



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
DURHAM HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Durham High School for Girls

Full Name of School	Durham High School for Girls
DfE Number	840/6004
Registered Charity Number	1119995
Address	Durham High School for Girls Farewell Hall South Road Durham DH1 3TB
Telephone Number	0191 384 3226
Fax Number	0191 386 7381
Email Address	enquiries@dhsfg.org.uk
Headmistress	Mrs Lynne Renwick
Chair of Governors	Mrs Morag Cummings
Age Range	3 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	420
Gender of Pupils	Girls
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 28 5-11: 112 11-18: 280
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Katherine Anderson
EYFS Gender	Girls
Inspection Dates	01 Dec 2015 to 04 Dec 2015

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 standard inspection was in December 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.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Education (DfE) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

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

Inspectors

Mrs Honoree Gordon	Reporting Inspector
Mr David Goldbrough	Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mrs Claire Hewitt	Team Inspector (Headmistress, GSA school)
Ms Lucy Pearson	Team Inspector (Headmistress, HMC school)
Mr Graham Yates	Team inspector (Deputy Headmaster, Society of Heads school)
Mrs Angela Russell	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL	2
(a) Main findings	2
(b) Action points	2
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	2
(ii) Recommendation for further improvement	2
3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	3
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning	3
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c) The contribution of teaching	6
4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	8
(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
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	12
(a) The quality of governance	12
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	12

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Durham High School for Girls is an independent day school for girls aged from three to eighteen, comprising a Nursery, junior school (called Junior House) and senior school (called Senior House). The school aims to: create a friendly, caring community based on Christian principles where every individual is valued; develop the potential of every girl in all areas of her life; and encourage academic excellence and a life-long love of learning.
- 1.2 The school was opened in 1884 in the centre of Durham. It was founded as a Church of England school and remains so, providing education to pupils of all faiths or none. The school moved to its present site on the outskirts of Durham in 1968, occupying purpose-built premises which accommodate the senior school and the junior school, which includes the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The governing body has oversight of all sections of the school and includes representatives of the Bishops of Durham and Jarrow, of the Dean of Durham and of Durham University. The school's charitable foundation became incorporated in 2007. Since the previous inspection in 2010 a new headmistress was appointed in 2012. In 2013 further new appointments included the chair of governors, bursar, head of the junior school and two deputy headteachers. A school chaplain was appointed in 2011.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection the school had 420 pupils enrolled, of whom 28 were in the EYFS, 112 were in Years 1 to 6, 205 were in Years 7 to 11 and 75 were in Years 12 and 13. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, from Durham and a broad area surrounding the city. There are 28 pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL). Thirty-four pupils, including three in the EYFS, have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including dyslexia. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The ability profile of the junior school is above the national average. All pupils sit an examination for entry to the senior school, the ability profile of which is above the national average. The ability profile of Years 12 and 13 is above the national average for pupils in sixth-form education.
- 1.4 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 school provides an excellent atmosphere for learning that is particularly suited to able girls, enabling them to achieve highly in both academic subjects and a wide range of sporting, musical and other activities. The school is highly successful in meeting its stated aims to encourage excellence and a life-long love of learning. Attainment at GSCE and A-level is excellent and is a direct result of high quality teaching throughout the school. The rich curriculum challenges pupils very effectively, promoting their outstanding personal development. Pupils are articulate and keen to learn, and have high academic aspiration. Lessons are well focused to secure their good progress and only very occasionally fall short, when teachers' plans do not in practice take sufficient account of the range of abilities in the class.
- 2.2 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, fostered well by the school's Christian foundation and ethos. The promotion of British values permeates the curriculum and is reflected in the warm, supportive relationships evident amongst pupils and with staff. Pastoral care is excellent: parents and pupils alike praise the care that staff provide. The overwhelming majority of parents were delighted with the progress that their children make and the many opportunities provided for them to excel.
- 2.3 The school is well governed, ensuring that all the regulations are met consistently, with a high emphasis on safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety, including the national strategy for countering extremism. The school has acted effectively on the recommendations of the previous inspection in improving marking, adjusting the curriculum, developing the variety of teaching methods and in the use of outdoor education in the EYFS. Governors currently lack formal, regular links with departments or sections of the school, in terms of fulfilling their monitoring role in greater depth. Leadership and management are excellent, with well-judged plans for improving the school further. Throughout the school, leaders at all levels successfully develop pupils' skills and the positive attitudes that are evident from the outset in the EYFS.

