



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

ST HUGH'S SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of School	St Hugh's School		
DfE Number	925/6022		
EYFS Number	EY314326		
Registered Charity Number	527611		
Address	St Hugh's School Cromwell Avenue Woodhall Spa Lincolnshire LN10 6TQ		
Telephone Number	01526 352169		
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Email Address	dos@st-hughs.lincs.sch.uk		
Headmaster	Mr Stephen Greenish		
Chair of Governors	Mr Mark Harrison		
Age Range	2 to 13		
Total Number of Pupils	188		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (97 boys; 91 girls)		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	8	5-11: 127
	3-5 (EYFS):	17	11-18: 36
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	113	
Number of Boarders	Total:	75	
	Full:	0	Weekly: 75
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Paula Slaven		
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection dates	09 Oct 2012 to 12 Oct 2012		

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 November 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) (England) Regulations 2010. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

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

This inspection contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education, personal development and welfare. Until September 2011, Boarding inspections were carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills.

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

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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

Inspectors

Mrs Jane Chesterfield

Mr Adrian Lowe-Wheeler

Mrs Gill Wilson

Mrs Carol Evans

Mrs Jenny Clayphan

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector
(Former Deputy Head, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL	2
(a) Main findings	2
(b) Action points	3
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
(ii) Recommendation(s) for further improvement	3
3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	4
(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	6
4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	7
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	7
(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care	8
(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	8
(d) The quality of boarding	9
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	12
(a) The quality of governance	12
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	12
6 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE	14
(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	14
(b) The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being	14
(c) The leadership and management of the early years provision	15
(d) The overall quality and standards of the early years provision	15

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 St Hugh's School is a preparatory school for boys and girls, situated in a small Lincolnshire village. It is housed in an Edwardian building on a self-contained campus, with a number of additional buildings. The school has charitable status and is overseen by a board of governors.
- 1.2 The school's aims are to provide a happy and stimulating environment in which pupils are able to fulfil their potential whilst they develop spiritually, mentally and physically. It sets out to provide a broad, stimulating curriculum that places great emphasis upon what each pupil can achieve in the classroom, and also looks to educate each pupil in all aspects of life. The school seeks to underpin academic standards with traditional values of courtesy, honesty, hard work, independence unselfishness and a sense of responsibility. It emphasises consideration for others and a spirit of service as important elements in living and working together.
- 1.3 The school was established in 1925 as a boys' school and began to admit girls in 1981 and pre-prep pupils in 1993. It now educates boys and girls aged from two to thirteen years, offering boarding facilities for older pupils, and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision in its Nursery and Reception classes. The current headmaster has been in post since 1998. There have been no significant changes in the characteristics of the school since the previous inspection.
- 1.4 Currently, there are 188 pupils on roll: 97 boys and 91 girls. Seventy-five pupils board on a weekly or flexible basis. Twenty-five children are in the EYFS. The school does not select pupils on the basis of academic ability. Standardised test results indicate that the ability profile of the pupils is slightly above the national average, but with a wide ability range. Most pupils are from white British backgrounds.
- 1.5 Two pupils currently have statements of special educational needs and forty-six have been identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Two pupils have been identified as having English as an additional language (EAL), and neither requires support for this.
- 1.6 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 St Hugh's School is successful in meeting its aims. Pupils achieve well and reach above average standards in their academic work and their extra-curricular activities. They achieve particularly well in art, music and sport. Pupils are extremely happy at the school, and are confident and eager to talk about school life and their work. They are articulate and have good literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. The school has identified that some do not yet possess the skills to make them fluent and accurate writers. Pupils make good progress throughout the school because they are well taught and enjoy a broad and interesting curriculum and a diverse range of extra-curricular activities. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and expertise, and plan their lessons very carefully, so that pupils' different needs are well met and they are challenged in their learning. Marking has improved since the previous inspection, and there are some excellent examples of this, though there is still some inconsistency in quality. Those pupils with SEND are exceptionally well supported.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, is excellent. The positive, caring ethos and the excellent quality of relationships at all levels enable pupils to flourish and thrive at the school, and develop as true all-rounders, in line with the school's aims. They show genuine consideration for others and display a sense of responsibility towards the school community and a pride in their involvement. Pupils are exceptionally well cared for, and arrangements for safeguarding their welfare are good. However, there is currently no systematic process for overseeing and reviewing compliance with regulatory requirements. The quality of boarding is good. Boarding care and outcomes are excellent, and the attention given to the welfare of boarders is good. The boarding provision is well led. Children make a good start to their education in the EYFS.
- 2.3 The quality of governance and of leadership and management is good. The role of governors has improved since the previous inspection, and they are becoming increasingly more involved in challenging the school and holding it to account. All statutory requirements are now met, after work to ensure coverage of all details. The school did not have rigorous methods of checking regularly that all changes in requirements were followed up. Leadership responsibilities have been more evenly distributed since the previous inspection, with the introduction of the post of bursar. Senior leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, and school development planning has focused on appropriate priorities for the future. The school has responded positively to the recommendations from the previous inspection. It is well placed to move forward. Parents are exceptionally pleased with the school and what it offers their children. They are particularly confident that their children are happy and feel safe at school, and would thoroughly recommend the school to other parents.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.
- 2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2011.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Introduce a systematic process for overseeing and reviewing regulatory requirements for all areas of the school's work.
 2. Ensure that pupils who have recently joined the school develop a secure understanding of grammar and punctuation, and confidence in writing at length, in order to raise attainment.
 3. Increase consistency in the quality of marking across the school to match the best practice found in some subjects.
 4. Implement planned strategies to improve children's mathematical development in the EYFS.
 5. Ensure that all staff in the EYFS use an interesting range of resources in order to enrich children's knowledge and understanding.

