



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

KIMBOLTON SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Kimbolton School

Full Name of School	Kimbolton School		
DfE Number	873/6012		
Registered Charity Number	1098586		
Address	Kimbolton School Kimbolton Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE28 0EA		
Telephone Number	01480 860505		
Fax Number	01480 861386		
Email Address	headmaster@kimbolton.cambs.sch.uk		
Headmaster	Mr Jonathan Belbin		
Chairman of Governors	Mr Charles Paull		
Age Range	4 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	958		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (499 boys; 459girls)		
Numbers by Age	0-2	0	5-11: 267
	3-5 (EYFS):	36	11-18: 655
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	919	Capacity for flexi-boarding: 24
Number of Boarders	Total:	39	
	Full:	39	Weekly: 0
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Elizabeth Hartwell		
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection dates	18 Oct 2011 to 19 Oct 2011		
	16 Nov 2011 to 18 Nov 2011		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in September 2005.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government 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 is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

*These Standards Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

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

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) 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.

The inspection of boarding was not carried out in conjunction with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills, and the report does not contain 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 and development in general. The full Ofsted report refers to an inspection in February 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, though inspectors will 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.

CONTENTS

1	THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2	THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL	2
(a)	Main findings	2
(b)	Action points	3
	(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
	(ii) Recommendation(s) for further improvement	3
3	THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	4
(a)	The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills	4
(b)	The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c)	The contribution of teaching	6
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 welfare, health and safety	9
(c)	The quality of boarding education	10
5	THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	11
(a)	The quality of governance	11
(b)	The quality of leadership and management	11
(c)	The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians	12
6	THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE	14
(a)	The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	14
(b)	The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	14
(c)	The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	14
(d)	Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	15
	INSPECTION EVIDENCE	16

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 In the belief that everyone has talent, Kimbolton School aims to provide the opportunity for each individual to excel so that success can be celebrated and self-esteem enhanced. Within a friendly, caring environment, the school also aims to encourage its pupils to develop social responsibility and independence of thought in order to equip them for the challenges of a changing world. The school is an incorporated charitable trust with a governing body. The present headmaster has been in post since August 2002.
- 1.2 The school provides education for boys and girls, and offers boarding in the Senior School. Situated in the village of Kimbolton in Cambridgeshire, on the borders of Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire, the school's foundation dates from 1600 and was intended to "provide and conduct" a school in the parish. It remained for almost 300 years as a county grammar school. In 1950 the Senior School moved from the buildings that now house the Preparatory School into the former castle and estate of the Dukes of Manchester. The school is an ex-direct grant grammar school that became fully independent in 1976. Since the previous inspection, new facilities have included the Queen Katharine building in the Senior School, comprising classrooms and a lecture theatre, a second all-weather pitch and a dining room extension. Major refurbishment has taken place at the Preparatory School and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) has been provided with a covered outdoor area.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, 958 pupils attended the school. In the Preparatory School, a total of 303 pupils included 36 in the EYFS. Of the 655 pupils in the Senior School, 39 were full boarders.
- 1.4 Overall, pupils in the Preparatory School have an ability that is at least above the national average. In the Senior School, the ability profile is above the national average, with a notable proportion of pupils having ability that is far above average and a few of below average ability. The ability of the sixth form is also above average but with a wider spread of abilities than in the main Senior School.
- 1.5 There are 13 pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL), 11 of whom receive language support. A total of 137 pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 1 has a statement of special educational needs and 50 receive learning support from the school.
- 1.6 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used by the Preparatory School and throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the Senior School and its NC equivalence are shown in the following table.

