



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**CLAYESMORE SCHOOL**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Full Name of School       | <b>Clayesmore School</b>  |
| DfE Number                | <b>835/6009</b>   |
| Registered Charity Number | <b>306214</b>   |
| Address                   | <b>Clayesmore School<br/>Iwerne Minster<br/>Blandford Forum<br/>Dorset<br/>DT11 8LL</b> |
| Telephone Number          | <b>01747 812122</b>   |
| Fax Number                | <b>01747 813187</b>   |
| Email Address             | <b>headmaster@clayesmore.com</b>  |
| Head                      | <b>Mr Martin Cooke</b>  |
| Chair of Governors        | <b>Dr Richard Willis</b>  |
| Age Range                 | <b>13 to 18</b>   |
| Total Number of Pupils    | <b>427</b>  |
| Gender of Pupils          | <b>Mixed (264 boys; 163 girls)</b>  |
| Number of Day Pupils      | Total: <b>192</b>   |
| Number of Boarders        | Total: <b>235</b><br>Full: <b>235</b> Weekly: <b>0</b>                                  |
| Inspection dates          | <b>24 Jan 2012 to 27 Jan 2012</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 October 2007.

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 through the following link: [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Search for Independent School Standards Regulations and enter date 2010, to find Schedule 1, Parts 1-7.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Equality Act 2010 (including race, gender, special educational needs and disability).
- (ii) The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, banning corporal punishment.

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

Under Government arrangements, the inspection of boarding became an integrated part of ISI inspections from 1 September 2011. 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. Boarding inspections were previously carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills. The relevant Ofsted report refers to an inspection in October 2009, and can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) under Children's social care/Boarding school.

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.

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. The grades used by ISI and Ofsted are different to 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 for Achievement the descriptor 'exceptional' is available in addition.** 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 and other 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

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Mr Robin Gaff       | Reporting Inspector   |
| Mr Richard Biggs    | Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)                         |
| Mr George Fisher    | Team Inspector (Former Head, HMC school)                        |
| Mr Andrew Gist      | Team Inspector (Director of IB, HMC school)                     |
| Mrs Fiona Hallworth | Team Inspector<br>(Director of External Relations, HMC school)  |
| Mr Paul Spillane    | Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding                            |
| Mrs Alison Scott    | Team Inspector for Boarding<br>(Former Deputy Head, GSA school) |

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Clayesmore School was founded in Enfield by Alexander Devine in 1896, moving to its present site at Iwerne Minster, near Blandford Forum in Dorset, in 1933. Clayesmore Preparatory School moved to the same site in 1974. There are currently 264 boys and 163 girls on roll, 235 of whom are boarders. The school occupies a spacious site, the focus of which is the village's original manor house, which contains offices, the library, the dining hall and one of the five houses. One boys' house and the art department are situated in the centre of the village. Most pupils are of white British heritage, but many other cultural backgrounds are represented in the school. Day pupils travel up to thirty miles to reach the school. Most boarders live within two hours' drive of the school. Fifty-seven boarders come from overseas. The school's affairs are overseen by a board of governors, the Council of Clayesmore.
- 1.2 A high proportion of pupils who join the school at the age of 13 come from the school's own and other independent preparatory schools. Pupils' ability on entry to the school is broadly in line with national averages, and the ability of pupils entering the sixth form in Year 12 is similar. Overall, the ability range of pupils is wide. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs, and a further one hundred and fifty-four receive additional help for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in the learning support centre. Seventeen of the boarders from overseas receive additional support because they are learning English as an additional language (EAL).
- 1.3 The school's mission is to develop the unique gifts of every boy and girl. It aims for every individual to be counted and valued, and for all to have an opportunity to be proud of their talents and achievements.
- 1.4 Since the previous full inspection, the school has refurbished some of its boarding and other accommodation, including the library and sixth-form common room, and has introduced a new uniform for its younger pupils. There have also been changes in its management structure, including the move to all-female management of the girls' boarding houses.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