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) Recommendation for further improvement

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
1. Refine monitoring systems, in particular of the approaches to teaching, to ensure that outcomes for all pupils across the ability range remain high.

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 Achievement is excellent across all sections of the school. Pupils are very well educated in accordance with the school's aims. Excellent teaching lies behind this, together with a challenging, stimulating curriculum for able girls and an environment that fosters their self-esteem. Pupils are enthusiastic, highly self-motivated learners. They apply themselves with vigour to their studies.
- 3.3 Children's EYFS Profile scores testify to their excellent achievement. Children apply themselves with enthusiasm. All children, including those with SEND or EAL and those who are more able, make rapid progress in relation to their starting points. By the end of Reception, the majority of children achieve the Early Learning Goals, with many exceeding them, and are very well prepared for entry into Year 1. Children listen carefully, confidently answer questions, follow instructions and write simple words using their knowledge of letters and sound combinations. They accurately recognise a variety of two-dimensional shapes and use mathematical language competently. As active learners they use problem-solving skills, for example to make a castle when pretending to keep a fairy godmother safe from a dragon. Children apply skills in information and communication technology (ICT), using a mouse to control their drawings. They develop their physical skills, for example through climbing in the outdoor environment.
- 3.4 The junior school develops pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy highly effectively, building on the excellent foundations laid in the EYFS. Speaking and listening skills are excellent. Pupils write effectively for a range of purposes, with both independence and creativity. They apply ICT and scientific skills well. Pupils are well prepared for successful entry to the senior school or to other schools.
- 3.5 Excellent progress was noted in many lessons observed and in work sampled, across the age range. In the senior school, written work is of a very high quality, detailed and accurate, reflecting pupils' interests in the subjects studied and their ability to write well at length. Pupils are fluent, confident speakers, fostered by regular opportunities in all subjects to present information, and discuss and defend views, recognised through winning local and regional debating competitions in many age categories. Extension work and research, for example in science or mathematics, develops pupils' sophisticated reasoning and problem-solving skills. Pupils apply their ICT skills effectively as a routine part of lessons.
- 3.6 In the junior school, attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but on the evidence available it is judged to be above national age-related expectations. Standardised tests, the school's assessment data, work seen during the inspection and interviews with pupils show that these standards remain consistently high. Standardised measures of progress show that pupils make good progress in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Many pupils make excellent progress.
- 3.7 The following analysis for the senior school uses the national data for the years 2012 to 2014. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. Pupils' performance at GCSE has been well above the national average for girls in maintained schools, and similar to that of girls in maintained selective

schools. In 2013, results were above the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. A-level results were above the national average for girls in both maintained schools and maintained selective schools. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make excellent progress throughout the senior school, including in the sixth form, in relation to pupils of similar abilities. The school's analysis of results in 2015 shows that excellent results have continued, with around three-quarters of passes at A* or A grades at GCSE and two-thirds at A level.

- 3.8 Pupils achieve highly in music, sport, drama and a wide variety of other activities, both at team level and as individuals. Under-11 and under-10 teams are city winners in a number of sports, such as netball, hockey and athletics, and are regularly placed at regional level. Senior school sports teams have been regular winners in netball and hockey over several years in most age groups at city competition level, and competing in or winning regional finals. A high standard of singing was noted in the carol service in the cathedral. In external speech and drama examinations in 2015, pupils gained 24 distinctions at grade 5 and above. Individual successes include participation in the BBC Proms Youth Choir, reaching the finals of a national brass band competition and of the BBC Young Musician of the Year competition, and leading the Young Sinfonia string orchestra. Pupils achieve notable success in art and poetry competitions, history projects, including on Auschwitz, and in classics recitation and translation, emerging as first regionally for senior class in both Greek and Latin in 2015. Pupils' community involvement is recognised through The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, with an entry of 70 pupils each year, including 30 to 35 at bronze level. Pupils' skills in science and mathematics are recognised at the annual national chemistry Olympiad, where a number gain gold medals, in the UK Maths Challenge and through the award of Arkwright engineering scholarships.
- 3.9 Pupils with SEND and those with EAL achieve highly, in line with their peers, because their needs are known, appropriate adjustments are usually made to lessons and specialist help is provided where necessary.
- 3.10 Pupils' extremely positive attitudes to their work enable them to achieve highly. They respond enthusiastically to tasks set, and apply themselves in a very focused way as individuals, relishing challenges. They also work very co-operatively together, looking to support one another, wherever possible, as they learn. They organise their work very efficiently and respond with flair to the many opportunities for showing initiative or leadership.

