



IPSWICH SCHOOL

# Excellent IN ALL AREAS

Independent Schools Inspectorate Report 2014  
SUMMARY BOOKLET

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*"Pupils demonstrate excellent levels of knowledge, skills and understanding across all subject areas, in response to an ambitious curriculum and excellent teaching."*

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*"Pupils leave the school with highly developed personal skills, as confident, emotionally mature young people, able to respond to the challenges of the modern world."*

## WELCOME

**I am delighted that the Independent Schools' inspectors have rated Ipswich School as excellent in every category.**

It is very apparent when reading the full inspection report of the central role played by the school's aims and core values, which were written with input from all those involved in the school: the parent forum, pupils, staff and governors. These values are summed up as Care, Passion, Potential, and Communication and the inspectors clearly picked up a great deal of evidence to show that they are very much embedded into all that we do at Ipswich School.

The school's last inspection was back in 2008 and we were delighted that the inspectors noted the significant improvements made since then and that we had acted on all the recommendations. A team of nine inspectors visited Ipswich School over four days in November 2014; they observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and the Chairman of Governors, observed co-curricular activities and visited the boarding house. They also analysed the responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires and examined regulatory documentation.

This booklet summarises their main findings, but I would recommend that you read their report in full which is available on our website at [www.ipswich.suffolk.sch.uk/inspection](http://www.ipswich.suffolk.sch.uk/inspection).

Despite receiving such an excellent report, we have no intention of sitting back and resting on our laurels. We know that there are areas where we can improve and we have a development plan that addresses these. The report highlights a few

*Read the full report at:*  
[www.ipswich.suffolk.sch.uk/inspection](http://www.ipswich.suffolk.sch.uk/inspection)

areas on which we should focus – namely ensuring consistency of practice across departments, especially when related to marking – and details about these points and other significant developments we are planning are given towards the end of this booklet.

Finally, I would like to thank all those involved in the achievements recognised in the report. Foremost among these are Ipswich School pupils and teachers, whose passion for learning was very much in evidence during the whole inspection process. I must also thank our governors and our parents without whose support we clearly could not have done so well, and the work of support staff – so easily overlooked – in preparing grounds, keeping classrooms tidy, cooking splendid meals and doing all that is needed to ensure the successful and efficient operation of the school.

In this age of league tables it is perhaps unfashionable to talk about passion in education, but at Ipswich School we take great pride in this, and in the care and attention we give to our pupils. Through these we help young people to unlock their potential and develop their talents. To have all that we do confirmed as excellent is a great tribute to everyone here.

**Nicholas Weaver**  
Headmaster,  
Ipswich School



## KEY FINDINGS

The team from the Independent Schools Inspectorate rated Ipswich School as **'excellent'** in all areas

- Academic and other achievements: **Excellent**
- Curriculum: **Excellent**
- Teaching: **Excellent**
- Pupils' personal development: **Excellent**
- Pastoral care: **Excellent**
- Boarding: **Excellent**
- Management and leadership: **Excellent**

*"Pupils consistently achieve at levels well beyond those expected for their age. Their academic achievement is complemented by excellent achievement in activities, underpinned by unusually high levels of learning skills."*



The inspectors found that the school's aims are "... fulfilled to a high degree through pupils' excellent achievement and learning. High standards are achieved, including by pupils with English as an additional language, the more able and those with special educational needs or disabilities." They said: "Pupils make excellent progress in response to the particularly vibrant curriculum which includes an exciting and extensive array of activities and sports. Their progress is supported by dedicated and often passionate teaching, which is of excellent quality overall..."

The inspectors looked at all areas of the school's work including teaching, co-curricular provision

and the pastoral care system in place. They said: "The pupils' personal development is excellent, supported by an extremely effective and well-organised pastoral care system. Pupils show high levels of confidence, are thoroughly articulate, and demonstrate very strong moral and cultural awareness."

In addition the inspectors said: "Leadership, management and governance are excellent, promoting the school's aims very strongly... High-quality building developments support the school's ambitious aims and focus on its extra-curricular provision... The school has made significant progress since the previous inspection."

## THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

### The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is *excellent*

The inspectors found pupils displayed advanced levels of mathematical problem-solving, scientific understanding which is "excellent for their age" and "high levels of response" in a wide variety of classical and modern foreign languages. They said: "Highly focused analysis, evaluation and argument are frequently seen... Pupils develop high-order thinking skills because the teaching allows them to think for themselves", adding: "Achievements are also excellent in aesthetic pursuits." Inspectors also said: "Standards in physical education, in a wide variety of sports and in a vast array of activities, are exceptional..." and added: "Pupils' outstanding standards in activities and sports, alongside their academic success, confirm that achievement overall is excellent."

*"Pupils demonstrate excellent levels of knowledge, skills and understanding across all subject areas, in response to an ambitious curriculum and excellent teaching."*

*"Pupils of all ages develop their learning skills to an extremely high level. Their self-motivation and readiness to learn independently, and a natural inclination to work collaboratively to excellent effect, together with highly developed curiosity, enable them to achieve well. All of these skills are demonstrated within a learning environment which is characterised by thorough enjoyment and good humour..."*



### The contribution of the curriculum is *excellent*

The inspectors found the curriculum is "highly successful" in supporting the school's aim of providing pupils with a wealth of opportunities in all subjects. They said: "The curriculum provides very effectively for all areas of learning and contributes significantly to the pupils' achievements... The curriculum is highly appropriate and well-matched to the needs of all pupils..."