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

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

- 2.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent. Overall, pupils make good, and in many cases, excellent progress in reaching standards of attainment, in a range of subjects, that are above average by the time they leave the school. Pupils' highly positive attitudes and the excellent working relationships they establish with one another and with their teachers contribute very effectively to their learning. The quality of teaching is excellent. Teachers know their subjects extremely well, and plan their lessons carefully to include a variety of activities that succeed in engaging and maintaining pupils' interest and in enabling them to progress. The school has established excellent systems for assessing pupils' progress, although there is some inconsistency in the marking of pupils' work. The broad academic curriculum is well tailored to match pupils' abilities and interests. Pupils benefit from an extremely rich and varied programme of extra-curricular and enrichment activities, and achieve considerable distinction in a wide variety of non-academic pursuits. This helps to prepare them extremely well for the next stage of their education and for employment.
- 2.2 The quality of pupils' personal development is excellent. They behave extremely well, and show a strong sense of responsibility and moral and spiritual awareness. They make an outstanding contribution to their school and to the wider community, and develop a very good understanding of different cultures and traditions. Pupils benefit from excellent pastoral care. All are known and valued as individuals, and they are helped to achieve their potential, in accordance with the school's aims. Pupils have good opportunities to express their views, and know that these will be considered. Meticulous arrangements for the pupils' welfare, health and safety, including child protection, ensure that pupils are safe. Those pupils who board benefit greatly from this experience, which clearly enhances their confidence, self-reliance and ability to get on with others. They enjoy being part of a boarding community, and their experiences are enhanced by the school's provision of an excellent variety of activities in the evening and at weekends.
- 2.3 The governing body provides excellent oversight of the school's continuing development, and brings to it a wide range of expertise. The school has responded effectively to implement the recommendation made in the previous inspection report by continuing to develop a wide range of strategies to enable all pupils to achieve their academic potential. The quality of leadership and management is excellent. Leaders and managers at all levels know the school and the pupils very well, and are strongly committed to improving further the quality of provision and of outcomes for pupils. They provide very clear educational direction for their colleagues, who are held firmly to account but feel empowered and very well supported. Parents express considerable satisfaction with their children's experience of the school, and with the quality of information provided, including about their children's progress.

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

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

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is available through the link described in the Preface)

- 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 greater consistency in the quality of marking of pupils' work, by continuing to share the best practice across the school.



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

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning throughout the school is excellent.
- 3.2 The school is highly successful in fulfilling its mission to develop the unique gifts of every boy and girl. Pupils show very good levels of knowledge and understanding in a wide range of subjects. They can skilfully apply what they have learned to new situations, draw on their good general knowledge of the world around them to interpret new information appropriately and can accurately analyse data presented in different forms. They show the ability to link cause and effect very well in subjects such as science and the humanities. Pupils demonstrate high levels of skill in speaking, literacy and numeracy. Their competence in information and communication technology (ICT) is evident in their skilful use of computer-based resources in a variety of subjects.
- 3.3 Pupils achieve considerable success in a range of non-academic activities. The orienteering team has won national competitions, and many pupils have represented their county, region and country in various sports, including hockey and cricket. The Combined Cadet Force (CCF) has gained county awards, and the school is recognised as a centre of excellence for its Young Enterprise programme. Pupils show their initiative and innovation skills in cross-curricular activities, such as the 'electric car' project, which has gained national recognition. The excellence of pupils' artwork on display around the school demonstrates its success in developing their talents in this area.
- 3.4 Pupils' excellent achievements prepare them extremely well for future study and employment. When they leave school, they go on to study a wide range of courses in higher education, some at universities with highly demanding entrance requirements. Others begin careers that enable them to develop their talents further, and to make an extremely valuable contribution to the community.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2008 to 2010. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results at GCSE have been above the national average for maintained schools. Results at International GCSE mathematics have been similar to worldwide norms in 2009, and higher than worldwide norms in 2010. A-level results have been above the national average for maintained schools. In 2011, the proportion of pupils gaining the highest grades at both GCSE and A level rose substantially, maintaining the rising trend in pupils' attainment over the last ten years.
- 3.6 Their performance in public examinations indicates that pupils make good progress from their starting points. Pupils' achievement in the lessons observed and work scrutinised showed that many of them are now making outstanding progress. This applies especially to the high proportion of pupils who have SEND, who are helped by the school to overcome, in some cases, very considerable barriers to learning. Pupils with EAL also make at least good progress, owing to the excellent support which they receive. Higher attaining pupils make very good progress towards the challenging targets they have been set.
- 3.7 Pupils display extremely positive attitudes to learning. They work diligently and extremely well together in lessons, and are very keen to participate in classroom

