



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**ST JOHN'S COLLEGE SCHOOL**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

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## St John's College School

Full Name of School	<b>St John's College School</b>
DfE Number	<b>873/6004</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>9900001</b>
Address	<b>St John's College School 73 Grange Road Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB3 9AB</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01223 353532</b>
Fax Number	<b>01223 355846</b>
Email Address	<b>klj@sjcs.co.uk</b>
Headmaster	<b>Mr Kevin Jones</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Revd Duncan Dormor</b>
Age Range	<b>4 to 13</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>449</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (260 boys; 189 girls;)</b>
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): <b>0</b> 5-11: <b>302</b> 3-5 (EYFS): <b>32</b> 11-18: <b>115</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total: <b>412</b>
Number of Boarders	Total: <b>37</b> Full: <b>37</b> Weekly: <b>0</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Miss Althea Pipe</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection dates	<b>14 May 2013 to 17 May 2013</b>

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in January 2008.

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](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.

Ofsted monitors the work of independent inspectorates, including a sample of inspections, and you can find the latest evaluation of the work of ISI on the Ofsted website.

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, 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	Reporting Inspector
Mr Paul Cozens	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Mr Paul Oldham	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Mr Nicholas Park	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Mr Stephen Yeo	Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mrs Myra Rodgers	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Sally Gray	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 St John's College School is a preparatory school for girls and boys situated in the centre of Cambridge. It is predominantly a day school which also has a co-educational boarding section. Owned by St John's College, Cambridge, the school was founded in the mid-seventeenth century to provide an education for the College's choristers, moving to its present location in 1955. Half of the governing body is composed of fellows of the college. The College is a registered charity.
- 1.2 The school's aims are: to provide its pupils with a challenging and supportive academic curriculum; to help them to come to an understanding of and responsibility for themselves and others as learners and as people; to enable them to discover the best in themselves whatever their gifts and talents may be; to value all academic gifts and non-academic talents equally, and to foster pupils' social, emotional, moral, cultural and spiritual growth.
- 1.3 The school educates girls and boys aged from four to thirteen years, offering Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision in its Reception classes. Choristers and other pupils board from the age of eight onwards. Since the previous inspection was carried out in 2008, a new boarding house has been completed, and the school's senior department has been redeveloped to provide new classrooms and specialist facilities. This work was completed in 2012.
- 1.4 Currently there are 449 pupils on roll, of whom 32 are in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school is exempt from the learning and development requirements of the EYFS. The main point of entry to the school is at Reception, which is non-selective. Those entering into older age groups are assessed to ensure they can cope with the demands of the curriculum. Choristers are admitted to Year 4 and above on the basis of their singing and musical capability. Thirty-seven pupils board, mostly boys.
- 1.5 The ability profile of the school is above the national average, with most pupils having an ability that is at least above average, and few having ability that is below average. No pupils have been identified as having English as an additional language. Eighty-five pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and all receive support from the school. No pupils currently have statements of special educational need.

- 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***

School	NC name
Kindergarten	Reception

***Preparatory School***

School	NC name
Transition 1	Year 1
Transition 2	Year 2
Form 1	Year 3
Form 2	Year 4
Form 3	Year 5
Form 4	Year 6
Form 5	Year 7
Form 6	Year 8



