



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

BRAMBLETYE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of School	Brambletye Preparatory School		
DfE Number	938/6251		
EYFS Number	EY368652		
Registered Charity Number	307003		
Address	Brambletye Preparatory School Lewes Road East Grinstead West Sussex RH19 3PD		
Telephone Number	01342 321004		
Fax Number	01342 770197		
Email Address	headmaster@brambletye.com		
Head	Mr Hugh Cocke		
Chair of Governors	Mr Andrew Hynard		
Age Range	2 to 13		
Total Number of Pupils	282		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	4	5-11: 167
	3-5 (EYFS):	39	11-13: 72
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	204	
Number of Boarders	Total:	78	
	Full:	78	Weekly: 0
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection dates	13th to 16th March 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 November 2007.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed 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 June 2011 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. 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 the chair of governors, and the governor who oversees child protection, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the boarding house 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

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Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Director of teaching, IAPS School)

Team Inspector (Former head, IAPS School)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Brambletye School was founded in 1919 as a boarding school for boys, and moved to its present site near East Grinstead in 1933. The school is centred on a Victorian House in 140 acres of grounds. In 2000 it became co-educational. The school provides education for 282 pupils from the ages of two to thirteen. Forty-three children are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with four who are under three. The boarding accommodation is located in the main building. Many pupils board towards the end of their time at the school. Just over a quarter of the 78 boarders come from overseas and are from a range of ethnic backgrounds. Many pupils come from the local area, with an appreciable number who come from South London. Their parents are mainly from professional and business backgrounds. The school is an educational trust and has a governing body.
- 1.2 The school seeks to promote a happy working relationship between staff and pupils. Emphasis is placed on the provision of an environment that is stimulating, challenging, and exciting. Each child is considered as an individual, and is given the opportunity to learn in a positive, encouraging and achieving atmosphere. Good manners and common courtesies are expected at all times, to all people and in all areas of the school. The principles of a Christian upbringing are promoted. Since the previous inspection, a seven-classroom block, the Blencowe Centre, has been built. In addition, the science rooms have been redeveloped and changing rooms have been adapted for the girls.
- 1.3 The average ability of pupils, as indicated in standardised tests taken by pupils, is above the national average, with a wide range of ability represented across the school. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Eighteen pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Thirty-one pupils receive specialist learning support. Twenty pupils have English as an additional language (EAL). None have specialist support, but may have extra help from time to time.
- 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 Pupils' achievement is good in their academic subjects and their extra curricular activities. They are well educated in line with the school's aims. Pupils make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. Attainment is judged to be well above national age related expectations. The pupils' achievement in creative subjects, particularly art is especially strong. They are highly effective learners and have exemplary attitudes to learning. The curriculum is good. A wide range of excellent extra-curricular activities is provided. Curriculum planning is undertaken carefully, but omissions in some subjects hinder whole school curriculum development planning. Effective support is provided for gifted and talented pupils. The support for pupils with SEND is excellent. Provision for pupils with EAL is in line with their individual needs. The pupils' success is promoted by excellent teaching, a significant improvement since the previous inspection, and their highly positive attitudes to learning. In Years 3 to 8, the quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent. Whilst pupils are often given written comments of praise, they are less often given written advice as to how they might improve their work. The systems to assess pupils' progress and achievement are thorough, and the information is used effectively to track their progress and to plan future work.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent and is fostered by the school's positive and supportive ethos. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and reflects the school's values. Relationships between pupils and teachers, and with their peers are excellent. Pastoral care is excellent. The extra curricular activities contribute significantly to pupils' personal development. Good attention is paid to safeguarding pupils and to health and safety. The quality of boarding is good, effectively supported by excellent leadership and management. As identified at the previous Ofsted inspection, the dormitories are too small for the number of pupils accommodated. The overall effectiveness of the EYFS provision is good. The leadership and management, quality of provision and outcomes for children in the setting are good. In Reception, children have insufficient opportunities for spontaneous purposeful play.
- 2.3 Governance is good. Governors are keen to ensure that the character of the school continues to reflect its aims and values. They undertake their oversight of child protection and health and safety effectively. Plans and finance are in hand to improve the quality of the dormitories. Leadership and management are good. The senior management team effectively sets the way forward whilst ensuring that the school's values are maintained. Staff training and induction are good. Considerable progress has been made in improving the links between the prep and pre-prep departments. The improvements made are not fully reflected in the written policies for the school as a whole. Parents' replies to the pre-inspection questionnaires were highly supportive.

