



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
CUMNOR HOUSE SCHOOL**

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Cumnor House School

Full Name of School	Cumnor House School		
DfE Number	938/6019		
Registered Charity Number	801924		
Address	Cumnor House School London Road Danehill Haywards Heath West Sussex RH17 7HT		
Telephone Number	01825 790347		
Fax Number	01825 790910		
Email Address	office@cumnor.co.uk		
Headmaster	Mr Christian Heinrich		
Chairman of Governors	Mr Stephen Cockburn		
Age Range	3 to 13		
Total Number of Pupils	396		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (208 boys; 188 girls)		
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	31	5-7: 69
	7-11:	205	11-13: 91
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	360	
Number of Boarders	Total:	36	
	Full:	23	Weekly: 13
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Mandy White		
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection Dates	10 March 2015 to 13 March 2015		

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 2009. An ISI Intermediate Boarding inspection took place in May 2012.

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) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations 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.

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.

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.

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 outgoing and incoming chairman of governors and other 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

Mrs Danice Iles	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Kerry Cooke	Team Inspector, Deputy Head, IAPS school
Mr Michael Higham	Team Inspector, former Head, IAPS school
Mrs Elizabeth King	Team Inspector, former Head, IAPS school
Mr Edward Rees	Team Inspector, Head, IAPS school
Mr David Roberts	Team Inspector, Head of Department, IAPS school
Mr Andrew Nott	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Yvonne Parry	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Cumnor House School is a preparatory day school for boys and girls between the ages of three and thirteen, with boarding in Years 7 and 8. Founded over 80 years ago in Croydon, it moved in 1948 to a country manor house and 60-acre estate near Danehill in the heart of Sussex. A charitable educational trust was established in 1988, and members of the governing body are trustees and directors of the company limited by guarantee.
- 1.2 The inspiring aims and ethos of the school are encompassed in its crest 'Aim High, Be Kind, Dare to be Different'. Each pupil is therefore encouraged, as an individual, in a nurturing and happy environment to make the most of his or her own gifts and to move on to senior school with confidence and enthusiasm. The ethos of the school is guided by the values of the Church of England and pupils of all faiths are welcomed.
- 1.3 The school has developed considerably since the previous inspection, and the EYFS has been extended this term to include a Nursery class with its own accommodation and garden area. An all-weather surface has been installed, adding to the existing extensive games facilities; a new theatre building now complements the outdoor theatre; and tablet computers have been introduced. A new building principally to provide discrete science laboratories and enhanced space for technology will open in 2016, adjacent to the new large car park.
- 1.4 There are 396 pupils on roll: 31 in the EYFS, 69 in Years 1 and 2, 205 in Years 3 to 6 and 91 in Years 7 and 8. Currently there are 36 boarders. The pre-prep department is from Nursery to Year 2, the junior section is from Years 3 to 5 and the senior section from Years 6 to 8. The 36 boarders live in the main house and a range of boarding options is offered. Fortnightly boarding is the main option and occasional boarding of two or three consecutive nights is also available. The number of boarders rises to a maximum of 70 in the summer term.
- 1.5 No pupils have education, health and care (EHC) plans (formerly known as statements of special educational needs) and two pupils have English as an additional language (EAL). The school has identified 31 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and altogether 73 receive learning support from the school for a variety of needs, mainly dyslexia. A substantial number of pupils have been identified as gifted, not only academically but also in sport, music, art and drama.
- 1.6 The ability profile of the school is above the national average; at least a quarter of pupils have ability that is well above the national average, with very few having ability that is below average. Most pupils are of white British origin, and a few come from other ethnic backgrounds. The majority of pupils' families live relatively near the school and have business or professional backgrounds.
- 1.7 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent. Pupils of all ages and abilities are extremely successfully and happily educated in this lively school, where there is evident joy in learning. The school amply fulfils its intention to ensure that each pupil is encouraged, as an individual, in a nurturing and happy environment to make the most of his or her own gifts and to move on to senior school with confidence and enthusiasm. Provision for the education and care of children in the EYFS is excellent, as are its overall quality and standards. From Year 1 onwards, pupils develop excellent levels of knowledge, understanding and skills over a wide range of academic and creative subjects. The broad academic curriculum is complemented by an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities. In an exceptionally rich educational environment, pupils enjoy their learning and make excellent progress. Teaching of good quality, including a significant proportion which is excellent, makes an important contribution to the development of pupils' academic potential; at its best, it is challenging and stimulating. The contribution of ICT and library provision to the curriculum is limited to some extent at present. The less successful teaching lacks pace and challenge to hold the pupils' attention.
- 2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent throughout the school. In a caring, nurturing atmosphere underpinned by the Christian faith, the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent. Arrangements for pastoral care make a highly effective contribution to the pupils' personal development, and pupils respond to the friendly, encouraging atmosphere with quiet confidence and courtesy. The quality of boarding provision is high and the boarders enjoy their friendly, caring house. Arrangements for pupils' welfare, including safeguarding, and their health and safety, are of an extremely high standard and pupils feel safe and well cared for. Excellent links with parents are a major strength of the school. The results of the pre-inspection questionnaires to pupils and parents were overwhelmingly positive; reporting on pupils' achievement is clear, but reports do not always indicate targets for improvement or, in the EYFS, characteristics of effective learning.
- 2.3 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. The governors are immensely committed to the success of the school and, with their depth of experience and expertise, they have guided the school very effectively through a period of growth and expansion, and they continue to plan wisely for the future. The significant improvement and development which has taken place over the past decade is an indication of the drive and vision of the present excellent leadership and management, who are highly successful in achieving the aims of the school and establishing extremely constructive relationships with parents. The recommendations of the previous report have been successfully addressed and the school looks to the future with confidence.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- 2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Develop the use of ICT and library provision to promote further depth and breadth in the curriculum across the whole school.
 2. Ensure that written reports identify clearly the pupil's targets for improvement and, in the EYFS, also indicate the characteristics of effective learning.

