



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**THE YEHUDI MENUHIN SCHOOL**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

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## The Yehudi Menuhin School

Full Name of School	<b>The Yehudi Menuhin School</b>			
DfE Number	<b>936/6539</b>			
Registered Charity Number	<b>312010</b>			
Address	<b>The Yehudi Menuhin School Stoke d'Abernon Cobham Surrey KT11 3QQ</b>			
Telephone Number	<b>01932 864739</b>			
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Email Address	<b>richardhillier@yehudimenuhinschool.co.uk</b>			
Headmaster	<b>Dr Richard Hillier</b>			
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Richard Morris</b>			
Age Range	<b>8 to 19</b>			
Total Number of Pupils	<b>75</b>			
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (37 boys; 38 girls)</b>			
Numbers by Age	8-11:	<b>8</b>	11-19:	<b>67</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>9</b>		
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>66</b>		
	Full:	<b>61</b>	Weekly:	<b>5</b>
Inspection dates	<b>03 Dec 2013 to 06 Dec 2013</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 on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

This inspection contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education, personal development and welfare. Until September 2011, Boarding inspections were carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills.

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

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

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

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

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed academic lessons, instrumental lessons and practice sessions, 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**

Mrs Elizabeth Coley	Reporting Inspector
Mr Neil Chippington	Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mr Andrew Potts	Team Inspector (Head Master, IAPS school)
Mr David Tickner	Team Inspector (Headmaster, Society of Heads school)
Mrs Pamela Leech	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The Yehudi Menuhin School is a specialist co-educational, day and boarding school specifically for talented young musicians from the ages of 7 to 19. It was founded by Yehudi Menuhin in 1963 in London and moved to its current premises in Stoke d'Abernon, near Cobham in Surrey, the following year. The school offers an holistic education, providing an integrated music and academic timetable, for talented string players, pianists and classical guitarists, and many former pupils have become famous professional musicians around the world. In 1973, the school was accorded special status as a Centre of Excellence for the Performing Arts, and since then has been part of the UK government's Music and Dance Scheme, where talented pupils, currently numbering fifty-five, are funded by the Department for Education. The majority of the rest of the pupils are also supported by bursaries awarded by the school. The school is run as a charitable trust, administered by a board of governors who are also the trustees.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection in October 2007, a new headmaster, chair and vice-chair of governors have been appointed. The swimming pool has been renovated, extended and covered to provide an indoor facility which can be used all-year round, a staff flat has been converted into further boarding accommodation, and the servery and dining room have been updated. The school is currently part-way through a refurbishment of the boarding accommodation. The school has also introduced a development department, whose aim is to raise funds to further support bursaries for pupils and improvements to facilities.
- 1.3 Pupils come from the UK and all over the world, and can enter the school at any stage, although those who enter into Year 12 are expected to remain in the school for three years. They are admitted after an audition process, on the basis of their potential as musical performers on their given principal instrument. Pupils are not selected according to their academic potential. The ability profile of the school is above the national average.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection, there were 75 pupils on the roll, with an almost equal number of boys and girls. Eight pupils were in Years 3 to 6, 38 were in Years 7 to 11, and 24 were in Years 12 and 13. Five pupils have stayed on at the school for an extra year beyond A level to continue their music studies. Sixty-six pupils board at the school in two houses and around one-half go home to their families or to guardians in the UK at weekends. Four pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) none of whom have a statement of special educational needs. Approximately one-half of the pupils use English as an additional language (EAL) and 18 receive support with their acquisition of English.
- 1.5 The school aims to develop the musical potential of gifted young people regardless of race, creed or financial background, both for their own fulfilment and for the benefit and enrichment of others, within an academic environment which supports and develops their social, emotional, aesthetic and physical needs. It seeks to give pupils a sound academic foundation, believing that all subjects, as well as their musical education, enrich their personal development. Yehudi Menuhin's belief when he founded the school was that, for a musician to succeed, his or her mind must be fully educated and fully receptive to the world in which he or she lives. The school still aims for pupils to become independent, to learn the art of self-correction, to analyse and think, take decisions and then apply them to each task, so that they

become friendly individuals, well equipped to contribute to the international community.

- 1.6 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following tables.