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 does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2011, and therefore it must:
- ensure that the dormitories are of sufficient size for the number, needs and ages of boarders accommodated [National Minimum Standard 5.2, under Boarding Accommodation].
- 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 In addition to the above regulatory action point the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that clear guidance for marking is developed and implemented consistently.
 2. Ensure a greater consistency of format for schemes of work and subject handbooks to support whole school curriculum development.
 3. Ensure that written school policies and procedures apply to the school as a whole.
 4. In the EYFS, extend opportunities for Reception children to develop their learning outside.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievement is good.
- 3.2 This reflects the aim that pupils from a wide range of abilities should achieve well. From the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards, pupils are successful in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills in their academic work and in their extra curricular activities. The pupils are highly articulate and listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. They express their ideas fluently and readily in discussions. Written work is well presented. The pupils read fluently. Pupils show a logical approach to their work across the curriculum. They have a secure grasp of mathematics and apply these skills in other subjects such as science and design technology. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are well developed, and they use them effectively when they undertake graphic modelling or controlling robots. They readily use the internet for research. Pupils show high levels of skill in the creative arts. The quality of art, especially painting, is of outstanding quality and has led to pupils gaining art scholarships and success in national competitions. Pupils are skilful when singing and playing musical instruments, and in their drama productions. In sport, pupils have represented Sussex in the IAPS national athletic championships. They hold their own in competitive matches against other schools in a range of sports.
- 3.3 The pupils do not take the national tests at age seven and eleven. On the evidence available, attainment is judged to be well above national age related expectations. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. Pupils with SEND are extremely well supported and make appropriate progress in line with the targets that have been set for them. The pupils who have been identified as being gifted and talented make good progress in the areas where their talents lie. Pupils with EAL have appropriate support in their schoolwork.
- 3.4 The pupils follow a good curriculum and all gain places in a wide range of senior schools of their choice. A significant number gain scholarships. Pupils are highly effective learners and have exemplary attitudes to learning. They are keen to learn and improve the standards they attain. They often ask questions to clarify what they are being taught or to let the teacher know that they have not fully understood.

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

- 3.5 The quality of the curriculum is good.
- 3.6 The curriculum provides well for the pupils' academic, creative and physical development. It provides breadth and challenge and covers all the requisite subjects. Pupils' linguistic skills benefit from learning French across the school and Latin from Year 5. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is well planned and relevant and enables pupils to prepare for adult life by exploring and discussing important issues, including relationships and discrimination. Older pupils benefit from a leadership course. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' understanding of the natural world is enhanced by their access to 'the school in the woods'.
- 3.7 The curriculum is suitable for the age, abilities and needs of the pupils and is in line with the aims of the school to develop the individual needs and talents of every pupil.

Emphasis is placed on opportunities for creativity. Since the previous inspection, careful grouping by ability in the core subjects has been put in place to improve the challenge for all pupils. This is an improvement, and particularly benefits the more able pupils.

- 3.8 Pupils with SEND benefit from excellent support. Both teachers and pupils receive effective guidance on how best to meet pupils' needs. Where necessary, each pupil has an up-to-date individual education plan with appropriate targets which are reviewed regularly. Pupils with EAL gain from support which is often provided and matched to their individual needs. Pupils who are gifted and talented are usually challenged and supported to achieve highly. Currently, little explicit written guidance is provided to ensure consistency and aid teachers in their support for pupils with EAL and those who are gifted and talented.
- 3.9 Since the previous inspection, the role of the heads of department has been better defined so that the curricular links between the pre-prep and prep departments have improved significantly. Each head of department is now involved with the curriculum from Nursery to Year 8. Although the content of the curriculum is carefully planned, the documentation in each department is variable in its format and quality, and this hinders the effectiveness of whole school curriculum planning. Planning for the preparation of pupils' entry to senior schools is efficient, and in a number of subjects, useful links are made between subjects.
- 3.10 The provision and range of extra-curricular activities are excellent. Parents and pupils, in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, were highly appreciative of the wide range of activities available. High quality opportunities are provided to develop the pupils' creative and sporting talents and for them to make music and sing. Major drama productions, as well as those performed by year groups, and activities which include carpentry, chess, Taekwondo and fencing enhance pupils' personal development. Throughout the school, pupils benefit from a full programme of speakers, visits to places of interest including national museums, historic sites, theatres and environmental areas. Older pupils' independence is developed through residential visits abroad. These activities provide pupils with memorable experiences which develop their self-confidence and self-knowledge.
- 3.11 Pupils benefit from the school's positive links with the local community, the Community Outreach project and the Brambletye Adventure which provide a range of workshops for a variety of London prep schools and local primary schools. Pupils sing at local nursing and retirement homes at Christmas and at special events throughout the year.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.12 The quality of the teaching is excellent.
- 3.13 This represents a considerable improvement since the previous inspection. The teaching successfully meets the school's aim to enable pupils to achieve academically and make good progress. Teachers' high expectations for their pupils enhance their learning. Across the school, pupils are consistently encouraged and supported to make the most of their intellectual, physical and creative talents. Teachers are enthusiastic and supportive, and lessons take place in an atmosphere where pupils seek to do their best. Pupils are well supported as teachers make the best use of the small class sizes, and know their pupils individually, taking account of their differing needs. Teachers' knowledge is used to good effect in the planning

