



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**SAINT FELIX SCHOOL**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Saint Felix School

Full Name of School	<b>Saint Felix School</b>
DfE Number	<b>935/6007</b>
EYFS Number	<b>EY317397</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>310482</b>
Address	<b>Saint Felix School Halesworth Road Reydon Southwold Suffolk IP18 6SD</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01502 722175</b>
Email Address	<b>schooladmin@stfelix.co.uk</b>
Headmistress	<b>Miss Fran D'Alcorn</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Dr John Kelly</b>
Age Range	<b>2 to 19</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>302</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (155 boys; 147 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): <b>20</b> 5-11: <b>78</b> 3-5 (EYFS): <b>21</b> 11-18: <b>183</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total: <b>214</b>
Number of Boarders	Total: <b>88</b> Full: <b>60</b> Weekly: <b>11</b> Flexi: <b>17</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Lisa Laughland</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014</b>

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous full ISI inspection was in March 2010.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](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. Until September 2011, Boarding inspections were carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills.

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

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

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

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

inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

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

### **Inspectors**

Mr Rodney Fox	Reporting Inspector
Mr Steven Jandrell	Team Inspector (Headmaster, ISA school)
Mr Ian Lovat	Team Inspector (Director of Studies, HMC school)
Mr Kim Parsley	Team Inspector (Former Assistant Head, IAPS school)
Mr Mark Robinson	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, The Society of Heads school)
Mrs Jean Gray	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Miss Jacqueline Scotney	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Saint Felix School is a day and boarding school for boys and girls from two to nineteen years of age. The school aims to foster a liberal education, offering pupils the opportunity to discover and develop their full potential in terms of academic, sporting and creative achievement, through high-quality teaching and learning, a broad and balanced curriculum and supportive pastoral care. The school's ethos and culture set out to underpin the welfare and happiness of each individual. St Felix endeavours to produce well-rounded, confident young people, able to face the challenges of adult life and well prepared to contribute positively to wider society.
- 1.2 Founded in 1897 as a girls' boarding school in purpose-built buildings on a 75-acre site, close to the popular seaside resort of Southwold, the school became co-educational in 2003. The original red-brick buildings have been augmented with newer buildings without compromising the coherence of the original architecture. The school is an educational charity, governed by its trustees. The headmistress, previously the deputy head, has been in post since September 2013 and the Chairman of Governors has been in post since March 2014.
- 1.3 The school has three sections. The pre-preparatory department comprises the Dragons' Nursery, for children under four, and Years 1 and 2; the preparatory department contains Years 3 to 6; and the senior department Years 7 to 13. The pre-preparatory and preparatory departments each occupy their own building on the school site, with a large indoor play space for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) children and a fenced outdoor play area for the pre-preparatory department pupils. Boarders are accommodated in three houses, each with its own premises, resident staff and distinctive ethos, one each for boys and girls in Years 6 to 12, and a mixed house for Year 12 and 13 pupils.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection, there were 183 pupils in the senior department, 81 boys and 102 girls. The preparatory and pre-preparatory departments contained 78 pupils, 51 boys and 27 girls, aged between five and seven, and the EYFS contained 41 children, 23 boys and 18 girls under the age of five. Most day pupils are from farming and business families, some travelling a considerable distance each day by school minibus. The boarders come from many different countries, among which Hong Kong, mainland China, Germany, Spain, Nigeria and Russia are well represented in addition to UK boarders.
- 1.5 Standardised tests indicate that the ability profile of pupils in the preparatory department and the senior department is generally above the national average, with a wide spread of abilities, and with fluctuations in the spread and average ability between different year groups. The ability profile of pupils in Years 12 and 13 is in line with the national average for pupils in sixth-form education. Six pupils have statements of special educational need. The school has identified 31 pupils as having a special educational need and/or disability (SEND), of whom 27 receive specialist learning support, mostly for dyslexia. English is an additional language (EAL) for 50 pupils, 42 of whom receive extra help with English language skills.
- 1.6 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following tables.

**Early Years Foundation Stage Setting**

School	NC name
The Dragons' Nursery	Nursery
Reception	Reception

**Pre-preparatory and Preparatory Departments**

School	NC name
Form I	Year 1
Lower II	Year 2
Upper II	Year 3
Lower III	Year 4
Middle III	Year 5
Upper III	Year 6

**Senior Department**

School	NC name
Lower IV	Year 7
Upper IV	Year 8
Lower V	Year 9
Middle V	Year 10
Upper V	Year 11
Lower VI	Year 12
Upper VI	Year 13



