



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

BARNARDISTON HALL PREPARATORY SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of School	Barnardiston Hall Preparatory School
DfE Number	935/6023
EYFS Number	EY356342
Address	Barnardiston Hall Preparatory School Barnardiston Hall Barnardiston Haverhill Suffolk CB9 7TG
Telephone Number	01440 786316
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Email Address	lesley@barnardiston.com
Head	Lt Col Keith Boulter
Proprietor	Lt Col Keith Boulter
Age Range	2 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	240
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (133 boys; 107 girls)
Numbers by Age	2-3 (EYFS): 3 5-13: 203 3-5 (EYFS): 34
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 209
Number of Boarders	Total: 31 Full: 25 Weekly: 6
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Rebecca Richardson
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	24 Jan 2012 to 27 Jan 2012

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 February 2008.

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 through the following link: www.legislation.gov.uk. Search for Independent School Standards Regulations and enter date 2010, to find Schedule 1, Parts 1-7.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Equality Act 2010 (including race, gender, special educational needs and disability).
- (ii) The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, banning corporal punishment.

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 31st 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 Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

Under Government arrangements, the inspection of boarding became an integrated part of ISI inspections from 1 September 2011. This inspection contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education, personal development and welfare. Boarding inspections were previously carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills. The relevant Ofsted report refers to an inspection in September 2010 and can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Children's social care/Boarding school.

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.

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. The grades used by ISI and Ofsted are different to 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 for Achievement the descriptor 'exceptional' is available in addition.** 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 the proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Jan Preece

Mrs Dianne Barratt

Mr Howard Edwards

Mrs Karen Pickles

Mrs Bridget Forrest

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Head teacher, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Head, IAPS junior school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for boarding

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Barnardiston Hall Preparatory School is a day and boarding school for boys and girls aged from two to thirteen. It was founded in 1959, and in 1970 moved to its current thirty acre site, in the countryside on the borders of Cambridgeshire, Essex and Suffolk. It came into the ownership of the present headmaster in 1990. He, together with his family, is responsible for the management and oversight of the school. The school occupies an extended and adapted Victorian country house, together with purpose-built accommodation, and is surrounded by sports pitches and play areas. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision is for children from the age of two and it operates as part of the pre-preparatory department. Since the previous inspection, a programme of improvements has included the creation of new teaching facilities for cookery, art and design and technology, together with an all-weather sports area which is nearing completion.
- 1.2 The school has a broadly Christian tradition. It aims to provide a secure and stimulating environment in which pupils can enjoy a wide range of educational, physical and artistic opportunities, so that they can achieve their potential and leave as confident and caring individuals.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, there were 240 full-time pupils, of whom 133 were boys and 107 were girls. Of these, 203 were in Years 1 to 8 and some of the 37 in the EYFS attend on a part-time basis. A total of 31 pupils are boarders. They are accommodated in the main house on two separate floors. Boarding arrangements are flexible. Currently there are 25 full-time and 6 weekly boarders.
- 1.4 Pupils come mainly from professional, farming and Service family backgrounds. The school admits groups of overseas pupils for stays up to a month and individual pupils for longer.
- 1.5 The school does not select pupils by ability. Prior to entry, pupils are interviewed informally by the headmaster, to ensure that the curriculum and school ethos are appropriate to their needs. Parents and prospective pupils also meet current pupils for a question and answer session, without teachers being present. Standardised tests indicate that the ability profile of the pupils is above the national average, although there is a fairly wide spread of abilities.
- 1.6 At the time of inspection, two pupils had statements of special educational need and a further 32 were identified as requiring some degree of support for special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils all receive learning support co-ordinated by the school's specialist learning centre for children with SEND, the Bridge. Nine pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), seven of whom receive support. Almost all pupils are successful in securing a place at their first choice of independent school and each year a number gain scholarships.

