



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**SIBFORD SCHOOL**

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## Sibford School

Full Name of School	<b>Sibford School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>931/6005</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>1068256</b>		
Address	<b>Sibford School The Hill Sibford Ferris Banbury Oxfordshire OX15 5QL</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01295 781200</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01295 781204</b>		
Email Address	<b>office@sibfordschool.co.uk</b>		
Head	<b>Michael Goodwin</b>		
Clerk of School Committee	<b>Seren Wildwood</b>		
Age Range	<b>3 to 19</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>424</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (242 boys; 182 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>18</b>	5-11: <b>84</b>
			11-18: <b>322</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>370</b>	
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>54</b>	
	Full:	<b>37</b>	Weekly: <b>17</b>
Acting Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Alison Stoddart</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection Dates	<b>17 to 20 March 2015</b>		

## PREFACE

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

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) 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.

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 pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the**

**same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the Clerk of the School Committee (chair of governors) and other governors, and with a small group of parents, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and Meetings for Worship. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Dr Stephen Grounds	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Mary Booth	Team Inspector (Head of Admissions, HMC School)
Mr Steven Boyes	Team Inspector (Principal, ISA School)
Mrs Diane Durrant	Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, Society of Heads school)
Mr John Greathead	Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Susan Jones	Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, GSA school)
Ms Alison Horton	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Miss Mary Regan	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(a) Main findings</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(b) Action points</b>	<b>3</b>
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	3
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>4</b>
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning	4
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c) The contribution of teaching	7
<b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>9</b>
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	9
(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care	10
(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	11
(d) The quality of boarding	12
<b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>15</b>
(a) The quality of governance	15
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	15

## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Sibford School is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils from the ages of 3 to 19. It was founded in 1842 as a Quaker boarding school, occupying a 50-acre site near Banbury in Oxfordshire. It welcomes pupils of all faiths and denominations, and of none. Sibford seeks for each member a stillness and a peace that enable all to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone.
- 1.2 The school aims to develop the true potential of every person by encouraging self-esteem and respect for the qualities and needs of each other: 'Let your life speak'. It seeks to prompt also a thirst for life-long learning and an appreciation and active concern for the immediate environment and the wider community.
- 1.3 The junior school opened in 1989 and was fully amalgamated with the senior school in 2009. The school is a charitable trust, and is administered by a board of governors known as the School Committee, whose members are the trustees. The governors are appointed from a wide area by Sibford General Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. Quakers make up three quarters of the governing body, along with two appointed parent governors and two representatives of the Sibford Old Scholars' Association.
- 1.4 There were 424 pupils on roll at the time of the inspection with 18 in the Early Years Foundations Stage (EYFS) for children aged three to five. Eighty-four pupils were in Years 1 to 6 and 322 were in Years 7 to 13. The school has identified 194 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and seven of these have a statement of special educational needs or an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. A total of 137 receive specialist support. Forty-two pupils are learning English as an additional language (EAL) and of these 40 receive support for their English.
- 1.5 Pupils are mainly from professional and commercial families and approximately a tenth of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Boarding provision exists only for senior pupils and sixth formers in three boarding houses. Thirty-seven of the boarders are from overseas.
- 1.6 The ability profile of the junior school is overall slightly below the national average with some considerable variation in different years. That of the senior school is above the national average overall; a full spread of abilities is represented, although most pupils have ability that is in line with or above the national average. The ability profile of the sixth form is overall below the national average for pupils in sixth form education. Again, there are pupils from across the whole ability range.
- 1.7 Since the last full inspection in February 2009 the school has expanded its EYFS provision, initiated a new junior school curriculum, and carried out substantial site refurbishments to all parts of the school.
- 1.8 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

