



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

AYSGARTH SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

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Aysgarth School

Full Name of School	Aysgarth School
DfE Number	815/6009
Registered Charity Number	529538
Address	Aysgarth School Newton-le-Willows Bedale North Yorkshire DL8 1TF
Telephone Number	01677 450 240
Fax Number	01677 450 736
Email Address	enquiries@aysgarthschool.co.uk
Headmaster	Mr Anthony Goddard
Chairman of Governors	Mr Mark Stroyan
Age Range	3 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	224
Gender of Pupils	Mixed 3 to 8; boys 8 to 13
Numbers by Age	0-3 (EYFS): 0 5-8: 40 3-5 (EYFS): 33 8-13: 151
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 95
Number of Boarders	Total: 129 Full: 106 Weekly: 23
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Gill Shaw
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	20 November 2012 to 23 November 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 January 2010.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

Ofsted monitors the work of independent inspectorates, including a sample of inspections, and you can find the latest evaluation of the work of ISI on the Ofsted website.

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

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. Until September 2011, Boarding inspections were carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgements.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the

beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'satisfactory' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with 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 the boarding house and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

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Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector, Head of Junior Department,
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Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Aysgarth was founded in 1877 as a boarding preparatory school for boys from the age of eight to thirteen. It is still predominantly boarding and retains the Christian values of its foundation. In 1890, the school moved to purpose-built premises, now complemented by modern facilities, set in a large country estate in North Yorkshire. The school chapel is at the centre of the school. The extensive grounds give ample space for sports, games and countryside activities. The pre-preparatory school, Oak House, opened in 1993 as a day school for boys and girls from the age of three to eight. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is set within the pre-preparatory school. The school is an educational charitable trust whose trustees form the board of governors.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide an enjoyable, inspiring and relevant education, with a wide range of opportunities, in order to give its pupils the best all-round preparation for their future success at major public schools and beyond. It aims to create a happy, caring environment for its pre-preparatory school pupils, and a happy, safe and supportive environment for its boarders, and to encourage the development of every child across the ability range.
- 1.3 There are 224 pupils on roll; 73 in the pre-preparatory school, including 33 in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and 151 in the preparatory school. A total of 129 boys board, of whom 23 are weekly boarders. At the end of Year 3, girls transfer to other schools. Boys move up to the preparatory school where they work towards Common Entrance examinations in Year 8.
- 1.4 No pupil has a statement of special educational needs and nine have English as an additional language (EAL), but do not require additional language tuition. The school has identified 46 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 35 of whom receive specialist learning support from the school. The school does not set academic tests on entry, although there is an assessment procedure after a place has been offered. The school's ability profile is above the national average; a wide spread of abilities is represented.
- 1.5 The vast majority of pupils are British, with few from minority ethnic groups. Annually, a small number of international boarders from Europe or further afield is welcomed into the school for a year. The families of day pupils are generally within a range of 15 miles from the school, and most have business, professional or armed services backgrounds, as do the parents of boarders, whose homes are mostly in the north of England or Scotland.
- 1.6 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
Reception	Reception

Pre-preparatory School

School	NC name
Class 1	Year 1
Class 2	Year 2
Class 3	Year 3

Preparatory School

School	NC name
Form 1	Year 4
Form 2	Year 5
Form 3	Year 6
Form 4	Year 7
Form 5	Year 8