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

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Nursery	Nursery
Class 1	Nursery
Class 2	Reception

Pre-preparatory Department

School	NC name
Class 3	Year 1
Class 4	Year 2

Preparatory Department

School	NC name
Form I	Year 3
Form II	Year 4
Form III	Year 5
Form IV	Year 6
Form V	Year 7
Form VI	Year 8

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Pupils at Barnardiston Preparatory School are well-educated in accordance with its aims. From the EYFS, where outcomes are outstanding, and throughout the school, pupils' achievements are good overall with some excellent features. Extra-curricular achievement is excellent. Outcomes for boarders are excellent. Pupils' attainment is above the national average and they make good progress in relation to their abilities, as a result of the good teaching they receive. Pupils with SEND and EAL, and pupils placed by local authorities, make excellent progress as a result of strong support. The progress of the most able pupils is successfully promoted in scholarship clubs and other extra-curricular opportunities, though less consistently so in lessons. Pupils are largely successful in gaining entry to independent senior schools of their choice. Pupils' achievements are supported by a broad and balanced curriculum, a plentiful and interesting range of visits, and an excellent range of extra-curricular clubs and activities.
- 2.2 The personal development of both day and boarding pupils is excellent and, from the EYFS onwards, it is well supported by excellent pastoral care and welfare, health and safety arrangements, which ensure that pupils are safeguarded well. Pupils are self-confident, with high self-esteem and they have a strong awareness of moral issues. Their social development is good and they demonstrate excellent cultural development. Pupils' achievements are strongly supported by their largely positive attitudes towards learning and their attentive behaviour in class. Pupils are courteous and generally well-behaved.
- 2.3 The proprietor is highly committed to the success of the school and exercises good governance. He is fully aware of his responsibilities in relation to regulatory matters, and has ensured that all statutory requirements are met. The quality of leadership and management is outstanding in the EYFS and good in the boarding house and school as a whole. The leadership has made progress with the recommendations of the previous inspection report. Senior managers' vision is now more fully reflected in development planning. They are aware that monitoring of teaching and learning is currently insufficient, and that further development of the appraisal system is required. Links with parents, who are overwhelmingly happy with the education, extra-curricular activities and support provided for their children, are excellent. Boarding and day pupils' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires show they are happy to be part of the school. Some pupils would like the school to provide a forum where they can share their ideas with staff. Inspection evidence supports this view. A minority of pupils is dissatisfied with food arrangements. Inspectors found that, whilst lunches are nutritious and give choice, there is insufficient variety and choice of food in the boarding house.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is available through the link described in the Preface)

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.
- 2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2011.
- 2.6 See the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage section 6 for the inspection findings in relation to the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 for children under three.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.7 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
 - 1. Ensure that teachers consistently include challenge for the most able in their lesson planning.
 - 2. Develop more formal systems for the monitoring of teaching and learning by senior managers and heads of department.
 - 3. Formalise a system of recording in the boarding house, to ensure that correct procedures are always implemented and communicated to the next member of duty staff.
 - 4. Establish a formal forum which provides boarders with a regular opportunity to share their views with staff.
 - 5. In the EYFS, ensure that the next steps in learning for individual children are consistently written into daily planning.

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 good overall
- 3.2 The school successfully achieves its aim of providing an environment where pupils can achieve their potential. Pupils acquire good levels of knowledge, skills and understanding in both their academic work and the wider curriculum. They demonstrate attentive listening skills, and acknowledge and respect one another's views. Many articulate their ideas confidently. Pupils' literacy skills are well developed throughout the school. From an early age many pupils display an excellent awareness of sounds, which contributes to high standards of reading fluency and comprehension. Many pupils with SEND make significant progress with their reading. Pupils' proficiency in writing is demonstrated in a wide variety of subjects. The school has identified a need to spend more time in developing creative and extended writing activities, particularly for younger pupils.
- 3.3 Pupils' numeracy skills are good. They develop facility and confidence with calculation, and enthusiastically apply their skills, using information and communication technology (ICT) to take part in challenges against pupils across the world. Good progress has been made in developing the pupils' ability to use ICT in other subjects, such as geography, French and English. Pupils demonstrate competent thinking skills in subjects such as history, although the style of teaching in some subjects sometimes limits opportunities for them to do things for themselves. Most pupils achieve well in challenging tasks set in physical education (PE), games and music. Artwork on display around the school shows a high level of creativity and technical facility.
- 3.4 The school strongly emphasises participation and achievement of any kind is acknowledged in Friday assemblies. Pupils throughout the school achieve strongly in a wide range of non-academic areas. Many pupils perform successfully in music, speech and drama examinations and in productions which are of high quality. School choirs compete successfully in local music festivals. Sports teams, in which all pupils participate, achieve high levels of success locally and nationally in a full range of sports. Individual pupils with a particular talent represent their county in their respective sports and, at team level, the school is especially successful in orienteering where it is the national champion. Every year, a number of the most able pupils win scholarships and awards to their senior schools.
- 3.5 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be good in relation to national age-related expectations. The pupils follow a broad and demanding curriculum and this level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils, including the more able, make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. Many pupils with SEND and EAL make excellent progress in relation to their abilities and circumstances, due to the specialist support they receive. A number proceed to selective independent senior schools.

