



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION GOSFIELD SCHOOL

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Gosfield School

Full Name of School	Gosfield School
DfE Number	881/6010
Registered Charity Number	310871
Address	Gosfield School Halstead Road Gosfield Halstead Essex CO9 1PF
Telephone Number	01787 474040
Fax Number	01787 478228
Email Address	enquiries@gosfieldschool. org. uk
Principal	Dr Sarah Welch
Chair of Governors	Mr Peter Sakal
Age Range	4 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	219
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (133 boys; 86 girls)
Numbers by Age	4-5 (EYFS): 5 5-11: 69 11-18: 145
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 207
Number of Boarders	Total: 12 Full: 0 Weekly: 12
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Sarah Bearman
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	25 to 28 Nov 2014

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 February 2011.

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, as amended. 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.

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', 'requires improvement' 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 another governor, 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 Stephen Cole	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Krystyna Derkacz	Team Inspector (Assessment Coordinator, IAPS school)
Mr Ian Daniel	Team Inspector (Principal, ISA school)
Mr Graeme May	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, HMC school)
Mrs Susan Meek	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Ms Susan Rix	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Gosfield School aims to provide an environment within which pupils feel valued and able to achieve personal excellence in all aspects of life and one that seeks to involve staff, pupils and parents in a positive and effective partnership. It is an independent charitable trust.
- 1.2 The school was founded as a boarding school for boys on its present site near the village of Gosfield, just south of the Suffolk/Essex border. It is now a co-educational school, primarily for day pupils with a total of 12 boarders (aged 11 to 18) with girls and boys accommodated in different wings of the main building. Six pupils are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, boarding has been reintroduced for girls, and a new prep and pre-prep school is near to completion. There are 75 pupils in the junior school and 145 in the senior school, including a sixth form of 33. Fifty-two pupils have been identified as having special needs and/or disabilities (SEND) of whom 37 receive specialist support. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.4 Almost all pupils come from the local area and boarders return home at weekends. Very few have minority ethnic backgrounds. Two pupils have English as an additional language (EAL). The ability profile of the junior school is above the national average, with a wide spread of abilities and notable variations in average ability between year groups. The ability profile of the senior school in Year 7 is above the national average, with most pupils having ability that is average or above average, although with a wide spread of abilities represented. The ability profile of the senior school in Year 10 is slightly above the national average. The ability profile of the sixth form is overall below the national average.
- 1.5 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 pupils' achievements and their attitudes to learning are good. In the EYFS, children make good progress, making a good start with reading and writing. The progress of older pupils, and those in the junior school, is good, attaining at levels in line with national expectations. Results at GCSE are in line with the national pupils' average for maintained schools, representing appropriate progress, although there is a variation between subjects at GCSE. In the sixth form, the small number of candidates make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points. Pupils with SEND and EAL make good progress because of the good support they receive. Able pupils also make good progress, but opportunities to do so are not always provided in class. Pupils are successful in a range of individual and team sports, as well as in regional and national competitions including art and mathematics. Attitudes to learning are good. The curriculum in the EYFS and prep school covers all required areas, and has improved since the previous inspection. In the senior school, curriculum flexibility matches the subjects offered to the needs of the year group. The range of extra-curricular activities is limited. The needs of pupils with SEND are identified and met; those who are more able are identified, but their needs are not met in all classes. In response to the previous inspection the quality of teaching has improved and is now good. Teaching at all levels is marked by good relationships, and most is well planned and delivered at a good pace. In a few lessons, planning is less good and work does not always match the needs of the pupils well enough, particularly the more able. Assessment has improved since the previous inspection, although not all teaching makes enough use of assessment information to plan work for all pupils.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is good throughout the school. The atmosphere is calm and unhurried, with pupils at all levels behaving well and enjoying good relationships, having proper respect for people's differences. The school's arrangements promote good relationships and deal effectively with the very rare cases of bullying. Pupils have a good awareness of modern British society. Pastoral care is excellent, beginning in the EYFS with strong support from each child's key person, while older pupils feel confident that their worries will be treated seriously by staff and older pupils. Pupils of all ages understand the need for healthy lifestyles. Pupils are supported by excellent pastoral care. The school has good arrangements for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety; recommendations from the previous inspection have been implemented successfully. The quality of the boarding is good; boarders say that they feel comfortable, safe and secure.
- 2.3 The quality of governance, leadership and management is good. Governors discharge all responsibilities upon them and have been supportive of changes in response to the previous inspection. The small size of the school means that managers must carry multiple roles, but leaders and managers at all levels are focused on securing an enhanced educational experience for pupils. Staff recruitment follows official guidance, and appraisal is successful in identifying areas for development. The school enjoys good relationships with parents, almost all of whom are very positive about the school.

