



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
PIPERS CORNER SCHOOL**

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Pipers Corner School

Full Name of School	Pipers Corner School		
DfE Number	825/6017		
Registered Charity Number	310635		
Address	Pipers Corner School Great Kingshill High Wycombe Buckinghamshire HP15 6LP England		
Telephone Number	01494 718255		
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Email Address	theschool@piperscorner.co.uk		
Headmistress	Mrs Helen Ness-Gifford		
Chair of Governors	Lady Allison		
Age Range	4 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	539		
Gender of Pupils	Girls		
Numbers by Age	0-3 (EYFS):	0	5-11: 114
	3-5 (EYFS):	6	11-18: 419
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Elaine Rushforth		
EYFS Gender	Girls		
Inspection Dates	06 Oct 2015 to 09 Oct 2015		

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. 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 October 2012 and the previous ISI standard inspection was in March 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.

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, with groups of parents and with the chair of governors and other governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the 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

Dr Christopher Ray	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Paula Burgess	Team Inspector (Headmistress, IAPS school)
Mr Tom Brooksby	Team Inspector (Headmaster, SoH school)
Mrs Angela Clancy	Team Inspector (Head of department, HMC school)
Mr Simon Mozley	Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, GSA school)
Mr Stéphane Talleux	Team Inspector (Assistant Head, GSA school)
Mrs Penny Oates	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL.

- 1.1 Pipers Corner is a day school for girls, established as a Christian foundation in 1930 when the school operated under the name of 'The Old Vicarage School' in Chiswick, London, before moving to Richmond Hill in 1931. Upon the outbreak of World War Two the school relocated to Buckinghamshire, occupying Prestwood Lodge in Prestwood until 1945 when the school moved to its present location in Great Kingshill.
- 1.2 The school is set in the Chiltern Hills within 96 acres of grounds bordering woodland and fields, close to High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire. The Reception class for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is located in Woodlands, a self-contained unit on the school site. The pre-prep department, which includes the EYFS, is for pupils aged 4 to 7; the prep department for those aged 7 to 11, and the senior part of the school for those aged 11 to 18.
- 1.3 The school is administered by a board of governors as a charitable trust and company limited by guarantee. The governors are pledged to invest in the school's facilities and resources to create an exceptional learning environment for the pupils. The school continues to have a strong Christian ethos and asks all within its community to be sensitive to the beliefs and convictions of others regardless of faith, seeing this sensitivity as a cornerstone of each pupil's spiritual and moral development. The school aims to provide a secure and happy environment in which each pupil is helped to aspire to excellence, to fulfil her potential and to emerge with maturity, confidence, self-esteem and a sense of independence.
- 1.4 Since the previous boarding intermediate inspection the school has closed its facilities for boarding and it is now entirely a day school. Developments since the previous standard inspection have included: the establishment of an individual learning department to focus upon both pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and more able pupils; the introduction of setting by subject groups into Years 7 and 8; the development of the outdoor learning environment for the EYFS; and the implementation of an outdoor education curriculum for all pupils from the EYFS to Year 6 inclusive. In July 2015 an integrated series of building projects commenced in order to create an arts centre and theatre, a learning resource centre, a sixth-form centre and an artificial surface sports facility.
- 1.5 At present there are 539 pupils in the school, of whom six are in EYFS, 114 in the other pre-prep and prep years, 357 in Years 7 to 11, and 62 in the sixth form. The ability of pupils in the school is, for pupils up to and including Year 11, above and for those in Years 12 and 13, close to the national averages. There are two pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), one of whom receives specialised support. There are 105 pupils who have been identified with SEND, 62 of whom receive support from the school and one of whom has a statement of educational needs. Pupils come mainly from professional and business families in the local area with a small number coming from ethnic minorities.
- 1.6 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent. Pupils of all ages, needs and abilities including those in the EYFS are successful in their learning. The school fully meets its aim to help pupils to aspire to excellence and to fulfil their potential. The school has responded positively and successfully to the recommendations of the previous standard inspection further to develop teaching and learning across the school and to improve the EYFS outdoor learning environment. However, the recommended tracking and monitoring systems have yet to become fully embedded in all parts of the school. Excellent curricular and extra-curricular provision provides a wide variety of opportunities for pupils to flourish both in and beyond the classroom. The quality of teaching is excellent. Pupils, including those who are more able and those with SEND or EAL, are extremely well-supported by the individual learning department and generally make excellent progress relative to their starting points. However in a few cases the teaching fails to take full account of their needs.
- 2.2 The quality of pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The personal development of pupils is most effectively promoted by the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programmes and through assemblies. Pupils are eager to take on responsibilities and demonstrate their capacities for leadership as well as a strong sense of responsibility for others through these roles. Service to others is an important part of pupils' lives in the school, especially through charitable fund-raising. Pupils from Year 1 upwards mentor younger pupils: this is a particular strength of the school which brings cohesion and harmony to the community. The contribution of the arrangements for pastoral care is excellent. Behaviour is exemplary in all years. The anti-bullying policy, which encompasses cyber-bullying, is highly effective. Pupils said in interviews that incidents of bullying are infrequent and when they do occur they are handled well by the school. The contribution of the arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils from the EYFS onwards is excellent. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses and in interviews, pupils said that they feel safe and happy.
- 2.3 The governance and the leadership and management of the school are excellent. Governors understand their collective legal responsibilities, discharging these most effectively. They have a clear vision for the future of the school. Since the previous inspection the governors have supported the developments of the outdoor curriculum and of the individual learning department. The leadership and management has a strong desire for further school improvement and high ambitions for the school, encapsulated within the school's development plan. However, the otherwise excellent aspiration to promote rapid progress has led to insufficient prioritisation in development planning in the EYFS. Middle management provides excellent support. The leadership and management of each part of the school work in close harmony helping to ensure the successful transition of pupils as they move through the school. The school has responded effectively to the requirement of the previous boarding welfare inspection that the school must ensure that all appropriate checks are made prior to any member of staff starting work under supervision. Parents maintain a high level of confidence in the leadership and management. The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent. In their pre-inspection questionnaires, parents commented extremely positively about