- 3.6 Pupils' achievements are very well supported by their largely positive attitudes towards their learning. They apply themselves to their work in nearly all lessons and generally study hard and with enjoyment. They organise and present their work well and work equally effectively independently or with each other. They demonstrate respectful attitudes towards each other and with their teachers.

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

- 3.7 The quality of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good overall.
- 3.8 Pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum, which is enhanced by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities and visits. The curriculum is suitable for all ages and abilities and consistent with the school's aims. Time allocation of subjects is generally balanced, and adjusted if necessary in response to the school's analysis of pupils' performance. The school also reviews its provision as facilities are improved. Much progress has been made in the provision of ICT since the previous inspection. It is increasingly incorporated into other subject areas, such as the use of podcasts in English and time-lapse photography in science. The provision for sports and games is a strength. A full programme of fixtures gives all children in the school the opportunity to participate.
- 3.9 Teaching broadly follows the National Curriculum from Years 1 to 6. In the EYFS and Years 1 and 2, the curriculum is enhanced by the use of specialist staff to teach subjects such as music and French and, from Year 4 onwards, the curriculum is largely taught by specialist staff. Setting for literacy and numeracy is introduced in Year 1, and pupils are taught in two ability streams from Year 4, with additional setting for mathematics and English. Setting for French is introduced in Year 5. This system enables pupils to work at a level commensurate with their abilities. Pupils extend their linguistic skills when Latin is introduced for all from Year 3, and the more able continue with this subject from Year 5. A significant strength of the curriculum is the provision for SEND and EAL pupils who, in addition to working in the school's specialist unit, receive additional support in lessons from learning support assistants (LSAs). Consequently, they are able to fully access the curriculum.
- 3.10 In Years 7 and 8, pupils are prepared for Common Entrance and scholarship examinations. Additional activities, including trips, extra-curricular scholarship groups and sporting events, provide enrichment and extension, as observed in an excellent drama class seen during the inspection. Additional challenge is provided for those talented in sport during games lessons.
- 3.11 Subject documentation is detailed and comprehensive and has improved since the previous inspection.

3.12 The curriculum is supported by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities and visits which are very popular with pupils and appeal to different interests. They include academic activities, such as scholarship groups, sports, such as rifle shooting, and recreational pursuits, such as cookery and board games. Most pupils are involved in the considerable range of musical activities offered in the school. A notable characteristic of provision is that adventurous pursuits are offered from the EYFS, and even the youngest children are offered, and enjoy, classroom sleepovers. As pupils grow older, they are able to take part in adventure treks, for example to Snowdon, Morocco and Vietnam, and these considerably enhance their cultural and personal development.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

3.13 The quality of teaching is good overall.

3.14 Teaching promotes pupils' progress well and supports the aims of the school. Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong; pupils are confident about asking for help and many express their appreciation for the way staff support their learning. Praise and encouragement are used to good effect and add to pupils' enjoyment of the subjects being studied, as well as promoting their effort. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure, so teaching is confident and well-paced. The best teaching is well planned and imaginative. Lessons start with clear learning objectives, which are re-visited at the conclusion, to assess understanding. Teachers incorporate a variety of teaching and questioning techniques which are tailored to the individual learning needs of pupils and engage their interest.