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

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

- 2.1 All pupils from the youngest through to those in the sixth form make good progress. Those with SEND and EAL also progress well taking into account their difficulties and starting points. The relative achievement of those identified as gifted or talented is also good: these pupils benefit from additional lectures and activities but the most able are not yet systematically challenged in lessons. For the most part, pupils have good basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Most pupils apply mathematical ideas and scientific skills well. Their use of information and communications technology (ICT) is very well developed. Most older pupils are confident in discussion and when asking questions. Pupils produce high quality creative work in art and work independently in a range of subjects.
- 2.2 The excellent curriculum includes strong outdoor elements with a broad range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils respond successfully and enthusiastically to the sporting opportunities and to the wide range of visits, clubs, and musical opportunities. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship lessons are incorporated into weekly Meetings for Worship (school assemblies) as well as into the curriculum. Teaching is good and the support for those with SEND and EAL is a strength of the school, much appreciated by parents. The assessment and tracking of pupils is good and leads to individual support for pupils who need it. The marking of work is generally good with constructive comments on how to improve.
- 2.3 Pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils respond strongly to the religious ethos of the school. Both pupils and staff identify with the very strong element of mutual respect, which characterises the school and leads to very positive and mature attitudes and behaviour. At all levels, pupils benefit from the excellent systems of pastoral support and from secure procedures for welfare, health and safety and safeguarding. The arrangements for the support of boarders mirror the quality of the arrangements for day pupils. The overall quality of the boarding provision is excellent and the effectiveness with which overseas pupils are integrated into the boarding community is particularly strong.
- 2.4 Governance is excellent and governors are ambitious for the success of the school. Leadership and management at all levels is good with some excellent features. Among these is the successful working out in the life of the school of the Quaker ethos. Development planning is firmly embedded in the culture of the school, but some targets are not defined with sufficient clarity and the mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating progress towards them are not always sufficiently robust. The management maintains a good oversight of policies, especially those concerned with safeguarding and effective mechanisms are in place to ensure they are effectively implemented. However, monitoring had not identified some inconsistency in assessment in the EYFS. The school has responded well to the recommendations made in previous school and boarding inspection reports. It has been very successful in appointing high quality members of staff. Arrangements for checking the suitability of staff are secure. Links with parents are excellent and in the pre-inspection questionnaire parents expressed overwhelming support for and appreciation of the school's care and provision.



**2.(b) Action points****(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

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

**(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 2.7 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Further enhance the provision for pupils identified as academically gifted.
  2. Sharpen the focus and clarity of improvement plans in order to strengthen the processes of monitoring and evaluation.
  3. Establish procedures for more rigorous monitoring of the work of the EYFS.
  4. Incorporate assessment data from observations of children's learning and development in subjects taught by specialist teachers into profiles and learning journeys in the EYFS.

### **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 good.
- 3.2 The school is successful in providing an environment in which it meets its aim of enabling pupils to develop in confidence, self-esteem and tolerance.
- 3.3 The standards achieved in the EYFS are excellent. All children make excellent progress in their learning and development relative to their starting points and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. By the end of the year most children in Nursery are confident counting objects up to ten. They enjoy mark making and cutting out using scissors. Children in Reception identify and name 3D shapes such as square-based pyramids and spheres, and they recognise number patterns counting on in jumps of two and ten. All children are reading words at their own level and with increased confidence. The most able are beginning to write independently using their knowledge of letters and sounds. Children's physical development is exceptionally strong, as observed in jumping, balancing and landing in gymnastics. Their outdoor work demonstrates enquiry and independent exploration as well as controlled risk taking. They show independence in choosing books and in changing clothes. By the end of the Reception year most children reach expected levels of achievement with the more able exceeding these levels.
- 3.4 As pupils progress through the main school, they display good levels of knowledge, skills and understanding of the subjects they study. They are articulate. Pupils listen well, both to their teachers and to each other, and most read and write at levels appropriate to their abilities, though many in the junior school are less successful than others with writing tasks. Most pupils of all ages and abilities competently apply basic and more complex mathematical ideas and scientific skills. Their knowledge and use of ICT is very good and many pupils use word processing as a normal way of working. Older pupils produce illustrated articles with diagrammatic and quoted evidence to support their ideas, for example in sixth-form design technology (DT). Most senior pupils can express themselves well and are confident in discussion and when asking questions. Their creative skills are evident in the extensive range of imaginative and high quality art displayed around the school. Their ability to work independently, as well as to think logically, was demonstrated in a range of subjects and, in the sixth form, in the variety of Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) topics undertaken.
- 3.5 A large majority of pupils successfully leave the sixth form to a first choice destination, usually in higher education. They go on to a diverse range of courses in a variety of new and established universities.
- 3.6 Pupils' attainment in the junior school cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests, but on the evidence available it is judged to be good in relation to national age-related expectations. For the senior school the following analysis uses the national data for the years 2011 to 2013. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. GCSE results have been similar to the national average for maintained schools. The school's 2014 GCSE results are slightly higher than in 2013 and continue the gradual improvement from 2011. For the sixth form, the A-level results have also been similar to the national average for maintained sixth forms. These levels of attainment, together with other inspection evidence such as lesson observations and

the scrutiny of work, indicate that overall pupils make good progress in relation to the average for those with similar abilities.