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent. Pupils of all ages and a wide range of abilities enjoy an inspiring and relevant education in complete fulfilment of the school's principal aim. Their achievement is reflected in the consistent success of the pupils in obtaining places at their chosen schools, many of which have a highly competitive entry. Children in the EYFS make excellent progress which continues as they proceed through the school. From Year 1 onwards, pupils develop high levels of skills, understanding and knowledge, relative to their ages, in their academic, technological and creative subjects, and also in sports and games, where their success is outstanding. They have an enthusiasm for learning, and are attentive and engaged in class and on the games field. Pupils benefit from excellent teaching by dedicated and very well qualified staff who provide lessons that meet their needs very well. Pupils respond with enjoyment to the challenge and high expectations of their teachers.
- 2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent across the school; they are secure in the care and attention of their teachers and boarding staff. The very special ethos of full-boarding permeates the entire school and all pupils benefit from the happy family atmosphere created by those involved in the care of the boarders. There is an almost tangible atmosphere of warmth and consideration for others. Pastoral care is excellent throughout, as is the quality of the boarding to which so many staff generously dedicate their time. Pupils are set an excellent example by the adults who teach and guide them, and they grow up with a natural courtesy and a quiet confidence. In some aspects, they are mature beyond their years, happy to initiate and engage in conversation and discussions, while in their leisure time they are experiencing the space, freedom, richness and joy of a country childhood. They are encouraged to appreciate and aspire to excellence.
- 2.3 The governance, leadership and management are excellent. The governing body works closely with the senior management team to ensure that the best possible provision is made for the children in the EYFS, the girls and boys in the pre-preparatory school, and the boarders and day boys in the preparatory school. All aspects of welfare, health and safety are given meticulous attention, and the members of the senior management team, re-organised and strengthened since the previous inspection, are immensely committed and capable. Recommendations from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

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

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Develop lesson observation within and across subjects at all levels of the school, drawing on existing good practice and including the overview of EYFS practice and planning.
2. Ensure that the full individual development review process, including formal observation of teaching, is introduced for staff in the pre-preparatory school, including the EYFS.

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 extremely successful in fulfilling its principal aim of providing an enjoyable, inspiring and relevant education. It accomplishes this with a wide-ranging intake profile because of the focused encouragement and support which all pupils receive. Pupils throughout the school, from the EYFS onwards, receive an excellent education that develops their knowledge, understanding and skills in curricular and extra-curricular activities to a high degree. Pupils are extremely articulate from an early age; they become attentive and focused listeners, very competent in reading and writing. A particular strength is that boys are enthusiastic about literacy, which reflects the enthusiasm of their teachers. Pupils' proficiency in mathematics and science, and in thinking logically and creatively, warrants note as does their ability to apply the knowledge they have gained to their academic studies, their use of information and communication technology (ICT), their aesthetic appreciation and creativity, and their physical activity. The comprehensive and varied extra-curricular activities programme, which ranges from ballet in Reception to mechanics in the preparatory school, is exemplary, as is the high quality of achievement across the range. Pupils' also achieve notable success in inter-schools' sport, their fine musicianship, the quality of their art and their skill in design and technology. Activities are expertly run by knowledgeable staff, which leads to lively participation and first-class achievement by pupils.
- 3.3 In the EYFS, children achieve well. The youngest are introduced to books and counting using songs and rhymes. Older children use phonics successfully to sound out simple words as they acquire early reading and writing skills. They recognise and use shapes, patterns and count within ten. By the end of Reception, most achieve the Early Learning Goals, with many working beyond this. They write simple sentences with punctuation, and independently use computer skills to write and illustrate books. In the pre-preparatory school, girls are well prepared for their transfer to Year 4 in other schools, while boys are well equipped to move up to the preparatory school. In the preparatory school, pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but on the evidence available, is judged to be high in relation to national age-related expectations. Senior pupils are prepared very thoroughly for Common Entrance examinations; all gain places at the age of 13 into their first choice of senior school, including many of the most academically selective. A significant number of scholarships are won at this age; some for academic excellence, others for sport, art and music. The quality of music is of a very high standard, where a high percentage gain merits or distinctions in instrumental examinations.
- 3.4 Their level of attainment as judged indicates that pupils of all ages, including those in the EYFS, make a high rate of progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. This is also indicated by the school's statistical evidence. As recommended in the previous inspection report, the school has successfully implemented secure systems for measuring ability and evaluating progress which aid target setting, and are now providing sufficient pertinent data to allow staff to make informed professional judgements. The school makes very good use of this performance data to target provision for individuals. As a result, all pupils within a wide ability range, including the able, gifted and talented, and those with SEND, make appropriately high progress.