3.15 The resources available are of good quality and used effectively to promote learning. Interactive whiteboards are available in most classrooms and are used regularly by teachers. Where teaching is less successful, it does not take differing abilities into account, is too closely directed and lacks creativity.

3.16 The school has made progress with a recommendation from the previous inspection to develop a cohesive approach to meeting the needs of the most able pupils, though this has mainly been through extra-curricular provision. Scholarship lessons available after school provide challenge, and enable the most able to meet the high expectations of the mainly selective schools to which they transfer. Within lessons, challenge is not consistently given. For the most part, teachers are knowledgeable about the aptitudes and needs of their pupils but they do not always apply this to their planning, with the result that work is not always sufficiently well-matched to the most able pupils' capabilities. This restricts opportunities for these pupils to develop higher order thinking skills and engage in independent enquiry.

3.17 The identification, teaching and support provided by the Bridge for children with learning and EAL needs is excellent and a significant strength of the school. As a result, these pupils make impressive progress, particularly in literacy. Sensitive support by LSAs in lessons enhances the learning of these pupils. Correct provision is made to support and review progress of any pupil with a statement of special educational needs.

- 3.18 Children are assessed regularly by standardised tests in mathematics, English, verbal reasoning, non-verbal reasoning, spelling and reading. Analysis of the results is used to monitor general progress and to identify pupils who may need support. However, assessment practices vary. At its best, weekly and daily assessment of pupils is used carefully by teachers to plan objectives for future learning.
- 3.19 The quality of marking is generally regular and thorough, although it does not always follow the marking policy of the school. Marking is supplemented by good verbal feedback in lessons which pupils find helpful. In examples of the best marking, the comments are positive and encouraging and also give clear advice to pupils on how to improve their performance. Some marking offers helpful comments but is difficult to decipher, particularly for less able pupils, and as such is less beneficial than it could be.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The quality of pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 The pupils' personal development fully accords with the school's ethos to encourage pupils to develop their character and to leave the school as confident and caring individuals.
- 4.3 Pupils develop an excellent spiritual awareness, for this is embedded in the daily life and ethos of the school. They are confident, reflective and have well-developed self-esteem, because caring staff give their time both to support them in the school environment and also to take them on visits to areas of outstanding natural beauty, such as Snowdon and Ben Nevis. Pupils' sense of self-worth is evident as they receive accolades in assembly at the end of the week. Many pupils are sensitive and give insightful consideration to non-material aspects of life, such as when expressing awe and wonder at the results of a science experiment, or listening with rapt concentration to historical dramatisations. The pupils are highly respectful of each other, their teachers and all other members of the community. Reverence is shown in many areas, for example, in assemblies which are regularly class-led and when prayers are said before lunch. The school values and maintains a helpful relationship with the local clergy and church.
- 4.4 Pupils demonstrate an excellent standard of moral development. Throughout the school, they are able to distinguish right from wrong and understand that rules are necessary for a harmonious community. This is evident in their generally good behaviour and acceptance of the need for sanctions when they fall short of acceptable standards. Older pupils show a mature ability to consider the morality of situations, for example considering the fairness of mediaeval punishments and comparing them to modern times in a history class and discussing the death penalty in an English lesson.
- 4.5 Pupils show good social awareness. They are engaging, courteous and socially adept, acting as honest and excellent ambassadors for their school, such as when talking to prospective parents. They are keen to support others in lessons, at play and in other activities. The prefects, who carry out their duties fairly and equably, are well respected and valued by others in the community. They use their authority thoughtfully and caringly. Whilst most opportunities to exercise responsibility rest with older pupils, younger ones are also given opportunities to help, for example, milk is collected and messages taken. Older pupils also help lead playtime activities for the younger pupils. Pupils are involved in fundraising to support a number of charities, both local, such as a food bank, and international, such as world orphan week.
- 4.6 The cultural development of pupils is strong. The school welcomes short and long stay boarders from different nations who feel supported and settled within a short space of time; they are well integrated into the community. Pupils are highly respectful of others from different backgrounds and there is a harmonious ethos, with pupils acting as mentors for overseas visitors. They embrace other religions and cultures in both lessons and extra-curricular activities, for example, being able to compare and contrast Hinduism and Christianity. The study of French and Latin, the opportunity to participate in numerous trips abroad, such as to Pompeii, together

with frequent visits more locally to theatres, galleries and museums, help pupils to deepen their cultural understanding further.