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

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

- 2.1 The pupils at St Felix are well educated, and the school is successful in meeting its aims. At all stages of the school, including in the EYFS, their achievement is good and they acquire suitable levels of knowledge, understanding and skill. Pupils in the pre-preparatory and preparatory departments demonstrate good literacy and numeracy skills. Results at both GCSE and A level are above the national averages achieved at maintained schools and represent good progress in relation to the pupils' abilities. Some of the pupils' achievements in sport and activities are excellent. The school regularly produces swimmers who compete at the highest levels. The creative arts are strong. The excellent and wide-ranging curricular and extra-curricular programmes, together with the good quality of the teaching, enable the school to meet the needs and expectations of pupils with a wide range of ages, abilities and needs. The pupils' highly positive attitudes to their learning and activities lead to a purposeful and productive ethos in all sections of the school.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development at all stages, including in the EYFS, is excellent. Throughout the school, the pupils are at ease with themselves, express their ideas clearly and confidently, and enjoy excellent relations with each other and with the staff. Pupils are supported by excellent pastoral care, based on the close knowledge that the staff have of each individual. Arrangements to promote welfare, health and safety are unsatisfactory, although in almost all respects they are good. Most health and safety procedures are well managed and routine maintenance of equipment is properly done. However, the electrical wiring safety checks are overdue. The school has responded urgently to this deficiency. All safeguarding policies and procedures are now good and effectively implemented, and the safer recruitment of staff is conducted in rigorous accordance with official guidance. The outcomes for boarders are excellent and support the pupils' strong personal development. Pupils say that they enjoy boarding.
- 2.3 The leadership and management of the school have settled over the past year, and are now good. Management at all levels is effective, although staff do not yet have regular performance review linked to opportunities for professional development. Governance is good in many respects but, in view of the failure to conduct safety checks on the electrical wiring, is unsatisfactory overall. The structure of governance allows limited opportunity for governors to interact with staff on educational issues. The school has established excellent links with the parents, whose questionnaire responses were overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Almost all the recommendations of the previous inspections have been fully met, representing significant improvements in education, safeguarding and boarding since those two inspections. One remains incomplete as the time given to the teaching of personal, social and health education (PSHE) in the curriculum is still inconsistent.

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

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

- 2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010 and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013, and therefore it is required to:

- conduct periodic safety checks of the electrical wiring in the school buildings in accordance with health and safety requirements [Part 3, paragraphs 7.(a) and (b), 8.(a) and (b) and 11, under Welfare, health and safety; and Part 5, paragraph 23C, under Premises and accommodation; and, for the same reason, National Minimum Standards 6.1 and 6.2, under Safety of Boarders]

2.5 See the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage section 6 for the inspection findings in relation to the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 for children under three.

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

- 2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action point, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Review the structure of governance to ensure that governors exercise more effective oversight of health and safety and educational issues.
  2. Support the staff with professional review and development.
  3. Ensure that time is made available to allow more consistent teaching of the PSHE programme.
  4. Implement the recently established cycle of staff supervision meetings in the EYFS.
  5. Use technology more frequently in classroom-based activities 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 pupils are well educated and in full accordance with the school's aims. At all stages of the school, their achievement is good and they acquire suitable levels of knowledge, understanding and skill in all the required curricular and extra-curricular areas. Pupils in the pre-preparatory and preparatory departments demonstrate good literacy and numeracy skills. Throughout the school, pupils are highly articulate, write and use mathematics well, can reason logically and apply their knowledge effectively in solving problems. The school won the 2013 Good Schools' Guide award for excellence for boys taking A-level mathematics. Their creativity is particularly apparent in the visual arts. A student recently won the Young Designers of the Year award in the South of England National Textile Competition, and during the inspection an excellent display of textile work was on exhibition outside the art department. Pupils' physical development is strongly promoted and the school regularly produces swimmers who compete at the highest levels. Almost all those leaving from Year 13 proceed to higher education, with most gaining places at their first choice of university.
- 3.3 The attainment of pupils in Years 1 and 2, the preparatory department, and Years 7 to 9 of the senior department, cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but, on the evidence available, is judged to be good relative to national age-related expectations. The following analysis uses national data for the years 2011 to 2013, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results at GCSE have been above the national average for maintained secondary schools. Results at A level have also been above the national average for maintained schools, and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. The GCSE and A-level results in 2014 were broadly similar to those in the previous three years.
- 3.4 Observations of the pupils' work in lessons and written work, supported by the standardised measures of progress available, indicate that pupils in Years 1 and 2 and the preparatory department make appropriate progress relative to the average for pupils of similar abilities. The levels of attainment at GCSE and A level, and the standardised measures of progress available, indicate that pupils make good progress in the senior department relative to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Pupils with SEND are given good support to progress and achieve well in relation to their abilities, as was seen in their books and in lessons. Those with EAL receive help in developing their English language skills, following which they make good progress with their other subjects. The flexible nature of the curriculum in the senior department enables pupils in Years 7 to 9 to pursue a course that matches their ability and needs, so that, on the evidence seen, both the most able and those needing support progress and achieve well in relation to their abilities, as was evident in lessons and in their written work.
- 3.5 The pupils' attitudes towards their learning are excellent. At all stages, they are eager learners who co-operate fully with their teachers, listen carefully to one another's views and treat each other with respect. They have a good range of learning skills, including note-making and using information and communication technology (ICT) for research and other purposes. They are often avid readers of fiction, but the lack of a senior department reference library mostly restricts the

development of their independent learning to the use of textbooks or the internet. Scrutiny of their books reveals the care and pride that most bring to their work.