Senior School

School	NC name
1 st form	Year 7
2 nd form	Year 8
3 rd form	Year 9
4 th form	Year 10
5 th form	Year 11
Lower VI	Year 12
Upper VI	Year 13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 These are outstandingly amenable pupils whose positive attitudes to school make a significant contribution to their work and progress. Throughout the school, high standards are being achieved and pupils demonstrate excellent levels of knowledge, understanding and skills across the curriculum. Attainment in national tests and public examinations shows that pupils make good progress over time in relation to their abilities. The academic curriculum is supportive of pupils' achievement and enables them to flourish. In the Preparatory School, an extremely wide range of extra-curricular activities effectively extends the formal curriculum. The new school week provides additional lesson time that is appreciated by staff and pupils. Access to extra-curricular activities is largely restricted to lunchtimes for those who rely on school transport. Much of the quality of achievement is attributable to high standards of teaching and thorough tracking and assessment of pupils' progress.
- 2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent and supported by the exceptionally good relationships amongst pupils, and between adults and pupils. A caring, nurturing ethos is clearly in evidence throughout the school and anti-bullying strategies ensure that any concerns are quickly brought to the surface. There is a good range of opportunities for pupils to have responsibilities, including the school forum in the Senior School and school council in the Preparatory School. Much provision contributes to pupils' personal development and their attitudes and behaviour show strong development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Throughout the school pupils are confident and articulate and express their opinions clearly. They are proud, and feel safe and secure. Through the highly effective pastoral system, they know they are cared for and well looked after.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is good. Governors have clear and appropriate views about their role and display a thoughtful and realistic analysis of the school's situation that is reflected in the school's development plan. They recognise their legal responsibilities and carry them out effectively. Excellent senior leadership and management provide clear educational direction. A robust approach in response to the recommendations of the previous report has ensured that middle managers have a clear understanding of their role and provide good management and oversight of their areas of responsibility. The school works hard to maintain remarkably good links with its parent body. Both parents and pupils show great confidence in the school and what it has to offer, and this was confirmed by inspection findings.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.
- 2.5 In order to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school was required to:
- ensure that an additional member of staff is qualified in paediatric first aid.
- 2.6 At the time of the final team visit, the school had rectified the above shortcoming, as noted in the text of the report.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.7 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that the excellent teaching is extended across the school as a whole, through the sharing of good practice.
 2. Enable all pupils to have access to extra-curricular activities during the course of some, or all, of the school's working days and monitor the level of pupils' participation.
 3. Provide opportunities in the EYFS for staff to demonstrate curriculum areas to parents.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills

- 3.1 Throughout the school high standards are being achieved. In the Preparatory School, pupils' achievement is consistently excellent and in the Senior School, pupils' achievement is good with many outstanding features. The school's aim to encourage pupils to fulfil their potential is met.
- 3.2 Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate excellent levels of knowledge, understanding and skills across the curriculum. In the Preparatory School, they are very well grounded in the basics of reading, writing and numeracy. Skills of listening, comprehension, writing, reasoning and physical activity are developed most effectively. This lays the foundation for the pupils' considerable achievement across the same areas in the Senior School, where, for example, high standards are achieved in listening, writing and reading, supported by a focus on the development of a culture of reading for pleasure. In the Preparatory School, and to some extent in the Senior School, excellent numerical skills are used to very good effect in a range of subjects including mathematics. Across the school, pupils are very articulate. They can talk confidently about their understanding and knowledge of subjects and are able to express their opinions convincingly, with appropriate maturity of expression, such as effectively arguing a case and good use of analytical powers by more senior pupils.
- 3.3 Aesthetic and creative development is in evidence throughout the school. In both the Preparatory School and the Senior School, pupils achieve a high quality and enjoyment of singing and this is very evident in assemblies and the remarkably good school choirs. Further creativity is demonstrated in the many displays around the school, where pupils' achievements are celebrated. In the Preparatory School, pupils are able to use their good skills of information and communication technology (ICT) in word processing, spreadsheets and graphic packages, all of which are used to enhance their work in a wide variety of subjects. There are excellent opportunities for pupils of all ages to use their generally very good physical skills in a variety of sporting activities.
- 3.4 Pupils have enjoyed considerable success in national and regional competitions, such as the UK Maths Challenge in the Preparatory School and the biology Olympiad in the Senior School. The school was recently placed second in the UK in the European Youth Parliament competition. Many have achieved prominence in representative school teams or as individuals in activities as varied as canoeing, clay pigeon shooting and national conker tournaments in the Senior School, and becoming the national under-eleven relay champions and county seven-a-side winners at hockey. An excellent music and choral tradition has resulted in substantial numbers of pupils being successful in music examinations and the award of two university choral scholarships in 2010.
- 3.5 At the end of Year 6, the great majority of pupils move into the Senior School. Each year, two or three pupils gain scholarships. At the end of Year 13, practically all pupils successfully move on to a university course and many achieve entry to that of their first choice.
- 3.6 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2008 to 2010. These are the most recent years for which comparative statistics are available. Results in

national tests at the age of 11 in 2008 to 2009 were far above the national average for maintained primary schools. These results, confirmed by standardised measures of progress and the quality of pupils' work, are good in relation to the pupils' abilities, indicating that their progress to Year 6 is above average for pupils of similar abilities. Those pupils who are identified as requiring extra help make comparable progress, through individual assistance from teachers and learning support.