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

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

- 2.1 St John's College School is extremely successful in meeting its aims and gives its pupils a flying start to their education. It discovers and nurtures the gifts, talents and strengths of all pupils and supports their particular needs, so that they develop as well-rounded, well-balanced individuals who are able to shine in their chosen fields. Pupils' achievement from the EYFS onwards is exceptional, because they are given so many opportunities to succeed in so many areas. Their academic attainment is excellent, with the result that they are able to gain places and awards at prestigious selective senior schools. Many make excellent progress, particularly those pupils with SEND, because of the outstanding support they receive. Teaching is excellent, and boys and girls of all ages are enthusiastic, inquisitive and self-motivated learners because of this. Teachers have outstandingly good relationships with their pupils, and are often inspirational in their approach, firing up pupils' thirst for learning and fostering independent and co-operative learning skills. The curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities are excellent, offering pupils outstanding opportunities to use their skills and knowledge across a breadth of subjects.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent. They have a strong awareness of themselves as individuals and of the world beyond themselves, and a clearly defined sense of right and wrong. All are very proud of being part of the St John's community, and have a sense of commitment towards other communities and society as a whole through their charity work. They are genuinely interested in other faiths and cultures, and are deeply interested in the arts. The pastoral care for pupils is a key strength of the school. Pupils' all-round development is carefully monitored and frequently discussed, so that each one is exceptionally well known and supported. Excellent attention is given to welfare, health and safety, and the school complies fully with all regulatory requirements. The quality of boarding is excellent. Boarders enjoy excellent facilities and activities, and are extremely well cared for. They feel the boarding house is a home from home.
- 2.3 The quality of governance and of leadership and management are excellent. The governing body supports and challenges the school in its daily work and its development plans, and invests wisely in the future. Improvements in accommodation since the previous inspection have proved to be of great benefit to staff and pupils, and future needs have been accurately identified. As already identified by the school, the outdoor learning environment, particularly for children in the EYFS, does not yet offer the whole range of opportunities the school would wish to provide. Similarly, the accommodation in the junior house is often too small for its purpose and in need of refurbishment. Leaders across the school have a clear and ambitious vision for the future and ensure, through effective delegation, that the school runs like clockwork. Leaders inspire and empower staff to do their best and value their contribution. As a result, there is an exceptionally strong sense of teamwork and common purpose running through the whole school community. Parents are extremely pleased with the school and are thoroughly supportive of what it does for them and their children.

## **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) Recommendation for further improvement**

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Provide further opportunities for planned learning across the curriculum in the EYFS to take place outside.

### **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' achievement and learning is exceptional.
- 3.2 The school is extremely successful in helping its pupils to excel in their achievement across a wide range of areas, including academic subjects, music, art, drama and sport. As a non-selective school, it meets its aim to enable pupils to discover the best in themselves, whatever their talents may be, exceptionally well. Pupils' learning and study skills are extremely well developed. They are articulate and endlessly curious about learning, and are always ready to ask the question 'why?'. They listen carefully and express themselves clearly. Pupils have a thorough grounding in mathematics and are easily able to apply their different skills across the curriculum, using their mathematic and scientific knowledge to produce working models in design technology, for example. They read fluently and with comprehension, and write convincingly for different purposes, such as composing poetry or prayers for the school's collections. Pupils of all ages are happy to take part in physical activity.
- 3.3 In meeting the needs of the range of children who attend the EYFS, the provision is excellent, successfully achieving its aims to foster the aptitudes and nurture the growth of each child. Enthusiastic and hardworking staff provide planned, purposeful activities across a comprehensive educational programme, so that the setting continues to meet the conditions of exemption from the EYFS development and learning requirements. Overall, the children, including those requiring support, make excellent progress. Children use phonics to sound out simple words as they acquire early reading and writing skills, with some reading at a more complex level and writing simple punctuated sentences. In numeracy, they recognise and use shapes, patterns and non-standard measures and count to 20. They use information technology confidently, using computer mouse skills to draw and programmable toys to extend their learning in numeracy.
- 3.4 Children in the EYFS express themselves creatively through their music and art, as was exemplified by their work on snail patterns based on Matisse and a pond display using Monet and the tuneful singing and expressive movement in the specialist music lesson. Their understanding of the world is enhanced by nature walks and visits to such places as a local farm and safari park. Children are challenged through the 'question of the week' such as, 'Which animals lay eggs?' and, 'How do snails move?' to explore, research and record their findings independently. By the end of Reception, all children achieve the level of the Early Learning Goals, with the vast majority working beyond this.
- 3.5 The extensive range of pupils' achievements can be seen in the increasingly high proportion of scholarships gained by them year on year. This year, almost half of Year 8 pupils have been awarded scholarships to their senior schools. Since the previous inspection, increasing numbers have also gained places at highly selective day schools. The pupils' achievement in music is of an exceptional standard. Its choristers perform internationally, and more than 80% of pupils in Year 4 and above play at least one instrument. Pupils organise and perform informal lunchtime concerts on a weekly basis. Girls' and boys' sports teams achieve considerable success, with some players reaching county standard. Theatrical performances are frequent and to a high standard, and pupils take part in drama competitions. Year 8, for example, are currently producing a play in Latin which they have written