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

- 3.6 The curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.7 Throughout the school, the curriculum is wide ranging and highly effective in meeting the needs of all pupils and covering the required areas of learning. It is in line with the school's aim to ensure continuity and development in all curriculum areas, so as to enable pupils to transfer smoothly between different stages, building on their previous learning. A broad spread of subjects is offered at each level, with the emphasis on mathematics and English for the younger pupils, providing a secure foundation for further learning. French is part of the pre-preparatory curriculum, Spanish is introduced from Year 8, and Latin from Year 9, enabling the ablest linguists to study all three for GCSE. At all stages, good provision is made for the creative arts, giving pupils the opportunity to study art, drama, photography, music and textiles if they so choose. Careers education is part of the curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11, and those in Years 12 and 13 are well supported through the application process for higher education.
- 3.8 In addition to the core subjects, pupils choose five further subjects from a choice of thirteen for GCSE, and the school aims to accommodate every possible combination of subjects in Year 10, so meeting the needs and developing the full potential of individual pupils. The pupils, and their parents, appreciate the excellent range of options available and the flexibility that allows so many combinations to be chosen.
- 3.9 A large choice of 26 subjects is available at A level and, as with GCSE, all combinations are accommodated, even if this involves adjusting the school timetable if pupils change their minds. Additionally, an enrichment programme is timetabled, which includes preparation for life beyond school as well as the development of skills such as presentation, language and leadership, and which enhances the curriculum for Years 12 and 13.
- 3.10 The previous inspection report recommended a review of the time given to the teaching of PSHE, to ensure equal access for all pupils. Although this provision has been improved, the programme is not yet timetabled consistently across all years. It is, however, supplemented by tutors and, importantly, by specific day courses throughout the year.
- 3.11 A significant programme of extra-curricular sports and activities enhances the curriculum, with pupils of all ages participating enthusiastically and very successfully in a variety of sports, especially swimming, in which pupils have enjoyed national success. Older pupils assist with younger pupils through sports leadership programmes, thereby enriching their own personal development as well as widening opportunity for the younger pupils.
- 3.12 The excellent activities programme is well organised throughout the school. In the preparatory department, a carousel of activities provides pupils with a rich variety of experiences outside the curriculum, and here too a number of older pupils assist with the activities. In the senior department, activities offered include sporting, creative, cultural and recreational options. These range widely from 'learn to swim' to choir, and from drama to 'geek club' (an opportunity for pupils to experiment in a range of technologies). A number of the activities involve links with the local community, for example the local army cadets use the school facilities and a small

number of pupils are enrolled. The Duke of Edinburgh's (DofE) Award scheme has been revived and currently a number of Year 10 pupils have enrolled on the bronze award. The school tries to respond positively to pupils' requests for new activities.

- 3.13 The curriculum is further enhanced by a good range of trips and visits, for example drama trips to Cambridge and art trips to London. At the end of the summer term, an activities week in the preparatory department and several days of activities in the senior department are both educational and provide new experiences for pupils, often away from the school.

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

- 3.14 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.15 Throughout the school, the teaching is effective in promoting the progress of the pupils and supports the aim of the school to provide opportunities for pupils to foster and develop a love of learning. Excellent relationships, based on mutual respect, lead to a positive and co-operative working atmosphere. Teaching is based on a strong understanding of pupils' needs, with assistance quickly and sensitively offered.
- 3.16 Teaching is based on strong subject knowledge. Lessons are effectively planned to make good use of resources and to include a range of different methods, such as question and answer sessions, co-operative group work, or problem solving tasks. The extensive range of methods used in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, for example, enabled pupils of all abilities to participate and make good progress when reading and recording measurements, in different units, of body parts from life-size models. Often teaching sets a brisk pace, challenges most pupils and encourages reflective contributions. This was seen in several lessons, for example in an English lesson when pupils in Year 13 discussed the psychological characteristics of Prospero.
- 3.17 Teaching is almost always successful in fostering pupils' interest. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a few pupils felt that homework does not help them learn; however, inspectors found little support for this view when interviewing pupils and examining typical homework tasks. Huge excitement was provoked in an art and design lesson when pupils in Year 1 were set to work making their Christmas card, involving a 'moving Santa with his sack' tumbling down a chimney. Older pupils were seen evidently enjoying their work as they explored techniques for stroke improvement in swimming lessons in small groups within a class.
- 3.18 Teaching provides good support for pupils with EAL, sensitively providing them with extra support in the course of a lesson. The arrangements for pupils with SEND are excellent. All staff are made aware of the needs of these pupils by regularly updated lists, and the learning support department monitors the implementation of these effectively. Frequent reviews show that those pupils with statements of educational needs are well provided for and make good progress. Some pupils are supported in lessons by teaching assistants, or by sixth-form pupils in some lessons and activities in Years 1 to 6. This is helpful and significant in enabling these younger pupils to make good progress. The provision of extension work for more able pupils is routine in some subjects, but this is not consistent practice across all departments.
- 3.19 The marking of written work is generally well done. It is regular and often provides helpful comments to inform pupils of their progress. The school's assessment policy allows individual departments to decide their own marking strategies, which results in some inconsistency of implementation. Most marking provides detailed and

focused comments that give advice to pupils on targets for improvement. In a minority of cases, encouraging comments are not accompanied by guidance for improvement, or the marking is superficial or brief. Academic data is collected on a regular basis and is used for tracking and to inform planning in the sixth form, although it is not used consistently by all subject staff in all year groups to inform the next steps in learning or set targets in order to raise achievement.

