



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**HALL GROVE SCHOOL**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Hall Grove School

Full Name of School	<b>Hall Grove School</b>
DfE Number	<b>936/6444</b>
Address	<b>Hall Grove School London Road Bagshot Surrey GU19 5HZ</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01276 473059</b>
Fax Number	<b>01276 452003</b>
Email Address	<b>office@hallgrove.co.uk</b>
Headmaster	<b>Mr Alastair Graham</b>
Proprietors	<b>Mr and Mrs Alastair Graham</b>
Age Range	<b>3 to 13</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>443</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (273 boys; 170 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>3-5 (EYFS): 54    5-11: 316 11-13:        73</b>
Number of Day Pupils	<b>Total:        440</b>
Number of Boarders	<b>Total:        3 Weekly:       3</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Miss Philippa Gent</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>10 Nov 2015 to 13 Nov 2015</b>

## PREFACE

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://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.

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*. The inspection on which the report is based took place over a period of four continuous days in the school.

The previous ISI boarding intermediate inspection was in May 2012 and the previous ISI interim inspection was in November 2010.

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

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

This inspection contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education, personal development and welfare.

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

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

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

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is**

**'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for children aged under two), 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 proprietors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the boarding house and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mrs Louise Harwood	Reporting Inspector
Mr David Sibson	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Gordon Ferguson	Team Inspector (Deputy head, IAPS school)
Miss Emma Neville	Team Inspector (Deputy head, IAPS school)
Mrs Nova Shoesmith	Team Inspector (Deputy head, SoH school)
Miss Sue Duff	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Ms Valerie Craven	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Hall Grove School was founded in 1956 as a co-educational day preparatory school for pupils aged three to thirteen. The founders were the parents of the current headmaster who took over responsibility for the school in 1981. Flexible boarding was introduced in 1995 and a nursery class was established in 2015. The school is a limited company owned by the headmaster and his wife, who have the responsibility of governance. It has no governing body, and key consultants are retained to advise on a range of educational and business matters.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide a caring and nurturing environment in which the qualities of self-reliance, courtesy, leadership and hard work can flourish. Offering a broad and balanced curriculum, it aims to encourage respect for self and community within a context of the joy of learning. It believes this will encourage academic, cultural and sporting excellence for all its pupils.
- 1.3 The school occupies a country house and forty-acre estate on the outskirts of Bagshot. Facilities include a new, dedicated unit for three to five year-olds, an equestrian centre, a golf course, and hard sports pitches. Since the previous inspection the school has built an environmental studies cabin for geography and biology lessons and an outdoor woodland classroom, created two libraries and extended the music department. The school owns a field study centre in Devon which pupils from Years 4 to 8 visit annually.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection the school had 443 pupils, of whom 54 aged 3 to 5 attended the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The school comprises 3 sections: the Pre-Prep department for pupils from Nursery to Year 2, the Middle School for pupils from Years 3 to 5, and the Upper School which comprises Years 6 to 8. The school offers flexible arrangements for boarding, which include weekly and occasional overnight stays. No weekend boarding is provided.
- 1.5 As indicated by standardised tests, the ability profile is above the national average with a fairly wide spread of abilities represented. Twenty-seven pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), twenty receive specialist support. Pupils are drawn from the local area, with a representative social and cultural mix of backgrounds from predominantly professional and business families. Eleven pupils are learning English as an additional language (EAL); none require additional support from the school.
- 1.6 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its NC equivalence are shown in the following table.

