



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

FARRINGTONS SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Farringtons School

Full Name of School	Farringtons School
DfE Number	305/6007
Registered Charity Number	307916
Address	Farringtons School Perry Street Chislehurst Kent BR7 6LR
Telephone Number	020 8467 0256
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Email Address	head@farringtons.kent.sch.uk
Head	Mrs Catherine James
Chair of Governors	Mr David Chaundler OBE
Age Range	3 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	649
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (285 boys; 364 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 0 5-11: 228 3-5 (EYFS): 65 11-18: 356
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 586
Number of Boarders	Total: 63 Full: 60 Weekly: 3
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Carole Williams
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	4th to 7th December 2012

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in November 2009.

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.

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.

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.

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 chair of governors and other governors and trustees, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Ian Newton	Reporting Inspector
Mr Neil Gabriel	Team Inspector (Head, HMC/IAPS Junior School)
Ms Susan Rix	Team Inspector (Former Head, Society of Heads School)
Mr Richard Mannix	Team Inspector (Senior Master, HMC School)
Mr Gareth Price	Team Inspector (Headmaster, Society of Heads School)
Mrs Cathy Williamson	Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, GSA School)
Ms Alana Davidson	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Miss Jacqueline Scotney	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Farringtons School was founded in 1911 as a boarding school for the daughters of Methodist missionaries. It is set in 25 acres of parkland, bordering a nature reserve on the outskirts of Chislehurst, in Kent. In the late 1990s it merged with a local girls' day school, and between 2004 and 2012 it developed into a co-educational school for pupils between the ages of three and eighteen. Pupils are mainly of white British origin, but are also drawn from a wide range of other ethnicities. The school is now largely a day school, for the children of professional families in north Kent and south east London. In addition, there are around 70 boarders, mainly from the Far East, but with others from a range of countries including Britain. The overseas pupils include some who spend three years in the sixth form, with the first year largely devoted to improving their competence in English and mathematics, whilst gaining an introduction to AS-level courses in which they may later be interested.
- 1.2 The school is within the Methodist Independent Schools Trust, which acts as its proprietor. However, almost all aspects of governance, apart from the most significant financial decisions, are delegated to the school's governing body. The current head has been in post since 1999. Since the previous inspection, the school has extended co-education into almost all years and introduced boarding for boys; it has reviewed its management structure, developed additional sports facilities and extended its local minibuss service.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, the school had a total of 649 pupils. Of these, 65 were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for pupils from age three to age five. A further 228 pupils in Years 1 to 6 made up the total of 293 pupils in the junior school. The senior school contained 356 pupils aged eleven to eighteen. In the school as a whole, girls slightly outnumbered boys. The analysis of standardised tests showed that the range of pupils' abilities is in line with the national average. The school had 119 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom two had statements of need; of these 64 were receiving individual or small group support. There were 92 pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), of whom 58 received support.
- 1.4 The school aims to provide the best education for every pupil within a supportive Christian environment, while upholding qualities of loyalty, tolerance and respect for others and pursuing Gospel values. It seeks to ensure that every pupil attains their academic potential. It pursues academic rigour, and strives for self-improvement, encouraging initiative, creativity and tenacity in the search for personal growth. It aims to stimulate curiosity, critical awareness, leadership and responsibility, as well as fairness, trust and confidence in dealings with others. It seeks close links between parents, pupils and staff, and offers a wide variety of extra-curricular pursuits, enabling pupils to face the challenges of higher education and employment.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school in EYFS is shown in the following table; in other years the school uses NC nomenclature.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	Age of children
Pre-reception 1	3
Pre-reception 2	3 to 4
Reception	4 to 5