of lessons, which takes due account of what pupils have learnt before. In interviews, pupils reported that teachers were keen to help them when they had difficulties in lessons or with their 'prep'. The results of the pupil questionnaires confirmed this positive attitude to the teaching.

- 3.14 Teachers make good use of a wide range of teaching methods and a variety of activities in lessons which capture the pupils' interest. A significant feature of the teaching is the way that pupils are encouraged to think for themselves. Lessons start punctually, an improvement since the previous inspection. Lessons are well paced as teachers make the most of the time available and this promotes behaviour of a high standard. Previous learning is consolidated by brisk questioning at the start of lessons. Teachers make good use of open-ended questions to challenge pupils to think for themselves. Pupils' learning is enhanced significantly by the considerable subject knowledge of subject specialists and of class teachers. Excellent use is made of the good quality resources, and the interactive white boards in classrooms are used effectively to share pupils' ideas, and to illustrate more complex ideas.
- 3.15 The pupils' work is marked regularly. In Years 1 and 2, marking is consistent and pupils receive advice as to how they might improve their work. In Years 3 to 8, the format of marking between subjects is inconsistent. Whilst pupils are often given written comments of praise, they are less often given written advice as to how they might improve their work. Efficient systems are in place to assess pupils. Effective use is made of this information to track pupils' progress and to plan work. Assessment information is used profitably to advise pupils and their parents in the choice of senior schools.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 The school is successful in providing an environment where everyone is valued and is very much a part of a happy community as identified in its aims. Pupils' spiritual development is good. They develop a secure understanding of the importance of religious ideas to believers. Pupils benefit from the opportunities that assemblies, and worship in the chapel provide for them to consider, explore and reflect upon religious ideas. In a lesson in religious studies, pupils were able to consider what they might give up for Lent to enable them to improve as individuals. Pupils throughout the school confidently express their feelings and understanding. Their spiritual development is enhanced through their regular participation in the creative arts. Pupils have a well-developed sense of self-esteem.
- 4.3 Pupils' moral development is excellent. They have a clear sense of what is right and wrong in a moral sense, not just in terms of keeping to the rules. Older pupils show a very good understanding of why racism is morally wrong, for example when they refer to a speech made by Martin Luther King. Pupils have a set of shared values which is underpinned by the school's ethos, and they act responsibly towards each other. They know, understand and respect the school's code of behaviour. Pupils show their strong support for those less fortunate than themselves when they select and raise funds for many local, national and international charities.
- 4.4 Pupils' social development is excellent. From the Nursery onwards, pupils show a high degree of social awareness. They are at ease talking with adults and with pupils from different year groups. They take pleasure in the many responsibilities they are given as 'officers' and prefects, and undertake their duties conscientiously. Older boarders commented that they appreciated the important responsibilities they were given such as locking up, even though they knew that adults would check their work. Younger pupils take pride in being helpful in the classroom when they return registers to the office and distribute equipment. Pupils contribute to the wider society in which they live as they engage in regular visits to entertain senior citizens in the locality, and host fundraising events at school. They gain a sound understanding of public institutions in their PSHE lessons.
- 4.5 Pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils from a wide range of cultural backgrounds work and play harmoniously. In religious studies they gain a sound understanding of world faiths. Pupils gain an understanding of the practices, beliefs and arts of other cultures through many aspects of the curriculum, and when they listen to visiting speakers from a variety of backgrounds. Pupils successfully develop their understanding in their musical activities, including African drumming and playing Caribbean steel pans. Through residential visits to places such as Kenya, pupils learn at first-hand about the lifestyle background of other traditions. Pupils develop a good awareness of their own cultural heritage when they visit museums, historical sites and theatres.