activities. They learn to work independently, express their views coherently, and can justify and support these in a clear and logical manner. Pupils enjoy their learning, and take great pride in what they do, which is evident from the careful presentation of their written work.

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

- 3.8 The quality of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 Throughout the school, pupils have the opportunity to follow a wide range of subjects. They can pursue their interests and develop new ones through an extensive extra-curricular and enrichment programme. The school amply fulfils its aim for pupils to meet the challenges beyond school, whether at university or at work. The curriculum provides pupils with a broad base, with increasing flexibility as they progress through the school. In Year 9, pupils study a broad core of subjects, including a choice of modern foreign languages. An imaginative carousel of subjects enables them to study an extensive range of subjects, including media, critical thinking and home economics. A comprehensive personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, taught by specialists, covers key relevant issues and is well regarded by pupils. Additionally, a sensitive approach to setting means that pupils are appropriately placed according to ability whilst aiming to ensure that they will not always find themselves in the bottom sets. This approach is fundamental to the school's success in developing pupils' self-esteem and confidence in their own abilities. In Years 10 and 11, the options system continues to give pupils a good breadth in their study and enables them to gain a very good range of qualifications at GCSE. In the sixth form, pupils benefit from a suitable range of A-level courses, carefully tailored to meet the needs of individuals. This is enhanced by well-devised careers programmes, as well as extensive enrichment opportunities which include theatre and art gallery visits, poetry events, foreign exchanges, lectures, fieldwork and academic societies. The curriculum is very well tailored to match the needs, interests and abilities of a wide range of pupils, including those who have SEND.
- 3.10 Pupils of all abilities benefit from the excellent quality of the extra-curricular provision. An extensive programme of activities is provided on two afternoons each week, and is compulsory for all pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11. There is a varied programme of activities organised specifically for the sixth form, and many eagerly contested inter-house competitions take place in sport, drama and debating. Pupils' opinion informs the range of options on offer, and there is sufficient variety to accommodate all interests; pupils greatly value these activities. The sporting programme includes major team games such as hockey, rugby, cricket and netball, along with less common pursuits such as orienteering. All pupils are expected to take part in sport, and a high proportion represent their school in competitive fixtures. Pupils' personal development benefits considerably from activities such as the extremely well-run CCF, Young Enterprise and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award programmes, in which large numbers of pupils participate. There are numerous musical ensembles and orchestras, catering for a wide range of musical interests and levels of ability. A major drama production is staged every term. Many pupils also benefit from speech and drama lessons. A rich programme of academic, sports and cultural overseas tours helps to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world. They also benefit from the school's good links with the local community, including a local special school.

