

Claremont School

Baldslow, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN37 7PW

Inspection dates 26–28 April 2016

Overall effectiveness **Outstanding**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Sixth form provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The personal development of children, pupils and learners is outstanding. Pupils are incredibly proud of their school and rightly so. Their behaviour is exemplary and their personal progress is truly impressive. They develop quickly into intelligent, rounded young people who are ready to contribute their skills, knowledge and values to the wider world.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding. All pupils in the school benefit from expert teaching, not only in day-to-day lessons, but through an enriching programme of extra-curricular activities.
- All pupils make outstanding progress. The most able go on to achieve above and beyond their predicted results. Even more impressive is the rapid and sustained progress made by pupils who start school needing to catch up, sometimes because they have had previous difficulties.
- Senior leaders possess a deeply held sense of moral purpose, which pervades the whole school. The school provides a compelling balance of outstanding pastoral care with academic excellence.
- Leaders at all levels are energetic and thoughtful. They constantly review and check the quality of the work they do. They ensure that pupils benefit from accomplished teachers with excellent subject knowledge and the ability to teach exceptionally well.
- Children in the early years make outstanding progress. Their enthusiasm for learning is infectious and shines through all their behaviour and contributions to the school.
- The sixth form provides an outstanding quality of education and personal development. Learners benefit from individual attention, teachers with deep and wide-ranging subject knowledge, and a range of activities which prepare them extremely well for higher education and employment.
- The proprietor, principal and headteacher of the preparatory school form an excellent team, strictly holding themselves and others in the school to account.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that school improvement planning is clearly and precisely based on leaders' evaluation of how well pupils are progressing.
- Improve the outdoor learning area for the Reception classes.
- Extend the range and variety of careers and advice and guidance for learners in the sixth form.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- Pupils come first in this thriving, busy and growing school. School leaders have a clear vocation which assures outstanding personal development and outcomes for all pupils. Inclusive principles, openness to pupils of a range of different backgrounds and abilities and exceptional relationships among pupils and with staff, engender immense pride in the school, which inspectors found to be completely justified.
- In this non-selective school, all pupils, including the most able, those who have special educational needs or disability and those who need to catch up, all make outstanding progress from their different starting points. School leaders and pupils themselves are rightly proud of the rapid progress they have made and the difference the school has made to them.
- The highest standards of teaching, learning and behaviour are maintained through attention to detail and a deep understanding of individual pupils. For example, only staff with excellent subject knowledge are appointed. Low standards are not acceptable and school leaders take firm action to assure quality through a stringent approach of appraisal and performance management. Staff benefit from excellent training and development. Links with other schools in the independent and maintained sector have been made and have proved to be extremely useful for staff to share and develop good practice.
- Pupils profit from a stimulating and wholly appropriate curriculum at all phases of their education, equipping them extremely well to take their next steps within or beyond the school. However, developments in the range of subjects on offer do not stand still; leaders are constantly reviewing the provision for different pupils to ensure the best possible outcomes.
- Leaders have also ensured that pupils have more than just their taught lessons to develop their skills and understanding. An impressive range of activities, learning and leadership opportunities are on offer as part of the school's unique 'co-curricular' programme. The programme choices made by pupils in the senior school enable them to continue their studies in music, art or technology for example, in addition to providing essential opportunities for more physical exercise, spiritual growth or employability skills. Time is used flexibly to provide extra tuition and revision sessions where needed. For some pupils, there are golden opportunities to exercise their leadership skills in leading and managing projects and activities.
- A calendar of artistic, musical, sporting and social events further enhances pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These events contribute very effectively to developing pupils' understanding of British values, tolerance, democracy and participation. Inspectors noted how confident and self-assured pupils are. They are polite and welcoming to visitors and conduct themselves proudly when going about their business in the school and in lessons.
- Recent changes to leadership in both the preparatory and the senior school have not slowed the momentum of the school's drive to improve. The headteacher of the preparatory school was appointed in September 2015 and has built upon the inspirational foundations of the previous headteacher's work, providing a fresh focus on the academic rigour of teaching and learning. The principal has also wisely strengthened leadership in the growing senior school, assembling an accomplished team of skilled, experienced and energetic leaders, who not only share his vision and moral purpose, but also provide a careful balance between academic excellence and exemplary pastoral care.
- Leaders at all levels, including house, phase and subject leaders across both sites, maintain high standards and are true guardians of the moral purpose of the school. Leaders have a deep understanding of the strengths of the school and what they are striving constantly to improve. Plans to improve the school are ambitious and rooted in a vision of excellence. However, documented planning and evaluation of the school's work is not as precise or clear as it should be.
- The vast majority of parents value the school's work and are completely satisfied with standards. Via Parent View and the 'point in time' survey, a very small number of parents raised concerns about behaviour and the quality of teaching. These concerns were pursued as part of the inspection and considered alongside other evidence. At the time of the inspection, inspectors did not find any foundation to the concerns raised.
- School leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - There is no governance as such in the school. The proprietor and school leaders govern themselves and take full responsibility for the quality of the school. Nevertheless, they have strict processes and procedures to account for their work. Regular strategic and operational meetings take place to evaluate the performance of the school honestly.