themselves. Pupils have also been successful in national competitions in other disciplines, such as poetry, spelling, and mathematics. Their work in art and design technology is of an extremely high standard.

- 3.6 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but on the evidence available it is judged to be excellent, based on the work seen in lessons and in their books. They make progress which is often excellent from their different starting points, particularly the most able pupils. Those with SEND often make exceptional progress, and all those SEND pupils who take Common Entrance pass it, some gaining awards to their next schools. Thanks to the support from the school, all Common Entrance candidates attain places in their first choice of school.
- 3.7 Pupils of all ages are exceptionally well motivated and enthusiastic learners, bringing boundless energy, determination and application to their learning. From an early age, they are able to work independently and collaboratively, organising themselves and others to find things out for themselves. Pupils of all ages are able to lead and join in discussions or divide out responsibility for tasks without the need for adult input.

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

- 3.8 The quality of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 The curriculum successfully fulfils the school's aims of meeting the needs, fostering the aptitudes and nurturing the growth of each child, whilst investing richly in the children's expressive, aesthetic and creative development. Pupils benefit from a wide-ranging and balanced curriculum that encompasses the positive learning ethos, fundamental to the school's aims. The academic curriculum is well supported by a wide-ranging programme of extra-curricular activities; these are highly suitable for pupils of all ages and abilities.
- 3.10 From an early age, pupils benefit from being taught by specialists across a range of subjects. Latin is introduced in Year 5, Spanish has been introduced as a second modern foreign language and Classical Greek is offered to the more able. Study skills and philosophy have also been added to the curriculum. The pupils make purposeful use of the classrooms and the excellent facilities for science, information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology (DT), and creative and performing arts.
- 3.11 From the earliest years, pupils select the topic areas for their creative curriculum. 'WOW' days, emotions for learning and mindfulness programmes have been introduced across the school. Each lesson starts with a focusing activity, which impacts on pupils' readiness for learning. As a result, pupils are reflective and able to confidently make links and connections between subject areas.
- 3.12 A digital learning working party ensures all subjects throughout the school are fully supported with ICT resources. The school promotes the use of online resources to help pupils study at home. In addition, pupils may access computers in the well-equipped library at certain times of the day in order to pursue further independent study.
- 3.13 Provision for pupils with SEND is excellent. They are extremely well supported with individual education plans and the use of these is evident in detailed lesson planning and delivery. Many lessons profit greatly from the presence of support staff and

teaching assistants in the classroom. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and appropriate work and challenge is provided in most lessons.