- 3.7 GCSE results have been good in relation to the national average for maintained schools and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. Just under 60% of all grades achieved were A* or A. Results in those subjects taken at International GCSE have been higher than British and world-wide averages. At A level, results have been above the national average for maintained schools and those in 2010 were above the average for maintained selective schools. This attainment indicates that the pupils' progress in Years 7 to 11 and through the sixth form is above the average for pupils of similar ability, confirmed by standardised measures of progress.
- 3.8 Throughout the school, pupils have an excellent attitude to their work. They are attentive and keen to take part, and contribute to discussion. They concentrate well and apply themselves to the task in hand. They work very well individually and with others, presenting their work effectively. They use their skills and knowledge well to respond to their teachers' high expectations. Excellent relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and teachers are highly conducive to effective teaching and learning. Pupils are invariably courteous and polite, not only in the classroom but also around the school. They are confident and enthusiastic, and many noted how much they enjoy their experience of learning, both in and out of the classroom.

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

- 3.9 In the Preparatory School, the curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent. It contributes strongly to the pupils' success and supports the school's aim to provide the opportunity for each individual to excel so that success can be celebrated and self-esteem enhanced. The well-planned curriculum caters for different talents, interests, learning styles, strengths and abilities, and meets the needs of all pupils very well.
- 3.10 The broad range of subjects covers all areas of learning, and provision for those with particular needs, including those with SEND, is well organised and supported by individual learning plans and specialist help. Opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills are plentiful and music, drama and sport provide excellent opportunities to support the pupils' personal development. Increased specialist teaching and setting in mathematics from Year 2 provide the opportunity for work to be planned appropriately to suit all ability levels and are most effective in helping pupils to achieve high standards. The curriculum prepares all pupils exceptionally well for the next stage of their education.
- 3.11 The curriculum is enhanced by an extremely wide range of extra-curricular activities, including many sporting, musical and creative options and there is an extremely high level of pupil participation from Year 1 upwards. In addition, a number of external visits, whether locally or further afield, add significantly to the taught curriculum. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 experience residential trips in this country, whilst pupils in Year 6 may opt to go on the annual ski trip to Italy where they are given the opportunity to learn new skills and gain greater independence.

- 3.12 In the Senior School, the overall quality of the curriculum is good. It covers the main areas of learning well, going beyond the provision of the National Curriculum for all age groups, and successfully meets the school's aims.
- 3.13 The new structure of the working week is in its first term and provides the benefit of additional lesson time. Staff and pupils feel that the longer lessons are more productive. Nevertheless, the curriculum has had to be compromised in parts to fit the smaller total number of lessons. As a result, provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is shared with core subjects up to Year 11. The setting of subjects pays good attention to the needs of pupils of differing abilities. In Years 10 and 11, an afternoon is devoted to the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) or the Community Service Unit (CSU) and provides a valuable addition to the curriculum that takes pupils beyond academic requirements and emphasises more their personal development. In the sixth form, pupils can remain in the CCF or CSU, or usefully undertake a range of option courses in subjects such as debating and astronomy.
- 3.14 The curriculum is supported by a range of extra-curricular activities that are presently centred on sport and music, with drama emerging as a third area of focus. Those day pupils who live a distance from the school, and particularly those reliant on school transport, are often unable to attend after-school activities. As a consequence their access to the extra-curricular programme is restricted to lunchtimes and pupils reported that these scheduled activities result in a rushed lunch. Many of the other activities on offer include opportunities for pupils to catch up with, or work on, assignments for public examinations. During the inspection, attendance at all extra-curricular activities involved small numbers but monitoring was in the process of being implemented to ensure that all pupils have opportunities to flourish in a wide variety of such interests, in line with the aim of the school.
- 3.15 The programme of out-of-school visits is an undoubted strength of the school. There are ample opportunities for pupils to extend their horizons by participating in some of these trips, such as visits to China and Russia. Ski holidays, geography field trips, expeditions within The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, sporting tours and CCF camps demonstrate the variety on offer. Pupils appreciate this wide range of opportunities and the programme is co-ordinated to prevent too many demands being placed on pupils or their parents.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.16 Throughout the school the high, mainly excellent, quality of the teaching promotes pupils' progress well and fully supports the aims of the school to provide the opportunity for each individual to excel, so that success can be celebrated and self-esteem enhanced.
- 3.17 From the earliest stages and throughout the school, excellent relationships between pupils and teachers, and amongst pupils, enables pupils to acquire new knowledge, make progress commensurate with their ability, increase their understanding and develop highly effective skills. Classroom management is outstanding, with a good understanding between teacher and pupils, and an atmosphere that is co-operative and supportive. The teaching of pupils with SEND or EAL is already good and further improvements in provision are planned, following the recent appointment of a new special educational needs co-ordinator. The teaching environment around the school is fostered by many excellent wall displays that show high quality and very successful examples of the pupils' work and celebrate achievement.