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 Throughout the school, pupils are extremely well educated. The school is highly successful in meeting its aims; all pupils are encouraged to 'aim high' and achieve their potential in a happy and secure environment. Pupils of all ages reach excellent standards in both their academic and extra-curricular pursuits. From the age of three, Nursery children develop strong foundations for reading and writing through regular phonic activities and mark-making. Reception children read well; they can retell the events of a story and write short sentences independently. Numeracy is also strong: in Nursery, children produce simple repeating patterns as they make fruit kebabs. In Reception, children compare the weight of chocolate Easter bunnies with varying-sized Easter eggs and record their findings.
- 3.3 Pupils acquire an extremely wide range of knowledge which they are able to apply, together with well-developed skills and deep understanding, spanning all areas of the curriculum and beyond. Pupils are active listeners; they also express their ideas fluently and with considerable self-confidence. Their ability to write in depth was clear in geography research on coastal features. Pupils are numerically competent; they showed enjoyment and highly successful reasoning in mathematics when formulating equations from real-life situations and adeptly finding solutions. Older pupils showed outstanding investigative skills in design and technology (DT) when developing a fair test for bridge strength, using information and communication technology (ICT) in recording their results. Some discrete work in ICT is done, while within some subject areas its use enhances pupils' learning and achievements.
- 3.4 The range of extra-curricular activities is extremely wide and pupils' achievements outside the classroom are excellent, with an extensive range and quality in the creative arts being a particular strength of the school. Over four-fifths of pupils learn to play a musical instrument, with over half of this group learning more than one instrument. All musicians have the opportunity to perform in musical coffee concerts and the orchestra go on tour. Sports teams also go abroad on tour. Drama and dance are highly regarded; all Year 8 pupils participate in an eagerly anticipated annual Shakespeare production. Pupils achieve highly in competitive sports both as individuals and in teams up to international level. Awards have been gained for inter-school and national competitions such as the Intermediate Maths Challenge, whilst other pupils have gained prizes for art work exhibited at the Natural History Museum and the Royal College of Art.
- 3.5 Pupils are extremely successful in their entrance examinations to senior schools; they consistently gain places at their preferred school with many being awarded academic, art, music, drama and sport scholarships. Recent successes include scholarships to highly selective senior schools with very demanding entry requirements.
- 3.6 The attainment of the pupils cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests. However, evidence from the work seen in lessons and scrutiny of pupils' books, alongside internal tracking, monitoring and assessment, indicates a level of achievement that is high in relation to national age-related expectations from Year 1 onwards. The overall quality and standards of the EYFS setting are excellent.

