



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**KINGSHOTT SCHOOL**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Kingshott School

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Full Name of School       | <b>Kingshott School</b>   |
| DfE Number                | <b>919/6102</b>   |
| Registered Charity Number | <b>280626</b>   |
| Address                   | <b>Kingshott School<br/>Stevenage Road<br/>St Ippolyt's<br/>Hitchin<br/>Hertfordshire<br/>SG4 7JX</b> |
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| Headmaster                | <b>Mr Iain Gilmour</b>  |
| Chair of Governors        | <b>Dr Clare Dorrell</b>   |
| Age Range                 | <b>3 to 13</b>  |
| Total Number of Pupils    | <b>369</b>  |
| Gender of Pupils          | <b>Mixed (220 boys;149 girls)</b>   |
| Numbers by Age            | <b>3-5 (EYFS): 64    5-13: 305</b>  |
| Head of EYFS Setting      | <b>Mrs Julie Dickens</b>  |
| EYFS Gender               | <b>Mixed</b>  |
| Inspection dates          | <b>29 Jan 2013 to 01 Feb 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 November 2009.

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.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Education (DfE) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

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. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'satisfactory' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with a governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited 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 Penny Horsman

Mr Jonathan Carroll

Mr Trevor Gray

Mrs Helen Skrine

Mrs Penny Oates

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Kingshott School is a co-educational preparatory school for pupils aged three to thirteen, set in fifteen acres near Hitchin, Hertfordshire. It was originally founded in 1931 as a small boarding school for boys, the name being derived from King Henry VIII's hunting ground, which was part of the local area. In 1964 the last boarders left, and girls entered the school for the first time in 1983. The school was originally based in a country house built in 1859 that still forms part of the accommodation but has been extended and added to over the years. In 1980 the school became a charitable trust under the guidance of a board of governors. Since the previous inspection a purpose-built Nursery has opened and a breakfast club has been introduced.
- 1.2 The school aims to develop each pupil's confidence, stimulate curiosity and achievement, and enable all pupils to be the best they can be. It seeks to maximise their strengths and support their weaknesses in a supportive and positive environment and to prepare them for the next phase of their life.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection 369 pupils, 220 boys and 149 girls, were on roll. This included 34 boys and 30 girls in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Twenty-seven pupils have been identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Thirty-eight pupils are bilingual, with English as an additional language (EAL), and of these, two receive specialist support from the school. The ability profile of the pupils is above the national average, with many pupils having an ability that is well above the national average. Pupils come mainly from families with professional backgrounds who live in the towns and villages surrounding the school. A broad range of ethnic backgrounds is represented in the school.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

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

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

- 2.1 From the EYFS upwards, pupils are highly successful in their learning and personal development. Their achievement is excellent. The school successfully meets its aim to inspire all pupils to be the best that they can be within a happy, safe and stimulating environment. Excellent teaching contributes to the high standard of achievement, but marking is not yet consistent across all subjects. The pupils' attitudes to their work are excellent. They are interested in their studies, and appreciate the excellent opportunities which are offered to them, both within and outside the curriculum.
- 2.2 Throughout the school the pupils' personal qualities are excellent. The warm and caring atmosphere in the school results in pupils who are well mannered and unfailingly polite. Pupils reported that they are proud to be at the school. Arrangements to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety are excellent. A minority of pupils indicated that their views are not listened to. Inspectors could find no evidence to support this. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, most parents were positive and this reflects their strong satisfaction with the education their children are receiving. Some parents and pupils expressed dissatisfaction with the school's handling of incidents of bullying. After thorough investigation and consideration of detailed records, inspectors found no evidence to support these views. Staff, both teaching and non-teaching, provide excellent pastoral care and their example leads to the purposeful atmosphere that pervades the school.
- 2.3 Leadership is excellent in all sections of the school. Senior leaders have responded to the recommendations of the previous inspection to provide pastoral support for boys and to extend the use of monitoring and assessment. The use of the library has been reviewed and extended. Appropriate tasks are planned for the varying abilities of the pupils in almost all lessons. Senior leadership has been reviewed, but the roles of middle managers are not sufficiently clearly defined to ensure maximum effect or to support the senior leadership. The governors are committed to the school and play a key part in its development, although they do not have a working knowledge of the day-to-day life of the school. The school promotes positive links with parents; in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the majority of parents are positive about the education and care provided for their children.

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

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

2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

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

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure that the governors have a greater insight into the day-to-day life of the school.
2. Clarify and develop middle management roles to ensure full support for the school's senior leaders.
3. Ensure that marking is consistent and gives advice on how work can be improved.
4. In the EYFS, devise and implement a cohesive action plan that allows for systematic monitoring.



