



# **ISI Consultancy Report**

## **Whole School Review**

### **Llandovery College**

**October 2014**

**Final Report 04112014**

## PROFILE

<b>Full Name of School/College</b>	Llandovery College		
<b>Address</b>	Llandovery Carmarthenshire SA20 0EE Wales		
<b>Telephone Number</b>	01550 723000		
<b>Fax Number</b>	01550 723049		
<b>Email Address</b>	mail@llandoverycollege.com		
<b>Head</b>	Mr Guy Ayling		
<b>Chair of Governors</b>	Mr Hopkin Joseph		
<b>Age Range</b>	7 to 18		
<b>Total Number of Pupils</b>	299		
<b>Numbers by Age</b>	7-12: 84 12-18: 215		
<b>Number of Day Pupils</b>	Total: 173	Capacity for flexi-boarding:	34
<b>Number of Boarders</b>	Total: 126		
	Full: 115	Weekly:11	
<b>Review dates</b>	13 Oct 2014 to 16 Oct 2014		

### Considerations

ISI Consultancy (ISIC) is a British not-for-profit company and subsidiary of the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). ISIC supports schools throughout the UK and internationally outside the inspection process. We offer a range of packages and bespoke consultancy support delivered by highly experienced inspectors and subject matter experts along with workshops, seminars and inspector training.

These reports provide subject, whole school, aspect or department specific reviews for schools through observing lessons, scrutinising work and undertaking interviews. These inform the production of an action orientated report and if required an improvement plan.

There will be a number of common elements to these reviews that build on the ISI inspection framework. However there is no assessment of compliance and this report, the evidence considered, the assessment provided and any recommendations made are in no way connected to the formal inspections carried out by ISI.

## CONTENTS

1. Consultancy Brief .....	1
2. Background & Context.....	1
3. The Success of the School .....	2
4. Quality of Academic & Other Achievements .....	3
5. The Quality of the Pupils' Personal Development .....	6
6. The Effectiveness of Governance, Leadership & Management.....	11
7. Recommendations.....	13
8. Evidence Base.....	14

## 1. Consultancy Brief

- 1.1 This consultancy report follows the ISI Schedule for the inspection of British schools overseas. The consultancy consists of two parts: a preliminary two-day visit followed by a four-day (team) consultancy visit.
- 1.2 The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is a body approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting schools in England and overseas. ISI is also the agency responsible for the inspection of schools in membership of the Associations of the Independent Schools Council (ISC).
- 1.3 This consultancy follows closely the framework and guidance for independent school inspection in England and where appropriate the British Government's Standards for British Schools Overseas including:
  - i. The quality of education provided by the school (Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment).
  - ii. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
  - iii. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils.
  - iv. The suitability of the proprietor and staff.
  - v. The premises and accommodation.
  - vi. The provision of information for parents, carers and others.
  - vii. The school's procedures for handling complaints.
  - viii. The quality of provision for boarding.
  - ix. Leadership and management of the school.
- 1.4 The consultancy of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited review of other aspects, though consultants will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The consultancy 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 or company law.

## 2. Background & Context

- 2.1 Llandovery College is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils from the ages of 4 to 18. This report concentrates on the pupil body from 7 to 18. The college was founded by Thomas Phillips in 1848 to provide 'a good classical and liberal education fitting for young men destined for any liberal profession or scientific pursuit followed in the principality'. Girls were first admitted in the late 1960's. The college is administered by a governing body that was formed in December 2012 following financial and managerial restructuring.
- 2.2 The college's central aim is to develop rounded individuals with the skills to enable them to be happy and productive members of society who value service over self. The college seeks to honour its past traditions, whilst always tackling future challenges through innovation and imagination. The college takes pupils primarily from business and farming families in West Wales but the boarding houses have a small number of overseas pupils, mainly Chinese and German.
- 2.3 Pupil numbers from Year 3 upwards total 299, 189 boys and 110 girls. Eighty four of these are in the preparatory school, 50 boys and 34 girls. Of the 215 pupils in the senior school, 139 are boys and 76 girls; 98 are in Years 12 and 13, 65 boys and 33 girls. One hundred and seventy three are day pupils and 126 are boarders, including 11 weekly boarders in the preparatory school. There is capacity for 34 flexi-boarders. As from September 2014, the preparatory school has included Year 7 pupils. In 2015, it will also include Year 8 pupils.
- 2.4 The ability profile of pupils in the college is broadly in line with the UK average, with a wide spread of abilities represented. In Year 7, it is above the UK average, whilst that of pupils in Years 12 and 13 is below the UK average. Eighty-nine pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and receive support, 34 in the preparatory school and 55 in the senior school. Twenty-five pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and a quarter of the pupil body are first language Welsh speakers; all receive English language support as appropriate.
- 2.5 Since the previous Estyn inspection in March 2013, the college has begun a programme of facility improvement, with renovated teaching spaces, a new design and technology (DT) workshop, a programme of house refurbishment and a planned new science laboratory. Staffing has been increased in the preparatory school.
- 2.6 English National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

