



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION  
CHETHAM'S SCHOOL OF MUSIC**

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## Chetham's School of Music

Full Name of School	<b>Chetham's School of Music</b>	
DfE Number	<b>352/6021</b>	
Registered Charity Number	<b>526702</b>	
Telephone Number	<b>0161 8349644</b>	
Fax Number	<b>0161 8393609</b>	
Email Address	<b>chets@chethams.com</b>	
Head	<b>Mrs Claire Moreland</b>	
Chair of Governors	<b>Dame Sandra Burslem</b>	
Total Number of Pupils	<b>297</b>	
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (150 boys; 147 girls)</b>	
Numbers by Age	7-11:	<b>19</b>
	11-18:	<b>278</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>71</b>
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>226</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>19 May 2014 to 22 May 2014</b>	

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in November 2008, with interim visits in March 2013 and September 2013.

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) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, 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 chair of governors/the proprietor/a governors' representative/governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mrs Beryl Fawcett	Reporting Inspector
Mr Stuart Brant	Team inspector. (Director of studies, GSA school)
Mr Ian Davies	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Mrs Linda Griffith	Team Inspector (Former head of ISA junior school)
Mr Geoffrey Hill	Team inspector (Former director of music, HMC school)
Mrs Deirdre O'Sullivan	Team Inspector (Former head, IAPS school)
Ms Myra Rodgers	Boarding co-ordination inspector

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Chetham's is a specialist music school, the largest in the Department for Education's Music and Dance Schools Aided Pupil Scheme. It aims to educate musically gifted children between the ages of 8 and 18, whatever their social, ethnic and cultural background and financial circumstances; to provide as broad an academic curriculum as is possible within a specialist school and to develop the whole person, furthering the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of each student. The Music School is one part of the Foundation of Chetham's Hospital School and Library, founded by Humphrey Chetham in 1653. The Hospital is governed by Feoffees, some of whom also serve on the School Committee which is the governing body and proprietor of the School of Music.
- 1.2 The school is located in the heart of Manchester and has been a specialist music school since 1969, previously being a boys' grammar school. The current school uses buildings dating back to 1422. A majority of students are boarders and are accommodated in three boarding houses.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection in 2008, a new school building was completed in 2012 and incorporates all the music teaching spaces, practice rooms, a recital hall, outreach centre and most of the academic teaching areas. Much planning has taken place and continues to deal with the many major changes and improvements this is affording the school. New boarding accommodation for the younger students was completed in summer 2013.
- 1.4 The school student body is a rich mix of national and international backgrounds and social profiles. A number of day students are also choristers at the adjacent Manchester Cathedral. Entry to the school is based entirely on auditions to assess students' musical potential. There is no assessment of their academic ability. At the time of the inspection, there were 297 students on roll (71 day students and 226 boarders). Nineteen were aged 7 to 11 and 278 aged 11 to 18.
- 1.5 The ability of junior school students is not assessed using standardised tests but, based on the evidence gathered during the inspection, it is judged to be above the national age-related average. The ability profile of the senior school is above the national average, with around a third of students in Year 7 being well above average ability. The ability profile of the sixth form is above the national average for students in sixth form education, with most having ability that is above or in line with the average.
- 1.6 Of the 47 students for whom English is an additional language (EAL) 21 are taught English, and supported in their studies, by the compensatory education department. The school identifies 36 students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who are similarly supported by the department.
- 1.7 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

School	NC name
Juniors	Years 4, 5 and 6
Form 1	Year 7
Form 2	Year 8
Form 3	Year 9
Form 4	Year 10
Form 5	Year 11
Lower 6 <sup>th</sup>	Year 12
Upper 6 <sup>th</sup>	Year 13