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The pupils achieve good standards overall. High standards in literacy underpin much of the pupils' work across the curriculum. From the EYFS onwards, pupils are creative, have an excellent grasp of number, develop excellent research skills and analyse data well. High standards are achieved outside class, for example in acting and music, and in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE). The pupils obtain good results at both GCSE and A level. Progress is good throughout the school, with pupils with SEND and EAL receiving excellent support both individually and in class. The pupils in both parts of the school are excellent learners, who are enthusiastic about lessons and who work well both independently and with others. Their progress is supported by a good curriculum throughout the junior school, and by excellent provision in the senior school; the range of extra-curricular activities is excellent throughout, enabling pupils to extend their interests across a rich variety of areas. The quality of teaching is excellent overall, making use of a wide range of teaching methods in almost all lessons, meeting pupils' differing needs and abilities extremely well and combining a brisk pace with excellent relationships in class. Assessment is good, with thorough and constructive feedback and developing use of assessment data, although this is not yet consistent.
- 2.2 Pupils' excellent personal development reflects the school's Christian foundation. Pupils are at ease with themselves and with each other, showing respect for others and an appreciation of diversity, both within the school and within the wider community. They take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils benefit from an excellent programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE), called well-being, which develops their self-awareness well. This high quality of personal development is supported by excellent pastoral care throughout the school, including in the EYFS. Relationships between staff and pupils are outstanding, and pupils are confident that any difficulties amongst them will be resolved. Pupils' views are recognised through well-run school councils in both sections of the school. Arrangements for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety are excellent, and staff receive the training that is required; arrangements for recruiting staff are more robust than at the time of the previous ISI and Ofsted inspections. Boarders are well cared for and boarding contributes to their excellent self-confidence and self-sufficiency. Pupils say that they enjoy being at the school.
- 2.3 The school is supported by excellent governance. Governors have a clear insight into the school and provide effective oversight, including of welfare, health and safety. They provide particular input into areas of development or difficulty. The quality of leadership and management is good, and clearly conveys the school's commitment to creating an inclusive community centred on Christian principles. The school has managed changing leadership roles well, but in some areas the leadership structure is not yet fully defined; similarly, there is good practice in coaching and mentoring but appraisal is not carried out consistently. Development planning is improved and teaching more consistent than at the time of the previous inspection. Relationships with parents are excellent and they were, in general, highly positive about the school in the questionnaires; concerns expressed by a minority, about reporting, the handling of concerns and challenge for more able pupils were not borne out during the inspection.

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. Ensure that all leadership and management roles are clearly defined and supported fully by appraisal and consistent job descriptions.
 2. Develop leadership roles in the EYFS further by providing time for management roles to be undertaken.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is good.
- 3.2 In the EYFS, children make rapid progress in relation to their abilities, showing substantial progress in writing. The youngest children are confident when hearing initial sounds in familiar words, whilst Reception children write their own sentences in a class book. Numeracy skills are good; some older children recognise, write and sequence numerals to 30, whilst younger children complete number recognition programmes independently. The children show a passion for learning; throughout the EYFS they are fully engaged in their chosen activities. Children interact well with each other; they talk confidently, and think critically when posing questions.
- 3.3 Junior school pupils achieve good standards overall; literacy skills are excellent. By Year 6, they have an extremely good grasp of genre, simile and metaphor. In mathematics, they develop quick mental skills and by Year 5 understand terms such as factors and integers. They ask and answer simple questions in French, show a good grasp of mechanisms in technology and show creativity in art and drama. They use well-developed ball-handling skills in physical education (PE). They use information and communication technology well and apply logic to solving problems.
- 3.4 Senior school pupils achieve excellent standards in many lessons and good standards overall. They build upon excellent language skills at GCSE, by discussing linguistic concepts in depth at A level. Excellent manipulative skills in GCSE mathematics lay the foundations for a first-class understanding of difficult concepts later. The pupils show significant creativity in art and textiles; their well-informed still life works reflect artists they have studied. Pupils apply their knowledge in history and science to unfamiliar situations, making key connections between ideas. They show good skills in physical activities. In drama, they listen carefully to ideas that improve both movement and mannerisms, thus developing characterisation well. They use excellent research skills in advanced projects, for example on the distribution of aid in Malawi, as well as in more practical projects such as puppetry in drama.
- 3.5 Outside class, pupils convey meaning through acting and singing, and show skill in taekwondo. Their considerable success in music and speaking examinations is extended through high standards of performance in school. They perform well in regional and national competitions in sport. Many achieve in the DofE, some at gold level. Much success is achieved in mathematics competitions. The great majority of pupils gain places at universities of their choice.
- 3.6 The following analysis relates to the years 2009 to 2011, the most recent years for which comparative data is available. In GCSE, results have been above the national average for girls in maintained schools; just over a third are at A* or A grade level, nearly twice the national average. A-level results have been similar to the national average for girls in maintained schools. In 2011, nearly three-fifths of girls gained A*, A or B grades, compared with a national average of one half. This level of attainment suggests that pupils make good progress in relation to their ability to GCSE level. Pupils continue to progress well into the sixth form. These judgements are confirmed by inspection evidence. Both pupils and their parents are pleased with the progress that pupils make.