### **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 and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The pupils are well educated and extremely successful in their learning across all subjects and activities. The school fulfils its aims that all pupils should maximise their strengths and gain an appetite for learning. In both lessons and in their written work, pupils' level of understanding and progress are at least good. They listen to each other carefully. They speak and read with confidence, whether in discussion, when reading aloud or when conversing with adults. Younger pupils read confidently in assembly, and older pupils discuss concepts such as differences between the speed of sound and light and the factors that affect these. They acquire good mathematical skills from an early age, and manipulate numbers and understand mathematical vocabulary at a high level. In the EYFS, all children are effective communicators and active listeners. They make at least good, and often excellent, progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Many achieve or exceed the expected goals by the end of the EYFS, responding well to the high expectations of staff. The youngest children can replicate a repeating pattern of animal footprints, and recognise the numerals, and count accurately, to at least five. They are very quick at identifying the sounds from a range of ten or more letters. In Reception, children apply learned sounds to reading and write simple words. The most able tackle more complex words such as waddle and huddle, and then apply this skill to similar words such as middle. These children are able to write simple sentences within meaningful contexts.
- 3.3 Pupils' creative skills are clearly evident in excellent two- and three-dimensional displays in all areas of the school, which provide stimulus and interest. In information and communication technology (ICT), children in the EYFS can manipulate a computer mouse with increasing dexterity and use interactive whiteboards confidently to support their learning. As they move up the school, pupils reach high levels of competence in ICT and use this across many curriculum subjects. For example, younger pupils made excellent slide presentations of their visit to a Sikh temple. In some subjects, for example science and history, independent research skills are well developed. In a personal, social and health education lesson, pupils demonstrated logical thought when deciding which one of a group of different people should be allowed to fill the last available place in an underground bunker. Early identification of special educational needs and/or disabilities occurs from the EYFS upwards, and carefully planned and targeted support is quickly put in place. Pupils with SEND are able to use computers to generate written work where appropriate. These pupils are skilled at self-assessment of their work, being able to let their teachers know if they need additional help with the use of traffic light coloured pencil cases. Pupils display highly developed physical skills across a range of sports.
- 3.4 Pupils achieve success in local and regional competitions, for example in science challenges, public speaking, mathematics and general knowledge. They enjoy team success in a wide range of sporting activities and individual success in music and dance examinations. Opportunities for pupils to play and achieve at a high level are provided through choirs, the concert band, and various other string, brass and jazz groups, which perform both within the school community and locally. When they move on at the age of 13 to a range of senior schools, some pupils are successful in achieving awards for academic achievement, sport or music.

- 3.5 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be good in relation to national age-related expectations. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress. From conversations with pupils with SEND or EAL and from scrutiny of their work it is clear that their progress is also good. Opportunities for extension activities are provided within some, but not all, curriculum subjects. The most able pupils reach high standards in, for example, mathematics, music and French. Extension for the most able outside the curriculum includes Greek.
- 3.6 Pupils thrive in the atmosphere of enjoyment and effort. Their attitude to their work is excellent and they take pride both in their own achievements and those of others. All pupils from the EYFS upwards sustain good levels of concentration during lessons and activities, making good use of the opportunities presented to them. Pupils work very well together.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 The curriculum is broad and balanced. It ensures that the school fulfils its aim to provide an intellectual and supportive environment in which pupils' strengths are promoted and their weaknesses overcome. In the EYFS, the excellent provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend extremely effectively. A wide variety of indoor and outdoor opportunities, some of which are adult led and others chosen by the children, presents children with many exciting experiences. Clearly structured programmes in all the required curriculum areas encourage independent learning, exploration and problem solving, and ensure that children have the key skills needed for the next steps in their learning. A thinking skills programme is available within the curriculum to all pupils in Years 3 to 8.
- 3.9 As the pupils move up the school, the curriculum is adjusted appropriately to suit their ages and needs. The recently revised setting arrangements at the top of the school enable the curriculum to be more effectively targeted for the pupils' abilities. A comprehensive games programme meets the needs of all, and all pupils are included in sports teams appropriate to their ability. Pupils with SEND receive excellent support through withdrawal and in-class help from teaching staff, who use the targets identified by the learning support staff and communicated to all subject teachers.
- 3.10 The school libraries provide excellent opportunities for pupils to research beyond the taught curriculum and offer a quiet haven during breaks for pupils to enjoy books. The curriculum is enriched by a programme of educational visits to galleries, museums and other places related to the pupils' learning. Pupils spoke with great enthusiasm about residential trips. These include visits to an activity centre in Norfolk and to the Peak District, Scotland, France, Iceland and South Africa.
- 3.11 Pupils in all sections of the school benefit from the excellent extra-curricular provision. A wide range of clubs and activities is available for pupils of all ages before, during and after school. These include Greek, drama, and musical and sporting activities. Links with the local and wider community are excellent and make a valuable contribution to the high quality of pupils' personal development. Examples include visits to a local gurdwara and to a mosque to support the religious education curriculum, and links with a local church.