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

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

- 2.1 The quality of students' achievements and learning is excellent overall and exceptional in music. Students display secure knowledge, skills and understanding of the material being taught. The students are exceptionally knowledgeable and skilled in music, where they demonstrate outstanding attitudes in work and study, very often reflecting a high degree of self-motivation. Students make a high rate of progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. Students achieve outstanding success across a range of other musical activities and competitions. The curriculum offers breadth, balance and quality in the context of the music specialism of the school. Although, in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, some parents and students suggested that the range of extra-curricular activities is not sufficient, inspection found that the range offered is appropriate for a school with a music specialism. There is an appropriate focus on developing the musical talent of each individual and the curriculum generally gives students challenging experiences in all required linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, aesthetic and creative fields. Curriculum planning and teaching for Years 3 to 6, however, does not provide sufficiently well for the differing ages, needs and abilities within the one class. The time allowed for physical education is limited in Years 9 and 11. Achievement is fostered through the excellent quality of teaching that is effective in motivating students to want to learn and make progress.
- 2.2 The quality of students' personal development is excellent and is clearly promoted by their boarding experience, which is outstanding. The students live and work harmoniously with the various nationalities in the school. Their respect for the beliefs and traditions of others demonstrates a high level of emotional maturity. Through music education and performance, they come to appreciate their own traditions as well as embracing those of others. Students are polite and self-aware and their behaviour is exemplary. Students show a very good level of awareness of, and concern for, those less fortunate than themselves. Their participation in community music and music therapy programmes underpins a strong understanding of, and empathy with, the disadvantaged and disabled. Students collaborate congenially and cooperatively in joint ventures, notably in music, through which they develop an outstanding cultural awareness. By the time they leave the school, the students are well prepared to take their place in a complex multi-cultural society as confident and responsible young adults.
- 2.3 The quality of governance, leadership and management is excellent. The governing body provides highly effective oversight of all sections of the school, including boarding. It is well aware of its responsibilities for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of all throughout the school and seeks a high quality of provision. The previous visit in September 2013 made three recommendations relating to monitoring and review of safeguarding practice, elements of NMS for boarding, and development of policies and procedures to support staff in meeting pupils' needs. All the recommendations have been appropriately acted upon so that the governors now record in detail their review of safeguarding and NMS records. Policies and procedures to support new staff now include guidance in identifying and meeting the needs of pupils. The governing body fully discharges its responsibilities for statutory requirements, including safeguarding arrangements throughout the school. Leadership and management provide clear educational direction that reflects the specialist nature of the school and secures an effective balance between music

education and general academic provision. This is exhibited in the high quality of students' education and the superior standards of their personal development. The senior management team demonstrates a clear commitment to ensuring that both the pastoral and academic aspects of a pupil's time at the school are extremely positive experiences. Systems to monitor teaching and learning are well embedded in practice. At all levels, management is highly successful in securing, supporting and developing high quality staff for whom the specialist nature of the school provides significant motivation. Stringent recruitment checks ensure the suitability of all staff to work with children. The school successfully meets its aim to work effectively with parents and the community. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, parents were satisfied with most aspects of the education and care that their children receive. Although a minority of parents felt that they receive insufficient information about the progress of their children, inspection found that parents are well informed and the school maintains excellent constructive relationships with parents.

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

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.
- 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. In Years 3 to 6, ensure that students' individual needs are fully met, by improving the planning of the curriculum and teaching to reflect the age and capabilities of the students.
  2. Allow more time in the curriculum for physical education and games in Years 9 and 11.
  3. Formalise arrangements for supervision of access to boarding accommodation when parents visit boarders.

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

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

- 3.1 The quality of students' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The school's ambitious aims are very well met through the quality of teaching and learning. The quality of achievement in music is exceptional and the standards of literacy, numeracy, articulacy, logical thought and creativity are very high. Students display particularly secure knowledge, skills and understanding of the material being taught.
- 3.3 Students' achievements are often excellent and never less than good across all areas of the curriculum. They are exceptionally knowledgeable and skilled in music, where they demonstrate outstanding attitudes in work and study, very often reflecting rapid learning and a high degree of ability and self-motivation.
- 3.4 The wide range of learning skills, together with attainment across music and academic subjects, are very good and often excellent. The compensatory education department addresses the needs of students with EAL and those with SEND. It is very successful in its aim to ensure the greatest possible access to a broad and balanced education for all students, and allowing them to progress as well as their peers.
- 3.5 Through music and the stimulating strategies the department employs, the students acquire excellent skills in performing, listening and speaking. Outstanding opportunities are provided for students to perform as soloists and to participate in ensembles, bands, orchestras and choirs. On most days, two concerts are held during the lunch break and students perform at a professional level throughout the UK and further afield.
- 3.6 Students' powers of critical and creative thinking and understanding within music are generally extraordinarily advanced at all ages, and they transfer these skills to academic subjects naturally. Excellent organisational skills are rapidly developed to meet the many demands on their busy lives. This develops their independence and self-motivation and helps them to be excellent learners. Students show the ability to argue cogently and to think for themselves. Speaking, writing and mathematical skills are of a high standard and provision is made to accelerate students where appropriate. For example, a Year 6 student was observed in a Year 8 mathematics lesson, working on post GCSE material under the guidance of the teacher.
- 3.7 Attainment in national practical examinations is outstanding, with many students achieving a merit or distinction at Grade 8. In addition, students may take music diplomas at any appropriate time. In music performance there is significant achievement at a very high level. Students participate in a variety of internal competitions and many have a high degree of success in external competitions, both national and international.
- 3.8 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2010 to 2012. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in National Curriculum tests at the age of 11 are well above the national average for maintained schools. Results in GCSE are well above the national average for maintained schools, and above the national average for maintained selective schools. Boys' results in 2012 were exceptional in relation to the national

