



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

CONCORD COLLEGE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Concord College

Full Name of College	Concord College
DfE Number	893/6020
Registered Charity Number	326279
Address	Concord College Acton Burnell Hall Shrewsbury Shropshire SY5 7PF
Telephone Number	01694 731631
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Email Address	theprincipal@concordcollegeuk.com
Head	Mr Neil Hawkins
Chair of Governors	Dr Iain Bride
Age Range	13 to 19
Total Number of Students	456
Gender of Students	Mixed (219 boys; 237 girls)
Number of Day Students	Total: 55
Number of Boarders	Total: 401 Full: 401 Weekly: 0
Inspection dates	12 Feb 2013 to 15 Feb 2013

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 April 2008.

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. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the proprietor and 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 students. The responses of parents and students to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Ruth McFarlane	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Susan Court	Team Inspector (Former Head of Professional Development, ISA school)
Mr Chris Hall	Team Inspector (Head of Department, HMC school)
Dr Stephen Wilkinson	Team Inspector (Director of Studies, HMC school)
Mr Michael Windsor	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Mrs Linda Trevethick	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding (Former Operations Manager, ISC school)
Mrs Nicola Botterill	Boarding Team Inspector (Headmistress, GSA school)
Mr Jon Hammond	Boarding Team Inspector (Housemaster, GSA school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Concord College is an international co-educational college offering day and boarding places. The college was founded in 1949 and became a charitable educational trust in 1983. Trustees form the board of governors who carry out the function of governance under a chair of the governing body supported by several committees. The college buildings were planned and developed in a 40-acre site around a period house, in a rural environment in the village of Acton Burnell, near Shrewsbury. The present principal was appointed in September 2005.
- 1.2 The college aims to promote high academic standards, dedication and mutual respect amongst its students in a safe, modern and friendly environment. Further aims include recruiting high-quality staff who are committed to the ethos of the college, providing high-quality resources and facilities so that students can fulfil their potential, and successfully preparing many students for entry to British universities.
- 1.3 The college offers admission at Years 9 and 10 and to the sixth form at Year 12. A significant number of students join Year 12 each January, for a five-term course. A small proportion of students leave the college at the end of Year 11. There are 456 students on roll currently, 219 boys and 237 girls, of whom 295 are in the sixth form (136 boys and 159 girls). The 401 boarders are accommodated in 16 boarding houses, all within close proximity to the main college buildings.
- 1.4 Significant developments since the previous inspection include a new common room in the heart of the college, extensions to the boarding provision, new science laboratories and an additional sports facility.
- 1.5 The ability profile of students entering the college is above the national average. The majority of students (395) speak English as an additional language (EAL), 108 of these receive language support. Eight students are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) but none has a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the college. The year group nomenclature used by the college and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table. The college refers to Years 9, 10 and 11 collectively as lower school. Years 12 and 13 are referred to as the sixth form.

College	NC name
Form 3	Year 9
Form 4	Year 10
Form 5	Year 11
6.1	Year 12
6.2	Year 13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The students' achievements are exceptional. They make excellent progress and reach high standards of attainment, in a range of subjects, by the time they leave. Year 11 and sixth-form students alike achieve an exceptionally high proportion of A* and A grades in public examinations. Their highly positive attitudes and excellent working relationships make a very strong contribution to their learning. The excellent teaching underpins students' success. The teachers are subject experts; they plan their lessons carefully to encourage students to develop independence, engagement and interest. Thorough assessment systems check students' progress frequently and enable staff to deal rapidly with any shortfall. A carefully crafted academic curriculum underpins the successful fulfilment of the college's aims. It is broadened by creative and aesthetic aspects and is individually matched to students' abilities and interests. This, and the rich and varied extra-curricular programme, through which students achieve considerable additional success, helps to prepare them extremely well for the next stage of their education and for future employment.
- 2.2 The students develop excellent personal skills. They behave with considerable maturity and show an exceptionally strong sense of responsibility and moral and spiritual awareness. They make an outstanding contribution to their college and to the wider community, and develop a thorough understanding of the many different cultures and traditions represented. Students benefit from excellent pastoral care, which is particularly strong in the lower school. All are given expert help to achieve their potential. Arrangements for the students' welfare, health and safety, including child protection, take every possible action to ensure that students are safe. The many boarders enjoy and benefit greatly from the excellent boarding experience that clearly enhances their confidence, self-reliance and ability to get on with others. Although, in the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of students expressed dissatisfaction with some of the arrangements, inspectors could not find any substantiating evidence to support their views.
- 2.3 The quality of leadership and management, including governance, is excellent. The governing body's oversight of the college's continuing development is thorough. Leaders and managers provide very clear educational direction for their colleagues. All know the college and the students very well, and are strongly committed to the special ethos of developing students' ability to learn for themselves and helping them to achieve high academic success. In response to the recommendation of the previous inspection, the college has developed successful strategies to monitor and review teaching and learning more effectively and to ensure that more varied teaching styles stimulate students' independent thought. This has been highly successful in improving students' outcomes each year since the previous inspection. Leaders plan to make the monitoring programme even more rigorous, so that the excellence now evident in teaching, and in tutor group leadership in the lower school, can be fully promulgated. Parents express considerable satisfaction with all aspects of the college.