every aspect of the school's work as well as the quality of information about and care for their children. There is a most effective partnership between the school and its parents.

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.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure that all teaching makes full use of current approaches to tracking and monitoring pupil performance and progress.
2. Ensure that all teaching meets more fully the needs of the more able and those with SEND, building upon the work of the individual learning department.
3. Determine appropriately phased priorities for the EYFS parts of the school development plan.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils are very well educated, fulfilling the school's aim to develop the talents and strengths of each individual within and beyond the classroom. Almost all the responses from the parent questionnaire indicated satisfaction with pupils' progress. The achievement of pupils of all needs and abilities is excellent from the EYFS onwards. Their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are excellent relative to their ages. Pupils demonstrate high levels of competency and confidence in logical thought, scientific reasoning, mathematical applications and the use of information and communication technology (ICT).
- 3.3 In the EYFS, all children including those with SEND and those with EAL make excellent progress from a range of starting points. Their writing and numeracy are strong. They are active and independent learners with excellent physical, critical, investigative and creative skills. Most exceed the expected levels in all areas of learning and development by the end of their Reception year. Progress in literacy is particularly strong and the children are capably using their phonic knowledge to form letters and simple words in a variety of contexts. The more able children build relatively complex words and record their experiences unaided. The children make choices and listen to, and readily act upon, instructions. Independent access to a computer supports their confidence in technology.
- 3.4 Throughout the school pupils' understanding and knowledge across a wide range of subjects is excellent, as is the presentation of work and their ability to talk about ideas and concepts. Their aesthetic and creative skills are particularly well developed with many examples of outstanding art and design work displayed around the school. A film made by Year 6 pupils brought together excellent mathematical understanding and superb creative talents. Independent learning is promoted across a range of subjects and is particularly evident in work done for topics in the prep school and for projects in Years 7 to 9.
- 3.5 Extra-curricular achievement is excellent. Pupils participate in national competitions and award schemes, developing their understanding beyond the core curriculum. They achieve much success, for example in externally accredited speech and drama awards where three quarters of pupils achieve distinctions. Physical skills are developed most effectively through a rich and varied sporting programme. A number of pupils gain regional and national recognition, such as those who are members of the very successful equestrian team. Pupils speak particularly highly of the opportunities offered by drama and of the pride they take in major school productions such as *The Lion King* which was observed in rehearsal.
- 3.6 In the prep school, pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be good. For the senior part of the school, the following analysis uses the national data for the years 2012 to 2014. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Performance in GCSE has been above the national average for girls in maintained schools. Results in IGCSE subjects have been higher than worldwide averages. A-Level results have been similar to the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. Examination results for 2015 maintained this level of performance. The level of attainment in the

prep school, and at GCSE and A Level, confirmed by the nationally standardised progress data that is available, indicates that pupils, as they move from the prep department to and then through the senior part of the school, are making progress that is excellent in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Almost all pupils go into higher education on leaving school.

