



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**KENT COLLEGE SENIOR SCHOOL (CANTERBURY)**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Kent College Senior School (Canterbury)

The junior school and international study centre were inspected at the same time and separate reports were published.

Full Name of School	<b>Kent College Senior School (Canterbury)</b>	
DfE Number	<b>886/6053</b>	
Registered Charity Number	<b>307844</b>	
Address	<b>Kent College (Canterbury)</b> <b>Whitstable Road</b> <b>Canterbury</b> <b>Kent</b> <b>CT2 9DT</b>	
Telephone Number	<b>01227 763231</b>	
Fax Number	<b>01227 764777</b>	
Email Address	<b>enquiries@kentcollege.co.uk</b>	
Head Master	<b>Dr David Lamper</b>	
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Dudley Shipton</b>	
Age Range	<b>11 to 19</b>	
Total Number of Pupils	<b>498</b>	
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (261 boys; 237 girls)</b>	
Numbers by Age	11-19	<b>498</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>306</b>
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>192</b>
	Full:	<b>192</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>20 Jan 2015 to 23 Jan 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 February 2009.

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

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

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

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

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

## 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 and vice chairman of governors, observed a sample of the co-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions, chapel services 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

Mr Adrian Underwood	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Ann Aughwane	Team Inspector (Former Headmistress, GSA school)
Mr Richard Barr	Team Inspector (Former Head of Sixth Form, HMC school)
Mr Timothy Borton	Team Inspector (Head of Sixth Form, HMC school)
Dr Francis Clough	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mr Geoffrey Hill	Team Inspector (Former Head of Department, HMC school)
Mr David Williams	Team Inspector (Head, The Society Of Heads school)
Ms Alison Horton	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Sally Cunliffe	Team Inspector for Boarding (Former Housemistress, HMC school)

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Kent College Senior School is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged eleven to eighteen. It is situated in 280 acres on the outskirts of Canterbury. The college was founded in 1885 and acquired by the Board of Management of Methodist Schools in 1920. Originally a boys' school, it has been co-educational since 1973. The college is within the Methodist Independent Schools Trust, which acts as its proprietor. However, almost all aspects of governance, apart from the most significant financial decisions, are delegated to the school's governing body. The college, together with Kent College Junior School and the International Study Centre (ISC), are component institutions of Kent College, Canterbury. Kent College, Dubai, a sister school, is due to open in 2016. Kent College also owns Moat Farm, a resource used by each of the schools, which includes a recently developed equine unit, providing livery and riding facilities.
- 1.2 The Kent College schools share the same aims. Within a caring Christian family community, committed to the development of the full potential of each individual, the schools seek to maintain high educational standards in all academic, cultural and sporting activities, stimulating high excitement in learning and requiring discipline in study, whatever the ability of the child. They seek to uphold Christian values and make religious education a strong feature of the curriculum, whilst welcoming members of other faiths and none in a spirit of openness and tolerance. The schools seek to value close co-operation between parents, pupils and staff, encouraging enthusiasm, endeavour and self-discipline. The schools aim to engender curiosity, critical awareness and responsibility, to promote fairness, trust and confidence in dealings with one another and to develop initiative, creativity and tenacity in the search for personal growth.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection in 2009, the college has undertaken a number of curriculum changes to further its commitment to the development of individuals: restructuring of setting arrangements; introduction of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma alongside A Levels; extended teaching time; the addition of new subjects; one-to-one computer provision; an increase in accelerated learning programmes and bespoke timetabling. The house system has been restructured to enhance integration and many teaching and boarding facilities have been extended and improved.
- 1.4 Of the 498 pupils, ranging in age from 11 to 19, 168 are in the sixth form. 237 pupils live within 50 miles of the college; approximately 37 per cent are from overseas with 42 nationalities represented in the school population. Most pupils are from business or professional families. Almost all Year 13 pupils gain entry to universities in the UK, the USA and elsewhere. Boarding accommodation is organised into five houses, two for girls and three for boys. The head of boarding is a member of the senior management team.
- 1.5 The average ability of pupils in Years 7 to 11 is above the national average, with a fairly wide range of abilities represented. The ability profile of the sixth form is in line with the national average for pupils in sixth-form education. The college has identified 37 pupils as requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). English is an additional language (EAL) for 192 pupils, 75 of whom receive support for their English. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.