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 2013.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that all teaching uses assessment information to set clear targets for all pupils, including the more able, and to monitor progress towards them.
 2. Provide a wider range of extra-curricular experiences for pupils

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of achievements and learning is good.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated enabling them to move forward towards the school's aim of providing an environment where all pupils feel valued and are able to achieve personal excellence in all aspects of life.
- 3.3 In the EYFS, all children, including those with SEND or EAL and the more able, make good progress according to their starting points. Most children reach the expected levels of development by the end of the EYFS and some exceed age-related expectations. They express themselves confidently and take delight in informal role play and formal performances. They have made a good start to reading and writing and can write their own names and simple sentences with some independence. They can name 2-D and 3-D shapes and understand that shapes have different properties. They respond positively to music and can express themselves in mime and movement.
- 3.4 Pupils of all ages demonstrate good knowledge and subject skills in lessons. Pupils speak with assurance. They are confident in addressing an audience, whether in lessons, in the debating club or assemblies. They are equally courteous listeners, rarely interrupting each other in group work. Pupils read competently from an early age and demonstrate good writing skills. For example, pupils have won awards in regional and national history and essay writing competitions. Pupils apply their mathematical skills confidently in subjects such as geography and the sciences using clearly presented statistics, graphs and tables to record and analyse data. They think logically in subjects such as science. Success in art competitions, the display of art in the school and the public examination results reflect their well-developed creative skills.
- 3.5 They develop their physical skills in sports and in outdoor activities such as the DofE, the gardening club and the woodland initiative. Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively in project work and research. Last year, all pupils leaving the sixth form were successful in gaining a place at their choice of university or college.
- 3.6 Pupils are successful in individual and team sports. In 2013, 12 pupils achieved silver or bronze in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Prep school pupils have won regional competitions in science and art for the last two years and senior pupils have been successful in a national photographic competition and gained silver awards in the National Mathematics Challenge.
- 3.7 The school does not use national tests in the junior school, but inspection evidence, including lesson observation, scrutiny of work, examination of the school's records and discussion with pupils, shows that the pupils attain at levels that are in line with the national expectations for their age. In relation to their starting points, this represents good progress.
- 3.8 The following analysis uses the national data for the Years 2011 to 2013. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in GCSE have been similar to the national average for maintained schools. In 2013, results were above average and in 2014 the proportion of pupils who

achieved five grade C's or better was greater than predictions from national data. The results in IGCSE examinations are broadly in line with worldwide norms. The level of attainment at GCSE indicates that pupils make progress that is appropriate in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities, although there is a variation between subjects at GCSE. Pupils with SEND and EAL achieve and make academic progress at the same level and sometimes faster than those of similar age and ability. Attainment levels in the sixth form represent broadly satisfactory progress in relation to the pupils' starting points.

- 3.9 At all levels of the school, pupils with SEND and EAL make good progress as a result of the support that they receive. Able pupils attain at levels appropriate to their ability and make good progress when opportunities are provided in class.
- 3.10 The pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They enjoy lessons and are keen to absorb new concepts. They work with focus in groups and display high levels of concentration. Exercise books are neat and well organised. The productive learning environment is marked by the excellent classroom relationships. When they have the opportunity to do so, pupils show independence and curiosity.

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

- 3.11 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.12 Throughout the school, pupils are provided with a broad and stimulating curriculum that offers increasing challenge as pupils progress through the years. In most areas the curriculum fulfils the school's aim to meet the needs of all its pupils in a manner that stimulates, challenges, excites and encourages each of them to enjoy the opportunities available to them.
- 3.13 In the EYFS, the educational programmes fully cover the prime and specific areas of learning. The imaginative themed approach for each half term ensures that there is a balanced focus on numeracy, literacy, ICT, creative and physical skills.
- 3.14 In the prep school, the curriculum covers all the necessary elements. The introduction of a skills-based cross-curricular programme and the expansion of the woodland learning environment have implemented the recommendation of the previous report. Adjustments have also been made to the programme of study for numeracy and literacy.
- 3.15 In the senior school the curriculum is matched to the needs of individual year groups, for example providing separate sciences for a scientifically able year group. There is a strong place for the creative and practical arts in the compulsory curriculum up to Year 9 and pupils report themselves to be largely happy with the range of options available. Recently the main modern foreign language offered has switched from French to Spanish, although French is still available as an option. The course for personal, social and health education (PSHE) has also been revised under a new specialist co-ordinator, providing a continuity and quality of provision that has a positive effect on pupils' welfare. The school identifies systematically those pupils who have SEND and provides both one-to-one support and help in class. Where pupils have a statement of special educational needs, provision matches that set out in the statement. Able pupils are identified but their needs are not invariably or uniformly met in class.
- 3.16 It is a feature of the school that it attempts to adapt its A-level timetable to the desires and strengths of its pupils. For example, since the previous inspection,