- 3.7 Because pupils with SEND and EAL are well integrated into classes and are well supported, their attainment is also in line with their peers' and their progress is good given their difficulties and starting points. Pupils identified as gifted and talented do supplementary work: their relative achievement is, as a result, also good. For example, in mathematics they are entered for national mathematical challenges and, since 2013, 15 senior pupils and 22 junior pupils have achieved gold, silver and bronze awards.
- 3.8 Pupils show high levels of physical skill across a wide range of sports and a number of significant successes have been achieved through the local sports partnership and at district and county level in a range of team and individual sports. There have also been individual successes at national level in golf, go-karting, triathlon, swimming and mounted games.
- 3.9 There have been many high achievements in non-sporting activities. In music, distinction and merit have been achieved in grade 8 flute and saxophone. In the past three years 33 pupils have achieved the bronze award in the Duke of Edinburgh programme, 15 at silver and one at gold level.
- 3.10 Pupils enjoy their work and benefit from good learning skills. The mutual respect between teachers and pupils encourages pupils to take their work seriously and be keen to do well. Collaborative work was a strong feature of a majority of lessons observed.

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

- 3.11 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.12 In the EYFS the educational programmes for the prime and specific areas of learning help most children to reach the level of development typical for their age while the more able exceed those expectations in many areas of their learning and development. The weekly timetable provides a thorough coverage of the requisite areas of learning and reflects a good balance of adult led and child initiated learning.
- 3.13 In the main school, pupils benefit from a well-planned curriculum that is stimulating and of high quality: it enables them to enjoy a broad range of subjects and opportunities. Parents and pupils registered strong support for what is offered, especially the extent to which the school meets any special needs. The range of opportunities supports the school's aims to develop a thirst for life-long learning, as well as promoting concern for the environment and the wider community.
- 3.14 The curriculum has been strengthened since the previous inspection. In the junior school there is now an excellent cross-curricular and multi-sensory programme of lessons and activities into which ICT is fully integrated. Environmental education is supported in a number of ways, not least by the outdoor component. The secondary curriculum also now includes outdoor education for Years 7 to 9. In addition, there are now non-GCSE options to broaden the pupils' educational experience, and Spanish is available at an earlier stage. Separate science subjects are readily available to pupils of all abilities. Given the size of the school, there is a wide range of sixth-form subject choice. This includes an expansion of project-based studies such as EPQs. An intermediate "vocational package of subjects" to include existing

vocational subjects such as land environment and countryside management is being developed.

- 3.15 The special provision for pupils with SEND and EAL is excellent. Much of the support is provided outside normal lesson times enabling full attendance at regular classes. Pupils identified as gifted and talented are offered some extension work in classes and in addition are encouraged as a group to attend periodic meetings such as “wiser words”, puzzle solving and critical thinking, and talks given by visiting speakers. This provision broadens these pupils’ experience and knowledge, but it does not yet systematically challenge the most able.
- 3.16 PSHE and citizenship lessons are incorporated into weekly Meetings for Worship as well as being integrated with other subjects across the curriculum. When controversial issues are touched upon, the school ensures that a variety of views are explored in order to ensure balance. The school promotes British values, albeit from the wider perspective of international Quakerism. It promotes tolerance and respect for others and their values.
- 3.17 The resources supporting the curriculum are excellent. Pupils benefit from the established ICT resources as well as from a well-stocked library, science laboratories, games facilities and indoor swimming pool.
- 3.18 The broad range of lunch-time and after school clubs include drama, art, swimming, ball games, cooking, origami, knitting and dance. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are expected to attend at least three lunch-time clubs per week. Competitive sport is undertaken well and enables all pupils to develop their physical skills, as well as giving opportunities to play in matches against other schools. The academic curriculum is enriched by an extensive range of well-organised educational trips and opportunities.
- 3.19 In line with its ethos, the school has links with a preparatory school in Uganda and supports a charity for children in Malawi. It also provides the pupils with an appreciation of and active concern for their immediate environment and the wider community through a number of new initiatives including a pupil-led charity group and a Fairtrade group. The school has also won Green Flag status for its environmental projects.
- 3.20 The school has excellent links with the local and wider community. School facilities such as the swimming pool, games facilities and science laboratories are used by a number of local schools and agencies. The drama, dance and music school held on Saturday mornings and the ‘fun in the country’ holiday club held at the school during school holidays are all open to the wider community. During the inspection a local astronomer inspired pupils and staff with a skilful whole-school presentation on the 2015 solar eclipse, minutes before it happened.

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

- 3.21 The overall quality of teaching is good.
- 3.22 As at the previous inspection, the majority of the teaching seen in lessons was good with many examples that were excellent. There were few examples of teaching that did not reach this standard. The quality of teaching supports the aim of the school to enable every pupil to realise his or her potential. In both the pupil and parent questionnaires there was overwhelming satisfaction with this aspect of the provision.
- 3.23 In the EYFS all children receive very good support so that they develop the necessary skills to learn effectively through play, exploration and active learning. They are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their learning. Teaching strategies, as well as timely support and intervention, ensure that all children make excellent progress relative to their starting points. The planning of lessons and the use of resources is excellent: activities are always well matched to individual needs. Some activities benefit from teaching by specialist teachers. The assessment of children's learning and development is not consistent, notably in subjects taught by specialists.
- 3.24 In the junior and senior schools, teachers have secure subject knowledge and, in the junior school, pupils benefit from specialist senior school teachers in subjects such as PE and music. Teachers couple their secure subject knowledge with excellent knowledge of their pupils, and they are strongly focused on enabling them to make progress. They plan well for the different needs of the pupils in the class: this was a prominent feature of half the lessons observed. Lesson planning is meticulous. In most lessons there are particular strengths in the teaching methodology employed. Teachers' explanations and questioning are used skilfully to engage pupils.
- 3.25 As a result of good planning, the pupils showed great enjoyment, demonstrated good reasoning skills and showed application and perseverance. Pupils made good use of the resources made available to them.
- 3.26 The teaching enables pupils of all ages and of all abilities and needs to make good progress in their understanding, in the development of their skills and in the acquisition of new knowledge. As in the previous inspection, pupils identified as having SEND or with EAL receive highly effective support from specialist staff who communicate the pupils' needs and how to support them to classroom teachers. Consequently, class teachers understand and appreciate the particular needs of these pupils and make effective provision for them alongside and within the main curriculum; the needs of pupils with statements of educational need or EHCs are also met well. Excellent use is made of teaching assistants: for example in science lessons practical work was made accessible to all pupils by their help and support. Whilst planning usually encompasses the range of ability in classes, the most able are not systematically challenged, as evidenced by the work scrutiny.
- 3.27 In the junior school, marking is thorough with clear indications of how pupils might improve in most cases. Pupils expressed their appreciation of the feedback and support they receive. There is an effective system of tracking and monitoring. In the senior school marking is more varied. Much is of a high standard, with helpful comment that indicates to pupils the clear steps they need to take in order to make progress, but this is not consistent. In lessons teachers often give additional oral feedback which is positive and informed. In sixth-form assessment, the coverage of A2 and AS specifications is good and there is very explicit attention to marking

criteria. In some subjects the standard of marking is exemplary, providing pupils with feedback which is instructive, extensive and which invites a dialogue with the teacher.

- 3.28 In the junior school pupils from Year 2 upwards sit standardised test papers and this complements and informs a teacher assessment for tracking at two points in the year. This tracking is analysed to monitor progression. In the senior school progress is successfully monitored on a regular basis through the use of three-weekly reporting cards, which detail effort and achievement in the classroom and on homework tasks. This is based on interviews with pupils who take the report cards seriously. The data is used for dialogue with subject teachers and pastoral staff.

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

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 As at the previous inspection, pupils are developing well in accordance with the aims of the school to generate respect, resilience and positive relationships within the community and to see "That of God in Everyone."
- 4.3 The spiritual development of the pupils is excellent. Quaker values are central to the life of the school. Pupils respond with reverence and respect for the Meetings for Worship and their time for sustained silent reflection and contemplation. They show a strong sense of spiritual awareness and empathy for others. Their participation in music, art and drama illustrates their appreciation of both the beauty of the world around them and the less tangible aspects of life. They demonstrate a deep respect and awareness of the natural world and the environment.
- 4.4 The moral development of the pupils is excellent. From an early age, pupils demonstrate strong moral awareness and a confidence to express their views on ethical issues. They have strong personal values and act consistently with their own principles. They are strongly committed to self-responsibility for their own behaviour and to the improvement of their work. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and a desire for fair play. If necessary, they are self-critical. During the commemorations of the First World War, pupils considered the pacifist stance and a lively debate was held encompassing "Quaker Attitudes towards War", thereby showing consideration of the wider demands of citizenship for the conduct of local, national and international affairs. Pupils understand and respect the over-arching nature of the civil and criminal law of England.
- 4.5 The social development of the pupils is excellent. Children in the EYFS are self-assured and confident. They trust adults at school and feel secure and happy, becoming well prepared for the transition into Year 1. In the junior school, outdoor education provides opportunities for strong emotional growth, development of social skills and self-esteem. Across the school, pupils demonstrate that they are confident and show socially responsible and polite behaviour. By the time they reach the older classes, pupils are mature, articulate and sensitive young people. Pupils are self-aware and respectful of others. They are considerate of other people's social skills, learning differences, personal qualities and disabilities. Pupils have a strong sense of service and take roles of responsibility seriously, relishing the opportunity to act as role models and to contribute to the life of the school. Pupils also develop a strong awareness of political and economic institutions and the wider society. Pupils learn that others are less fortunate than themselves and eagerly become involved in fundraising initiatives. In this, they exhibit great pride. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to take on areas of responsibility appropriate to their age, such as when assisting younger children who may be experiencing problems.
- 4.6 Pupils demonstrate excellent cultural understanding. Their harmonious, tolerant and supportive relationships unify the school population whilst celebrating diversity. Pupils enjoy links with Uganda, Spain, Germany as well as connections made through the Society of Friends. They develop a conspicuous awareness and appreciation of cultures and faiths other than their own, as well as of western cultural tradition. Events such as the Spanish exchange help to promote harmony

