a recommendation in the previous inspection, progress has been made on the improvement of marking, but there remains some inconsistency in this area. Pupils are enthusiastic and committed learners. They enjoy supporting each other in their learning and many are adept at using information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance their understanding.
- 2.2 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils are interesting and engaging. Pupils have a high level of self-awareness and a strong moral compass, reflecting the ethos of the school. Pupils are culturally aware and, in their school community, live out the values that characterise modern Britain. Much of the success of the pupils is due to the excellence of the pastoral care and the measures for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Pupils value the pastoral care structure, citing their houses, tutors and teachers as sources of care and practical support. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, an overwhelming majority of pupils stated that they liked being at their school and they confirmed this in discussions with inspectors; a sign of meeting the school's aim to be a happy and successful school.
- 2.3 The school's marked progress since the previous inspection is the result of excellent governance and leadership and management. The governors are actively involved in the life of the school and use their professional expertise in monitoring and giving support and challenge. In response to a recommendation from the previous inspection, the governors have refined the development plan so that it has concise objectives. The governors fully support the school's ethos, ensuring that the ethos is integral to the school's future development. The excellence of leadership and management is apparent at all levels. Senior leaders have worked with the governors to ensure wide consultation with staff, parents and pupils on all aspects of the life of the school. Senior leaders have vigorously addressed the strengthening of middle management by regular monitoring and professional support so that the recommendation in the previous inspection to improve reporting has been met, as is attested by parents in the questionnaire, where they also confirmed their strong endorsement of the quality of their children's education.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure all marking matches that of the best.
2. Ensure high-level challenge for the more able pupils is provided consistently in all teaching.

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 The school successfully fulfils its aim to nurture each individual's intellectual, spiritual, artistic, sporting and social faculties. Pupils throughout the school, including those with SEND, EAL and the more able, show excellent subject knowledge and understanding in the vast majority of lessons. They also take full advantage of the extensive range of activities, societies and clubs to broaden their experiences.
- 3.3 Pupils display high standards of speaking, listening, reading and writing, and apply these skills readily across the curriculum. They think logically and respond with imagination. The excellent artwork and the products manufactured in design and technology (DT) are strong testament to pupils' creative abilities. Effective articulation of thought was seen within lessons and in assemblies. Pupils apply their mathematical and ICT skills well to support their understanding. Pupils' physical abilities are well developed.
- 3.4 Achievements in a wide range of co-curricular activities are also excellent. Pupils are highly successful in international and national competitions in music, sport and drama. Equally, they gain many awards in national science and mathematical challenges. In the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DoE) many pupils are successful at all levels.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2012 to 2014. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. The number of GCSE entries now represents a small minority, and the results are well above the national average when compared with maintained schools, and in line with the national average for maintained selective schools. The number of IGCSE entries has increased over the last three years, and results are higher than worldwide norms, and also higher than UK norms for schools that enter pupils for IGCSE. Results at A Level are well above the national average for maintained schools, and above the national average for maintained selective schools. IB results are exceptional in relation to worldwide averages, and above the UK average for schools that enter pupils for IB. In 2015 further improvements raised the IB results to well above the UK average.
- 3.6 Pupils make good progress towards GCSE in relation to those of similar abilities. At A Level and IB pupils' progress is excellent in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Pupils with SEND and EAL make excellent progress and achieve results in public examinations of the same standard as their year group. A significant majority of Year 13 pupils, including the more able, is successful in obtaining places of their first choice at universities, some of which have highly competitive entrance requirements. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, an overwhelming majority of parents and pupils expressed satisfaction with progress in both academic and co-curricular spheres.
- 3.7 Pupils throughout the school display a positive attitude and enjoy learning. They respond well to the challenges placed before them and show high levels of commitment and self-motivation. They have high aspirations both inside and outside the classroom. Behaviour in lessons is exemplary and pupils are appreciative of the