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

- 4.7 The quality of pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 The creation and maintenance of good relationships between staff and pupils, whilst maintaining boundaries of discipline, is a high priority. Staff are excellent role models in encouraging kindness and friendliness and so relationships at all levels are extremely positive.
- 4.9 The staff know individual pupils very well and provide excellent support and guidance for them. The needs of any pupil who is causing concern are brought to weekly welfare meetings and every pupil's progress is discussed by the whole staff each term. The Bridge, one of whose staff is a trained counsellor, provides excellent emotional and educational support for children with EAL, SEND and those who are vulnerable. This is much valued by those pupils who use it. In both the pre-inspection questionnaires and in discussions, pupils said they are happy and feel well cared for, praising the family atmosphere which pervades the school.
- 4.10 Pupils are aware of what constitutes a healthy diet and understand the need for sufficient exercise. Although some pupils expressed dissatisfaction with school lunches, inspectors found that they are provided with a choice of a nutritious, healthy hot meal or salad.
- 4.11 Arrangements to promote good behaviour and to guard against harassment and bullying work well, with the result that serious sanctions are seldom invoked. In the pre-inspection questionnaire and interviews, pupils were confident that bullying is rarely an issue and that the school's measures to counter any occurrences are effective.
- 4.12 Although the school feels it listens to pupils' views willingly, a small minority of pupils feel they are not able to express their opinions to staff. Inspectors found that, since pupils are not given a formal opportunity to be consulted and offer their ideas, they may feel they do not have a voice. The school has an appropriate policy and three-year plan which guides physical and curricular provision for any pupil who has a special educational need or disability.

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

- 4.13 The arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils are excellent.
- 4.14 All statutory policies are in place and are regularly updated. The school has a comprehensive policy for the safeguarding of pupils and all staff receive appropriate training in child protection at the requisite intervals. Personnel involved in the appointment of staff have received appropriate training in the correct procedures for recruitment, in line with national guidelines, and all staff have undergone the required checks on appointment.
- 4.15 All the necessary measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards have been taken and regular fire practices are held.
- 4.16 Arrangements to ensure the health and safety of pupils are securely in place. Risk assessments for areas of the school building and grounds are comprehensive.

Those for outside visits and school activities are completed carefully. Pupils who become ill during the day are well cared for in the medical room by the school nurse or a matron and any accidents are recorded carefully. The matron keeps comprehensive records of pupils' medical problems and the school nurse or matron administers any necessary medication, with parental permission. Staff have appropriate first aid qualifications at basic or higher level, including paediatric first aid training for all those working in the EYFS. All electrical equipment is checked at appropriate intervals. The health and safety committee meets termly to ensure that there is a regular review of all aspects in this area.

- 4.17 The admission and attendance registers are completed and stored correctly, and pupils' attendance is monitored carefully.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.18 The quality of boarding education is excellent.

4.19 Outcomes for boarders are excellent. The boarders' experience of a well-balanced programme of activities enhances their development in terms of their confidence and ability to manage challenging situations. They divide their time well between their prep, free time and social occasions. Boarders are very tolerant and patient towards one another and show much consideration to their peers and adults in the boarding house and school, demonstrating high standards of personal integrity. Boarders' understanding of the world around them is enriched by the accessibility of a library with newspapers and the news channels and documentaries to be viewed on television in the African Room, which serves as a common area for boys and girls. The boarders look forward to their film nights, and their high standard of behaviour and the warm family atmosphere which pervades the house are evident on these occasions. Boarders have a good appreciation of others' needs, developing the ability to cope with occasional challenging behaviour and assisting those from different social and ethnic backgrounds to fully integrate. Those with special educational needs are proud of their association with the Bridge and clearly thrive on the support they receive. Boarders are generally polite and listen attentively, showing a real care for their own house community. They display strong loyalty to the house system and this creates a positive and enthusiastic atmosphere in the school. Their confident and relaxed relationship with adults demonstrates their pride in their school. The pupils understand the focus on community spirit and show a genuine appreciation of others' talents and abilities. Boarders are fully committed to their lives at school and enthuse over their activities, opportunities and friendships. They say they are happy and enjoy their boarding experience.