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 reach above average standards overall in their academic work, and often reach high standards in some areas such as art and music. The quality of artwork is exceptional throughout the school. Pupils achieve well in their extra-curricular pursuits, particularly sport. This is in line with the school's aims to educate all pupils in all aspects of life and to enable them to fulfil their potential.
- 3.3 Most pupils have a good range of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. They are able to apply these effectively across the curriculum, for example using ICT to produce pie charts in history, or drawing graphs in geography. The school has identified that in some year groups, particularly where pupils have recently joined the school, their writing skills are not as strong as those in reading. This is often because they lack a thorough grounding in grammar, punctuation and sentence structure, or do not have confidence in themselves as writers.
- 3.4 Pupils are articulate and able to express their ideas thoughtfully and fluently. They are willing to 'have a go' when they practise speaking foreign languages, and they use ICT with enjoyment and assurance. Those with SEND achieve similarly to their classmates because of the excellent quality of support they enjoy. Pupils who are more able or who have particular talents achieve well because their needs are well planned for, in lessons or in extra-curricular activities.
- 3.5 The pupils' attainment cannot be directly compared with average performance in national tests. However, evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' books and from the work seen in lessons indicates that it is above average compared with national age-related expectations, from the EYFS onwards. Pupils are well supported in their choice of senior school and most gain places at the school of their choice. Those who take the 11+ examination have significant success; some are awarded scholarships for academic prowess, music, sport, art or all-round performance.
- 3.6 Beyond the classroom, pupils achieve particularly well in sport, often at county or national level. There have been recent successes in rounders and there are regular successes in swimming. Many pupils play musical instruments, with a significant proportion reaching levels well above expectations for their age. The school orchestras perform to a high standard.
- 3.7 Pupils make good progress as they move through the school, and have good attitudes to learning. They are lively and inquisitive, keen to participate in lessons and eager to take on challenge. They behave well in class and concentrate well on their tasks. A few in some classes call out their answers to questions on occasions, rather than waiting to be asked. Many take great care with their work and take pride in presenting it neatly, but some have not yet mastered this skill. Pupils work very productively with others, and are very capable of working independently when given the opportunity.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.9 The curriculum is successful in reflecting the school's aims to provide a happy and stimulating environment in which pupils are able to fulfil their potential whilst they develop spiritually, mentally and physically. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and covers the required areas of learning.
- 3.10 Curriculum planning and monitoring are excellent, undertaken by subject co-ordinators and key stage co-ordinators. Regular minuted meetings take place and there is a system in place for observations. Work planning is carefully monitored by the director of studies, who shares this information with the leadership.
- 3.11 Since the previous inspection, further languages have been introduced into the curriculum, in addition to French. Latin has been re-introduced into Year 4, whilst German is now taught a year earlier, from Year 5.
- 3.12 The school is addressing the recommendation from the previous inspection to provide more opportunities for pupils to think for themselves, and extend their learning with good research. There was some good evidence of this, particularly in art and design, history, geography, religious education and some of the science teaching.
- 3.13 Testing and screening pupils for SEND are excellent, and for all pupils who need extra support a comprehensive set of personal learning plans is prepared by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). The plans, which are reviewed regularly, are used by all staff in their lesson planning. Planning therefore reflects the aims of the school, to cater for each pupil's individual needs by providing a broad and stimulating curriculum that all can access.
- 3.14 The curriculum is enriched and enhanced by both residential and day visits. Pupils have the opportunity to enjoy residential visits to France, and as a result there are good links with a French primary school, as well as sports tours to Dublin, Oxford and South Africa. Various year groups enjoy day visits to a local historic house as part of history coursework on Tudor studies. This has resulted in some excellent cross-curricular work in English, art and design. Other excursions include geography field trips to a nature reserve, a visit to a Roman museum and visits to a mosque. The extensive school grounds are used in many subject areas, including science explorations and artwork. Participation in national and local events, such as mathematics challenges and orchestral and choral days, ensures that the curriculum is further enriched.
- 3.15 The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is good, and in sport, music, art and drama it is excellent. A significant number of pupils are awarded art or music scholarships, and almost 85 per cent of pupils play a musical instrument. In sport participation is excellent, and pupils regularly compete both locally and in county squads. Chess, dress making, board games and dance are some of the other extra-curricular activities on offer for pupils.