- 3.7 Substantial support enables pupils with SEND to progress well, in developing both language and numeracy skills. Pupils with EAL make good progress in gaining an increased understanding of English as a result of support from pupils as well as from teachers. Gifted pupils progress well; for example, excellent project work at A level shows an exceptional ability to research, process and analyse data.
- 3.8 Pupils in both sections of the school are excellent students, and clearly enjoy their lessons. EYFS children learn actively through play, are well motivated and show considerable concentration. Junior pupils are also enthusiastic learners, who show concentration and work together effectively. Their work is well presented, and they express themselves clearly both on paper and in class. They work independently and show initiative. Pupils can be passionate in class discussion but respect others' views. They make excellent use of the internet and other sources for research. The best research shows commitment, dedication and careful analysis but, on occasion, the range of sources is too narrow. In a few lessons, pupils settle slowly, but then work hard. They work extremely well with their peers and provide a lot of support to each other. They ask and answer questions, developing a better understanding in the process. Older pupils, in particular, evaluate their progress sensibly.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.10 EYFS provision is good overall, with excellent features. Children's needs are met well. The topic-based programmes make learning fun and interesting. For example, in Reception, the topic of transport was carefully woven into enjoyable activities that covered all the areas of learning.
- 3.11 In the rest of the junior school, the quality of the curriculum is good, and contributes well to pupils' learning and achievements. The strong emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills results in high standards. A broad and balanced range of other subjects is also taught. Throughout the school, pupils benefit from specialist teaching in many subjects. In Years 1 and 2, they respond extremely well to the more thematic approach, for example in the topics on Ourselves and on Plants.
- 3.12 The senior school offers an excellent, broad and balanced curriculum. A carousel of creative subjects in Year 7 and Year 8, and then option choices in Year 9 introduce pupils to graphic design, resistant materials, art, textiles and ceramics, so that they are better informed about GCSE choices. GCSEs in English, mathematics, double award science, PE and religious studies, together with well-being, are taken by all pupils; separate sciences are also available. The flexible option system ensures that most, if not all, pupils can study their chosen courses. The appointment of a literacy co-ordinator and upgrading of the library have supported the special focus on literacy well. Careers support, including preparation for choosing GCSEs and applying for higher education, is focused successfully on individual pupils' needs. Since the previous inspection, GCSEs in resistant materials and graphic design, and advanced courses in photography and government and politics have been introduced. The sixth-form curriculum provides an excellent range of subjects, enriched with general studies, extended project qualifications, business enterprise, DofE and world aims forum discussions.
- 3.13 The exemplary well-being programme ranges from relationship problems to a healthy lifestyle and money management for university. It is well planned, age appropriate and encourages self-awareness. Tutors adapt it to pupils' needs; for

example, Year 6 pupils' concerns about moving to senior school are incorporated into Year 7 sessions. The course is well resourced and pastoral leaders are kept free to teach sessions, monitor teaching and provide support.