- 1.6 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 Kent College Senior School is very successful in meeting its aims. The pupils' achievements and learning are excellent. Pupils achieve excellent results in national and international examinations and make at least good progress in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. The excellent achievement of pupils working in their second language is notable. Pupils are equally successful in achieving high levels in a wide range of co-curricular activities. Pupils benefit from an excellent and inventive curriculum. Pupils value the bespoke academic programmes which underpin much of their success. Pupils are enthusiastic and committed learners. They enjoy supporting each other in their learning and are adept at using the virtual learning environment (VLE) to improve their skills and academic research.
- 2.2 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils are engaging and outgoing, conversing confidently with adults and each other. In engagement with each other, their cultural and social development is significantly enhanced by being able to discuss world issues with representatives of over forty countries. Pupils reflect the strength of their spiritual and moral development through activities as diverse as participation in chapel services and working on the school's farm. Much of the success of the pupils is due to excellent pastoral care and excellent arrangements for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the pastoral and academic support they receive from staff. Pupils benefit from the structure of pastoral support, ensuring that boarders and day pupils mix naturally and to good effect. Pupils showed concern about some aspects of the catering and also the communication of decisions reached by pupils' councils. The quality of boarding and its contribution to boarders' personal development is excellent. Those pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very positive about the quality of their education and the academic and pastoral care.
- 2.3 The college's marked progress since the previous inspection has been supported by excellent governance and leadership and management. The governors are actively involved in the life of the college and, through this involvement and their professional expertise, give the college a high level of support and challenge. The governors have a clear vision for the college's development and are committed to achieving it. The excellence of leadership and management is apparent at all levels. The hallmark of the college's leadership and management is the clear framework of management responsibilities and support. Expertly led by the senior managers, middle managers are empowered in their roles and give the same challenge and support to their departments, pastoral teams and boarding houses as they receive from the senior managers. This is also reflected in the strength of pupil leadership. The two recommendations of the previous inspection have been robustly addressed. Teachers' marking now ensures that pupils receive high-quality written feedback. The quality of literacy across the curriculum is strong.

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

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

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

2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013.