and understanding, whilst involving the wider international community and parents. Pupils' cultural understanding is extended by educational outings, such as to the historic dockyard and theatres. Pupils appreciate opportunities to study drama art and music through such activities as the Shakespeare School Festival, performances and concerts some of which are linked with charity fundraising. Younger pupils develop their knowledge of culture, genders and races through small world play and visits by nurses, police and fire officers.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 The pastoral support for pupils in the EYFS is excellent. Teachers and support staff ensure that all children, including those in need of additional support, enjoy very positive relationships with adults and form secure emotional attachments. All children have a key worker with whom they have a positive and secure relationship. Children are happy at school and they arrive looking forward to the day ahead. They trust the adults who work with them and clearly enjoy being with them. A high priority is placed on encouraging independence and enhancing self-esteem. High standards of behaviour are expected and achieved. Adults help children to understand why it is important to listen to others, to show respect, to share, co-operate and take turns. Children are always encouraged and praised for being helpful and kind and receive petals for their flower chart as a reward.
- 4.9 The school is passionate about the emotional well-being of its pupils, with staff at all levels providing highly effective support and guidance in accordance with the school's pastoral aims. Pupils with statements, SEND or EAL are harmoniously integrated within the school. These pupils feel safe and secure and are thus able to grow personally and academically like all other pupils within a vibrant, supportive community. Exemplary relationships between staff and pupils, and between the pupils themselves, are apparent throughout the school. Pupils are supported with a pastoral system that helps them to appreciate themselves as individuals and to understand their relationships with others. Almost all pupils responding in the questionnaire said they knew to whom to turn if they had a personal difficulty and parents likewise indicated their strong view that their child was well looked after.
- 4.10 Senior pupils benefit from appropriate careers guidance before selecting their GCSE options. In the sixth form good advice is provided on preparing a university application, both through the use of literature and directly from staff.
- 4.11 Children in the EYFS understand the importance of physical activity and enjoy a wide range of opportunities. Both here and in the main school a healthy lifestyle is encouraged with regular opportunities for exercise. Healthy eating is encouraged for all, and the school meals are nutritious and tasty, with plenty of choice available at lunchtimes. Drinking water is available throughout the day.
- 4.12 Pupils' behaviour is excellent throughout the school. Pupils know where to go for help and support if socially unacceptable behaviour such as harassment, bullying or discrimination were to arise. The school employs a registered nurse in its own health centre and an independent counselling service for senior school students. A highly effective pastoral board meets regularly to discuss any concerns and ensure that best practice is shared as soon as possible.



- 4.13 The student forum in the senior school and school council in the junior school provide opportunities for the pupil voice to be heard. Excellent guidelines for new pupils were produced by the student forum and feature in a new student handbook.
- 4.14 The school has a suitable accessibility plan to increase educational access of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

- 4.15 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.16 Thorough attention is paid to child protection in all parts of the school, including the EYFS. The designated safeguarding leads have had recent training to update their expertise and organise regular events to train staff. Staff, including those in the EYFS, have all read the document *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and have been appropriately trained. The school usefully has supplemented its full policy on child protection with a shorter card which is carried by staff and which sets out the key advice and contact numbers. The policy itself has been refined for clarity in the course of the inspection. The school maintains very good and productive links with the local authority, and records show that close contact with this and other agencies is maintained if incidents arise. The governors closely scrutinise child protection policy and practice. In the very rare cases of serious matters they are appropriately informed. The school operates safe recruitment procedures and has significantly strengthened and updated the ways in which it handles recruitment and the maintenance of the central register of appointments. Teachers working with under-8s provide appropriate assurance that they are not disqualified by association.
- 4.17 E-safety is also given priority by the school. Pupils reported that they have had good training and have been properly guided by the staff in the care they should take using the internet including, in particular, social networking sites.
- 4.18 Appropriate arrangements promote the pupils' health and safety of pupils. Regular checks are carried out, including of fire and electrical safety, and these checks are well documented. Fire drills regularly take place. Risk assessment procedures are thorough, notably in the arrangements for safeguarding pupils on trips, where a member of the governing body quality assures the checks. Health and safety training for staff takes place as part of their induction on arrival.
- 4.19 Admission and attendance records are maintained and stored in line with requirements.
- 4.20 The school has a well-appointed medical room for pupils who are sick or injured. Systematic records are kept. The first-aid policy is comprehensive and the school has an appropriate number of staff with first-aid qualifications. In the EYFS, teachers trained in paediatric first aid ensure children's medical needs are met effectively, such as when playground accidents occur. The needs of pupils with SEND are also well catered for.