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

- 4.6 Pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.7 It makes a considerable contribution to pupils' personal development. The school successfully meets its aim to provide individual and sensitive pastoral care. Parents and pupils are extremely appreciative of the care the school provides, as indicated in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire.
- 4.8 Teachers provide excellent support and know their pupils well. In interviews, pupils reported that they appreciated being able to discuss matters of importance to them with their teachers. The management of pastoral care is excellent. Senior staff ensure that the arrangements for pastoral care are well organised and highly effective. Pupils' pastoral needs are carefully recorded and kept under regular review, and excellent relationships amongst pupils, and between staff and pupils, add significantly to the quality of the care.
- 4.9 The school promotes healthy living extremely well. Throughout the school, pupils benefit from an excellent range of physical activities in and out of curriculum time which offer ample opportunity to pursue a healthy lifestyle. Pupils acquire a good appreciation of how to stay healthy, through their learning in science and in PSHE. They understand the importance of healthy eating, which is encouraged by the provision of nutritious meal choices.
- 4.10 The school successfully nurtures good behaviour and effectively minimizes any opportunity for harassment. Comprehensive attention is paid to the prevention of bullying and harassment. Detailed records are kept of the few instances where pupils have difficulty in managing their behaviour. Pupils commented that in their view instances of bullying were rare. They are confident that were it to occur, it would be dealt with seriously and swiftly. Pupils understand the sanctions and rewards system and feel that it is fair. The school has a suitable plan to improve the educational access for pupils with SEND. As members of the school council, pupils represent their peers in sharing ideas for school development, knowing that they will be listened to.

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

- 4.11 The quality of welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.12 Effective attention is paid to safeguarding pupils and promoting their health and well-being. The safeguarding policy is comprehensive and is implemented effectively. Appropriate training for staff is provided. The nationally required checks are fully in place for the recruitment of staff.
- 4.13 All necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire. All fire prevention equipment and evacuation procedures are tested regularly. Risk of fire is carefully assessed. Detailed risk assessments are in place for educational visits and other health and safety matters. Good quality provision is made for pupils who are ill and for those who have SEND. Attendance and admission registers are completed and stored correctly.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.14 The quality of boarding is good.
- 4.15 Outcomes for boarders' personal development are excellent. The school succeeds in its aim to provide a happy and stimulating boarding environment. Boarders enjoy being with their friends and having fun, whilst learning to be responsible for themselves and to respect and support others. Current day pupils are invited to an induction week in the summer term, and on arrival are assigned a 'helper' to ensure they are happily integrated into boarding life. Dormitory captains supervise and assist younger boarders. Boarders are encouraged and inspired to develop their strengths, to be self-reliant, determined and tolerant. They are confident, articulate and are proud to be part of the school community. Boarders contribute enthusiastically to the life of the school and are vigorously loyal to their competitive houses. They show eager commitment to working together to achieve success. The boarders take full advantage of the many opportunities available to them. They participate in assemblies, chapel services, concerts, plays and an extensive range of sports. They make sensible suggestions for improvements to boarding life through the school and food councils. Relationships between boarders themselves and with the staff are excellent.
- 4.16 The quality of boarding provision and care is good. A dedicated team ensure that boarders are well cared for. Records are kept meticulously. During the inspection, boarders said that they felt safe and cared for, and that they enjoyed the additional contact with academic staff who lead activities and assist in boarding in the evenings and at weekends. Boarding and academic staff work very well together, carefully ensuring all boarders' pastoral, academic and social needs are met. Boarders know to whom they can turn if they have a problem. They have close liaison with their head of house and form tutor, and the independent listener also visits regularly to take assemblies. Medical staff provide efficient care for all pupils' needs in the school surgery. A separate dormitory is available for boarders who are unwell and the school doctor visits weekly or more often if required. Concerns regarding medical matters raised in the previous welfare inspection have been fully addressed.
- 4.17 Boarders are accommodated in dormitories which are bright and colourfully personalised with their family photographs and favourite soft toys. The previous Ofsted inspection in June 2011 reported that the dormitories were of an insufficient size for the number accommodated. This is still the case. Governors are aware of the necessity to alter the accommodation and have designated funds for improvement. Boarders enjoy healthy and nutritious meals and varied menus. They are invited to make suggestions for dishes they would like through the food committee, and particularly enjoy the barbecues in the summer months. Care is taken to accommodate any pupils' specific dietary needs. Fruit, milk and drinking water are always available. An extremely varied programme of extra-curricular activities and clubs is offered in the evenings and at weekends, which encourage boarders to 'have a go' at an exciting range of experiences. The extensive grounds provide beautiful surroundings in which boarders can play and explore and take initiatives for their own recreation. Effective arrangements are in place for boarders to contact their parents/carers and families in private. Boarders keep in contact with their families by the school telephones or by email. Those from overseas have access to their parents through the internet on Sundays. Boarders also write a letter home at weekends.