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

2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Promulgate more effectively the deliberations and decisions of the pupils' councils.
2. Ensure that all elements of catering are raised to the standard of the best of the current provision.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievement and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated in line with the college's aim to develop the full potential in each individual through a curriculum which delivers high educational standards in all academic, cultural and sporting activities. Pupils of all ages and abilities demonstrate strong subject knowledge, skills and understanding. Overall standards of literacy and numeracy are high; pupils express themselves confidently and clearly, both orally and in writing, and listen carefully and considerately to the views of others. Pupils think originally and logically and enjoy problem-solving and challenge. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) support creative and collaborative work across the curriculum.
- 3.3 Pupils respond enthusiastically to the many opportunities to broaden their experience through academic enrichment and the co-curriculum. Pupils have achieved notable successes in national science and mathematics competitions. Many pupils learn a musical instrument; participation in concerts and dramatic performances is high, with individual and group success at national level. In games, pupils represent county and national teams in hockey, which is a particular strength. County and national recognition has also been achieved in a range of individual pursuits, including cross-country, skiing, riding and tennis.
- 3.4 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 in GCSE have been excellent in relation to the national average for maintained schools. Girls' results have been stronger than boys' in a gender separated comparison. Results at A level have been good in relation to the national average for maintained schools and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. Boys' results have been stronger than girls' in a gender separated comparison. Since 2012 a cohort of pupils has taken the IB examinations. Their results have been exceptional in relation to the worldwide average, and above the UK average. Results overall showed further improvement in 2014. These results, together with the pupils' work and achievement in lessons, indicate that pupils at GCSE make excellent progress and, at A level, make progress that is at least good in relation to pupils of similar ability. Pupils consistently gain places at universities in the UK and the USA that have high entry requirements.
- 3.5 Pupils with SEND and EAL are carefully nurtured and encouraged; they benefit greatly from the extensive support available and make excellent progress. The combination of intensive, then on-going support and immersion in mainstream lessons, ensures rapid language development. Progress for more able pupils is of a similarly high standard and is supported by individualised timetables which enable pupils to advance to higher levels in their subjects.
- 3.6 Pupils demonstrate a very positive attitude to all aspects of their curricular and co-curricular activity. Pupils are willing, well-motivated and co-operative learners. They enjoy learning and work effectively, either as individuals or with others, and are responsive to the stimulus and feedback offered by their teachers. Pupils take pride in their work and aspire to achieve to the best of their abilities.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 In line with the college's aims a wide-ranging curriculum provides Year 7 to 13 pupils of different abilities and needs with opportunities to engender individual curiosity, critical awareness and creativity. The curriculum is carefully structured to give pupils in Years 7 to 11 an excellent academic foundation. In addition, in Years 7 and 8, pupils also learn about modern husbandry techniques on the college's farm.
- 3.9 An annually reviewed curriculum policy which takes into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils is underpinned by subject development plans and detailed schemes of work. Bespoke timetabling enables the college to meet pupils' subject choices and, for instance, additional practice time for advanced athletes or musicians. In responses to the parental questionnaire the overwhelming majority of parents said that the college offered an appropriate range of subjects.
- 3.10 Since the previous inspection the school has enhanced its curricular provision by adding six teaching periods to the timetable as well as additional subjects, such as food technology. In Years 7 to 9 new setting arrangements have allowed greater subject differentiation. A recent increase in accelerated learning programmes gives high achieving pupils the chance to follow Open University courses. All pupils have a personal computer and access to the college's virtual VLE, a development which has increased the integrated use of ICT across the curriculum.
- 3.11 The college has a comprehensive range of weekday and weekend extra-curricular activities, involvement in which is high and enthusiastic. Sports, farming, music and drama are popular options, often led by pupils. A senior rehearsal for *A View from the Bridge* was observed being directed by a Year 13 pupil in collaboration with a drama technician. Strong community links include volunteer work at a hospice and concerts at a retirement home. Each year a well-planned range of overseas expeditions for adventure, cultural and academic purposes are organised. In the pupils' questionnaire responses a very large majority of pupils said that there was a good variety of activities available.
- 3.12 The provision for pupils with SEND is excellent. Pupils with dyslexia are given bespoke timetables to meet their individual needs. Pupils whose principal language is not English are given specialist support in the ISC and, for those wanting to study at UK universities, courses leading to the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the Advanced Cambridge Certificate are provided. Pupils identified as more able are given extended learning opportunities throughout the curriculum together with differentiation, acceleration, bespoke timetabling and individual subject coaching.
- 3.13 An excellent programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) reflects the college's aims and ethos. In Years 7 to 11 weekly PSHE lessons, often supplemented by tutor group discussion and chapel talks, explore important personal issues such as relationships, British values, citizenship, democracy, internet safety and anti-bullying. Careers support in Year 11 is given by an outside agency, which gives debrief interviews and career action plans. This informs sixth-form choices. In Years 12 and 13 PSHE is part of the key skills curriculum, with a particular focus on study techniques and university application guidance. This is complemented by a programme of visiting speakers on a range of topics.

- 3.14 In Years 12 and 13 sixth formers greatly benefit from a wide choice of academic options including, since the previous inspection, the IB, and bespoke timetables are designed to match sixth formers' capabilities and interests. The sixth-form activities' programme is designed to meet the needs of older pupils. Popular options include Young Enterprise and 'Beyond Survival', a cookery club giving training in how to eat healthily at university.