3.5 Pupils have excellent attitudes to work, gaining personal and collective satisfaction from their successes. From the EYFS onwards, they are highly motivated, responding enthusiastically, particularly when actively involved in a lesson. In general, they settle quickly to their work and concentrate hard on the tasks they are given. Within the context of a demanding school day, pupils' enjoyment of their curricular and extra-curricular activities is obvious, as is their pride in their achievement.

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

3.6 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.

3.7 The curriculum has considerable breadth within the extended school day and fulfils the school's aim to challenge every pupil to make the most of their abilities. Wide-ranging non-curricular opportunities are also available which support Aysgarth's aspiration to provide an intensity of activity and ambition, and stimulate pupils to be involved and successful.

3.8 The curriculum is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs. The requisite areas of learning and subjects are effectively covered in each part of the school, with appropriate amounts of time allocated. In the EYFS, provision to meet the needs of the range of children is excellent. The educational programmes include outdoor learning and, in Reception, an introduction to French. They help all children to reach expected levels of attainment, so that all children develop well. For older pupils, French continues throughout the school, drama is included for Years 4 and 5, and Latin from Year 5. A special programme has been introduced for potential scholars which includes a Greek activity. Provision for pupils with SEND is a strength of the school, with careful analysis of individual needs and specialist support increasingly provided within the classroom. Classes in the preparatory school are sometimes arranged according to ability, thus encouraging higher achievers to progress more quickly, and enjoy greater challenge.

3.9 Provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent. In the preparatory school, games are timetabled for each afternoon and, such is the enthusiasm, a large number of teams are fielded for matches, while the less athletically gifted have many opportunities outside the main school sports. Participation in major drama productions and concerts for preparatory school pupils and less formal occasions for girls and boys in the pre-preparatory school enable many to gain confidence from performing in public. On Sundays, there is an enjoyable range of activities including outings, sports, creative and musical hobbies, which are much appreciated, according to the boys' replies in their pre-inspection questionnaire.

3.10 The educational experience of pupils is enhanced each year by visiting speakers and trips, often related to their academic studies, to places of interest. In addition, older pupils undertake residential visits, such as the annual French trip, the combined classics and history trip to Rome, and tours such as the recent rugby visit to Edinburgh. Links with the local community have been strengthened since the previous inspection.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

3.11 The contribution of teaching is excellent overall.

3.12 Teaching is highly effective in promoting pupils' progress and strongly supports the aims of the school. Teachers' subject knowledge is of a high standard, and lessons

are very well planned. The pupils' many successes inside and outside the classroom owe much to the excellent relationships they enjoy with their teachers. Discussions with pupils, samples of their written work, lesson observations and questionnaire replies together show that pupils develop a deep-seated love of learning.