- 3.14 Throughout the school, the pupils' education is enhanced by an excellent variety of activities, trip and visits, about which pupils and parents were extremely positive. In the junior school, activities include taekwondo, chess and photography, alongside the Ready to Read Club. In the senior school, they range from the eco club to a war-gaming society, and from the fair trade shop to Columbian dance. Pupils' involvement is excellent, and staff are enthusiastic and committed. The curriculum in both parts of the school is greatly enhanced by many trips: Year 2 pupils enjoyed visits to the zoo and the toy museum, Year 6 pupils enjoyed trips to the theatre, and sixth-form photographers visited the Museum of London. Residential trips took Year 5 pupils to France and Year 11 English pupils to Stratford upon Avon.
- 3.15 Throughout the school, individual pupils' needs are supported extremely effectively. In the junior school, pupils' learning plans, for those with SEND, support next steps in learning well, enabling good progress. Similarly, senior school learning plans support teaching and set targets to meet individual pupils' needs. Staff share information regularly and pupils with SEND speak warmly of the support they receive. Annual reviews are carried out for pupils with statements and outside agencies, such as educational psychologists and speech therapists, are involved in the review; as a result, pupils' needs are met well.
- 3.16 EAL provision is outstanding. Both junior and senior pupils make excellent progress because of skilful support in class, coupled with excellent individual or small-group teaching for senior pupils. In addition, all senior EAL pupils have a member of staff as a 'conversation partner'. A new one-year personalised learning course, for EAL pupils joining the sixth form, greatly enhances these pupils' integration, through the focus on English and mathematics in the first year before they start fully on advanced courses. They benefit from activities such as writing reports for the school newspapers and magazines, and from taking an English language qualification.
- 3.17 The school makes better provision for pupils who are gifted or talented than in the previous inspection. These pupils are challenged by activities which are well matched to their individual needs.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.18 The quality of teaching is excellent overall.
- 3.19 In the EYFS, the effective balance of activities led by adults and those chosen by children allows children to explore, investigate and be creative. Staff know children very well and plan activities for their interests and needs. In particular, this helps younger children settle into school quickly and enables pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, to achieve well according to their starting points. These activities provide suitable challenge. Teachers use a wide range of good quality resources effectively.
- 3.20 Throughout the school, the great majority of teaching is well planned, incorporates a wide variety of activities, and sets out clear connections between learning objectives and the lesson's focus. Pupils are very positive about the way teachers help them to learn. The best lessons, especially in the junior school, are based on planning in which the next steps are clearly identified. In the most imaginative teaching, teachers use devices such as games and role plays to enliven pupils' learning. Only

occasionally is teaching too focused on input from the teacher, or does it use worksheets too frequently. In contrast, excellent teaching places pupils at the centre of their learning, engaging them in independent and collaborative work in which they contribute much to their understanding, and think for themselves. Resources are used well, including interactive whiteboards and innovative models.