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

- 3.11 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.12 The curricular and extra-curricular provision is highly successful in fulfilling the school's aim of developing the potential of every girl in all areas of her life. The curriculum is well planned across the school and is supported by detailed schemes of work. It is suitable for the age and ability range of the pupils, including those with particular needs. It is well suited to able pupils as it provides intellectual challenge and many opportunities to excel. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and contributes highly effectively to pupils' scientific, linguistic, mathematical, physical and creative development. Art and design, music and drama for all age groups foster pupils' personal development.
- 3.13 In the EYFS the seven areas of learning are covered thoroughly. Topics are well developed. Specialist teaching for music and physical education (PE), and French lessons in Reception add breadth to the curriculum. During productions children have opportunities to grow in confidence and take risks to succeed.
- 3.14 In the junior school the well-balanced curriculum enable the basic skills of literacy and numeracy to develop rapidly. Pupils are given plentiful, regular opportunities to apply these skills across subjects in topic or project work in ways that stimulate, challenge and engage them, for example in history, ICT and art. The development of physical skills is given an equally high prominence and is reflected in the school's successes in sport. An outdoor learning day provides challenging tasks, allowing for independent thought and co-operative learning.
- 3.15 The school has completed a curriculum review. The senior school now follows a two-week timetable and a school day of five lessons instead of nine, providing better balance across subjects, increased time for English and more efficient use of time. The curriculum is academically challenging and well balanced, with two modern foreign languages and Latin in Years 7 to 9; and separate sciences. The most able pupils can study three sciences and learn four languages. Fifteen subjects are offered at GCSE and over twenty at A level, including Greek, drama and photography. Every effort is made to build the curriculum around individual choices, and sixth-form programmes further the aptitudes and interests of each pupil. The enrichment course for Years 12 and 13 includes presentation skills, conversational French, cooking, the Extended Project Qualification, higher education applications and PE, encouraging the pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles and preparing them well for adult life.
- 3.16 Through the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) programme pupils across the school gain self-awareness and knowledge of the society of which they are a part. Topics include relationships, the prevention of bullying, including cyber-bullying, economic awareness and careers guidance. Augmented by frequent talks from visiting professionals, a careers convention and a half-termly bulletin, pupils from Year 6 upwards develop a good awareness of careers options, making appropriate choices for the next stage of their education. British values are promoted very effectively through curriculum subjects and the diverse extra-curricular opportunities for discussion, broadening pupils' views and extending their understanding of these values.
- 3.17 Throughout the school highly focused curricular support enables pupils with SEND to make very good progress. Class teachers and specialist staff identify any help

required and usually determine the right level of challenge. Senior school subject staff identify pupils with particular talents and provide successfully for their needs, for example through extension work.