- 3.12 Opportunities are provided for the pupils to learn about the lives of those less fortunate than themselves through links with charities. During the inspection a movie evening was held to raise money for a local children's charity.

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

- 3.13 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.14 The school fulfils its aim to stimulate curiosity and promote an appetite for learning. Teaching enables pupils of all abilities and ages to acquire knowledge and skills, and to make good progress. Pupils' behaviour is excellent in lessons throughout the school. In the EYFS, the key people ensure that every child's needs are met and the children engage readily with the wide variety of tasks available, many of which provide opportunities for them to use imagination and creative flair.
- 3.15 Lesson planning is thorough and refers to the needs of pupils, including those requiring greater support. A variety of teaching methods is used to encourage curiosity and present challenges, which the pupils accept happily. Younger pupils were asked to investigate the resilience of eggshells by using a variety of wrappings before dropping and rolling the eggs, and older pupils used rap to explore meter in poetry. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge and high expectations result in lessons that move at a brisk pace and engage the pupils through skilful questioning and appropriate tasks. In the very few less successful lessons, the pace was too slow or the tasks were insufficiently challenging.
- 3.16 Throughout the school, teachers provide for pupils with SEND by using the excellent information which is disseminated to them by the learning support department. Individual educational plans give information on specific needs to aid planning. Pupils with SEND or EAL benefit from careful planning for their needs in almost all lessons and from the specialist individual help offered by the learning support department, both within and outside the classroom.
- 3.17 A wide range of appropriate resources in all sections of the school, including interactive whiteboards in all classrooms and two ICT suites, is used effectively to support teaching and learning. Classrooms are well organised, with stimulating displays, and the three libraries provide excellent additional resources.
- 3.18 Marking is regular and in some subjects it is excellent. However, it is not consistent and on occasions it is limited to a cursory tick, providing no information on how work might be improved or targets to which the pupils can aspire. In the EYFS, assessment of progress is regularly collated and clearly recorded, and used to identify the next steps in children's learning. Expectations are high.
- 3.19 Since the previous inspection, assessment in the other year groups has been thoroughly revised. A comprehensive system of testing and monitoring of pupils' progress is now used effectively. Progress of individual pupils is tracked and discussed with senior leaders. A small minority of pupils criticised homework in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Inspectors could find no evidence that too much homework is given. Pupils spoke warmly of the help that their teachers give them and said that the amount of homework is appropriate.