### ***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting***

<b>School</b>	<b>NC name</b>
Pre-School	Nursery

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 The school is highly successful in meeting its aims. As a result of a rich and stimulating curriculum, pupils achieve a high level of knowledge, understanding and skills in a wide range of subjects. The broad and creative variety of extra-curricular activities presents them with experiences that extend learning and self-knowledge. Standards in music, sport and the performing arts are excellent. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, both pupils and parents were overwhelmingly positive about the standard of academic progress made and the range of activities offered. Teaching throughout the school is characterised by teachers' excellent subject knowledge and this fosters pupils' enthusiasm. It frequently focuses on the development of independent thinking, often using debate as a means to challenge and extend ideas. Outdoor pursuits are an integral feature of learning, including in the EYFS. Assessment is used strongly to identify individual needs, and consequently, all pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, make good progress from their starting points. The most able make good and often excellent progress.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils of all ages and abilities are confident and believe that hard work is the means to success; they are proud of their subsequent achievements. They collaborate well and frequently acknowledge the importance of team endeavour. Throughout the school, pastoral care is excellent; behaviour and manners are polite and courteous, and relationships are founded on mutual care, trust and support. Pupils appreciate the readiness and availability of staff who are committed to helping them overcome concerns, whether in their work or their relationships with others. In more formal forums, such as the school council, the pupils' views are not always taken fully into account. Careful and immediate attention is given to all aspects of welfare, health and safety.
- 2.3 Excellent leadership and governance unites the school community, of which the EYFS and the small boarding community are valued members. The proprietors show considerable commitment to the maintenance and development of accommodation, resources and the retention of high-quality staff. Recommendations made in both the 2010 inspection report and the 2012 boarding inspection report have been met. Leaders and managers are highly successful in fulfilling the aims of the school and in promoting pupils' achievements and personal development. Safeguarding is held in high regard, and policy and practice are regularly reviewed and carefully monitored to ensure the safety and well-being of the pupils. The school maintains excellent relationships with parents, who expressed overwhelming satisfaction with its provision and care in their pre-inspection questionnaire responses.



## **2.(b) Action points**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- 2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015.

### **(ii) Recommendation for further improvement**

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
1. Improve the effectiveness of the school council as a forum for pupils to raise their opinions and suggestions.

### **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 excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils leave school equipped with a high level of knowledge, understanding and skills in a wide range of subjects, well-supported by their notable success in a broad variety of extra-curricular activities. Within the EYFS, achievements exceed age-related expectations in the seven areas of learning and all children, including those with SEND or EAL and the most able, make excellent progress relative to their starting points, abilities and needs. Children in the Nursery develop excellent foundations for reading and writing as a result of the strong emphasis on developing their speaking, listening and comprehension skills. Consequently they frequently use well-developed vocabulary and imaginations, such as when they investigated and described the properties of rice. They spontaneously count a range of everyday objects during practical and routine activities. Reception children are active learners who are able to concentrate and work independently. During activities linked to letters and the sounds they make, the children enjoyed creating expressive words such as 'squishy' and 'squashy', which they then transferred to their writing of full sentences. Many older children can count up to 50 and beyond. When comparing numbers, they are skilful at using mathematical language such as 'more than' and 'less than'. Both the Nursery and Reception children are able to think critically and respond with enthusiasm to the challenge of teacher-led problem-solving activities.
- 3.3 Throughout the school, pupils' communication skills are highly developed. They express their ideas and beliefs clearly, and listen attentively to each other and to their teachers. Pupils are skilful and thoughtful conversationalists, selecting topics and information to illustrate a point and asking discerning questions to further their own understanding. They enjoy engagement in debate and argue persuasively. Written work is often accomplished beyond expectations of age and ability, with high standards of presentation, varied vocabulary and a keen awareness of audience. Mathematical understanding is at a high level and pupils are able to apply their skills well in other subjects, particularly science. Independent projects, such as those in geography, show strong investigative skills based on reading, internet research and logical analysis of other sources of evidence. In modern foreign languages, pupils are acquiring an excellent range of vocabulary relative to their age and ability. They display considerable artistic and design skills across all age groups. Their physical skills are excellent and they participate enthusiastically in a wide range of sporting disciplines.
- 3.4 Pupils enjoy significant success in a wide range of disciplines in county and inter-school sporting competitions. Teams and individuals recently reached the Independent Association of Prep Schools national finals for athletics, football, netball, judo and gymnastics. Pupils give polished drama performances in front of their peers and wider audiences, and many gain awards in external speech and drama examinations. In 2015 a high proportion passed with merit or distinction. Musical standards are excellent. Over 180 pupils receive instrumental tuition and some are working at grades far above those expected for their age. Their performance in brass and string ensembles, including jazz and guitar groups, reveals a commitment to hard work and practice, and an enjoyment of the opportunity to work together.