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 2011.

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
1. Ensure that development planning and monitoring are robust enough to fully promulgate the excellence evident in teaching and in pastoral care.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the students' achievements and learning throughout the college is exceptional.
- 3.2 The college is highly successful in fulfilling its aim for students to achieve high academic standards that prepare them successfully for entry to university. By the time they leave, students show very high levels of knowledge and understanding in a wide range of subjects and can apply this knowledge very competently to new situations. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Mathematical problem solving and logical reasoning skills are particularly well developed, serving students well in many subjects including science and the humanities. Students demonstrate high levels of skill in speaking, literacy and numeracy. First-class competence in information and communication technology (ICT) is evident in students' frequent use of computer-based resources in lessons to support learning.
- 3.3 Students achieve considerable success in a range of non-academic activities. Groups and individuals organise large-scale excursions, such as for Chinese New Year, and charitable events. The regular college magazine is produced without staff assistance. Concord students reached the national finals of the MACE debating competition, and fourth place in Yale University public-speaking competition. Concord pianists and violinists have won and been finalists, respectively, in a regional concerto competition recently. The excellence of students' artwork and the buzz of activity in this department demonstrate high-quality creative achievement. Many students play a variety of sports to a high level, particularly basketball and badminton, and individually, nationally, in show jumping, skiing and swimming. A Concord student won a place representing Europe in a recent World 'Go' strategy-game competition.
- 3.4 The following attainment analysis uses the national data for the years 2010 to 2012. All results show an upward trajectory over the period. Results at GCSE are high in relation to the national average for maintained schools and above the average for maintained selective schools. Four-fifths of the GCSE grades awarded are A* or A. Results in International GCSE are above worldwide norms. A-level results are exceptionally high in relation to the national average for maintained colleges. Three-quarters of the grades are at A* or A. Students go on to study a wide range of courses, many at universities with highly selective entrance. Seventeen students won places at Oxford or Cambridge in 2012. Students are also successful in achieving places at international universities, in Hong Kong and the United States.
- 3.5 About three-quarters of the students enter at an early stage of speaking English. Students' high performance in public examinations indicates the exceptional progress they make, due to the excellent levels of support they receive. This level of progress was replicated in the lessons observed and work scrutinised and applies also to the small proportion of students who have SEND, who are helped to overcome their barriers to learning though individual help readily provided. Higher-attaining students make very good progress towards the challenging targets they have been set.
- 3.6 Students' enjoy learning and display extremely positive attitudes, working diligently together in lessons. They participate fully and enthusiastically in activities in the classroom and beyond. They learn to work independently, and can express and

justify their views in a clear and logical manner. Students take great pride in all they do, evident in all aspects of their demeanour and in their work.