## **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 the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 Through religious education lessons, assemblies and visits, pupils develop a considerable understanding of the importance of religious beliefs. They were confident when discussing the way that the school population represents many different religious beliefs and the way that these enshrine values of tolerance, care, forgiveness and empathy. Pupils demonstrate their awareness of non-material aspects of life by making good use of the spacious grounds and enjoying the art and music that are part of their daily lives. An assembly which explained how music can tell a story captured the pupils' interest so that they appreciated how and why various songs are written.
- 4.3 Pupils' moral development is excellent. Throughout the school, pupils understand right and wrong. They are also clear about the strong moral code, which underpins the school and emphasises care and concern for others. Pupils displayed strong ethical values in a discussion about conflict resolution. In an assembly, written and delivered by the oldest pupils in the school, good and bad behaviour were demonstrated and discussed. All pupils shared in the success of others, applauding enthusiastically when achievements in music and dance were recognised.
- 4.4 Pupils show considerable social awareness and understand that their actions affect others. They express their views with confidence, demonstrating a well-developed sense of self-esteem. They are the products of the happy environment in which they work and learn. They are active in striving to be the best that they can be, in line with the school's aims. Pupils spoke eloquently and with pride about the positive effect that good manners and friendship bring to the school community. The excellent relationships within the school make a significant contribution to pupils' social development. In the EYFS, children's behaviour is exemplary, and both courtesy and respect for each other are hallmarks of the setting. One child was quick to compliment a peer about the standard of her reading and in response was told with sincerity that he was a very good writer. Positions of responsibility as members of the school council are carried out conscientiously by pupils, who understand that they are representing their peers. Pupils contribute to the wider society in which they live through charitable fund raising and by engaging in activities such as planting 2012 trees locally in 2012.
- 4.5 Cultural development is excellent. Pupils develop their understanding of faiths and cultures other than their own through the opportunities provided by the rich multi-cultural community in which they learn. Pupils experience exciting new tastes when parents visit to demonstrate cooking from places as diverse as China and South America. Residential visits to France, Iceland and South Africa deepen understanding of cultures other than their own. Pupils gain an appreciation of the rich tapestry of diversity in the world around them, fulfilling one of the school's aims.
- 4.6 By the time they are ready to transfer to their next school at the age of 13, pupils have an excellent level of personal development.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 Pastoral care is a high priority shared by staff throughout the school. They provide effective support and guidance in accordance with the school's aim to nurture each individual and promote a sense of responsibility towards others. In the EYFS, caring, supportive, well-trained and very knowledgeable key people have successfully created a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Within the context of high staff to child ratios, all the adults develop strong bonds with the children. The positive emotional attachments formed with key people ensure that every child's individual needs are recognised and catered for, resulting in excellent all-round development. Children feel happy and safe.
- 4.9 Relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst pupils themselves, are excellent. Fortnightly pastoral meetings, in addition to the weekly staff meeting, ensure that staff are aware of all pastoral matters. Since the previous inspection, a member of the senior leadership team has assumed pastoral responsibility for the boys at the upper end of the school and ensures that all matters relating to the older boys are dealt with appropriately.
- 4.10 Throughout the school the benefits of healthy eating and the importance of physical exercise are emphasised. Well-balanced, plentiful meals are available at lunchtime. Children in the EYFS were clear that fruit is much healthier than sweets. Self-help skills and good hygiene practices are encouraged from pupils' earliest days in the school, with displays promoting healthy eating throughout.
- 4.11 The house system promotes healthy competition and offers opportunities for leadership roles. Effective behaviour and anti-bullying policies promote good behaviour. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, some parents and pupils expressed concern that incidents of bullying were not dealt with appropriately. Inspectors investigated this thoroughly and could find no evidence to support these views. Incidents of poor behaviour had been dealt with quickly and with compassion, taking into account the individual needs of those concerned, and had been recorded correctly. Whilst a small minority of pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that they did not have an adult to turn to, all pupils interviewed and spoken to informally on the inspection were clear that, should a concern arise, there is a member of staff to whom they can turn.
- 4.12 Some pupils reported in their responses to pre-inspection questionnaires that their views are not listened to. Inspection evidence does not support this view. Opportunities are provided for pupils to serve on the school council and minutes of the meetings are displayed in all classrooms and on the school council notice board. Pupils themselves wrote the school council operating rules and meetings are chaired by one of the senior pupils, with a member staff in attendance to ensure appropriate conduct. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the council and described changes that had occurred because of the issues raised, such as the inclusion of a particular request in the lunch menu. Some pupils also felt that not all teachers give rewards and sanctions fairly. In discussion with inspectors, pupils agreed that this was age related, with younger pupils receiving more rewards than those who are older. The school has implemented a system to ensure that inconsistency in the number of rewards given does not affect the house competition results. Inspectors could find no evidence that teachers gave unfair sanctions.

- 4.13 The school has a suitable three-year plan to improve the educational access for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.15 Safeguarding procedures are thorough and have regard to official guidance. All staff are appropriately trained at the required level in child protection. Throughout the school, including the EYFS, safeguarding and pupils' safety are seen as priorities. Their welfare, health and safety are assured through the consistent implementation and regular review of policies and procedures. Close and effective relationships are maintained with children's services locally.
- 4.16 All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards, with thorough risk assessments covering all areas of school life. Risk assessments for all outings are rigorous and comprehensive. Regular fire drills are held and suitable records are kept. Staff receive clear guidelines on fire safety. A health and safety committee meets regularly and the school has responded to the recommendations of a recent professional health and safety audit. Electrical testing is regular and recorded appropriately.
- 4.17 Pupils who are sick or injured are very well cared for in a purpose-built medical room and appropriate records are kept. Many staff are qualified in first aid, and staff who work in the EYFS have paediatric qualifications as required.
- 4.18 The admission and attendance registers are suitably maintained and correctly stored.