- 3.21 The great majority of teaching caters extremely well for pupils' differing needs and abilities. In some lessons, pupils are enabled to perform at different levels in response to the same task; in others, tasks of different difficulty provide suitable challenge and support. For example, many junior lessons involved tasks at three levels of difficulty and senior lessons frequently offered more challenging questions for some and extension work for others. Carefully structured prompts and individual support provide additional support for pupils who find work particularly hard. The pupils with SEND or EAL, including those with statements, are well supported, enabling them to progress well, especially in their grasp of language.
- 3.22 A high proportion of lessons proceed with a brisk pace and sense of purpose, which keeps pupils on task and supports good behaviour. Teachers combine firm management with excellent relationships, chairing lively discussions and offering encouragement and praise. As a result, there is a positive and relaxed atmosphere in class. Only occasionally does a lesson lack in pace, or do pupils lose interest. Teaching shows excellent subject knowledge, explanations to be clear and learning relevant.
- 3.23 Since the previous inspection, assessment procedures have been improved. In the EYFS, next steps are set in all areas of learning, and close links with the local authority is supporting further target setting. The staff undertake regular assessments, based initially on information from parents regarding children's interests and needs. These assessments inform planning well, enable pupils' progress to be tracked and make staff aware of how the children learn.
- 3.24 In the junior school, much valuable assessment takes place. Marking is thorough and constructive, indicating how pupils can improve; on occasions, pupils are asked to self-assess their work. Longer-term targets are set and pupils are regularly assessed through standardised reading, spelling and cognitive aptitude tests; however, this information is not used fully to track and analyse progress.
- 3.25 Assessment is consistently good in the senior school, with much high-quality, detailed and informative marking. Standardised entry assessments are used effectively in setting initial targets for pupils. Regular testing is used to review both predicted and target grades, and to plan further work; self and peer assessment are used frequently. Although pupils' progress is monitored well, the use of data for tracking is not yet fully established.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 The children in EYFS are an integral part of the junior school. Reception children appreciated joining older pupils for the 'special mention assembly'. In this, children share their achievements with others across the junior school and learn the importance of respect. Children thus gain an insight into the expectations of older pupils. As a result, children are well prepared for their move into Year 1.
- 4.3 Throughout the school, pupils' spiritual development is outstanding. Pupils of all faiths and none appreciate the opportunities for contemplation, prayer and reflection. They develop a sense of their own worth, feeling that they are valued and nurtured. They absorb the school's values of respect, tolerance and service. Pupils explore their beliefs in chapel and assemblies; they say that they enjoy chapel and feel included. Some pupils attend a course exploring Christianity further, and pupils of other faiths may attend their place of worship at weekends. The pupils benefit from the ethos of respect and care for the individual, and grow into confident and caring young people. They are intellectually curious, creative, and have a sense of wonder.
- 4.4 Pupils of all ages develop strong moral values. They exhibit high standards of behaviour and respect for their peers and teachers. They demonstrate concern for people who are in need through fund raising for charity and practical service in the community; for example, they raise funds for a local nursery for children with SEND.
- 4.5 Pupils' excellent social development ensures that pupils of all ages, genders, ethnic and religious and social groupings work and play happily together. They respect each other's opinions, even when they disagree. Day and boarding pupils share positive attitudes, ensuring a happy and harmonious atmosphere. Pupils are unfailingly polite and mature. They willingly take responsibility for younger pupils, and for those who are new to the school. They participate enthusiastically in school councils, house meetings, clubs and societies where they frequently take responsibility for organising meetings. Inspection evidence did not support the criticism by a minority in their questionnaire responses that there are too few opportunities for responsibility and that the school does not listen to their views. Pupils are aware of wider issues of citizenship; for example some take part in the Model United Nations.
- 4.6 The pupils' cultural development is outstanding. Pupils who come from a wide variety of different cultures say that within a very short time they feel completely accepted. Cultural differences are celebrated and enrich the experience of all pupils. Pupils share their different heritages through extra-curricular activities and at events which range from language breakfasts to fashion shows and from an English club to the celebration of Divali. Pupils benefit from a wide range of cultural visits to theatres, museums, and places of scientific and historical interest. Junior pupils painted pictures in the style of the French impressionists and Year 6 pupils made an attractive display of tiles in the style of William Morris. Sixth-form pupils take part in overseas trips to Andalusia and Malawi.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent throughout the school.
- 4.8 Almost all pupils like being at the school. Pupils to whom inspectors spoke did not agree, on the whole, with criticisms by a minority in their questionnaire responses that teachers were unfair with rewards and sanctions, or that any bullying was not well handled. Parents were almost unanimous in praise for the care their children receive.
- 4.9 In the EYFS, the choice of key person enables children to make secure attachments to staff; the youngest children's key person is the staff member that they are most comfortable with. Staff provide positive role models; this, alongside well-established rules and routines provides children with clear boundaries enabling them to behave well and keep safe. Throughout the EYFS, children are encouraged to deal personally with their hygiene; they wash their hands before and after eating. Reception children make healthy choices when choosing their lunches. Children show a keen interest in exercise and even the youngest can discuss the rules of football.
- 4.10 Both junior and senior pupils feel happy, valued and cared for. Teachers know pupils well, encourage them to take advantage of all the school offers and support them in their work. Relationships are excellent between pupils and staff and amongst the pupils. Pupils feel that they have someone to turn to. Older pupils value the opportunity to talk to the school counsellor. Rewards and sanctions are appropriate. Pupils are clear on the code of conduct and are supportive of the high standards of behaviour expected. Bullying is rare; pupils say that they know who to turn to and are confident that incidents will be dealt with swiftly and fairly. Appropriate records are kept of any incidents of unpleasantness that occur.
- 4.11 The school has an appropriate plan to improve access for pupils with SEND. Those with SEND or EAL are fully integrated into the school and teachers have high aspirations for them. Individuals are given appropriate help and regular contact is maintained with parents.
- 4.12 Pupils are encouraged to be healthy and teachers discuss food choices with them. Meals are nutritious and generally enjoyed; the staff monitor pupils sensitively in the dining room so that potential problems can be averted. PE is compulsory for all and pupils appreciate the wide variety of sporting activities on offer.
- 4.13 Active school councils in both junior and senior schools give pupils a voice. Year 2 pupils were delighted to have secured new toys for their play area. Senior pupils were pleased with the improved queuing system for lunch. Questionnaires are provided for leavers from the senior school, and senior pupils have use of an anonymous concerns box.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.15 The school complies fully with the requirements for safeguarding children and has robust procedures for safe recruitment and for training staff in child protection. The central record of staff appointments is now accurate and up-to-date, meeting previous recommendations. The governing body receives termly anonymised reports on any child protection incidents so that it can review how they have been handled. There is a designated person for child protection for early years, where staff have appropriate checks and training.
- 4.16 The school has comprehensive arrangements for preventing and responding to fire; all recent recommendations have been addressed and proper records are kept of drills and equipment checks. Similarly, arrangements for health and safety are thorough, and risk assessments are carried out where necessary. Suitable arrangements ensure pupils' safety on site. The EYFS children are extremely well cared for by staff who provide for both their care and learning needs. The children's well-being is fostered through effective on-going health and safety routines. Staff carry out regular risk assessments, placing children's safety as their first priority; for example, the outdoor area was checked prior to children playing outside to see if it was slippery following an earlier snow shower.
- 4.17 Pupils who are ill or injured are properly cared for. The medical centre is well staffed and staff qualifications maintained. Appropriate action is taken to record and report incidents. The appointment of a school counsellor has ensured high quality support for pupils who are experiencing particular emotional difficulties. Attendance and admission registers are properly compiled and backed up.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.18 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.19 Only a small number of boarders responded to the questionnaire. The great majority were positive about their experience. A few were critical of aspects of boarding but these concerns were not borne out during the inspection. The small number of parents who responded were almost entirely positive about their children's experience.
- 4.20 The boarders' excellent personal development and self-confidence result from their boarding experience. Younger boarders take pride in mastering new skills such as knitting and chess, and in becoming more self-reliant. Year 13 pupils appreciate doing their own laundry and cooking in preparation for life at university. Boarders form firm friendships, placing great value on mixing with and learning from people from different cultures, and on the way that their social skills have developed. The school is committed to inclusive education, and tolerance and respect underpin daily life. The boarders feel that they are all treated equally regardless of gender or nationality. Boarders with EAL confirm that they do not feel isolated. There is strong support for boarders with SEND and the school works well with outside agencies for their benefit. The boarders enjoy being part of their community and make a significant contribution to it. Their views are secured via weekly meetings, which inform school council discussions; pupils say that this works well. Pupils say that prefects are supportive and that they feel comfortable going to them with any problems. The boarders enjoy excellent relationships with staff, and have a good