human biology and economics and business have been added to the choices in the sixth form.

- 3.17 There is a good range of curriculum enrichment opportunities, from specific activity days or weeks when normal teaching activities change focus, to a number of external visits, events and competitions, such as the annual modern languages competition, mathematics challenges, science Olympiads and Gosfield's own versions of popular television programmes. Visiting speakers and museum and theatre trips enrich the educational experience.
- 3.18 Provision for careers and university planning is strong, beginning in the prep school with visitors from a variety of jobs, class visits to some work places including an airport, and the use of an external careers-linked learning resource aimed at stimulating the younger pupils' thoughts about career paths. In the senior school, there is an annual careers fair open to all pupils and a work experience scheme for Year 10. In the sixth form, students receive good advice and assistance with their higher education applications from the specialist sixth form tutor team.
- 3.19 The provision for extra-curricular activities is sound in the context of the size of the school. There are opportunities for involvement in sport, though competitive fixtures are restricted, and there is less of an offering in girls' sport in general. The range of extra-curricular activities is limited, with few opportunities to engage pupils in societies and clubs that cover school subjects as well as activities of general interest. Individual instrumental lessons allows some pupils to develop their musical talents and there are some opportunities for musical and dramatic performance in assemblies and school productions. Pupils undertake voluntary work at local Nursery schools and organise fundraising events for national and local charities. There has been a recent expedition to Laos.

3. (c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.20 The quality of teaching is good.
- 3.21 In almost all lessons teaching has a very positive impact on the pupils' progress and reflects the school's aims. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection.
- 3.22 Teachers know the strengths and weaknesses of pupils very well. The collaborative and friendly learning atmosphere created is a hallmark of the school. Pupils are prepared to work hard for their teachers. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, all pupils agreed that their teachers help them learn.
- 3.23 In the EYFS, enthusiastic and knowledgeable staff have a thorough understanding of the Early Years curriculum and plan a careful balance of stimulating experiences. The programmes are enhanced by specialist teaching in music, physical education, swimming, ICT, performing arts and outdoor learning. The children also benefit from regular visits to places of interest and from enrichment days which further develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. Adult led learning is reinforced in more informal sessions where the children are free to explore, experience role play and investigate independently. As a result, children make good progress.
- 3.24 Most of the teaching is well planned and takes account of the pupils' prior attainments. At its best, planning demonstrates flexibility in response to pupils' needs as the lesson unfolds. Clear lesson objectives allow pupils to have a good grasp of what is expected of them. Often, the use of a suitable variety of teaching

methods enhances interest and allows pupils a number of ways to access the content of a lesson and to develop their learning. Most teaching is done at a good pace which, when combined with stretching expectations suited to ability, is successful in securing rapid progress in pupils' understanding and knowledge.

- 3.25 Most teaching matches work well to the needs of the students, so that it stretches the more able and also supports those with SEND. At its best, this allows the more able pupils to take risks and challenge themselves to work independently. At the same time, awareness of the needs of those requiring support ensures that they remain confident learners and are also able to make good progress. Teaching meets the requirements set out in statements of special educational needs, where appropriate.
- 3.26 In the few lessons where teaching is less effective, planning is less secure and learning objectives lack clarity. As a result, work is less well matched to the needs of the pupils, principally the most able, opportunities for independent learning are narrower, and the pace of learning slows, particularly when the teacher talks too much.
- 3.27 The use of assessment is good. In response to the recommendation of the previous report, marking is now more frequent and supports improvement. Pupils report that work is returned very promptly by teachers and that they find that the written comments help them to progress. A small minority of pupils' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire criticised the level of homework. Inspectors found that the clarity, level and quantity of homework set was appropriate throughout most of the school, although in some lessons missed opportunities for consolidation meant that the effectiveness of homework was diminished. Data collected on the abilities of pupils at entry is used well to monitor the progress that pupils make over time, but is less well used by subject teachers to set targets for individuals in lessons.

