

### **3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS**

#### **The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils**

- 3.1 The school provides outstanding pastoral care, support and guidance for all pupils. The high quality of arrangements for pastoral care and for the welfare, health and safety of pupils noted at the last inspection has further improved and fully supports the school's stated aims. Pupils of all ages feel well cared for and valued as individuals. Parents and pupils are very appreciative of the care provided, as was evident in the responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires and was also expressed by pupils during interviews.
- 3.2 Form tutors are central to the pastoral care structure, providing effective daily oversight of each pupil's personal development and academic progress. The twice-daily contact that they have with their forms enables a trustful relationship to be built with, and a close eye kept on, each individual. Pupils feel secure in the knowledge that they have a member of staff who knows them well. The division heads meet regularly with the form tutors in their year group to provide support, to coordinate their work and to ensure consistency within the pastoral system. The head of middle and upper school (Years 7 to 11), the director of sixth form and the deputy heads provide further valuable layers of support and important links into the senior leadership team. Creation of the role of head of girls' pastoral care has been a sensible precaution to ensure that during the transition to full co-education their welfare is closely monitored and protected. From the time of their entry into the school, the needs of all the pupils are carefully and sensitively met by the pastoral structure established.
- 3.3 The quality of relationships is excellent throughout the school. Pupils speak highly of their teachers in all aspects of school life and believe that teachers genuinely care about their well-being. Mutual respect between pupils and teachers and between the pupils themselves is evident. The school has a very strong community spirit and the Benedictine aims underlie the way in which people normally treat one another.
- 3.4 The comprehensive anti-bullying policy is known to all pupils and works well in practice. Incidents of bullying are infrequent. Those that do occur are reported by pupils as having been dealt with rapidly and sensitively. The merit system rewards good behaviour and is effective in promoting mutual respect and tolerance among the younger pupils. The high level of self-discipline and respect that prevails ensures good behaviour and order further up the school.
- 3.5 Practice in respect of child protection is good. All members of the school staff have received appropriate training in child protection procedures. The child protection policy has recently been brought up to date and approved by the trustees. The school calendar contains a lengthy list of the names of members of staff to whom pupils can turn with problems, and the telephone numbers of appropriate childcare agencies and the local authority services are well advertised. The school attendance and admissions registers are properly kept using a computerised system and pupils' attendance is also checked in each lesson. A thorough procedure to follow up any unexpected absences by telephone has been established.
- 3.6 Effective health and safety policies and procedures are in place. The school uses outside consultants to monitor and give advice on safety matters and appropriate guidance on risk assessment is provided for staff organising trips away from school. A more than sufficient number of staff holds a first-aid certificate and these are kept up to date. The medical room is staffed by a fully qualified nurse, who is available to see pupils who are sick or injured and to provide a further sympathetic ear for those who are worried. Fire evacuation practices are held regularly and the premises have been inspected by the fire authority. Most areas of the

school have good access for the disabled, enabling any member of the school with a physical disability to follow a full curriculum.

- 3.7 Healthy eating is promoted as part of the PSHCE syllabus. Meals are appetising with a good choice of hot or cold dishes and a vegetarian option or a salad. Fresh fruit is always available. Arrangements for lunch are such that queues are rapidly built. Lack of space together with inadequate supervision result in meals being rushed with little opportunity for socialising. Regular exercise is encouraged and all pupils have weekly games lessons. A high number of pupils participated in a recent walk-to-school week, which was enjoyed by many.
- 3.8 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3].

### **The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community**

- 3.9 The school has established strong and constructive links with parents, in line with its aims. In addition, it has developed many productive links with the wider community, which enrich the pupils' educational experience. This is similar to the situation at the time of the last inspection, but the reporting system has been markedly improved since then.
- 3.10 The overwhelming majority of parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire are highly satisfied with the school's provision, with particular satisfaction being expressed over the range of extra-curricular activities, the help and guidance provided, the scope of the curriculum, the values and attitudes promoted and the quality of the teaching. No area of significant dissatisfaction emerged from the responses, and one in seven of the parents added an unsolicited comment expressing their delight in the education provided for their children.
- 3.11 Parents have ample opportunity to be involved in school activities and in the work and progress of their children. Parents are readily able to follow the day-to-day progress of their child using the weekly progress cards which pupils in Years 7 to 11 carry. Pupils below the sixth form also carry a prep diary, by means of which parents can see what work is being set for homework. The parental handbook contains helpful information about school policies and practice, and the termly calendar keeps parents well informed about forthcoming events. An informative newsletter from the headmaster is published seven times a year, whilst the termly magazine 'From the Smallest Beginnings' and the school magazine, 'The Priorian', record pupils' achievements. The school website, which is still under development, already provides an important source of information. Parents regularly attend school fixtures and events and their support is highly valued. The Society of Parents and Friends actively promotes cooperation between parents, staff and friends of the school. Parents recently helped to raise significant funding for a rugby tour to New Zealand, and an under-12 rugby tour to Dubai was accompanied by a parallel parents' tour. The school hosts a Parents' Forum each term at which a presentation on a given theme is made to both senior and junior school parents, thereby strengthening the home-school partnership.
- 3.12 Parents and prospective parents receive good information and are well informed about the work and progress of their children. Every year group has a helpful information evening at the start of the year when parents meet pastoral and subject teachers. Annual parents' evenings enable parents and teachers to discuss pupils' progress. Following the last inspection, the reporting process has been strengthened and parents in Years 7 to 10 now receive two detailed written reports each year, though the information they provide about work covered and in setting targets for improvement is inconsistent and the school plans to provide fuller guidance for teachers on report writing. In addition, a centrally compiled and recorded assessment in each subject is sent to parents every term, giving a good check on