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

- 3.7 The quality of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 Maintaining the quality noted at the previous inspection, the curriculum supports the acquisition of high-quality literacy, numeracy, speaking and listening skills throughout the college, and also contributes significantly to students' scientific, human and social development. Much thought has gone into designing a curriculum which supports students' strengths, while offering a breadth of choice from suitably rigorous subjects, in line with the college's aims. For example, students take compulsory separate sciences for GCSE, and may also opt for accounting AS level, and statistics GCSE; nearly every student in the college studies mathematics. IGCSE is offered in a range of subjects including Hindi as a second language, Korean as a first language, Chinese, French, physics and geography. The latter, and history, have become increasingly popular A-level choices. A good number of other subjects, including Japanese and other languages such as Latin, are available, largely through lessons taught outside the main timetable. ICT is used profusely to support learning. Art and music are well provided for, as are sports of many disciplines, through well-equipped facilities including squash courts and a swimming pool.
- 3.9 Students' personal development is enhanced by an extensive and highly successful personal, social and health education programme, taught to lower school students in groups by their tutor, and through a lecture series in the sixth form.
- 3.10 The curriculum is well supported by excellent academic resources such as the library, which is an attractive, popular modern space. The computer-based Virtual Learning Environment offers excellent features, such as the 'Bigger Read', for extra-curricular reading covering a variety of subjects. This is used particularly effectively to support the late-entry sixth formers, giving them the chance to catch up on missed work before their arrival in January.
- 3.11 The curriculum is thoughtfully designed to cater for students from a variety of backgrounds, most of whom have EAL. The strength and flexibility of the provision available at every age group for helping students to become fluent in the language, and the independent way of working that is promoted, and the rapid progress that students make as a result, is integral to their success in all the subjects they study. This flexibility applies also to the few who have SEND, who thrive as a result. The success of the five-term sixth-form programme is evident through the high-level results achieved by the students. They are very well catered for by a combination of dedicated classes and extra teaching that meets their needs precisely.
- 3.12 The careers department provides an excellent source of advice for entry to universities both in the UK and abroad. Designated and experienced members of staff provide specialist advice for United States and Hong Kong universities, as well as for a range of popular courses here and abroad, such as medicine and law.
- 3.13 Students benefit greatly from the very many extra-curricular opportunities available, ranging from bee-keeping to basketball, and Chinese to chamber music. An unusually large number of the activities offered provide support or enrichment for academic subjects. Besides this formal teacher-led programme, there are several high profile student-led activities, such as the college newspaper '*Concord*

Columns, which offer significant opportunities for students to develop leadership and other independent learning skills.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.14 The quality of teaching is excellent overall.
- 3.15 Teaching is highly effective in promoting students' progress, throughout the college, and fully supports the college's aims. Teachers know their students well. Lessons are well planned and tailored precisely to students' needs. Through expert subject knowledge, teachers pass on their confidence and enthusiasm through challenging and exciting lessons, using an excellent range of resources. They use modern technology as a matter of course to relate topics to the current social context, such as a sixth-form lesson on linguistics which included 'text-speak'.
- 3.16 In the best lessons all students are challenged and stretched and this has resulted in exceptionally high levels of achievement in public examinations. Teaching is particularly successful because staff understand and quickly meet the needs of the many students with EAL. As a result, all achieve GCSE English language grade A*-C, and many go on to achieve AS level in English language, often with excellent grades.
- 3.17 Teachers encourage students to be fully engaged with their learning while managing time very well. For example in a lower school music lesson, students worked enthusiastically, independently or in pairs, using ICT competently in composing and arranging in the style of popular music, including 'hip-hop' and 'beat-box'. They were given plenty of time to be individually creative; frequent checks on their progress ensured that time was used well.
- 3.18 Students with SEND are provided with an individual education plan so that the right teaching strategies can be applied. They contribute by deciding their own targets in consultation with specialist staff. One-to-one support ensures that this group of students makes the same rapid progress as their peers. Teaching also provides very well for the more able and those the college regards as gifted and talented, for instance in art, or music, or a sport.
- 3.19 The regular assessment programme on Saturday mornings, by which each student is tested on each subject every three weeks in Years 10 and 11, and every two weeks in the sixth form, has proved to be highly effective in monitoring and improving students' achievement. The system is rigorous and is regarded very highly by both students and teachers, especially in its strength in detecting problems early. In addition, the written marking of students' work is diagnostic and constructive. Target setting is frequent and helps lead progress forward.
- 3.20 Progress on the recommendations of the previous inspection has lifted the quality of teaching from good to excellent since then. As a result, teachers use more varied teaching styles and techniques and there is a universal focus on stimulating students' independence in thinking and learning. Excellent examples include the AS-Level Extended Project, which gives students the opportunity to develop independent learning skills through research and investigation, and the independent learning evident in a GCSE physics lesson on radio isotopes, when students, working in groups of three, researched different facets of the topic.
- 3.21 In many departments there is effective sharing of good practice and in some, such as the highly effective English department, the most successful methods are also