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 pupils is good.
- 4.2 Pupils demonstrate an identity with the school's aims and values that underpins their confidence. The school's calm unhurried atmosphere is reflected in their approach. Children are prepared for their transition into the next class extremely well. Overall, pupils demonstrate a good standard of personal development by the time that they leave the school.
- 4.3 The pupils' spiritual development is good. The ethos in the school community encourages pupils to flourish and grow into self-confident and well-informed young people. Pupils improve their knowledge of the world from assemblies based on diversity, courage and identity, which encourages personal reflection. However they do not always show themselves to be naturally self-critical or reflective outside the formal opportunities provided by the school.
- 4.4 The pupils' moral development is good. In the EYFS, children behave extremely well and show they enjoy coming to school, feeling safe, secure and happy in the caring and welcoming environment. The well-organised PSHE scheme for older pupils contributes strongly to the development of a strong moral code and sense of right and wrong. Pupils understand the need for the school's behaviour code, and learn about the over-arching nature of the civil and criminal law of England.
- 4.5 The social development of pupils is good. Children in the EYFS work constructively together, share and take turns, investigate confidently and play imaginatively. They show increasing independence when dressing themselves and organising their belongings. Older pupils acquire a good level of social, political and economic awareness, including a suitable knowledge of the public institutions and services of England, from their work in PSHE. Collaborative relationships contribute to the pupils' developing a level of emotional maturity appropriate for their age. At all ages, pupils learn to respect the differences between people. Throughout the prep and senior schools they are active members of their own community and assume roles of responsibility and service with enthusiasm. Pupils are aware of their responsibilities to those less fortunate, as seen in their widespread involvement in the school's extensive charity programme which reflects their awareness of current national and international issues.
- 4.6 In lessons and PSHE sessions pupils of all ages, including those in the EYFS, display a respect for a range of backgrounds, cultures and faiths, but the depth of their first-hand understanding is curbed by the limited cultural diversity of the school population. The school actively promotes the need to demonstrate tolerance and harmony and, as a result, pupils have a clear understanding and appreciate the achievements of both Western culture and those of other cultural backgrounds. Pupils learn to value the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and tolerance of those from different backgrounds and faiths to their own.

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

- 4.7 The school's arrangements for pastoral care are excellent.
- 4.8 The staff provide effective support and guidance for the pupils in accordance with the school's aims. Daily procedures provide ample opportunity to develop effective relationships and awareness of pupils' needs. Consequently, there are excellent and constructive relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves. In the EYFS, key staff ensure that the needs of individual children are met. Independence, responsibility and respect are effectively encouraged at all times, as demonstrated in an outdoor activity in local woodland, where the children developed an understanding of risk and of respecting the environment, whilst enjoying a highly imaginative game to identify bird calls.
- 4.9 A weekly 'drop in' clinic gives every pupil the opportunity of discussing any social or academic worries or concerns with staff or senior pupils. Pupils in the prep school have every confidence that staff will hear and deal with any anxieties.
- 4.10 Pupils are regularly encouraged and praised, both informally and through structured schemes. Registration time is effectively used to reinforce expectations, for example the need to write down homework clearly. Pupils readily take up responsibilities, whether it is distributing books or being sent on errands.
- 4.11 Children in the EYFS are helped to understand the importance of healthy eating by the provision of nutritious school lunches and snacks. Parents are informed of what their children eat each day so that they can support their children in choosing a balanced diet. Children are given many opportunities to be physically active, both in adult led sessions, such as in drama and movement and through the outdoor learning and play area. The good quality and range of food assists older pupils in developing healthy eating habits. The importance of regular exercise is promoted both during curriculum times and in the after-school football club for the senior pupils and ball games club enjoyed by the younger pupils.
- 4.12 The school is effective in promoting good behaviour and guarding against harassment and bullying. In the pre-inspection questionnaires a small minority of pupils and a few parents said that the school did not deal with bullying. In interviews, no pupil could recall any incidents of bullying, and all written comments were in praise of the school's efforts. Records show that it is extremely rare, and when it occurs immediate and appropriate action is taken in line with the school's thorough anti-bullying policy. A centralised system allows trends in the rare cases of misbehaviour to be effectively tracked and dealt with. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils felt that teachers were not always fair in the way they gave sanctions; a few said that teachers were inconsistent in the use of rewards. In interviews pupils disagreed with this view, and the record of both rewards and sanctions shows that they are fairly awarded.
- 4.13 The school has a detailed plan to ensure educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.14 A minority of those responding to the pre-inspection survey said that their opinions were not valued by the school. Inspection findings do not support this view, finding that pupils are encouraged to contribute to change. The minutes of the school council are summarised during assembly to ensure all pupils are engaged in its work, and show that it has effected changes in the school uniform, lunch menus and the building of a shelter near the car park.