- 3.7 At all levels of the school, pupils identified as having SEND or EAL generally make excellent progress supported by the individual learning department. The more able pupils, together with those identified by the school as having particular gifts and talents, receive support and encouragement to enable them in most cases to make rapid progress and reach high levels of attainment.
- 3.8 The pupils' achievement is strongly supported by their extremely positive attitudes to learning and their exemplary behaviour. Pupils approach their work with enthusiasm and commitment. They work together most effectively, supporting and encouraging each other. Those with SEND show strong levels of perseverance and effort, gaining confidence from the support they receive. Pupils co-operate well in their work, supporting and encouraging each other. They place high value on their excellent relationships with teachers and they have great pride in their school.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of the curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.10 The curricular and extra-curricular provision fulfils the school aim to provide a secure and happy environment for learning. The school has successfully responded to the recommendations of the previous inspection to extend the enrichment programme at sixth-form level and to promote the provision of activities for more able pupils. The development of the individual learning department provides strong support for more able pupils and the school closely monitors each pupil's enrichment programme.
- 3.11 The well-planned and flexible curriculum is broad and highly effective in its coverage of scientific, linguistic, mathematical, logical, practical, cultural, physical, and creative areas of study. There are excellent and plentiful opportunities for art and design, music, dance and drama for all ages. The curriculum in all parts of the school including EYFS strongly supports personal development. The school's curriculum policy document sets out the curricular arrangements and promotes their effective implementation throughout the school. The parental responses to the questionnaire demonstrated a very high level of satisfaction with both curricular and extra-curricular provision.
- 3.12 In the EYFS there is an excellent balance between child initiated and adult-led activities, which are most effective in promoting all key areas of the curriculum and learning for early years. The curriculum provides excellent opportunities for children of all needs and abilities to make progress and flourish. In response to the recommendation of the previous inspection, opportunities for problem-solving and independent learning have been improved and the easily accessible outdoor area is being used to excellent effect. A stimulating range of resources supports all areas of learning and physical development and enables the children to engage in imaginative role-play. Specialist teaching of dance, physical education (PE), French, swimming and music enriches the curriculum. The school's wooded area provides excellent opportunities for the children to engage in the outdoor education curriculum.

- 3.13 In the pre-prep and prep departments class teachers and specialist teachers provide stimulating and diverse experiences for the pupils for all needs and abilities. Excellent cross-curricular links enhance and enliven the pupils' education. The inspirational environmental educational programme provides pupils with life skills and an awareness of the need to protect the natural world. In the senior school, there is a broad and varied curricular provision for pupils. They are introduced to two modern foreign languages in Years 7 and 8 and have lessons in computing up to Year 9. Creative subjects include design technology, textiles and food technology. Sixth-form pupils choose from a wide range of A-Level courses including psychology and drama.
- 3.14 Excellent resources, libraries and ICT facilities are well used by teachers and pupils and contribute to vibrant and enriching learning. Visiting speakers, artists in residence and educational visits all contribute to the richness of the learning experience and its inspirational effect on pupils. Programmes for PSHE are most effective throughout the school. A well-structured careers programme for senior pupils includes a careers week and opportunities for work experience.
- 3.15 The extra-curricular provision is excellent. Clubs, societies and other activities provide very many opportunities for pupils including equestrian sports, photography, yoga and Italian for beginners. Some of the activities for younger pupils are organized and effectively led by sixth-formers. The music and drama departments provide many occasions for public performances. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and organised trips to such locations as Tanzania, Uganda and Ecuador give the pupils the chance to develop not only important leadership skills but also some valuable links with the local and wider community. In their responses to the questionnaire and in interviews, pupils welcomed the extra-curricular opportunities available to them throughout the school.
- 3.16 The school's individual learning department systematically identifies and effectively supports pupils with SEND and EAL. Clear guidance is provided for teachers. Carefully considered individual education plans are effectively used in most cases to assist in the delivery of targeted support including for the pupil with a statement of educational needs