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

- 4.21 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.22 Outcomes for boarders are excellent. As a result of the experience, boarders develop in confidence and in social skills such as politeness, communication and the ability to be good listeners. They become extremely supportive of one another and embrace the diversity of their community. Overseas boarders, fully integrated within the boarding houses, enjoy sharing details of their backgrounds and customs with others. The awareness of the wider world gained as a result is further enhanced by access to newspapers, television, the internet and a varied programme of outings.
- 4.23 Boarders make a positive contribution to their community. They raise suggestions for improvement. House meetings (collects) are often led by boarders and a record is kept of suggestions with action dates and outcomes. The previous boarding inspection recommended further formal opportunities for boarders to voice their views. Boarders interviewed identified that there are now many ways in which their views can be listened to, both formally or by individual staff.
- 4.24 The highly committed houseparents have an excellent and natural rapport with the boarders in their care. In line with one of the boarding aims, the “open and trusting ethos” where boarders will be “treated and respected as an individual” is palpable in the boarding houses. A sixth-form boarder said that a strength of the school is that the staff at Sibford are very good listeners.
- 4.25 The boarders are very comfortable in their relationships with one another and value highly the friendships they make. Most boarders who responded to the pupil questionnaire agreed that they enjoy boarding and that boarders get on well together in the house.
- 4.26 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. The formal induction of new boarders by taster sessions, induction days and helpful key written information is very effective, as is the informal help given by houseparents and other boarders. Boarders find staff highly approachable. They are aware how to contact the independent listener and Children’s Commissioner. They praise the availability and willingness of teachers to support their learning as required.
- 4.27 Excellent medical care is provided by highly qualified nursing staff in charge of the well-appointed medical centre. Out-of-hours care is also very good. This is provided by houseparents, who are well informed and first aid trained. They are regularly updated in the administration of medicines and other health issues. Houseparents can contact the nurse for out-of-hours advice, and have a detailed list of emergency telephone numbers for a range of medical services. Procedures regarding record keeping and confidentiality are meticulously observed. Boarders are registered with a local general practitioner. There are excellent links with local dental, optometric and other services. Controlled drugs, prescribed medicines and homely remedies are appropriately stored in the medical centre and the houses as required.
- 4.28 Boarders say they feel safe in their boarding houses; most are confident that their possessions are secure. Fire drills take place at least termly in boarding time and are properly logged.

- 4.29 Boarders can easily obtain basic items locally and have access to a wider range of shops through weekly trips. The laundry procedures are effective. Apart from Saturday evenings, all meals are taken in the light and pleasant central dining hall, where round tables facilitate social interaction. Special dietary needs are met. A very small minority of those who responded to the pupil questionnaire, said that the food was not good. This was not borne out by boarders' opinions in interviews, nor by the excellent quality of food sampled by the inspectors. Virtually all food is prepared freshly by chefs on site, and there are excellent choices on offer. On Saturday evenings meals are prepared by boarders in house. They can choose to cook for themselves, with friends or to prepare supper for the whole house. Necessary groceries are purchased on a regular Friday evening supermarket trip, and boarders have been given food hygiene training. They enjoy this experience and develop useful skills for the future. Fresh fruit and other snacks and drinks are readily available in the houses at all times.
- 4.30 A wide range of activities and trips is on offer in the evenings and at the weekends. In the pupil questionnaire a very small minority was not happy with the balance between free time and these activities. The current provision is good but boarders' views on this are under discussion and review at the boarders' forum.
- 4.31 Boarding accommodation provides good-sized communal areas and bedrooms, with space to study and relax, and boarders enjoy good kitchen facilities. There is room for personal privacy. However, the standard of accommodation is variable. The separate boys' and girls' houses have been refurbished and are of a high standard. The rolling refurbishment programme of bathroom facilities, lighting upgrades and the redecoration of bedrooms and social areas has begun in the mixed sixth form house, with the intention of improving its tired appearance. Effective procedures are in place to oversee access to the accommodation. Security measures do not intrude on boarders' privacy.
- 4.32 In interviews boarders said that they had no difficulties in contacting their families and their friends. Houseparents maintain regular links with boarders' parents, by email and telephone. Some send newsletters summarising events in the house.
- 4.33 The effectiveness of arrangements for welfare and safeguarding of boarders is excellent. The National Minimum Standards are met and the school implements effectively the safeguarding policy and the prevention of bullying policy. All other relevant policies are in place and known by staff, in particular the policies for the restraint and the searching of pupils and their possessions. All houseparents and domestic staff demonstrate a clear awareness of their safeguarding responsibilities and, as with other staff, all have been appropriately trained in safeguarding. Excellent and regular registration sessions are in place to ensure houseparents are fully aware of the whereabouts of the boarders in their care, and they are conversant with the missing child policy and procedures. Recruitment procedures for staff involved with boarding are appropriate, and detailed agreements between the school and boarding staff regarding the terms of their employment are in place. All boarding staff have detailed job descriptions, and effective duty rotas and staffing arrangements for prep and activity sessions ensure very good supervision of boarders.
- 4.34 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of boarding is excellent. Each boarding house is led by a team of houseparents. They share ideas about the development of the house, address pastoral concerns together and support one another.