- 4.18 The effectiveness of arrangements for welfare and safeguarding is good. All boarding, academic and support staff are given training in safeguarding. Appropriate health and safety policies and procedures for boarding are in place, which are overseen and monitored appropriately by senior managers and governors with designated responsibility for health, safety and child protection matters. The school's system of awarding stars for good behaviour and minuses for shortcomings is an effective incentive, and boarders appreciate the praise, rewards and recognition they receive for positive and constructive attitudes and achievements in boarding life. Boarders stated that incidents of bullying were rare, but if they did arise, they were dealt with firmly and fairly by staff. Suitable arrangements are in place for boarders to contact staff at all times. In turn, the staff know where the boarders are and appropriate arrangements for dealing with cases of a missing child are in place. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, the vast majority of parents and boarders were highly supportive and appreciative of the boarding arrangements.
- 4.19 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the boarding provision is excellent and reflects the commitment and dedication of the boarding team. The school has a coherent vision for boarding with priorities that are clear and in line with its aims. These are reflected in the high quality of the pastoral and boarding policies and procedures. Care is taken to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the provision. The organisation of daily life for boarders is excellent, and the needs of boarders are well known and met. Boarders are enthusiastic about boarding and appreciate the quality of the support they receive and range of facilities and activities on offer. They are cared for outstandingly well, and provided with an abundance of opportunity for personal development. The harmonious and constructive relationships with staff continue to be a significant strength of the school. Boarders' views on boarding life are sought and listened to sympathetically. Communication with parents is exemplary. Any concerns are responded to promptly and actions taken followed through methodically.

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 maintain good oversight of the school. They are very supportive of the school, and are keen to ensure that the character of the school meets the school's aims. The wide range of expertise within the governing body is used effectively. The governing body have a good oversight of the school. An effective committee structure is in place. Finances are managed prudently as seen in the facilities provided, for example in drama, music and physical activity. The grounds are well kept and the school is well maintained, clean and tidy.
- 5.3 The curriculum committee oversees pupils' achievement and benefits from presentations from members of staff. Arrangements have been established by the academic committee for heads of department to work with colleagues in another school. Governors gain knowledge and insights about the school from their visits and from the detailed reports from the senior staff. Governors have established effective arrangements to undertake their annual review of safeguarding. They regularly check on health and safety matters through the health and safety committee. The last Ofsted report highlighted the crowded nature of the dormitory accommodation and that it failed to meet the national minimum standard. The governors have now allocated finance for the plans to improve the situation. Action has been taken that ensures that the national minimum standards regarding medication are now met. A self-review by the governors has highlighted the need for more training. Governors have not effectively kept up-to-date with the new national minimum standards for boarding.

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

- 5.4 The leadership and management of the school are good.
- 5.5 The senior management team has established a clear educational direction for the school firmly rooted in the school's aims. The hallmark of their work is that there is always a focus on the experience provided for the pupils and that the school runs smoothly. The school's organisation is excellent. Teamwork is of high quality. A unity of purpose has been established where all staff are keen that pupils should achieve well. Effective arrangements are in place and implemented to evaluate the work of the school. Detailed oversight of the pupils' achievement and personal development, together with the quality of teaching and pastoral care enables the senior management team to have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need improvement. These are reflected in the comprehensive plan for the development of the school which outlines the areas identified for improvement. The effectiveness of the plan is hindered as outcomes are judged mainly in terms of the completion of tasks, rather than impact on pupils' learning and development. Since the previous inspection, the leadership and management of subject departments have been improved. Subject documentation is not consistent in format and this lessens its usefulness. A review of pupils' completed work by the senior management team prior to the inspection highlighted inconsistency in marking