- 4.20 The quality of boarding provision and care is good. The house staff take a real interest in the boarders' well-being and communicate well with the academic staff. The buddy system is effective in introducing new boarders to the school and ensuring that they are cared for and friendships are made. The school does this particularly well since it also supports overseas boarders in terms of language tuition. All boarders have lockable storage to safeguard their possessions. They are able to telephone their parents and families easily, though not all have an email account to provide an alternative method of contact. The school offers a nutritious and well-balanced menu. However, a number of boarders would like more choice in their supper and weekend meals, and have asked for snacks in the evening before bedtime, to bring them in line with Year 8 boarders and ensure their appetites are satisfied. Laundry is dealt with efficiently and quickly. However, a few boarders are concerned that their personal clothes are occasionally returned with issues such as

discolouration or shrinkage. The school has introduced measures to rectify this, instituting greater oversight from the matron. Recommendations from the environmental health inspection of the kitchen last year have been met. Since the previous inspection, a new common room on the boys' floor has been established, which has proved very popular, and a rolling redecoration programme has given a fresh and comfortable feel to the boarding environment. The care plans are well thought-out and are mostly well-implemented by the staff. Systems to care for boarders when they are ill are generally excellent, although when the nurse is not on duty in the afternoons, a few pupils feel less secure. The staff give support and encouragement to the pupils. They show sensitivity, developing trust and strong relationships with their charges.

- 4.21 Arrangements for the boarders' welfare, health and safety are excellent. The National Minimum Standards for safeguarding are fully met through a clear and comprehensive policy and robust safer recruitment procedures. Staff's safeguarding training is regular and up-to-date. The supportive and caring environment in the boarding community ensures that there is a culture of openness between the staff and pupils, so that difficulties are dealt with openly and calmly. Sanctions are in place but are rarely invoked because good behaviour is praised and positive incentives are in place. Behaviour of the boarders is excellent overall, and instances of bullying very rare. When behaviour is poor, it is appropriately dealt with and a good outcome is achieved. If physical restraint has been necessary, staff have followed the statutory guidelines and the school policy and have recorded these incidents thoroughly. The Pathfinder Scheme which places a few children through local authorities, has been successful, and the relationship between the school, the social services and local authorities is very good. Robust risk assessments and health and safety procedures are in place so that the boarders are kept safe but encouraged to be independent and quick-thinking to prepare themselves for later life.
- 4.22 The leadership and management of the boarding provision is good overall, with many areas of excellence, particularly the enthusiasm, dedication and commitment which is evident from the staff, who feel fully supported by the senior management team (SMT). The boarding staff are well trained in the fundamental requirements for boarding standards. Good management of the boarding area ensures that boarding life runs smoothly. Whilst in some respects records are kept very thoroughly and appropriate staffing levels are maintained for most of the day, this is not consistently the case, so that communication between members of duty staff is not always clear. Boarding staff meet regularly together and also with the SMT to evaluate the provision. This ensures standards are maintained. Priorities identified for improvement are included in the school development plan, though without a clear time scale for completion. The boarders benefit from a high standard of care overall and policies are fully compliant with legislation and generally well implemented. The prefects take on responsibility well, help maintain the friendly atmosphere in the house and receive helpful support in their roles. In turn, they support the boarding staff well and are proud, but modest, in their roles.
- 4.23 Parents are positive about their children's lives as boarders. Replies to the pre-inspection questionnaire say they are pleased with every aspect and although recognising that homesickness is natural for young boarders feel that the school deals with this very well.