- 4.35 The running of the houses is done smoothly and sensitively in line with the school's statement of boarding principles, which is available to staff, parents and boarders. The management is very good: meticulously maintained daily diaries ensure efficient handover procedures, and all record keeping is of a high standard. Close liaison between houseparents and both academic and pastoral staff is achieved through a well-chosen meetings structure and informal contacts. The boarding community benefits from the involvement of all members of the teaching staff, who perform supervisory duties at mealtimes, prep, leading activities or escorting trips. The head of boarding is always available for advice on, or involvement in, boarding and pastoral matters, and offers excellent leadership on the welfare of boarders, as well as ensuring the necessary documentation to support compliance with NMS and other regulations. Boarding staff develop their skills through the sharing of good practice by visiting the other houses, regular in-service training and attendance at courses offered by external agencies.
- 4.36 There is enthusiasm within the whole boarding team to try out new initiatives and to review them with boarders. This ensures that boarding continues to develop and meet pupils' needs and that there is a harmonious community where everyone's opinions are valued. The head of boarding liaises closely with the link governor for boarding. A strategic plan is produced by the head of boarding, in consultation with houseparents, which demonstrates a clear vision for the future of boarding, in both the short and longer term.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Governors are ambitious for the future of the school. Well qualified and with a breadth of professional experience, they discharge their responsibilities for strategy, financial planning, the appointment of senior staff and for learning resources effectively. They provide challenge in academic matters. All are keen to maintain the attractive rural site and support the school's wishes for a more energy efficient environment.
- 5.3 The committee structure works well and is appropriate. There are governors who lead on the EYFS, boarding and child protection. The EYFS governor has parental and teaching assistant experience and so is able to speak authoritatively on EYFS matters in committee meetings. She draws on the senior leadership for advice on government requirements. Both the clerk (the chair) and the child protection governor are particularly well informed on child protection matters. They devote considerable committee time to the annual review of the policy and its implementation. The whole governing body reviews the policy and then submits it to the local authority as part of its child protection liaison arrangements.
- 5.4 Governors have a strong understanding of their legal obligations to the school and maintain frequent oversight of policies and procedures, including safeguarding. Governors scrutinise the single central register of appointments termly. There is regular contact with the senior leadership team. The annual review of safeguarding is securely carried out by the entire governing body.
- 5.5 Governors are kept informed by the head's reports and the clerk is in frequent contact with senior leaders. Heads of department attend committee meetings to give governors 'spotlight' presentations about their subjects. Governors attend major events but a consequence of the fact that their meetings take place at weekends inhibits frequent interaction with staff and pupils.
- 5.6 New governors receive a day's induction organised by the head, business manager and clerk, who also arrange a biennial residential weekend for further training and strategic planning. There is regular safeguarding training of all governors, carried out by the designated safeguarding lead.

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

- 5.7 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians is good.
- 5.8 The leadership has considerable strengths and the school is considered to be well run by pupils, parents and staff. Those leading the school are strong advocates of Quaker values and have been very successful in enshrining these values, giving the school its distinctive character and underpinning the caring, nurturing environment that allows pupils of all ages to prosper, to respect others and to value democracy. The management, in liaison with the governors, maintains a good oversight of policies, especially those concerned with safe recruitment and safeguarding. A

small number of minor matters within the EYFS and in the safeguarding policy required attention but these were quickly remedied during the inspection.