- 3.18 Extra-curricular provision is excellent throughout the school. All the parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that the school provides a good range of activities. This was echoed in pupils' questionnaire responses and in discussions with them. The scale of the extra-curricular programme strongly enriches pupils' educational experience, with ample opportunities to participate in a wide range of activities, including sports teams for all age groups, and a widening choice of sports. An excellent programme of visits, workshops and study days supplements class-based lessons. An extensive range of trips in the UK and overseas, including charitable work for an orphanage in Sri Lanka, enhances pupils' personal development further. Pupils relish taking part in overseas sports tours. Opportunities for creativity abound, leading to very high standards of achievement: drama groups, choirs and numerous musical ensembles enjoy excellent facilities. A high proportion of pupils are involved in choral singing, as observed at the school carol service, with performances from four different choirs, comprising pupils from Year 3 upwards. Pupils benefit from links with the local community, such as drama outreach productions, and older pupils supporting a Brownie pack locally and helping to run a weekly science club for those in Years 5 and 6 from nearby schools.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.19 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.20 Teaching very successfully fulfils the school's aims and enables pupils to achieve excellent examination results. Well-planned lessons, with clear aims, high expectations and teachers' excellent subject knowledge, are key factors behind pupils' high achievement and excellent behaviour. Teaching methods are more varied and stimulating than at the time of the previous inspection, driven by a teaching and learning group which disseminates best practice through staff training.
- 3.21 Early Years staff enthusiastically help children in the EYFS to learn, supporting them extremely well in activities, using information from assessment to plan very effectively for their next steps and taking every child's needs and interests into account. An excellent range of indoor and outdoor resources helps children to develop their own ideas and become more independent in learning. In response to the recommendation from the previous inspection, teachers now include outdoor activities in their written plans. Adults foster speaking and listening skills well, through engaging children in meaningful conversation.
- 3.22 Teaching in the junior school is characterised by lively pace and varied methodology to sustain pupils' interest and enthusiasm. In many lessons across the school teachers involve pupils actively in their learning, for example through open questioning to encourage critical and creative thinking. In a Year 6 PSHEE lesson pupils showed great initiative in their responses to a creative writing and art task set, working co-operatively in small groups on ideas related to Anne Frank's experience of religious persecution. A Year 9 English lesson with open-ended questions set at different levels encouraged pupils to reflect on their understanding of a novel and to justify their views. In most lessons teaching is well paced, using highly effective strategies to foster interest, challenge pupils and ensure that all, including the most able, gifted and talented, make good progress. High quality resources, including two well-stocked libraries and ICT equipment, enhance the provision. Teachers use ICT

judiciously to enliven and support learning, promoting self-evaluation and further progress. Teaching promotes tolerance and respect, key characteristics of the pupils. In a Year 10 lesson, pupils explored Islamic views on fertility treatment, developing their understanding of different attitudes. Political issues within the PSHEE curriculum are explored in an objective, non-partisan way.

- 3.23 Pupils' attainment and effort are graded on a regular basis, enabling teachers to track progress and identify under-performance. Good practice in marking has been extended across the school since the previous inspection. Marking is usually of high quality, provides suggestions for improvement or further research and is supplemented by oral feedback. Where marking routinely includes extension questions, posed at different levels of ability, pupils are challenged further. Setting targets encourages pupils' academic ambition. In discussions pupils commented very positively on the supportive nature of teachers' feedback.
- 3.24 Teachers understand each pupil's learning needs. As a result, progress in lessons is almost invariably good or better. Grouping pupils according to their attainment in English, mathematics and science in Years 7 to 9 and 10 to 11 helps to promote pupils' rapid progress overall. Key information on pupils with SEND, including any with a statement of special educational needs, is disseminated to teaching staff. Training focuses on developing teachers' skills to meet the learning needs of these pupils. Effective intervention is provided in many subjects, but very occasionally teachers' plans to support and integrate all the pupils are not fully realised in the lesson, and the progress of individual pupils slows as a result. The best teaching provides a high level of challenge for the most able pupils, through extension activities and sophisticated questioning. The enrichment programme in Years 12 and 13 provides thought-provoking opportunities for pupils of all abilities: more able, gifted and talented pupils develop skills of independent learning through completion of the Extended Project Qualification. A small group of highly motivated pupils were working on a range of demanding topics, such as the ethics of stem cell technology. Where departments have identified their talents and successfully challenge them, pupils who are able, gifted or talented also enjoy a high level of success.

