



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

GODSTOWE SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of School	Godstowe School
DfE Number	825/6007
Registered Charity Number	5403601
Address	Godstowe School Shrubbery Road High Wycombe Buckinghamshire HP13 6PR
Telephone Number	01494 529273
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Email Address	headmaster@godstowe.org
Head	Mr David St. Clair Gainer
Chair of Governors	Mr Andy Kemp
Age Range	3 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	412
Gender of Pupils	Mixed to age 7, girls to age 13
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 52 5-13: 360
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 313
Number of Boarders	Total: 99
	Full: 88 Weekly: 11
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Yvonne Wyman
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	15 May 2012 to 18 May 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 March 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/or disabilities).
- (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 31 August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for 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 November 2008 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.

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, 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 Margaret Smallwood	Reporting Inspector
Mr David Callender	Team Inspector (former Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Elizabeth Garner	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Linda Glithro	Team inspector (Deputy Head, GSA school)
Mrs Felicity Lawson	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Lynda Boden	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL	3
(a) Main findings	3
(b) Action points	4
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	4
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	4
3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	5
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning	5
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	6
(c) The contribution of teaching	7
4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	8
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	8
(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care	9
(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	9
(d) The quality of boarding	10
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	13
(a) The quality of governance	13
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	13

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Godstowe Preparatory School is a day and boarding school for girls aged from 3 to 13 and boys from 3 to 7. It was founded in 1900 and is situated in 12 acres of parkland in High Wycombe. The school is a charitable trust governed by the Council of nine governors. The school's main aims are for pupils to become confident, happy and successful with a love of learning, in an environment where they feel valued as they are prepared for the demands of the modern world. It aims to promote the best opportunities for pupils by providing a challenging curriculum and a wide range of extra-curricular activities, together with a stimulating and enjoyable boarding experience.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection, there were 412 pupils in the school, of whom 52 were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and 15 boys up to the age of 7. The main school is for pupils between the ages of 7 to 13. The Lodge is a separate building for those pupils aged from 4 to 7 with its own facilities which include a computer suite, assembly hall and play areas. Children aged 3 and 4 are in the Nursery which is situated near the Lodge. All pupils can use the main school facilities. There are three boarding houses all situated in the grounds. Of the 99 pupils who board, 88 are full boarders with the remainder boarding on a flexible basis.
- 1.3 Overall, pupils' ability on entry is above the national average. The school has identified 88 pupils who require school support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), mainly for dyslexia. Two pupils have statements of educational need. Thirty two pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL)
- 1.4 Most pupils come from business and professional families who live in the surrounding rural and urban areas, with a significant number of boarders from further away and overseas. Over one tenth of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds or non-British nationalities giving a range of different faiths and cultures. Most pupils continue their education in selective independent schools at the age of 13, with a few moving to local grammar schools at the age of 11.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) 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 equivalence are shown in the following tables.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting .

School	NC name
Nursery	Nursery
Beginners	Reception

Pre-preparatory/Preparatory Departments

School	NC name
Kindergarten	Year 1
Transition	Year 2
Form 1	Year 3
Form 2	Year 4
Lower Third	Year 5
Middle Third	Year 6
Upper Third	Year 7
Fourth Form	Year 8

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Pupils' achievements, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage are excellent. In the EYFS, children make rapid progress towards the Early Learning Goals. The setting's aims of nurturing and educating children are extremely well met. Pupils show academic knowledge, skills and understanding of a high standard, across a challenging curriculum. Their highly positive attitudes to learning contribute to their academic achievements. In creative activities, achievement is extremely high, particularly in music and art. The curriculum is appropriate for the different sections of the school with smooth transition between ages including in the EYFS. Those with SEND and EAL are fully supported. An exceptionally wide range of extra-curricular activities are available. Strong links with the local community and countries abroad benefit pupils' education. Excellent teaching ensures pupils success whatever their abilities. Pupils are extremely well monitored and tracked throughout the school.
- 2.2 The quality of pupils' personal development is excellent and strongly supports the schools aims for confident, happy, well mannered pupils who respect others and can all achieve some success. Pupils appreciate spiritual matters, have a clear moral understanding, mature social skills and wide cultural awareness helped by the presence and encouragement of the school's overseas pupils. Highly effective individual support and care is given to all pupils from the EYFS upwards and pupils feel well looked after. Relationships amongst pupils and between staff and pupils are positive and friendly. Children in the EYFS delight in showing their work to adults as well as their friends. The pupils' personal development is strongly supported by the excellent welfare, health and safety arrangements. Safeguarding arrangements are now strong, and have improved since the previous inspection. Risk is well managed and all necessary precautions are taken.
- 2.3 Boarding is of excellent quality and contributes much to pupils' self confidence and personal development, and is a strength of the school. Accommodation is comfortable, and arrangements for boarders' pastoral care and welfare, health and safety are excellent and have improved since the previous inspection. Boarding is a rewarding and enjoyable experience.
- 2.4 The quality of governance, leadership and management including the EYFS, is excellent, and supports the high achievement and excellent personal development of the pupils. The governors have a clear oversight of the whole school, and carry out their monitoring of policies and welfare, health and safety with diligence. They have excellent relationships with leadership and management, and provide a supportive and challenging role enabling the school's aims to be realised. The school maintains strong relationships with parents, demonstrated by the positive replies to the questionnaire. Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the life of the school.