- 3.16 The school supports both national and local charities, and almost £15,000 in total is raised each year. The school has many links with the local community. These include local groups and organisations which use some of the school's facilities.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.17 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.18 Good progress has been made in all areas since the previous inspection. The teaching, some of which is excellent, enables pupils to make good progress. Teaching is firmly based upon an understanding of the pupils' needs and the way in which they learn, and the very best teaching involves pupils fully in their learning, creating many opportunities for them to put forward their own ideas, either to the whole class or in discussion in pairs and groups. Teachers are very well qualified and have commitment, dedication and a huge enthusiasm for their teaching. They also have excellent subject knowledge, which they use both to explain and to ask questions that stimulate pupils to deepen their thinking. Teachers know their pupils very well and serve as excellent role models.
- 3.19 Timetables are well structured and teachers make effective use of time management. The pace of lessons is good, leading to some lively teaching and good outcomes. Planning is excellent, with very detailed lesson plans and excellent medium- and long-term plans. Staff use different strategies to encourage interest. Examples include field trips, project work, use of the school grounds for practical work, use of ICT, cross-curricular work, individual research and child-initiated learning.
- 3.20 Target setting is good and fully understood by most pupils, and is used well by the staff to raise achievement and to help stimulate pupils' effort and motivation. There is good evidence of planning to meet different needs, and good use is made of assessment of learning. Assessment is very thorough and reflects the progress made by the pupils and the understanding the staff have for the needs of individuals. The pupils are encouraged to self-assess and this is working very well, for it promotes in them a strong sense of ownership and responsibility for their own learning and understanding. Most teachers encourage pupils to present their work to a high standard, but this is not consistently the case.
- 3.21 Marking overall has improved since the previous inspection and some is excellent, but there are still some inconsistencies between subjects. The best marking includes written pointers for future progress and helpful comments and guidance for the pupils. There is a good range of rewards, and commendation for good work and effort, and this is clearly evident in most books. Oral feedback in class is excellent and supports marking, and staff take every opportunity to praise and reward. Pupils feel that their best efforts have been acknowledged and have a clear idea of how to make further progress. Behaviour management is good and any instances of misbehaviour are dealt with quickly and firmly, although at times pupils are not required to put up their hands to make a contribution in class and they call out.
- 3.22 The provision for pupils with SEND, and for gifted and talented pupils, is excellent. The SENCO ensures that staff have a very clear understanding of the needs of pupils with SEND and also those who require extended work. This aids planning and enables all pupils to access the curriculum at their own level.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The school is successful in its aim to provide a happy and stimulating environment in which pupils can develop spiritually, mentally and physically. The quality of pupils' spiritual development is excellent. Pupils interact confidently with each other and adults, allowing each to have their own opinions and values. They display a composed self-awareness during their time at school. Their strongly established self-confidence enables them to face the challenges of school life very positively and constructively. In their discussions in lessons and interviews, pupils of all ages show an appreciation of non-material aspects of life. Pupils express their ideas and feelings in a friendly yet confident manner in formal and informal situations. The pupils are emotionally mature relative to their age. For example, pupils confidently discussed conflicts around the world, such as in Afghanistan and Syria. Pupils with SEND are assisted sensitively by their peers.
- 4.3 The quality of pupils' moral development is excellent. Pupils develop a keen sense of right and wrong, and respect norms of good conduct expected by the school community. They understand the school aims to achieve a balance between homeliness and order, and how each pupil can contribute to this. Pupils appreciate the school's system of rewards and sanctions, and are keen to achieve the best for themselves and their 'set', or house, to which they show great loyalty. During the inspection pupils displayed good manners and courtesy, holding doors open for adults, engaging inspectors in conversation over lunch and giving them directions around the site.
- 4.4 The quality of pupils' social development is excellent. Pupils demonstrate excellent social awareness and a mature approach to their relationships with others. They accept opportunities for responsibility with enthusiasm whenever they are offered these in school life. Year 8 pupils prize highly their whole-school responsibilities and act as good role models in carrying them out reliably. Pupils in Year 7 take pride in acting as mentors to younger pupils at break times around the school. Pupils of all ages have genuine pride to be part of their "special" school, and are equally appreciative of the needs of others. All pupils are involved in raising funds for charitable causes through their own initiative and efforts, or supporting those of their peers. A range of local, national and international charities benefit from pupils' sympathy and generosity. For example, a cancer charity recently benefited to the sum of £147. Another highly popular event is Grandparents' Day, which has recently been held.
- 4.5 The quality of pupils' cultural development is excellent. Pupils have a very good understanding of varying cultures and show appreciation of the Christian tradition of the school. Pupils show keen enthusiasm for trips to places of worship and culture, when visiting countries abroad, churches, mosques and theatres, and during choral days. They are sensitive to the enrichment provided by the creative work on display throughout their school and opportunities to perform. Pupils show a well-informed understanding of other faiths and cultures. Older pupils were keen to discuss religious differences in diet and the reasons behind these. By the time they are ready to leave the school, pupils demonstrate well-rounded attitudes to life and a maturity that enables them to benefit from all that the school provides, in order to support them during their transition to senior schools.

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

- 4.6 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.7 Pastoral care is a particular strength of the school; pupils confirm that they feel extremely safe and happy. The well-structured arrangements are given a high priority within the school's ethos and routines, supporting the pupils' personal development exceptionally well. Pupils are very well known by all staff, who help them to thrive individually and as members of the community. Support and guidance are excellent, with form tutors as the first point of contact.
- 4.8 Relationships between the staff and the pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves, are excellent, and pupils show appreciation of respect and affection for the staff. Respect for one another is evident in all areas and the pastoral aims of the school are fully realised. The pupils state confidently that they can turn to the staff for help in the event of any concern, and strongly agree that bullying is extremely rare. The anti-bullying policy is comprehensive and staff deal with any instances quickly and constructively. The school has a suitable plan to improve access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.9 The school has a strong culture of praise, rewarding good behaviour and effort through a variety of methods, including celebrating success in the Friday achievers' assembly. The set system encourages pupils to be responsible and to work as a team; pupils are proud of their sets and of their school. Sanctions are applied fairly. Channels of communication are excellent and ensure that the views of pupils are heard. Pupils are most enthusiastic about the work of the school council, which provides them with an opportunity to experience the principles of democracy and to discuss their views and ideas with the school management.
- 4.10 Pupils develop a thorough understanding of the importance of choosing a healthy diet and participating in physical exercise. Food is plentiful and nutritious; menus change regularly and the caterers meet all individual dietary needs.

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

- 4.11 The contribution of arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils is good.
- 4.12 Since the previous inspection a number of improvements have been made. All statutory policies are in place and are regularly updated. The school has a comprehensive policy for the safeguarding of pupils and all staff receive appropriate training in child protection at the required intervals. Personnel involved in the appointment of staff have received appropriate training in the correct procedures for recruitment, in line with national guidelines, and all staff have undergone the required checks on appointment.
- 4.13 Measures to protect the health and safety of the school community are effective and are overseen by the recently appointed bursar. Risk assessments for all classrooms and for activities on and off the school site are carried out. Effective measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards, and records and documentation of all aspects of health and safety are carefully maintained. The school's admission and attendance registers are maintained appropriately and correctly backed up.

- 4.14 Arrangements for sick or injured pupils are good and school staff provide necessary care. Staff are very well informed about individual needs and conditions, including any pupils with SEND.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.15 The quality of boarding is good overall.
- 4.16 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. Boarders' happiness is apparent in everything they do and say: that the staff care for and about them is equally evident. The pupils' questionnaires show the boarders' genuine love of boarding and the parents' extremely high level of appreciation of the care shown to their children.
- 4.17 The boarders are confident, sociable, mature and extremely proud of their school. They are comfortable with adults and peers alike. The relationship between staff and boarders is caring and affectionate. Boarders are very appreciative of the care and support they receive. All are treated equally. Those with particular needs, whether educational, cultural, medical, religious or emotional, are supported by sensitive, experienced staff, who are imaginative and resourceful. The support given by the learning support department is of the highest quality. Boarders have access to outside events through television, the internet, newspapers, magazines and school trips.
- 4.18 Boarders enjoy the boarding experience; they are very attached to their house and keen to contribute. Any concerns can be raised through the school council, regular boarding house meetings, a food ideas box and pastoral care box. Suggestions are listened to and adopted where possible, and explanations given otherwise. All Year 7 pupils are trained as peer mentors. Year 8 responsibilities include head boy and girl, deputies, head chorister and captains of sports, and other duties around the school. All are aware of their responsibilities as role models. Duties are shared throughout the year so that everyone gets a chance to contribute and develop leadership skills. Younger boarders also contribute by helping in house. All participate in fund raising for charities.
- 4.19 The excellent quality of the relationships between boarders and staff was much remarked on in pupils' and parents' questionnaires. There is a friendly, family atmosphere throughout the school and warm exchanges between staff and pupils were observed throughout the inspection. Boarders say they can turn to any staff for help and all know the independent listener and her role. They have appropriate helpline numbers by the telephones.
- 4.20 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. The pupils' handbook includes boarding, and there is an effective induction process. Matrons are all qualified in first aid and the administration of medicines. Boarders who are sick are well cared for until collected by parents. There is a sick bay with dedicated toilet facilities near the surgery and another in each house area. Boarders have access to other external healthcare provision if needed. Parental consent for emergency treatment has been sought. Boarders and their possessions are protected by the school's policies and procedures relating to health and safety, fire, staff recruitment and vetting. Upgrading is planned for smoke detector systems during the school holidays. There is an appropriate complaints policy. Boarders enjoy excellent meals; a wide variety of choice is on offer, food is locally sourced and menus are imaginative. Particular dietary needs are catered for. Snacks are available throughout the day and boarders have access to drinking water at all times. Any

boarders staying on Sunday are catered for in house. Boarders were universal in their praise of the food.

- 4.21 There is a good range of activities after school and in the boarding houses. Any boarders staying at the weekend are taken out, to the seaside or cinema. Boarders say that they enjoy their activities and free time, and have fun. They have access to school facilities, are trusted to be out in the grounds and know where they can be on their own if they wish. They are protected by safety measures including the locked fence around the pond, staff supervision in the sports hall and life guards in the swimming pool.
- 4.22 Boarding accommodation is secure, and only used by boarders. It is comfortable, clean, well lit and warm. Common rooms are attractive and kitchens well equipped. Bunk beds are the norm and bedding is clean. The houses are currently being refurbished. All bedrooms have been repainted. The girls' bathrooms have been renewed to a high standard, and the boys' bathroom is next to be upgraded. Use of CCTV cameras does not encroach on boarders' privacy.
- 4.23 Boarders can contact parents by telephone, email and post. Video, voice and text communication software is available in the boarding house for parents overseas. The school has regular contact with parents by email and telephone.
- 4.24 The effectiveness of arrangements for welfare and safeguarding is good. The school has appropriate policies and procedures in place. All staff have child protection training every three years; new staff at induction. Positive behaviour and relationships are promoted by a policy and by practice that focuses on good citizenship, regular public praise and rewards, and the excellent role models in Year 8. These are understood and appreciated by boarders. The school makes clear that bullying is not acceptable; boarders know that any incident would be dealt with quickly. Sanctions are in place but rarely used. Pupils are courteous, and demonstrate impeccable behaviour.
- 4.25 There is a policy for the use of physical restraint, though not all staff have been trained in this. The senior leadership team has received training in safer recruitment. Procedures for Gap Year students have improved, though are not yet fully refined. Appropriate written agreements are in place. Visitors to boarding accommodation are supervised, as are contractors at the school, whilst boarders are on site. The school does not appoint guardians.
- 4.26 All staff working with boarders have job descriptions, induction training and annual appraisals, as well as formal and informal meetings. Staff can access training courses for professional development. Supervision by staff is good. They know where boarders are and boarders know who is on duty. There are a number of staff sleeping in at night and boarders know how to contact them. Boarders do not have access to staff accommodation in school.
- 4.27 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the boarding provision is good. There have been clear improvements in the provision. A bursar has been appointed, who deals with health, safety, maintenance and security. A new health and safety consultant has also been appointed. There are governors with responsibility for boarding and child protection, and a governor is to oversee health and safety.
- 4.28 Senior boarding staff, as in the rest of the school, have not always ensured rigour in making sure that the finer details of compliance have been addressed. Newly