- 3.5 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured against a fixed national average, but it is judged to be excellent in comparison to national age related expectations. Evidence from classroom observations, discussions with pupils, scrutiny of their work over time, and examination of the records of their attainments as they move through the school confirm this evaluation. Pupils sustain a good rate of progress when compared with those of similarly above average ability.
- 3.6 The progress for pupils with SEND or EAL is consistently good; quick and accurate identification of their needs is followed by effective support. The most able pupils achieve high standards and make good and often excellent progress. This can be observed in the excellent achievement of the oldest pupils as they are prepared for scholarship examinations. When they leave school, almost all pupils transfer to their first choice of independent senior school. A significant proportion gain academic, music and sports scholarships, some to highly selective schools.
- 3.7 Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning, demonstrating a desire to excel. Their swift progress is directly linked to their enthusiasm to learn. The school has high expectations of behaviour and effort; pupils are aware of these and endeavour to meet them. They regularly reflect on the effort they have applied in lessons and set their own targets for future achievement.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 In the EYFS, detailed educational programmes cover all seven areas of learning and enable all children to reach a high standard of development. An appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities ensures that a wide range of challenges is available to all children. In response to the recommendation of the previous inspection, staff ensure that learning moves freely between indoors and outdoors, making the most efficient use of resources and building on interests and enthusiasms. This strong provision enables children of all abilities to make excellent progress in relation to their starting points. All children have access to an appropriate range of extra-curricular clubs, and the specialist teaching in French, music, dance and physical education (PE) contributes positively to outcomes for children. By the end of Reception more time is spent on literacy and numeracy sessions, ensuring that children are fully prepared academically for their next stage.
- 3.10 The curriculum offers rich and effective coverage of the requisite areas of study for all ages and abilities, and reflects the school's aims and ethos. A particular feature of the curriculum is the emphasis on outdoor learning; the school's extensive grounds constitute an integral part of the learning environment. The outdoor classroom and the school's own residential field-trip centre in Devon enable pupils to apply their knowledge and skills in cross-curricular challenges and to participate in many practical learning opportunities. The art, ceramic and textiles programme develops a creative outlook complemented by dance and drama, which are taught from an early age.
- 3.11 All pupils benefit from a comprehensive personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme of studies which reflects the school's active response to promoting the shared values that characterise modern Britain. It includes topics which cover respect for the law, individual freedom and the right to hold opposing religious beliefs. Trips to the Houses of Parliament and visiting speakers offer a well-balanced non-partisan presentation of political issues. Older pupils study

themes which develop their knowledge of careers and employment, and undertake challenges to develop their understanding of the economy and enterprise, such as designing and advertising their own product. The study of different religions develops pupils' understanding of their place in a diverse and cohesive Britain, and encourages tolerance and a deepening understanding of different points of view.

- 3.12 Curriculum planning is thorough and is regularly evaluated to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils. Strong support for those with SEND and EAL is provided through withdrawal groups and individual lessons. Since the previous inspection, specific programmes have been implemented to target underachievement in reading and this has had a positive impact on standards. The most able pupils in Years 7 and 8 follow enrichment programmes in preparation for scholarship examinations. This includes the option of learning Greek. A digital learning platform provides pupils of all abilities access to revision and extension activities at any time.
- 3.13 The range of extra-curricular activities is excellent. Pupils and parents value highly its comprehensive and eclectic mix of opportunities. Sport and the performing arts form many of the activities on offer. Rugby and netball teams experienced recent success and gained high levels of confidence as a result of their tours both at home and abroad. The school grounds play host to activities such as golf, archery, bushcraft and mountain biking. Pupils benefit from numerous trips to support their current topics of study, including trips abroad. The choristers sing in many prominent British and European cathedrals. Pupils visit local theatres as well as central London productions. A recent workshop at a notable senior school benefitted pupils who are able pianists, while mathematics and science teams enter quizzes and challenge days at local schools. Artists and authors visit older pupils, and the whole school takes part in 'Shakespeare Week' which includes guest speakers.
- 3.14 The school has developed many good links with the community in order to encourage a sense of connection with local institutions and citizens. For example, pupils take produce to the local residential home for the elderly, and the concert and jazz bands play at the village fair. The school opens its gardens to the public each year and pupils act as guides for the visitors.