- 3.7 Their high level of attainment indicates that the pupils make excellent progress in relation to those of similar ability. Pupils with SEND make good or better progress in relation to their needs due to the sympathetic, extremely well-organised and high quality support they receive. All pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage in their education with opportunities to extend their horizons and meet innovative challenges to excite their enthusiasm for learning. Pupils who are gifted and talented, and the few with EAL also make excellent progress. In their questionnaire responses, parents of very able pupils were virtually unanimous in their appreciation of the support their child received.
- 3.8 Pupils have a notably enthusiastic and contagious attitude to learning which drives them on to great success. Children in the EYFS enjoy their learning and come happily into class, engaging enthusiastically with activities. Pupils delight in being challenged, producing work of high quality whilst demonstrating perseverance and diligence in their tasks. They show themselves as co-operative and extremely confident young people whose desire to achieve promotes rapid and sustained learning. They move onto their next schools with study skills and experiences that give them an excellent foundation for future success.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of the curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.10 The curriculum is highly effective in developing the pupils' creative and sporting skills, alongside literacy and numeracy, and is strongly supported by excellent specialist facilities for physical education (PE), games, drama, art, technology and music. French from Year 1, Latin from Year 4, and DT from Year 3, together with the recent introduction to the timetable of a 'time to think' session, all give added strength to the curriculum. The space available for ICT and library provision is limited in relation to the size of the school and, to some extent, restricts their contribution to the curriculum at present. Both the indoor and outdoor theatres play a significant part in helping all pupils to 'aim high' in their speaking and listening skills, whilst ingenious use of the grounds enables physical activity and games to be enjoyed by all ages and abilities in a wide variety of sports and outdoor pursuits. Educational visits to Kew Gardens, to museums, galleries and theatres in London and more locally, including opera, enrich the curriculum and inspire the pupils. Current affairs are covered at an appropriate level as part of the personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) and in 'time to think' activities; there is balanced presentation of opposing view in the coverage of political issues in both curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- 3.11 In the EYFS setting, excellent provision is made to meet the needs of the range of children who attend. The school admits pupils without academic selection and its educational programmes offer challenging experiences which help all children, including those with SEND, EAL or the more able, to progress well. Creativity and problem-solving skills are greatly enhanced by the new 'outdoor' classroom and the curriculum is broadened through the use of specialist teachers for PE, dance, drama, music and swimming.
- 3.12 Across the school, the identification of and provision for pupils who have SEND is very effective and carefully tailored to suit individual needs, which the pupils truly value. Tracking of able and talented pupils, and the use of setting, further enhances pupils' opportunity to benefit from the curriculum at a level to match their abilities.

Staff liaise well regarding the needs of their pupils and generally ensure that their lessons are adjusted appropriately.

- 3.13 Curriculum planning is mostly thorough, and consistency in approach has improved since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy some specialist teaching from the EYFS onwards, which increases as they move through the school. Opportunities for cross-curricular links are developed through some topics, as in Year 7 where art, history and music departments came together on a Zulu project. Opportunity is provided for additional research and broadening of horizons via the use of mobile electronic devices in Years 7 and 8.
- 3.14 An extensive range of extra-curricular activities, called 'occupations', allows pupils to further enhance their learning experiences. They have an excellent choice from cookery to martial arts, and visiting speakers, trips abroad and participation in competitions and events all serve to develop their personal qualities.
- 3.15 The recommendations of the previous report about monitoring of the curriculum, establishing a more collaborative approach to short-term planning across departments and within year groups have been substantially met, and the need to improve access to ICT for individual work and research is being continually addressed.
- 3.16 Links with the community are strong. The school shares its excellent facilities with toddler groups and very positive and productive links are being developed with the local primary schools. Younger pupils have visits from the police and the local vicar. Year 7 pupils visited a local care home to discuss with older residents their experiences of life in Britain during the Second World War. These types of activities afford the pupils opportunities to develop social and personal skills, considerably enrich the curriculum and are of great benefit to all pupils. Parents are very complimentary about the positive and enriching experiences their children enjoy.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.17 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.18 The teaching is extremely effective in promoting excellent learning and progress, thus successfully supporting the pupils in aiming high, particularly in the pre-prep and the senior part of the school. The staff's high expectations in the well-resourced EYFS encourage the children to become motivated and enthusiastic learners who soon acquire the skills and capacity to learn effectively and be ready for the next stage in their learning.
- 3.19 Across the school, the quality of teaching in the very large majority of lessons is good or better and it is excellent in a significant proportion of lessons where pupils are eager and inspired. Lessons are planned in detail with clear objectives and a thorough understanding of the pupils' needs. The teaching staff are very well qualified; specialist teachers have detailed knowledge of their subject and they use this exceptionally well in the senior school to challenge and motivate pupils of all abilities.
- 3.20 In the best lessons, the work is challenging and stimulating allowing the pupils to make rapid progress. In the small number of less successful lessons over-direction by the teacher and lack of classroom management result in pupils losing interest and concentration, and the pace of their work slows. The teachers know their pupils well

and the quality of the relationship between the teaching staff and pupils enhances the personalised support given to pupils.