- 3.14 The children have good opportunities within each year group to take part in an extensive range of educational day trips and residential visits closely linked to the curriculum. In addition, the school encourages educational visitors to the school. The STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) programme and the 'mantle of the expert' initiative see many parents visiting the school and offering a range of lectures and learning opportunities.
- 3.15 In the senior department, staff and pupils follow a weekly 'Wonder' afternoon, providing opportunities for departments to work together exploring a range of curricular and co-curricular activities. During the inspection pupils were involved in critical thinking, developing and analysing syllogisms; were visited by an Olympic high jumper and designed and built shelters and bridges. Year 8 were engaged in an excellent rehearsal for their leavers' play, in which pupils were taking a leading directorial role.
- 3.16 Games and sports provision is excellent and all pupils in the senior department have the opportunity to play for a team and take part in fixtures.
- 3.17 Music and drama in the school are outstanding. A large majority of pupils in Years 4 to 8 learn musical instruments at school. An ever-changing programme of ensembles, to match the requirements of the pupils, is run, currently numbering 35 per week.
- 3.18 The school enjoys an extensive activities programme which is clearly structured and well organised. Pupils speak of the wide range of excellent and diverse activities with enthusiasm, most pupils from Year 3 to Year 8 taking part in at least one activity per week. A range of clubs is also offered by senior pupils, including zumba, aqua-aerobics and photography. Pupils benefit from taking part in local and national sporting and musical events and competitions, some of which are hosted by the school.
- 3.19 The EYFS curriculum provides interesting and challenging experiences, with an effective balance of adult-led and child-initiated tasks indoors, but with fewer opportunities to learn outside. The school is aware of the limitations to its outdoor space and is planning extensive improvements to these areas.
- 3.20 A very good range of quality resources in the EYFS provide an interesting environment for all-round development, for example, through programmable toys and remote control cars for ICT, and the light box for scientific exploration.

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

- 3.21 The overall quality of the teaching is excellent.
- 3.22 The teaching is often inspirational and fully supports the aim of the school that talents will be identified and needs responded to. In their questionnaires and in interviews pupils indicated a very high level of satisfaction with the teaching they received. Relationships between pupils and teachers are excellent and are founded on mutual respect.
- 3.23 From Reception onwards, effective and well planned lessons promote pupils' progress. Teachers in the EYFS achieve a very successful balance between adult

- led and child initiated learning, so that children's needs are extremely well met. They support children's learning skillfully and extend children's understanding through careful use of questioning and development of vocabulary.
- 3.24 All lessons start with a period of calm after which almost all lessons observed proceeded at a brisk pace, frequently employing an excellent range of teaching activities.
- 3.25 Teachers know their pupils well and are familiar with their strengths and weaknesses. The school uses detailed assessment procedures to identify and then carefully track the progress of those who need any form of additional support from the individual needs department, or might need it in the future.
- 3.26 Pupils identified as being especially talented are also carefully monitored. They are promoted into the top sets in the year group and, whenever appropriate, the school's policy is that they should be given extension work to enrich their learning. Nonetheless in a few lessons pupils of above-average ability are not given sufficiently challenging activities to extend their learning when they have finished the main task.
- 3.27 In Year 8, the small number of pupils who do not study Latin are given excellent opportunities to strengthen their written English by completing interesting and imaginative tasks; some work by these pupils, for example writing film reviews, is of an excellent standard.
- 3.28 The marking of pupils' completed work was identified at the previous inspection as being conscientious but not always in line with the school's agreed policy. Marking procedures have been substantially revised. The guidance incorporates precise advice to teachers on how marking should support future learning, and how pupils should be encouraged to self-assess the comments on their marked work. This policy is working well for the majority of teachers, although some have yet to implement it fully.
- 3.29 The school actively encourages teachers to initiate imaginative ways of delivering not only individual lessons but complete cross-curricular themes designed to encourage and inspire collaborative working and critical thinking. They work together to make links across the curriculum, for example using scientific discoveries to inspire pupils to write poetry. Drama and music are included most effectively in much cross-curricular teaching generating great enthusiasm and leading to outstanding progress for pupils.
- 3.30 In very many lessons, teachers allow pupils a great deal of independence: leavers preparing for their end of term production were encouraged to develop their own movement sequences rather than having each one directed. The resulting dramatic impact and the progress of the pupils' acting skills were considerable.
- 3.31 The excellent teaching is supported in the senior department by mostly new, well maintained and excellently equipped classrooms. Those in the junior department are equally well equipped and maintained though some are rather small. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are also highly skilled in using the interactive whiteboards that are installed in each room.