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

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.16 This excellent teaching meets the teaching aims to encourage academic rigour, curiosity, and critical awareness at all levels. 'High excitement', also a teaching aim, was seen in a number of lessons, including a Year 8 lesson where pupils were clearly fascinated by their hands-on involvement in the care of the animals at the college's farm.
- 3.17 Teaching is very effective in promoting pupils' progress. This is borne out in pre-inspection questionnaire responses, in which almost all pupils reported that they are happy with the progress they make. A very large majority of parents reported that they are pleased with their children's progress. Teaching is based on teachers' strong subject knowledge and an accurate understanding of each pupil's needs. These are supported in lessons and complemented by the time and commitment given by staff outside the classroom, where extra support is always available, often in the form of well-attended 'drop-in' clinics. Individual pupils also receive specifically tailored help. Most pupils report that teachers give individual help when they need it. Pupils report how much they value this individual support. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Teaching also promotes independence of thought and critical thinking, as seen in a Year 10 physical education lesson on healthy eating which required pupils to analyse a variety of raw foodstuff. The introduction of the IB into the sixth form has complemented the school's emphasis on academic rigour and critical awareness for all. Teaching in the sixth form strongly encourages discussion, with pupils challenging each other's views. Sixth-form teaching also sets appropriate research tasks, used by pupils to develop independence of thought.
- 3.18 Dedicated and highly skilled teachers work hard to involve and integrate pupils. Lessons are carefully planned and make effective provision for the different needs of pupils. Teachers regularly draw on the diversity of the cultural backgrounds and experiences of pupils to promote curiosity and collaborative working. Teachers' high expectations ensure significant progress for pupils with previously different educational backgrounds. The teaching of EAL pupils is highly effective, is responsive to their specific needs and allows those pupils to gain the skills required to fulfil their potential. SEND teaching is excellent and is directed specifically to implementing what careful assessment shows is needed. Teachers provide individual and challenging work for more able pupils. Specialist staff provide regular training for subject teachers, with whom they frequently liaise to ensure that pupils' needs are being met in mainstream classes. The most effective practice is shared in team leaders' meetings hosted by departments.
- 3.19 The college has acted positively on the recommendations of the previous inspection with regard to marking and assessment, which are consistently constructive and of high quality. The best examples provide detailed feedback and clear advice for pupils to follow. Pupils are often encouraged to self-assess their work. The

college's management information system ensures effective tracking of each individual pupil's progress which is shared between staff and with parents. Year group progress is monitored on a regular basis and this data is used to inform planning, identify trends and plan interventions for individual pupils. This, combined with staff assessment, informs target setting, seen, for example, in sixth-form pupil planners. Parents are kept informed of their child's progress on a regular basis.

- 3.20 Classrooms are well resourced, with a variety of pupils' work on display. Interactive whiteboards and digital projection are used to provide visual materials to promote learning. A major initiative since the last inspection has been the use by both teachers and pupils of personal computers, which provide a valuable 'companion to learning' in terms of independent study and research.

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

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

- 4.1 The quality of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The school fulfils its aims to develop pupils in seeking excellence in all that they do, emphasizing participation, integrity, courtesy. The spiritual development of pupils is excellent. Christian values are central to the ethos and pupils of all faiths or none benefit from regular worship in chapel, taking an active part in the music, readings and prayers. The school chaplaincy is well regarded by pupils of all viewpoints. Through a worship leading group, pupils prepare and lead services in the community. Pupils express their individual spiritual questioning in religious studies (RS) lessons. Pupils' sense of wonder is captured in their animated responses in creative arts; their self-awareness and maturity are palpable in all aspects of their school lives.
- 4.3 Pupils' moral development is excellent; they understand the difference between right and wrong and benefit greatly from the strong set of core values, promoted by the school in all facets of the life of the community, which strongly reflect British values and traditions. Pupils reflect upon moral issues whenever they arise, whether through issues in their own lives or topics in class or in assembly. Their understanding of the legal system is enhanced by well-developed courses on British law and democracy, the court system, punishment and rehabilitation in the RS and PSHE programmes. Pupils' behaviour towards one another is excellent, reflecting the school's primary aim to be a caring community. Pupils listen carefully to each other's views and are supportive of each other. Bullying is very rare and pupils are confident that their teachers will deal with any incidents promptly and fairly.
- 4.4 The social development of pupils is excellent. Pupils learn to live alongside each other in supportive boarding house communities. Pupils of different nationalities relate well to each other and told inspectors that they relish these multi-national relationships. Day pupils are fully integrated with boarders through the four school houses and international pupils value this interaction with day pupils. Pupils have a strong sense of responsibility for those less fortunate than themselves and engage in a variety of charitable activities, including, for instance, a musical group visiting a local home for the elderly to entertain the residents. They are also actively involved in the problems of less developed countries through supporting schools in Tanzania and Botswana, including working visits to the Tanzanian school. Older pupils lead by example, organising and managing many school events. Younger pupils value the mentoring they receive from senior pupils, for both academic and social support.
- 4.5 The pupils' cultural development is excellent. Pupils are fully involved in the extensive range of drama, music and art, both in school and in the wider community. Pupils are fully immersed in British culture and values through the curriculum and in discussions between day pupils and boarders. Class discussions and informal conversations confirm pupils' awareness of Western cultural traditions as well as their strong understanding of different cultures. Topics in the PHSE and RS programmes, such as a Year 11 study of poverty in Rio de Janeiro, further support pupils' cultural awareness. At a practical level, international pupils enjoy cooking national specialities for friends.