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

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

- 4.1 The personal development of the pupils throughout the school is excellent.
- 4.2 The school meets its aim to develop well-rounded, confident young men and women. By the time they leave school, pupils develop high standards of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- 4.3 Pupils' spiritual development is very strong. At all stages of the school, they are at ease with themselves and display appropriate self-esteem and self-awareness. From the pre-preparatory department to the senior department, pupils demonstrate appreciation of the non-material aspects of being human. In the preparatory department, they enjoy and are uplifted by experiencing a wide range of music. Senior department pupils appreciate the high quality displays of art, photography and textiles. Pupils from all parts of the school participate readily in Chapel services, at which they sing with enthusiasm and respond reflectively. They understand the importance of faith in many people's lives. Discussions with pupils from a range of year groups elicited a readiness to empathise with others and to show both care and support.
- 4.4 Pupils' moral development is excellent. They can distinguish clearly between right and wrong and have a well-grounded awareness of the need for self-discipline. They understand the basic necessity for the rule of law within society and have recently been able to reflect on the ethics of war as the school commemorated Remembrance Day. Discussion of drug misuse in a PSHE lesson evoked well-considered responses, revealing a mature moral understanding. Behaviour in all parts of the school is excellent. Pupils are considerate of the needs of others and of the rights of the individual. They appreciate the need for an appropriate disciplinary system, which gives them both security and confidence.
- 4.5 The social development of pupils at all stages is excellent. They have a keen awareness of, and value for, themselves as part of the community, and readily accept responsibility for themselves and for others. Their natural inclination is to be thoughtful, kind and considerate to others and to accept responsibility. This manifests itself, for example, in sixth-form pupils helping younger pupils as mentors and assisting in the preparatory and pre-preparatory departments in activity sessions, such as tennis and swimming. An overarching sense of community is exemplified by the pride with which pupils openly discuss the school and what it means to them. Boarders and day pupils mix freely, and the facility to board by arrangement for one or more days a week is appreciated and used by some day pupils, who describe the experience as thoroughly enjoyable. Pupils' awareness of those less fortunate than themselves is excellent and is demonstrated by their commitment in raising money for charity.
- 4.6 The pupils' good appreciation of western culture stems, in part, from the range of trips and outings locally, further afield and abroad, such as choir trips to Salzburg and Rome. In all parts of the school, relationships between pupils of differing ethnic backgrounds are invariably excellent. Pupils show a keen interest in, and a developing understanding of, the differences between them. They enjoy the art and music they experience, both within and outside school, and readily involve themselves in drama productions. The pupils show a good understanding of fundamental British values. They participate in the democratic process of electing

members of the school council from their forms, and respect both the liberty and the rights of the individual, treating each other with consideration and compassion. Respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs is evident, as was exemplified in a religious education lesson, the subject of which was understanding and accepting the religious views of others. Pupils expressed clear, tolerant views in their preparation of notes for a talk on religious tolerance.

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

- 4.7 The arrangements made for pastoral care are excellent.
- 4.8 The school achieves its aim to provide a secure and supportive environment in which pupils feel safe and valued. Relations between staff and pupils are excellent. The pastoral system in Years 1 to 6 is based on the form teacher, and in the senior department on tutors, as the first point of contact and guidance. At each stage, they are closely supported by members of staff with specific responsibility for overseeing pastoral care. Pupils say that they always have a member of staff to talk to, should the need arise. Regular meetings are held to discuss pastoral issues and all relevant staff are kept appropriately informed. These highly effective arrangements are complemented by excellent relationships between pupils.
- 4.9 Pupils voice their appreciation of the time given by staff to their needs beyond the classroom and comment gratefully on staff availability. The relaxed, yet purposeful, atmosphere throughout the school reflects the friendly, family nature of the school identified by pupils when interviewed. Standards of behaviour are very high. Incidences of bullying are rare and are dealt with effectively. Pupils are confident of the school acting swiftly should the need arise and sanctions are seen as both appropriate and fair. Good behaviour is effectively promoted by the school, which has an improved and well implemented behaviour policy.
- 4.10 Timetabled sport, as well as the extensive activities programme, promote and encourage fitness and health. This is well supported by a healthy and varied menu in the school dining room. Whilst a small minority of pupils in the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed concern about the food, the evidence during the inspection was that it is of good quality and quantity. It was also noted that some pupils went back for second helpings.
- 4.11 The support for pupils with SEND is excellent and the school has an appropriate plan to improve educational access for them.
- 4.12 Pupils can make their opinions or concerns heard through the school council or the boarding forum. Ideas suggested by pupils, such as pyjama days, have been implemented. Although a few pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that their opinions are not listened to, most pupils felt that they can raise any matter that they want to with their form teacher or tutor.