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.17 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.18 Teaching is highly effective in supporting the aims of the school to identify, develop and support each pupil's talents and strengths. Throughout the school, lessons are well planned and include an excellent variety of challenging and engaging activities. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, most parents said that they were pleased with the progress their children are making.
- 3.19 In the EYFS all children, including those who require additional support, enjoy their learning. They work and play together happily. Adults know the children as individuals extremely well and have a detailed understanding of how young children learn. The teaching encourages the children to explore, investigate and initiate their own learning on a daily basis. It shows high expectations of what the children may achieve. Full use is made of the newly refurbished outdoor learning area immediately adjacent to the EYFS classroom, thereby fulfilling a recommendation of the previous inspection. Appropriate assessments are made throughout each

school day, and the information gained from these is used to plan the next steps for each child. The progress of each child is carefully monitored.

- 3.20 A range of teaching methods is evident across the school. The most successful teaching is characterised by challenging questioning and excellent use of resources together with a brisk, purposeful pace. In the questionnaire almost all pupils said that the teaching helps them to learn. In response to the recommendations made by the previous inspection, the school has implemented a marking policy and a tracking system. Most marking is excellent. Assessment has a positive effect on pupil progress and is a strong contributory factor to the excellent achievement of the pupils. Many lessons incorporate peer and self-assessment to good effect. In a small number of cases marking is somewhat cursory with little guidance given to pupils about how they might improve. The tracking system monitors pupils' academic performance and progress. This is beginning to provide a wealth of useful data to inform future planning. However, it is still in its infancy and is not yet fully used as an aid to the pupils' progress.
- 3.21 A small minority of pupils indicated that their homework does not help them to learn. Discussions with pupils and scrutiny of samples of their work indicated that, for the most part, the homework set is both appropriate and manageable. However, it is clear that some pupils in the prep and senior parts of the school do not always receive sufficient monitoring and academic support to help them manage their workload.
- 3.22 Teachers are well qualified and have excellent subject knowledge. The teaching promotes tolerance and respect and is balanced in its coverage of any political issues. Pupils and teachers share a genuine mutual respect. The pupils' behaviour and relationships in and out of lessons are exemplary.
- 3.23 Most teaching incorporates extension work and alternative resources to stretch the more able and support those pupils with SEND. The teaching meets the requirements set out in the statement of special educational needs. Parents, in the questionnaire, commented favourably upon the support given by the school to the more able and those pupils with SEND. The individual learning department is instrumental in developing this provision but it is yet to have full impact on all teaching. Whilst many lessons cater effectively for more able pupils and for those with SEND, in a small amount of the teaching there is in the prep and senior parts of the school an over-reliance on class setting. This leads to learning activities which are not sufficiently tailored to the specific abilities and needs within a class, resulting in slower progress for some pupils.
- 3.24 The teaching enables pupils to make good and sometimes excellent use of ICT to benefit their learning and improve the quality of their work: the use of the recently developed learning platform, and of tablet devices and laptops, is widespread. Classroom environments are stimulating and dynamic. Displays of pupils' work around the school are often highly creative and striking.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is excellent.
- 4.2 The school is highly successful in achieving its aim in creating a community based on Christian values, tolerance and service. This results in compassionate and articulate pupils who are able to express their opinions confidently. Pupils have an excellent standard of personal development by the time they leave the school.
- 4.3 In the EYFS, the underlying ethos is one of co-operation and a positive approach. This prepares the children well for the transition from Reception into Year 1. Acts of kindness are noted, recorded and widely celebrated. Adults and children alike demonstrate a mutual respect for each other and the children's behaviour is exemplary. The setting embraces fundamental British values. The children have written to, and received replies from, members of the royal family. Equality of opportunity is actively promoted and diversity within the community is seen as a significant asset. Recognition of different faiths and cultures is actively encouraged. Evident pleasure is gained from being awarded a role of responsibility. Creativity and aesthetic awareness are strong features in the personal development of the children in the setting.
- 4.4 Throughout the school, the pupils' spiritual awareness is excellent. Pupils show a strong appreciation for non-material aspects of life in response to the exploration of spiritual themes in assemblies, PSHE and religious education lessons through which they develop self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. The school's extensive grounds include a quiet garden and a chapel. Pupils gain a deeper understanding of different faiths both through religious education classes and visits to other places of worship. Pupils in the pre-prep department have listened to visiting speakers tell them about Eid al-Fitr and Diwali. Pupils in Year 8 visit synagogues, mosques and churches.
- 4.5 The pupils' moral awareness is excellent. They have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They develop their appreciation and respect for British legal institutions through PSHE lessons and assemblies. Behaviour both in the classroom and around the school is exemplary. Pupils have a clear appreciation of the needs of others beyond the school and in the wider community and they are concerned for the needs of those less fortunate than themselves. They organise many charity fundraising events in support of national and international causes such as earthquakes. Year 6 pupils took up the school's entrepreneurial 'Fiver Challenge' to raise several thousand pounds for charities. Pupils engage with local community projects through house-based harvest projects. Pupils choose the charities supported and help with the delivery of goods to shelters for the homeless.
- 4.6 The social development of pupils is excellent. Throughout the whole school setting pupils have extensive opportunities to take on leadership roles and welcome the opportunities to do so. In Year 6, for example, all pupils have a position of responsibility for which they apply by letter. Through buddy systems, pupils from the pre-prep department upwards guide and mentor others within and across each part of the school: social contact between year groups is a clear strength. Pupils of all years are also fully involved in house system, focused on activities and sports. Pupils make excellent contributions to the school community through meetings of the