supportive relationships with their teachers and each other. They apply themselves well, showing good organisational skills and a pride in the presentation of their work. Pupils are highly successful in working independently and in small groups. They work extremely effectively, learning much from their peers showing respect, support and encouragement to each other.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and co-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 The high standard of provision is fully in line with the aims of the school to enable the pupils to experience excellence in education. Firm foundations are laid in Years 7 and 8 through the time given to core subjects. From Year 9, the number of compulsory subjects is reduced, giving pupils the opportunity to choose additional courses to match their interests and abilities. All pupils study three sciences for GCSE, and take English language and literature. All but a very small minority take a modern foreign language. Wherever possible, the timetable for Year 9 and above is created around the pupils' individual choices. Pupils with SEND are able to access the full curriculum and are provided with additional individual support.
- 3.10 Pupils in Years 12 and 13 have the opportunity to study the full IB Diploma Programme or A Levels. A wide range of subjects is available for all Years 12 and 13 pupils. For the A-level pupils, the examined subjects are complemented by a general studies course providing opportunities to develop new skills. In addition, pupils are also encouraged to undertake an individual research project. Both the general studies course and the extended project enable A-level pupils to develop the skills that lie at the core of the IB Diploma.
- 3.11 The pastoral curriculum (PC), taught by tutors and specialists, is designed for Years 7 to 11. It is well structured and resourced and the key values that characterise Britishness are firmly promoted. Pupils in the sixth form have a series of lectures to support their personal development. The school ensures a balance of opposing political views in their choice of speakers. Pupils confirm that careers education is well integrated into the pastoral curriculum and the sixth-form general studies courses. Sixth formers said how much they valued the extensive support for university applications.
- 3.12 The outstanding extensive co-curricular programme, which fully complements and enriches the core curriculum, offers a wide range of clubs and activities. The wide range of cultural, music, drama and sporting clubs give pupils of all ages the opportunity to pursue their individual interests. Many of these clubs are co-ordinated and led by pupils. Pupils benefit from the opportunities provided by the combined cadet force (CCF), DoE and the Ten Tors expedition. In the questionnaires almost all parents and pupils expressed high levels of satisfaction with the breadth of both the curriculum and co-curricular programme.
- 3.13 The school fosters extensive links with the local community, as well as with other communities and cultures. The school's arts festival, *Portsmouth Festivities*, is a striking example of the pupils' involvement in the local community. The extensive community service programme provides opportunities for pupils to develop their service skills and understand the needs of wider society. Exchange programmes are in place with schools in Europe and China. Pupils are enthusiastic in their fundraising for local, national and international charities, in particular linked schools in

Uganda and Cambodia. Pupils interviewed were overwhelmingly positive about their involvement in all community action.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.14 The quality of teaching is excellent.
- 3.15 The majority of lessons were of the highest quality, fulfilling the aim of the school to inspire learning and develop confidence. Teachers have an excellent rapport with pupils who testify to their teachers' support for their learning and the teaching fosters an atmosphere in which there is respect for each other's opinions. In the very best lessons, a collaborative style ensures that pupils respond attentively and intelligently with a discriminating exchange of ideas and insights.
- 3.16 In all the best lessons, teachers' subject delivery is finely tuned to pupils' needs and their capacity to understand. Teachers frequently act as guides and facilitators. Many have a strong passion for their subject. Well-planned lessons ensure the careful structuring of coherent tasks and the appropriate use of resources. A good pace and enthusiastic encouragement feature in many lessons. Teachers shrewdly assess pupils' learning and adjust their questioning appropriately. All teaching promotes tolerance and respect and, whilst it was pleasing to note that pupils held a wide range of political views, teaching is non-partisan in delivery.
- 3.17 Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching has improved. Opportunities for exchanging good practice within departments and across departments through teaching and learning groups, and learning walks contribute to a culture of aspiration and improvement, which is an element of the development plan. The appraisal reports clearly identify features of excellent teaching.
- 3.18 The use of the school's assessment systems is strong but marking is variable in quality. Most marking is thorough, but broad in its exhortations or strictures. Assessment to identify precise strengths and offer targeted advice exemplified the best practice. In interviews, pupils confirmed the value of oral feedback with personal and individual advice. In the questionnaire, a small minority stated that teachers were unfair in giving rewards and sanctions. Inspection evidence did not support this. The school's records on rewards confirm that over 7000 commendations were given in the previous academic year. This academic year the current figure is commensurate with that total. The school's records on sanctions show a relatively low number of sanctions given by teachers. Reward and praise are common features of lessons, complemented by the annual *PGS Extend Celebration Evening*. In the questionnaire, a minority of pupils stated that they were set too much homework. This was not born out by work scrutiny or in discussion with pupils, although there was evidence of pupils choosing to undertake homework out of phase with the homework timetable.
- 3.19 Pupils' learning differences and identified needs are recognized and recorded by teachers through their access to a comprehensive database which identifies strategies and offers clear guidance. Variety of tasks and teaching methods ensures that teaching is inclusive, and the needs of pupils with SEND and EAL are sensitively supported in lessons. The needs of more able pupils are addressed in some lessons, but they do not consistently benefit from high-level challenge. The use of ICT is well established and growing. The teaching successfully incorporates the use of tablets in whole class activities, which develops pupils' research and presentation skills. Excellent examples of pupils using ICT in their presentations

were seen in Year 12 mathematics and economics lessons. The school has trained Year 8 pupils in readiness for the wholesale use of tablets in Year 9 as part of the unfolding digital plan.