## **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 governors pay considerable attention to matters of finance, administration and policy review, but have limited knowledge of the daily life of the school. Governors provide a valuable blend of experience and expertise. They are successful in providing the stimulus and resources to ensure an effective education in line with the pupils' needs and the school's aims, from the EYFS upwards. They exercise prudent financial control and have ensured that the school benefits from high quality buildings, resources and staff. They have had oversight of the strategic plan for the development of the school.
- 5.3 Governors are aware of their legal responsibilities, and review policies and procedures for safeguarding, safer recruitment, and welfare, health and safety. All governors have received training in child protection. They are kept informed about the school by the headmaster and have received presentations from individual subject leaders. However, they have little knowledge of the daily life of the pupils from the EYFS upwards, and spend limited time visiting the school, meeting staff or familiarising themselves with pupils' learning and progress. Their involvement in this area is not effective.

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

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management is excellent.
- 5.5 The school is led with vision and commitment, promoting the aim that all pupils should be the best that they can be. The excellent personal qualities of the pupils and the high standards of their achievements are a direct result of the ethos that has been created within the school and the example set by the senior leaders. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires and in interviews, pupils reported that they enjoy being at Kingshott and that they are very proud of their school. The majority of parents were equally supportive, especially concerning the wide variety of opportunities provided for their children. Whilst a few parents were critical of the leadership and management of the school, the inspectors could not substantiate their views. The school's leaders have responded to the recommendations of the previous inspection to ensure that leadership of pastoral support for boys is clear. Monitoring of teaching and learning has ensured that teachers plan for the differing abilities of pupils within each lesson. Assessment systems have undergone a thorough review, and such information is shared by teachers and used to ensure that each pupil reaches the highest standard of which he or she is capable. Use of the library has increased to develop independent learning and the school has plans to improve the older accommodation on the site.
- 5.6 The senior leaders have a sharp focus for continuous future improvement and they provide clear educational direction, supported by rigorous self-evaluation. They monitor all policies and procedures carefully. However, the roles of middle managers are not sufficiently clearly defined for them to give maximum support to the school's senior leaders. In the EYFS, leaders are diligent in fulfilling their responsibilities for overseeing the educational programme. Meetings take place to

- review the performance of individual children, and regular EYFS staff meetings provide effective opportunities for self-evaluation. Staff share an ambitious vision for future development, including new resources, and areas for improvement are detailed in the EYFS action plan. This is currently under review to produce a more cohesive document that allows for systematic monitoring.
- 5.7 All staff receive the appropriate training in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Safe recruitment procedures are followed when new staff are appointed and these are recorded accurately on the single central register. Safeguarding and pupils' safety are seen as priorities, and their welfare, health and safety are assured through the consistent implementation of suitable policies and procedures, both in the EYFS and in the rest of the school. Induction procedures for new staff are thorough and staff are well qualified. A formal staff appraisal system and the strong commitment to professional development ensure that high standards of learning and care are maintained from the EYFS upwards.
- 5.8 The school has strong links with parents. The vast majority of parents are very pleased with the education that their children are receiving. A number of parents felt that the information provided about their children's progress is insufficient. Inspection evidence does not support this view. At the start of each year an introductory evening is held, with opportunities for parents to meet with form tutors and members of staff who will teach their children. Curriculum handbooks are provided for each year group. Twice termly reports on effort and behaviour are issued and informative termly reports on progress in curriculum subjects are sent to parents. In addition, parents' consultation evenings and forum meetings are held, and the school operates a policy whereby staff are available at the start and end of the school day. All staff can be contacted by email. In the EYFS, relationships with parents are promoted by approachable and welcoming staff. In questionnaire responses the vast majority of parents showed genuine appreciation of the provision and of the progress that their children make. They value opportunities for involvement, such as encouragement to contribute to the booklet *My Home Learning Journal*, in helping their children to learn.
- 5.9 Some parents are involved in the daily life of the school by volunteering to help on school trips, or by helping staff with preparation of materials or covering books. Other opportunities include activities such as netball, and the events organised by the parent teacher association, both social and fund raising. The older children in the EYFS enjoy 'stay and play sessions', when they share their learning with their parents or are able to play alongside them. Inspectors agreed with the comments made by parents about the poor quality of the changing rooms for boys and the school has made plans for their improvement.
- 5.10 The high quality school magazine, regular newsletters and excellent website, which was designed with the help of parents, all help to keep parents informed about the day-to-day life of the school. An events diary and regular text messages ensure that information about forthcoming events and changes to routine are disseminated with immediacy to the parent body. Parents are welcomed to assemblies, plays, concerts, matches and other school events.
- 5.11 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a few parents raised an issue about the way in which the school handles their concerns. Inspectors found that individual concerns are handled with care and careful records are kept. A detailed and suitable complaints procedure is available on the school website. All parents of prospective pupils are provided with the required information about the school.



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