school councils. Year group prefects give help and guidance to younger pupils thereby demonstrating excellent levels of emotional maturity.

- 4.7 The cultural awareness of pupils is excellent. Through assemblies, PSHE and other lessons, pupils learn about other cultures and develop their understanding of and respect for British values and institutions. They respect different cultural traditions and understand the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination. A mock general election involved all pupils. Pupils support a school in Uganda. Pupils are fundraising for trips next year to Peru and Ecuador. Pupils extend their cultural horizons effectively through a variety of visits, for example to art galleries, museums and theatres in London and on a history trip to Berlin.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 Clear structures and policies ensure that the pastoral needs of the pupils are met, fully meeting the aim of the school to provide a secure and happy environment. Highly effective school-wide communication systems and regular monitoring of these ensure early identification of concerns about individual pupils and effective, timely intervention. The form tutors and class teachers, supported by heads of years and section heads, provide daily contact with and continuous pastoral care for the pupils. A counsellor is available for additional support.
- 4.10 In the EYFS, the key person and support members of staff play important roles in successfully nurturing the personal, social and emotional wellbeing of the children. They are excellent role models and go out of their way to encourage mutual respect and promote positive relationships within a happy, caring and purposeful environment. The children's behaviour is exemplary. Healthy snacks are served and the lunch menus are balanced and nutritious. The children are aware of the need for good hygiene and make excellent use of the outdoors for physical exercise.
- 4.11 Pupils in discussions and through the questionnaire praised the support they receive from staff. Most pupils say they are confident that there is an adult or senior pupil to whom they can turn to if they have any concerns. In the questionnaire and in discussions, pupils confirmed that they like being at the school. This is echoed in the views of the overwhelming majority of parents who, in their responses to the questionnaire, said that their children feel safe in school and are well looked after and happy.
- 4.12 The school is highly effective in promoting good behaviour and guarding against bullying. The school's e-safety strategy is strong in its approach to the promotion of pupils' welfare and the vigorous discouragement of cyber-bullying. In interviews pupils said that bullying is infrequent and they expressed confidence that the school handles any incidents firmly. The disciplinary records indicate that the school implements its policies and procedures meticulously and that it takes a strong stand against all forms of bullying.
- 4.13 In their questionnaire responses a small minority of pupils said that sanctions and rewards are not always given fairly by teachers. Sanctions logs indicate that responses to misdemeanours are typically appropriate and fair. In discussions, pupil indicated that rewards often are given for achievement, perseverance and progress.
- 4.14 A small minority of pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that the school does not always ask for or respond to their opinions. In interviews, pupils

said that the school seeks their views and responds to them. Inspection evidence shows that several recent initiatives have been influenced by pupil opinion, for example the plans for the new sixth form centre and the play area for prep school pupils. The senior school council has recently been revitalised on the advice of pupils and now meets more frequently. This has improved its effectiveness in gathering pupils' views and suggestions and presenting these to the school. Pupils in the prep department have their own council which gives them too an effective forum for making their views known.