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 In the EYFS adults provide excellent support for each child within a caring, Christian community. All children respond extremely well to clear guidelines and understand right from wrong. They are inclusive of one another in class. Children's excellent behaviour reflects excellent personal and social development. They have a grasp of treating everyone equally, while respecting that each person is unique. They help each other, proudly collaborating to keep the classroom tidy. They listen extremely well, valuing others' views when sharing ideas during story time. They understand diversity through celebrating Eid and Chinese New Year, and develop respect for different customs, for example in making a Diwali house and learning Indian dancing. Children learn about those who have a key role in their community, through visits such as from a doctor, a vet and a policeman. Children care for those in need by taking part in a baking competition and sponsored walk to raise funds for children locally and further afield.
- 4.3 Pupils demonstrate a lively spiritual awareness and value the principles underpinning their school. The school's Christian principles are a vibrant aspect of the pupils' educational experience, bolstered by the recent appointment of a school chaplain and regular Christian services. Girls can pray or reflect in silence in a quiet room. The annual carol service in Durham Cathedral, combining spiritual, cultural and musical dimensions is a highlight for the community. Pupils throughout the school consistently demonstrate high levels of maturity and thoughtfulness, commensurate with their stage of development, and are confident and engaging. They express their opinions cogently, whilst questioning others' views with intelligence and vigour. Pupils demonstrate considerable self-awareness and cite the school as playing a very significant part in their personal development. Senior girls are well mannered, articulate and good humoured; they engage intelligently with adults and one another.
- 4.4 Pupils exhibit a strong sense of right and wrong and are securely guided by the school's code of conduct. Behaviour is exemplary. The junior school successfully develops responsibility and respect for others. Pupils are considerate and courteous to peers and adults alike. Pupils learn the values that underpin English law, exploring the social impact when laws are broken. The regular exploration of moral issues and ethics prepares pupils very well for their futures. In religious studies, Year 8 pupils consider how moral decisions are made, and Year 11 pupils consider sexual ethics and attitudes to marriage, a theme explored further in Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*.
- 4.5 Pupils throughout the school are highly respectful towards one another. Mutual support is reflected in a much valued 'buddy' system, where pupils from Year 6 upwards offer reading support to younger pupils, while the 'guardian angel' initiative promotes friendship in Year 7. Pupils enthusiastically assume positions of responsibility within the school, including captains of sports teams, year group representatives and prefects. In school council meetings pupils raise ideas for improvement, ranging from reinstating the school bells to improving the décor. The PSHEE curriculum explores the principles of active citizenship. Pupils are keen to help those less fortunate than themselves, engaging in a wide range of charitable work, raising funds for a variety of local, national and international causes.

- 4.6 Throughout the school, pupils show excellent awareness of the importance of the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. The PSHEE programme, assemblies and the taught curriculum actively promote these values, furthered by popular activities such as The Duke of Edinburgh's Award and the debating club, reinforcing pupils' understanding of how these values apply to their community. Senior pupils commented on how important tolerance and fair play are within the school. The democratic process is observed through elections for the pupils' senior team, the school council and the catering committees. Year 11 pupils enthusiastically discussed current affairs and understood the role of Parliament in the democratic process. A mock election successfully promoted their understanding, boosted by visits from MPs. Pupils have a good understanding of public institutions and services, as shown by a spontaneous discussion in a sixth-form tutorial on a House of Commons debate.
- 4.7 The school actively develops tolerance and understanding of other faiths through discussion of key religious festivals, and classroom displays promote understanding of the traditions and views of different faiths.
- 4.8 Pupils appreciate the value of each unique human being and stand up for human rights, as exemplified in their work with Amnesty and in their supportive attitudes towards those who have disabilities.
- 4.9 Pupils' personal development by the time they leave the school at the age of 18 is excellent.

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

- 4.10 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.11 The pastoral system contributes significantly to the school's successful fulfilment of its aim to create a friendly, caring community based on Christian principles, where every individual is valued.
- 4.12 The school promotes the welfare of children in the EYFS highly effectively, including checking on their prompt and regular attendance. Excellent arrangements ensure that the children's well-being is safeguarded. The EYFS offers a very positive, caring environment for learning: committed, caring staff provide excellent support, fostering children's independence and desire to succeed. Children eagerly talk to staff about their feelings, reflecting the secure relationship between adult and child. Excellent induction procedures ensure that children feel safe and happy.
- 4.13 Excellent care in the junior school means that pupils feel safe and are looked after well by their class teachers. In the senior school, the well-established form tutor system manages day-to-day care, with heads of year overseeing pupil welfare. The changes since the previous inspection, with heads of year now moving up with their year groups, provide greater continuity of care. Regular staff meetings provide a forum to share information promptly. The pastoral management team, together with the school chaplain and PSHEE co-ordinator, ensure an holistic approach to supporting pupils throughout the school, with independent counselling offered when needed and good communication links with outside agencies as sources of help. Pupils say that they can approach a number of staff if they have a concern. A 'thought box' offers an anonymous means of communication. High levels of trust and respect between pupils and staff are evident. Senior pupils cite this as a key reason for joining the school. Pupils interact very positively across the age range,

including through the extra-curricular programme, particularly in music. Parents commented on the highly positive atmosphere for learning in school, as supported by inspection evidence. Throughout the school, relationships between the staff and pupils are warm, based on mutual respect. Pupils appreciate the generous support their teachers provide and overwhelmingly indicated that they feel they are progressing well.