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)

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

2.6 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2011.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Develop further support for pupils who are fluent in English, but speak another language at home.
2. In the EYFS, implement plans to improve communication with those parents who are not seen on a daily basis.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The school is highly successful in achieving its aims to develop confident and successful pupils who love learning together. Pupils of a wide range of ability are able to succeed. As well as showing strong factual knowledge, pupils confidently apply their skills to their learning. Pupils listen attentively, speak eloquently and confidently and are making significant progress with advanced reading skills. Pupils write clearly and imaginatively using increasingly advanced vocabulary and syntax, and argue logically. At all ages pupils' work is well presented and they can undertake independent work efficiently. Their mathematical standards are high with good mental recall and the ability to solve problems. Some pupils have achieved well in national and international mathematical competitions. Throughout the school, pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) well, particularly in project work. From the EYFS upwards, pupils achieve exceptional standards in creative work. The annual art exhibition contained contributions from every pupil. Standards in music and in dramatic performances are high. Most pupils learn at least one instrument, with many playing at high levels, as well as some playing in national children's orchestras. The standard of singing is excellent. Pupils show high levels of skills in physical education and games activities, and have been successful in a range of sports at local, county and preparatory school national level. Outcomes for children in the EYFS are excellent. Children make rapid progress towards meeting all of the Early Learning Goals, and many exceed them. Children read simple sentences and use numbers to 20. Pupils' results in competitive examinations to both maintained grammar and highly selective independent schools are outstanding, as they gain a number of academic and other scholarships each year. Pupils are successful in a particularly wide range of extra-curricular activities, known as the enrichment curriculum, as well as in art, music and drama competitions and examinations, and these achievements make a considerable contribution to their personal development.
- 3.3 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to performance against a fixed national average, but on the evidence available it is judged to be high in relation to national age-related expectations. The curriculum is demanding throughout the school. Lesson observations, scrutiny of work and curriculum interviews confirm this measure of the pupils' attainment. Pupils who receive help and support for SEND achieve well. Comprehensive data, tracking pupil progress and recording their preferred learning styles, enables well targeted support in the classroom. Pupils with EAL frequently achieve exceptionally well and make rapid progress, often gaining awards to senior schools. The achievement of the most able pupils is particularly high across the curriculum.
- 3.4 All pupils make good progress including those with SEND and have very positive attitudes to their academic studies and to other activities. A few parents felt their children did not receive enough help for SEND, but the children themselves felt that their extra lessons gave them confidence and support in helping them to improve. Inspection evidence agreed with this. In the EYFS, thorough identification of individual needs and the excellent use of information gathered from continuous assessment ensure that all children make rapid progress. Their attitudes to learning are carefully guided by staff enabling them to make a positive contribution. They co-operate well, enjoy their learning and make choices and decisions. Children come

to school eager to learn and bursting with enthusiasm. A love of learning together, which is the aim of the school is very evident in all ages. Pupils thrive in the atmosphere of enjoyment and effort which pervades the school. They concentrate well, and co-operate together working collaboratively when asked.