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

- 3.11 The overall quality of teaching is excellent.
- 3.12 Teaching is highly effective in promoting pupils' progress and fulfils the school's aim to foster in them a love of learning. In a high proportion of the lessons observed, the teaching was of a high standard, and in other lessons it was rarely less than good. Generally small class sizes and very well-planned lessons promote progress for all pupils, addressing the needs of those who have been identified as gifted and talented as well as lower attaining pupils.
- 3.13 Teachers' lesson planning is enhanced by their good use of detailed assessment information about each pupil. An example of this was a Year 12 English lesson, where a sophisticated discussion of Keats's imagery in *The Eve of St Agnes*, led by the most able pupils, was then humorously reinforced for the whole class with the use of cartoon storyboards of the poem's narrative. Pupils with EAL and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are extremely well supported by their teachers, and so are fully included in lesson activities.
- 3.14 Teachers are well qualified and highly committed, and have excellent subject knowledge. Teaching is generally characterised by generosity, kindness and compassionate care for every pupil. There is a friendly yet courteous relationship between pupils and staff, which promotes an encouraging environment for learning. Teachers create an atmosphere in which pupils feel secure and are mutually supportive and respectful of the contributions of their peers. They ensure that pupils are not afraid to ask for clarification or help if they need it, and pupils respond very well when it is given. Pupils are extremely appreciative of the extent to which teachers are prepared to give them extra help outside normal lesson times. Teachers maintain a brisk pace in lessons and include a variety of tasks, mixing collaborative and individual work in ways that foster pupils' engagement and enjoyment. Tasks are well chosen and resources imaginatively employed, as seen in a Year 10 geography class where some pupils used everyday objects to construct models of dams and reservoirs, while others used ICT very well to prepare a visual presentation on water use. Teachers' classroom management is excellent, with high expectations of behaviour. Pupils are set an appropriate volume of work for their ages and abilities, and homework tasks enable them to consolidate and to build upon what they have learned in class.
- 3.15 The school has developed highly sophisticated and extremely effective systems for monitoring and assessing individual pupils' progress, and for setting them challenging but realistic targets for achievement. This enables teachers quickly to identify any pupils who are at risk of underperforming, and to address the causes of this, often by ensuring that they receive very well-targeted specialist support. Marking is generally thorough, accurate and frequent, and offers pupils advice for further improvement. As a result, pupils know how well they are progressing in relation to their targets. Examples of excellent practice in the assessment of pupils' work were seen, including the use of pupil self-assessment grids alongside teachers' marking. Frequently, teachers give informative oral feedback when work is returned. However, such excellent practice is not consistent across all teaching. On occasion, teachers' comments are not sufficiently detailed to ensure that pupils know exactly what steps they need to take in order to improve the quality of their work.

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

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

- 4.1 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 The school successfully achieves its aims of developing pupils' sense of spirituality and of encouraging a full awareness of moral issues and responsibilities that they face in school life. Pupils demonstrate excellent spiritual awareness that is encouraged by the underlying Christian ethos of the school. They participate actively in both chapel services and assemblies, using them as opportunities to become better informed and to reflect on their own sense of identity and self-worth. They also show an awareness of non-material aspects of life in many areas of the curriculum, including art and music. A noteworthy example was the excitement and interest with which they listened to a pupil playing various piano pieces in assembly. Pupils demonstrate great maturity in their approach to school life. They consider values and beliefs thoughtfully in religious studies, the PSHE programme and tutorial periods, as, for example, when one group of pupils discussed, very perceptively and in some depth, moral and social issues arising from misuse of the internet and mobile telephones.
- 4.3 Pupils show a keen moral awareness. They are unfailingly polite, have a well-developed sense of right and wrong, and are supportive of the school's code of conduct and sanctions policy. They fully understand that certain rules are necessary for the effective running of the school community. Pupils undertake a wide variety of leadership roles. They act as school and house prefects, support their peers and help the staff, supervising mealtimes, preps and other daily routines. They see themselves as the bridge between staff and other pupils, and are highly conscientious in carrying out their duties. Their extensive involvement in community service and fund raising for charities helps pupils to understand and respond to the needs of those from disadvantaged backgrounds, or those who have suffered from the effects of natural disasters.
- 4.4 The behaviour of pupils in lessons, in extra-curricular activities, in boarding houses and around the campus shows a highly developed sense of respect for each other and for the staff who teach and look after them. They respond positively to the culture of mutual respect and trust which exists across the school. Their sense of social duty was also evident when pupils in Year 12 taught cooking skills to a group of autistic pupils who visit the school weekly. All pupils involved benefited a great deal from this experience.
- 4.5 The pupils develop a strong understanding of different traditions through the many opportunities the school provides. These have included exchanges with France, Germany and Spain, a programme to raise global awareness for pupils in Year 9, a product design day, when those in Year 10 were required to present elements of marketing in another language, and an introduction to Korean cooking, presented by a parent.
- 4.6 Pupils are mature and articulate, proud of their school and eager to benefit from the many opportunities presented to them. They feel extremely well prepared for the next stage of their lives and ready to meet the challenges of the future.