## **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 Pupils are confident and self-aware. Spiritually they benefit from a worship space within the main school hall, and also from the atmosphere of peace and tranquillity engendered by the chapel of St John's College, where services are held throughout the term and where the choristers attend on an almost daily basis.
- 4.3 Children become emotionally resilient, thanks to the school's programme of emotions for learning and mindfulness which pervades the daily life of the school. They feel safe and secure, and have a sense of belonging to the school.
- 4.4 There are a number of effective pupil committees in the school, namely eco, international and charities. Pupils take their responsibilities towards those less fortunate than themselves seriously and the pupils themselves often lead the way in choosing charities to support. For example, a recent initiative called the 'grow a pound scheme' has raised over £2,800 for motor neurone disease, and children have also raised money for the teenage cancer research project at a Cambridge hospital.
- 4.5 Pupils gladly take on the many opportunities for them to assume positions of responsibility and develop leadership skills. In the senior part of the school, for example, pupils are given the responsibility of organising the teams for house matches and in the junior department the older pupils can become library monitors, door crew, computer room helpers and key keepers.
- 4.6 Many pupils take part in drama, music and games and perform to a very high standard. In addition to the many plays and sporting fixtures there are over forty concerts a year, both formal and informal. One of the key features of these concerts is the level of peer support which participants receive from their friends.
- 4.7 In religious studies lessons, pupils are open to all religions. They value visits to other places of worship, for example, the synagogue and the Sikh temple.
- 4.8 As pupils move through the school they are encouraged to think about many of life's great issues. The Year 8 Passion play is an excellent spiritual and moral vehicle for the pupils and provides an opportunity for them to ponder on the concept of sacrificing your life for your friends.
- 4.9 Pupils are always keen to consider life beyond the school boundaries, and make the most of trips abroad and clubs which explore other cultures. They also show maturity in thinking through difficult moral issues, for example in their history or PSHE lessons.
- 4.10 The personal development of the children in the EYFS is excellent. They enjoy coming to school and they happily share resources, take turns and make independent choices about their play, learning and behaviour. Staff in the EYFS give clear guidance on standards of courtesy and behaviour expected so that children demonstrate good levels of behaviour, show respect for one another and play co-operatively, as seen in their role play in the 'fantasy land'.

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

- 4.11 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.12 Pastoral care is a main strength of the school. In all areas of the school, staff are extremely committed to ensuring the pastoral needs of every child are achieved, providing extremely effective support and guidance in accordance with the school's aims.
- 4.13 Relationships are exceptionally warm and positive between teachers and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves, throughout the whole school community. The meticulous record-keeping of the tutor system allows for extensive monitoring of individual pupils, and provides an in-depth awareness of pupil needs, enabling staff to be proactive in their pastoral duties. The pastoral needs of all pupils are extremely well met by class teachers and extensive monitoring, support and guidance is provided by senior managers.
- 4.14 Confident and articulate pupils spoke extremely positively about the friendly and caring nature of their teachers and they know who they can turn to if they have a problem. The school is highly effective at promoting positive behaviour and guarding against bullying. All incidents of bullying are recorded and monitored carefully. However, pupil questionnaires confirm that bullying is rare and that, should it occur, pupils have every confidence that staff would deal with it extremely quickly.
- 4.15 A wide range of topics is sensitively covered within PSHE classes. In an interview with Year 7 pupils they said that they had had sex education lessons and had also learnt about drugs and alcohol. They were adamant also that there was a clear anti-bullying culture within the school, and every term pupils are asked to write down a 'safety net' list of people they would be happy to talk to should anything be troubling them.
- 4.16 Pupils' opinions are valued and the school employs effective methods to seek their views. The quality and variety of the food provided at the school is excellent and, during interviews, pupils commented positively about it. Pupils are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles by developing healthy eating habits and taking regular exercise during games, activities and playtimes. The school has a suitable plan to develop educational access for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 4.17 Provision for the well-being of children in the EYFS is excellent. A high priority is given to the welfare of the children and, supported by the effective emotions for learning programme for personal and social education, children form strong relationships with the staff, particularly their key person, and feel safe, happy and confident to share their concerns.
- 4.18 The setting encourages good eating habits through the curriculum and the healthy meals provided and children have opportunities for physical exercise through their outdoor play, as well as their specialist PE sessions. All these factors ensure that the children are well prepared for transition into the next stage of their learning. To enhance this, the book buddies system promotes learning and friendships with the older children.