- 3.21 Successful teaching, which uses a wide range of strategies together with appropriate use of resources, worksheets and ICT to enhance learning, is based on confident subject knowledge. This was evident in a Year 8 DT lesson where the pupils were filming their experiment on an electronic tablet. The replay in slow motion enabled the analysis of the relative strong and weak points of the construction. Excellent opportunities are provided in many lessons for the pupils to work in pairs or groups to enhance their collaborative learning. In Year 3 mathematics lessons, pupils shared their experiences of identifying reciprocal numbers. Questioning is used exceptionally well to stimulate discussion and to check the pupils' understanding. In the very best lessons, pupils are provided with opportunities and encouragement to think critically and embark on independent research. Teaching promotes tolerance and respect for others and their views and is required to be unbiased in any references to political issues. Educational visits support the teaching well; for example, in geography, pupils learn successfully from their investigations of coastal land-forms in Dorset. Regular talks from outside speakers further enhance the teaching programme.
- 3.22 The school has a clear marking policy which is well understood by the pupils, and which rewards and encourages their endeavours. Marking is regular and mostly in line with the school policy, although this is not consistent in all year groups. The best marking is informative with recommendations on how to improve, and time allotted at the beginning of lessons for an overview; other marking is not consistent in clearly following the school's guidelines. Assessment is thorough and supports planning well; a regular pattern is established throughout the school. Both internal and external data are used to monitor progress effectively and to update targets constructively. Since the last inspection, the systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' academic progress have improved significantly.
- 3.23 The well-qualified teaching staff who are deployed effectively across the curriculum are supported in Years 1 and 2 by teaching assistants who have been provided since the last inspection; however, these assistants are not always used effectively to support the pupils' learning. All teaching areas are equipped with interactive whiteboards and effectively resourced, aiding teaching and learning. Excellent use is made of wall and ceiling space to provide outstanding and colourful displays.
- 3.24 Support for pupils with SEND is strong. A comprehensive register of those who have SEND is accessed daily by the staff, who follow the guidance on the pupils' individual provision plans provided by the learning support department. Liaison between departments and the learning support team allows appropriate intervention, which enables the pupils to make excellent progress at all stages through the school. The more able pupils are also clearly identified in all age groups and are well challenged in many lessons; they make rapid progress. Parents are very appreciative of the support and encouragement given to their children.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The pupils' spiritual development is excellent. Pupils demonstrate respect and care for others and a strong sense of self-awareness. Regular morning prayers, assemblies, and boarders' Sunday matins services, along with junior and senior carol services, help pupils develop a sense of spirituality. They welcome and appreciate the celebration of their own and others' success and are proud to see examples of their work on display throughout the school. Pupils are developing a sense of self-knowledge and an understanding of others through the opportunities provided by the thinking and mindfulness sessions. The beauty of the extensive school grounds, with a lake, woods and awe-inspiring distant views, is appreciated by pupils and helps to develop their freedom of spirit. Pupils have self-confidence and are emotionally mature for their age. The school actively promotes the fundamental British values through its own aims and a culture of respect and tolerance for all in the community, including those of other faiths and cultures.
- 4.3 The pupils' moral development is excellent. They have a strong sense of right and wrong which is further developed by the many opportunities provided, both in tutorial time and within lessons, to discuss local and national issues or the weekly, often topical, thought-provoking question, such as "when is it right to take risks?". The structure of Cumnor Care Committees for which pupils from Year 3 upwards can volunteer provides valued opportunities for them to voice their opinions and ideas, or raise concerns about the needs of others. At appropriate stages, pupils have the opportunity to discuss and learn to appreciate the need for rules and for respect for the civil and criminal law of the land. Pupils develop an understanding of, and care for, those less fortunate in the local and wider community with a range of fund-raising activities in aid of children's charities in Kenya and South Africa.
- 4.4 The social development of the pupils at all ages is excellent. They consistently demonstrate good social skills, and greet each other, staff and visitors to the school politely and courteously. Caring, thoughtfulness, responsibility and good manners are emphasised and rewarded. The pupils' awareness of citizenship and public institutions is excellent: they attended Remembrance Day services where members of the armed forces took part and visited a local care home to meet war veterans. Senior pupils have positions of definite responsibility which they approach with maturity and junior pupils have tasks and duties, but they do not have many opportunities to experience the democratic process and be involved in the selection of others for positions of responsibility. However, values which encourage respect for others and for democracy are evident in the ethos of the school.
- 4.5 From an early stage, pupils learn about rules and tolerance and respect for everyone they meet. In the EYFS, children's personal and emotional development is excellent. Children are happy, friendly and co-operative. They take turns, behave well and their feelings of safety and security are evident in the independence and confidence they have. Excellent teamwork across the EYFS, the pre-prep and the prep departments prepares children and older pupils for transition to the next stage, as do the taster days for new entrants.
- 4.6 The pupils' cultural awareness is good. Through literature, music, art and drama they are given an appreciation and understanding of their own British culture and