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 The school is active in promoting both the pupils' personal development and the values that characterise modern Britain, such as the rule of law, individual freedom, respect and tolerance. The pupils' spiritual development is excellent. The school successfully fulfils its aim to nurture each individual's spiritual faculties and their confidence to lead and serve in a changing world. Pupils show conviction and confidence in expressing their ideas about spiritual life. Pupils have a high level of self-awareness and are also critically reflective, inspired to silent contemplation by pupil-led assemblies on the death of Henry Worsley, the Antarctic explorer, and sixth formers' experiences on visiting Auschwitz. Pupils are sensitive to the non-material aspects of life, particularly valuing the place of music in their lives.
- 4.3 The pupils' moral development is excellent. They have an outstanding sense of right and wrong, and they are aware that this is needed for a harmonious community. In pastoral curriculum sessions observed during the inspection, pupils clearly articulated the reasons for their personal values. Pupils have a strong awareness of democratic processes, the civil and criminal law of England and individual liberty. They develop this awareness partly through the pastoral curriculum, and also by visits to law courts, national and local government bodies and religious venues. These visits are complemented by visiting speakers, including politicians representing a range of views. Pupils confirm their awareness that tolerance and understanding are vital if different cultural traditions are to co-exist and extremism is not allowed to flourish. A strong example of pupils' awareness of moral parameters is their decision to develop their own charter on *Using Digital Devices and Social Networks*.
- 4.4 Pupils display an outstanding level of social skills. They are modest in manner, but confident and socially aware. They show courtesy to each other and to visitors and converse with everyone they meet in a fluent and engaging manner. They contribute to the life of the school in many ways, enjoying taking the lead in their community. These opportunities to take responsibility and lead contribute significantly to their personal growth. Twice a year, pupils publish their own magazine, *Portsmouth Point*, a sophisticated journal with challenging and erudite articles. Older pupils volunteer as mentors to younger pupils, working with them during pastoral curriculum sessions, where they willingly share how they felt at a younger age and how they managed different challenges. Relationships between older and younger pupils are excellent. The school is characterised by the care pupils have for the disadvantaged in society.
- 4.5 The cultural awareness of pupils is excellent. Pupils show a strong appreciation of cultural diversity by living in a school community with a range of cultural influences. Pupils understand that it is never acceptable to discriminate against anyone because of their creed or background. A strong example of this in practice is the society *PGS Pride*. This is a pupil initiative and has raised awareness of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues in school. Pupils confirm that this has increased respect for others and encouraged greater care over the use of potentially homophobic language. Pupils have strong cultural awareness through their participation in house music, drama productions, concerts and the annual school musical. Pupils also

value all they learn about different cultures from the extensive programme of overseas expeditions and fund-raising for international charities.

- 4.6 By the time they leave the school, the pupils have an excellent standard of personal development and know where they fit into the world.