- 4.14 Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and are active in their extra-curricular pursuits. Participation rates in physical activities are high across the school. Gym activity, badminton and golf feature as part of a compulsory unit of physical education within the enrichment programme in Year 12, which also offers a course on preparing nutritious meals on a budget, in preparation for university. The PSHEE programme explores healthy eating in other year groups.
- 4.15 In their questionnaire responses a very small minority of pupils said that they felt the school does not deal effectively with bullying. Inspectors talked to some pupils and staff about this and looked at the school's records. These showed that the school makes every effort to deal with any allegations brought to its attention. Pupils said that instances of bullying are rare; pupils and staff take pride in the harmonious atmosphere in school and ensure that behaviour reflects the school's ethos. Systems for promoting positive conduct and guarding against bullying, including cyber-bullying, operate effectively and pay due regard to those pupils who have SEND. Pupils find that the system operates fairly, in encouraging effort and good behaviour. The school actively seeks out pupils' views, for example through an annual survey. Regular meetings of the school council provide another effective channel of communication.
- 4.16 The school has a suitable up-to-date plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.17 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.18 The provision for children's well-being in the EYFS is excellent: adults diligently ensure that children are well supervised.
- 4.19 The school follows all official guidance for safeguarding pupils' welfare. It conducts all checks that are required by the regulations, including those for the prevention of fire and for ensuring the safety of electrical equipment. Regular fire practices are held. Records of health and safety checks are kept thoroughly and are monitored by senior leaders. The school has a comprehensive, effective set of policies and risk assessments, including information relevant to the EYFS, to underpin its welfare, health and safety arrangements. Admission and attendance registers are correctly kept and stored. Prompt and regular attendance is ensured. The school attended swiftly to two minor health and safety points brought to their attention during the course of the inspection. Staff had to make a small number of very minor adjustments to the detail in their policies to ensure that these were fully compliant with regulations. The school has suitable arrangements for pupils who fall ill, and considers appropriately the needs of pupils with SEND within these. Any accidents at school are recorded and parents are informed.
- 4.20 The safeguarding of pupils is carefully promoted. Staff across the school understand safeguarding procedures and implement them effectively to promote pupils' welfare. Training in safeguarding, child protection, first aid, including

paediatric first aid for the EYFS, and health and safety is up to date for all staff. All staff have had recent training in the school's arrangements to help protect pupils from the risks of extremism.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The governing body fulfils its duties well. Governors support and challenge the school, working effectively with the leadership and senior managers to ensure that the school successfully fulfils its aims. They have successfully acted on the recommendations from the previous inspection, and provide good impetus for the school's further development. The governing body has a good insight into the school's strengths and weaknesses, gained principally from information provided by the leadership and other senior leaders. Meetings of the governing body are regular and minutes kept carefully, detailing decisions and actions.
- 5.3 Recently, the governing body has begun to draw more on information from middle managers in helping them to make decisions and plans. An annual governors' visitation day to the school provides much useful information. The chair of governors is nominated as the governor for safeguarding, but there are no other formal, regular links with departments or sections of the school, including the EYFS, to help the governing body fulfil its monitoring role in greater depth. Governors currently exercise their monitoring role of the EYFS through the junior school leadership. Current, direct monitoring includes spot checks on the single central register of appointments. Governors have not had formal training, although safer recruitment training has been undertaken in the past. New governors are inducted by the chair of governors.
- 5.4 The governing body conducts an annual review of safeguarding and child protection arrangements, as required by regulations. It is aware of its new safeguarding duties in relation to the promotion of British values and the protection of children from extremist views, and of how the school is fulfilling these requirements.

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 Leadership and management are highly effective at all levels across all sections of the school in realising the school's aims. Leaders have successfully built up a warm, happy and purposeful school ethos, which strongly and overtly promotes each girl's personal development, enabling the pupils to achieve highly.
- 5.7 Since the previous inspection the EYFS setting has made excellent progress in many areas, including planning for the more able, and in assessment. The EYFS staff consistently promote the aims and ethos of the school. Staff meet regularly to evaluate the provision, discuss their plans and set realistic, highly focused targets for continuous improvement. Staff supervision meetings support knowledgeable and well-qualified staff in their teaching and care of the children. Educational programmes are carefully monitored and allowances are made when children's interests develop and alter the plans. Staff training needs are identified, ensuring that staff keep up to date with their understanding of the EYFS. This has a very positive impact on the learning and development of the children.