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

- 4.19 Arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 4.20 The arrangements for safeguarding pupils throughout the school are extremely thorough. Every two years all staff receive appropriate training on the safeguarding of children and this includes the adult members of the choir. Those with particular responsibilities in this area undertake additional training. The chair of governors is also trained and has responsibility for safeguarding throughout the school. Constructive relationships are formed with local welfare agencies and the recording of incidents is efficient and maintains confidentiality.
- 4.21 All necessary precautions have been made to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. Regular fire practices are carried out to ensure the safety of pupils, staff and visitors. The school has comprehensive policies covering all aspects of health and safety, and these are meticulously maintained and reviewed through termly meetings with a cross-section of staff and the senior management team. The senior operational staff liaise closely and proficient systems are in place to support the maintenance of the school. Health and safety issues are reported termly to the governors. Risk assessments for trips and visits, at home and overseas, are thorough and monitored effectively. Provision for pupils who are ill or injured fully meet requirements. First aid boxes and bags are located around the site and are well maintained, and there is an effective reporting procedure for recording accidents.
- 4.22 Admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained and stored for at least three years. The safe recruitment procedures are scrupulously followed and the central register is accurately maintained on current staff and new appointments.
- 4.23 Staff in the EYFS support independence in the children's own personal hygiene, and confidence and personal qualities are successfully fostered. Children are safeguarded effectively, cared for extremely well and their needs are fully met.

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

- 4.24 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.25 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. The boarders' personal development is clearly promoted by their boarding experience and they show excellent qualities of confidence, tolerance, maturity and independence. The children are extremely polite, well behaved and thoughtful of the needs of others. Boarders say they love boarding. Boarders are supported and encouraged by a dedicated and caring boarding team in all aspects of their lives as boarders. There are strong links between boarding staff and school staff, some of whom help in the boarding house. Weekly meetings, both in the boarding house and school, are held and the children are discussed individually, including their progress, pastoral issues and any support they may need. Staff are mindful of the commitment of the choristers and the balancing of their routines both in school and boarding. Boarders enjoy being part of their community and make a positive contribution. They have a house forum and changes have been brought about as a result of these meetings, including having a pot of tea at breakfast and the purchase of four bicycles.
- 4.26 The house guidelines and sanctions, formulated by boarders, are based on giving back to the community, for example tidying the library. Good relationships exist between boarders and between boarders and staff and the children are appreciative

of the efforts of staff on their behalf. Boarders know there is a wide range of people they can talk to if they need help or advice, including the independent listener who visits the school. Appropriate helpline numbers are displayed and a concerns box is available, though rarely used. New boarders entering the school are given a 'buddy', from an older age group, for their first year and they really value the help of the 'buddies'. There is also a helpful boarding handbook. Older boarders are given more independence, for example unescorted visits to Cambridge for which they have clear guidance, in preparation for life at their next school. Boarding staff run pocket money accounts. The policy for equal opportunities is followed closely in practice.