traditions; similarly, they gain some appreciation of other cultures through the curriculum; for example, through a cross-curricular project in Year 7 or when Year 4 pupils study the tribes of the Amazon. Pupils gain awareness of other religions and their festivals through religious studies lessons. Gap year students also play an important part. Older pupils, particularly through their interest in sport, have opportunities to develop an awareness of the multicultural nature of contemporary British society, and of the importance of opposing discrimination.

- 4.7 The quality of the pupils' personal development by the time they leave the school is excellent.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 Form staff support and guide pupils through the pastoral system, which has been well designed and is well managed. The school is successful in placing a strong emphasis on good discipline, social skills, respect for each other and traditional values. Relationships are very positive, and the pupils find staff are friendly and approachable. As a consequence pupils, in turn, show respect, friendship and kindness towards each other, fulfilling the school's guiding principle to 'be kind'.
- 4.10 The Early Years provision makes an excellent contribution to children's well-being. Children settle quickly, forming secure emotional attachments with key persons. Generous staffing levels mean there are always adults available to talk and listen, and to encourage good behaviour.
- 4.11 From Nursery onwards, children are helped to understand the importance of exercise and healthy eating. Lunchtime is a happy and relaxed occasion and a food committee offers suggestions for additions to the menu. Pupils have healthy appetites, and they enjoy and appreciate a choice of excellent freshly-cooked, well-presented food. The school has an extensive games and extra-curricular programme which allows all pupils to enjoy exercise and benefit from it.
- 4.12 Pupils benefit from sessions to discuss pastoral issues, and staff discuss serious or on-going concerns at staff meetings and in the weekly pastoral committee meeting. Where necessary, a pastoral support plan is implemented for a pupil. The success of the committee lies in its clear thinking and strong communication with parents and each other. There are effective procedures to promote good behaviour.
- 4.13 While the overwhelming majority of parents indicated that their child felt happy and safe at school, a few parents and pupils indicated a concern about problems of unkindness or bullying. The school is very alert to any such incidents, which are carefully recorded. Staff follow the correct, carefully considered guidelines and procedures in order to help solve the problem as quickly as possible. The anti-bullying committee, which includes senior pupils, plays an extremely valuable role in prevention of problems. In discussions, pupils did not consider that bullying was a problem and were certain that any incidents of possible unkindness or bullying are taken seriously by staff and dealt with rapidly.
- 4.14 Staff are extremely alert to the pastoral requirements of pupils with SEND, and the school also has a well-considered plan to improve their educational access.
- 4.15 In their replies to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils said there were too few opportunities to express their opinions and receive a response.

School records and interviews with pupils indicate that there are sufficient opportunities to have an input into the life and development of the school. These opportunities are more limited for younger pupils, but all pupils can make suggestions to the appropriate committee about food, or other issues, through the sister in the medical centre, and have opportunities to join the committees mentioned above.