- 4.6 Pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils are confident, courteous and caring young people with a strong social conscience and an appreciation of the wider world. They are well prepared to lead happy and fulfilling lives. They are proud of their school and its central part in their lives.

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

- 4.7 The quality of pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 A culture of care pervades all areas of the college and is commented on positively by pupils and their parents. Pupils are recognised as individuals and all staff take pride in encouraging and supporting each to achieve his or her best. Excellent communication between staff, pupils and parents plays a key part in securing the high levels of trust and support evident within the college community. Year 10 pupils who volunteer to act as mentors for Year 7 pupils are an example of the culture of care in action.
- 4.9 In the pupils' questionnaire responses a small minority of pupils expressed concern about sanctions. Inspection evidence does not support this. Expectations are clearly set out and sanctions and rewards are closely monitored. Pupils appreciate the rewards system and confirm its positive impact on their motivation to be the best they can be.
- 4.10 The college's house structure successfully supports interaction between pupils across all age groups and between day and boarding pupils through numerous events such as the annual cross-country run where every individual's effort and contribution is valued. The sense of community is strengthened through healthy competition involving staff and pupils in varied activities, including an annual arts festival.
- 4.11 The college is highly successful in promoting good behaviour. The effectiveness of the college's anti-bullying policy is reflected in the fact that pupils report that bullying very rarely occurs, and that any issues are promptly handled. Pupils have great confidence in the support given by staff whenever it is needed. Recent guidance on cyber-bullying across all year groups has been well received. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle, responding positively to nutrition guidance in the curriculum and the many opportunities for physical exercise. The accessibility plan confirms a pro-active approach to improving educational and physical access to the school for all pupils.
- 4.12 Of the pupils' questionnaire responses, a small minority expressed concern that the school does not respond to pupils' opinions. Inspection evidence does not support this. The college actively seeks pupils' input through three pupil committees. The school council includes representatives from every tutor group and issues raised are considered carefully. Minutes of council meetings are published termly. The Year 11 common room development is a particularly successful outcome from the work of this group. The staff and pupil nutrition and catering committee welcomes feedback on the catering provision. Whilst the existence of these groups is widely known, pupils report that they are unaware or unsure of the responses to matters raised.

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

- 4.13 Arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 4.14 The college has robust and well-implemented systems to safeguard pupils' welfare. Risk management is a priority and risk assessments underpin pupils' safety in all areas, but do not preclude pupils from enjoying challenging sports and activities. Excellent policies and procedures for educational visits are carefully implemented. All necessary measures have been taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards; practices are carried out termly and correctly logged. The health and safety committee reports termly to the governors' estates committee which monitors all health and safety issues. Pupils report that they feel safe in the school.
- 4.15 The college's arrangements for safeguarding and the policy and procedures are thorough and fully implemented. All members of staff are trained appropriately in child protection and all required checks are carried out and recorded before new staff are permitted to start work. Appropriate records of child protection issues are kept and are fully detailed and the school has a strong relationship with the local safeguarding authorities. Pupils have training in e-safety through ICT lessons and a programme of visiting speakers from external agencies specialising in this sphere of child protection.
- 4.16 Registration of pupils is carefully carried out and recorded and the school has effective procedures for following up any unexpected absences. The college's electronic admission register is correctly maintained and is backed up and stored appropriately. An excellent medical centre supports both boarders and day pupils who are ill and the first-aid policy is effective in practice and includes good provision for specialist areas such as sport. The identification of, and provision for, pupils who require extra learning or personal support is excellent.