shared through team teaching. However, teaching styles and methodology are dealt with at departmental level rather than college-wide and while this has led to excellent teaching overall, this form of monitoring does not offer rigour or enable full sharing of the best inspirational teaching across the college.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 The students show excellent personal development at all levels, fully meeting the college's aims and maintaining the quality noted at the previous inspection.
- 4.3 The students' spiritual development is excellent. They develop as self-confident, articulate and tolerant young people, shown by their full involvement in all the college offers, and in the atmosphere of fun and enjoyment that is a key feature of college life, promoted alongside the hard work demanded and willingly undertaken. They often demonstrate an emotional maturity well beyond their years. They show strong understanding and appreciation of their own and each others' sets of values and beliefs. The beauty of the college buildings and the rural surroundings contribute significantly to the spiritual dimension of life and students confirm their appreciation of this environment.
- 4.4 The students develop excellent moral awareness based on a strong sense of right and wrong, reflected in their exemplary behaviour and caring attitudes. Students often devise, organise and lead assemblies containing a well-articulated moral message, understood by givers and listeners alike. An excellent example is the clever, creative film that sixth formers made to promote appreciation of feelings, which delighted all in a sixth-form assembly during the inspection. Students fully understand and subscribe to college rules. Their behaviour is exemplary, seen during the inspection and noted from records. Students' work to raise money for those less fortunate than themselves is a key feature of the college through charity clubs they run themselves. The Outreach Society and Charity Club have raised funds, for instance, for schools in India, a children's orphanage in Uganda, and, closer to home, a local hospice.
- 4.5 The students have exceptional social skills. They are confident, warm and caring, both towards each other and staff, and towards visitors to the college. They undertake many and various positions of responsibility, leading societies, unions and recreational activities with great maturity. For instance, they run a model United Nations group of around 60 students from all year groups. The group participates in conferences here and abroad, developing social skills and moral understanding to a high level. Recent discussions focused on globalisation and the ethics of the arms trade. The Medics Society enables aspiring medical students to discuss medical morals and dilemmas, linking with former Concord students who are now at university on medical courses, and also with practising doctors. Students organise and perform musical and theatrical productions. Students know well how to live in a democratic society, learning about the democratic style of government, and public services and institutions, through the comprehensive personal, social and health education programme and through the activities of the student council and food committee.
- 4.6 The students' cultural development is excellent. Through the varied art, music and theatrical programme they come to understand the differences of culture between east and west, and show excellent appreciation and awareness of the different cultures and traditions. The college makes excellent use of the experiences of the many overseas students, who enjoy sharing stories of their religion and culture with both students and staff. Students thoroughly embrace and value attitudes and

lifestyles that differ from their own and learn and live harmoniously together. Several of their comments in the pre-inspection questionnaires expressed their joy and appreciation of the diversity of the college population.