#### **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 very high standards of support and good, effective guidance for individual pupils, in accordance with the school's aims. Pupils with specific additional needs are extremely well supported in preparing for the transition to higher education and future employment. Relationships between older and younger pupils are very supportive. Pupils are well known to all teaching and house staff, and there are excellent channels for formal and informal communication concerning academic and welfare matters. As a result, pupils feel extremely well looked after and valued, and those who are new to the school feel welcomed and settle in easily.
- 4.9 Pupils are positively encouraged to be healthy. Careful monitoring ensures that attendance at meals, and well-balanced menus, which the pupils enjoy, foster healthy eating habits. Regular exercise is a feature in the life of pupils, and the compulsory games and activities for younger pupils lay very good foundations for the future.
- 4.10 The school is demonstrably effective in promoting good behaviour. Pupils understand what is expected of them in the classroom, in the houses and in the wider community. Effective policies and systems guard against harassment and bullying; pupils report that bullying is not an issue and have confidence that staff respond quickly and effectively if it does occur. In the unusual case of unacceptable behaviour, this is dealt with constructively and sensitively.
- 4.11 The school listens closely and responds very well to the views of pupils. The 'open door' policy of staff, as well as house councils, the food committee and prefect meetings, give pupils confidence that their ideas, concerns and opinions will always be welcomed and considered.
- 4.12 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

- 4.13 The quality of provision for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.14 Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils are extremely robust. The school works closely with the local safeguarding board and two members of staff are qualified as trainers in safeguarding. All staff receive comprehensive training in child protection, which is tailored to meet the needs of their specific roles in the school. Arrangements for health and safety are effective; the electronic reporting of maintenance issues enables a rapid response from the in-house team or outside contractors. Fire, water and electrical installations are serviced regularly. Appropriate steps are taken to minimise the risk from fire, and fire drills take place regularly. Senior managers monitor the risk register assiduously. All houses have a comprehensive risk awareness folder with detailed procedures. Detailed risk assessments are prepared for all school visits, as well as for any potentially hazardous areas, and activities within the school, and are regularly reviewed and refined.
- 4.15 The medical staff offer an excellent service in caring for pupils who are ill or injured, and contribute to their care plans where necessary. Pupils comment very positively

about the advice and guidance they receive from the medical centre. A large proportion of staff have had first-aid and fire training. The admission and attendance registers are completed meticulously, and are maintained and stored in accordance with regulations. The ethos of the school promotes co-operation, supportive relationships and high standards of behaviour. As a result, pupils show that they understand how to keep themselves and others healthy and safe.

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

- 4.16 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.17 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. Their personal development is successfully promoted by their boarding experience and is apparent in qualities such as self-reliance and tolerance, and in the congenial nature of the house community. In showing visitors around pupils are excellent ambassadors for their houses, talking confidently and articulately, displaying pride in their house and saying how much they enjoy the various aspects of boarding life. While the houses have their own distinctive character, a common factor is that they are all friendly, welcoming places that are very well cared for. Boarders avail themselves of the opportunities to make a positive contribution to their community: for instance, the prefects exercise their responsibilities conscientiously and helpfully; older pupils mentor younger ones; and proposals from the house councils have led to distinct improvements in the houses' amenities. Boarders get on extremely well with one another and with the boarding staff. They also integrate very happily with the day pupils. Boarders know that they have a wide range of staff whom they can approach with matters of personal concern. Well-organised rotas ensure that members of staff are easily accessible, and pupils confirm that they are kind and helpful. Sensitive to the needs of the boarders, the staff ensure that any support is implemented in a manner that respects their privacy and dignity. Pupils do not identify bullying or harassment of any kind as an issue, and they are confident that any instances would be dealt with swiftly, sensitively and fairly.
- 4.18 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. Boarders are very well cared for, and the boarding provision is effective in supporting their individual needs and in helping them to keep safe, fit and healthy. There is an appropriate process of induction and guidance for new boarders, who are sympathetically helped to settle in. The boarding staff maintain close liaison with the medical centre, and the arrangements for those who are unwell are excellent. Boarders have access to local medical, dental, optometric and other specialist provision as necessary. Policies regarding confidentiality, self-medication and the use of household remedies are appropriate and are scrupulously observed. The school keeps comprehensive medical records of all pupils, and the boarders' personal files, which are kept in the houses, reflect the careful, conscientious recording of all pertinent matters as the boarders progress through the school. Termly fire practices are held at night. Pupils affirm that the laundry provision is regular and efficient. They can obtain necessary personal and stationery items from the village at frequent, identified times. All pupils have lockable storage for their possessions, and they confirm that they have all they need for private study.
- 4.19 Boarders benefit from extensive facilities and opportunities for recreational and developmental activities in the evenings and at weekends. They enjoy access to the sports facilities on weekday evenings and there is a lively programme of optional weekend activities, including shopping trips and visits to places of entertainment and cultural interest. Pupils make very good use of self-directed time. House common