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

- 4.17 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.18 Outcomes for boarders are excellent. Boarders are polite, confident and tolerant, behaving with integrity and demonstrating high standards of conduct. Overseas boarders are well integrated across all the year groups within the college community and individuality is respected. Different cultures are celebrated with themed dinners which are enjoyed by all. When the need is identified, well-focused support is given by both the EAL and SEND departments.
- 4.19 A wide range of opportunities exists for boarders to take on roles of leadership and responsibility. The prefect appointment system is democratic and well respected. Prefects act as peer mentors to the younger boarders as well as helping to assist with the smooth running of the houses and organising house events. This experience teaches them valuable life skills and enables them to contribute to the wider college community. Relevant training is given and monitored carefully. The college implements its clearly written policies to promote good behaviour effectively. Rewards and sanctions are given fairly. Boarders have the opportunity to contribute their views through various channels. In interviews boarders said they were most likely to take concerns to boarding staff. Most boarders, however, were unaware of the issues and responses raised at various council meetings. Built on mutual trust, boarders enjoy relaxed and positive relationships with all their highly committed boarding staff. Boarders also have many other people to whom they can turn for

help and advice, and helpline numbers are clearly displayed in all houses. Boarders are also supported and encouraged by their academic tutors.

- 4.20 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. The induction of new boarders is effective. They receive helpful key written information, have an induction programme that is followed up by houseparents using checklists or quizzes, which identify points still to be clarified. Boarders feel able to approach any member of staff or fellow pupils if they have any questions. They are aware that they can contact the independent listener with concerns. Boarders also benefit from a school counsellor who holds drop-in sessions twice a week. Year 7 boarders, who are accommodated overnight in the junior school boarding house, are members of senior houses. This contributes to a smoother transition to senior school life.
- 4.21 Boarders' health is supported by the excellent 24-hour medical care provided in the well-appointed medical centre situated within easy access of all the boarding houses. Boarders can stay overnight, and houseparents can call for medical support at any time. The highly qualified staff, led by the sister-in-charge, are well trained in first aid, the administration and recording of medicines and the treatment of chronic conditions. A general practitioner holds a surgery twice a week, and further appointments can be made as required. The centre has excellent links with local dental and optometric services, as well as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and other specialist practitioners. Procedures regarding confidentiality are meticulously observed; personal files are conscientiously recorded electronically and are secure. Medical information is passed to both boarding and academic staff on a need-to-know basis and with pupils' consent. Prescribed medicines and homely remedies are appropriately stored and procedures for self-medication are thorough.
- 4.22 Boarders feel safe, and are confident that their possessions are secure. They appreciate the regular laundry service. All meals are taken in the central dining hall, where snacks are offered at break and after school. Special dietary needs are met. A large majority of pupils who responded to the pupils' questionnaire said that the food was not good and a small minority felt that the provision of snacks was not sufficient. This was not borne out by the good quality of boarders' breakfast and lunch observed and sampled by inspectors. The choice available at supper is more limited, however, and boarders in interviews expressed concern about the quality of food at the weekend. The college has recently addressed this issue by commissioning an external catering review, which recommends improvement in the areas of pupils' concerns. A good range of fruit and snacks was seen to be readily available in the houses, although the availability of snacks provided in the dining room is sometimes limited. Boarders were extremely enthusiastic about the large co-curricular programme of school activities. Most attend these and enjoy yet another, but different opportunity to integrate with day pupils. They also appreciate the wide range of activities and trips on offer to them in the evenings and at weekends.
- 4.23 Each house has its own identity and all boarding accommodation is of a very high standard, predominantly in double rooms, with single rooms for older pupils. Rooms provide excellent space for study, relaxation and personal privacy. Social areas are attractively decorated and furnished. Boarders enjoy good kitchen facilities where they can make drinks and cook simple snacks. Boarders have no difficulties in contacting their parents, and houseparents maintain regular links with parents, both individually and in house newsletters.