### **3.(c) The contribution of teaching**

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.16 Staff in the EYFS are highly skilled and ensure that children's learning and development needs are well met. They plan practical activities using good quality resources to successfully foster children's creative and investigative skills. Carefully judged support is provided for the more able and those with SEND or EAL, and ensures that they have the opportunities to reflect on their learning and refine their skills so that they make excellent progress. Staff have high expectations of all children. From the earliest days in the Nursery, they take high priority in developing children's language and communication skills and this, together with the systematic teaching of the sounds that letters make in Reception, ensures that children develop proficient early reading and writing skills. Staff frequently challenge children of all ages to extend their vocabulary and thinking through open-ended questioning and problem-solving opportunities. This successfully expands children's knowledge and understanding. Information gained through accurate assessments of children's learning and development is used rigorously to identify their next steps, ensuring that all children make the progress of which they are capable.

- 3.17 Teaching is effective in fostering pupils' enthusiasm and promoting their progress. It supports the school's aim to be committed to academic excellence and to develop independent thinking. Lessons are well planned, use a varied range of methods to engage pupils and promote excellent understanding. Teaching motivates pupils to undertake independent work and discover personal strengths and interests. It is non-partisan in the coverage of political views, and teachers ensure that pupils show healthy tolerance and respect for each other and for those in the wider world. National shared values are never undermined. Relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils are excellent. In discussion with inspectors, and in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, pupils expressed strong appreciation for their teachers' expertise and support.
- 3.18 Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and wide-ranging background experience. They draw strongly upon both to motivate and engage pupils effectively. Teachers know the pupils and their differing requirements well and have high expectations of pupils of all ages and abilities. They are dedicated to improving standards by tailoring teaching to individual needs, including the provision of extra one-to-one tuition where necessary. A variety of teaching styles ensures that all pupils, including those with SEND or EAL, are able to benefit greatly from lessons.
- 3.19 Teaching regularly takes place outdoors in order to use the natural world for inspiration and as an area for pupils to experiment and work in groups. Many examples were observed during the inspection week of teachers securing high levels of interest, concentration and participation by utilising the school grounds. For example an Upper School history lesson used outdoor space to re-enact a battle from the English Civil War, while a Middle School session in the outdoor classroom facilitated rapid learning of mathematical skills as pupils measured trees. Inside the classroom, teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to provide a stimulus and focus for learning. Information and communication technology is employed effectively in some subjects such as music, but inconsistently in others. The school has identified this as an area for development. Teachers use resources imaginatively to assist learning, such as the playing of a ukulele accompaniment to assist the pupils with their conjugation of a Latin subjunctive verb, and utilising a soldier's kit bag to stimulate the imaginations of Pre-Prep pupils in a literacy lesson.
- 3.20 Assessment and feedback provide pupils with a clear understanding of their strengths and good guidance on required improvement. Marking systems are set out clearly in the pupils' books. Inspection work scrutiny revealed some minor inconsistencies in marking across the Middle and Upper Schools, but pupils state that teachers' comments are helpful, that they understand the marking and grade system, and that work is marked promptly.