rooms contain comfortable furniture, televisions, indoor games equipment and very good facilities for the preparation of snacks and light meals. The boarders' three main meals are served in the dining hall: they are tasty and nutritious, and there is a wide choice on the menus. In all the houses, the fabric, furniture, fixtures and fittings are maintained to a uniformly high standard, and this quality of maintenance is repaid by the care the pupils take of their accommodation. The lavatories and washing facilities are particularly well maintained. Pupils are encouraged to personalise their own spaces with posters, photographs and items from home. Boarders are able to maintain regular contact with their families, by telephone and various means of electronic communication. The school communicates effectively with parents and guardians, who say that the boarding staff are helpful and responsive, dealing promptly and effectively with matters of interest or concern.

- 4.20 Arrangements for the safeguarding and welfare of boarders are highly effective, and ensure compliance with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. With regard to safeguarding and child protection, in addition to the robust safe recruitment procedures for all staff, appropriate checks are undertaken on all family members living on the premises. House staff are conscientious in implementing the school's policy on good behaviour. Boarders are at all times under the supervision of suitably qualified and experienced staff, all of whom have received appropriate training and many of whom hold first-aid qualifications.
- 4.21 The leadership and management of the boarding provision are excellent. Boarding priorities are clear and the houses are extremely well run, in line with the aims of the school. Highly supportive and dedicated, the boarding staff are committed to self-evaluation and improvement: in their meetings and in their responses to pupils' suggestions, they show an eagerness to make the boarding provision as good as it can be. The school has remedied the minor weaknesses, relating to enhancing risk assessments and providing separate bathroom facilities for staff and visitors, identified by its previous boarding inspection, and built upon the very many strengths that the report highlighted. Routines and procedures are posted on the main house notice boards; the administration and management of the houses successfully blend institutional requirements with a strong awareness of maintaining for the boarders a home-from-home. All channels of communication, such as liaison with academic staff and senior management, are productively used, through regular timetabled meetings and informal day-to-day contact.
- 4.22 The pupils thoroughly enjoy the civilised experience of boarding at Clayesmore. They evidently feel able to flourish in the purposeful, but homely and relaxed atmosphere of the houses. In their responses to the questionnaire, parents expressed great satisfaction with the care that their children receive. A small number indicated that they are not confident that staff treat their children as individuals. Inspection findings supported the opinion of the great majority, who expressed a different view.