### 3. The Success of the School

- 3.1 Llandoverly College fulfils its challenging aims in exemplary fashion. An outstandingly caring ethos engenders a highly supportive learning environment. The pupils achieve good standards in external examinations and in their learning throughout the school, benefiting in the main from good and sometimes excellent teaching. Pupils with SEND and those with EAL make good progress as a result of targeted support, whilst the most able and talented are provided with many opportunities to excel, although support within lessons is not always sufficiently challenging. Significant progress has been made in improving the quality of teaching and learning since the previous Estyn inspection.
- 3.2 Some excellent teaching was observed, where pupils were inspired to delve deeper into the subject, but, in some lessons, pupils took little active part and their interest was not fully engaged. Standards and levels of participation in a wide variety of sports are extremely high. Information and communication technology is taught as a discrete subject and is used effectively across the curriculum. The formal monitoring and dissemination of good practice in teaching and learning has improved greatly since the previous Estyn inspection, but is still not fully consistent across subjects. In the preparatory school, there is insufficient use of externally moderated data on pupils' attainments to help in target setting and the monitoring of progress.
- 3.3 The pupils achieve excellent levels of personal development, feeling secure, safe and valued in the friendly, mutually trusting ethos, which prevails throughout the school. This is built on the all-pervasive excellence of relationships, underpinned by comprehensive policies and procedures, appropriately implemented, to safeguard pupils' welfare, health and safety. Senior pupils delight in helping their juniors, for instance in sports coaching. The spacious, well-maintained site and buildings provide a civilising backdrop to the pupils' learning. Pupils responding to the pre-consultancy questionnaire were unanimous in their appreciation of the teachers helping them to learn and giving individual help, when they needed it.
- 3.4 The supportive oversight and financial acumen of the college's new governors are major factors behind recent improvements. The driving force, however, lies in the clear visionary leadership, which analyses accurately the school's needs and sets priorities to achieve them, commanding the respect and loyalty of their colleagues in so doing. The pupils approve of the way the school is run. The parent questionnaires revealed high levels of satisfaction with the curricular and co-curricular opportunities provided, with the values the school promotes and with the information provided.
- 3.5 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent Schools Standards Regulations (2013) and of the Standards for British Schools Overseas (2011).

## 4. Quality of Academic & Other Achievements

### The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills

- 4.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills is good throughout the college.

#### Preparatory School

- 4.2 The pupils are very well educated in accordance with the college's aim to enable all pupils to reach their full potential. Through the broad, well-planned curriculum, they develop the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to make good progress. They are articulate. Standards of reading are high. Good levels of spelling and written English were observed. The pupils' mathematical skills are increasingly secure by Year 6. Following the recommendation of the previous Estyn report, the pupils are becoming adept at applying their good literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum. They develop good levels of logical and independent thinking. Pupils with SEND and EAL make particularly good progress, helped by carefully planned support. Creativity is well developed, leading to pupils achieving success in Eisteddfods and gaining a very high proportion of merits and distinctions in music and drama examinations. Physical prowess underlies the under-11 rugby sevens team reaching the Welsh national final and the under-11 football, hockey and netball teams being county finalists. Other pupils have achieved distinction in athletics and in triathlons.
- 4.3 Pupils' attainment and progress cannot be measured in relation to national norms, as externally moderated measures are not available. However, on the evidence available from lesson observation and work scrutiny, and from consideration of the levels at which the pupils are working, the pupils' attainment is judged to be good and their progress high in relation to English national age-related expectations.