- 3.21 In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a small minority of pupils expressed the view that homework did not help them to learn. Inspection evidence did not support this view; discussions with staff and pupils and direct observation of the setting of homework found that it was appropriately linked to learning objectives. A broad range of assessment is used to track the progress of pupils. The subsequent data produced is carefully analysed and staff meet regularly to discuss the results and to agree on appropriate support. Assessment also guides the process of placing older pupils in subject sets to provide them with the necessary challenge at all times. Teaching of the Year 7 and 8 scholarship set provides pupils with high-level extension work.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 Nursery and Reception children are developing high standards of behaviour, co-operation and courtesy in an environment where British values are consciously promoted. They are actively involved in their learning and are rapidly acquiring the ability to make appropriate choices and to respect each other. Children in the EYFS enjoy shared activities with pupils and staff in Years 1 and 2 and quickly settle into their new class each year.
- 4.3 Pupils have an excellent level of personal development by the time they leave the school. They are confident and highly motivated. They are proud of their achievements, their school and their community of fellowship, and readily express appreciation of these without conceit.
- 4.4 The spiritual development of the pupils is excellent. They acknowledge the ever-changing natural world around them as they walk to and from lessons, and use it for inspiration in their work. Pupils have a developing sense of appreciation for music and art. Choristers enjoy performing in large cathedrals, commenting that the sound of the organ 'made our bones shake'. In their daily collective worship, pupils sing enthusiastically and are reflective during prayers.
- 4.5 Pupils' moral development is excellent. All understand and respect the fact that rules and laws are necessary to keep individuals and societies safe. They pay firm heed to their code of conduct. In discussions in PSHE, current affairs and religious studies lessons, pupils show concern for injustice. They readily engage in debate, and older pupils discuss moral and ethical issues such as abortion and the impact on sport of performance-enhancing drugs, with an increasing awareness of cause and consequence.
- 4.6 Pupils show excellent social development. Their skills of co-operation and teamwork are strengthened through participation in residential trips to the school's field centre in Devon, in sport and music collaboration, and in drama productions. In their questionnaire responses, a few pupils felt that they have insufficient opportunities to undertake positions of responsibility. Inspection evidence found that a number of such opportunities are provided. Pupils readily accept positions of responsibility within the school community, which they discharge conscientiously and reliably. These include acting as house captains or vice-captains, and as tour guides for visitors and at open day events. Pupils take responsibility for community-serving tasks such as filling the bird feeders. Older pupils are linked with their younger peers in various ways, such as listening to them read as part of the 'Hall Grove Award Scheme'. Excellent social development is also nurtured through regular charitable work, often initiated as a result of the pupils' suggestions.
- 4.7 Pupils have an excellent awareness of the values of British society, which are carefully embedded across the curriculum and infuse the school's ethos. Pupils are respectful of different faiths and beliefs, and consider differences of viewpoint to be a source of mutual interest and personal growth. They develop mature social, political and economic awareness, speak knowledgeably about the public institutions and services of England, and understand the country's political systems. Pupils observe