- 5.8 Parents are encouraged to reinforce learning at home and to attend parent evenings. They have many opportunities to talk to teachers, both formally and informally, about their children's progress, as well as communicating through the 'home-to-school' book and the informative learning journals. In discussions with inspectors and in questionnaire responses, the overwhelming majority of parents were very satisfied with all aspects of the EYFS.
- 5.9 Leaders across both sections of the school ensure that they consistently meet all the regulations for independent schools, keeping swiftly up to date with any changes in requirements. The school's culture, based on Christian principles, actively encourages tolerance and care for others, from the earliest age, instilling respect for others' points of views. The active promotion of British values is evident across the curriculum, including in the taught PSHEE programme, and reinforced through work on topics or themes in the junior school, and as pupils mature, through the many clubs, community links and charitable ventures in which they are encouraged to take part.
- 5.10 Recruitment practices are robust. The school ensures that it appoints and trains good quality staff. The single central register is correctly kept, showing that all the checks required on staff appointed to the school have been satisfactorily completed. The school takes its duty to safeguard pupils' welfare very seriously: this underpins decision making and planning, and is reflected in excellent pastoral care. The appointment of a deputy head to oversee pastoral matters has enhanced pastoral management capacity since the previous inspection. The school takes active steps throughout the curriculum to reduce the risks to pupils that extremist views represent, including teaching them about e-safety.
- 5.11 Leaders provide clear direction. They have acted well on the recommendations from the previous inspection, so that marking has improved, the curriculum is better balanced and planning in the EYFS includes learning outdoors. Significantly, they have improved the quality of teaching so that this is now excellent. Leaders have fostered the sharing of the most effective practice across subject departments through a teaching and learning group. A formal system has been established whereby senior leaders scrutinise a sample of pupils' work, co-ordinated with observation of lessons and the appraisal of staff. This has provided evidence, for example, about improvements in marking. These initiatives serve the school well, but current approaches to monitoring lessons do not focus sufficiently on whether the lessons include and extend all pupils in the class, checking that teaching is evolving well to match the wider range of ability now in the school. The school's leaders and managers are highly self-evaluative. School plans sets out appropriate priorities for next steps, with an annual review to check that these are being achieved. Middle leaders are held accountable for the success of their areas of work, for example through writing an annual subject review analysing their examination results.
- 5.12 The school maintains highly effective links with parents, carers and guardians. The co-operative relationship between parents and school creates a strong sense of community. The overwhelming majority of parents are very pleased with the progress that their children make, and feel that the school provides an appropriate range of subjects and experiences, and that there are high standards of behaviour. The school communicates openly with parents. Parents have many opportunities to share in events, such as concerts, plays and sports fixtures, and help with school trips. The active Parents' and Friends' Association organises social events such as a supper for the parents of new pupils, a grandparents' day and an annual ball, and

raises funds for the school and for charity. Special services led by the chaplain in the cathedral are open to all in the school community. Parent representatives for each year group provide a strong link between parents and school. An annual questionnaire sent out by the leadership provides useful information about parents' views. The school has an appropriate complaints procedure, which records show operates effectively and has very rarely been needed. Any concerns are dealt with swiftly and informally. Parents are kept very well informed about their children's progress at parents' evenings. Parents are also invited throughout the year to evenings on e-safety, options in Year 9 and transition for Year 6. Staff are available for more informal discussions in between.

- 5.13 A comprehensive user-friendly website, a helpful prospectus, informative open days and an open week provide the parents of prospective pupils with key information. Parents of current pupils receive regular information through weekly news bulletins, the leadership's half-termly newsletters, and a booklet of dates and assessments. The website highlights school events and celebrates pupils' successes. Email and text messaging services communicate changes to arrangements. Grade sheets and informative reports detailing pupils' progress, effort and achievements are sent out regularly. Parents of senior school pupils receive half-termly grade sheets, one of which is part of a full report. Parents of pupils in the junior school receive a report at the end of the autumn and summer terms. Reports demonstrate how well teachers know their pupils.

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