average for boys. At A level, results have been above the national average for maintained schools and above the national average for maintained selective schools. Boys' results in 2011 were well above the national average for boys in maintained selective schools. Results in IGCSE subjects have been higher than worldwide norms. Pupils make a high level of progress in relation to pupils of similar ability.

- 3.9 Students achieve outstanding success across a range of musical activities and competitions both nationally and internationally. A large percentage of students go on to specialist music colleges and frequently gain places in universities with highly competitive entry requirements.
- 3.10 Throughout the school, the pupils almost always display an excellent attitude to learning. They are keen to do well and enjoy being challenged. They are highly responsive, offering well-reasoned answers and opinions confidently. They work well individually and in groups and are highly conscientious. The students are enthusiastic learners and their achievements match their very high expectations.

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

- 3.11 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.12 This successfully reflects the aim of the curriculum to offer breadth, balance and quality in the context of the music specialism of the school. With an appropriate focus on developing the musical talent of each individual student, the curriculum is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs and gives students challenging experiences in all required linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, aesthetic and creative fields. The provision for physical education and games in the curriculum is generally sufficient but is limited in Years 9 and 11. In addition to the compulsory subjects at GCSE, there is a range of optional subjects and in recent years the school has successfully implemented IGSE courses in English, history and geography. Personal, social and health education is prominent, both in the curriculum and in the daily life of the school.
- 3.13 Supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, the implementation of the curriculum is, in most cases, highly effective. Curriculum planning in Years 3 to 6, however, is not sufficiently detailed to provide effectively for the differing ages, needs and abilities within the one class. In response to previous recommendations, information and communication technology (ICT) has become a discrete part of the curriculum in Years 3 to 8. Music technology is of high quality and popular in Year 9 and above, although after Year 8, little evidence was seen during inspection of use by students of ICT in other subjects.
- 3.14 All students benefit from individual advice and guidance about their academic and musical commitments and sixth formers enjoy the advantages of individual learning programmes, devised to recognise their musical aptitudes and interests. Guidance extends to the paths students choose to follow when they leave the school and they are well prepared to meet the responsibilities and opportunities of adult life.
- 3.15 Students needing support for their learning receive excellent help, both inside and out of the classroom. Their individual needs are identified at an early stage, so that appropriate help can be given, through setting by ability in some subjects and the provision of work suitably tailored to individual needs in the classroom. Many students who have received such support perform well in external examinations.

- 3.16 The curriculum is supported by an exceptional range of musical extra-curricular activities including exciting and useful opportunities to engage with the local community. A programme of non-musical clubs and activities is also available for students who wish to participate. These include horse riding, dry-slope skiing, swimming in the local new Olympic-sized pool and the occasional weekend activities, such as youth hostelling or paintballing. Although, in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of parents and students suggested that the range of activities is not sufficient, inspection found that the range offered is appropriate for a school with a music specialism.
- 3.17 An exceptional number of opportunities is available for all students to perform in public. These range from two lunchtime concerts every day in different school venues, to which members of the public are invited, to famous venues nationally and overseas. Over 400 concerts take place every year.
- 3.18 The school provides opportunities for individuals, schools and community groups to experience music in a dynamic way by providing a series of "Outreach events". The last 15 years has seen several notable music-based community initiatives, the most recent being a celebration of '150 Years of Delius' and 'the Centenary of Britten'. The involvement of students with a service which supports families living with a visual impairment, and a music therapy centre, provides excellent opportunities for community work.