examples of democracy within the school through the election of representatives from each form to voice their opinions on the school council.

- 4.8 Pupils' cultural development is excellent. Music and art play a significant role within the school, with many pupils enjoying participation in clubs, music ensembles and art sessions. Pupils' general knowledge of the cultural heritage of their own and other countries is wide for their age. They appreciate the cultural impact of major writers such as Shakespeare and appreciate that other countries such as Italy and Spain enjoy a rich legacy of art and music. Pupils work in harmony with their peers who represent other cultures and religions. Their appreciation of cultural diversity is enhanced by visitors to school, visits to different places of worship and trips abroad such as the netball tour to Barbados and the choristers' tour to Italy.

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

- 4.9 The contribution of pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.10 All staff in the EYFS work closely together to provide a nurturing, happy and stimulating environment in which children thrive and have their needs met. Strong relationships are quickly and firmly established between key people, children and families. All adults consistently promote high standards of behaviour. Children learn about the importance of nutritious eating, particularly during lunchtime and snack time routines when they are encouraged to make healthy choices, including choosing pieces of fruit. They are helped to understand the importance of washing their hands before lunch and after going to the toilet. All children are involved in regular exercise, including PE and dance lessons as well as daily exploration of the school grounds.
- 4.11 The school is highly successful in providing a high level of pastoral support for all pupils. Pupils' relationships with each other and with staff are excellent, with a good balance between friendliness and respect. Pupils state they feel valued, happy and enjoy being part of a strong school community where they have many people to turn to for support and guidance. The nurses' medical facility is central to the school for both pastoral support and first aid, and all relevant information is shared appropriately and swiftly between staff. Healthy eating and lifestyle habits are promoted through a strong programme of extra-curricular activities, excellent sports provision, food science and PSHE lessons. A wide range of nutritious food choices is available at lunchtime.
- 4.12 The school has comprehensive arrangements to promote good behaviour and to combat discrimination and bullying. Expectations of behaviour are high and pupils are keenly aware of the school's code of conduct. They are taught how to deal with harassment or bullying, including cyberbullying. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a few pupils indicated that the school deals with bullying ineffectively. Representatives from all year groups told inspectors that staff are quick to respond to any instances of bullying, and school records confirm this. Additionally a small minority of pupils indicated, in their questionnaire responses, that the school does not ask for their opinions or respond to them. Inspection evidence supports this view. Pupils have opportunities to express their views at a personal level, but the school council meets infrequently and is not sufficiently pupil-led to be effective in giving pupils an active and constructive input into the daily life of the school. In their questionnaire responses, a few pupils also felt that teachers are not always consistent in the way in which they apply rewards and sanctions. After careful

analysis of relevant records, the inspection found school procedures to be diligently followed.

- 4.13 The school has a suitable plan to enable educational access for pupils with SEND.

#### **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 All staff, including those in the EYFS, show a highly secure understanding of the school's safeguarding policy and procedure. They fully embrace their responsibility towards ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils, including those with SEND, and react quickly to anything apparently untoward. The school provides high-quality training for newly appointed staff, who consequently demonstrate secure knowledge of the necessary procedures to follow in cases of safeguarding issues. All staff receive appropriate update training at regular intervals. Excellent relationships with external agencies and with health and safety providers are maintained, and concerns are always reported at an early stage. In the EYFS, children's welfare is promoted effectively and all staff are secure in their wider safeguarding duties, including the latest government guidance to prevent extremism.

4.16 Appointment procedures are followed diligently, and clearly and accurately recorded in the single central register of appointments. The school has strong and precise internet content filters and effective processes to monitor website browsing. Parents, staff and pupils are trained to be vigilant in e-safety. At all levels of the school management, risk is carefully considered and discussed for all aspects of activity and safety. Leaders take prompt action in response to deficiencies around the premises. A rigorous system of checks by external professionals helps to ensure safety from fire and other hazards, and staff are regularly trained in fire prevention and safety. Appropriate fire evacuation drills are carried out and recorded. The school's medical facilities offer comfortable and well-appointed accommodation for those pupils who are unwell. Storage of medication is secure. Highly qualified and caring nursing staff ensure that minor injuries are treated quickly and safely, and meticulous records are kept and carefully monitored. Nurses are assiduous in their communication with parents.

4.17 Admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and are fully compliant with regulations. Any absence is swiftly followed up and non-attendance is rigorously monitored.

#### **4.(d) The quality of boarding**

4.18 The quality of boarding is excellent.

4.19 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. Boarders say that they feel happy, confident and positive about their boarding experience, valuing the close friendships that they make particularly across different year groups. They show care and support for each other in the wider school community and demonstrate a high level of maturity in discussions and in boarding time. A distinctive family atmosphere is maintained for the small number of boarders, in line with the school's aims. The bespoke nature of care is exemplified by boarders' meals, which are taken at a large table alongside boarding staff. They are frequently joined by the headmaster's family who live in adjacent accommodation. The evening meal is prepared every day by the same member of staff who knows the boarders well and has the freedom to tailor the food to popular choices. Day pupils can join boarders for their meals



through a booking process. The head boarder sits on the school council and represents the views of the boarders across the year groups. Daily conversations with the head of boarding ensure that the pupils' views are regularly heard. Relationships between pupils and the staff who care for them are warm and positive, and the boarders feel well supported. They are aware of the designated people outside the school to whom they can talk, including an independent listener.