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 provision fully supports the school's aim to value each individual and to celebrate what they contribute to the school and the wider community. At the heart of this is the house system and a team of tutors that the pupils trust and whom they confirm know them as individuals. This care is complemented by the pastoral curriculum, where tutors encourage discussion of issues such as e-safety and lifestyle choices. The school successfully promotes the benefits of healthy living through well-balanced menus and excellent provision for physical exercise. The support of pastoral care and the school's well-being culture is also given by the chaplaincy, counsellors and the school nurses. Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils are excellent. Parents, in the questionnaire, overwhelmingly agreed that pupils enjoyed a high quality of care.
- 4.9 The school is highly effective in promoting good behaviour and guarding against bullying. High standards of behaviour are expected: pupils are courteous and highly respectful of each other. In the questionnaire, a small minority of pupils disagreed that the school deals with any bullying that occurs. Inspectors did not find any evidence for this. The school records confirm there are relatively few incidents of bullying and these are documented in detail and appropriate action has been taken. During interviews, pupils said there was little bullying, but when it does occur it is dealt with fairly, firmly and quickly.
- 4.10 In their questionnaire responses, a minority of pupils said that the school does not ask for their opinions or respond to their views. Inspection evidence does not support this. Pupils are given opportunities to express their views through their tutors, the three age-related pupil councils and a whole school council. All council meetings are minuted and pupils discuss these in tutor time. An annual *Pupil Voice* assembly for the whole school, led by pupils, reports on the work of the councils. Pupils also have opportunities to be involved in school developments, such as appraisals of their tutors and appointments of teaching staff. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.11 The arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 4.12 Arrangements support the school's aim to ensure that pupils are happy and successful. The systems and policies to safeguard pupils' welfare, health and safety meet requirements and their effectiveness is monitored regularly. The identification and management of risk is a priority, notably for ensuring that pupils can safely enjoy the school's co-curricular programme of activities, sports and expeditions. The school carries out comprehensive risk assessments. Fire prevention is a priority. Fire wardens are appropriately trained. Fire drills are held regularly and correctly recorded, with action points from these drills followed up diligently. All health and safety issues are monitored by the health and safety committee, which reports to the full governing body.
- 4.13 Registration of pupils is correctly managed and recorded; the school promptly follows up any unexpected absences. The admission register contains all the required entries and is backed up and stored correctly. The medical centre gives excellent support to all pupils who are ill or injured, including those with SEND. The first-aid policy is effective in practice and includes good provision for specialist areas, such as sport and trips.
- 4.14 Safer recruitment of staff is a priority of the school. Following a recommendation from the previous inspection, all necessary checks are completed and recorded before appointments are confirmed. All members of staff receive regular training in child protection. All staff have received update training, which included strategies for preventing pupils from radicalisation and extremism and reporting female genital mutilation. In an inspection meeting with new teaching and support staff, appointed from September 2015, their knowledge of documentation and the practical elements of child protection was good. The higher-level training of the school's designated safeguarding lead for child protection is up-to-date. The designated lead for safeguarding works highly effectively with the governor responsible for safeguarding. They meet regularly and report on safeguarding termly to the full governing body. Records of child protection issues are fully detailed and links with external agencies are strong. The school's arrangements for ensuring the suitability of visiting speakers are rigorous as are the school's ICT filtering systems.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Governors have a clear vision for the school, and are highly successful in ensuring that it achieves its aims. Governors exercise effective oversight of all aspects of the school, including academic achievements and standards, pastoral and personal education, safeguarding, financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and learning resources. All these elements feature in the development plan, which, following a recommendation from the previous inspection, has been reviewed so that it now includes concise objectives in order of priority.
- 5.3 Governors have an excellent insight into the workings of the school. They regularly visit the school to observe lessons and activities; they attend parent forums and a wide variety of formal and informal events. Some of the governors are parents or former parents which strengthens the board's awareness of the school community. The minutes of governors' meetings and discussions with staff confirm that governors provide both support and challenge. Governors are committed to improvement in all areas of the school. They closely monitor academic and pastoral issues. Significant to their commitment to improvement is the way they consult with parents, staff and pupils before any major educational or physical development.
- 5.4 Governors are highly aware of their responsibilities including child protection, welfare, health and safety. Comprehensive systems have been instigated to monitor school policies and their implementation. The recommendation from the previous inspection regarding safer staff recruitment has been fully met. The role of the safeguarding governor is well-established, and all governors contribute to the annual review of safeguarding which is in line with guidance issued by the local safeguarding board. Governors have supported the recruitment of additional human resources staff in order to ensure that all aspects of safer recruitment are adhered to, and that records are accurately maintained.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management including links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent.
- 5.6 Senior managers are united in their vision; wishing "our pupils and our staff to be happy and successful, and in that order". They are a strong and cohesive unit, but with clearly defined roles, allowing full and comprehensive oversight of the many and varied aspects of school life. Their clear and enduring vision ensures pupils are able to enjoy a high standard of education with a broad and developing curriculum, which includes exciting expansion in the understanding and use of ICT. They ensure pupils thrive in a caring and convivial environment, which benefits from excellent safeguarding procedures. They are keen to learn and review their own learning progress and are appreciative of the opportunities and support made available to them by committed and hardworking staff.
- 5.7 Staff, too, are well supported and encouraged to develop their skills. They have the opportunity of taking sabbatical leave to research an educational topic or can follow

a bespoke masters level qualification in *Educational Leadership and Management* which has been developed by the school in partnership with the University of Portsmouth. Senior management has also introduced a more innovative form of staff wellbeing in the guise of enrichment days, where staff are encouraged to try more personal and individual challenges.