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

- 4.13 The school's arrangements for promoting welfare, health and safety are unsatisfactory.
- 4.14 Safeguarding policies and procedures are now fully in accordance with official guidance and are rigorously implemented. All staff and volunteers are made aware of the school's procedures for the protection of children as part of their induction. Training for all staff is regularly refreshed and carefully recorded. The school has



designated a number of senior staff to receive additional training in order to work with the designated safeguarding leader. All safeguarding records are properly stored in a secure cabinet. Safe recruitment procedures are rigorously followed and meticulously recorded in a single central register. All possible steps have been taken to correct any deficiencies identified in previous inspections.

- 4.15 The school takes all necessary steps to comply with fire regulations. The fire prevention policy is clear and procedures to reduce hazard from fire are well known, understood and implemented. Evacuation practices are held regularly, both for the whole school and for the boarders, and carefully logged.
- 4.16 Arrangements to ensure health and safety are not satisfactory overall, although in nearly all respects they are good. Health and safety is a standing item on the governors' agendas. A health and safety committee meets regularly and the minutes of its meetings are circulated to governors. Routine maintenance checks are almost all conducted according to a planned schedule and are carefully logged. However, safety checks of the electrical wiring in the school buildings have not been routinely conducted as required. The school has responded urgently to this finding and specialist contractors are due to start carrying out the requisite checks in the week immediately following the inspection. The school has a disability access plan, the purpose of which is to ensure that those with particular needs or disabilities are not disadvantaged in accessing the school's facilities and arrangements relative to other pupils. Pupils' health care is well provided for through a comprehensive first-aid policy and procedures. The school's computer network is effectively filtered and managed so as to protect pupils from hazards on the internet.
- 4.17 Admission and attendance registers are accurately kept and properly stored for the required period.

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

- 4.18 The quality of boarding is sound.
- 4.19 Outcomes for boarders are excellent. Boarding fully meets the school's aim that it should be friendly, supportive, good fun and an excellent preparation for an independent life at university and later. Pupils' personal development is enhanced by their boarding experience and they thrive in the relaxed atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. They are courteous and welcoming, and confident that the views they express at meetings will be considered. Boarders have a wide range of adults to whom they can turn, day or night, and relationships between boarders and staff are warm and constructive. Boarders are aware of outside agencies that they can contact for help, but say with all the help available at school they cannot imagine when they would need this. Boarders are tolerant of those from different cultures and traditions and enjoy celebrating their diversity.
- 4.20 The school has worked imaginatively and successfully to integrate the overseas pupils by team-building events such as the Challenge Cup and the Maize Maze. The house prefects and heads of houses have well-defined roles and enjoy taking responsibility. Younger boarders are highly appreciative of the care and friendship shown to them by the older pupils, who are excellent role models in promoting very positive behaviour. New boarders are quickly integrated into house life by an extensive induction programme, enhanced by a buddy system of support. Those boarders with particular needs are well supported, and the EAL department plays a significant role in the initial induction and continued support of overseas pupils.

- 4.21 The quality of boarding provision and care is sound. Although in almost all respects the provision of boarding and care is good, the omission of the safety checks on the electric wiring in the houses means that it needs to improve. The boarding houses are comfortable, cheerful and spacious with boarders making them homely by personalising their sleeping and common room areas. All boarders in Years 11 and above have single rooms. Very well-equipped kitchens allow for snacks to be made. Drinking water is labelled and available at all times. Pupils in Years 12 and 13 are encouraged to cook for themselves in the evenings and at weekends. Younger pupils have supervised homework sessions, and older years have good provision for working in their rooms.
- 4.22 Boarders in Years 12 and 13 wash their own laundry in the sixth-form house. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are guided by a housekeeper to become independent with their laundry. A school shop allows for purchases of stationery items, and pupils have opportunities to buy other necessities from local shops. All rooms have lockable spaces, but boarders rarely feel the need to use them.
- 4.23 The medical centre is welcoming and the team of committed nurses is highly valued by boarders. It is only normally open during the school day but, if it is necessary to accommodate an ill boarder, can be staffed overnight. A local doctor holds a weekly surgery at the school, and pupils can also attend the practice surgery. They are escorted to other services such as opticians and dentists. Effective procedures are in place for the safe storage and dispensing of drugs, including homely remedies in the houses. Records are rigorously maintained and the communication between the medical centre and the houses is good. Appropriate arrangements are in place for self-medication and the confidentiality of boarders is suitably maintained.
- 4.24 A small minority of boarders in the questionnaire expressed concerns about the food and the snacks available. However, after talking to pupils and visits to the dining room, inspectors found little evidence to support these views. Where possible, fresh food is locally sourced, and all diets and allergies are catered for.
- 4.25 The dining hall is an attractive environment, especially with its Christmas decorations, and for breakfast and supper boarders sit in a small section, which helps create a feeling of community. The catering staff bring variety of menu and highlights to the year such as Christmas dinners, 'favourite nights', when houses choose the menus, and Burns night, when a piper pipes in the haggis.
- 4.26 The provision of the internet across the boarding houses is good and appropriate systems are in place to help secure the safety of its use. Pupils can thus gain knowledge of the outside world and maintain regular contact with parents and friends, as well as by telephone. The school sends regular information to parents through the website, and often translates this for overseas parents.
- 4.27 An excellent and diverse range of activities is provided, and well taken up, during the week, and an interesting weekend schedule, including Christmas shopping trips to Norwich, visits to an amusement park and the cinema, is much enjoyed by full-time boarders.
- 4.28 Arrangements for the boarders' welfare health and safety are sound. The school has a detailed written policy on compliance with relevant health and safety requirements which is generally carefully implemented, but safety checks on the electrical wiring were significantly overdue at the time of the inspection. The school responded quickly to this situation when it was drawn to their attention, arranging for the necessary checks to be done immediately following the inspection.