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

- 3.5 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision for pupils is excellent.
- 3.6 This provision fully supports the aims of the school to develop confident, happy and successful pupils and it helps prepare them for the next stage of their education. The curriculum covers more than the requisite areas of learning. Pupils' linguistic skills are well developed as they learn French from Reception and older pupils Spanish and Latin. A relevant personal, social, and health education (PSHE) programme, and philosophy, drama and study skills enhance their curriculum experiences, enabling them to learn new skills and demonstrate their individual confidence and respect for each other.
- 3.7 The curriculum is broad, varied, well-balanced and challenging. Very thorough planning takes account of cross-curricular links across a range of subjects. The curriculum is appropriate to the age and needs of all pupils, including those in the EYFS. Setting pupils in groups by ability is gradually introduced to meet the needs of individual pupils, and those with SEND and EAL receive individual help. Pupils have access to extensive opportunities for music, art, and drama in termly productions which involve all pupils. Design and technology includes cookery and dressmaking, enabling skills for the future. A termly cross-curricular day and an annual Workshop Week take place each year providing pupils with a broader academic curriculum. The well-equipped and welcoming library is used throughout the day. Children in the EYFS benefit from both indoor and outdoor play. They enjoy working collaboratively to make shelters for their teddies and identifying mini-beasts.
- 3.8 Pupils benefit from a physical education and games programme which provides excellent opportunities and specialist teaching in many different sports. Recently there has been an increased focus on pupils who are less successful in sport. This has enabled more pupils to play in teams and to take part in a wider range of sports.
- 3.9 The pupils' experiences are enriched by an extensive extra-curricular programme. A wide range of creative and general interest activities, in addition to sports, drama, dance, art and music, range from Newspaper Club to Story Club, knitting, and Mad Science. Some activities are available to younger pupils and the EYFS, and some are geared towards more able pupils as extension activities such as the mathematics Olympiad and Greek. Music activities include extremely high standard choirs, ensembles and an orchestra. Pupils' learning throughout the school, including the EYFS, benefits from a range of residential and other visits which include day, field and activity outings, and extended trips in Britain. Residential trips for older girls who visit France and a music trip to Prague develop their independence.
- 3.10 Strong links with the local community add significantly to pupils' personal development. Older pupils develop their social and life skills through their community involvement in their post-Common Entrance programme which includes first aid and decorating a local nursery. They invite local school pupils for games activities and give concerts in the local hospice and retirement home. A diverse

range of communities are supported by the school's charity activities. These enable pupils to think of those less fortunate than themselves and to develop strong initiative and organisational skills. This was demonstrated by pupils who set up a successful concert in the community in support of local charities.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.11 The quality of teaching is excellent
- 3.12 Throughout the school excellent teaching enables pupils to be happy and confident in their learning and make good progress. Significant numbers of highly effective lessons stimulate and engage pupils. Excellent lesson planning provides challenge to pupils of all abilities. Cross curricular teaching, often including ICT is well used, such as an electronic quiz board made using skills from design technology, science and history. Occasionally, teachers miss opportunities to accelerate pupils' learning as they do not use the interactive whiteboards imaginatively. In the EYFS, all children experience stimulating play and valuable first-hand experiences. Adult-led and child-initiated activities are well balanced. Pupils with SEND and EAL are given individual support and different strategies are used to increase their understanding. For example, visual aids are provided for those who find listening to instructions difficult. In lessons, pupils are given many opportunities to work collaboratively learning through discussion, or to work quietly and with concentration when working independently. Teaching is lively and enthusiastic with exceptionally good use of time and pace. Clear learning objectives are understood by all. Pupils learn from teachers' use of perceptive questioning and wide subject knowledge which enables lessons to be related to wider social and global issues. In a very few lessons, pupils were unable to engage fully in their learning when they were not asked to explain their reasoning or teaching was too directed. High expectations are set and relationships between teachers and pupils are warm and good-humoured. Pupils say this relationship makes the majority of their lessons and work interesting and enjoyable. They receive excellent, much appreciated individual help often outside the classroom. The school has recently recognised that a few pupils who speak English fluently, but as a second language, may need extra support in reading and completing work.
- 3.13 Teachers know their pupils extremely well and direct their lessons to their different needs and learning styles. The most able are fully challenged and those who find academic work more difficult are given tasks suited to their needs enabling them to make good progress. In Years 1 and 2 and EYFS, teaching caters extremely well for a wide range of ability by recognising the different ways in which pupils learn. An excellent range of varied resources are used imaginatively in all parts of the school including specialist teaching rooms. In the EYFS teaching makes excellent use of the outdoor areas.
- 3.14 Marking of work is thorough and department heads regularly check books for consistency and thoroughness in marking. Marking gives pupils targets and ways to improve. An extremely comprehensive assessment and tracking system enables pupils' weaknesses and strengths to be identified and addressed. This is well used to help lesson planning. Pupils also use peer and self assessment which helps their understanding of a subject. In the EYFS, staff sustain existing high standards through an efficient system of review and self-evaluation which enables continuous improvement. Teaching makes excellent provision for those with statements of special educational need.

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 the pupils' personal development throughout the school is excellent.
- 4.2 The school is extremely successful in its aim to create happy, confident and successful pupils. The quality of pupils' spiritual development is excellent. While the school celebrates all faiths, a strong Christian ethos underpins school life. The school recital hall is used as a dedicated chapel and the school values its close relationship with the local Anglican and Catholic parish churches where boarders attend services. Stimulating PSHE and religious studies programmes, alongside thoughtful assemblies and daily reflection are respected by the pupils and contribute to their development. They are encouraged to have a goal and reach towards it in line with the school's motto 'Finem Respice'. As a result of the warm, caring relationships that exist between the pupils and staff, each pupil feels valued and known as an individual. A group of pupils with EAL spoke of their genuine feelings of self-knowledge gained at the school. Pupils' self-confidence enables them to cope positively with the challenges of school life. They have a genuine appreciation of the natural world. EYFS and Years 1 and 2 pupils were entranced watching chicks hatch. Boarders willingly tend their gardens and enjoy the flowers and produce grown. Pupils of all ages have an awareness of the non-material aspects of life, valuing the artwork and music which permeate the school. Pupils' sense of self-worth is enhanced in the celebration and music assemblies which recognise success and service. Pupils with disabilities are helped very sensitively by their peers.
- 4.3 Throughout the school the pupils' moral development is excellent. They have a keen sense of right and wrong and understand the need for rules in order for the school to run smoothly. They are keen to do their best for their class, and for their teams. Behaviour around the school is excellent and often regulated by the pupils themselves. They smile, hold open doors and move through the school calmly. In the EYFS, the behaviour policy results in a happy and busy atmosphere where children are guided and nurtured.
- 4.4 The pupils' social development is excellent. Staff value kindness and good manners extremely highly and lead by example. As a result, pupils exhibit these qualities themselves and their behaviour towards one another and towards adults is open, friendly and confident. Pupils have opportunities to undertake a wide range of responsibilities. Older girls become monitors and prefects and greatly value their whole school responsibilities, acting as good role models. Class responsibilities are keenly sought after, and library monitors and the recycling squad carry out their duties reliably. Older pupils have an excellent knowledge and understanding of democracy and current affairs. In the EYFS, children make a positive contribution by willingly helping others.
- 4.5 Pupils are aware that they are fortunate and are conscious of the needs of others. Extensive charity work takes place, raising money for local, national and international causes. The post Common Entrance programme for Year 8 is designed to promote future skills for living and includes a personal safety course as well as charitable work. Pupils show an excellent appreciation of their own and other cultures, gaining much from the rich diversity of well-integrated pupils at the school. Overseas pupils are encouraged to talk about their own culture and to play their instruments. This gives everyone a valuable insight into the values and beliefs of others. Throughout the school there is much support for the celebration of

festivals of all cultures. The school helps support a Nepalese school and has links with schools in rural France and New Zealand. Visits to theatres, museums and places of worship enable pupils to extend their cultural understanding. Children in the EYFS begin to develop their skills for the future. By the time they leave the school, pupils demonstrate well rounded attitudes to life and the maturity to handle the transition to their senior schools.

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

- 4.6 The quality of pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.7 Strong pastoral care is at the heart of the school's provision for its pupils. Its aim for pupils of all ages to be happy is extremely well met, contributing much to their personal development and is obvious from the demeanour of the pupils. In the EYFS, children are nurtured and extremely well cared for enabling them to feel valued and safe and to become confident and independent in their relationships and learning. Very effective individual support and guidance is given across the school through its system of class teachers and tutors, heads of divisions and pastoral leaders, as well as the pupils themselves. All records of pastoral care are thoroughly documented, tracked and analysed to give pupils the very best support for their individual needs. Both pupils and parents, including those in the EYFS, showed their appreciation of this care in replies to their questionnaires. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and positive. Frequent formal and informal meetings between staff, monitor any problems and ensure quick resolution. They also ensure all staff have excellent knowledge of pupils' needs
- 4.8 Behaviour throughout the school is excellent. Pupils act naturally with friendliness towards children and adults alike. Appropriate policies to guard against bullying and promote good behaviour are in place. Pupils feel that bullying is infrequent, but that if it does happen, staff deal with it quickly and appropriately. Older pupils help their younger peers to solve friendship problems in the playground and take their responsibilities as 'playwatch' monitors very seriously. Pupils feel that the school's system of rewards and sanctions is appropriate and are usually applied fairly and that their views, given through the School Council, are listened to and that changes have been made in response to their requests.
- 4.9 Those pupils with SEND and EAL feel that their different needs are well understood by staff. They receive extremely thorough support and guidance. An appropriate plan is in place to improve educational access for those with SEND. All pupils including those in the EYFS learn about healthy lifestyles and are encouraged to eat healthily. Both pupils and staff feel that food is appetising and varied, and they enjoy their meals showing considerate table manners. All pupils participate frequently in a wide range of physical activities. In the EYFS much learning takes place outdoors which children enjoy.

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

- 4.10 The arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 4.11 Keeping its pupils safe is at the heart of the school's policy. Safeguarding arrangements are thorough. Designated persons with special responsibility for child protection and all staff and governors, have received the necessary training which is regularly updated. In the EYFS, all policies and procedures necessary for the efficient, safe running of the setting are in place and well implemented. Good

working relationships exist between the school and local welfare agencies. Confidential records of any pupils at risk and recording of incidents are carefully kept.

- 4.12 A thorough fire policy and risk assessment is in place to cover any eventuality and particularly strong practical fire precautions are in place in boarding houses. In the EYFS, staff actively teach children about their safety and welfare. Throughout the school health and safety procedures are robust. Visits, both local and residential, are planned with safety in mind following correct procedures including strong risk assessments. The medical centre is well equipped and manned with sympathetic, trained staff who ensure that sick or injured pupils are well cared for. Accident reporting procedures are rigorous. A number of staff are trained in first aid including paediatric first aid in the EYFS.
- 4.13 The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and correctly kept.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.14 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.15 Outcomes for boarders are excellent and their personal development is well promoted by their boarding experience, in line with the school's aims to maintain an environment in which pupils are confident, happy and successful. Boarders come from a wide range of nationalities and are well supported by staff to integrate fully into the life of the school and boarding community. During the school year, different cultural and social events take place which enable pupils to celebrate their different heritages through music, food, social, cultural and sporting events. Boarders of all ages are proud of the contribution they make to the school community, and speak eloquently and enthusiastically about their boarding experience. They are proud of their houses, valuing the positive relationships they develop with their friends, including those of different cultures. Those boarders with SEND and EAL say that they are well supported and respected as individuals, and inspection findings confirm this. Established boarders happily support any new boarders as an important part of the induction process. Younger boarders integrate well with older boarders who offer them support with their reading and organisational skills. All girls keenly contribute to the boarding community as either house prefects or monitors for a variety of duties. They feel that in fulfilling these responsibilities, they are acquiring useful skills for the future. The mutual affection and respect between the boarders and the boarding staff is evident, promoting a most caring and harmonious atmosphere. Boarders have many opportunities to express their views about their lives in the boarding and school community. Positive encouragement is given to all boarders by staff to share and discuss their views through house meetings, boarding council meetings and informal discussions. All house staff teams, senior management, the medical team and the nominated independent listener have an 'open door' policy for boarders to speak to them about any subject at any time. Boarders confirm that their views, wherever practicable, have been taken into account by the school.
- 4.16 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. Members of the staff team encourage the girls to respect difference, applaud achievement and develop friendships for life and many of the boarders commented positively about this. Members of staff are watchful to ensure that homesickness does not become an issue for new boarders. Boarders and their parents are given a detailed handbook about day-to-day management of boarding, and the different ways they can keep in

contact with their family and school. The buddy system is effective in introducing new boarders to the school and ensuring that they are cared for and friendships are made. Boarders confirm they feel well cared for by their house staff teams, and they say the school is a large and happy group of young people living and working together in a friendly and supportive environment. Boarding accommodation in all three houses is warm and comfortable, with pleasant facilities which are spotlessly clean and well maintained. An annual rolling programme of refurbishment and redecoration work is in place, and the school is committed to ensuring the living accommodation and buildings are further improved and developed each year. All houses have common rooms, quiet rooms, sitting rooms, light and airy dormitories, kitchens and suitable washroom provision. All boarders have lockable storage to safeguard their possessions and laundry is dealt with efficiently and quickly within the boarding houses. The well-resourced medical centre has well-trained, professional staff, who provide excellent care for the boarders. Comprehensive medical records are kept, ensuring that all relevant staff are aware of individual needs. Specialist and cultural diets are catered for and take full account of the needs of the multicultural boarding community. During the inspection, boarders spoke highly of the plentiful, varied and nutritious food. Boarders' views and ideas for new additions to the menu are sought by the catering staff who respond positively to all reasonable requests. Drinking water and fruit are available at all times, and snacks are provided at appropriate intervals. Older boarders are able to make their own snacks. It is a vibrant community, buzzing with activity and endeavour, and girls are eager to join in the many and varied opportunities that are available during the evenings. These activities, whilst encouraging the development of numerous different skills, allow for self-directed time and freedom of choice. An excellent range of weekend activities further enhance the boarding experience and provide the girls with opportunities to develop their understanding and show appreciation of British culture or to have fun. There is ample opportunity for activities such as swimming, dog walking, gardening, team games, keep fit and tennis resulting in much healthy exercise. Boarders are able to maintain regular contact with their parents and families using individual mobile phones provided by the school as well as by email and letters. The school communicates effectively with parents, carers and guardians through emails, phone calls and regular contact.

- 4.17 The effectiveness of arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are excellent. The National Minimum Standards for safeguarding are fully met through a clear and comprehensive policy and robust safer recruitment procedures. Pupils' welfare is at the forefront of everyday practice, and staff have a thorough understanding of safeguarding responsibilities. They are strongly supported by designated people, appropriate training and excellent links with the local authority. Strong links exist between boarding and academic staff enabling any concerns to be discussed informally, and recorded when necessary. The school's anti-bullying procedures are clear, with underlying principles based upon respect, tolerance and consideration for the feelings and comfort of others. Boarders overwhelmingly reported no experience of bullying and were unanimous in their confidence that they know who to turn to if they have any concerns. They are confident that they will be listened to and supported. The policy and procedures to promote good behaviour are securely in place, with a comprehensive system of rewards and sanctions, clearly understood by boarders. The school meets all requirements in relation to fire safety. Pupils and staff are fully aware of procedures for both day and night as a result of clear information and regular drills. Meticulous risk assessments are in place for both on-

site activities and out-of-school visits, and boarders are encouraged to be safety conscious, for example, during adventure activities.

- 4.18 The effectiveness of the leadership and management is excellent in line with the school's aims. The day-to-day management is the responsibility of the boarding staff. All staff work exceptionally well together, ensuring that processes of self-evaluation and planning for future improvements are integrated successfully into the whole school development plan. Communication at all levels is excellent. A comprehensive induction programme ensures that all new staff fully understand relevant policies and procedures. An effective staff appraisal and performance management system ensures that staff are well trained in line with current boarding practice. In their responses to the parental questionnaires, parents were highly appreciative of the care and support their daughters receive, a view entirely endorsed by inspection findings. The school has responded successfully to the recommendations from the previous boarding inspection particularly those involving administration of medicines.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Governors have a wide range of relevant expertise and experience with over half having a past or present connection to the school. This enables them to provide extremely strong support and challenge to all aspects of school life and thus help the school to achieve its aims. Over time, their strong financial management has provided excellent facilities for the education of its pupils. Governors' business is carried out with efficiency. Extremely well minuted meetings of both the full governing body and its committees ensure that all business is covered appropriately. Governors are well informed about the running of the school through the detailed reports from senior leadership and heads of departments and senior managers. This also helps them identify areas for improvement or attention. Staff have opportunities to meet governors socially as well as in meetings and governors attend school functions when they are able. Staff appreciate this support. A recently appointed EYFS governor is available to discuss matters with staff and to keep other governors fully informed about the EYFS. Governors are able to observe lessons occasionally during the day and the school has plans to make this more frequent. Governors regularly review the content and success of the school development plan which includes the construction of a sports hall.
- 5.3 Governors' give careful attention to matters of welfare, health and safety and thoroughly review child protection policies and the efficiency with which they work annually. Both safeguarding and health and safety are items on all full board meetings.
- 5.4 Other policies are reviewed frequently and any matters arising dealt with efficiently. The governing body is conscientious in discharging its responsibilities for monitoring compliance throughout the school. They have ensured that all requirements from the previous inspection have been met.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management including links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent.
- 5.6 Leadership is strong and clear-sighted with an ambitious vision for the future. Together with the excellent educational direction given by the senior management team and middle management, it enables the school to achieve its aims to develop confident, happy and successful pupils with enquiring minds and the skills to flourish in the modern world. Safe recruitment procedures are robust and the central register for the appointment of staff, governors and volunteers is accurately maintained.
- 5.7 The management system is well structured and roles are clearly defined. Each of the sections of the school is strongly led and since the previous inspection, the balance of responsibilities of staff in Years 1 and 2 has been improved. Heads of departments monitor their subjects both formally and informally to ensure that pupils' excellent achievement and progress are maintained. The senior management team