- 4.20 The quality of the boarding provision and care is excellent. The colourful and well-appointed rooms are predominantly in groups of three with plenty of space, including a lockable area for storage. Homework is completed either in the pupil's own room or, more usually, in the common room. The school maintains the accommodation and facilities to a high standard, regardless of the small number of boarders. The recently refurbished showers and toilets are an example of this and are much appreciated by pupils. New boarders who join the community receive a careful induction to ensure their immediate assimilation. The common and television rooms provide numerous opportunities for rest and relaxation. The democratic process of choosing an evening activity is supported by the head of boarding who spends each evening with the boarders, knowing exactly where they are at all times. During the evenings, boarders can either remain in-house or make use of the school's extensive facilities and grounds.
- 4.21 Boarders are exceptionally well supported by a dedicated and conscientious nursing team which takes responsibility for their pastoral and medical care. The medical facility is the hub of the school and welcomes all pupils at any time. Evidence during inspection confirmed that pupils feel free to take personal or medical issues to the nurses, who provide them excellent care and advice. The nurses communicate pupils' information appropriately across the school, ensuring confidentiality where necessary. The medical facility has a private bedroom for pupils who need time to recover and boarders are looked after here or in the boarding house. All medication is stored and dispensed appropriately according to its nature. Pastoral and medical care is enhanced by comprehensive care plans and risk assessment for the pupils who require it. Boarding staff use the medical facility in boarding time to dispense medication, and handovers at both ends of the day ensure that the overall picture is always known by those who care for boarders.
- 4.22 Boarders have monitored access to their telephones during the evenings. In addition, they can use school facilities to contact their parents should they wish. They do not have access to a computer in the boarding house to assist with the completion of homework or to speak to their parents through the internet. Catering throughout the school is operated by an efficient team of well-certificated contractors who are keen to respond to the suggestions of boarders wherever possible. The head of boarding makes snacks and hot chocolate for the boarders, and drinking water is available at all times. Laundry is carried out in-house and the head of boarding provides supplies such as stationery or personal items as necessary.
- 4.23 The effectiveness of arrangements for welfare and safeguarding is excellent. The school addressed the recommendation of the previous inspection to record details of fire drills held in boarding time. Risk assessments are systematically created for all activities. Recruitment checks are completed on all staff, which are supported by rigorous induction procedures. All boarding staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding procedures and have access to safeguarding training. They have clear job descriptions and opportunities for professional development, supported by the school. Boarding staff work well together as a team and ensure smooth handovers between themselves and the nurses. Boarders say that they feel safe

and secure in the boarding house and the use of surveillance cameras and intruder alarms at the entrance to the boarding area promotes their security. Boarders know who is responsible for them at all times and they have a backup walkie-talkie system to ensure that they can access help from the house parents immediately during the night, should the need arise. The school's family values and family ethos encourage positive behaviour in the boarding house.

- 4.24 The effectiveness of leadership and management of boarding is excellent. The aims of boarding are clear and available to all parties on notice boards and in the handbook. The headmaster ensures that the boarding and welfare provision in the school is of a high quality, and he and his wife actively promote and support the well-being of boarders. This is exemplified by the regular involvement of excellent external speakers and the ongoing training and development of staff. Pupils' mental health and support for all pupils at the school are regularly discussed at management level and are taken very seriously. The head of boarding and the headmaster provide clear and direct leadership of the boarding facility, ensuring that the pupils have a positive boarding experience. Parents appreciate the supportive and flexible extension to the school day, and those who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of boarding provision.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) The quality of governance**

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The proprietors are highly committed to the school and successfully discharge their responsibility for maintaining high educational standards and fulfilling the school's aims and values. They view the school's work as an integrated whole and provide commensurate support for the EYFS and for boarding. Their role as custodians of both the heritage of the school and its future leads them to exercise prudent financial management so that they can realise their ambitious, well-informed strategic vision. Effective investment enables them to oversee regular maintenance of the school buildings and grounds, extensive projects such as the building of the new EYFS accommodation, and provision of a wide range of educational and material resources. Investment in well-qualified staff and their professional growth impacts directly on the excellent academic standards and personal development of the pupils.
- 5.3 The proprietors provide strong oversight of those areas where they have legal duties. They are effective in discharging their responsibilities for child protection, welfare and health and safety throughout the school. Questions of staff suitability are properly checked and the single central register of appointments is accurately maintained. The annual review of safeguarding arrangements is carried out as required. Scrutiny from advisors ensures that safeguarding and educational practices are effective. The school has responded well to the recommendations of the previous inspections in 2010 and 2012; all matters have been addressed.