- 4.24 The effectiveness of arrangements for the welfare and safeguarding of boarders is excellent. The National Minimum Standards are met and the school implements effectively the safeguarding policy, the prevention of bullying policy and all other relevant policies. All boarding house staff, including domestic staff, demonstrate a clear awareness of their safeguarding responsibilities and all have been appropriately trained in safeguarding. Excellent systems and regular registration sessions are in place to ensure that boarding staff are fully aware of the whereabouts of the boarders in their care, and they are conversant with the missing child policy and procedures.
- 4.25 Each house benefits from having a high number of both resident and visiting staff. The well-being and welfare of the boarders are supported by thorough record keeping. All boarding staff develop their skills through a significant programme of in-service training (INSET). The college has responded to the one recommendation from the 2011 Ofsted boarding welfare report by providing INSET for house managers. The professional development review includes all boarding staff.
- 4.26 The leadership and management of boarding are excellent. The highly enthusiastic houseparents run their multicultural houses effectively and sensitively in line with the statement of boarding principles and practice. Management of the house teams is highly effective. Detailed and efficient handover procedures ensure that all staff are kept up to date with matters concerning individual boarders. Daily diaries are maintained meticulously. The introduction of electronic recording is an excellent initiative, which enables house staff to update the diary immediately via a mobile phone. The director of boarding chairs weekly houseparent meetings, where issues are shared and parity of provision and response are ensured. He discusses boarding matters at senior management team (SMT) meetings and also liaises closely with the boarding governor, reporting annually to the full governing body. In addition to the electronic pupil records, concerns about individual boarders are shared with academic staff in a weekly pastoral briefing. Sanctions are also recorded electronically, alerting the head of boarding immediately by email, enabling a swift response. This facility results in excellent opportunities for monitoring the consistency of sanctions and identification of developing trends. Along with the governing body, the SMT has a clear vision for the management and development of the future of boarding.

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

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

- 5.1 Governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Governors have a detailed understanding of, and empathy with, the college's aims and ethos, enabling them to provide informed support and guidance to ensure that the Christian principles are strongly sustained and the school's aims are conspicuously met.
- 5.3 Governors draw successfully on an extensive range of strategies to maintain a perceptive overview of the work of each of the schools; through their regular visits to the schools, participation in annual subject reviews, presentations from members of staff and scrutiny of results data, for example. They ensure the consistent fulfilment of their responsibilities for educational standards. Several governors' committees, including those covering estates, finance, education and personnel, and the allocation of responsibilities to individual governors, including for safeguarding and boarding, ensure that the full board is kept clearly informed, facilitating the discharging of responsibilities for safeguarding and securing prudent financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding meets regularly with the designated lead safeguarding staff and presents an annual review of safeguarding for approval by the full board.
- 5.4 Governors bring a wide range of skills and interests to the school. A recent self-evaluation provided valuable insight into how governance operates. The selection of new governors is undertaken following careful analysis, to bring specific skills to the board. These measures, together with an induction programme for new governors and regular governors' training, including courses with external providers, ensure that they have an in-depth insight into the working of the schools and are highly effective in monitoring their work and providing perceptive support and challenge to their staff.

### **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 and others, is excellent.
- 5.6 The leadership of the college is highly effective in ensuring that the educational aims of the college are fulfilled, understood and implemented by all. An experienced and well-established SMT is highly effective in ensuring that appropriate policies are created, regularly reviewed and carefully implemented. These cover all the required policies, including those for health and safety. Governors' oversight in this area of the management is indicative of the way leaders and governors work together. An overwhelming majority of parents replying to the pre-inspection questionnaire confirmed that the college is well led and pupils acknowledge the visibility of the senior leaders and key role they play in their school.
- 5.7 The educational vision is defined and developed and is successful in catering for and stretching the individual with bespoke timetables and accelerated learning flowing from the college's Methodist maxim of being 'the best you can be'. The

leadership understands and transmits what the college does best to staff and parents and is constantly striving to improve outcomes for its pupils. Whilst welcoming pupils from other countries, the college's ethos is clearly one of promoting British values. Strong leadership is also accompanied by a commitment to consultation when implementing change with staff given many opportunities to express their views on the college's direction.