Preparatory school pupils enjoy their learning. They are very enthusiastic and behave well in lessons. They are confident learners; who respond well to feedback from their teachers. They collaborate well in pairs and in small groups. Most pupils continue into the senior school.

#### Senior School

- 4.4 The pupils are very well educated in accordance with the college's aims. They demonstrate a good level of knowledge and understanding. Their application of mathematical skills is good. Pupils reason well, think clearly and show considerable expertise in the use of ICT in a range of applications. They are articulate and clear communicators, with the ability to argue cogently. They are adept linguists, with several bilingual in Welsh and English. They show great creativity. The level of pupils' physical skills is excellent. Sixth-form pupils are excellent independent learners. Pupils win medals in the UK mathematics and biology challenges and one has won the Dyfed Young Composer of the Year competition. The college rugby teams perform at a consistently high level, with individuals representing Wales and, in the case of recent past pupils, the British Lions. Llandovery pupils do extremely well in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (DofE), gaining a large number of awards. The Combined Cadet Force (CCF) contingent gains high praise in its reports. Many pupils achieve distinctions in music and drama examinations. Three pupils sing in the National Youth Choir of Wales.
- 4.5 The following analysis uses the English national data for the years 2011 to 2013, the most recent years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in GCSE have been good, above the English national average for maintained schools, with over a third of

the grades awarded being A\* or A. A-level results have been similar to the English average for maintained schools, with nearly six out of every ten grades given being A\*, A or B. The girls' A-level results were similar to the English average for maintained selective schools, with two thirds gaining the top three grades. The level of attainment, standardised measures of progress and evidence from lesson observation and work scrutiny, indicate that pupils make good progress throughout the senior school, including the sixth form, in relation to the average for pupils of a similar ability.

- 4.6 The pupils are keen and active learners. They listen carefully in class and enjoy joining in debates or discussions. They work well together. They show initiative and independence when set to work on their own, to carry out research, to solve a problem or to complete an extended piece of writing.

### **The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)**

- 4.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils) is excellent.

#### **Preparatory School**

- 4.8 The extensive, well-planned, curriculum fully supports the college's aims. All National Curriculum areas are covered. In addition, Welsh and French are taught from Year 3, and Latin is added in Year 7. Art, music, physical education and science are taught by specialist teachers. The expansion of the preparatory school to include Year 7 has facilitated the continuation of a stress on literacy and mathematical skills across the curriculum, and improved transition arrangements, addressing recommendations of the previous report. All abilities and needs are catered for. Provision for pupils with SEND and EAL is a particularly strong feature of the curriculum. Challenge groups in mathematics and English extend able pupils' skills. The quality of curricular provision is kept under regular review. Its delivery and efficacy are monitored but lack of managerial non-contact time limits the efficacy of these procedures.
- 4.9 The curriculum is supplemented by visits to local places of interest, such as the Brecon Beacons national park, which provide pupils with opportunities to develop valuable life skills such as initiative and independence. The curriculum is enriched by a comprehensive range of co-curricular activities which further develop pupils' intellectual, creative and physical skills. School staff give unstintingly of their time and talents, offering football and triathlon, philosophy and debating, fencing and gymnastics, art and drama, choir (entry by audition), the Big Sing (open to all who are interested) and band.

#### **Senior School**

- 4.10 The curriculum is broad and balanced and is a major factor in the school's fulfilment of its aims. It goes well beyond National Curriculum requirements, with strong provision for languages, including Latin and Mandarin, and separate science subjects. First and second language classes are offered in Welsh. ICT is taught in all age groups, optional from Year 10, and is used effectively across a variety of subjects. Despite its small size, the college offers extensive provision at GCSE and A level and attempts to satisfy all pupil requests. A Business and Technology Educational Council qualification (BTEC) in physical education (PE) addresses the needs of some pupils. All pupils are assessed for learning needs and individual and group learning support is extremely effective in preparing those with SEND or EAL for rapid inclusion into the full curriculum. Some pupils take GCSE examinations early in mathematics and Welsh. A comprehensive wellbeing programme covers personal, health, citizenship and

social topics in Years 8 to 11 whilst sixth-form pupils benefit from having a personal academic tutor and following a well-planned pathways programme covering careers and higher education choices.