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

- 4.7 The quality of pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 Academic and pastoral staff provide a very high standard of support and extremely effective guidance for individual students, in accordance with the college's aims, and maintaining the quality noted at the previous inspection. The centralised organisation of pastoral care ensures that every student is very well supported by a tutor group system, of particularly high quality in the lower school. Although very strong, with many extra subject 'clinics' and academic support, there is relatively less cohesion and consistency to the 32-group sixth-form tutor system. The college has this under review.
- 4.9 Relationships are extremely positive at all levels. Older students have mentoring responsibilities to the younger students and all are known well by staff. Students report that they feel very well looked-after and valued. Food is nutritious and there is plenty of choice. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of students expressed dissatisfaction with the food. However, the many students with whom this was discussed felt that the college goes to great lengths to listen and improve food. Students are encouraged to eat healthily. Eating habits are monitored by staff. Health is also encouraged through the availability of the extensive sporting facilities available until late in the evening.
- 4.10 The college successfully promotes students' good behaviour. Students understand what is expected of them both in and out of the classroom. They report that bullying is rare and staff respond quickly and effectively, while taking account of any related difficulty or disability. Students have many ways of expressing their views and influencing college decisions. The student council and the food committee are both formal ways of seeking the views of students, as well as the annual student questionnaire which covers every aspect of college life.
- 4.11 The college has an appropriate and recently updated three-year plan to improve access for students with special educational needs or disabilities.

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

- 4.12 The arrangements for the students' welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 4.13 The safeguarding policy is comprehensive and implemented rigorously. Regular and effective child protection training, including internet safety, is provided for all students and members of staff, and is updated regularly. All visitors to the college are carefully vetted. CCTV surveillance cameras are located appropriately.
- 4.14 The arrangements have improved since the previous inspection. All necessary action is taken to reduce the risk of fire. Regular fire evacuation drills are carried out and are carefully monitored and recorded. Fire alarms and extinguishers are well placed and regularly checked, with detailed records kept, and fire exit doors are well signposted. Comprehensive risk assessments cover buildings and grounds, particular subject areas and the wide range of external visits. All electrical equipment is checked routinely by a qualified maintenance staff.

- 4.15 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire a small minority of students did not feel they are well looked after when ill or injured. Inspection evidence did not support this view. There are excellent arrangements for dealing with students who feel unwell or those who may be injured. The medical centre provides clean and attractive accommodation; the medical centre staff are fully qualified and able to issue a wide variety of over-the-counter medicines where necessary. Meticulous records are kept. Local doctors visit the college twice weekly and students can visit a local surgery if necessary. First aid kits are located in convenient places around the college, including in each boarding house. The locations are listed in the comprehensive first aid policy. Many of the staff have up-to-date first aid training and a large number are trained to the higher level. Two members of staff are trained in counselling.
- 4.16 The admission and attendance registers are accurately maintained and stored, and follow-up checks on absent students are carried out promptly and effectively.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.17 The overall quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.18 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. Boarders' personal development is a college priority and boarders are happy and confident. They show genuine care for others and are friendly and articulate. Through the student council their views and opinions influence the running of the boarding community. The houseparents ensure that boarders' excellent personal development is fostered in a congenial atmosphere. Students can mix and socialise freely in college recreation areas in the evenings. Relationships are excellent; boarders develop high levels of confidence, self-reliance and integrity. They accept responsibility readily and develop very strong leadership skills. Many take lead roles in college life as either prefects or monitors who are heavily involved in clubs, societies, events and excursions, making a very strong contribution to boarding. Boarders acknowledge that their experience at the college is rich and exciting; they are very busy, yet calm and relaxed.
- 4.19 The quality of boarding provision and care in all sixteen houses is excellent. The houseparents are experienced, committed and dedicated. They ensure that boarders feel very safe and secure. Records and information about boarders is held centrally and the comprehensive system facilitates effective and prompt communication among boarding and academic staff and with parents, which makes for seamless links between boarders' boarding and academic lives. All houses are well maintained and equipped to a very high standard, being safe and secure; with warm bedrooms that are well lit, spacious and comfortable, with lockable doors and a safe for the storage of valuables. Boarders express a high level of appreciation and satisfaction with their accommodation. There are plenty of showers and toilets. Rooms are cleaned daily and laundry washed weekly. Boys and girls are accommodated in separate houses and each house has a small, well-equipped kitchen for the preparation of drinks and snacks. Most common room space is on the main campus either in the 'Old Chapel' or in a spacious relaxation area entitled the 'West End', developed since the previous inspection. A selection of newspapers and magazines is provided.
- 4.20 Most of the many parents and students who responded to the boarding questions in the questionnaire are extremely satisfied with the care and provision at the college. Inspectors found no evidence to corroborate the views expressed, in some of the students' responses, about poor quality of food or lack of choice. All meals are