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

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent.
- 5.5 In the EYFS, children's well-being and safeguarding are of paramount importance. All staff receive updated training in safeguarding at the required frequency, this enables them to take appropriate action should the need arise and ensures a safe and secure environment. Senior staff rigorously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the educational programmes in all seven areas of learning. Teachers and assistants are well supported in their professional development through an established system of appraisal, regular supervisory meetings and attendance at internal and external training courses. Reflective practice is a strong feature of the setting; through this all staff have a voice and a significant role in identifying areas for future focus.
- 5.6 School leaders and managers fully discharge their responsibilities in the realisation of the school's aims and objectives. This is particularly the case in relation to policy implementation and the safeguarding of all members of the school community, and results in a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment for all pupils. The stated aims of the school encapsulate traditional values, including respect, tolerance and fairness, and leaders and managers encourage these in all areas of the school's work and play.

- 5.7 The strategic vision for the school is ambitious. It is informed by rigorous self-evaluation and monitoring, and linked directly to the school's aims. The vision and clear educational direction are reflected in the high standard of the pupils' education and their excellent personal development. Improvement plans are successfully disseminated throughout the school through a highly effective and fluid system of communication based on delegated responsibilities. Roles and reporting structures are well defined such that all members of the teaching and pastoral staff are fully involved and informed. Since the previous inspection, staff timetables have been fully audited and greater consistency has been ensured by redeploying a number of teachers to assist in games, clubs and activities and to provide additional support to groups of pupils in catch-up sessions. Both academic performance and personal development of all pupils are carefully monitored, and appropriate support is provided in a timely fashion. Staff in all sections of the school, including the EYFS, carefully and regularly evaluate practice and provision. Appraisal and supervision meetings lead to staff development and training so that teaching standards across subjects and sections remain high. All managers and leaders maintain an awareness of the interconnection between all the school's activities, including extra-curricular activities, trips and visits, and the improvement of learning and outcomes.
- 5.8 The school is effective in recruiting, developing and supporting highly motivated members of staff, including loyal and hard-working support staff. It takes a strong emphasis on the retention and development of staff. All contribute strongly to the quality of the pupils' experience and are suitably trained in safeguarding and welfare, health and safety. The school's leadership ensures that arrangements for carrying out all required recruitment checks are suitable.
- 5.9 The school has excellent links with parents. In the EYFS, parents are encouraged to be involved in the work of the setting through the weekly 'play and stay' sessions. They are well-informed about their children's achievements and progress, and are encouraged to share their own observations from home.
- 5.10 The school works hard to establish and maintain strong links with parents and their overwhelmingly positive responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicates that it is successful in its endeavours. The vast majority of parents who responded stated that they receive timely replies to their questions and are satisfied with the information provided about their children's progress. They are highly satisfied with the depth and range of both the curricular and extra-curricular activities and are confident that their children are very well looked after. A very large majority feel that the school handles concerns well, deals well with any cases of bullying and feel encouraged to be involved in aspects of the school's work. The school actively seeks feedback from parents about all aspects of its work through online questionnaires and workshops.
- 5.11 Communication between staff and parents is open. The school encourages a listening ethos at every level of its work and concerns raised are handled in a sensitive manner, leading to a timely resolution in accordance with the school's published procedures. All parents are invited to be involved in the work of the 'Friends of Hall Grove' association. The school takes account of parents' knowledge and expertise by inviting them in to talk about their jobs, often linked to a current curricular topic.
- 5.12 An induction day is organised for new parents which includes a talk about the school's aims and expectations. A wide range of up-to-date information is available on the school's website, including key policies and a comprehensive weekly

newsletter. Parents are well-informed about their children's learning and development through detailed and helpful progress reports. These contain encouraging and personalised comments from their teachers and are much appreciated by parents.

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