- 4.11 Enrichment activities provide excellent challenge, including extended project qualifications (EPQs), a university course in philosophy, on-line courses, thinking skills and academic lectures, as well as philosophy, psychology and politics clubs, the latter a recent initiative run by pupils. The college is a Confucius Centre. Pupils enter mathematics and science Olympiads/challenges, essay and business competitions. Other provision includes debating, Model United Nations and Young Enterprise
- 4.12 The curriculum is further enriched by an extremely wide range of educational and sporting trips, whether taking mathematicians to Cern or art students to Venice. Year 12 pupils undertake work experience in the local community. Art, drama and music play a significant role, exposing pupils to live performances and productions, such as Macbeth this term or the choir singing in the Millennium Centre, as well as in chapel services. The Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (DofE) offer a vast range of outdoor skills and leadership locally and across three continents.
- 4.13 Sporting provision is outstanding, with teams in key sports training three afternoons a week as well as having regular fixtures. Lunchtime clubs promote a variety of minority sports and external professional coaches supplement the expertise in coaching on the college staff. Senior pupils, who have achieved coaching status with their Sports Leaders Award, develop the juniors' talents.

### **The contribution of teaching**

- 4.14 The contribution of teaching and assessment is good throughout the college.

#### **Preparatory School**

- 4.15 Teaching effectively promotes pupils' achievement and progress, in accordance with the college's aims. All observed teaching was good, with a significant proportion being excellent. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of their subjects and an infectious enthusiasm for sharing this with their pupils. Significant emphasis is placed on the understanding of pupils' needs and on meeting these. The majority of lessons are carefully planned to provide challenge for the different abilities within the class.
- 4.16 The most effective teaching is lively and inspiring. It fires the pupils' own creative thinking. Teachers use carefully targeted questioning techniques that encourage pupils to think for themselves. In a Year 6 RE lesson, discussion centred on what rules should be adopted in a new religion of their own devising. Teachers use praise, encouragement and house points generously and this generates enthusiasm. Where teaching is less effective, the work is not so closely matched to different pupils' abilities. They lose concentration and their progress slows. Relationships between staff and pupils are extremely positive and behaviour is generally of a high standard. The teaching of the most able is often, but not always, sufficiently challenging. The high quality teaching and deployment of learning assistants contribute significantly to the pupils' progress.
- 4.17 Specialist members of staff liaise closely with class and subject teachers, enabling pupils with SEND or EAL to make good progress. Pupils with different needs work collaboratively together to the advantage of each.
- 4.18 Pupils' work is marked frequently and the standard of marking is generally very good. At its best, it includes many helpful comments and suggestions about how pupils can improve the standard of their work. Assessment and record-keeping are thorough and ongoing, enabling

effective planning. The lack of any externally moderated data on pupils' attainment or of any standardised testing, limits relevant comparisons and makes accurate monitoring of progress more difficult.

### **Senior School**

- 4.19 The good quality of the teaching plays a significant role in enabling the pupils to make good progress in their studies, in line with the school's aims and expectations. Most teaching is good or better; some is of the highest quality. Since the previous Estyn inspection, continuing professional development has been effectively focused on standards of teaching and learning and greater consistency has been achieved. The greatest improvement has been in the quality of lesson planning, which is now well embedded in the school's culture, based on professional standards. Teachers have strong subject knowledge, know their pupils' capabilities and adapt teaching well to meet their differing needs. Pupils' responses to the pre-consultancy questionnaire agreed unanimously that teachers help them to learn and give individual help when it is needed. All bar one of the respondents felt they were making good progress; almost nine out of every ten parents responding agreed.
- 4.20 A variety of teaching strategies extend the pupils' learning. All bar one of the sixth-form questionnaire respondents found the work they do interesting. The teachers' flair and infectious enthusiasm for their subject, which is apparent in the most effective teaching, sparks endeavour, excitement and interest in the pupils, encouraging their active participation, especially in projects and discussion. It is just such characteristics which are missing from the weaker teaching, which, although it enables some progress, lacks challenge, has limited expectations and fails to engage the pupils actively in their learning.
- 4.21 Assessment procedures have improved significantly since the previous Estyn inspection. Marking and assessment are productively focused on guiding improvement and ensuring that pupils have a clear understanding of their strengths and areas for development. An effective tracking system monitors pupils' progress and sets appropriate targets for achievement.