- 4.15 Pupils are encouraged to make healthy life choices. They take regular exercise both in their timetabled PE lessons and through extra-curricular activities. The PSHEE programme supports a healthy lifestyle through an appropriately strong focus upon good mental health and physical well-being. The school provides a wide choice of nutritious food and all pupils are aware of the importance of choosing a healthy diet.
- 4.16 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational and physical access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.17 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 4.18 Extremely careful attention is given to the safeguarding of pupils and the comprehensive policy is now implemented effectively. In the previous boarding welfare inspection the school was asked to ensure that all appropriate checks should be made prior to any member of staff starting work under supervision. The school now undertakes thorough, comprehensive pre-appointment checks, which are carefully recorded. All members of staff, governors and volunteers receive regular and effective child protection training. An appropriate safeguarding governor is identified. Records relating to any concerns about pupils' welfare are stored carefully. Suitably trained designated members of staff maintain close and appropriate contact with local agencies. Appropriate steps are taken in all parts of the school including EYFS to prevent radicalisation or extremism.
- 4.19 The safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS are extremely well met. The EYFS is a welcoming, safe and caring environment within which the children form secure emotional attachments to the adults, as well as each other. A range of detailed risk assessments covering activities inside and outdoors serve to remind everyone of their responsibilities. Early morning and after-school arrangements are suitable for children attending.
- 4.20 The necessary measures to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards are particularly thorough. Fire risk assessments and training records are up-to-date, fire drills are held regularly at different times of the day and evacuation procedures are clear. The procedures are well known and understood by pupils and staff. Risk assessments associated with the premises, with traffic and movement around the school, and with school trips and activities are thorough and detailed. They identify the hazards and the controls needed to minimise risk. These risk assessments are regularly monitored and updated with the assistance of an external consultant. Younger pupils are supervised carefully as they move around the school site. Maintenance of the buildings and sites is very well managed. The health and safety committee meets regularly and its deliberations and recommendations are considered and implemented by the leadership and management and by governors.

- 4.21 The first-aid policy provides very clear guidance for the care and welfare of pupils. The medical provision for ill and injured pupils and for pupils with SEND is excellent. Many members of staff are trained in first aid and their training is updated at least every three years. Those directly involved in the EYFS have paediatric first aid training. Pupils who are ill benefit from excellent medical support. Accidents, illnesses and provision of medication are recorded carefully.
- 4.22 Registration of the pupils throughout the school, including in EYFS, takes place in a calm and careful manner with any unexplained absences followed up quickly and effectively. The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and correctly stored.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Whilst building upon the strengths and success of the school, the governors have developed a clear and ambitious vision for the future. The governors are highly successful in fulfilling their aim to provide a secure and happy environment in which each pupil is helped to aspire to excellence.
- 5.3 Since the previous standard inspection, the guidance of the governors has helped to improve the standards of education whilst maintaining excellent arrangements to ensure the welfare and well-being of pupils, including children in the EYFS. Governors have given full support to the development of an outdoor school curriculum and the establishment of the individual learning department. Through their objectives for the school, the governors' vision for strategic development is strong. Careful financial management is embedded within the ethos and educational ambitions of the school. The success of the governors' wholehearted commitment to the school is exemplified in the many building projects currently under way.
- 5.4 The governors fully support the EYFS and a nominated governor monitors its work. Regular, focused visits take place, where vision and strategies for developing the setting are discussed. Since the previous inspection the governors have endorsed significant investment in the EYFS outdoor learning and play environment.
- 5.5 Governors demonstrate a wide range of skills and experience including financial, legal, business, marketing and educational. They are supportive and have an excellent insight into the school. Governors meet regularly with the senior management and leadership and with other members of the school community. Through both formal and informal meetings, the governors monitor and challenge the leadership of the school. Several committees monitor the administrative and educational work of the school and members of staff both within and beyond the senior leadership contribute to their meetings and report on a range of educational developments.
- 5.6 School buildings are maintained effectively and any issues relating to health and safety are dealt with promptly. Governors provide excellent support for senior management, including through annual appraisal of the head.
- 5.7 The governors understand their legal responsibilities to the school and maintain careful oversight of policies and procedures which are reviewed annually. Robust safeguarding procedures are implemented. The governors as a body receive and discuss an annual safeguarding report on the safeguarding policy and procedures and their implementation, and they are appropriately trained.