choice of adults to whom they may turn. They have easy access to information about events in the world outside, for example through the internet and television.

- 4.21 The quality of care for the boarders is excellent overall. House staff follow pupils' academic progress carefully, have regular contact with parents and guardians, and are easily available. Records of communication between academic and boarding staff are properly maintained. The boarders are encouraged to integrate fully with their fellows; the school provides an appropriate and supportive induction process for new boarders according to their age and nationality. Boarders know that they can contact the independent listener, the Children's Rights Director or other helplines, should the need arise. The medical centre provides good quality facilities for any boarders who are ill and boarders have easy access to outside medical provision should it be needed. The school nurse is on call at all times, including at night. In addition, house parents hold first aid qualifications and are trained to issue household remedies; they keep appropriate records and keep the school nurse informed. Health and safety arrangements, and fire procedures, ensure that boarders are protected from harm. Many house staff are trained as fire marshals and all the recommendations made in the last fire inspection have been implemented. Fire drills in boarding time are held at least once a term and appropriate records maintained. The school has appropriate arrangements for knowing boarders' whereabouts; boarders sign out of their respective houses and indicate where they are going. Food is good, with a wide range of choices and care is taken to cater for pupils with special dietary needs. The school has successfully addressed issues with the preparation of food within the constraints of the current building, and the construction of a new purpose-built kitchen is due to commence in February 2013.
- 4.22 Boarding accommodation is comfortable and secure with large common rooms, well-equipped kitchens for preparing drinks and snacks, and good washing and toilet facilities. The school provides the opportunity for boarders to personalise their areas, but only a minority do so. It has an efficient system for laundering boarders' clothes and safes in the houses ensure the security of boarders' valuables. The school supplies stationery, and boarders use local shops to purchase anything else they need. A comprehensive range of activities is open to both boarders and day school pupils after school; house staff also organise activities that match boarders' specific interests. The good programme of weekend activities includes visits to London, Hastings and Canterbury, as well as to theatres, museums and theme parks. Common rooms are available for relaxation, as are boarders' own rooms. Boarders can contact their parents easily, and telephone booths ensure privacy. The school has an appropriate procedure for dealing with any complaints.
- 4.23 Procedures for the welfare and safeguarding of boarders are excellent. The school has proper procedures for recruiting staff, and the central register is accurately maintained and more robust than at the previous inspection. There are no additional members of staff families living on site in the boarding houses. The good behaviour policy, to which all subscribe, has a transparent system of rewards and sanctions which is understood by the boarders. Rewards include outings and sanctions may be going early to bed or removal of a laptop. Pupils do not see bullying as an issue and say that they are encouraged by staff to seek resolution for any differences of opinion. There is appropriate induction and support for new boarding staff. Staff appraisal consists of an annual review meeting with the head of boarding. Professional training is available if staff wish to attend, and the school is aware of the need to provide more staff training and development in future. Pupils are well supervised and the school has an appropriate missing persons policy, although it