## **5. The Quality of the Pupils' Personal Development**

### **The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils**

- 5.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent throughout the college.

#### **Preparatory School**

- 5.2 The school is highly successful in achieving its aims to recognise and nurture the innate ability in every individual.
- 5.3 The pupils have an excellent spiritual awareness, which reflects the college's Christian foundation. They develop a quiet self-confidence and openness to others, which results in solid bonds of friendship and ready appreciation of each other's successes. They are courteous, thoughtful and reflective. They acquire a sense of wonder about the world around them, whether singing in chapel or rushing out enthusiastically, after an inspiring art lesson, to sketch their surroundings in the style of Van Gogh.
- 5.4 The pupils' strong moral sense is based on the school's ethos to be kind, decent and honest. They understand the concepts of right and wrong. They embrace challenging issues in lessons and assemblies and reflect on personal and moral responsibility. They show a mature awareness of the needs of others and raise significant sums for many charities.
- 5.5 The pupils' social awareness is extremely well developed. They contribute eagerly to community life and willingly take on responsibility as members of the preparatory and whole

school councils. Their strong sense of social responsibility is shown in their helping tidy the gardens at the local care home.

- 5.6 The pupils display excellent cultural awareness, understanding their own culture and showing respect for the cultures of other pupils. They take part enthusiastically in celebrations of international diversity. Year 3 pupils have established a link with a school in Spain. Their understanding is further increased by their work in art, music, humanities and literature.

### **Senior School**

- 5.7 The college fulfils its ambitious aims to develop rounded individuals with the skills to be productive members of society who value service over self.
- 5.8 The pupils' exemplary self-awareness and quiet self-esteem enable them to listen to each other and respect each other's views. Feeling safe and valued, they gain an inner strength and emotional maturity, which enables them to reach out confidently to others and establish easy and tolerant relationships. They find time to reflect on matters beyond the immediate rush of life. Lively discussions about the origin and evolution of the universe were sparked by recollection of a visit to the Large Hadron Collider near Geneva. The pupils gain a deep awareness of life's non-material aspects from art, music, literature and RE lessons and, above all, from chapel services. The college chapel lies at the heart of the community's spiritual life. The school's wholehearted rendition of Calon Lân (A pure heart) made an unequivocal statement of community values.
- 5.9 The pupils have a strong moral sense and demonstrate a clear understanding of right and wrong in their exemplary behaviour. They strongly support the college's system of rewards and sanctions. Their strong moral fibre can be seen in their support of many charity initiatives.
- 5.10 The pupils' social awareness is excellent. They play a full part in community life and delight in taking responsibility. They are keen to serve on the council, to lead in the CCF, to coach younger pupils or to be prefects. The house communities engender a sense of belonging. Pupils volunteer to work on projects in the local community. They are well informed about current affairs and the nature of British institutions.
- 5.11 The pupils' cultural awareness is excellent. Their understanding of diverse cultures, nurtured in humanities, languages and creative subjects, as well as in direct contact with their peers from abroad, is greatly enhanced by sixth form exchanges to Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the United States of America, Dof E expeditions abroad, and subject and sports trips across the globe. They are also very proud of their own college, which is steeped in Welsh tradition, language and culture.

### **The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety**

- 5.12 The college's pastoral care for its pupils and arrangements for ensuring their welfare, health and safety throughout the college are excellent.

### **Preparatory School**

- 5.13 A caring, disciplined and nurturing atmosphere prevails throughout the preparatory school, reflecting its Christian ethos and fully supporting its aims. Pastoral care is given a high priority by all staff, who provide outstanding support and guidance for pupils.
- 5.14 Thorough and effective systems underpin positive relationships. These systems have been put in place by the strong educational leadership team and are implemented efficiently by staff. Class teachers provide exceptionally high levels of care in monitoring the pastoral and

academic progress of the pupils. Pastoral concerns are regularly shared by staff and careful records maintained.