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

- 5.8 The quality of leadership and management including links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent.
- 5.9 In the questionnaire, parents indicated high levels of satisfaction with the leadership and management of the school. An overwhelming majority of parents said that they would recommend the school to others.
- 5.10 The leadership and management of the EYFS is excellent. The setting has made excellent progress since the previous inspection. Thorough self-evaluation helps the leadership to identify areas for development building upon the setting's considerable strengths. Suitable monitoring and supervision arrangements are implemented. The EYFS team shares the leadership's commitment to further improvement, encapsulating its approach within the school's development plan. However, the otherwise excellent plan lacks in places a clear sense of appropriate prioritisation for the EYFS with the result that there is sometimes no clear distinction between those actions needing immediate attention and those which may be delayed. Equality, diversity and British values are promoted most effectively. The recommendations of the previous inspection have been met successfully.
- 5.11 The school is highly successful in meeting its aim that its pupils should fulfil their potential, developing maturity, confidence, self-esteem and a sense of independence. The aims are reflected in the excellent quality of education and the high standard of pupils' personal development throughout the school.
- 5.12 The leadership and management of the school provide a clear vision for excellence in learning which emerges through the school's development plan. A culture of self-evaluation by management results in excellent school improvement through effective planning. Regular senior and middle management meetings ensure that the school development vision is shared, developed, evaluated and communicated to all staff members thereby providing high levels of cohesion across the school.
- 5.13 The school has been generally effective in responding to recommendations from the previous inspection. It has implemented a coherent approach to whole-school marking. However, a small number of teachers are yet to incorporate this in their practice. The systems to track and monitor pupil progress have been developed most effectively even though they are not yet fully embedded across all areas within the school. The enrichment programme in the sixth form and the provision of activities for the most able have both been extended, further enhancing the opportunities for pupils' learning.
- 5.14 The leadership and management has ensured a strong focus upon the needs of those pupils with SEND and of the more able. Although most of the teaching has responded positively to this, full account is not yet taken of the needs of the more able and those with SEND through specifically targeted actions in lessons
- 5.15 The school is very supportive of the process of continual professional review and development of staff. The educational programmes within the EYFS are effectively monitored and the supervision of staff is regularly carried out, leading to continuous professional development for identified needs. Senior leaders and middle management have been trained in coaching techniques which serve to support and develop staff in their roles. Members of staff monitor and evaluate progress towards

their own professional goals and towards the overall development priorities as set out in the school development plan. Annual staff appraisal supports the system of continuous professional development and review. Members of staff feel supported in their work by the middle management and by senior leadership.

- 5.16 The leadership and management maintain careful and most effective oversight of all aspects of the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Procedures to safeguard all pupils throughout the school are rigorous, including in the EYFS. All members of staff, volunteers and governors are trained in safeguarding procedures. Members of the leadership are trained in safer recruitment. The school has responded effectively to the requirement of the previous boarding intermediate inspection that the school must ensure that all appropriate checks are made should any member of staff need to start work under supervision. Secure procedures to check suitability of staff, governors and volunteers to work with children are now implemented and appropriately detailed records are made in the central register.
- 5.17 The links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent in all sections of the school. In accordance with its stated aim to create valuable partnerships with families, the school successfully maintains extremely constructive relationships. There are most effective partnerships between the school and parents to secure appropriate interventions for those children in the EYFS who need them and to engage parents in their children's learning and progress. In their questionnaire responses most parents said that they are encouraged to be involved in the education of their daughters and in the life of the school.
- 5.18 The parent-teacher association raises funds for a range of initiatives. Older pupils nominate a charity and this is supported by large-scale ventures organised by parents such as the ball and a Christmas fair. Parents have provided, for example, a defibrillator, a flower meadow and tents for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Parents offer advice at the careers fair, come into the school as speakers or to share their expertise, and belong to the school's community choir.
- 5.19 Constructive relationships with parents are established before entry to the school with comprehensive literature for new parents at every level of entry, including all required information for parents of prospective and current pupils. Communications sent to current parents are regular, informative and sensibly detailed. Reports on their children are very informative: they reflect the individual pupil's achievements and document targets to support future learning. Meetings with staff are valuable and readily available. In their questionnaires, parents commented extremely positively about every aspect of the school's work, as well as the quality of care for their children. The school handles any concerns and complaints in a timely fashion and according to the school's suitable written policy.

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