- The proprietor and school leaders have wisely retained the services of the previous headteacher to act as a 'critical friend', providing guidance and advice about compliance with statutory requirements.
- The proprietor regards one of his top priorities as employing the best teachers and so far his strategy has been successful. There are no unfilled vacancies and little difficulty in recruiting staff.
- The proprietor has also ensured the financial viability of the school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Senior leaders are highly trained and vigilant, as are all staff, so any concerns are reported and acted upon conscientiously. Pupils' safety and physical and emotional well-being are a top priority. Careful records are kept of concerns and there is a close and effective relationship with other agencies supporting children and young people, including child and adolescent mental health services. Leaders are acutely in tune with local concerns and current challenges regarding keeping pupils safe and they act accordingly.
- Both sites are well maintained and secure. Staff are alert to the risks posed by the busy road near to the preparatory school site and ensure that the entrances and exits are secure. Pupils are well trained to move calmly, safely and with consideration around the older parts of buildings on both sites, where corridors and staircases are steep and narrow.
- School leaders are mindful of professional boundaries between pupils and staff and also between families and the school and are alert to any risks of inappropriate behaviours. There is a clear policy for staff to follow when working closely with pupils that helps to keep all safe and secure.
- Vetting checks on staff employed in the school meet all requirements and are carried out meticulously. Leaders are trained in safer recruitment procedures and records seen during the inspection indicate that all checks are carried out carefully and in line with current guidance from the Secretary of State.
- Staff have been thoroughly trained in safeguarding procedures and practice. They know exactly how to recognise signs of abuse or neglect and how to report their concerns.
- Pupils benefit from a thorough programme to support their own understanding of the risks they may face. In this way, for example, they are protected from adopting extreme views. The school also ensures that steps are taken to minimise pupils' anxieties and improve their emotional and physical health. There is a strong understanding of the pressures and difficulties faced by young people which may lead them to self-harming or being excessively controlled about eating. Staff, including the school welfare personnel, are skilled in supporting pupils who may be at risk.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Teachers have excellent knowledge of their different subjects and make sure that pupils explore ideas and concepts deeply. As a result, pupils in all year groups in the school have complete confidence in their teachers and their ability to help them to succeed.
- The quality of questioning, debate and discussion in lessons is impressive. The youngest children in the early years frame intelligent questions about their learning. At the other end of the school, Year 13 learners present their ideas with reason, subtlety and sophistication. Dialogue and use of sophisticated language are exceptional.
- Teachers judge well when and how to respond to pupils' answers. They astutely ascertain what pupils find easy and what they find difficult and adjust their teaching accordingly, ensuring that all pupils are challenged to attain highly. Teachers have high expectations and pupils definitely feel challenged. For example, pupils in the preparatory school told inspectors that sometimes the work is 'too hard' but that their teachers explain things so well and clearly that they are able to excel. The most-able pupils are pushed to think deeply, provide more detail in their answers and are challenged with concepts and problems that take them beyond their comfort zones.
- Throughout the preparatory and senior schools, teachers explain ideas, concepts and methods extremely effectively, taking enough time to ensure that all pupils fully understand. While they explain, teachers are watchful and ready to target pupils who may not appear to understand completely. Alternatively, when pupils are ready to do so, they sometimes take the lead with explaining their ideas to their classmates. In this way, not only are teachers demonstrating impressive subject knowledge, but pupils, too, are absorbing knowledge and understanding at a rapid rate.
- Pupils are diligent, committed and motivated to learn. They concentrate hard, whether trying out practice examination papers, pursuing extension work, listening to each other or working collaboratively. The atmosphere in classrooms is both studious and enthusiastic. Even the very youngest children are capable of sustained concentration.