- 5.8 In their response to the recommendation in the previous inspection to adopt rigorous monitoring procedures, the senior management team has been pro-active. Teacher appraisals now include a review of the quality of their report writing and assessment. Termly departmental work scrutinies are complemented by an annual whole school work scrutiny overseen and graded by senior managers. The quality of marking, in response to a recommendation from the previous inspection, has been addressed, but high quality marking is not yet consistent amongst all teachers. Regular lesson observations are monitored and reviewed by senior managers to develop high standards of classroom teaching practice. A procedure is in place should any teacher be recognised as needing support in their teaching.
- 5.9 The monitoring of middle management is now strong. Heads of department create annual targets which are assessed and receive robust reviewing by senior managers. The reviews are then communicated to the governing body. Appraisals by the senior managers monitor regular targets and aims for all middle managers, pastoral and academic. Their new 360-degree style format ensures full scrutiny in all aspects of their roles. Inspection evidence confirmed the improvement in the quality of middle management.
- 5.10 Alongside this closer monitoring, senior managers are keen to promote the confidence and creativity of their middle managers. Many opportunities exist for strategic consultation, which is much appreciated by middle managers. Heads of department have been given time to develop and manage the performance of their subject teams, whilst deputy heads of houses no longer have tutorial roles, giving them more time for their managerial roles and for greater direct involvement in any evolving pastoral situations.
- 5.11 The senior team is aware of the need to evaluate its own development and performance. As well as each having their own termly focus, they are also appraised annually by the headmaster, who also undergoes a regular external appraisal to which pupils, parents, governors and staff contribute.
- 5.12 The senior managers have an excellent relationship with the governing body, strengthened by a common vision and a clear sense of direction and purpose. A meticulous programme for the review of policies is in place which is communicated to the governing body for monitoring, which ensures they are kept aware of any major changes in policy. The recent building programme has resulted in the opening of the science centre and the sixth-form centre, providing outstanding facilities for study and socialising. An ongoing programme for the refurbishment of the older buildings and classrooms is reflected in the high quality of the educational facilities. As well as ensuring that the required educational resources are available, the school has invested time and resources in its desire to provide staff with the awareness and skills to respond to mental health issues amongst young people and the challenges of e-safety.
- 5.13 Staff recruitment is thorough and successfully implemented. Senior managers have supported the recruitment of additional human resources staff in order to ensure that all aspects of safe recruitment are adhered to, and that records are accurately

maintained. New staff follow a comprehensive induction programme and all appointments are made with correct regard to safeguarding requirements. Senior managers ensure that the appropriate safeguarding training is given and all staff are trained in their roles of safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Parental feedback is emphatic in its opinion that the school is strongly led and managed.

- 5.14 Links between the parents and the school are excellent and strongly support the academic and personal development of the pupils. The questionnaire indicated a high level of parental satisfaction with the education, support and communication provided by the school. In the questionnaire responses, parents praised the community atmosphere and high academic standards. The school has an effective complaints policy, and in the event of a complaint, all procedures are rigorously followed. In the questionnaire, parents reported that any concerns are handled well by the school and questions are responded to very quickly. An overwhelming majority of parents would recommend the school to other parents.
- 5.15 The school forges strong links with new parents through form tutor phone calls and a welcome service in the cathedral. Parental receptions provide an opportunity for parents to meet staff and other parents. Parents are invited to attend the numerous events both in school and in the local community. Parent volunteers support the school by conducting mock university interviews and giving careers' talks. A parent forum, attended by senior staff and governors, meets termly and is actively involved in the development of the school. For example, the forum expressed a concern that the Year 7 parents' evening was too late in the year and the school responded by moving it to an earlier date in the school calendar.
- 5.16 Information for parents is extensive and the high-quality publications provide all the required information for current and prospective parents. A weekly digital newsletter informs parents about important school news and events. The school has an extremely active presence on social media which it uses effectively to communicate with parents. Since the previous inspection, the quality of reports has significantly improved. Termly full reports are now detailed, evaluative and provide clear guidance for pupils for the next stage of their learning.

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