- 3.18 In the Preparatory School, opportunities for promoting individual thinking and learning, and the provision of high levels of challenge, common to most teaching, are strengths of the excellent contribution that is made to pupils' learning. Well-planned lessons reflect the teachers' high expectations. Conducted at a brisk pace, the teaching includes a variety of strategies and the use of well-focused, open-ended questions, leading to exceptionally well-articulated, confident responses. Pupils report that they find their lessons challenging, interesting and enjoyable. Good use is made of time, and a variety of resources captures the pupils' interest, for example the use of recording equipment in music and English. Much good use is made of ICT in lessons and easy movement of equipment allows pupils to use computers freely. Well-qualified and knowledgeable staff foster in the pupils a keen interest and a desire to learn.
- 3.19 The many instances of outstanding teaching observed in the Senior School were marked by the high quality of the teachers' subject knowledge, well-structured lessons, ingenuity in the way topics were pursued and use of an exciting range of well-targeted and stimulating resources, all of which facilitated the pupils' rapid progress or consolidated their learning. Generally, there is very good utilisation of teaching time to reflect the new longer lesson length, with the majority of teaching showing evidence of good planning. In Years 10 and 11, there was some evidence that teaching is rather more limited in its delivery of the GCSE specifications, with less evidence of the longer lesson being put to effective use in delivering the exciting, stimulating and well-structured lessons observed in earlier years and in the sixth form. Although there is not an integrated approach to use of ICT in the classroom, some remarkable and confident examples were observed.
- 3.20 Marking in the Preparatory School is highly constructive and, while more variable in the Senior School, is well understood by pupils. Since the previous inspection, effective and robust systems have been put in place for the assessment and recording of pupils' progress. Monitoring of this progress is achieved through a particularly well-considered, and widely understood, approach to target setting, departmental review and regular performance management. All the available data, including test and public examination performance, is well used to inform planning.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The personal development of pupils is excellent and entirely in accordance with the stated aims of the school. Pupils' outstandingly well-developed personal qualities are strongly promoted through the wide range of opportunities offered, including PSHE. Pupils are friendly, outgoing and self-confident. Visitors are made most welcome and the pupils' first concern is to show respect and courtesy in this.
- 4.2 Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. They are comfortable with who they are and with their place in the school community. Throughout the school, the obvious confidence and self-assuredness of the pupils are achieved entirely without precociousness. Pupils behave in a responsible and thoughtful way and take a pride in their achievements. Through the wide and varied range of visits and guest speakers, pupils develop an awareness of many significant issues affecting their spiritual development, which is also promoted through the high quality of their uplifting experience of music and art, and opportunity for reflection in assemblies.
- 4.3 The pupils behave very maturely for their age. They display a keen knowledge of right and wrong and an overt sense of fair play, which is fostered through many lessons and other activities, and shows in the way they conduct themselves and feel a part of the school community. In tutorial classes and house assemblies, pupils demonstrated excellent awareness of issues concerning bullying and the procedures for dealing with difficulties pupils may have. Sixth-form pupils were observed supporting Year 8 pupils on the same topic. As they progress through the school, and develop in maturity, pupils are able to express their clearly held views on ethical and moral issues in debate and discussion. The quality of their behaviour, consideration of each other and respect for their teachers are of a very high standard.
- 4.4 Throughout the school, pupils develop very good social skills and strong leadership qualities. Pupils actively accept responsibility and are effective in the many roles they carry out. Year 6 pupils operate a rota for assisting in the play area for younger children, and pupils from the Senior School's CSU work regularly with classes in the Preparatory School in various roles, ranging from assisting the teaching assistant to games coaching. Gown prefects provide good role models for other pupils and have clear awareness of their contribution to the social life of the school. Pupils learn to express their views and have their voice heard through the school forum in the Senior School and the school council in the Preparatory School. Contributions to the local community have been effected through a very well-developed CSU programme, including working in local institutions such as elderly care homes.
- 4.5 Pupils' cultural awareness is well developed. They display a welcoming approach towards those from different backgrounds, both within peer groups and in their meetings with visitors from other cultures and faiths. A strong emphasis is placed on tolerance of others, and pupils have an understanding of their cultural heritage and of public institutions through literature, art and music. They learn about other cultures in subjects such as PSHE, geography, history and music. Religious studies lessons about alternative faiths and traditions also promote pupils' appreciation of cultural diversity, and the school goes to some length to ensure opportunities for the sharing of cultural beliefs and practices.