- 5.8 Members of the SMT have clear, defined roles, a strong sense of collective responsibility and a commitment to school improvement. There is also regular discussion of roles, with amendment to individual job descriptions emerging from annual performance meetings; for example, the recent changes to the responsibilities of the deputy head. Supported by systems and structures established by the SMT, middle managers carry out their roles very effectively in implementing the college's vision for teaching and learning and caring for and supporting pupils. A rigorous quality assurance programme monitors outcomes across the college, for example, to evaluate the quality and consistency of morning tutorial time. All middle managers take responsibility for monitoring the quality of provision within departments and year groups with evidence provided to the SMT. The SEND and EAL middle management interacts highly effectively with all teachers to ensure high standards in all areas and the best outcomes for pupils. The senior teacher responsible for the more able ensures the identification, formal tracking and provision of opportunities for the development of these pupils.
- 5.9 The college's development plan is produced after extensive consultation with staff and governors and its clear objectives are explicitly referred to and built on in departmental and pastoral performance reviews, thereby giving all responsibility for its implementation. The deputy head also checks that individual performance review targets link to the main plan. Under the direction of the head master, a well-developed annual review cycle with direct governor involvement analyses departmental performance. Detailed individual departmental development plans are produced annually to encourage all to analyse and reflect, so that the area for which they have responsibility shows improvement. All areas of the college therefore show an awareness of current whole-school targets whilst developing their own specific priorities. A spirit of innovation and development pervades the college with a palpable sense of connected thinking and shared vision.
- 5.10 The college has sufficiently and suitably trained teaching and non-teaching staff. All staff, volunteers and governors are checked suitably before appointment and the results of all required checks are appropriately recorded. Excellent arrangements are in place for staff training on safeguarding and pupils' welfare. This is of the highest importance in the college's priorities as, for example, in the case of recent investment in training for senior managers on mental health and well-being. A recent focus on developing leadership by supporting and giving opportunities to those seeking to progress and develop in their careers is the hallmark of a school which seeks to nurture and develop those who work there. The college is equally committed to the training of those new to the profession through the School Direct Programme. Team leader meetings and staff meetings allow regular opportunities for sharing the most effective practice and other innovative and stimulating training opportunities encourage staff to reflect on their practice and improve outcomes for pupils.
- 5.11 The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent.

- 5.12 In accordance with the college's aims and its Methodist traditions, the college promotes regular dialogue with the families of its pupils. A very large majority of parents who responded to the parents' questionnaire were satisfied with the college's communications, and with the manner in which their queries are handled, including the raising of any concerns. The use of the digital communication system, the parents' portal on the school's website and a range of digital and social media ensures that college information is passed to parents quickly and effectively. Lines of communication with overseas parents, agents and guardians are excellent.
- 5.13 The college calendar and website list extensive opportunities for parents to be involved in events, including the extensive sport, music and drama programmes. The Friends of Kent College also facilitates parental engagement in the college community in numerous ways, such as providing ambassadors to meet parents, while the 'Friends' Education Award' funds pupils to undertake summer placements. An overwhelming majority of parents, in response to the questionnaire, reflected their satisfaction with co-curricular opportunities for their children. Reviews of college events are regularly disseminated via a wide range of social media, and also promulgated through the termly edition of the *Kent College Times*, a largely pupil-edited publication. These communications also enable members of the large and increasingly international alumni association to keep in touch with their *alma mater*, as do invitations to various events in college, such as significant house anniversaries.
- 5.14 All required information for parents is easily available. The high-quality publications and prospectus provide plenty of information for current and prospective parents, and discrete booklets ensure that relevant material is easily accessed by the appropriate audiences. The formal programme of parents' meetings and reports informs parents effectively about their children's progress on a regular basis. Parents participate in target setting at parents' meetings and academic surgeries are available for follow up discussion if necessary. The college is prompt in alerting parents of any important matters concerning their children. More informal communications between the college and parents are frequent and appreciated by both parties. Responses to the parental questionnaire show that the overwhelming majority of parents are satisfied with the college's reporting procedures. The school has an appropriate complaints procedure and any complaints are handled in line with that procedure.

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