- 4.27 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. Care for boarders is outstanding and they feel safe. The school implements well thought out policies for boarders who are unwell and the children receive excellent medical care. Boarders say they are well looked after if they are ill.
- 4.28 The boarders' accommodation is of an extremely high standard. The children appreciate their environment and care for it. The rooms are light, clean and airy. Boarders can socialise in the large family style kitchen and the games room with table football, pool and television. A well-stocked library also provides a quiet space. Boys and girls have separate bedrooms, showers and toilet facilities. The bedrooms are well furnished and children can personalise their own areas. There is disabled access to the house, including a lift. The school keeps records of all risk assessments, complies with fire safety regulations and holds regular fire drills.
- 4.29 All the children lead full and busy lives, but they still have enough energy left at the end of the day for activities and very much enjoy sporting activities on the field, including mixed games of rounders and cycling. Dorm movie nights are also popular. The boarders have the opportunity to visit Cambridge and the girls enjoy 'girly nights'. Weekend activities for the choristers include punting, the cinema and museum visits, and the wide range of school activities is much appreciated by the pupils.
- 4.30 Boarders maintain regular contact with their families by email and house telephones; they also have access to internet telephone calls. Communication between staff and parents is excellent, and parents are welcome to visit the school. Boarders enjoy their meals and inspectors found them to be of an excellent standard. Catering staff prepare food from mainly fresh produce and respond positively to boarders' suggestions. Menus are varied and healthy, and the catering staff help promote healthy eating. Special dietary needs are catered for and the school operates a nut-free policy. Children's laundry is done on a daily basis and beds are changed weekly.
- 4.31 The effectiveness of arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are excellent. Child safeguarding measures are effective and all staff, including ancillary staff, receive regular child safeguarding training. The school operates a safe recruitment policy. There is a robust anti-bullying policy and bullying was not found to be an issue in the school. Positive behaviour is promoted. Boarders have to sign in and out of house. The children are aware of how to raise a member of staff at night if they need help.
- 4.32 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the boarding provision is excellent. Leadership through senior management and senior boarding staff who lead the boarding team on a day-to-day basis is strong. Five members of staff are generally on duty and supervision of the boarders is excellent. Weekly meetings of

staff at all levels take place, and the boarding team regularly reviews and updates its practice. Boarding staff have the opportunity for further training. All the required policies and documents are in place.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The governing body is extremely successful in supporting and challenging the school, helping it to meet its aims and guiding it through ambitious plans for improvement. Thanks to their foresight and investment, the quality of accommodation for boarders and pupils in the senior department has been transformed since the previous inspection, so that it now offers excellent provision and facilities. Similar plans are being drawn up to upgrade the junior buildings and outdoor learning environment. At present some rooms in the junior buildings are not large enough for their purpose and the decoration is in need of refurbishment. Governors have foresight and faith in the educational leadership of the school, and are prepared to invest in long-term developments such as these for the benefit of the all-round education of the pupils.
- 5.3 Since the previous inspection, the governing body has been pro-active in improving and extending the range of skills and expertise of its members. The increase in numbers from ten to twelve has brought in new experience to complement that of the college fellows and other existing governors. They have a very effective oversight of the school. The governing body ensures that the school is fully compliant with the Independent School Standards Regulations and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding, and discharges all its responsibilities for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety to a high standard. Governors carry out the required annual review of safeguarding procedures and practice, and of health and safety.
- 5.4 Governors have a good oversight of the EYFS, although there is not as yet a governor with specific responsibility for this part of the school.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is excellent.
- 5.6 Senior leaders have a clear and definite vision for the school and a commitment to realising the school's aim for its pupils' all-round development as valued and unique individuals. They are highly successful in achieving this. They inspire loyalty and enthusiasm in staff, who have a strong sense of common purpose and a desire to do their best for their pupils. Senior staff are also greatly valued by the pupils, who recognise that they genuinely care about all pupils and have their best interests at heart at all times.
- 5.7 The school's success in meeting its aims is down to senior leaders making sure that every aspect of each pupil's development is carefully monitored and regularly discussed, so that everyone has the best possible opportunity to thrive and flourish. Talents are discovered early and nurtured.
- 5.8 Middle leaders are given high levels of responsibility and are trusted to lead initiatives, and this contributes strongly both to school improvement and to their continuing professional development. Staff at all levels are consulted and involved

in school improvement initiatives, such as emotions for learning or the creative curriculum, through working parties and training opportunities, so that all feel part of the process of change and development. Staff retention rates are high.