- 3.13 In the EYFS, staff plan interesting activities to promote children's enthusiasm to explore and investigate, such as bulb planting, measuring and comparing their teddy bears or building dens in the excellent woodland learning environment. In general, teaching enables children of all abilities, including those with SEND and the gifted and talented, to learn and develop their talents successfully.
- 3.14 Across the school, teachers know their pupils well and understand the very wide range of needs associated with the school's intake profile. This was illustrated in excellent teaching in lessons where pupils from different sets had been combined: pupils of different abilities were set appropriately varied tasks and their understanding was probed by targeted questioning.
- 3.15 In the substantial majority of lessons, a suitable range of teaching methods is employed and a purposeful atmosphere is created which fosters interest and enthusiasm. Across the school, teachers manage time well and pupils' attention is held throughout their lessons. Teachers' management of behaviour is very effective and pupils behave co-operatively and well. Their positive attitude and eagerness for knowledge ensures their successful learning, even on the few occasions when the pace of a lesson is slow, or when there are too many worksheets. The pupils' wider enthusiasm for learning minimises the impact this might have had.
- 3.16 Teachers use the excellent facilities and learning resources well, as when electronic whiteboards are used in a genuinely interactive fashion. In the bright and attractive EYFS area, a good range of resources supports a balance of both child-initiated and adult-led tasks, so that children are able to respond well to the high expectations of staff and learn effectively. Although the use of ICT was not widespread at this stage of the term, there were examples of its highly effective use in science, mathematics and French, and also in support situations.
- 3.17 All work for older pupils is marked and comments made are positive and encouraging. On the whole, marking offers pupils clear written guidance as to how to improve the quality of their work and sets appropriate additional targets for them. Pupils are also given oral feedback and, during discussions, they indicated that they appreciated the marking of their work.
- 3.18 Following the recommendations in the previous report, assessment has been improved, and now contributes significantly to the progress of all pupils. Assessment data is recorded on the central database to permit the monitoring of pupils' progress in all subjects. Information about performance is analysed well, and pupils have clear targets for improvement. Pupils said in discussion that they find targets helpful. In the EYFS, high standards of planning and regular, detailed assessments evaluate the progress of each child and guide staff as they plan the next steps for each child's learning, including those with SEND. In Reception, the more able are suitably challenged with extended tasks.
- 3.19 Following a recommendation in the previous report, staff, through in-service training and support from the skills development department, are successfully applying teaching strategies that support pupils with learning difficulties.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 Throughout the school, including the EYFS, a major emphasis is placed on developing the personal qualities of pupils; there are high expectations of them in terms of their behaviour and attitudes towards others. The school is highly successful in achieving its values and is rightly proud of the excellent personal development of its pupils.
- 4.3 The spiritual development of the pupils is excellent. The school is true to the enduring Christian ethos of its foundation which is reflected in its statement of values. Pupils demonstrate an understanding of deeper spiritual values which flow from the beauty of the school's natural setting and its superbly restored chapel, at the heart of the school, where each day begins for the older pupils.
- 4.4 Older pupils respond outstandingly well to the school's provision; they have a quiet, secure self-awareness and self-esteem. The new personal social and health education programme which links with the new religious education and well-being syllabus is also making an important contribution to personal development, as is the twice daily individual reading session in the library which provides more reflective, personal time.
- 4.5 Moral development is excellent. All age groups have a very clear understanding of right and wrong and their behaviour is exemplary. They are unfailingly well-mannered and courteous. Pupils show deep empathy and articulate very well their understanding of the feelings of others. They were overwhelmingly positive in their replies to questions about attitudes and responsibilities.
- 4.6 There is considerable evidence of excellent social development. In the EYFS, children happily share resources, play co-operatively, take turns and, by Reception, regularly play with pupils in Years 1 to 3, establishing positive relationships with older girls and boys. Their key staff encourage independence in the children's learning and help them to develop their skills for the future.
- 4.7 Pupils develop an excellent sense of responsibility: for instance, teamwork was the theme of a pre-preparatory school daily assembly, and the girls and boys showed a good understanding of this in a lesson that day. Preparatory school pupils have the opportunity to represent their fellow pupils on the school council. This council is an example of pupils contributing to the society of the school, in addition to learning about democratic ideas.
- 4.8 Pupils in the senior forms have the opportunity to act as prefects and library and subject monitors, and take their duties very seriously. They also enjoy a parliament week when they learn about public institutions in Britain, and Year 8 pupils annually visit the House of Commons.
- 4.9 Pupils show significant qualities of leadership and the ability to work together in teams. Pupils talk positively about the 'spirit' of the game when discussing team games. The school encourages this throughout its daily life and also arranges for the pupils to attend activity camps and leadership courses which help to establish a sense of esprit de corps.