- between departments, and action on this is planned. The leadership and management of the pre-prep department are good.
- 5.6 The links between the prep and pre-prep schools have improved significantly to the benefit of the pupils and parents. This is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection. The school's documentation has not fully caught up with the improvements made and these are not always reflected in policy documents that apply to the school as a whole.
- 5.7 Good attention is given to staff development. Thorough arrangements are in place and implemented for the appraisal of staff. Newly qualified teachers, and teachers new to the school have an appropriate induction programme which includes efficient training in child protection and health and safety matters. Staff are suitably trained for their roles in safeguarding, welfare and health and safety. The recruiting and appointment of staff pays due attention to regulatory requirements. Criminal Records Bureau checks are completed systematically on all adults and recorded on a central register of appointments.
- 5.8 The school maintains excellent relationships with parents, guardians and carers. Parents are highly supportive of the school as they indicated in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires. They are particularly appreciative of the range of subjects, the boarding experience, the progress their children make, the care provided to pupils as individuals, and the attention paid to keeping their children safe. Parents welcome the information they are provided about the school, for example in the academic handbook for parents.
- 5.9 A wide range of helpful information is available for parents. The required regulatory information, including policies and procedures is posted on the website in the parental portal. The academic guide for parents provides comprehensive information. The informative half termly newsletter is available on the website together with details of daily and weekly events. Parent consultations are held once a year. In between these formal meetings, the school keeps in close touch with parents as senior managers greet them as they bring their children to school. In boarding, highly effective arrangements are in place to keep parents informed.
- 5.10 Parents receive informative reports twice a year, and tutor assessments twice a term. These provide parents with appropriate information about the effort that their children are making and how well they are achieving. Good opportunities are provided for parents to be involved in the life of the school. At times a committee of parents is formed to help with extra events such as plays and the summer ball. Parents' concerns are given due attention. Should it be needed, parents have access to a formal complaints procedure. No formal complaints were received in the past year.

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 early years provision is good. Adults are successful in making the setting a happy place where children thrive; and they succeed in achieving this. Children are highly valued as individuals. The needs of children, including those under the age of three are well provided for, and as a result children achieve well regardless of their starting points. Since the previous inspection, stronger links with parents and extensions to outdoor areas have significantly improved provision and outcomes for children. Ongoing self-evaluation demonstrates a very good capacity for continuous improvement.

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

6.2 Leadership and management in the EYFS are good. Governors visit regularly and recognise the importance of the early years. All required policies, including procedures for staff recruitment, are in place, and fully understood by staff, ensuring children are safeguarded, but systems for reviewing and maintaining these policies lack rigour. Equality of opportunity is strongly promoted throughout the setting. Resources and staff are deployed effectively to meet the children's needs, although resourcing is less effective in outdoor areas for Reception children. Adults work closely with external agencies and parents to ensure all children's needs are met. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents expressed overwhelming support for all aspects of the setting.

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

6.3 The quality of provision is good overall. Adults provide a good, and sometimes outstanding, balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, particularly for younger children. In Nursery, outdoor spaces provide good opportunities for spontaneous purposeful play, but in Reception they are less well developed. Excellent use is made of the wider grounds allowing children to engage with the natural world. Imaginative resources extend learning and promote children's creative, critical thinking skills. Focused observations form the basis for reflective assessment. Planning is carefully adapted to individual needs. Outstanding support for children's welfare is provided by caring staff. Adults help children to understand the importance of hygienic routines, and encourage independence. A very effective, system of rewards promotes good behaviour, encouraging children to make positive choices.

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

6.4 Outcomes for children in the EYFS are good. Children make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress, with most achieving the Early Learning Goals, by the age of five. Children are enthusiastic, highly motivated learners; eager to participate, persevere and achieve. They make excellent use of available resources, becoming critical thinkers, and decision makers. Children under three have made a good start in developing their skills in literacy and numeracy. Older children are confident

communicators who express their thoughts and feelings verbally and through writing. They read and count reliably up to ten. Adults actively encourage children to solve simple everyday problems, but opportunities for more challenging problem solving are less evident. Familiarity with ICT and other technology develops as children under the age of three use a digital camera, and in Reception operate the interactive white board. Excellent role-play opportunities allow children to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children co-operate well as they play in small groups. 'School in the woods' activities help children to develop a mature understanding of managing risks. Children have excellent table manners, develop good personal hygiene habits and are extremely polite. They understand the benefits of physical exercise, and develop good gross motor skills during well-planned physical education and creative music and movement sessions.

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.