has not been needed. Houses are properly staffed overnight and pupils have appropriate access to staff should they need it.

- 4.24 The quality of leadership and management is good overall, despite some weaknesses in structure and communication. The good quality of care for boarders is underpinned by committed and experienced leadership to boarding as a whole, but the lack of time for delegation and sound management mean that some roles within boarding are not fully developed, as the school is aware. The school has a statement of its aims for boarding, and effective senior management has maintained the standard of provision during times of considerable change. There are effective links between boarding and day school staff. Policies are up to date and reviewed regularly; appropriate records are maintained. Boarding houses run smoothly from day to day.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Governors provide first-class oversight of the school, both in terms of the quality and standards of the education it provides and in areas of finance, staffing and resources. Governors bring a wide range of appropriate experience and expertise to their work; education is well represented. Governors provide excellent support, guidance and challenge to all areas of the school. They receive detailed reports from the head, which include reports from some, although not all heads of department, enabling them to monitor progress and make informed decisions about strategy and implementation. Annual away-days enable them to consider issues in more depth. Individual governors have given valuable support to specific areas of the school such as the junior school; others support the school in areas such as safeguarding, health and safety. Governors have a strong relationship with the EYFS; staff in this area particularly appreciate their involvement and their willingness to listen to their needs. They enjoy a good deal of informal contact with staff and also hear directly from heads of department at their meetings.
- 5.3 Governors give careful attention to reviewing matters of safeguarding, welfare, health and safety, for example reviewing child protection arrangements each term. In turn they provide information enabling the trustees to fulfil their obligation in these areas as well. Shortcomings in regulatory compliance have now been addressed.

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

- 5.4 The overall quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is good.
- 5.5 The school's leadership and management are committed to its aims of creating an inclusive community, centred on principles of respect and tolerance and providing education in a holistic manner that challenges all pupils. A senior management team (SMT) consisting of the headmistress, bursar and the heads of the senior and junior schools meets weekly and maintains a clear sense of values for the school. It has a strong vision for the school, which is supported by the staff, reflecting a real energy and desire for success. All staff have appropriate training in child protection, welfare, health and safety, as well as enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks; arrangements for staff recruitment are now more robust than at the time of the previous inspection.
- 5.6 Leadership and management of the EYFS are good, meeting all of the safeguarding and welfare requirements and having effective systems that keep children safe and ensure that they are treated equally. Child protection is taken extremely seriously, and there is a designated child protection officer for early years. Since the last inspection, the management of the EYFS has been through considerable change. Although still in its infancy, the new management is fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the setting, and is ambitious for improvement. Procedures for staff supervision and continual professional development have a positive impact. The existing systems for self-evaluation, development planning and appraisal are not yet

fully effective; however, the management has plans to develop these systems further. The setting is well resourced and resources are used well.