4.10 Cultural development is excellent. Since the previous inspection, the school has sought to build upon its good practice to further increase the breadth of the pupils' outlook upon the world. Pupils understand and respect other faiths and cultures. Initiatives have seen the school become more involved in the life of the local village community, in addition to developing a sense of the wider world. In lessons, they learn about complex issues such as the situation in Rwanda and the conflict in the Middle East. Pupils' horizons are also widened through school trips to France and Italy and visits to families of international boarders.

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

4.11 The arrangements for pastoral care are excellent.

4.12 Pastoral care very strongly supports the aim of developing the best in children of all ages by providing a caring, stimulating, safe and comfortable environment, and contributes exceptionally well to pupils' personal development. Throughout the school, staff provide outstanding support for pupils' needs and development. Staff in the EYFS provide continuous support to help the children settle happily each day; preparatory school staff have attended teenage awareness training to help them respond to the needs of older pupils.

4.13 In the EYFS, the established key person system ensures that children form strong relationships and feel safe, happy and confident to share their concerns. Staff give clear guidance on standards of courtesy and behaviour expected, so that children demonstrate exemplary levels of behaviour and show respect and care for each other and their teachers. Children learn about the need for physical exercise and the importance of healthy eating.

4.14 Throughout the school, relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst pupils themselves, are excellent. There is a strong feeling of mutual respect, and pupils display great loyalty to their school. Form teachers have immediate responsibility for pupils' well-being, and membership of competitive houses from Year 4 onwards gives an excellent sense of community. Staff actively listen to pupils' views through the school council, which enables older pupils to play a part in decision-making, and have a positive impact on school life. Staff also value responses in the annual leavers' survey.

4.15 Pupils develop a thorough understanding of the importance of choosing a healthy diet and taking physical exercise. The youngest participate in outdoor activities and learn to monitor pulse rates after exercise. All enjoy a wide range of high quality, home-cooked food. Meal-times are pleasant, positive social occasions.

4.16 The school effectively promotes high standards of behaviour. Pupils have confidence in the measures in place to deal with bullying, should it occur. They say that bullying is taken seriously and dealt with swiftly and appropriately. Senior staff promote a clear philosophy of high expectations which helps to engender a strong sense of responsibility and community.

4.17 The school has a comprehensive plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND and supports them with exemplary skill and care. Staff initiate, and regularly monitor, care and welfare plans which ensure pupils receive the appropriate level of support.

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

- 4.18 The arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 4.19 The excellent safeguarding arrangements have regard to official guidance and the school has a rigorous child protection policy, known by all staff. Child protection training is well structured through appropriate organisations and the designated members of staff with responsibility for safeguarding, including one specifically for the EYFS, have had the appropriate level of training. Meticulous recruitment procedures are carried out to ensure the suitability of staff.
- 4.20 All measures to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards are precisely in place and carefully monitored in all parts of the school. The school has a clear fire policy with concise and efficient arrangements for all areas of the school. Regular fire practices are held, and recorded and analysed in order to improve routines if necessary. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy and the health and safety committee meet regularly to review all aspects of this area. Professional audits are arranged at regular intervals, and staff are given regular training. Thorough risks assessments cover all areas of school life for pupils of each age group, and include specialist accommodation, together with trips and visits out of school. Careful consideration of the safety of the pupils is a high priority.
- 4.21 There are effective procedures for accident reporting and for the recording of the administration of medicines. First-aid boxes are located round the site and are very well maintained. A generous number of qualified first aiders, including paediatric first aiders, support the excellent provision available for sick or injured pupils provided by the school nurse and the sick bay. Access for those with SEND is effectively planned and continually improved.
- 4.22 Admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and correctly stored, thus meeting the recommendations from the previous report.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.23 The quality of boarding education is excellent.
- 4.24 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. Their personal development is strongly enhanced by their experience of boarding. They are knowledgeable and confident and demonstrate a high standard of care for one another. They have strong and positive relationships with one another and with pastoral staff and the warmth of feeling for house staff is palpable. They value the friendships they form with one another and there is a strong informal support network amongst them. They are comfortable in their environment and acknowledge the efforts made by house staff to create a homely atmosphere and regard their house as home during term time. They have high standards of behaviour and respect different cultural traditions. The school policy of changing bedrooms termly means that the boys are encouraged to integrate fully with their peers and all greatly value this experience.
- 4.25 There is an excellent standard of boarding provision and care. Boarding staff are fully involved in all aspects of the boarders' lives. Interaction with the school's general house system, which goes across year groups, is highly effective. An open-door policy across the house team ensures easy access to staff. The youngest boarders live in small dormitories which are well furnished and bright, whilst older boarders, who are situated in the refurbished attic bedrooms, have recently had provision installed to facilitate bed-time reading. Comfortable common areas which