taken in the main dining room. The new 'deli bar' is very popular and provides an excellent and varied buffet. Those with special dietary requirements are well catered for. Fruit and water are available at any time. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of students felt that they did not find it easy to contact family and friends from outside school. Inspectors found parents can and do contact their children easily and vice versa, by telephone or email. Similarly, the few comments from students that there is not enough to do at evenings and weekends was not supported by inspection evidence. Regular excursions, including trips to the cinema and the theatre enhance the boarding experience. The sport and recreation facilities available each day and evening on the college campus are extensive.

- 4.21 The very comprehensive induction programme helps new boarders settle smoothly and quickly into college life. Each boarder has a personal academic tutor and there are two trained college counsellors, called listeners. An independent listener, who lives locally, is introduced to students and is readily available. All houses clearly display comprehensive information about emergency numbers and contact details for various support agencies. The live-in house staff can be contacted during the night or students can call a member of the night security team. Appropriate risk assessments are undertaken and boarders are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions.
- 4.22 Care for boarders' welfare and safety is excellent, an improvement since the previous inspection. There is an effective, clear and comprehensive policy. The excellent anti-bullying policy and zero tolerance approach across the boarding and academic experience promote a mutually supportive atmosphere in the main college and the houses. Boarders know when and how to report any concerns. They are extremely confident with regard to speaking with house and academic staff. The medical centre is appropriately staffed and provides excellent care. Male and female doctors are available. All medication is correctly and appropriately stored and dispensed, with parental consent in place. The arrangements for self-medication are effective and confidentiality is respected. Records kept are clear and comprehensive. Each house has a lockable first aid box and a careful log is kept. Students can consult the college counsellors confidentially. There are regular well-logged fire drills in the boarding houses at various times. Boarders are encouraged to be fit and healthy. Many ride bicycles around the extensive campus. Each night of the week a comprehensive range of physical activities is available. Effective systems are in place for signing in and out and boarders sign to record where they are going. College staff are aware of boarders' whereabouts at all times. The 'missing child' policy is clear and well understood.
- 4.23 The leadership and management of boarding are excellent and have improved since the previous inspection. Boarding aims and principles are clearly set out and are met in practice. Robust routines and systems are consistent under the direction of the very strong pastoral team that oversees all boarding matters and ensures that communication is effective and that outcomes are extremely positive. Frequent and easy communication with parents is facilitated by the use of email. The boarding leadership team meets regularly to review provision and evaluate its quality, and they ensure that change and development impacts positively on the boarders. Governors monitor the boarding provision meticulously.
- 4.24 The college responded fully and promptly to the recommendations of the previous Ofsted boarding inspection. Consequently, arrangements for boarders who are ill to be cared for are meticulous; the confidentiality of boarders' personal information is

protected; boarders know which member of staff is responsible for them at all times and have the means to contact that member of staff, day or night.

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 close and effective oversight of the college to ensure that it meets its aims to the highest degree, an improvement since the previous inspection. The range of experience and expertise provided by governors, especially for finance and education, ensures that high-quality staffing and learning resources are maintained, and support the college exceptionally well. They know the college well and attend many college events: staff are invited to attend quarterly dinners with governors. Governors have been energetic and positive in their support for the college's recent expansion and in the formulation of ambitious but realistic plans for future development, and are determined to ensure that the college retains its special character as an international college where students are nurtured as individuals and prepared fully to benefit from a university education.
- 5.3 Governors provide much valued support for senior leaders, whom they regularly meet on an informal basis, in addition to the formal programme of meetings. Governors have specific areas of responsibility, for example safeguarding. They receive and review reports from the various sections of the college, and closely monitor the quality of provision, and outcomes for students, including their educational standards and achievements, personal development and well-being. Governors discharge their responsibilities for child protection, welfare, health and safety exceptionally well. College policies are thoroughly and regularly reviewed and approved by relevant committees. This includes those for safeguarding children, which are thoroughly reviewed annually.

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

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.5 The high standard of leadership provided by senior and middle managers demonstrates their very strong and successful commitment to furthering the aims of the college and is an improvement since the previous inspection. Very clear direction from the top has ensured that a specific and special ethos has evolved in the college that is focused on ensuring that every student adapts quickly, to what is, often, for them, a new way of learning. The priority to develop students' independent thinking and students taking responsibility for their own learning is spreading through the college and enabling students to develop high levels of confidence and self-esteem. This has led to students' exceptional achievement and to their high levels of personal skills. The staff handbook is comprehensive and gives staff very clear guidance on how to realise the college's objectives. The commitment of all staff to fulfilling the college's aims is clearly reflected in the high quality of teaching, the excellent pastoral care provided for students and the exceptional outcomes for students.
- 5.6 The senior team is extremely responsive to change, and plans carefully and systematically for the future. Its members are highly reflective in their practice, providing a caring, supportive and stimulating environment for staff as well as

- students. Leaders delegate responsibilities effectively so that communication across the college is excellent. They have implemented detailed policies and procedures for all aspects of college life which ensure the smooth running of the college and the provision of an excellent educational experience for the students. All aspects relating to the safeguarding of students are discharged efficiently.
- 5.7 Staff are very clear, through the principal's 'hands on' approach and regular verbal checks, that the focus is fully on students' progress. However, the printed development plans do not focus firmly enough on how staff, departments and the college might continually raise students' achievement. Leaders' self-review is astute and accurate, being based on detailed analysis of students' performance and with a clear focus on continuous improvement. Through this, plans are in hand to make sure the excellent pastoral care remains at the highest level through tighter organisation of the tutor system in the sixth form.
- 5.8 The senior team, working closely with the governing body, has been very successful in recruiting, supporting, developing and motivating high-quality staff. Very close attention is paid to ensuring that staff, including leaders and managers, are suitably and appropriately trained for their roles in meeting the welfare, health and safety needs of all students. Staff who are relatively new to the college say that their induction, as well as the ongoing support they receive from all their colleagues, has helped them to adapt quickly to college routines so that they can carry out their roles effectively from a very early stage. Leaders and managers in all areas of the college provide clear feedback to staff through a wide-ranging but sometimes informal system of monitoring, appraisal, professional development and departmental review. The systems are effective and have led to continuing improvement in the quality of the education and care the college provides for the students. The process is too informal to ensure that this state of affairs continues indefinitely and that the excellent teaching practice evident is spread fully across the college.
- 5.9 Managers ensure that the spacious grounds, buildings and facilities are exceptionally well maintained, so that they provide an extremely attractive and stimulating setting in which students learn and develop. This, and the success of the college, is due to excellent organisation and the commitment of staff at every level. Educational and administrative staff provide strong support for students' learning and personal development.
- 5.10 The excellent links with parents have improved since the previous inspection. They enable the college to maintain highly productive relationships in accordance with its aims, and parents are extremely happy with the college's provision for their children. The parents' responses to pre-inspection questionnaires showed that they are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of their children's education. They are particularly pleased with the standard of teaching and extra-curricular activities that the college offers, the information that they receive regarding their child's progress, the pastoral care given by the college and the high standards of behaviour achieved by the students. Inspectors concur with the many parental comments referring to students being very happy and that the college's environment is one in which a high quality of education is provided and students' personal development fully fostered.
- 5.11 Parents receive all required information. The college website is particularly informative as is its social networking page. An excellent quarterly newsletter contains information on a wide variety of college activities and achievements. The comprehensive parent handbook provides all necessary information. Parents are very happy with the detailed, comprehensive and frequent reports about their

children's progress, which are sent out electronically. The 'first impressions' report is particularly appreciated, issued during the initial stages of students' settling into the college. Many of the parents highlighted the way in which their children are known as individuals by staff, which has promoted their children's self-confidence and independence. Each year parents' dinners are held at Concord and overseas, in successful attempts to bring the international family community together.

- 5.12 The college handles the concerns of parents with due care and sensitivity. The procedure for resolving complaints is clearly set out in the handbook. Complaints are rare and timely responses are embedded in the college's procedures.

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