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

- 4.15 The contribution of the arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.16 All the recommendations of the previous report have been implemented. The arrangements for the safeguarding of the pupils of all ages reflect official guidance and are given a high priority by the school. All governors and staff have been trained to an appropriate level in child protection, welfare and health and safety. Safer recruitment procedures are methodically carried out. Isolated clerical errors in the single central register were amended by the end of the inspection, and did not carry any risk to pupils. The full board of governors receives and fully discusses an annual safeguarding report and receives presentations from the designated safeguarding leader. There is a comprehensive code of staff conduct appropriate to the school, and regular training raises awareness of the physical and emotional needs of children. Child protection procedures are followed rigorously. In the EYFS, children's welfare is promoted effectively and there is a shared understanding of how their safeguarding can be meticulously ensured.
- 4.17 Strong health and safety procedures are implemented thoroughly to ensure children are safe. All necessary actions are taken to reduce risk from fire and other dangers and detailed records are kept. Fire drills are held regularly and evacuation procedures are clear, with exits well signed. Risk assessments for school activities and visits are specific and reviewed regularly. Access to the internet is filtered and all pupils receive guidance on e-safety. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, all parents said that the school keeps their children safe.
- 4.18 In the pre-inspection questionnaire, pupils said that they were well looked after if unwell or injured. Suitable provision is made for sick pupils and for those with SEND. The first aid policy is clear and many staff are first-aid trained. Medicines are securely stored and monitored. Pupils with SEND are supported in and outside class. Admission and attendance registers are now efficiently completed and archived, and absence meticulously followed up.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.19 The quality of boarding education is good.
- 4.20 Outcomes for boarders are good. Boarders of all ages are friendly, confident, courteous and tolerant, demonstrating a high standard of conduct. They are at their ease in boarding, clearly enjoying the experience, although this is necessarily limited by the small numbers of boarders. Boarders are generously supportive and helpful to each other and show a warm, respectful rapport with boarding staff. They appreciate the family atmosphere in the boarding houses, regarding them as 'home from home'. New boarders are carefully inducted into boarding community life and they are particularly encouraged by the support and friendship they receive from older boarders and 'buddies'.
- 4.21 Boarders contribute responsibly to the smooth running of their houses, undertaking duties and supporting daily routines, although currently there are no opportunities for leadership roles within the boarding houses. Boarders take advantage of the programme of leisure and developmental activities in the evenings and integrate extremely well across the age groups. They are able to make constructive suggestions for improvements to boarding life. In interviews conducted during the inspection, boarders cited several changes, such as the quality of evening meals

and the provision of fortnightly off-site activities after school, which have been introduced through suggestions raised in boarding meetings or through the use of the house suggestion boxes.