carries out its responsibilities for pupils' safeguarding, welfare, health and safety highly efficiently across the school. A strong sense of commitment and direction by all management staff ensures that an excellent education is provided for all pupils. In the EYFS, the capacity for sustained improvement is excellent and is reflected in the perceptive and detailed self-evaluation that identifies priorities and development. Policies and procedures to promote children's equality and eliminate discrimination are thorough and effective. Excellent resources are used imaginatively and effectively.

- 5.8 The school development plan is extremely thorough and incorporates department plans, contributed to by all staff, providing a useful tool for planning for future challenges and opportunities. All development plans are reviewed and evaluated to monitor progress and record success.
- 5.9 The extremely hard working and approachable staff are strongly supportive of the leadership and senior management team and all work closely together. Excellent working relationships between staff, including ancillary staff, ensure that the pupils' success and well being is at the forefront of their planning. Constant communication between staff at all levels and a variety of relevant meetings ensure that all pupils' needs are met. Excellent records of pastoral and academic issues provide a reference and enable any recurring problems to be tracked.
- 5.10 Staff performance review is extremely thorough and includes teaching assistants and gap students. It is seen as a supportive process which celebrates what has been accomplished, sets targets and identifies problems. Both personal and whole school targets ensure that high standards are met and frequently reviewed. Opportunities for staff to attend training courses in and out of school further their professional development. Safeguarding and health and safety training is given regularly to all personnel throughout the school. High quality staff are recruited and safe procedures are followed. The central staff register is correctly kept. The grounds and premises are well maintained, providing a safe and stimulating environment in which pupils can play, enjoy sports and many other activities helping them to develop new skills. The efficient running of the school owes much to its ancillary staff including teaching assistants and GAP students, who are all regarded as part of the whole Godstowe community. The medical, administration, catering, cleaning and maintenance staff all work hard to contribute to the care and support of pupils. Both parents and pupils recognise this.
- 5.11 The school continues to have excellent links with parents, carers and guardians. Parents in their questionnaire were particularly happy with the education, care and support given to their children. They feel that communication with the school has improved and appreciate the comprehensive website and well produced newsletters. A small number of parents felt that their concerns were not always dealt with promptly enough. Inspection evidence showed that generally this was not the case, although in a small number of cases, the nature of some concerns may have meant that a final decision took longer to make. The majority of parents were very satisfied and felt that teachers were approachable and listened to their concerns. In the EYFS, parents welcome the open door policy and are overwhelmingly supportive of the whole school. They feel the setting works in partnership with them and much appreciate the care given to their children. The setting is exploring ways to communicate further with working parents who may not come into school on a daily basis.

- 5.12 Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the life and work of the school and their practical help is much appreciated. Some join in with the school orchestra and choir for occasional concerts. Class parent representatives meet with the school's leadership and help keep parents in their child's class in touch with school activities. The Friends of Godstowe organise well attended fund raising and social events.
- 5.13 Information provided to parents and prospective parents is comprehensive and includes all that is required and more. Parents receive two informative reports a year and also half term grades for older pupils and can attend parents' evenings. Full reports show what has been achieved, as well as ways in which to improve with grades for effort and achievement.

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