- 4.29 Checks of portable electrical and fire equipment are regularly completed. Arrangements to protect boarders from the hazard of fire are thorough, and unannounced fire drills are standard and regular practice.
- 4.30 The school's recruitment procedures are fully in accord with official guidance and rigorously implemented, and all house staff have received training in safeguarding, which has been regularly refreshed. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, an overwhelming number of boarders said that they feel safe in their boarding houses and that they are well cared for.
- 4.31 Appropriate arrangements are in place for checking visitors into boarding houses, and access to the houses is carefully controlled. Arrangements for tracking pupils' whereabouts at all times are effective, and staff know the procedures should pupils be missing.
- 4.32 A comprehensive anti-bullying policy is well known and understood by boarders and staff, and the considerate and courteous behaviour in the boarding houses ensures sanctions are seldom necessary. Incidents of bullying are infrequent; pupils would not hesitate to report them and are confident that they would be dealt with effectively.
- 4.33 The leadership and management of boarding are sound, although in almost all respects they are good. A detailed statement of the school's boarding principles is available for all on the website and in handbooks, is implemented successfully in practice, and is written in language accessible to the youngest boarders.
- 4.34 The boarding houses are led by a dedicated team of house parents whose efforts to make their houses into homes are greatly appreciated by boarders. Effective weekly meetings of key boarding staff have helped to standardise procedures across the houses. Records are well kept and monitored both in the houses and electronically, and information is shared appropriately with the house teams. Boarding staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. All staff have appropriate job descriptions, which are supported by a thorough programme of staff induction. Staff provision is sufficient to ensure consistent care during the day and night. Comprehensive links between boarding, pastoral and academic staff ensure that pupil concerns can be shared. A system for reviewing boarding staff performance and identifying appropriate professional development has now been inaugurated, but it has yet to be fully embedded into the management of the houses.
- 4.35 An overwhelming majority of parents responding to the questionnaire expressed themselves highly satisfied with the boarding provision and care their children receive.
- 4.36 Recommendations from the previous boarding welfare inspection with regard to safeguarding, menus, choice of extra-curricular activities, opportunities for pupils to express their views, and improved electronic systems, have all been met.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is unsatisfactory.
- 5.2 Although the governors' omission to ensure that an important safety check has been conducted means that governance is not satisfactory, in most respects it is good. The governors are committed and hardworking and, between them, they have a wide-ranging expertise, enabling them to exercise effective oversight of many sections of the school and to ensure that it adheres properly to its aims. The finance and general purposes committee, which meets every month, monitors resources closely in order to provide sufficiently for the educational and pastoral needs of the pupils. Individual governors are linked with different sections or aspects of the school's work, ensuring that these governors have first-hand knowledge of the educational and pastoral issues facing the staff.
- 5.3 Governors are closely involved in strategic planning, particularly in the areas of resources, ethos and marketing. They do not have a whole-school education committee or an appraisal process for senior staff, although they do receive reports from the headmistress and the heads of the preparatory and pre-preparatory departments at each meeting of the full governing body. Their opportunity to work closely with staff, and to offer challenge, support and stimulus in the educational field is limited by these arrangements, although governors are held in high regard by the staff who say that they are frequently at the school.
- 5.4 Governors take their responsibilities seriously and understand their role in ensuring that the safeguarding and safety of the pupils is paramount. They now have a comprehensive safeguarding policy, which is in full accordance with official guidance, and which is rigorously implemented. The policy and its implementation are properly reviewed by the governors annually. Health and safety is a standing item on the agenda of all the governors' meetings. However, routine checking of the safety of the electrical wiring in the school buildings is long overdue. During the inspection, the school arranged for a full check by an outside consultant to be conducted, starting at once.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is good.
- 5.6 Following a period of disruption, the current leadership and management team is establishing itself securely, and its thorough self-evaluation, development planning and other initiatives provide the means to take the school forward successfully. Work has begun to raise the school's profile in the locality and more widely, building on existing strengths. Initiatives have been started to consolidate the academic standing of the school by adapting to the changing emphasis of examination syllabuses and further developing appropriate staff skills and aptitudes throughout the school in response. Policies are being implemented effectively, with the care and education of the pupils always remaining central. Training in regard to safeguarding is now thorough and aimed at ensuring that all staff are aware of and follow the school's child protection procedures, thus satisfying the recommendations of previous inspection reports.