In addition, the inspectors looked at the school's co-curricular activities. They said: "The provision of extra-curricular activities, known in the school as the 'co-curriculum', is excellent. It complements the academic subjects well, while also contributing significantly to pupils' personal skills development. Enormous variety and opportunities are available to all pupils... The vast programme of activities engenders much enthusiasm."



*The Big Band performs at the Snape Spring Concert*

*"A key feature of participation is pupils' diversity of interests, for example, some rugby players are also keen poets"*



## The contribution of teaching is *excellent*

*“Almost all the teaching is at least good with a substantial proportion that is excellent. It makes a significant contribution to pupils’ progress and supports the school’s aim of enabling pupils to grow and excel in all that they do.”*

The inspectors visited a range of lessons during their time at Ipswich School. They found that: “Teachers know their pupils well and all lessons demonstrate excellent working relationships and strong subject knowledge. Teachers manage behaviour very well so that classrooms are characterised by hard-working individuals, purposefully acting on teachers’ instructions and often making rapid progress.”

*“In the best teaching, pupils are fully involved in their learning and a variety of teaching methods are used to create opportunities for them to achieve and put forward their own ideas.”*



## THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS’ PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

### The personal development of pupils is *excellent*

The inspectors looked at the moral, social and cultural development of pupils. They found that pupils’ moral development was “excellent”: “They show a keen sense of fair play and debate moral dilemmas with maturity and good sense. Pupils develop their own set of appropriate values, while respecting and appreciating those of others.” They also found that pupils “show a perceptive understanding of other cultures and faiths as well as their own”, and noted the time pupils spend on voluntary work and fundraising for charity: “Pupils show a generosity of spirit and appreciate the circumstances of those less fortunate than themselves. Their strong commitment to community service is evident with high levels of participation in volunteering and charitable fundraising.”



*We Will Rock You drama production Dec 2014*

*“The school’s core value of ‘passion’ is fully realised through pupils’ excellent spiritual development. They become confident and articulate young people with high self-esteem and a willingness to express their views.”*

*“Pupils leave the school with highly developed personal skills, as confident, emotionally mature young people, able to respond to the challenges of the modern world.”*



*Project to build a Caterham car*

## The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is *excellent*

The inspection team noted that the school "promotes good behaviour and guards against harassment and bullying", saying: "Highly effective, well-organised support and guidance are provided, based on a house and tutor system." They also found that the arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils are "excellent".



## The quality of boarding education is *excellent*

The inspectors noted that "boarding is well run" with excellent safeguarding arrangements. They said: "Boarders are self-assured, courteous and respectful of one another. They develop warm and supportive relationships with one another and the boarding staff."

The support for boarders and continuity of care between teaching staff and boarding house colleagues was noted, along with the "comfortable" boarding accommodation. "Large common rooms with recreational games, a small library and computers give boarders the opportunity to relax together." Inspectors also found that "a wide range of activities is on offer, especially during the week."



Westwood Boarding House



Boarders at Westwood making clay animals in an evening activity

*"Boarders and staff demonstrated easy relationships, where cultural differences are warmly celebrated. Older boarders naturally and willingly help new members of the community."*

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

### The quality of governance is *excellent*

The inspectors found that: "Pupils' excellent achievement and personal development are underpinned by governors' very strong oversight of the school's work and support for its aims." They said: "Governors discharge all of their responsibilities exceptionally well, promoting the school's distinctive ethos with passion and wholehearted commitment."



Governors' meeting

### The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is *excellent*

The inspection team found that "Leadership and management are highly effective at the senior level. All work closely together, united in purpose." They also noted the "highly constructive" communication between tutors and parents, saying: "There are many opportunities for parents... to be involved with the work and progress of their son or daughter in fulfilment of the school's ambition to form a triangular partnership with parents. Strong and supportive relationships are evident."

*"Clarity of vision and direction underpins the excellent leadership and management and assists the school in achieving its broad-ranging aims. Leaders ensure that they provide a wealth of opportunities to help pupils find their own passions... Pupils' academic and personal prowess gives a very clear indication that leadership in the school is very strong, especially when considered alongside the focus and attention given to providing excellent pastoral care."*



# FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS

Alongside their 'excellent' judgements, the inspectors made one recommendation for further improvement: "Ensure consistent high-quality practice across all departments, including in marking and its monitoring." The inspectors noted that different subjects had different marking policies "which can be confusing for pupils", and that some marking was inconsistent and "did not lead to prompt improvements in pupils' work." Improving the consistency of practice across departments has already been included in the school's development plan to be worked on over the coming months.

## New facilities

This year brings significant developments to the facilities at Ipswich School. The official opening of the Ipswich School Sports Centre at Rushmere in the spring marks a key milestone for one of the most prestigious sporting facilities in the country. This exciting development includes three new all-weather hockey pitches, including two in Olympic blue and pink, and seven high quality netball courts. In the autumn the Britten Faculty of Music moves into the first phase of the new Music School, with state-of-the-art teaching and practice rooms; the second phase will include a recital hall and recording studio.

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*"The school knows itself exceptionally well and a comprehensive school development plan underpins its direction, with progress on priorities meticulously followed up."*

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*Aerial photograph of Ipswich School Sports Centre, Rushmere, showing three hockey pitches and seven netball courts*

*Front cover photo: Ipswich School pupils celebrate reaching a high pass during their trek in the Markha Valley, Northern India, July 2014*



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