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

- 4.16 The contribution of the arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.17 The school has extremely robust arrangements for dealing with welfare, health and safety issues. As a result of the care which is taken, pupils feel they are safe and well looked after and are very happy and settled at school. This view is shared by the overwhelming majority of parents.
- 4.18 Safeguarding procedures are given high priority. Both staff and governors receive thorough induction followed by regular training in child protection. New staff and governors also benefit from an on-line safeguarding training course while senior staff and a number of governors have undertaken training in safer recruitment. Recruitment procedures are exemplary.
- 4.19 The school has extremely thorough arrangements for reducing the risk from fire and accidents. Regular fire practices are carefully recorded and the relevant equipment is checked at appropriate intervals. Health and safety is given a high priority, with risk assessments for all activities and areas of the school. Signage and safety equipment are clearly visible in the swimming pool building; due care is given to the safety of pupils in the science laboratory and DT room.
- 4.20 Extremely careful consideration has been given to traffic safety with fencing, chicanes and a new car park carefully designed to reduce risk to pupils. Health and safety meetings, staff meetings and the pastoral committee give all staff the responsibility and opportunity to raise any issues. Pupils and parents have received online safety training to protect them against the dangers that come with an increase in the use of ICT and the internet. The governors' risk committee has an important role.
- 4.21 The school has excellent arrangements for any pupils who are ill or injured. It gives careful attention to any pupils who have particular medical or learning support needs. Medicines are appropriately stored by the sister. A large number of staff have received first-aid training, and several have paediatric training also.
- 4.22 In the EYFS, children are taught about keeping safe, and exploratory play provides opportunities for children to take appropriately managed risks. Risk assessments and carefully maintained records detailing welfare needs ensure that children are well-cared for. The staff have a shared understanding and responsibility for protecting children. The setting meets the safeguarding and welfare requirements.
- 4.23 The admission and attendance registers are completed correctly and backed up as required.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.24 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.25 Boarders have an excellent standard of personal development, thoroughly enjoy their boarding experience and speak highly of it. Whether they board occasionally, or are full boarders, they value the chance to spend time with their friends in the boarding house and appreciate the opportunities to become more independent. Boarders are confident, tolerant and self-reliant.
- 4.26 Boarders have extremely positive and constructive relationships with all the house staff. Behaviour is of a high standard, borne out of a strong sense of mutual respect and friendship, supported by appropriate policies. Boarders are at ease with one another and enjoy life in the house to the full, taking enthusiastic advantage of the excellent range of activities offered by the house staff during the week and at weekends. Boarders' understanding of the world around them is enriched by the accessibility of newspapers, magazines, television and news websites.
- 4.27 Pupil surveys, house meetings and frequent informal opportunities to talk to house staff enable boarders to contribute their views and identify areas for improvement. Boarders feel that their opinions are greatly valued by the boarding staff and that they play a part in the development of boarding. Boarders are well prepared for the next stage of life at their senior school and they feel that their current experience provides them with the right personal qualities to make the transition a success.
- 4.28 Pastoral arrangements are excellent and boarders are extremely well cared for. New boarders are quickly put at ease with a highly effective induction programme that helps them settle comfortably into boarding life. Boarders know to whom they can turn if they have a problem and they know who outside school would also provide support, such as the independent listener and Children's Commissioner. The boarding provision is successful in keeping boarders safe, fit and healthy. Internal systems of communication are excellent, records are kept meticulously and medical staff provide highly efficient care for all the boarders' needs. Care plans are well formulated and their implementation is followed carefully. The arrangements for sick or injured boarders are of high quality, with bright, comfortable and well-equipped medical facilities. Boarders have access to local medical and specialist services through the medical sister, and there are careful systems for prescribed medicines.
- 4.29 Boarders take advantage of the extensive range of opportunities available to them in the evenings and weekends, enjoying team games and weekend trips to various local amenities. These activities, whilst encouraging the development of many different skills, allow for self-directed time and freedom of choice. Excellent indoor and outdoor facilities enhance the strength of the programme in the evenings. Food is plentiful, nutritious and varied, with thoughtful adjustments to meet individual dietary needs. Regular social events provide opportunities for the boarders to appreciate the school's exceptional catering whilst enjoying the company of each other and of staff. Drinking water is readily available at all times and snacks are available after school and before bedtime.
- 4.30 Dormitories are of a generally reasonable standard, with provision for personalization. They have ample storage space for boarders' personal effects, with any valuables kept safely in the house parents' office. Social space is more limited but satisfactory. Boarding accommodation and the privacy of the boarders are well

protected. Arrangements for boarders' laundry are highly efficient, and staff take pride in ensuring that boarders look smart and have tidy, well-organised rooms. Washroom facilities are well-maintained and kept immaculately clean. Matron keeps a supply of personal items.