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

- 4.6 Pastoral care is exemplary throughout and fulfils the school's aim of creating an environment in which pupils are happy, secure, confident and valued. Pastoral arrangements are highly effective in promoting pupils' personal development and academic achievement, and they are supported by excellent arrangements to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety. Pupils' self-confidence in a wide range of activities is fostered by praise and encouragement. Support from the chaplaincy, counselling and medical staff provides an additional, extremely valuable, resource for pupils.
- 4.7 The comprehensive pastoral system actively promotes the support and encouragement of pupils. Tutors and subject and class teachers provide outstanding support for pupils under the guidance of senior staff. Regular pastoral meetings ensure that the progress of each pupil is carefully monitored. The very well-established house system serves pupils well. The transition from the Preparatory School into the Senior School is strongly supported, as pupils join a lower house which is exclusively for those in Years 7 and 8 before moving into the senior houses in Year 9. All pupils appreciate the reward systems, including merits and commendations.
- 4.8 Teachers willingly offer pupils extra help outside lessons, and the positive relationships between staff and pupils promote a culture of mutual respect that the pupils value. Records of any pastoral concerns are kept meticulously so that staff can identify emerging patterns of behaviour that may need to be addressed. Systems for promoting good behaviour have been extremely effective.
- 4.9 The school has well-formulated and accessible policies to guard against bullying. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they believe that any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. Instances of pupils requiring behavioural support are rare.
- 4.10 Safeguarding and health and safety policies are comprehensive and well implemented. Child protection officers are designated for each of the school sites, and all staff receive regular child protection training appropriate to their role. Fire precautions are appropriate and the policy regarding access for those with disabilities fully meets requirements. The on-site medical centre provides 24-hour care for pupils and many staff are trained in first aid, now including appropriate training in paediatric first aid in the EYFS. Admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained and stored.
- 4.11 Physical exercise and healthy eating habits are encouraged through taught sports and the extra-curricular sports programme, and healthy eating is also promoted through the PSHE programme. Mealtimes are enhanced by the new dining area and a selection of nutritious, good quality food is provided.