appointed staff and volunteers are clearly committed to boarding. House staff have weekly meetings, regular appraisals and mentoring when appropriate.

- 4.29 There are plans to redevelop the boarding areas when funds become available. All the recommendations in the previous report have been made, although only two of the telephones available to pupils afford privacy.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The governing body carries out its duties well, helping the school to meet its aims successfully. Governors have an effective oversight of the work of the school through their committee structure. The finance committee and the marketing and strategy committee direct the school's affairs prudently and provide a clear steer for the future. The education committee, a significant addition since the previous inspection, provides a necessary focus on the quality of the curriculum provision and academic outcomes for pupils.
- 5.3 Governors have increased their monitoring role and their effectiveness in challenging the school and holding it to account. Their recently instigated programme of monitoring visits has been particularly successful in helping them to understand the workings of the school.
- 5.4 The governing body now meets its statutory obligations, and all gaps, for example in aspects of policies and information to parents, have been addressed. It fulfils its commitment to reviewing the school's safeguarding policy and procedures annually. There is a named governor with responsibility for child protection, who has undertaken appropriate training.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is good.
- 5.6 Structures for leadership and management have been developed well since the previous inspection, so that the school meets its aims successfully. The role of bursar has been introduced and developed effectively, and this provides good administrative and organisational support to senior leaders. The school now meets all regulatory requirements, though there is currently no systematic process for overseeing and reviewing these requirements. Nonetheless, pupils are effectively safeguarded and exceptionally well cared for.
- 5.7 Senior leaders evaluate the school's performance realistically and have a good understanding of its strengths and future challenges. There is a clear vision for the direction the school wishes to take, and the school development plan contains appropriate priorities for achieving this. There has been less rigour in ensuring that the finer detail of statutory compliance has been addressed. Structures for leadership and management work well. Senior leaders communicate effectively with heads of department, who play a full part in monitoring the quality of provision and outcomes in their subject areas, and have developed these well. Senior leaders maintain a good overview of the work of these middle leaders, and know where the strengths and areas for development lie within teaching and the curriculum.
- 5.8 There are systematic procedures for appraising the performance of staff, so that they can be held accountable for their work, their achievements can be recognised and their professional development needs can be supported. Staff training is seen

as a priority, and staff are able to meet the needs of pupils well as a result. Staff are trained appropriately in welfare, health and safety. Safeguarding training is securely covered and up to date, and a high proportion of staff are qualified in different aspects of first aid. Excellent relationships at all levels and a strong sense of teamwork make the school a happy community where the best interests of the pupils always come first.

- 5.9 A large number of parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire. The great majority expressed very high levels of satisfaction, citing the good quality of care their children receive, the warm family atmosphere that the school promotes and the generally high standards of behaviour. Parents are overwhelmingly pleased with the standard of education provided for their children, but a small number feel that more should be done to help individuals and that school information is not easily available. Inspectors investigated these concerns and found that there are good levels of awareness of the needs of individuals throughout the school, and that there are numerous opportunities for parents to find information through the many channels used by the school. Parents of current and prospective pupils are well informed about the school and its activities, through printed material, frequent contact by email and the school's website, which is updated regularly.
- 5.10 Parents have very good opportunities to be involved in the work and progress of their children. There is a parents' forum which meets twice a term, where parents can influence decisions about the running of the school through open dialogue. Parents are welcomed into the school and support a wide variety of activities, including sporting fixtures, drama productions and concerts. Parents also accompany pupils on sporting trips such as the recent tour to South Africa. There is an active parents' association which organises numerous events. Reports to parents on their children's progress are clear and informative, and there are regular evenings where parents are welcomed to discuss their children's progress.
- 5.11 The school has a formal complaints procedure that is available to parents. Any concerns are recorded carefully, treated sensitively and generally resolved through discussion and prompt action.