- 4.31 Provision for boarders to communicate with their families is good and they have access to a landline during their free time. Senior boarding staff keep in regular touch with families, responding swiftly and helpfully to any concerns which may arise.
- 4.32 Arrangements for the boarders' welfare, health and safety are excellent, and the school complies fully with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding. Procedures for safeguarding are robust and proper care is taken in the recruitment and checking of the suitability of resident staff, including members of their families, and volunteers. Visitors are well supervised. All boarding, academic and support staff are given training in safeguarding and rigorous health and safety policies and procedures for boarding are overseen and monitored by senior managers. Suitably qualified and experienced members of staff take care of the boarders who have the means to contact a member of staff in the night. Suitable accommodation is provided for residential staff, and boarders only have access to the houseparents' office. Boarders stated that incidents of bullying were rare, but if they did occur, staff would deal them with firmly and fairly. Boarders have clear access to help-lines should the need arise. There are always several members of the boarding staff on duty in the evenings, and gap year assistants provide the staff with excellent support in looking after the boarders. Risk assessments are extremely thorough, fire drills occur regularly and action to be taken should a boarder go missing is clearly established. Such processes ensure that boarders' safety is given the highest priority.
- 4.33 The excellent leadership and management for boarding have a significant impact on all aspects of the provision. Pupils and parents are very well informed about boarding life through the comprehensive information in handbooks, through regular communication with the boarding staff and in regular boarding newsletters. The documentation of policies and procedures is meticulous and contains very clear guidance for the smooth running of the boarding house and any eventuality or emergency; the school has highly effective systems in place to maintain and monitor appropriate records. Boarders are enthusiastic about their lives in boarding and are aware that it helps them develop their understanding of themselves and of others.
- 4.34 Regular weekly meetings of the house staff ensure that everyone involved remains up to date with pastoral and administrative matters. Staff receive excellent induction and training opportunities to support their boarding input, and they all demonstrate a highly dedicated level of commitment towards the needs of boarders. Senior boarding staff, in partnership with involved senior managers, have excellent vision for improvement and they ensure that boarders are cared for outstandingly well.
- 4.35 In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents report that their children thoroughly enjoy the boarding experience and much appreciate the support provided by the staff responsible for their care. Likewise, in meetings and through their questionnaire responses, the boarders expressed high levels of satisfaction with their boarding life. The inspection team is in agreement with the views expressed.

- 4.36 Since the previous inspection, through a temporary solution, the school has addressed the recommendation to provide a dedicated common room for boarders pending the planned establishment of a permanent new space in the near future.

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 governing body provides extremely effective oversight of the school. Its members, several of whom are former pupils or former parents, show immense commitment to the school and its aims. They successfully fulfil their responsibilities for high educational standards, and for efficient financial planning. Since the previous inspection in 2009, they have continued to ensure carefully considered and planned investment in the school to provide, as the school has grown, further classroom accommodation with resources and facilities of high quality, and increased provision for ICT, games and the performing arts. Pupils benefit from stimulating classrooms, attractive play areas and well-kept grounds and sports fields, all of which give them excellent educational and recreational opportunities.
- 5.3 The governing body with its broad and valuable range of experience and expertise has a clear insight into the working and future development of the school through the work of its committees, through regular updates and reports from the headmaster and through its monitoring and appraisal arrangements. Specific governors have a particular responsibility for the EYFS, for boarding and for safeguarding. The EYFS governor visits regularly to gain further insight. Governors are welcome visitors who are in a position to offer support, challenge and offer constructive contributions in many areas. As a new chairman, extremely aware of the responsibilities of governance, takes up his position, the high expectations of the board will continue to challenge and guide the development of the school.
- 5.4 The responsibilities held by the governing body for statutory requirements, which include welfare, health and safety arrangements and child protection, are taken extremely seriously and an annual review of safeguarding procedures is carried out as required.

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 At all levels of responsibility, the leadership and management of the school are highly effective in achieving the aims of the school, and creating an ethos which promotes respect for others and for democracy. The school's desire to put individual children at the heart of all its decision-making is fundamental to its success and guides all its policies and their implementation. At their different levels of responsibility, members of the senior management team are very effective overall. They act in accordance with the aims of the school to fulfil their delegated responsibilities and, in the best interests of the pupils, they do so particularly successfully in the vital areas of policy implementation for the safeguarding of pupils, safe recruitment, welfare and health and safety, including in the EYFS.
- 5.7 Excellent leadership is provided through successful commitment to, and passion for excellence, in education. This is evident in the clear overall educational direction provided. High aspirations and a comprehensive vision, strongly supported by the

governors, result in the high quality of the leadership and of the management. This leads to the pupils' excellent personal development and their high levels of achievement, which enable their entry to senior schools of their choice, often with scholarships and other awards.