- 5.7 The effectiveness of leadership and management is demonstrated clearly in the academic and pastoral outcomes for students. The realising of individual potential and maintaining a family atmosphere are priorities for the school. Leadership and management, at all levels, are guided by these principles. Senior managers have a high profile around the school and have a very good understanding of children's academic strengths and weaknesses. They meet with individual heads of department, and the department heads themselves meet regularly, to discuss the educational direction being pursued and this is giving impetus to development.
- 5.8 Whilst there is clear academic direction, which is understood and shared by staff, the departments work with a high level of autonomy and systems are not in place to co-ordinate their approach. Appraisal is primarily based around classroom observation and does not lead to a formal process of staff development.
- 5.9 The school gives due importance to the appointment of high quality staff at each level and has been successful in this regard. All members of staff have been checked for their suitability to work in a school environment and records are now rigorously kept. New members of staff undergo a suitable induction programme and all staff are fully trained for their roles in safeguarding and in overseeing the pupils' welfare, health and safety. These processes are carefully and successfully handled, with the exception of checks on electrical wiring, which were overdue at the time of the inspection.
- 5.10 The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent. Parents are encouraged to be part of the school community and many practical opportunities exist for them to do this. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, all the parents responding felt that they were encouraged to be involved in events and other aspects of the school's work. They were also overwhelmingly satisfied that their child is treated as an individual, is happy and feels safe, is well looked after and has a good range of activities provided. They raised no concerns about the school.
- 5.11 The school website contains a wide variety of useful information and gives parents reassuring access to a range of documents. An extensive list of policies gives a clear indication of how the school manages aspects of its work and gives guidance on formal procedures. Newsletters, items on events, sport fixtures, school visits and pupil successes help to give a flavour of life at the school, as well as providing useful detail to families involved. Overall, the website provides comprehensive guidance for both existing and prospective pupils and parents.
- 5.12 Reports are produced three times a year, and are complemented with grade sheets each half term, giving parents and pupils a thorough evaluation of progress and achievement. Children new to the school receive a helpful report after the first half term giving information on how they have settled into their new environment. Parent consultations are held twice each year for all pupils, giving ample opportunities for feedback which are welcomed. In addition, at transition points, there are useful occasions for parents to discuss how pupils are prepared for the next stage of their schooling through events such as the Year 6 and 7 transfer dinner which is attended by pupils and parents.
- 5.13 The school has a thriving parent-teacher association, which promotes many events in which parents and friends of the school can take part. It raises money on behalf of the school and effectively supports its ethos of being a large family. Parental involvement with the school takes place on many levels, with representation on the governing body, informal access to senior management and many opportunities to

be involved in the day-to-day running of the school. Examples of this are the support for mock interviews, running school activities and enjoying tuition from the tennis coach. Parents' ideas are welcomed by the school, along with their involvement.

- 5.14 The school has a suitable complaints policy which is made available to parents and which is properly implemented. Complaints are usually resolved informally and a very large majority of parents express satisfaction with the way that concerns are handled. Scrutiny of the records showed that written complaints are dealt with quickly and with care to achieve a fair and appropriate outcome.

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

## **6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

### **6.(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend**

- 6.1 The setting makes outstanding provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. Enthusiastic and well-qualified staff plan exciting, topic-based educational programmes. These help children meet and, in many cases exceed, the expected levels of development for their age. There is an effective balance of self-chosen and adult-directed activities, both indoors and out. Since the previous inspection, the setting has been re-structured, and this has resulted in greater opportunities for children to engage in active learning which encourages them to explore and think critically. Such experiences are now plentiful; for example, the youngest children think about which animals would fit into the 'tall bin' that they have created out of construction blocks, whereas older children explore the properties of ice whilst monitoring the thawing of a large ice block containing toys.
- 6.2 Staff undertake useful on-going observations of children, which inform future planning well. They have high expectations, and care that children's interests are planned for in an engaging and challenging way. Consequently, all children, including those with SEND, have their needs met very well. Learning is expertly tailored to meet the needs of individuals, and extra support is provided where necessary.
- 6.3 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of parents indicated that they are happy with all aspects of the setting. This view was echoed by the parents spoken to during the inspection week. They appreciate that they have constant access to their children's on-line learning journals, and find that these, along with formal reports at the end of term, provide them with a good insight into the progress of their child. Parents receive all required information, including the progress check at age two and EYFS profile scores at the end of the Reception year. Plentiful opportunities exist for parents to play a part in their children's learning, such as through daily communication between home and school, and opportunities to visit the setting for events such as performances and assemblies.