***Junior Department***

School	NC name
D3	Year 3
D4	Year 4
D5	Year 5
D6	Year 6

***Senior School***

School	NC name
C1	Year 7
C2	Year 8
C3	Year 9
B1	Year 10
B2	Year 11
A1	Year 12
A2	Year 13
A3	Post A Level

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

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

- 2.1 The Yehudi Menuhin School very successfully fulfils its aims of developing the musical potential of gifted young people, both for their own fulfilment and for the benefit and enrichment of others, through an integrated music and academic timetable. Pupils' achievements and progress are exceptional, particularly in their music studies, with all pupils gaining entry to the conservatoires or universities of their choice around the world. Their excellent standards of articulacy, numeracy and creativity demonstrate their strong commitment to their studies across all subjects, and pupils in Years 12 and 13 in particular participate with high levels of curiosity. Throughout the school, pupils' extremely positive attitudes to learning, their exemplary behaviour and their very strong relationships with both their peers and their teachers contribute to these outstanding levels of attainment. The high-quality curriculum is well planned so that instrumental lessons, practice sessions and academic subjects are interwoven throughout the school day, providing a strong academic foundation as the school intends. Excellent teaching is provided by extremely knowledgeable staff in very small class sizes. This enables teachers to give individual help to each pupil as required, including those with SEND, EAL and the more able. Extra-curricular activities are of necessity limited but these are more than offset by the opportunities pupils are given to showcase their instrumental prowess in internal and public concerts, national and international competitions, and musical tours abroad, which add positively to their educational experiences.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent, enabling them to become confident, well-balanced individuals who can take their place in society and contribute to the international community, as enshrined in the school's aims. Their excellent spiritual development is supported by the beauty of the musical environment which surrounds them and by the uplifting quality of their music, which the pupils and their audiences appreciate. Their moral, social and cultural development is also extremely strong, and pupils respect each other whatever their background within this multi-cultural community. Pupils' personal development is strongly promoted by the excellent pastoral care shown by the dedicated teaching and non-teaching staff team. The arrangements for the pupils' welfare, health and safety are good and are of paramount importance in the day-to-day life of the school. The boarding experience makes a valuable contribution towards their achievements and personal development in this unique school, which is a happy and nurturing place where pupils are mutually supportive. However, the choice of food and the quantity, particularly for the older boarders, is inconsistent.
- 2.3 Senior leaders and governors have a purposeful vision for the future of the school, represented in a clear school development plan. Good links are made between this plan, the appraisal process and the professional development of staff. However, recruitment systems for staff and governors have not been rigorously implemented or monitored, resulting in late completion of some appointment checks. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire parents were overwhelmingly positive and highly supportive concerning all aspects of school life. Since the previous inspection, information and communication technology (ICT) is used more widely by pupils across the curriculum, and the school has extended the opportunities for participation in sport.

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

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

- 2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:
- ensure that all required checks against the barred list, and checks of medical fitness, qualifications and identity, are always carried out before staff start work in the school, and that for governors, identity is checked and enhanced disclosure obtained as soon as practicable after appointment. [Part 4, paragraphs 19(2)(a); 19(3); and 21(6)(b)(i) and (ii), under Suitability of staff and proprietors; and, for the same reason, Part 3, paragraph 7, under Welfare, health and safety]
- 2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2011.

### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that governors and senior leadership have a reliable process for monitoring compliance with regulations.
  2. Consistently provide a greater variety of food and increase the quantity available for older boarders.

### **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 is exceptional.
- 3.2 The pupils are exceedingly well educated in accordance with the school's aims to develop the musical potential of gifted young people both for their own fulfilment and for the benefit and enrichment of others. They become independent, learn the art of self-correction, analyse and think, take decisions and then apply them to each task, following the vision of the school's founder. Pupils develop their understanding, knowledge and skills extremely well in all subject areas but exceptionally so in their musical education.
- 3.3 Throughout the school, pupils are highly articulate and can hold mature conversations about various topics or issues. They listen to each other and their teachers very well, their reading is fluent and they write in a very expressive way. Their numeracy skills are applied very well in different subject areas and, when they are given the opportunity, they display strong ICT skills; in music, technology plays an important role. Pupils demonstrate their creativity in the high quality of work seen in art and particularly in their music studies, where their achievement and progress are exceptional, reflecting the reason why they chose to attend this school. The focus on developing their independence and extremely strong organisational skills has an excellent impact on their critical and logical thinking. In Years 12 and 13, pupils demonstrate a high level of curiosity through their studies, and this is seen in the way they ask relevant questions of their teachers. They appreciate the knowledgeable demonstrations and inspirational teaching, particularly of the music staff, which engender and strengthen the pupils' commitment to their own futures. Throughout the school, their physical skills are developed effectively through the range of sports in which they participate. Pupils' levels of achievement are supported extremely well by excellent teaching, their own exemplary behaviour, the very strong relationships they enjoy with staff, and their own outstanding attitudes to learning.
- 3.4 Most pupils wish to continue their music education when they leave the school, and all of these gain entry into their choice of music conservatoires or equivalent, either in the UK or abroad. A very small number choose to read another subject at university. Pupils with EAL effectively become bilingual, and most take GCSE in English language and literature and achieve very well. Pupils participate in UK mathematics challenges with a number gaining bronze, silver and gold certificates, and they also achieve success in chemistry, creative writing and poetry competitions. Pupils have gained The Duke of Edinburgh's Award at bronze and silver levels, and this year pupils have enrolled on the gold level for the first time. A multitude of significant musical achievements are seen in solo performance, chamber music, choral singing, orchestral playing and compositions, and individual success is frequent in major national and international instrumental competitions.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2010 to 2012. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. However, it should be borne in mind that the numbers of pupils taking public examinations each year is extremely small. Results in national tests at the age of eleven have been excellent in relation to the national average for maintained primary schools; in 2011, results in English were exceptional. Results in GCSE have been good in relation to the national average for maintained schools and similar to the

national average for maintained selective schools. Results in IGCSE have been higher than the worldwide average and mostly higher than the UK average. Results at A level have been excellent in relation to the national average for maintained schools, and also good in relation to the national average for maintained selective schools. These levels of attainment, supported by evidence from lesson observation, work produced by pupils and curriculum interviews with them, indicate that pupils throughout the school make an excellent rate of progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability. Progress in pupils' music studies and instrumental performance is exceptional.

- 3.6 Pupils with SEND and more able pupils achieve very well because staff ensure that, in the small class sizes within academic lessons, pupils are given the individual support they need to approach the tasks they are set with confidence, so that they are each challenged at their own level of ability. Pupils with EAL also demonstrate excellent progress in their acquisition of English, and clear evidence was seen of immediate progress in comprehension soon after arrival at the school. For example, in the junior school these pupils are able to recognise different parts of sentence construction and use them when writing acrostic poems at their own level of English comprehension; in the senior school, they are able to write sonnets of a high quality giving opportunity for their creative expression beyond music. The individual timetables which are prepared for each pupil mean that, in their instrumental studies, the opportunity is given frequently for them to be inspired and stimulated at their own level of ability, so that their progress is exceptional throughout their time at the school.
- 3.7 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They are enthusiastic, apply themselves very well, and concentrate and persevere in their instrumental tuition or practice for extended periods of time. They collaborate exceptionally well and work with determination during lessons and group performance, as well as in individual practice sessions. The presentation of their written work is neat and well organised, and, in concert performance, even the youngest pupils demonstrate notable levels of maturity and confidence. Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is exemplary and they clearly enjoy their learning in academic and music studies.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of the curricular and extra-curricular programme is excellent.
- 3.9 The curriculum is well planned and suitable for the age range, needs and abilities of the pupils. It very successfully supports the school's aim to develop the musical potential of gifted young people within an academic environment and contributes very well to their exceptional achievement. Pupils spend approximately half of their time pursuing their music studies and the remainder on the academic curriculum, during which a well-rounded education is provided, covering linguistic, mathematical, scientific, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative development. The school is flexible in meeting pupils' needs through a range of subject choices and each pupil, including those in Years 12 and 13, is given an individual timetable that combines academic studies, instrumental lessons and practice sessions, art and sport.
- 3.10 In Years 3 to 6, pupils study English, mathematics, science, history, art, sport, German and music with the addition of drama in Years 7 to 9. Typically, pupils sit GCSEs in English language and literature, mathematics, sciences, history, music and a modern foreign language with an emphasis on German, although French is

also taught. There is an increasing provision, particularly for younger pupils, to use ICT to support their learning within the academic curriculum, a recommendation at the time of the previous inspection. Composing and other software is used extensively in pupils' music studies. Pupils in Years 12 and 13 study two or three A levels, one of which is music. Pupils may spend two or three years studying in the sixth form. The opportunity to spend an additional year is invaluable in supporting music studies and/or preparation for entry to higher education at international musical colleges and conservatoires which have a very competitive standard of entry. The balance of the curriculum throughout the school is regularly monitored by the senior leadership.

- 3.11 In their music studies, all pupils throughout the school receive two one-hour lessons with their principal teacher, and at least one additional hour with an assistant teacher, on their first study instrument each week; they also receive one half-hour lesson on their second study instrument. Each day contains timetabled practice sessions. They also attend classes in composition and take part in workshops, with regular opportunities given for their compositions to be performed. The music curriculum also includes classical improvisation classes, choral singing and aural training.
- 3.12 By definition of entry to the school, all pupils are able, gifted and talented in music and they receive highly individualised support from teachers who know them well. Provision for pupils with SEND is strong. These pupils, who are very small in number, receive further support within lessons from their teachers and have individual education plans that are regularly monitored and reviewed by senior staff. Provision for pupils with EAL is excellent. They receive a high level of individual support from a specialist and from their subject teachers, who focus on subject-specific language in lessons which ensures speedy acquisition of English. Those who are more able academically are given the challenge they need because the class sizes are small, and teachers focus very effectively on each individual.
- 3.13 The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities that extends the music and academic curriculum as well as providing a range of recreational activities. There is an extensive programme of musical performance throughout the year for all pupils including those in Years 12, 13 and post A level, for instance twice-weekly lunchtime concerts in which all pupils perform to the highest professional standards. In response to a recommendation about sport at the time of the previous inspection, the school has developed a successful and largely popular programme of sport and games that complements pupils' musical and academic progress. Refurbishment of the school's swimming pool allows all pupils to swim at least weekly. Pupils also have opportunities to take part in football coached by staff from a local football club, cross-country, badminton, dance, tennis and yoga. Pupils' creativity is further stimulated by opportunities to take part in art as a non-examined subject and annual drama productions. The school has successfully introduced the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.
- 3.14 The school has very strong community links, locally, nationally and internationally. Pupils have many opportunities to participate in the school's outreach programme which gives them experience of playing and teaching in local schools and residential homes or hospices and of understanding the needs of others within the community. Seven such external concerts were held during the inspection. A variety of tours is arranged to different countries around the world. Such experiences make an outstanding contribution to pupils' personal development.

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

- 3.15 The quality of teaching is excellent.
- 3.16 Teaching is highly effective in promoting pupils' progress and strongly supports the aims of the school. Teachers' subject knowledge is of a high standard and staff genuinely wish to share their knowledge and skills with their pupils. The pupils' high levels of achievement within the public academic examinations taken owes much to the excellent relationships they enjoy with their teachers, in particular the empathy shown by teachers to the inevitable parallel demands created between academic study and the pupils' music commitments. Pupils develop a disciplined approach as well as a genuine enthusiasm for learning because of the excellent role modelling by staff.
- 3.17 Across the school, the teaching challenges the pupils intellectually so that they develop the ability to reason constructively and reflectively and to apply themselves diligently to the task before them. The time constraints lead to the non-musical academic programme within the upper years of the school, including in Years 12 and 13, being examination-focused, leaving little opportunity for independent investigative work beyond the confines of the syllabus. Nevertheless, the enthusiasm of the staff means that they grasp opportunities to provide wider consideration of their subjects through discussion and trips away from school.
- 3.18 Within this small school, staff know all pupils very well. Whilst all pupils are extremely talented in music, staff understand the wide range of academic needs associated with the pupils who attend and empathise with the demanding, ever-changing routine the pupils have to manage. This knowledge leads to a very flexible approach, with academic staff freely offering their time for catch-up sessions for lessons missed or concepts which were not easily understood. Staff challenge more able pupils at their own level of ability. Support for those with EAL, through the strong support of specialist teaching and the normal classroom provision, is excellent, as subject teachers give plenty of individual help to these pupils and to those with SEND. This results in excellent standards being achieved across the curriculum for all of these pupils.
- 3.19 A particular strength of the school is the pupils' drive to succeed and to do their best, often inspired by the teaching methodology. This is particularly true in Years 12 and 13, where, for example, higher level questioning drew pupils into thinking logically and critically about the music to which they were listening. Pupils' attention is held throughout their lessons by the wide range of teaching methods employed to ensure the best outcomes for pupils, and time is used very well. This creates a purposeful atmosphere which fosters interest and enthusiasm. Behavioural problems in class do not occur and the high level of cooperation from pupils enables teachers to maximise the learning and achievements of their pupils through well-planned lessons.
- 3.20 Teaching is based on the current stage of the pupils' development and examination aspirations. Assessment strategies afford teachers the opportunity to monitor effectively their pupils' achievements so ensuring that they are well placed to realise their ambitions. Pupils' work is assessed regularly and the comments made are positive and encouraging. Marking offers pupils clear written guidance as to how to improve the quality of their work and often sets mutually agreed targets. Pupils are also given much oral feedback and, during discussions, they indicated that they appreciate the constructive assistance their teachers give them. Resources are

used very effectively in most subjects and the availability of pianos around the school means that the timetable, especially for practice sessions, can be extremely flexible. The use of ICT resources to support teaching has improved since the previous inspection.

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

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils' personal qualities develop extremely well in accordance with the school's aims. Their spiritual awareness is very strong and pupils of all ages and faiths have respectful attitudes towards each other, developed by attendance at morning meetings (assemblies) which often have a moral, spiritual or reflective theme and include talks on British culture and institutions. An example of where pupils learned from, and respected, very well each other's backgrounds was seen when links were made between the Hebrew language, read by a Jewish pupil, and the English translation of the *Song of the Sea* from the Bible in the morning meeting. Pupils sometimes lead these meetings, including a recent one on Amnesty International, and they take very seriously the two minutes of silent reflection at the end of meetings, which has been a tradition since the founding of the school. Pupils benefit greatly from their very high standard of music-making which pervades the daily life of the school and this helps them develop spiritually and culturally. They are confident young people and demonstrate a high level of maturity in the way they work and talk to each other and their teachers.
- 4.3 Pupils develop an extremely good set of moral values and have a clear awareness of right and wrong. They are kind and thoughtful to each other and their relationships with staff are excellent. They support one another effectively and their behaviour is exemplary. A mentoring system exists which involves supporting each other within a year group as well as older pupils supporting younger ones who have the same instrumental teacher. Pupils applaud each other with genuine warmth and enthusiasm at regular lunchtime concerts. They have the opportunity to discuss matters such as rights and responsibilities and conflict resolution in tutor groups and within the curriculum. For example, pupils explored the issue of human rights in an English task and others discussed how they had looked at racial inequality when studying the early history of jazz.
- 4.4 Pupils' social awareness is excellent. Pupils take up opportunities of responsibility when they arise; the ethos is non-hierarchical and senior pupils, particularly those in Years 12 and 13, carry out pastoral roles automatically and with sensitivity. They organise the school's Christmas party in the winter and a jazz party in the summer. A team with a leader will have particular responsibilities in the dining room, and pupils assist in the stage-managing of concerts. They develop leadership and other skills which have a positive impact on their personal development through the introduction of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. All pupils are involved in charity work and this has recently included some growing their own plants and selling them, and the organisation of a cake sale. They take and share personal responsibility in their musical studies, such as leading the rehearsal of a chamber group preparing for the Christmas concert, or accompanying a peer in his or her performance. They participate in the outreach programme willingly and do this and their charity fund-raising with a sense of support and responsibility for those who may be less fortunate than themselves.
- 4.5 Pupils have an excellent appreciation of their own and other cultures. They develop mutual respect and understanding through the school's inclusive international community. At lunchtimes, pupils from different backgrounds sit together. Pupils' understanding of various cultures is very strong, developed through sharing their

own backgrounds from around the world and through their music, art and history studies or tours abroad. They also learn about different faiths and cultures through talks in morning meetings and those given by external speakers.

- 4.6 By the time they leave the school, pupils demonstrate an extremely high level of personal development. They are mature, knowledgeable, independent and empathetic, ready to be responsible citizens and contribute positively to the next stage of their education and society.

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

- 4.7 The quality and arrangements for pastoral care are excellent.
- 4.8 Pastoral care very strongly supports the school's aims and makes an excellent contribution to pupils' personal development. All members of staff understand that they have a pastoral role to play in the school whether this is formal or not. Some staff are tutors to groups of pupils throughout their time in the senior school. An effective senior leadership structure involving a range of senior, boarding and welfare staff support the tutors. Whilst the size of the school allows for much informal dialogue, the headmaster meets formally each week with the staff who have specific pastoral roles. This ensures that immediate pupil concerns are shared and brought to the senior staff's attention, and that key information is disseminated appropriately at the weekly briefing meetings, the minutes of which are emailed to all staff. An intensive pupil review takes place termly.
- 4.9 Throughout the school, relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst pupils themselves, are outstanding, giving the school a very special feel of kinship. There is a deep, instinctive feeling of mutual respect and pupils display great loyalty to their school and to each other. This is nurtured by the very informal, non-competitive and inclusive nature of the school as well as the mentoring system, where senior pupils help new and younger ones adapt and settle in swiftly. As an example, an older pupil was observed supporting a younger overseas pupil within a lesson. The pupils work very co-operatively in lessons and are polite and courteous to and considerate of each other as they interact during the school day.
- 4.10 Within the necessary constraints that being a specialist music school imposes, pupils are able to enjoy a range of physical recreational activities. Through this, and through their lessons, they develop a thorough understanding of the importance of choosing a healthy life-style and taking physical exercise. In addition to this, the school provides 'Alexander technique' lessons, so that the pupils learn the importance of posture, and sensible eating habits are developed. Meal times are pleasant, positive social occasions and encourage pupils to eat healthily.
- 4.11 The school effectively promotes high standards of behaviour. Pupils have confidence in the measures to deal with bullying, should it occur. They say that, although bullying is rare, it is taken seriously and dealt with constructively. All staff promote a clear philosophy of high expectations which helps to engender a strong sense of responsibility and community. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.12 In their responses to the pre-inspection pupil questionnaire, a small minority of pupils were not positive about the school listening to their views. In discussion with all pupils during the inspection, the great majority said that they feel at ease raising concerns individually with senior staff, house staff and others. To assist this communication there is a school council, composed of pupils from the tutor groups

so that its representation is across the senior school, which meets once each half-term with the headmaster, as well as opportunities within the boarding houses. A food council has also recently been established.

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

- 4.13 The contribution of the arrangements for welfare, health and safety of pupils is good.
- 4.14 The safeguarding of pupils is given a strong emphasis on a day-to-day basis and the school operates an effective policy. All staff are trained in child protection and are keenly aware of their responsibilities, including the senior designated officers who have a good relationship with local children's care services. Referrals are made appropriately and expeditiously. The recently introduced policy and procedures which include guidance for staff about working alone with these young musicians are a sensible, clear and proportionate addition to the safeguarding policy. In a small number of cases, staff and governors have begun work before all the required recruitment checks have been carried out, although supervision was put in place, and all staff have had an enhanced criminal record disclosure. All checks are accurately recorded on the single central register.
- 4.15 Fire risk assessments, evacuation procedures and training have improved since the previous inspection. Good records of fire practices are kept and fire notices are clearly displayed in every room. The physical safety of pupils, both in and out of class, is given a high profile. Pathways are well lit around the school, in particular to the areas where concerts and rehearsals take place. Appropriate checking of risk is undertaken in all areas of the school, for example in science and for the swimming pool, and risk assessments for activities on-site and visits out of school are carried out and recorded thoroughly. Pupils of all ages said that they feel safe. They receive guidance appropriate for their age about keeping safe, and all praised the recent presentation on e-safety. Access to the internet is securely filtered.
- 4.16 Provision for ill and injured pupils is very good, care of pupils is given by appropriate staff and there is a strong first aid policy. Those with SEND are extremely well supported in all areas of school life. Admission and attendance registers are adequately maintained and stored and effective systems exist for checking pupils' absence.

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

- 4.17 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.18 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. Boarders are proud of their houses and demonstrate high levels of personal development in their confident interaction with adults, their support of each other and in their participation in the community. Relationships amongst boarders, and between boarders and staff, are constructive and sincere. The mentor system enables pupils to undertake leadership roles, assisting new boarders both to settle in to the house routines and to organise music practice sessions. Boarders enjoy the many opportunities to contribute to community life by taking part in lunchtime and evening concerts and helping at break times. The rich cultural diversity of the many different nationalities represented in this inclusive boarding community is eagerly celebrated and boarders value the opportunity to develop friendships across the world. Behaviour in the houses is exemplary and boarders thrive in the atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Boarders feel very well cared for and are appreciative of the efforts made by staff to

promote their well-being and musical development. They are able to influence their provision through weekly house meetings and the school council. In addition, a food council has just been formed and boarders are encouraged to write comments in a book in the dining room, to which the catering manager responds. Older boarders feel extremely well prepared for progressing to the next stage in their musical careers or further education.

- 4.19 The quality of boarding provision and care is good. The school's belief in the mantra advocated by Yehudi Menuhin to provide a homely, family environment for pupils, encourages close co-operation between house staff, tutors, academic and music staff, ensuring excellent pastoral care and all-round support. The health centre is conveniently sited and provides a high standard of care for all pupils. Fully qualified nursing staff are available twenty-four hours a day. Medication is correctly stored and dispensed and records are meticulously maintained. Appropriate provision is made for those who are ill and accidents are correctly recorded. Effective systems facilitate excellent communication between the health centre and the boarding houses. In the boarders' questionnaire, a minority of boarders reported that the food provided, although improving, did not always allow them sufficient choice or quantity. Inspectors found menus to be well planned but options are not always fully available and the plating system does not offer the flexibility of varying the quantities offered to different age groups. Special dietary requirements are clearly identified and met.
- 4.20 New boarders benefit from a comprehensive and welcoming induction programme and all boarders confirm that there is always someone to whom they can turn for advice, including an independent listener. Houses are secure and staff undertake regular checks on boarders' whereabouts. A rolling programme of refurbishment ensures that most of the boarding accommodation is reasonably well decorated and maintained, although a few areas are a little 'tired'. Laundry provision is adequate. Up to the age of 11 boys share accommodation with girls. Current organisation ensures that sleeping arrangements are separated by gender and washing facilities are appropriate. The school intends to provide separate accommodation for junior boys and girls in the relatively near future. Boarders are encouraged to personalise their rooms. A small minority of boarders responded to the questionnaire that they were unable to keep belongings secure. Inspectors found that the school makes reasonable provision, supplying each boarder with a lockable drawer and with the option of handing money and valuables to house staff for safe keeping. Many boarders do not choose to use padlocks or deposit items with house staff. Two common rooms afford boarders the opportunity to socialise and there is enough space for personal privacy and quiet times. In their responses to the pre inspection questionnaire, a small minority of boarders reported that they are not happy with the availability of snacks and drinking water outside meal times. Inspectors found that boarders may use house kitchens to prepare hot drinks and snacks, and the school also provides these. Internet access and school computers are available for boarders' use and there are house telephone booths where they may contact parents and friends.
- 4.21 The indoor swimming pool is greatly valued by boarders who also enjoy the use of sports pitches. Shopping trips and occasional cinema visits are organised for weekends and free time is carefully planned to allow boarders sufficient rest and relaxation periods. A small minority of boarders indicated in their responses to the questionnaire that they would appreciate more planned activities but inspectors found that, when activities are offered, most boarders prefer the opportunity to rest. Although onerous demands are made on these pupils who work a long day

combining their academic and music studies, these demands are suitable for this specialist school and do not unacceptably affect their welfare.

- 4.22 The quality of arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are excellent. Boarders feel safe and valued. The clear and comprehensive safeguarding policy encompasses all staff, visitors and contract workers, and gives clear guidance about one-to-one teaching. Staff receive training in e-safety and in child protection. Correct recruitment procedures have been closely followed for boarding staff. Regular fire drills take place in boarding time and all fire regulations are met. Risk assessments are carefully monitored. The staff supervising boarders outside teaching time are sufficient in number and at least one member of staff in each boarding house can be easily contacted at night should boarders require assistance. Boarders understand the signing in and out process and staff are confident about what they should do if a boarder is reported missing. The system of rewards and sanctions promotes excellent behaviour. Boarders know when and how to report concerns and are comfortable in speaking with house staff, confident that issues are taken seriously and dealt with promptly. They report that bullying is not tolerated and any instances are quickly addressed.
- 4.23 The leadership and management of boarding are excellent. Boarding aims are clearly stated and policies are suitable, reviewed annually and published on the website. The boarding team meets regularly to review arrangements for boarding, ensuring that changes and developments impact positively on boarders. Staff are well supported and able to access professional training with opportunities to share information from courses with each other. House records are properly maintained and monitored. The school has a comprehensive complaints procedure for parents. Parents who responded to the boarding questionnaire were extremely satisfied with the provision and care their children receive. Boarders are equally enthusiastic about their boarding experience, especially being able to enjoy friendships in a safe, happy environment.
- 4.24 The school has responded positively to the recommendation of the 2010 Ofsted report, by implementing an effective system for recording sanctions consistently in boarding houses, in line with the school's policy.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The governing body, called council, oversees the work of the school effectively, enabling the school's aims to be fulfilled in relation to the pupils' academic achievements, the advancement of their musical talents and their personal development. The governors fulfil their responsibility for reviewing the safeguarding policy and the discharge of the related duties, and they regularly monitor other school policies, particularly those for welfare, health and safety. They endeavour to keep abreast of their legal responsibilities; however, their oversight and monitoring of the undertaking of recruitment checks has not been sufficiently rigorous.
- 5.3 Governors, who are also trustees, bring to their role a range of expertise from different walks of life. Through the five sub-committees which meet regularly, and through the detailed report provided for each full council meeting by the headmaster, director of music and director of studies, governors are informed of the successes and challenges for the school. They ensure that high educational standards are maintained and are particularly focused on developing the pupils' musical achievements successfully. The council makes effective strategic and financial decisions, as seen in the upgrading of the dining facilities, renovation and extension of some of the boarding accommodation and provision of an indoor swimming pool. The governors work closely with the senior leadership team in creating a school development plan, challenging their ideas, yet also offering support with agreed objectives. The plan is forward-looking in consideration of education, accommodation and financial planning, ensuring that material and human resources are used to best advantage to meet the needs of the pupils who attend.
- 5.4 Members of council frequently attend school events such as the twice-weekly lunchtime concerts and they strongly support the school's fund-raising activities. Some have observed lessons and seen the working of the school during the daily routine, and other information is received via an annual presentation made to the education sub-committee by a member of staff, about the successes and challenges of their roles and responsibilities. A panel of governors undertakes the appraisal of the performance of the headmaster and the leadership team.