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 good provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. Provision is outstanding in the Nursery. Teaching is always good in the EYFS, and in the Nursery it is often outstanding. The well-planned educational programmes ensure that children have numerous opportunities to listen, talk, make close relationships, develop physical skills, learn both independently and with others, and to start to acquire early reading and writing skills.
- 6.2 A new method of assessment is being used which helps to improve planning, in order that each child may be supported more effectively. This includes children with EAL, where individual help is given when needed to reinforce vocabulary and encourage fluency. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection to ensure that the pace of lessons and the challenge of teaching are appropriate for all children. For example, during a lesson in Reception which moved briskly, some children used their phonic knowledge to identify which sound a number of objects began with, while those able to do so read simple words. Occasionally, however, the range of available resources is not sufficiently exciting and stimulating, and this limits the quality of new knowledge and understanding children can acquire.
- 6.3 Parents and carers are delighted with the support children are given in settling into each class, and also with the high quality of the transition arrangements from Nursery into Reception and from there to Year 1. The detailed and frequent information they receive about their children's progress and events in the school is much appreciated and they value deeply the family atmosphere throughout the EYFS.

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

- 6.4 The contribution of the early years provision for the children's well-being is outstanding. The key people are skilled and experienced, and serve as excellent role models, displaying courtesy and respect for others. High priority is given to ensuring that children feel happy and are safe, so they are confident to learn, to become increasingly independent and to form close relationships both with other children and with adults.
- 6.5 From an early age, children are taught how to keep themselves safe and the importance of physical exercise, healthy eating and good hygiene. Risk assessments are thorough and regular fire procedures are well known. A strong emphasis is placed on developing children's personal qualities so that they are mature for their age. Arrangements for transition ensure that children move confidently from one class to another.

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

- 6.6 The leadership and management of the early years provision are good. The governors take a keen interest in the EYFS and visit regularly. Children are cared for extremely well throughout the day in a safe, homely atmosphere. All staff have been checked with the Criminal Records Bureau, and they understand child protection and health and safety procedures. There has been good progress in the quality of safeguarding arrangements since the previous inspection.
- 6.7 Policies are updated regularly and staff are well supervised by senior leaders, who set targets and arrange for them to receive further training as appropriate on the teaching and development of young children. The interim leaders of the EYFS have improved the planning and assessment arrangements, so that areas of learning that need attention are highlighted and plans are detailed and clear. For example, during regular staff meetings, assessment and discussion revealed that children's mathematical development was not as advanced as in some other areas of learning, so this is now a priority area for improvement. There is close liaison between staff and parents, who are kept informed as to how they can help their children. Local agencies are active in their support of the setting.

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

- 6.8 The overall quality and standards of the early years provision are good. The children, including those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in relation to their ability and needs. Children in the Nursery express themselves with increasing clarity and confidence in their conversations and their creative work, including role play, which they thoroughly enjoy. For example, four children played the characters in the story of *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* with enormous gusto. They are beginning to count, recognise many colours and understand relative terms such as 'little', 'middle', 'large' and 'big'.
- 6.9 In Reception, children count confidently to 20. Many know which number is one greater than a given number, and they name simple two-dimensional shapes correctly, although mathematical development is not as advanced as communication and language development. The majority of children speak clearly and fluently in increasingly complex sentences. They access computer programs with minimal help and manipulate both the mouse and keyboard with considerable dexterity.
- 6.10 Physical development is good throughout the EYFS. Children in both the Nursery and Reception have good basic understanding of their bodies and what they can do. They know about some festivals, and in Reception they use a globe independently to identify countries, some of which they have visited.
- 6.11 The children's personal and emotional development is outstanding. The youngest children take turns happily, share resources and start to play with other children. By the end of Reception, children respect one another's feelings and form close relationships with other children and with adults. They are imaginative and are confident to try to work independently. Throughout the setting, behaviour is exemplary.
- 6.12 The children's welfare is appropriately safeguarded and good relations are maintained with local authority services, who use the Nursery to train apprentice nursery assistants. The development plan is of good quality and indicates clear commitment to continuous improvement.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

6.13 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.