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

- 3.19 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.20 Teaching successfully fulfils the school's aim to provide as broad an academic education as is possible in a specialist music school. In all parts of the school, a significant proportion of the teaching is of high quality and makes a strong contribution to students' learning and progress.
- 3.21 Teachers know their students very well. Teaching is characterised by extremely warm and supportive relationships which are highly effective in motivating students to strive for improvement. Whether in individual performance or academic lessons, both effort and progress are frequently praised by teachers and contribute to students' understanding and motivation. Teaching is successful in engaging students' interest; they are appropriately challenged and feel sufficiently confident to participate actively in lessons.
- 3.22 The well qualified teachers are extremely knowledgeable about their subject and have high expectations of their students. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives and excellent use is made of the time available in them. The best teaching provides opportunities for careful examination and appraisal of material and employs a range of effective strategies to promote learning and performance. There are opportunities for independent learning in all areas and excellent examples of this were seen in English revision of challenging texts, in drama and in art. Students in Years 3 to 6 show a desire for knowledge and have a natural curiosity to learn, although in a small number of lessons the materials and tasks with which they are provided are not always sufficiently relevant to their different ages and capabilities. In many lessons throughout the school, the teaching encourages students to work collaboratively in groups, in pairs, or in ensembles, sharing their ideas and providing support and encouragement. This was observed in revision lessons in subjects such as music and modern foreign languages. The particular needs of individuals

are well catered for. Most of the teaching is sensitive to the needs of students, including talented individuals and those with SEND, and gives them the attention they deserve.

- 3.23 Excellent teaching strategies are shared between departments so that all may learn from the best practices as identified by the school. Yearly appraisals of teachers have helped to promote excellence in teaching and identify any professional development needs they may have. Informed by careful and regular assessments, teachers understand the needs of each student. Marking is carried out to a very good standard with helpful comments on how students could improve and this is especially effective in the sixth form. Each department has its own marking policy. In interviews students reported that they understood the assessment procedures and were grateful for the helpful comments made and also for the oral feedback that was also proffered by some teachers.
- 3.24 The school has responded well to the recommendation in the previous inspection report to widen its use of ICT in lessons in order to help improve teaching. The use of interactive whiteboards is the norm in most departments and students are encouraged to use ICT to facilitate independent learning. Music technology forms part of the academic provision for Year 9 students upwards and is taught in dedicated studios. The school recognises the rapid pace of technological change and now regularly reviews its ICT provision. As a result, teaching reflects this.

## **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 students is excellent.
- 4.2 The school effectively fulfils its aim to further the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all students.
- 4.3 The students' spiritual awareness is excellent, augmented by the diversity of the school family and the depth of musical experience, through which they come to appreciate the spiritual and non-material aspects of life. The students are polite, aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and reflective. They show a high level of respect for different faiths and traditions, as demonstrated in a history lesson by a student who questioned the cultural religious significance of Aztec artefacts. Students celebrate the multi-national and multi-faith community in assemblies and in culinary 'international days'. Their respect for the beliefs of others demonstrates a high level of emotional maturity that was evident in an English lesson when the class was analysing the subtext in *Silas Marner*.
- 4.4 Students have many opportunities through which they develop a strong moral sense and demonstrate a clear understanding of right and wrong. Their behaviour is usually exemplary. A strong spirit of co-operation is evident throughout the school. Students appreciate the values of the school and strongly support them, for example the strategies to identify and manage bullying. Moral and ethical issues are embedded in the curriculum, as was noted in a biology lesson where the ethics and dilemmas involved in transplant surgery were discussed. Students show a very good level of awareness of, and concern for, those less fortunate than themselves. Their participation in community music and music therapy programmes has led to a strong understanding of, and empathy with, the disadvantaged and disabled.
- 4.5 The students' social development is excellent. They co-exist harmoniously with the various nationalities in the school. They are well-mannered and considerate and have a strong sense of self-discipline. They look after the well-being of their fellow students and take the responsibility of their roles as house representatives and prefects seriously. The students display a high level of tolerance and sensitivity that contributes to the excellent community atmosphere. They develop a sound understanding of society, including its economic and political aspects, and how they can make a worthwhile contribution through their charitable work. The extensive outreach programme underpins the students' good understanding of national and international institutions and their personal responsibilities to a global society. The students love their school and take pride in their beautiful surroundings.
- 4.6 A very distinctive feature of life at the school is the frequency with which the students collaborate congenially and co-operatively in joint ventures, notably in music, through which they develop an outstanding cultural awareness. The multicultural nature of the school community promotes a natural valuing, interest and enjoyment of the diversity of cultural heritage. Through music education and performance they come to appreciate their own traditions as well as embracing others. In the lunchtime concerts, students from across the school perform music from many cultures to an exceptional standard.
- 4.7 By the time they leave the school, the students are well prepared to take their place in a complex multi-cultural society as confident and responsible young adults.