- 5.15 Relationships between staff and pupils and among the pupils themselves are warm and supportive, and pupils state that they feel happy, safe and well cared for. Good relationships exist between different year groups. A culture of positive praise pervades the school.

### **Senior School**

- 5.16 The senior school is highly successful in implementing its well-planned pastoral systems, which foster a caring community and provide excellent support and guidance for all pupils, enabling the college to fulfil its aim to ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment. The small size of the college enables all members of the community, pupils and staff, to know each other well. Relationships are excellent. All pupils feel valued. They enjoy being at the college and state that it is well run. A strong team of pastoral managers, housemasters and housemistresses, academic tutors, a counsellor, the nurse and the chaplain, is responsible for stimulating high standards in pupils' pastoral and academic development and pupils make no secret of their immense trust in them and gratitude for their unstinting care and support.
- 5.17 The pupils' views are sought through learning, teaching and pastoral surveys. The pupils' responses to the pre-consultancy questionnaire indicated almost unanimous agreement that their teachers show concern for them as individuals and that there was always an adult or senior pupil they could turn to, if they had a problem. A small minority said rewards and punishments were not always fair, and, to a lesser extent, that the pupils were not always treated equally. Consultants found no evidence to support these views; on the contrary, they found the relationship between teachers and pupils to be mostly one of remarkable trust and, in the sixth form, respect.

### **Whole School**

- 5.18 The school's high expectations of good behaviour, underpinned by a balanced range of commendations and sanctions, are readily espoused by pupils, who feel safe and secure. A culture of good behaviour prevails and pupils are proud of the fact. They are confident that universal respect, outstandingly friendly relationships and appropriate implementation of comprehensive anti-bullying and behaviour policies and procedures ensure that any isolated cases of inappropriate behaviour are effectively resolved.
- 5.19 The policy and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils' welfare, health and safety, including for safer recruitment, are not only compliant with Welsh regulations, they now also comply with the Independent School Standards Regulations (2013) and the Standards for British Schools Overseas (2011). They are implemented effectively. Members of staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding. All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards. A trained nurse is on site, accidents are suitably recorded and medical facilities are good. An appropriate three year accessibility plan is in place. The pupils understand the importance of choosing a healthy diet: the pupil-run school council has recommended that the school tuck shop be closed. School meals are nutritious. The pupils take regular physical exercise. Participation rates in sporting activity are extremely high. The admission and attendance registers have been accurately maintained.

### **The quality of boarding education**

- 5.20 The quality of boarding education is excellent.
- 5.21 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. The boarding experience makes a very strong contribution to the personal development of boarders. They are very considerate, well-

mannered, energetic and modestly self-confident. From the earliest age, boarders live well together in an easy and tolerant way. The boarding houses are inclusive communities, which have a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Boarders take considerable interest in people, and they are highly supportive of each other. They speak of strong bonds of friendship with their peers and of most positive relationships with their tutors and house staff.

- 5.22 Boarders enjoy being at the college. Some pupils, who live close enough to be day pupils, choose to board as they recognise the benefits of the boarding life. The boarders' day includes extended time for study, many opportunities for extra-curricular involvement and continuous development of interpersonal skills by being alongside people with shared interests and ideals. Boarders have plenty of opportunities to contribute to their community, through meetings and school or house councils. Boarders say their ideas are listened to, provided they are sensible, and they recognise that they have been able to contribute to school improvement. Senior pupils develop leadership skills through roles of responsibility. Younger pupils look up to prefects as good role models, and one said that prefects are helpful rather than bossy.
- 5.23 The quality of boarding provision and care is good. New pupils say that they are made to feel most welcome when they join the school. There is an induction weekend to ensure they settle in quickly, and the community views the arrival of new boarders as an opportunity to make more friends. The college has most effective policies for the medical care of boarders, which are meticulously applied. There is a modern and well-equipped medical centre, which provides excellent accommodation for ill boarders. There are clear channels of communication between the nurse and house staff, which ensures continuity of care. Pupils speak highly of their medical care, which is readily available to them day and night. Pupils have access to a doctor and a dentist as required.
- 5.24 Issues of health and safety are well managed throughout the boarding houses. Fire practices are carried out each term during the day and during boarding time. During the consultancy pupils responded quickly to the fire alarm, when it sounded. A record of all fire practices is kept centrally and monitored by the Bursar. Boarders report that their possessions are safe, and all have lockable cupboards or drawers. The boarding houses are secure, with each having security codes on the doors. Signage is in place, in most areas, to make clear that the school grounds are private, and to direct visitors towards the reception area.
- 5.25 A central laundry deals most efficiently with clothes and bed linen; some houses also have access to their own washing machines. The majority of boarders commented favourably on the quality of food, and said that there had been a marked improvement in its standard. During their visit, consultants enjoyed eating good and nutritious food with the pupils. The catering department is well managed, and a varied and balanced menu is provided. Individual diets are provided as required, responding to cultural, medical or dietary needs.
- 5.26 A minority of boarders said in their pre-consultancy questionnaires that there are insufficient activities available in the evenings or at weekends. However, during the consultancy, this view was not supported by the boarders who were interviewed; they are pleased with the balance between directed and free time. They enjoy a busy week of work and activities. Senior boarders are happy to relax on Sundays or to catch up with work, while the junior boarders report enthusiastically about the further activities available to them at the weekend. Boarders have ample opportunity to keep in touch with their parents, by telephone or email. They are in touch with the outside world and keep up to date with current affairs.
- 5.27 The standard of boarding accommodation is satisfactory overall. The bedrooms provide sufficient space for each boarder, for their bed, a desk and storage space. Boarders have good access to facilities for washing, cooking and recreation. However, the quality of the

girls' accommodation is notably better than that of the boys. The girls live in a well-appointed modern house, which is brightly lit and in good decorative order. By contrast the boys' houses have dark corridors and there is a need for modernisation. The college is well aware of this difference and a plan is in place to improve provision.

- 5.28 The arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are excellent. House staff are fully checked and vetted before taking up their post. A new system of monitoring is now in place to ensure all checks are recorded and filed. There is an effective system of appraisal in place and staff are well supported when they join a boarding house. The college has highly effective procedures and policies in place, which prevent bullying and strongly encourage pleasant and considerate behaviour. The standard of behaviour in the houses and around the school is excellent; sanctions for poor behaviour are rarely applied.
- 5.29 The leadership and management of boarding houses is excellent. The college is compliant with the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools in Wales, and there is a clear system in place to monitor these. The leadership and organisation of each boarding house and the level of care and guidance for pupils is excellent. There is good communication between house staff, and support for each other. The day-to-day administration is well organised. In general, policies are well written and support the efficient running of the boarding provision and the welfare of pupils. The college has a development plan for boarding, to improve the quality of provision further.
- 5.30 The college has acted on the recommendations of the last Care and Social Services inspection.

## 6. The Effectiveness of Governance, Leadership & Management

### The quality of governance

- 6.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 6.2 The governance strongly supports the aims and ethos of the college. The newly appointed governing body is highly committed and gives generously of its time. Many members are current parents or have a past connection with the college, which contributes to their insight into its workings. They provide effective oversight and have discharged their responsibilities for educational standards, financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. They have presided over the growth of a highly supportive learning environment and the resultant excellent development in pupils' talents and qualities.
- 6.3 Despite its small size, the governing body has a good range of experience and expertise. The governing body operates through a well organised and effective set of committees. Strong financial direction is enabling long-term planning, whilst academic matters are considered and evaluated by a knowledgeable education committee. There is good communication between the governing body and senior leadership and frequent meetings. Governors learn about the college through reports from the warden and through their visits to the school. During governors' days, members of the board are able to attend lessons and activities, and gain insight into the pupils' learning experience.
- 6.4 The governors effectively discharge their legal responsibilities, to satisfy the Welsh regulations for the pupils' welfare, health and safety. They have recently put in place procedures to ensure the compliance of their safeguarding and welfare, health and safety policies and procedures with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations (2013) and the Standards for British Schools Overseas (2011) and have nominated two governors to oversee the monitoring of their implementation. Some governors have been able to attend training courses; the board is aware of the need to develop its training programme further.

### The quality of leadership and management

- 6.5 The quality of leadership and management is excellent throughout the college.
- 6.6 Leadership and management are extremely successful in fulfilling the aims of the college, creating an exemplary learning environment, in which an ethos of care, support and trust is all-pervasive. It enables pupils to flourish without fear and to develop excellent levels of self-awareness and self-confidence. Strategic leadership is exceptional, combining a challenging vision and financial acumen. Their clear educational direction is reflected in the pupils' outstanding levels of personal development. Since the last report, staff and management have collaborated in successful targeting of professional development to raise the standards of teaching, in line with the recommendations from the previous report. A culture of self-evaluation has been established at all levels, and this, allied to more effective monitoring of teaching, based on Welsh national standards of professionalism, is beginning to raise pupils' standards of achievement. However, this is very much work in progress. As yet, monitoring is not consistently rigorous and peer observation is infrequent. Some remarkable teaching was observed during the consultation, but no formal structures are in place to ensure its widespread sharing during in-service training.
- 6.7 Needs are very well identified and are being successfully addressed. The detailed college development plan is complemented by an annual college improvement plan that is publicly displayed in reception. Leadership and management have been highly successful in securing, supporting, developing and motivating high quality staff. Effective oversight ensures that policies and procedures are compliant with the Independent School Standards Regulations

(2013) and are consistently implemented. All staff are checked for their suitability to work with children. All are trained in meeting the needs of the children and in safeguarding their welfare, health and safety. The college has extensive facilities, all of which are immaculately maintained. Resources for learning are excellent.

### **The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians**

- 6.8 The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is good.
- 6.9 The school maintains a constructive relationship with parents in accordance with its aims. More than nine out of every ten parents responding to the pre-consultancy questionnaire are satisfied with the educational opportunities and supportive care provided for their children and with the quality of communication with the school. They were particularly pleased with the school's promotion of worthwhile attitudes and views and with the curricular and co-curricular opportunities provided for their children. The consultants agree. The parents also appreciate the ready availability of information about the school and its policies.
- 6.10 Those whose child's first language is not English were unanimous in appreciating their child's progress in English. However, a small minority expressed some concern about the amount of progress their child was making and the lack of information received about it. These views were directly contradicted by the pupil respondents, all but one of whom felt that they were making good progress in their work. In lessons, interviews and scrutiny of work, consultants found that pupils were indeed making good progress overall. Almost nine out of every ten parents agreed that the college has handled any concerns they have had very well. The complaints log supports this view and shows that the college follows its published procedures and handles complaints with care.
- 6.11 Excellent arrangements are in place to inform parents of their child's progress. Parents receive thorough, informative reports termly. Each year group has a parents' evening in the Lent Term and parents of new pupils and of sixth-formers have an extra parents evening in the Michaelmas term. Induction reports are sent out to parents of new pupils and all housemasters and housemistresses email or telephone all parents within the first week of the school year.
- 6.12 The college makes every effort to work in partnership with parents. Several very good opportunities are offered for dialogue and involvement to discuss relevant topics, such as the new school development plan or teenage issues, such as cyber-bullying. Highly effective guidance is given at vital moments in pupils' careers. The school's care and concern, not just for the pupils but also for constructive dialogue with their parents, can be seen in the welcome weekend organised for new parents in September. Parents' views are surveyed through an annual questionnaire, but the parental portal has yet to be developed to its full potential. An active parents association offers excellent support in raising funds. The great majority of parents feel the college encourages their involvement with the school. The consultants agree.

## 7. Recommendations

- 7.1 To raise the existing good achievement to the standard required to meet the revised aims, the school should consider the following.
- i. Provide time for all heads of faculty, subject coordinators, heads of department and their staff to identify and share the excellent practice in teaching and learning observed in some lessons during the consultancy.
  - ii. Introduce a system of standardised, externally validated measures to inform analysis, tracking and planning in the preparatory school.

## 8. Evidence Base

- 8.1 The consultancy team observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and staff and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors and another governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the consultancy period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies.
- 8.2 Consultants visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre- consultancy questionnaires were analysed, and the consultants examined documentation made available by the school.

### Consultants

Mr John Sugden	Consultant Reporting inspector
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