## **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 school to ensure that it meets its aims. Current members offer a range of appropriate skills, including finance, business, law and education, to support the school, and there is a clear understanding of the need to maintain a breadth of skills in future appointments. Governors know the school well and attend many school events, including an annual reception with staff. They have been energetic and positive in their support for the school's recent expansion and in the formulation of ambitious but realistic plans for future development, and are determined to ensure that the school retains its particular character as a place where pupils are known and valued as individuals.
- 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. Every governor has a specific area of responsibility, for example staff recruitment, and a link with a particular member of school management. Governors receive and review reports from the various sections of the school, and closely monitor the quality of provision, and of outcomes for pupils, including their achievements, personal development and well-being.
- 5.4 Governors discharge very effectively their responsibilities for child protection, welfare, health and safety. All governors have received training relating to child protection. School policies are approved by relevant committees as required. They regularly review policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding children and young people.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.6 The high standard of leadership provided by senior and middle managers demonstrates their very strong and successful commitment to furthering the aims of the school. The mission and aims of the school, including its strong focus on valuing pupils as individuals and developing their unique gifts and talents, are stated clearly in the staff handbook. This gives staff very clear guidance on how to realise the school's objectives. The commitment of all staff to fulfilling the school's mission is clearly reflected in the high quality of teaching and the excellent pastoral care provided for pupils.
- 5.7 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 pupils. Leaders delegate responsibilities effectively so that communication across the school is excellent. They have implemented detailed policies and procedures for all aspects of school life which ensure the smooth running of the school and the provision of an excellent educational experience for the pupils. Duties, including all aspects relating to the safeguarding of pupils, are discharged most efficiently.



Managers ensure that the grounds, buildings and facilities are very well maintained, so that they provide an attractive and stimulating setting in which pupils learn and develop.

- 5.8 Leaders and managers in all areas of the school provide clear direction and feedback to staff through monitoring, appraisal, professional development and departmental review. This is reflected in the continuing improvement in the quality of the education and care the school provides for the pupils. Leaders at all levels value and prioritise self-evaluation, as evident in departmental reviews, which are characterised by detailed analysis of pupils' performance and a clear focus on continuous improvement. Middle managers are held rigorously to account, but also feel very well supported in their duties. They confirm that they appreciate the extent to which they are given responsibility for their work. The sharing of good practice is encouraged as staff observe one another's lessons, with a clear focus on specific aspects, such as the use of assessment. Teachers' eagerness to grasp every opportunity to improve their practice was demonstrated by their willingness to engage in professional dialogue following lesson observations.
- 5.9 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 pupils. Staff who are relatively new to the school say that their induction, as well as the ongoing support they receive from all their colleagues, has helped them to adapt quickly to school routines so that they can carry out their roles effectively from a very early stage.
- 5.10 The parents are extremely satisfied with the education and support provided for their children. In their responses to the questionnaire, parents expressed their approval with the school, including the range of subjects provided, the courses and extra-curricular activities available, and the quality and timeliness of the general information they receive. Parents also stated that they are happy with the clear and useful reports they receive about their children's progress and development. Many of them highlighted in their comments the way in which their children are known as individuals by all staff, including the most senior, and the individual support they receive, which has enabled them to develop their self-confidence and to thrive.
- 5.11 The school maintains a constructive and open dialogue with parents, carers and guardians, in accordance with its aims. It handles any concerns, on the very rare occasions they arise, with sensitivity and a focus on the individual pupil, in accordance with published procedures and regulatory requirements. Timely responses are embedded in the school's procedures at every level. The website, with ongoing news items, and the electronic reports keep parents very well informed about the school and their children.
- 5.12 Parents have extremely good opportunities through the Clayesmore Society, including social and cultural occasions, to increase their involvement in their children's education. Parents enthusiastically support sport, drama and music events. The school enables parents to be extremely well informed about their children's progress by providing access, through the website, to teachers' half-termly assessments. Parents of current and prospective pupils are provided with detailed information about the school and its procedures, both through the very clear and informative handbook and the website. Communication with parents on an individual basis is detailed and comprehensive, especially with regard to those pupils

for whom particular learning needs have been identified. Parents are encouraged to share any concerns and any relevant information they may have about their children's progress and well-being with teachers, as well as with senior staff. Termly written reports give parents a very good insight into their children's performance and helpful advice about what they can do to support their learning.

- 5.13 The school has successfully addressed the recommendation from the previous inspection regarding the development of strategies to enable all pupils achieve their academic potential, the successful implementation of these strategies in the classroom and the sharing of best practice. This has resulted in an increase in the proportion of excellent teaching, and a corresponding improvement in pupils' academic achievement. Development plans focus firmly on raising pupils' achievement further, and on a continuing commitment to meeting their individual needs.

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