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

- 5.5 Leadership and management, including links with parents and others, are good.
- 5.6 The excellent quality of the educational experience offered, the exceptional achievement of the pupils and their excellent personal development indicate that the school is successfully fulfilling its aim of developing the musical potential of gifted young people regardless of race, creed or financial background. Systems for pre-appointment checks for staff and governors have not been rigorously implemented, resulting in some checks being undertaken after the individual has started work. All staff have an enhanced criminal record disclosure and they are accurately recorded on the single central register.

- 5.7 The senior leadership team and the governors have a clear vision for the challenges and the next steps in their school's development. The strong and committed team of staff has contributed to the five-year school development plan which includes the major issues for future progress. The objectives are clear and the steps required to action them; it is used as a working document and is regularly reviewed and evaluated.
- 5.8 The premises make a positive contribution to the pupils' learning experiences, especially the Menuhin Hall, which is an inspiring venue in which to showcase the pupils' talents to the full. The extensive grounds are well maintained. The school runs efficiently due to the care and support given to the pupils by the administration, catering, cleaning and maintenance departments. Pupils respect their learning environment and displays around the school, particularly in art, demonstrate further the pupils' strong creativity, celebrating their achievements in areas other than music, and reflecting the effort they put into their academic work and the pride they have in their school.
- 5.9 Senior leaders observe lessons and examine pupils' work, and teaching staff have participated in peer observation. An effective appraisal system for all staff operates annually and is linked successfully to the in-service training programme and the development plan. School policies are regularly reviewed concerning content and implementation, and all staff have been suitably trained for their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Communication between staff, both formal and informal, about academic, music and pastoral matters is continuous with regular meetings between different groups of staff, which ensure that the needs of, and outcomes for, the pupils are always the main focus of senior leadership.
- 5.10 The school promotes excellent relationships with parents. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were highly supportive of the school. All who responded were positive about their children feeling safe and happy, how well they are looked after, the excellent progress they make in their studies, the range of subjects available, the ready availability of information and policies, and the effective leadership and management of the school. Numerous opportunities for parents to join in with school activities are provided, and they are particularly welcome at the lunchtime concerts, bonfire night, teas at the beginning of term and the annual play, although it is not possible for many parents who live overseas to attend these. The Friends of the school are particularly active in supporting the work of the school through fund-raising, and their recent efforts provided a new chamber organ.
- 5.11 The school has a compliant formal complaints procedure which is available to parents and which has been invoked and followed in the recent past, with detailed records kept. Any concerns are recorded carefully, treated sensitively and generally resolved through discussion and prompt action. Staff are readily available for parents in person, on the telephone and by email.
- 5.12 Parents of current and prospective pupils are provided with detailed and relevant information, much of which is on the website, and they are informed of how they can obtain it in other ways. Termly detailed and interesting newsletters about achievements and successes are another valuable way for parents to keep in touch with events. At the end of each term, parents receive a full and informative report on the progress made by their children in academic, musical and personal development in boarding if applicable, with appropriate targets set in some academic subjects or aspects of music towards which their children can work in the future.

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