- 5.8 Senior management continually and successfully evaluate their policies and planning, set priorities and monitor the implementation and progress of their plans. The school development plan is comprehensive and based on information from the different sections and subjects; the most important targets are identified and prioritised, linked to the budget, and those responsible steadily work towards their achievement.
- 5.9 A major strength of the leadership and management is their appointment, in all areas of the school, of high quality staff who acknowledge the importance of meeting the needs of all pupils, and embrace the school's philosophy of children coming first and the preservation of childhood. Arrangements and training for safeguarding, safe recruitment and for welfare, health and safety are carefully carried out and efficient records are kept. These arrangements also apply to governors. Appraisal, professional development and relevant and regular in-service training are other important factors in the success of the school.
- 5.10 Improvements have been brought about purposefully and successfully over recent years in areas such as staff development, learning support, communication, and resources, including access to ICT throughout the school. The latter has brought many benefits and, by Year 8, pupils use tablet computers very competently in projects for Common Entrance examinations. The school has met the recommendations of the previous report to improve the monitoring of the curriculum and to introduce a more collaborative approach to short-term planning across departments and within year groups, as well as to improve access to ICT for individual pupils' work and research in the most senior years.
- 5.11 At middle management level, development plans are drawn up, which then link into the overall school plan, in which priorities are identified and costed, and timescales set for their achievement. The expansion in ICT has resulted in the introduction of a comprehensive system of assessment to measure the pupils' ability, attainment and progress; the analysis of the resulting data is valuable to the teaching staff and is increasingly used in reporting to parents. In other areas, such as marking, policies are not yet fully embedded. Monitoring of teaching through lesson observation and work scrutiny has been introduced; it is carefully planned but is not yet fully in operation. A regular appraisal system, which includes lesson observation, is valued by staff.
- 5.12 The leadership and management of the EYFS are excellent. Senior leaders monitor and evaluate the education and welfare provision. There is effective evaluation of practice, establishing how improvements can be made. A nursery opened in January 2015 and the development of an 'outdoor' classroom has enabled the recommendation of the previous inspection, to consider ways of additionally enhancing the opportunities for planned outdoor learning, to be met. Further development is planned to enhance outdoor provision, and an online system for recording and assessing children's progress has been introduced.
- 5.13 EYFS staff meet regularly to plan and assess the children's progress and development. An effective programme of appraisals linked to professional development ensures that staff are well-trained and this has a positive impact on

children's learning and personal development. Staff appreciate the opportunities provided for individual meetings with senior managers when they can receive coaching and discuss any issues that may arise.

- 5.14 The EYFS setting has excellent and extremely productive partnerships with parents and external agencies, which ensure children receive all the support they need. Parents can view and contribute to their children's online 'Learning Journals.' Informal daily contacts, reading records and home-school books all actively engage them further in their children's learning. Responses to the pre-inspection parents' questionnaires confirm their overwhelming appreciation of the setting. Parents of children in Reception receive written reports at the end of the autumn and summer terms and a progress report in the spring term. At present, these do not always clearly identify the characteristics of effective learning or the next steps for learning and development.
- 5.15 The quality of links with parents is excellent. The overwhelming majority of parental questionnaires and responses from interviews were highly positive. Parents particularly value how happy and safe their child is and how well looked after children are in school, the range of subjects offered, and the excellent number of extra-curricular activities available. They were highly complimentary about the strength of the leadership and management of the school. They particularly praised the happy family atmosphere, and how carefully the older children looked after the younger children. The high standard of the catering was also mentioned.
- 5.16 There are increasing opportunities for parents to be actively involved in the work and progress of their children. A few parents were not satisfied with the information they received about their child's progress; however, half-termly effort and achievement grades and bi-annual parents' evenings and termly reports provide detailed information on the progress and personal development of each pupil. In the most helpful reports, targets are set out and enable parents and pupils to identify the next stage of learning. However, this good practice is not consistent across all year groups and subjects.
- 5.17 A comprehensive website provides current and prospective parents with the required information about school and its policies and links to the Cumnor app. E-mails and texts are in regular use and communication with parents is enhanced by 'home-school' books and reading records. Social events such as the daily coffee and croissants, magnificent weekly match teas, the recent charming Mothers' Day tea party and activities such as Mums' netball, Dads' football, tennis lessons and dance exercise classes strengthen the existing very good links between school and home.
- 5.18 The school maintains a highly constructive relationship with parents and handles any concerns with care and consideration according to its published procedures. In interviews, parents expressed their satisfaction that staff are so readily available to speak with them and attend to concerns as they arise. As a result the vast majority of concerns are dealt with swiftly and informally. The school has a clear and appropriate complaints procedure.

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