- 5.7 In the junior school, recent changes in leadership mean that a permanent management team is not yet formalised and some aspects of leadership are in transition; however, year group and subject co-ordinators make a valuable contribution under the leadership of the new head. In the senior school, the senior leadership team (SLT) meets weekly, containing the head of the senior school and the three assistant heads of teaching and learning, pastoral care and enrichment. This group is successful in driving forward academic and pastoral initiatives and plays a major part in evaluating their progress. Their leadership is much appreciated by staff and results in good achievement and strong personal development by pupils, alongside significant developments in assessment.
- 5.8 Since the previous inspection, a five-year strategic development plan has been produced by the governors and, in the senior school, a more specific, annual school development plan for the curriculum is produced by the SLT. Both provide a clearer sense of direction. The junior school leadership is in the process of preparing a new development plan, which will seek to formalise much of the good work of the pastoral and subject co-ordinators, reflected in the excellent attitudes of junior pupils.
- 5.9 The school now has appropriate systems for safer recruitment, and the staff are well qualified and hard working. The school has good schemes for mentoring and coaching, especially for newly qualified teachers. However, there is a lack of clarity in some areas, such as job descriptions, which are not always sufficiently specific and fully understood by staff. Following the last report, a formal system of appraisal operating on a two-year cycle was put in place for both the junior and senior schools but has not yet been implemented consistently.
- 5.10 In the senior school, departmental reviews involve middle managers monitoring their staff and then discussing their report with one of the assistant heads. Work scrutinies are carried out annually by senior staff. Both these programmes enable the school to evaluate teaching and learning, and set priorities and targets. In the junior school, peer observation provides a useful opportunity to share good practice. A greater level of individual responsibility has been introduced within the non-teaching staff, encouraging a sense of teamwork and enabling a clear vision of the site's development.
- 5.11 In response to previous recommendations, the school has made substantial progress in assessment. This has been supported by a good programme of in-service training, focusing on topics such as adapting to different learning styles. The school has ample data, but the tracking of pupils is not yet fully developed and this is a key objective in the current development plan.
- 5.12 Appropriate policies and procedures for the curriculum and pastoral care are implemented in the senior school, with ambitious plans for further development. In the junior school, policies are in place but junior school leadership recognises the need for further development.
- 5.13 Links with parents are excellent. Responses to the parents' pre-inspection questionnaire were extremely positive, reflecting satisfaction with most aspects of the education and support their children receive. A few parents felt that they did not receive sufficient information about their child's progress, that very able pupils did not receive appropriate support and that the school did not handle concerns well. Inspectors found that parents receive good reports that detail their child's progress

well, and are invited to regular parent-teacher meetings. In the great majority of cases, able children receive very good support and in the sample of correspondence scrutinised, concerns were dealt with promptly and appropriately.

- 5.14 EYFS parents are overwhelmingly supportive and extremely happy with the education their children receive; the vast majority of questionnaire responses were extremely positive. Staff communicate well with parents; they are available for parents to talk to at the beginning and end of the day and they send home regular information on the topics that children are learning, as well as communication books that aid the sharing of information. Parents have good opportunities to become involved in their child's learning, for example by completing home activities with their child and assisting on trips. Staff have close relationships with parents as well as with external agencies, such as speech and language therapists. This ensures that through working together, the specific needs of children are met effectively.
- 5.15 The whole school's nurturing relationship with both children and their families is seen as a huge strength of the school by parents; they value the fact that it is a community where staff know individuals well. Parents spoken to felt that any concerns were listened to and answered promptly, in line with the school's policy and procedures.
- 5.16 Parental partnerships are an important part of school life; parents are encouraged to play a full role in their child's learning. They sign contracts to this effect and support their children in many ways; from helping with homework, and assisting on trips, to visiting school to talk about their jobs during career fairs. The parent teacher association has grown significantly during recent years. The committee organises a wide variety of well-supported social and fund-raising events for pupils and parents.
- 5.17 Relationships between families and school are fostered prior to children joining; for example, the parents of prospective pupils are invited to the school's May Ball, so they can be made welcome. Prospective parents are provided with all the information required; the inclusion of sample newsletters within the prospectus gives a real taste of life within the school. Parents of current pupils are also provided with valuable information; the welcome information booklets answer many of their questions. A wide range of communication, including newsletters, emails and text messages, ensures that parents are kept up to date with news and events.
- 5.18 Parents receive informative reports about their child's progress. They especially value the target grades, which are re-evaluated termly. Appropriate arrangements enable parents to meet staff formally and informally to discuss their child's progress.

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