### **6.(b) The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being**

- 6.4 Provision for children's well-being requires improvement. This is because the electrical wiring throughout the setting has not been routinely checked within the required timescales. Arrangements have immediately been put into place to ensure that this is promptly addressed. However, this oversight means that, whilst practitioners are extremely diligent whilst caring for the well-being of the children, the attention paid to welfare health and safety at governance level is inadequate.
- 6.5 Close relationships between staff and children are forged through the effective implementation of the key person system. Children demonstrate that they are extremely happy and comfortable whilst in the setting. They eagerly investigate the range of activities provided on arrival. Key people take time to engage in purposeful discussion with children. Through these, they expertly nurture their language and imaginative skills. Independence is fostered from an early age, with the youngest

children confidently self-registering in the morning and older children using the self-service facility at lunch time. They are keen to take on roles of responsibility, such as the snack-time helper.

- 6.6 Children have a strong awareness of the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle. They eat balanced meals and snacks, and engage enthusiastically in physical activity. Personal hygiene skills are promoted well, with children across the EYFS taking responsibility for their own hand washing. On a day-to-day basis, staff are fully aware of their responsibilities for welfare, health and safety, and implement the setting's procedures rigorously. They teach the children about risk well, which is evident in the way children conduct themselves whilst using apparatus and whilst on a walk around the school grounds.
- 6.7 The EYFS setting is considered an integral part of the pre-preparatory department, which also houses Years 1 and 2. Consequently, children engage in many shared activities, and know staff across the year groups. This helps prepare children for the move to the next stage of their education when the time comes. When children move to another school, this transition is also handled well.

### **6.(c) The leadership and management of the early years provision**

- 6.8 Leadership and management of the EYFS provision are good. Governors have not been rigorous in ensuring that the required electrical wiring safety checks have been undertaken. However, they are kept sufficiently abreast of the work of the EYFS setting through regular feedback from senior staff. The management team has a clear oversight of the curriculum and practice across the EYFS, and policies are reviewed regularly. Systems for self-evaluation and development planning are suitably used to inform priorities for the future. These are well known by the EYFS staff, who play a key role in this process.
- 6.9 Provision for children's safeguarding is strong. All necessary pre-appointment checks have been undertaken on new staff, who have all received appropriate induction, which includes training in child protection. There is a suitable number of staff with paediatric first aid and food hygiene training. Procedures for fire evacuation are conducted carefully, with children aware of the regular tests that take place.
- 6.10 A formal cycle of meetings where staff can discuss the children in their care with their manager has recently been developed, although this is in its infancy and has yet to be fully implemented. Staff communication is good, with regular EYFS staff meetings taking place. A system for appraisal enables staff to reflect on practice and identify targets for continuing professional development. Staff are encouraged to improve their skills by gaining additional qualifications, which in turn enhances children's experiences.
- 6.11 Strong partnerships have been forged between staff and parents, and with external agencies and other professionals. This ensures that children who require additional support have their needs met very well.

### **6.(d) The overall quality and standards of the early years provision**

- 6.12 The overall quality and standards of the early years provision are good. Children, including those with SEND and EAL achieve well in relation to their starting points. Most reach the expected levels of development at the end of the EYFS, with many exceeding these. Younger children display excellent language skills in their



conversations and imaginative play. They immerse themselves fully in activities, such as on the 'Gruffalo walk', where they delighted in finding footprints and explaining that the leaves 'rustle, rustle' underfoot. They demonstrate a growing knowledge of number, showing confidence when counting beyond 10 during the register, and show a love for books. Older children reveal a secure understanding of number whilst undertaking practical activities, such as counting and recording how many toy penguins remain on top of a large block of ice. They demonstrate good cursive handwriting and phonic knowledge for their age. They eloquently share their learning with older pupils and parents during assembly. Technology is used to good effect by older children in their ICT lessons. However, as was the case in the previous inspection, the use of technology is not fully developed in classroom activities.

- 6.13 Children's personal development is excellent. The family ethos permeates the setting, and children demonstrate that they feel safe and secure whilst in the care of their key persons. From an early age, children show great compassion for one another. This results in a harmonious environment where children learn happily together.
- 6.14 The setting successfully meets the requirements for safeguarding. Rigorous arrangements are in place, which are well known by all staff. However, not all requirements for health and safety have been sufficiently met.
- 6.15 Through their self-evaluation, the EYFS team demonstrates that it knows itself well, and a suitable development plan is in place. The recommendation from the previous inspection has been successfully addressed. Collectively, these factors provide clear evidence that staff are committed to on-going improvement.

### **Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three**

- 6.16 In order to meet the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006, those responsible for the registered provision must:
- ensure that all necessary checks have been undertaken on the electrical wiring in the setting.

**Section 2 includes any identified action the Early Years Foundation Stage is recommended to take in order to improve its provision other than take the action specified above.**