- Pupils are sometimes so keen to get answers right that those who are less confident appear hesitant or even shy. However, there is no shame in making mistakes. Teachers make sure that pupils are corrected where needed and avoid continued misconceptions. Working relationships are strong. Teachers are encouraging and sometimes soothing for those whose confidence needs boosting. They are also not afraid to be tough and 'no nonsense' when pupils just need to sharpen up, think more carefully and make use of what they already know.
- Brisk starts to lessons, readiness to learn and prompt attention characterise typical lessons in the school. No time is wasted. Available resources are used effectively. For example, pupils make good use of textbooks and notes taken in previous lessons.
- Pupils really value and act upon the precise and individual feedback they receive from their teachers, whether written or verbal.
- Excellent teaching and learning also happen outside the regular timetabled lessons. Pupils benefit from the school's commitment to providing extra help, additional tuition in key skills and revision sessions. All of these additional interventions contribute to pupils' excellent progress and attainment.
- Teaching assistants are deployed extremely well. They skilfully and discreetly support pupils who need additional help, while not doing the work for them. There is no stigma attached to pupils who need extra guidance at different times while at school. Pupils told inspectors how much they valued the work of the learning support team, for example in supporting those who have dyslexic tendencies. There is wide acceptance that pupils all might learn differently, succeed in different ways and that everyone has a strength. As one parent commented, 'everyone at Claremont is good at something'.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils' individual personal development and welfare are prized and cultivated as carefully as is their academic progress. One parent commented that pupils are 'allowed to be children and grow, well-balanced with learning the right amount of self-discipline'.
- Leaders have established an impressive assessment system built around the frequent collection and analysis of pupils' attitude scores, specifically tailored to each subject. Pupils are competitive and completely committed to this system. Their improving attitude scores completely correlate with their progress. In this way, pupils learn how to become excellent learners. They are motivated, self-assured and resilient.
- A full programme of activities, sports and cultural opportunities ensure that pupils look outside of the school environment and gain a greater understanding of the wider world, their place in it and their responsibilities as citizens. In this way, they are in a superb position to contribute to society as well-adjusted, educated adults.
- Relationships between pupils and with staff are warm and mutually respectful. Pupils celebrate different backgrounds, cultures and experiences. The school is right to pride itself on its inclusive atmosphere and sense of acceptance.
- Staff have inculcated ideals of respect and tolerance among the pupils, who are alert to derogatory or disrespectful language and what is right and wrong. Firm action is taken to deal with the very rare instances of discriminatory behaviour.
- Pupils told inspectors that if there was ever any hint of bullying behaviour, it was dealt with effectively by staff. They feel that they can rely on staff to sort out problems.
- Pupils feel and are safe on both sites. They know that staff are there to help them if they find themselves in difficulties or at risk of harm.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are unfailingly charming and polite. They are courteously self-assured, with thoughtful and modest consideration for others.
- It was heartening to see how welcoming and friendly pupils were during the inspection. They really wanted to show off their school and would have liked more time to do so. The younger pupils were almost 'beside themselves' with enthusiasm, wanting to tell inspectors all about their learning.
- Pupils typically behave well in lessons and around the school sites. During the inspection, no low-level

disruption to learning was seen. Pupils were attentive and followed instructions promptly with few if any reminders about chatter or daydreaming. Pupils are purposeful and productive in lessons and see it as their duty to concentrate and participate.