- 5.9 The EYFS is well run. Staff meet fortnightly to discuss timetabled events, to oversee the curriculum and to discuss children's progress. However, the implementation of the policy on the assessment of children's learning and development is not consistent in all lessons, especially the small number of lessons taught by subject specialists and as a consequence some significant information is omitted from the collected EYFS data. This shortcoming had not been sufficiently revealed in the monitoring of the EYFS lessons. Teachers are now planning to use these lessons as assessment opportunities.
- 5.10 The school's management structure has been refined to facilitate greater clarity in terms of individual responsibility areas. New development groups for ICT, marketing, community and the environment have productively increased the participation of a wider range of staff in the planning process. Development planning is firmly embedded in the culture of the school, but some targets are not defined with sufficient clarity and the mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating progress towards them are not always sufficiently robust.
- 5.11 Following an extensive review of the arrangements for maintaining the single central register of staff appointments, the school's systems are now robust. All staff are trained in welfare, health and safety. All are trained in safeguarding, and the two leads have had recent enhanced training.
- 5.12 The school has been very successful in appointing high quality members of staff. Staff arriving in September undergo a comprehensive programme of induction which commences before the start of the academic year and continues throughout the autumn term. The induction programme includes familiarisation with Quaker values, training on safeguarding, welfare and health and safety matters, and systematic coverage of an array of policies that enables the school to run smoothly.
- 5.13 The importance of professional development for all staff is recognised by the leadership team and sufficient funds are made available to support this. In the EYFS, effective systems cover supervision, appraisal and the in-service training of staff. In the main school, senior staff organise periodic in-service twilight training sessions as well as providing some opportunities for teachers to observe each others' lessons. A culture of openness in discussing teaching strategies has been developed. In this way the school has responded to one of the action points raised in the previous inspection report. The annual system of performance review, which applies to all members of staff, is a significant strength. The evaluation process is thorough, evidence-based and well documented with clear targets for development and associated training needs identified. Scrutiny of individual departments and other key areas of the school is done on a rolling basis via the 'Spotlight system' with the outcomes being presented by the head of department to the governors.
- 5.14 In the previous inspection report closer integration between the junior and the senior school was recommended. Considerable progress has been made in this regard due to changes in the management structure, the sharing of some teaching staff and the running of more joint events for parents
- 5.15 The school has excellent links with parents and guardians of pupils of all ages. In their response to the questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of parents expressed a high level of satisfaction with the quality of education and care provided for their children. They are especially pleased with the way their child is looked after, the

timely responses to their questions and the extent to which they are encouraged to be involved in events and other aspects of the school's work. Almost all parents agreed that their children felt happy and safe whilst at school. A large number of those with children with special needs wrote in appreciative detail of the support that their children had received.

- 5.16 The school website has been significantly enhanced in recent months and now provides a wide range of information, including all the required policy documentation, to parents of current and prospective pupils. This information is supplemented by weekly and termly newsletters, and by the annual Sibfordian magazine which describes many of the activities that have taken place over the course of the academic year and celebrates pupils' achievements.
- 5.17 The school handles concerns well. The excellent rapport that exists between parents and staff ensures that most issues are resolved quickly in a fair and sensitive manner. The school's complaints policy is in line with current regulatory requirements and is readily available to parents via the website. A review of school records shows complaints are rare and, when they do arise, correct procedures are followed with extensive dialogue taking place in the search for a satisfactory resolution.
- 5.18 The school keeps parents very well informed about their children's progress. In the EYFS, parents are kept informed about their children's achievements and progress and the detailed and informative end of year report clearly indicates each child's level of development assessed against the Early Learning Goals. The school actively encourages parents to share information and observations about children's learning experiences at home. In the main school, a detailed annual report is produced for each pupil, summarising academic, extra-curricular and personal achievements as well as providing clear advice as to how further improvements can be made. The format of these reports provides an opportunity for pupils and parents to respond to teachers' comments, creating a dialogue that enhances achievement. In addition to the annual reports, grade cards detail effort and achievement at half-termly intervals for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and at three weekly intervals for pupils in Year 10 and above. Parents' evenings, workshops on topics such as mental well-being and the challenges of parenting, and open surgeries with the head as well as social gatherings provide plenty of opportunities for parents to engage with staff.
- 5.19 Parents actively support the school in a variety of ways. These include accompanying pupils on educational visits, assisting at careers events, providing opportunities for enrichment activities and participating in discussion forums on issues such as homework setting and approaches to primary mathematics. There is also an active parents association (PSFA) which organises various social events such as the Christmas Fayre and an annual charity ball. The PSFA also raises monies to fund items such as playground equipment, the construction of a bird hide and the Peace Garden, and to subsidise the cost of author visits. The junior school operates an open door policy and parents are welcome to speak to staff by appointment, or when the youngest children are dropped off in the morning or collected at the end of the day. In the junior school, parents are invited to curriculum workshops where topics covered range from how you can read with your child to outdoor education.

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