- 4.22 The quality of boarding provision and care is good. Boarders are very well cared for by a team of dedicated house staff, who are committed to meeting their individual needs and to promoting their welfare. Boarders use the school facilities for activities and in interviews, they said that there is a varied programme of active, community and creative opportunities available to them in the evenings, thus satisfying a recommendation from the previous inspection. Boarders enjoy their free time, for example playing in boarding house sports tournaments, visiting the local cinema, baking cakes or simply relaxing with friends in the house or walking in the grounds. They appreciate the balance of organised leisure activities and self-directed time and said they can always find time and space to be alone if they wish.
- 4.23 Healthy living is promoted effectively, in partnership between house and school staff, to ensure boarders understand how to keep themselves fit and well, physically and emotionally. Medical care is efficiently supervised by the principal first aider in the medical room in the senior school or in the house sick bays. Boarders have access to a local doctor's surgery and can be referred to other medical services as necessary. Medical records and care plans are stored securely and the administration of medication is meticulously recorded and monitored. Boarders know how to make contact with a member of staff if they feel unwell during the night.
- 4.24 A varied choice of nutritious hot and cold food is prepared by the catering staff, who are positively responsive to boarders' requests. Dietary requirements for cultural or medical reasons are always met. A cooked breakfast is provided every morning and boarders particularly appreciate the improvement in the quality of evening meals, which was a recommendation from the previous inspection. In houses, boarders can prepare snacks and drinks in the evenings if they wish.
- 4.25 The girls' and boys' boarding accommodation is situated in separate areas of the senior school house. Bedrooms, common rooms and study areas are bright, airy, comfortable and well furnished. Some boarders choose to personalise their spaces with posters and photographs from home. Personal belongings can be secured in lockable boxes or cupboards in their bedrooms and boarders stated that they feel safe and well cared for in the boarding houses.
- 4.26 Boarders keep in regular contact with their parents and friends by mobile telephone or email, although they stated in interviews that internet access is unreliable and that they would appreciate access to video conferencing facilities during weekday evenings.
- 4.27 All boarders go home or visit family members at the weekends, returning to school on Sunday evening or Monday morning. Some pupils enjoy occasional boarding and are warmly welcomed into the boarding community for one or two nights a week.
- 4.28 The effectiveness of arrangements for welfare and safeguarding is good. Procedures meet regulatory requirements and are effectively monitored. Detailed reports on safeguarding and health and safety are regularly submitted to senior leaders and to the full governing body. Policies for safe recruitment, welfare and safeguarding are clearly communicated and all members of house staff are appropriately trained in child protection procedures, first aid and administration of

medication. Assessments of risk for the boarding houses and for activities and trips are comprehensively undertaken and regularly reviewed.

- 4.29 Boarders' behaviour is good and sanctions are rarely necessary: they are taught to be responsible and self-regulating and keep themselves safe from harm. Boarders stated that incidents of bullying were also rare but if they did occur, they were dealt with promptly and effectively. In addition to the boarding handbook, an information booklet 'Worries and Complaints - a guide to boarders' is posted on all house notice boards and gives advice on what to do if they are unhappy or need help or support. Boarders also understand procedures to contact independent listeners. Boarders confirmed that they feel comfortable, safe and secure in boarding.
- 4.30 The effectiveness of leadership and management of boarding is good. The school's boarding principles are clearly communicated in handbooks and on the website. Senior leadership undertakes a systematic review of practice and there is an ongoing commitment to the professional development of house staff. The link governor for boarding visits the school regularly and is supportive of the ongoing improvement and development of the boarding provision. Since the previous inspection girls' boarding has been reintroduced and the accommodation for girls has been refurbished.
- 4.31 The houses are well run and there is effective and regular liaison between boarding staff, tutors and heads of houses to ensure boarders' wellbeing is a priority and their progress academically, socially, emotionally and physically is carefully monitored. Although detailed records on individual boarders are held by tutors, documentation and recording of incidents, meetings and decision-making processes in the boarding houses is not formalised and limits effective tracking and evaluation of actions taken.
- 4.32 House staff keep in regular contact with boarders' parents and the questionnaires indicated that most parents are satisfied with the boarding provision at the school. There were very few responses to the questionnaires from the boarders themselves.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The governors provide a good mix of professional expertise that supports the principal and senior team in building on the progress of the last few years. They are highly committed and discharge effectively their responsibilities for financial planning, investment in staff, accommodation and learning resources. Since the previous inspection, the playing fields have been drained to enhance the sporting experience of the pupils, and a new prep and pre-prep school is due to be completed in January 2015. The governors have fully supported the school in its responses to the recommendations of the previous inspection, particularly in safeguarding. The school's compliance officer reports on any changes to regulations at governors meetings.
- 5.3 The annual review of safeguarding is carried out by the full governing body and governors are aware of the requirements for safer recruitment, including the accurate use of the single central register.
- 5.4 Link governors ensure that all key areas of school life are given detailed attention, and that consequently all governors have a close knowledge of the school. They analyse the achievement of pupils and agree annual targets for the performance of the school in key areas. The chairman regularly appraises the principal.
- 5.5 Governors receive informal induction training and their effectiveness is regularly reviewed by the chairman. The recently appointed link governor for EYFS has yet to receive the induction training necessary to ensure that the governors are effective in providing a good quality of educational experience for the setting.