- The majority of pupils attend well. All are punctual and need little chasing to arrive at lessons on time, with minimal lingering at changeovers or lunchtimes.
- The school is justifiably proud of its work to support those pupils who find full attendance difficult or who are reluctant to participate because they have previously had severe anxiety about school. Staff quickly gain pupils' confidence and interest and very soon pupils attend well and make good progress in lessons.
- Incidents of poor behaviour are very infrequent, but when they do occur they are dealt with firmly and fairly. Leaders do not shirk from taking an appropriate tough line with unacceptable conduct and sanctions are proportionate and effective. Leaders also ensure that, following any serious misdemeanours, opportunities to educate, rehabilitate and prevent repeat offending are not missed.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- Pupils make excellent progress from their starting points. Attainment at the highest level compares well with that of other pupils with similar starting points.
- Progress in English is excellent throughout the preparatory and senior schools. A love of reading and writing is a golden thread from the early years right up to the sixth form. At each stage or phase, pupils make rapid progress and attain high results because of outstanding teaching and close attention to accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Pupils in the preparatory school particularly excel in reading, including the youngest children, who read fluently and expressively. They skilfully use their knowledge of letters and the sounds that they make (phonics) to work out new words and are undaunted by challenging texts. National curriculum test results in reading for most pupils in the preparatory school are at the highest level. Pupils acquire strong reading habits, which are sustained right through the senior school, supporting their studies and enhancing their general knowledge.
- Pupils achieve extremely well in mathematics in the preparatory and senior schools. A few learners are exceptionally talented in mathematics and are wisely given every opportunity to pursue advanced studies at their own rapid pace.
- GCSE examination results in all subjects have improved year on year since the senior school opened. A large proportion of pupils achieve the highest grades to prepare them either for the sixth-form courses or for programmes at other schools. Overall, GCSE results in 2015 were well above the national figure, which is particularly impressive in this non-selective school.
- The most able achieve extremely well. Expert teaching and the excellent subject knowledge of teachers ensure that no pupil is held back, but instead pupils are pushed to exceed already high expectations.
- The school is rightly proud that pupils who need to catch up and those who have particular learning difficulties such as dyslexia or autism make accelerated progress, not only in their studies, but also in their personal development, self-assurance and confidence.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language quickly acquire the language skills they need to access the curriculum and make rapid progress. The school ensures that they are not held back in any way.
- Throughout the school, at each transition, children and pupils are well prepared for their next steps, so if they stay in the school, their progress goes smoothly. For those pupils who choose to take up places at other schools, either at 11, 13 or 16 years of age, their transition is planned well.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- Children get off to a flying start in the early years. They are curious, enthusiastic learners who make excellent progress. Their personal development is exceptional. Children are confident and happy; they mix well, form strong friendships and acquire impressive attitudes to learning.
- Leaders continually seek ways to improve outcomes for children. They have high standards, insist upon only the best provision and do not shy away from tackling any weaknesses. As a result, the early years provision is constantly improving.
- Leaders' assessments of children's progress and achievement are accurate. The proportion of children

achieving a good level of development is very high compared with national figures, with many children exceeding expectations. The very few children who enter the early years slightly below age-related expectations quickly catch up. Children who have special educational needs or disability are extremely well supported and make outstanding progress. In this way, children are very well prepared for Year 1.

- The range of learning activities in the early years is rich and inspiring. Children are 'fired up' by stimulating experiences that develop their imaginations. Early years leaders know the children extremely well and form excellent relationships. Children, from the earliest age, very quickly learn to communicate well and play together. They are capable of sustained concentration and focus. They also ask questions to which adults respond, and adjust teaching and activities.
- Children's language development is excellent. They rapidly acquire a wide and sophisticated vocabulary. Their reading and writing are impressive, as is their development of number skills.
- Parents are extremely positive about their children's experience in the early years. Parents who spoke to inspectors reported that they could not find any fault with the provision for their children. Relationships are excellent and information about children's progress is shared regularly. Parents report that children settle down quickly and that transitions to Year 1 are smooth and well planned. Parents have the opportunity to contribute to children's learning journeys, by recording steps of progress on the school's electronic assessment system.
- Children's excellent conduct and happy enthusiasm demonstrate that they feel exceptionally safe and secure. Staff are highly alert to children's welfare and all statutory requirements are met, including the independent school standards.
- A relative limitation of the early years provision is the outdoor area. The space is small and is not as stimulating as it could be. Although children benefit from the forest school programme, children in the Reception classes do not have free access to the outdoor learning area. Leaders are aware of this weakness and are planning to rectify it.