- 4.24 The school has complied with the recommendation from the previous inspection by Ofsted to ensure that staff and other adults have separate toilet and showering or bathing facilities, and do not share boarders' facilities.

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 proprietor draws on his experience in education and business. He takes overall responsibility for the premises, health and safety and finance, as well as the future development and direction of the school. Specialist advisors are consulted, when necessary, on matters such as building, finance, health and safety. He has overseen progress in respect of the recommendations of the previous inspection and has drawn up, in consultation with the staff, a school development plan, which summarises strategic planning. This includes cost implications and responsibilities, which is an improvement from the previous inspection, though priorities and criteria to evaluate the benefit to pupils are not clearly defined.
- 5.3 Astute financial management and a commitment to investment in the school has ensured the provision of appropriate resources to support teaching and learning, the continual redevelopment and updating of buildings and the maintenance of a well qualified complement of teaching and ancillary staff. The proprietor, in his role as head, demonstrates an in-depth knowledge of the staff, pupils and parents, gained from his daily presence in school. This ensures that the school's ethos and values are maintained. Whilst his monitoring of the provision is largely informal, it is constant, so that he has an accurate view of where the school is strong and where further developments are required.
- 5.4 The proprietor is fully aware of his responsibilities for the welfare, health and safety of pupils and, with support from the senior management team, regularly reviews these aspects. He has undertaken training in safeguarding and the safe recruitment of staff. All statutory requirements are met.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is good overall.
- 5.6 Leadership and management successfully promotes the aims and distinctive character of the school. Since the previous inspection, the senior management team has been augmented and re-structured, so that members now have clear responsibilities and formally meet on a regular basis. The school's provision is evaluated in consultation with the proprietor, and areas for improvement are now set out in strategic planning. The clear direction provided by senior leaders is reflected in the educational success and excellent personal development of the pupils, as well as the high quality of pastoral care.
- 5.7 Since the previous inspection, the school has worked to ensure that subject schemes of work are of more consistent quality. However, as the school has identified, systems to monitor the quality of teaching by senior managers and subject heads in the preparatory department, through regular lesson observation and work sampling, are still at an early stage of development. This results in some inconsistencies in pupils' learning experience and reduces the quality of some teaching. However in the pre-preparatory department, teaching is observed by the leadership weekly and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning experience.

Provision for pupils with SEND and EAL has continued to improve through strong support from the leadership, and excellent organisation by specialist staff in the Bridge. Together with support from LSAs in class, this makes a valuable contribution to pupils' educational progress and development and also to their confidence and well-being.

- 5.8 Staff are well qualified and deployed effectively to give the support required to meet the needs of pupils. They receive regular training in the necessary areas of safeguarding, welfare, health and safety, and show high levels of care and concern for pupils. A comprehensive staff handbook gives them useful guidance, and good induction arrangements ensure that new appointees are well informed of school routines and safeguarding arrangements. Effective policies and procedures cover all aspects of school life and are conscientiously implemented by staff who are exceedingly hard-working and strongly committed to the pupils in their care.
- 5.9 To further staff development, an appraisal system is now established but does not include sufficient information on performance, gained from lesson observation. The leadership has identified that further refinement is necessary, so that appraisal becomes fully beneficial in developing staff's skills and guides their access to external training courses. A notable strength of the leadership and management of the school is that all teaching, welfare and administrative staff are so committed to supporting the school's ethos.
- 5.10 The quality of links with parents is excellent. In pre-inspection questionnaires and discussion, parents were overwhelmingly happy with the education, extra-curricular activities and support provided for their children. They are very satisfied with the information they are given and the communication they have with the school. Inspection findings concurred with the parents' views.
- 5.11 The school has an excellent and constructive relationship with parents because staff care about their pupils and their families. Parents find the headmaster and staff very approachable and readily accessible in person or by email. Concerns raised are treated speedily and sympathetically, and any complaints are dealt with in line with the school's complaints procedure. Coffee and a listening ear are always available to parents.
- 5.12 Both new and existing parents are provided with a clear and informative parents' handbook, and the pupils contribute to regular newsletters about life at school. Reporting to parents is thorough, clear and informative, but at present written reports do not consistently include targets for improvement.
- 5.13 There are many opportunities for parents to be involved in the school community and in the work and progress of their children. The parent teacher association successfully raises funds for both the school and chosen charities, by organising many social functions for parents and their children, which are enjoyed equally by staff and parents. Curriculum, information and discussion evenings for parents inform them about how their children are being prepared for transition between crucial stages in their education. They are also invited to assemblies, concerts and plays. Parents are particularly appreciative of the wide range of extra-curricular activities, outings and trips offered to their children, which encourage a family atmosphere where children of all ages happily mix together.