- 5.9 Procedures for monitoring and evaluation of the school's work are systematic and structured, designed to lead to improvement. Departmental reviews and focused lesson observations lead to development planning and staff performance interviews, which result in professional development. The outcomes of the school's monitoring of teaching closely reflect the profile observed during the inspection. Tracking of pupils' performance is careful and thorough, and is used to plan for their individual needs. Pupils may be gifted and talented in one aspect of their development, for example, but receive additional support in another.
- 5.10 Senior leaders ensure that the school fully meets its legal obligations for the safeguarding, welfare, health and safety of pupils, and that staff are fully trained in their roles. The school ensures that the suitability of staff and governors is carefully checked and that recruitment procedures are fully compliant. Responsibility for overseeing these areas is appropriately delegated to senior operational staff, who ensure that they are overseen extremely efficiently. The school's daily routines run smoothly and seamlessly and the contribution of all staff is valued.
- 5.11 Leadership and management of the EYFS are excellent. Robust procedures and effective policies, with thorough risk assessments, ensure that safeguarding and welfare requirements are met, so that the setting is a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment. Staff hold appropriate qualifications and all necessary checks have been made before they are appointed. Staff are encouraged to develop their knowledge and skills through professional development identified during the appraisal system. Training in child protection, first aid and health and safety is rigorous.
- 5.12 There are effective systems for self-evaluation in the EYFS that inform the setting's priorities and set targets for continuous improvement. These challenging aspirations and clear vision are shared with staff by the highly effective EYFS leadership. The progress of each child is systematically tracked through assessments and observation to identify and plan for the next steps in their learning and personal development. The setting's ongoing self-evaluation of provision is evidence of its commitment to continuous improvement.
- 5.13 Links between the school and the parents are excellent and strongly support the academic and personal development of the pupils. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that parents are very supportive of the school. They are particularly positive about how happy and safe their children are, how well they are looked after, the school's timely response to parent's questions and the quality of boarding.
- 5.14 Throughout the school, relationships with parents are characterised by open and easy communication based on an in-depth knowledge of and a genuine care for the pupils and their families. The school's leadership and staff are readily available to speak to parents or to answer queries by e-mail or in 'surgery' time for the senior department. The procedure for parental complaints meets requirements and parental concerns are handled quickly and efficiently. The views of parents are regularly sought in school surveys and feedback is invited on a range of issues.
- 5.15 The parent-teacher association is an active body, enthusiastically supporting the school by organising events to welcome new parents, and social events, such as a

ball, bonfire night celebrations and fun runs. They also raise funds for charities and foster the strong sense of community in the school.

- 5.16 Information is readily available to current and prospective parents through the comprehensive website, an admissions and information pack, school magazines, tweets and weekly bulletins, on paper and electronically, information evenings and a detailed calendar. Parents are kept very well informed of their children's progress through regular parents' consultations and annual reports in the junior house, and twice yearly reports in the senior department, which are clear and concise and include target-setting.
- 5.17 There are many opportunities for parents to be involved in the school. Parents are welcomed at sporting, music and drama events, and at assemblies. Parents offer their expertise in a range of subjects, from identifying and categorising rocks in science to puppet making and contribute to multi-cultural festivals. They support theatrical productions with costume making and set building and accompany school trips.
- 5.18 The EYFS is very successful in working in partnership with parents to enhance the learning and progress of each child, securing appropriate interventions to support learning where needed. Parents appreciate the continuous support provided by staff to help their children settle and there is a real partnership between school and home. Parents are kept comprehensively informed about their children's progress through verbal and written reports, and through sharing their child's photographic 'adventures in Kindergarten'. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were overwhelmingly appreciative of the education their children receive and how well they are cared for.

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