are separate from sleeping areas are available for all year groups. They are well equipped and privileges are appropriately increased with age.

- 4.26 Boarders are encouraged to contribute to the local community through becoming involved, for example, with gardening and painting. They are encouraged to stay fit and healthy through the extensive range of sports activities and the high quality of meals provided. A comprehensive and detailed range of weekend activities ensures that all boys are able to access activities of their choice. Evening activities take the form of organised leisure activities, extra-curricular activities and lessons. The quality of medical care is excellent with 24-hour on-site cover, and bright accommodation is available for those pupils who are unwell. This provision is led by a dedicated team who demonstrate a sound knowledgeable understanding of those in their care. The catering staff provide all meals for boarders. The food is of a consistently high quality and boys report that they enjoy the range of meals. They are also able to influence the variety of meals through the school council.
- 4.27 Procedures for the welfare and safeguarding of boarders are excellent. Recruitment of staff meets requirements and good care is taken in the checking of suitability of staff. The central register of appointments is carefully maintained. The school has made improvements in boarding, and further work is planned. Boarders are kept safe and they report that they feel safe at all times. The risk assessment policy is updated and all external visits attract separate risk assessments. There is a considerable number of adults within the school to whom boarders are able and willing to turn in times of difficulty. A high standard of behaviour is maintained. A strong emphasis is placed on encouraging positive behaviour together with systems in place for sanctions. Boarders say that they feel these are used fairly. They understand the anti-bullying policy and completed a survey last year. They say that bullying is not tolerated at any level and any reports will be dealt with quickly and efficiently.
- 4.28 There is excellent leadership of the boarding provision which provides energetic and committed guidance and direction to the boarding staff. The friendly and positive atmosphere within the boarding community is actively promoted and there are excellent relationships between boarders and the adults who are responsible for their welfare. Policies are comprehensive and regularly updated and form the framework within which the house staff operate. Alongside daily, informal contact there are regular meetings which are recorded, during which the boarders' progress forms, care plans and welfare plans are updated. House staff meet weekly to consider day-to-day pastoral issues and also more strategic issues such as how to improve the boarding. Boarding staff are regularly encouraged to take part in training and conferences, in order to develop their skills. The duties of boarding staff are carefully constructed to ensure a high level of cover throughout the building at all times. Contact with parents is meticulous and relevant at all pastoral levels. Staff take time to ensure that new boarders have contact with parents. These initial calls are monitored whilst still respecting privacy to allow staff to allay any anxieties with both boys and parents. International boarders are encouraged to use the internet and staff ensure privacy for these calls.
- 4.29 In their replies to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were unanimous in their view that the school keeps their child safe, and virtually all considered that boarding is well organised and managed effectively. They were also in strong agreement that the experience of boarding helps their child's progress and development, that the staff treat their child as an individual and that they can easily contact the staff who care for their child.