4.(c) The quality of boarding education

- 4.12 The quality of boarding is outstanding, and the boarding experience is valued not only by the full boarders but by a significant number of day pupils who take advantage of the flexi-boarding option.
- 4.13 Relationships in both boarding houses are excellent amongst boarders, and with day pupils and boarding staff. The pupils are proud of their community and appreciate the high standard of care and support that they receive. During weekday evenings, boarders undertake their prep in a supportive environment that supports their school work and encourages them to complete their work thoroughly. Trips out of school are organised regularly at weekends; most recent Sunday outings have included visits for shopping and to the cinema, a ten-pin bowling alley and a quad-biking centre.
- 4.14 The school has responded fully to the recommendations of the most recent inspection of boarding, undertaken by Ofsted in February 2011. The school nurses now have access to a named doctor for professional guidance and consultation, and all medication is kept securely. Furniture in the communal areas is in a sound condition. Boarders have access to reasonable facilities for preparing food in addition to main meals.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good and provides effective oversight of the school, in line with its aims, supporting the pupils' achievement and personal development. Led astutely, and benefiting from the chairman's experience, the governing body has clear and appropriate views about the role of governors and their relationship with senior management. They display a thoughtful and realistic analysis of the school's situation that is reflected in the school's development plan. Careful financial management has enabled development of new buildings, refurbishment of others, and careful maintenance throughout. Future developments are carefully planned and costed. Governors recognise their responsibilities for educational standards, and investment in staff, accommodation and resources, operating through a range of appropriate committees, and ensure that policies are effective and regularly reviewed, including in the areas of child protection, welfare, health and safety.
- 5.2 The governors have good insight into the working of the school through the headmaster's reports and presentations by heads of department, and occasional visits to departments. They are particularly well prepared for their role through a comprehensive initiation course on appointment and regular training sessions either in the school or with governors from other schools. Each year a group of governors visits another school to discuss matters of mutual interest, and the operation of the governing body is regularly reviewed. Governors' support provides stimulation for growth and improvement and another source of advice which individual teachers can consult. The interested and active governing body ensures effective coverage of school activity through attendance at a wide range of school events.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.3 Throughout the school, the leadership and management are highly effective in providing clear educational direction. Strong, caring leadership at senior management level is excellent and ensures that the school's aims are fulfilled. This leadership accounts for the high quality of the pupils' education and achievements, and the excellence of their personal development.
- 5.4 The comprehensive policies are regularly reviewed, updated and implemented. Since the previous inspection, under the direction of the senior management team, the school has established clear and very extensive systems to assess the pupils' achievement and progress. The data is used very effectively to monitor attainment and identify individual needs and areas of the curriculum that may need revision or modification. The attention given to the tracking of pastoral care is extremely robust and issues pertaining to any pupil are quickly identified and acted upon. Subject co-ordinators and heads of department now have a well-defined role and share the responsibility of monitoring progress with the senior management team.
- 5.5 The collegiate style of leadership is highly effective in achieving change where it is deemed necessary. At the time of the inspection, significant changes in the arrangements of the school week had involved consultation with all members of the school community including governors, teachers, parents and pupils.
- 5.6 Since the previous inspection, the school has responded well to recommendations. In the Preparatory School, subject co-ordinators now have a clear job description

and there are detailed arrangements for effective planning, monitoring and observation of lessons. In the Senior School, systems have been established that require middle managers to take full responsibility for running their departments, setting priorities and ensuring that they are achieved. Comprehensive arrangements and supportive documentation ensure that the roles and responsibilities of academic and pastoral heads are clearly identified and monitored at senior level. Departmental reviews and self-evaluation are thorough and encourage reflection by teachers in each department.

- 5.7 The continuous professional development scheme provides all teachers with an opportunity to reflect on their practice and continue to develop their skills to the benefit of all pupils. Management at all levels is extremely supportive of the hard-working and dedicated staff and is successful in securing, supporting and motivating staff of high calibre. A number of senior staff fulfil more than one leadership role. All staff are fully trained for their roles in meeting the needs of all pupils, and in safeguarding, welfare, and health and safety, for which the associated training is robust. The school has thorough arrangements for checking the suitability of staff and governors.

5.(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians

- 5.8 The quality of links with parents is outstanding. In pre-inspection questionnaires and discussion, parents showed a high level of satisfaction with almost all aspects of the school's provision. Inspection findings concurred with the parents' views.
- 5.9 The school encourages a high degree of parental involvement and is very successful in maintaining this amongst the parents of older pupils as they move through the school. There are regular parents' evenings held throughout the school year and reporting to parents is detailed and comprehensive. The parents are viewed as partners in their children's education.
- 5.10 Parental involvement in the life of the school outside the classroom is strong. Parents join the Kimbolton School Society which provides social opportunities and raises funds that benefit both school pupils and outside charities. Communication with parents is strong. In response to the questionnaires, they particularly praised email and other electronic systems which, they feel, keep them totally up-to-date with events and changes to routine. Reception teachers also conduct home or nursery visits and this engages parents from the very outset. Parents have assisted in producing a very useful guide, which is now issued to all parents of new pupils on joining the school. Much care and attention are given to include parents in the process of their children's move from the Preparatory School to the Senior School, and also for other pupils who join the school in Year 7. For example, a pastoral evening for parents whose children are new to Year 7 takes place two weeks into the new term, and is an opportunity for parents to meet with key staff who will be looking after their children, and to ask any questions they may have about the transfer to the Senior School.
- 5.11 A comprehensive and very successful system of assessment and reporting is valued by the parents, who feel well informed about their children's progress and welfare. Some dissatisfaction about the level and extent of provision for pupils with SEND emerged through the parents' questionnaire, but the appointment of a new member of staff to co-ordinate this area of work has already started to address these concerns.