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

- 4.8 The quality of the pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 The careful structure and strong pastoral support for both boarders and day students helps to promote their personal development and provides essential stability for individuals. The staff have a clear understanding of the need to support students facing the challenge of a demanding performance specialism and all this entails.
- 4.10 The relationship between the staff and students is excellent and staff relate well to the specific needs of the individual students. The students can identify staff in whom they can confide and state that they feel safe at school. In their response to the questionnaires, a very small minority of parents and students felt that cases of bullying were not dealt with appropriately. Inspection found that the school has a comprehensive anti-bullying policy which is implemented swiftly and effectively, and in interviews students confirmed that the rare instances of bullying were dealt with immediately.
- 4.11 While inspection found that the food was good, with sufficient choice and quantity to match the students' needs, a minority of pupils, in their response to the questionnaire, felt that the food provided by the school was not of good quality. The junior school students felt that the choice was more suitable for adult palates and would like something plainer and less spicy. Students are aware of the need to eat healthily through their science and the PHSE curriculum. Although the time allocated to PE in Years 9 and 11 is limited, the students' physical needs are effectively addressed by otherwise adequate PE sessions in conjunction with the physical demands of playing a musical instrument.
- 4.12 The sanction and reward system is readily available in the student handbooks. Although a minority of students felt that sanctions and rewards were not always fairly applied, in interviews they understood the system clearly and appreciated that it worked well and was fair. Access for students and visitors with disabilities is well catered for in the new teaching building and is dealt with as required in the school's plan to improve educational access for students with SEND.
- 4.13 The school employs effective methods to seek the views of pupils. A small minority of students felt that the school did not take into consideration their views or respond to them but the detailed minutes of the student forum demonstrate that it is an important and active conduit for students' views. Ideas are given due consideration and clear feedback is given on decisions and outcomes. For example changes to the uniform and food have been implemented.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety of pupils is excellent.
- 4.15 The school has stringent arrangements to safeguard all pupils that take into account the particular circumstances of recent safeguarding concerns. All staff have appropriate training in child protection and designated officers have advanced training. Procedures are fully understood by all members of staff. Rigorous recruitment checks ensure the suitability and experience of all staff to work with children. Arrangements for the supervision of students are excellent.
- 4.16 Welfare responsibilities are taken very seriously, ensuring compliance with statutory regulations, and effective relationships are maintained with local welfare agencies.

Health and safety policies include all necessary information and are routinely checked by the health and safety committee and in governors' meetings. As appropriate, external consultants ensure good management systems are in place and that the premises comply with health and safety legislation. The site maintenance staff routinely undertake checks and deal promptly with issues arising. All necessary measures are taken to reduce risks from fire and other hazards. The alarm system is checked regularly, practice evacuations are undertaken and logged correctly, and the school has an excellent relationship with the local fire service. Thorough risk assessments are undertaken for all activities and for trips out and abroad. Students who are ill or injured are well looked after in the medical centre by well qualified staff. Clearly labelled drinking water is readily available.

- 4.17 Attendance registers are properly maintained and conform to statutory regulations; the junior house attendance registers are kept electronically. Arrangements to maintain and store the admission register comply with current regulations.
- 4.18 The school has responded to advice and recommendations in relation to the previous short inspections.

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

- 4.19 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.20 Outcomes for boarders are excellent. The boarders' personal development is clearly promoted by their boarding experience. They develop key qualities such as tolerance and confidence. They are thoughtful towards each other and there is a sense of community in the houses. A small minority of respondents to the pupil questionnaires expressed concern over how they were treated but inspection found that excellent relationships exist between boarders and staff. They provide a high standard of care and are sensitive to boarders' individual needs, both pastorally and academically and their commitments as musicians. In all interviews, boarders felt staff treated them well. Excellent links exist between academic and boarding staff and are enhanced by the tutor system, where tutors have small groups of tutees in house. The boarders know there is a wide range of people they can talk to, including an independent listener who visits the houses. Appropriate helpline numbers are displayed including those of *Childline* and the Office of the Children's Commissioner. New boarders are provided with helpful handbooks, are welcomed into the boarding community and many of them have had a taster sleep-over prior to joining. Lower sixth boarders have an induction weekend. The school's policy to promote good behaviour amongst pupils is implemented in practice in the boarding houses where boarders were seen to behave very well and be extremely polite and helpful. Boarders say their views are listened to. An effective school forum, boarding committees, suggestion boxes and the use of surveys of opinion enable them to be heard. For example, through the forum a new school uniform was agreed and introduced. Boarders are also confident in raising issues with staff. They have access to the world around them through newspapers and television. Equal opportunities are offered to all boarders.
- 4.21 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. Boarders feel safe and confirmed that they receive excellent health care. The school implements effectively its policies for those who are unwell. The health centre is staffed by qualified nurses 24 hours a day, seven days a week and school doctors hold twice weekly surgeries. Local services can be accessed, including a dentist and an optician. Accommodation for boarders ranges from good to excellent. Rooms are light, airy

and well maintained with a high standard of cleanliness. Junior boarders moved into a new house of an excellent standard in September 2013. In all houses there are some en-suite facilities and boarders enjoy socialising and playing games in the common rooms. They can personalise their own areas and have lockable spaces, although all boarders spoken to said their belongings were safe. There is a wide choice of well-prepared, nutritious food and special dietary needs are catered for. Catering staff are responsive to requests made by boarders. Snacks and drinks are available in house at appropriate times. There is an on-site laundry. Boarders say that this service is efficient and senior boys and girls appreciate that they can do their own laundry. Stationery and personal items can be purchased locally and boarders have access to the town, younger boarders being accompanied. Boarders enjoy the range of activities which are provided for them, including cinema nights and craft club. Regular contact can be made with parents and guardians by email, internet telephone calls, mobile phones and each house has a payphone.

- 4.22 There are effective arrangements for welfare and safeguarding and correct checks on all staff are in place. Policies, including the anti-bullying policy, are up to date and meet requirements, and their implementation is carefully monitored by senior staff and governors. Boarders say bullying is not a problem and should it occur it would be dealt with quickly. There are three to four members of staff on duty every evening ensuring good supervision of boarders, who can contact staff at all times. The school operates an electronic card system that enables staff to know the whereabouts of boarders and there are regular registrations. There is at present no formal arrangement for supervision of access to boarding accommodation when parents visit boarders. In line with whole-school policy, all boarding staff, including ancillary staff, receive appropriate safeguarding training, that is also extended to prefects and '*guardian angels*'. Boarding staff have job descriptions and induction training, supported by comprehensive staff handbooks.
- 4.23 Leadership and management of boarding provision are excellent. The school has a suitable statement of the school's boarding principles and practice available to parents, staff and boarders. The boarding team are well supported by senior management. School governors are actively involved in all aspects of the school, including boarding. Boarding staff have regular appraisals and there are opportunities for further training. Regular meetings are held at all levels. There is an appropriate reward and sanction scheme and details are recorded effectively. All the required records are kept and monitored. The responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires for pupils and parents were highly positive in support of boarding.
- 4.24 The recommendations from the previous Ofsted inspection of boarding have been implemented.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The governing body provides highly effective oversight of all sections of the school in line with its aims. Based on a clear vision of excellence, it discharges rigorously its responsibilities for educational standards, financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. Since the previous inspection, there have been several changes within the governance structure that have further strengthened its effectiveness.
- 5.3 The board meets regularly on a formal basis and attends training to ensure that responsibilities for maintaining high standards are efficiently discharged. The governors have an excellent insight into the working of the school. Through regular visits, meetings and contacts with members of its staff, they are in a good position to monitor and review practice and ensure that targets for improvement are rigorously met. The governing body has a strong and effective focus on financial planning and investment. The recent acquisition of the new teaching accommodation demonstrates a commitment to the provision of high quality accommodation and resources for the benefit of students' education.
- 5.4 The governing body is fully aware of its responsibilities for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of all throughout the school and seeks a high quality of provision. Since the recent report in March 2013 which identified weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements, the governing body has responded rigorously and has introduced measures that now fully discharge their responsibilities in this area, including safeguarding arrangements throughout the school and the annual review of safeguarding and child protection practices.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is excellent.
- 5.6 Leadership and management is highly successful in achieving its aims for the school. It provides strong educational direction that reflects the specialist nature of the school, and secures an excellent balance between music education and general academic provision. This is exhibited in the high quality of students' educational achievements and the superior standards of their personal development.
- 5.7 The senior management team demonstrates a clear commitment to ensuring that both the pastoral and academic aspects of a students' time at the school are extremely positive experiences and in the past year has sustained strong staff morale in the face of external pressures.
- 5.8 An overwhelmingly strong community feel within the school derives from leadership and management that is effective in self-evaluation, setting priorities and ensuring they are achieved. The processes of self-evaluation are insightful and development planning is extremely well detailed. These systems have a significant influence on the effectiveness of the processes that drive the school's improvement forward. The staff have good opportunities to contribute towards these processes and are

involved in the process of decision making. All opinions, including those of students, are actively sought and carefully considered, and play an important part in future planning.

- 5.9 Systems to monitor teaching and learning are well embedded in practice. Senior leaders meet with subject co-ordinators to review curriculum practice and regular liaison ensures the appropriateness of the curriculum. Students' workbooks are scrutinised and staff are observed teaching within the regular appraisal system.
- 5.10 The senior leadership team keeps the governing body well informed and, with its support, systematically reviews policies and procedures and actively promotes the highest regard for the safeguarding of children.
- 5.11 The appointment of appropriate, highly qualified staff for both music and academic teaching and leadership is a significant factor in achieving the balance that is sought. At all levels, management is highly successful in securing, supporting and developing sufficient high quality staff for whom the specialist nature of the school provides significant motivation. Stringent recruitment checks ensure the suitability of all staff to work with children and all new staff undergo induction processes to ensure that they are fully aware of their roles in meeting the safeguarding and welfare needs of all students. The premises are well maintained and a dedicated team of non-teaching staff contribute significantly towards the smooth operation of the school.
- 5.12 The school successfully meets its aim to work effectively with parents and the community, and these aspects of its work have continued to be developed since the previous inspection. Parents and prospective parents have suitable access to all required information. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, parents were satisfied with most aspects of the education and care that their children receive. They particularly appreciate the progress made by their children, the way in which they are kept safe, and the information they receive about the school and its policies. Although a very small minority of parents felt that they receive insufficient information about the progress of their children, the inspection found that parents are well informed. They can access their own child's timetable, school reports and StREAM, a system for students and parents to know where a student should be at any given time. Pupil reports can be sent out to parents, while cards for achievement are also emailed to parents.
- 5.13 The school maintains excellent constructive relationships with parents. Several channels of communication by email, text and telephone enable parents and guardians to contact the school and links are effective. The head regularly sends emails to all parents and guardians updating them on school events, achievements and other relevant information. There have been on-line questionnaires seeking parents' responses, for example on music provision. Additionally, an electronic portal provides parents with information and policies and a useful frequently-asked questions section.
- 5.14 Parents have good opportunities to be actively involved in the work and progress of their children, such as an on-line parents' forum that is monitored by parents. A parent governor has been elected. Parents frequently attend concerts and other school events.
- 5.15 The clear complaints policy meets requirements and effective procedures are in place. A small minority of respondents to the parents' questionnaires expressed the view that their concerns are not handled appropriately. Inspection showed that

parents are responded to with due care, positively and sensitively, in line with the policy.

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