- 4.30 The boarders were unanimous that they enjoy boarding and are well looked after if they are ill or injured. They were virtually unanimous that the boarders get on well together in the house, that there is lots to do in the evening and at weekends, that they can easily contact their family and friends, that they know what to do if they feel unhappy or worried, and that they feel safe. A small minority expressed concern about the safety of their belongings and the school is taking steps to improve this situation.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The governors take their responsibilities for the whole school, including the EYFS, very seriously, generously giving their time and attention to their individual roles. They have an established committee structure and specified responsibilities. This, combined with their professional experience, enables them to provide extremely effective oversight of all parts of the school.
- 5.3 The professional and financial expertise of the present members enables them to fulfil successfully their responsibilities for educational standards and financial planning which allows for wise investment in staff, accommodation, and resources and facilities of high quality, such as the new sports hall.
- 5.4 Several governors are former pupils or past or present parents, and this gives them an excellent insight into the working of the school. Members take their monitoring responsibilities seriously and the headmaster is appraised annually. They are aware of their responsibility to provide support, challenge and encouragement for the continual improvement of the school, therefore their strategic development plan which links to the school management plan, is an important working document and is reviewed annually.
- 5.5 Governors fulfil their responsibilities extremely effectively for welfare, health and safety and safeguarding. They receive and consider a termly review and an annual report of the latter.

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

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, is excellent.
- 5.7 The leadership and management team are guided at all times by the aims, vision and values of the whole school. They are aware of their responsibilities and the need to ensure that policies and guidelines are implemented and followed, particularly those related to safeguarding. Record-keeping and documentation are meticulous. All the requirements for the registration of pupils and the keeping of an admission register and attendance registers have been implemented, as recommended in the previous inspection report.
- 5.8 There has been significant progress in leadership and management since the previous inspection, including the introduction of a director of studies and a director of academic communications. Other positive changes have been the strengthening of the roles of middle management and the formation of an academic forum to which heads of subjects contribute. Policies and guidelines are reviewed systematically and training, either initial or updating, takes place regularly over all areas of the school.
- 5.9 Leadership and management are effective in their planning and constructive in their self-evaluation, selecting priorities and working systematically towards their achievement. The structure of the management plan is based on the governors'

strategy document. As a result, there is a clear overall vision for the development of the school, including the EYFS. The excellent quality of the pupils' education is illustrated by the continued improvement in Common Entrance results and the extremely high standard of their personal development.

- 5.10 Management is also successful in selecting, appointing, developing and motivating staff of high quality. Great care is taken with the recruitment and appointment procedures, which are very well organised, to ensure that all new staff are efficiently inducted and well trained in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. The central register of appointments is up to date and carefully annotated. An annual appraisal system, based on formal classroom observation together with the review and identification of the development needs of the school, the department and the individual, has been introduced in the preparatory school. This process is being extended to the pre-preparatory school where reviews are taking place but are not linked to classroom observations by the reviewer. In the EYFS, the review system is leading to focused training on child development but the monitoring of teaching and planning is not as well developed.
- 5.11 The school has excellent links with parents and guardians, who are made very welcome at concerts, plays, Sunday services and matches. In their replies to their pre-inspection questionnaire, an extremely high proportion of parents were in strong agreement that the school is well led and managed, their child feels happy and safe and that they would recommend the school to another parent. Parents were overwhelmingly positive in their responses. Parents were extremely content with the education and support provided for their children and with the quality of boarding, ease of communication with the school and the high standards of behaviour. Parents' written comments and remarks in conversation were completely in line with their positive and complimentary questionnaire replies. The inspection team agreed with the views of parents and their children that Aysgarth is providing an outstanding educational experience from which its pupils gain enjoyment, inspiration and an excellent preparation for the future.
- 5.12 The school takes great care to ensure that parents of full boarders, in particular, are kept informed through newsletters and other more formal communications. Parents from the EYFS onwards receive clear and useful reports about their children's work and progress, and targets for pupils are made clear in these.
- 5.13 The school's relationship with parents is caring and constructive, and any concerns are handled with great care, in accordance with its published procedures. Parents of pupils and of prospective pupils are provided with the required formal information about the school. In response to the previous inspection, parents are now fully informed about the EYFS curriculum which includes outdoor learning in the planning.

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