Sixth form provision

is outstanding

- Learners in the sixth form benefit from expert teaching, a wide range of extra-curricular activities and excellent leadership. Learners' outstanding behaviour, work ethic and personal growth, together with continuing improvements in their attitudes to learning, all contribute to their impressive achievements. As a result, learners are on track to achieve above and beyond their targets.
- The current Year 13 learners are the first cohort to go through the senior school. The school can confirm that very nearly all learners have confirmed plans for their next steps, whether employment, further training or university offers, which in some cases are unconditional.
- A lively, scholarly atmosphere pervades lessons and study time in the sixth form. Teaching typically challenges and deepens learners' thinking. Teachers make highly skilful use of learners' prior knowledge, which helps to develop their understanding and confidence to the full. Teachers meticulously listen to and assess learners' responses and adjust their teaching accordingly. Teachers and leaders track learners' progress closely and step in promptly if more support or additional study is needed. While learners appreciate and make the most of the extra tuition provided by their teachers, they are guided to become more independent and self-sufficient when studying.
- The school mostly offers academic A-level courses. Entry requirements to courses are designed to encourage learners to be ambitious and pursue their particular interests and aptitudes. Although it is early days in the history of the sixth form, particular subjects are emerging as strengths, including art and English. For those learners who need to improve their mathematics and English post-16, the school insists upon them achieving good grades in both these subjects in order to be prepared for higher education.
- A wide-ranging programme of enrichment adds to the sixth-form experience. Learners are active contributors to school life, through the extensive programme of extra-curricular activities, work experience and opportunities to develop leadership. The school is rightly proud of the way that learners mature and develop personal qualities that will take them far in life. Learners who have joined the school more recently settle in quickly and their progress accelerates. The most-able learners are able to take a faster track through some aspects of their courses, without losing any depth of learning or missing out on mastering knowledge.
- Learners are provided with excellent guidance when planning their future education and careers. School leaders are knowledgeable and learners are confident that the advice they receive is individual and impartial. A programme of careers events, talks and visits from professionals help learners to know what opportunities are open to them. However, school leaders have shrewdly identified that as the sixth form

grows, a wider range of specialist careers advice and guidance would support learners even more effectively.

- Leadership in the sixth form is excellent. Entry requirements to the sixth form are designed to ensure that learners start and continue on the right courses and that they make rapid progress. A flexible and personalised approach ensures that learners attend well, retention is high and learners' study programmes are tailored closely to their needs and abilities. Staff are highly vigilant and make sure that learners are safe and well educated about risks they may face as they become young adults.

School details

Unique reference number	114640
Inspection number	10017315
DfE registration number	845/6010

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Independent co-educational
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	1–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	604
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	74
Number of part time pupils	79
Number of boarders on roll	21
Proprietor	Mark Beaumont
Principal	Giles Perrin
Headteacher of preparatory school	Abra Stoakley
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,500 (pre-preparatory department) £11,250 (preparatory school) £15,150 (senior school) £15,900 (sixth form)
Annual fees (boarders)	£27,000
Telephone number	01424 751555
Website	www.claremontschool.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@claremontschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 March 2012

Information about this school

- Claremont School is a non-selective, independent, co-educational school for pupils aged from one to 18 years.
- The school was founded in 1925, initially as a preparatory and nursery school.
- In September 2011 the senior school opened on a different site near Bodiam. Learners currently in Year 13 were the first year group to start at the senior school and will be the first group to complete their studies in the sixth form this year. The school also owns a study centre in northern France.
- The school was previously inspected by Ofsted in April 2012.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- In September 2015 the school opened a boarding facility, which currently has 21 boarders, most of whom are senior pupils from overseas. The boarding provision was not inspected as part of this inspection.
- A small proportion of pupils in the school speak English as an additional language. A very small number of pupils have education, health and care plans.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- At the request of the Department for Education, this inspection was carried out earlier than planned because of concerns raised from the 'point in time' survey of pupils. Inspectors considered these concerns alongside other evidence.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 33 lessons across both school sites, undertook some shorter visits to sequences of lessons and visited the 'co-curricular' afternoon activities. More than one third of the observations of teaching were undertaken jointly with either the headteacher of the preparatory school or the director of teaching and learning at the senior school.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, groups of staff and middle leaders on both sites. Inspectors also selected groups of pupils from both school sites for formal meetings, in addition to speaking to pupils in lessons and around the school sites. A work sample was scrutinised and inspectors also examined pupils' work in lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation and policies to check compliance with the independent school standards.
- An inspector spoke to parents dropping off their children at the preparatory school. In addition, the 89 responses to the Parent View Ofsted online questionnaire were taken into account. The 33 responses to the staff questionnaire were evaluated as part of the evidence base.