- 5.14 Parents are delighted that their children are so accepting of other children who may have particular learning needs and attribute this to the excellent work and integration of the Bridge. Above all, parents particularly appreciate the emphasis and importance placed on traditional values such as courtesy and politeness. They say this becomes a way of life since it begins in the Nursery and continues until the children move on to their senior schools. This results in the creation of a nurturing and happy community.

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

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

6.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.1 The overall effectiveness of the EYFS provision is outstanding. Children thrive in a happy and secure family setting because they are so well supported and valued by the caring and conscientious adults who have their needs at the heart of the setting. Staff work hard as a team to sustain high standards and consequently have a clear vision of how to move the setting forward.

6.(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.2 Leadership and management are outstanding. The regular involvement of the headmaster, as proprietor, enriches pupils' life in the EYFS and successfully informs his governance. The necessary policies, procedures and ongoing risk assessments are robustly implemented to safeguard each child. Staff give children equal opportunities to succeed. High-quality resources are used well and are accessible to children. Links with parents are excellent. They are very happy with the education their children are receiving and are given many opportunities to be involved in their children's learning. Reporting to parents is thorough but does not include individual targets for improvement. Staff work as a strong team and are assisted by the local authority in evaluating their provision to move it forward. Regular monitoring and appraisal identifies staff training needs.

6.(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.3 The quality of provision is good. There are outstanding features. A well-planned balance of child- and adult-initiated activities provides children with challenging and exciting experiences throughout every area of learning within a stimulating and varied indoor and outdoor environment. The school has identified the need to make provision for the outdoor environment to be used in all weather conditions and has an action plan to accomplish this. Teaching is based on a thorough understanding of each child and nurtures positive attitudes to learning. Children benefit from specialist teaching in French, ballet and music. They are very well motivated by the high proportion of outstanding teaching but, on occasion, extra opportunities for teacher input, for example when children are waiting between activities, are missed. Staff make informative observations, though individual next steps are not consistently written into planning. Staff are particularly skilled and sensitive in their management and understanding of children and reward and celebrate their achievements. Children needing extra support are quickly identified and their needs are addressed through effective support in class. This is an outstanding strength of the provision. Staff promote children's welfare, health and safety effectively. A wide range of safe and suitable resources is accessible to all children.

6.(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

- 6.4 Outcomes for children are outstanding. They are enthusiastic, happy and independent learners who all progress well in relation to their starting points and begin to develop skills for the future. They are confident and articulate children who respond happily to adults. They learn to listen and follow instructions, think critically and make decisions. Children understand about eating healthily, maintaining good hygiene and being safe. Developing independence is a particular strength of the setting. Children from two to five years are involved in ordering and collecting their milk from the kitchen and carry their duties out in a business-like and confident manner. Nursery children enjoy taking digital photographs and displaying them on the computer; from a reticent start, they develop the confidence to perform in their Christmas production. They learn sounds and can count up to five objects. Upper Nursery children build on their sounds, enjoy finding and recognising numbers on a maths walk, handling clay and make a good attempt to model. Reception children can add two numbers, learn to form their letters correctly and use their sounds to build up words when reading aloud. They enjoy talking about their favourite books. They can use the computer independently and learn to take turns. Their understanding of the wider world is clearly demonstrated through their varied activities and outings. Behaviour is exemplary because children know what is expected of them.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

- 6.5 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.