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

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians is good.
- 5.7 The school leadership team has initiated much of the progress made since the previous inspection. Despite the necessity for of multiple responsibilities associated with a small school, senior leaders remain sharply focused on improving the educational experience for all pupils in line with the school development plan. Shared school priorities ensure clear focus. Performance against targets is evaluated including a rolling cycle of detailed subject reviews. The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the EYFS is good. The setting maintains a constructive relationship with parents and handles any concerns promptly.
- 5.8 As recommended in the previous inspection, a system for tracking, monitoring and assessment has been introduced, supported by progress mentors and pastoral tutors. However the present system reacts to underperformance rather than being used to set expectations for different abilities in lessons. Comprehensive, well-structured arrangements linking pastoral care and the academic programme ensure the holistic educational development of pupils.

- 5.9 Leadership and management of the EYFS demonstrates a drive and enthusiasm for improvement and many objectives have already been met, such as those of strengthening links with parents and adopting more effective methods of planning and assessment. Analysis of data and tracking pupil progress to further improve children's progress and development is still in its early stages and is not yet fully integrated into planning. The educational programmes are regularly reviewed and there is a detailed development plan for the EYFS. Across the school, monitoring of lessons and marking of books has led to improvements in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. The leadership teams have established detailed policies and procedures that ensure efficient communication alongside the informality inherent in a small school. Strong, co-operative and caring relationships between staff and pupils are evident.
- 5.10 The school now has a rigorous procedure for the recruitment and appointment of staff and maintains an accurate record of all required checks carried out. A thorough programme for the induction of staff includes appropriate training in safeguarding the pupils' welfare, health and safety. The school ensures that all staff are regularly retrained for their roles. In the EYFS, there are established appraisal and supervision systems for staff and areas identified for development in staff expertise are supported extremely well by the provision of relevant training. Regular meetings between all staff involved in the setting ensure that all work together extremely effectively to support the children's progress.
- 5.11 The school is fully committed to the development and support of both its teaching and non-teaching staff. Clear leadership of the performance management system is valued by staff throughout the school. Contributions made by individuals are reviewed in line with the school's aims to maintain and develop committed, forward-thinking and well-qualified staff able to offer effective support to all pupils. The programme of staff appraisal identifies targets and encouragement to achieve performance management goals.
- 5.12 The school has good relations with parents and guardians. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire are unanimous in their appreciation of the extensive range of information that is available to them from the school website, such as information on policies, curriculum outlines, future events, weekly menus and newsletters relating to all age groups in the school and the principal's blog. The overwhelming majority also felt their child was happy and felt safe at school. The EYFS has developed an excellent and effective partnership with the parents. There is an 'open door policy' and parents are encouraged to contact the school with any problems. In discussion parents indicated that they felt the school was proactive in bringing any problems to their attention. The school works closely with parents and external agencies to ensure relevant support for children needing particular help with their learning and development.
- 5.13 In the pre-inspection questionnaires, a few parents said that the school has not handled their concerns well. An inspection of the records of complaints and concerns show that they have been dealt with in a timely and professional manner in line with the school's policy. A small minority of parents were not satisfied with the information the school provided about their child's progress. Inspectors found that the school regularly provides clear and useful information and reports on the progress of pupils throughout the school. Reports are regular, detailed and informative, giving assessments in each subject and indicating targets for improvement. In the EYFS, high quality information about the curriculum, how parents can support their child's learning at home, parents meetings, daily contact

books and creative mornings, where parents work in the class with their children, all ensure parents are kept closely involved in their child's learning. An online learning journal can be accessed and added to by the parents from home. In this way a constant dialogue about the child's progress is maintained. This is greatly appreciated by the parents. In the pre-prep, contact books provide a daily exchange of information between home and school, and parents are invited to attend assemblies, activity days and workshops on various areas of the curriculum. Parent information sessions in the senior school cover many areas, for example on Year 6 to Year 7 transfer.

- 5.14 There are many opportunities for parents to be involved in the life of the school, attending assemblies, performances and sporting events. The parents' association, organises fundraising for the purchase of resources to further benefit the pupils, for example an outdoor shelter was provided in response to a request from the school council and ICT has been enhanced by the provision of interactive whiteboards. Parents are also effectively involved in the careers fair and by offering work experience.
- 5.15 Parents and parents of prospective pupils are provided with all the required information about the school. Home visits and visits to the school before entry together with strong links with a local nursery enable the children to settle quickly.

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