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Claremont School

Claremont School (St Leonards) Limited

Claremont School, Baldslow, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN37 7PW

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

Claremont is a co-educational day and boarding school for children from the age of one to 18. The nursery, pre-prep and preparatory schools are in St Leonards-on-Sea and the senior school is in Bodiam. The school is an independent school for 800 pupils with up to 110 boarding places. The school provides residential care for pupils from 11 to 18 years old in two boarding houses within a short drive from the main school sites. The school offers full-time and weekly boarding. At the date of inspection, students from 28 different nationalities were boarding.

An education inspection took place in April 2016 and the school was judged as outstanding.

Inspection dates: 22 to 24 November 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The boarding school provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the school contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

Date of last inspection: First welfare inspection

Key findings from this inspection

This boarding school is outstanding because:

- Students from 28 countries live in an inclusive environment where they learn and celebrate their different cultures. Students feel like they are living in a 'home from home'. Boarding fully underpins their learning, and academic success is outstanding.
- Students make exceptional progress, some from a starting point where boarding seemed an impossibility. They make friends, embrace each other's differences and support each other to achieve their goals. Students enjoy warm and positive relationships with staff, describing them as being like family.
- Senior leaders have been successful in embedding a safeguarding culture throughout the entire school. Staff use software to record any issues and senior leaders analyse trends. Senior leaders identify any emerging issues for students and ensure that they have the necessary support.
- The boarding school benefits from exceptional leadership. Senior leaders are inspirational, confident and ambitious to continually challenge and improve practice. They identify areas for improvement, such as the need for the provision of a further common room.
- Staff are unreservedly committed to student welfare. They consider carefully the emotional well-being of students, making bespoke arrangements to ensure that students thrive in boarding. Staff assure each student's privacy and dignity.
- Students live in an environment that is furnished, decorated and maintained to an exceptional standard. They demonstrate the pride they have in their boarding areas by taking excellent care of them and keeping them clean.
- Students' behaviour is exceptional. They respect the boundaries in place to keep them safe. Students aspire to be prefects who model excellent manners, behaviour and maturity.
- There is excellent integration between boarding staff and education staff. They work together providing a holistic approach so that each student is ready and eager to learn. Students demonstrate a remarkable attitude to their education, actively seeking opportunities outside of the school day to further their studies.
- Staff demonstrate a wholehearted commitment to the students. They enjoy being with them, are responsive to their needs and provide a listening ear when students are experiencing difficulties, such as feeling lonely or homesick.
- Housemasters ensure that the staff team is well trained. They align their training programme with the needs of the current cohort, taking account of the senior leaders' analysis of the presenting needs.
- Parents speak in the most positive terms about the boarding. They say that staff are doing a fantastic job and cannot praise them enough. A parent said, 'It is the best school I have ever experienced.'

The boarding school's areas for development:

- Staff use two different methods to record the administration of medication. This has resulted in discrepancies between the two systems and does not always identify who administered the medication.
- On occasion, students have to find a member of staff to assure them that they have signed out when leaving the boarding house. This is not appropriate for all students.

What does the boarding school need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- Review the system of recording medication administration.
- Review the arrangements to ensure that students sign out when leaving the boarding house.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Boarding is an integral and valued part of the school community. Academic and care staff work as one team to ensure the best possible outcomes. Boarding students invite day students over to their home. Teachers held an assembly on boarding so that day students understand the provision.

Boarding students make exceptional progress. They demonstrate a commitment to their learning, such as doing extra study beyond the planned hours of prep time. Some students have complex needs that staff meet to an excellent standard. Staff responses to specific needs are child-centred, with individual programmes designed to nurture students to enable them to thrive. One parent said, 'The staff have done outstanding work with a complicated boy.'

Housemasters plan the boarding population carefully so that individual characteristics and needs are taken into account. If a student experiences difficulties in the dormitory or house, staff are quick to respond to resolve issues. Strategies are successful, such as boarders moving dormitory or moving boarding house. One student had a 'calming effect' on another student who was then able to complete the academic year. Students are able to increase their overnight stays in boarding and to develop their confidence and social interaction skills, some from a starting point of social isolation.

The multicultural community celebrates difference and enables understanding and

tolerance. A member of staff said, 'We actively promote British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.' Students are free to express their own faith without fear of discrimination, for example saying a prayer at lunchtime.

Staff are very knowledgeable about students' needs. They are sensitive to the ongoing and emerging needs of students, including their emotional well-being. Students who were once homesick now relish their boarding experience and want to stay for additional years. Students are at ease, knowing that staff are taking appropriate action to ensure their well-being. All students identify adults they can turn to.

Staff meet students' health needs in full; for example, they ensure that overseas students are registered with a local doctor. The school nurse is able to give guidance about important health needs, creating health care plans if necessary. This includes utilising other agencies such as child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) when necessary. Staff protect student's privacy and dignity when addressing their health needs. They treat students with the utmost respect. A student expressed his appreciation about how staff had driven him 'all over the place' to get the necessary treatment. Another student said, 'The boarding staff have always supported me when I need help and when I am feeling unwell.' A parent said, 'They have been incredibly successful in meeting his needs. They have been excellent. It is a great credit to them.'

Staff are aware of the risks of students bringing in medication from overseas. They follow the established procedures to ensure that all medication is prescribed in the United Kingdom. They use over-the-counter (OTC) medication to treat minor ailments. Staff use two systems to record medication administration and a running stock check. On occasion, there are discrepancies between the two systems for OTC medication, such as who administered it.

A comprehensive admissions procedure is in place. Staff induct new students particularly well. They ensure that student profiles are in place, especially for international students. They ensure that new students meet all the key people and orientate themselves in the local community. Staff are aware that some students may be homesick and regularly engage with them to ensure students' ongoing emotional well-being. Staff are available to students at all times. They appoint other students as additional support to guide new students during the settling-in period.

Staff support students towards independence; for example, some students do their own laundry. Students complete an exeat request form when wanting to visit relatives or friends, travelling independently if appropriate.

Students enjoy warm and positive relationships with staff and with each other. They feel like they are living in a family. They have fun while learning about themselves and others. A former student expressed her appreciation of the care provided in a

thank you card, stating, 'Thanks, I love you so much. You have been the best host family ever.' Another student, who is currently resident, said, 'I could not ask for a better housemaster. I can talk to him about anything.'

Students value the range of activities available to them, for example trips into London. They develop personal and social skills so that they can represent themselves and the school to a very high standard.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding

Senior leaders and managers demonstrate professionalism and commitment to exceed safeguarding standards. Of particular note are the designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) who provide outstanding leadership. They are respected role models who have been successful in embedding a safeguarding culture throughout the school. The DSLs work transparently, seeking advice from other safeguarding professionals to ensure the ongoing safeguarding of students.

Senior leaders have introduced a software tool that they use to monitor, report and analyse students' welfare. All staff are diligent in adding any concerns about students' well-being. Students trust staff and tell them of any concerns they have about themselves, others or situations at home. The comprehensive monitoring and recording systems allow leaders to build up a picture of each individual student's needs. They develop pastoral plans if necessary to guide staff about how to provide the best possible support. Students have access to a teenage mentoring, counselling and support service. The holistic approach, considering fully the welfare of each individual student, is impressive. Senior managers go beyond expectations to ensure that any student in need gets the right help and support such as anger management. Students are physically, emotionally and mentally healthy.

The DSLs use the safeguarding software tool to provide an oversight of the key issues and trends within the whole school environment, for example emotional well-being and mental health. They are able to direct resources, such as staff training in emotional resilience. They maximise the opportunity, from the trends and patterns they identify, to promote students' welfare to the highest possible standard.

Students, from a multitude of different nations, enjoy each other's company. Students enjoy learning about other cultures, values and beliefs. There is no bullying, racism or discrimination. Staff support them to understand worldwide issues from different perspectives. There is a fully inclusive culture with students living in harmony in a peaceful environment.

Students are proud to be part of the school. They present as positive ambassadors, reflecting the culture and high expectations of the school. Behaviour is exemplary. Staff expect students to sign out of the boarding house when they leave the premises. On occasion, students must seek out staff to assure them that they have done this. This does not underpin the culture of trust and independence.

Staff show exceptional awareness of the risks that the internet poses. For example, a member of staff noticed a screen wallpaper on an electronic device and identified a potential safeguarding issue. Staff follow the clear channels for reporting concerns so that DSLs can assess risk and take swift action. Students receive education through the comprehensive personal, social, health and economic programmes. They demonstrate an understanding of the risks in the cyber world and a mature attitude to the use of personal electronic devices.

Staff demonstrate astute practice, noticing small changes in behaviour that alert them to any emerging needs. Staff discuss such observations with other professionals to establish early intervention programmes. Feedback from parents has been effusive in praise of how staff have helped their children blossom. A member of staff said, 'Safeguarding is taken very seriously at the school. As part of their induction, the students are advised who they can seek support, help and guidance from and there are reminders throughout the house of the DSL.' A student said, 'If I need something, they always help. I treat them like my second family.'

The recruitment process is exceptional. All necessary checks are in place to appoint only suitable adults to have contact with students. The proprietor plans for future posts, employing staff in advance to ensure that the member of staff embraces the safeguarding culture.

Key people ensure that students live in a safe physical environment. They utilise regular health and safety audits to ensure ongoing safety. Outside contractors certify the safety of crucial equipment, such as fire appliances. Students undergo regular trial evacuations so that they know how to leave the building in an emergency.

Staff ensure that parents of overseas students arrange an education guardian. They provide a policy for parents setting out their expectations of the education guardian's role to ensure students' ongoing welfare and safety, for example during school holidays.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Senior leaders are inspirational, confident and ambitious to continually challenge and improve practice. Their passion to place students at the centre of practice and improve outcomes extends throughout the entire staff team. They are role models for staff and students, successfully establishing a culture of respect and acceptance across the school community.

Housemasters show exceptional leadership. They provide guidance to staff who demonstrate an understanding of the national minimum standards and how to apply them in practice. Housemasters arrange training that is pertinent to the role. Staff are competent in supporting students with a range of needs. A strength of the school is the staff team. Staff know each student's needs, strengths and idiosyncrasies. Staff like spending time with them, with a genuine sense of

enjoyment of the different personalities and cultures. Staff have high expectations of students who embrace and accept the standards expected of them.

Staff understand their roles and receive regular training to ensure that they are competent and knowledgeable. Staff see working in boarding as a vocation and unreservedly show a commitment to provide the best possible care. They have established a culture in the whole community that welcomes feedback and comments. Staff address issues swiftly without students needing to resort to the formal complaints procedure.

Staff communicate exceptionally well with parents and guardians, especially given that many parents are overseas and may be in a different time zone. Staff are responsive to their concerns or requests, including during school holidays.

Staff have been successful in developing the role of the prefect, which is an exemplar to other schools. Students aspire to become a prefect, knowing that they will undergo a rigorous selection process that assesses their suitability. Prefects are role models to younger students, demonstrating empathy and sensitivity to students who may be adjusting to boarding.

Senior management monitoring of the boarding is exemplary. The proprietor maintains careful oversight of the school. He spends copious amounts of time with staff and students, including sharing meals with students who board. He reads the various reports that leaders submit to him, providing guidance and challenge when necessary. Senior leaders concentrate on ensuring compliance with national minimum standards as well as considering creative ways to improve the boarding experience while the provider provides proficient oversight.

Accommodation is to a very high standard. Students take care of where they live. They live in a warm and homely environment. The new boarding home has already established an 'esprit de corps' and feedback from the students is excellent. Senior leaders are aware to consider carefully the physical outlay of the building should both genders be accommodated there in the future. Staff listen to students and their ideas about the creative use of space, for example ideas about an additional common room. Maintenance staff are on hand to attend to any necessary repairs promptly.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the school knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

Inspectors approved the application, as part of this inspection, for a material change to register the second boarding provision.

Boarding school details

Social care unique reference number: 1159395

Principal: Mr Giles Perrin

Headteacher: Mrs Abra Stoakley

Type of school: Boarding school

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Email address: enquiries@claremontschool.co.uk

Inspectors:

Keith Riley, lead social care inspector

Maria Lonergan, social care inspector

Paul Taylor, social care inspector



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