- 5.12 Both the head of the Preparatory School and the headmaster operate an 'open door' policy that makes the leadership of the school very accessible to parents.

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

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

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

- 6.1 The overall effectiveness of the EYFS is outstanding. Conscientious and dedicated staff ensure that children's needs are well met within a happy and caring environment where they thrive and flourish. Staff continuously and effectively evaluate their provision and identify targets for improvement. The recommendations made at the previous inspection have been successfully addressed.

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

- 6.2 Leadership and management are good, with outstanding features. Well-qualified, committed staff nurture the children's needs in a safe, secure and organised environment. Arrangements have been made to remedy a shortcoming in training in paediatric first aid to further strengthen the safety and well-being of children. Meticulous policies and procedures promote equality and eliminate discrimination. Continuous and thorough assessment of risk ensures that children are safe. Excellent teamwork, regular reflective meetings, a helpful appraisal system and use of staff's expertise result in good evaluative practice and identify targets for further training. There is a very clear vision for future developments. Links with the local authority are good. Resources, including training opportunities, are extremely well used to meet the needs of children. Procedures are in place to enable a smooth transition between classes. Links with parents are good and they are very happy with the education that their children are receiving. Although they are given written curriculum information, there is no opportunity for staff to demonstrate to parents how they use phonics to further reading skills. Reports are thorough and informative although they do not consistently identify individual targets.

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

- 6.3 The quality of the provision is outstanding. A welcoming and happy atmosphere both indoors and outside provides children with stimulating experiences in every area of learning. Classroom displays are colourful and of high quality. Staff have an excellent understanding of their children's needs and interests and provide well for individuals. Teaching always challenges children's thinking. Planning and assessment are excellent. A wide range of indoor and outdoor resources is easily accessible to children. The curriculum is well balanced with many opportunities for adult-led and child-initiated learning. The behaviour policy is rigorously implemented, leading to a calm and happy atmosphere, where the weekly target is reinforced throughout the day. Good work and positive behaviour are celebrated. The health and welfare of the children are promoted at all times.

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

- 6.4 Outcomes for children are outstanding. They are enthusiastic, happy and independent learners who progress well in relation to their starting points and begin to develop skills for the future. Children are confident and articulate. They love books, turning pages carefully and listening to each other when sharing a book. They make decisions when choosing their own activities and their lunch. They take turns when creating a picture on a computer program together and demonstrate competent use of icons and the mouse. Children concentrate well. They can order and recognise numbers to 20 and, using their phonic knowledge, they can build up small words such as 'pig' and 'hat'. By the end of the year they can write sentences, independently making a good attempt to spell words accurately, and they can add numbers beyond 20. At the end of activities they tidy up carefully and help each other to put things away. Children are kind friends to one another. They understand about healthy eating and maintaining good hygiene. Their knowledge of the wider world is clearly demonstrated through their role play, and enhanced by visitors to school and visits out. Snack times and lunchtimes demonstrate their growing independence and good manners. Behaviour is exemplary because children know what is expected of them.

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 chairman 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 Beryl Fawcett	Reporting Inspector
Mr Geoff Lee-Gallon	Assistant Reporting Inspector Former Head, IAPS school
Mr Magnus Bashaarat	Deputy Head, HMC school
Mr Philip Capes	Head Master, HMC school
Mr James Fowler	Head Master, HMC school
Mr Peter Grant	Head of Department, HMC school
Mrs Niki Gan	Head, IAPS school
Mr Kerry Lord	Deputy Head, IAPS school
Mr Julian Thould	Head Master, HMC school
Mrs Bridget Forrest	Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector