



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

ST JOHN'S-ON-THE-HILL SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of School	St John's-on-the-Hill School
DfE Number	916/6014
EYFS Number	EY286338
Registered Charity Number	312953
Address	St John's-on-the-Hill School Castleford Hill Tutshill Chepstow Monmouthshire NP16 7LE
Telephone Number	01291 622045
Fax Number	01291 623932
Email Address	info@stjohnsonthehill.co.uk
Headmaster	Mr Nick Folland
Chairs of Governors	Mr Stephen Willis and Mr Trent Ward
Age Range	0 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	363
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (203 boys; 160 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 52 5-11: 176 3-5 (EYFS): 74 11-13: 61
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 349
Number of Boarders	Total: 15 Full: 0 Weekly: 15
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 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. 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 chairs 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 Linda Donowho	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Lesley Parlane	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Alastair Ramsay	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Francesca Southern	Team Inspector (Director of Studies, IAPS/HMC school)
Mrs Vivienne Wells	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Lynda Boden	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) Recommendations 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	11
(a) The quality of governance	11
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	11
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 John's-on-the-Hill School, founded in 1923, is a co-educational day and boarding preparatory school for pupils aged between three months and thirteen years, administered by a board of governors. It occupies a Georgian house, with modern additions, and is set in its own extensive grounds at the edge of Chepstow on the Welsh border. It has an all-year-round day Nursery on site. The Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classrooms are accommodated in a purpose-built building adjacent to the school, with immediate access to the Nursery classrooms. Since the previous inspection, a new headmaster has been appointed. The school has also recently refurbished its boarding facilities and library, and has added a new dining facility.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection, there were 363 pupils on roll. Of these, 126 were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), 90 attending the Nursery, the majority part-time. The school offers full, weekly and flexi-boarding to pupils from Year 4 onwards. At the time of the inspection, 15 pupils were boarding on a flexible basis, and many pupils make use of this arrangement. The pupils come predominantly from business and professional families. Most pupils are of white British ethnicity and a small proportion represent a range other nationalities and cultures. The school has identified 54 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 39 of whom receive additional support. Two pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), both of whom receive additional support. Three pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The majority of pupils leave the school at the age of 13, when most take scholarship, Common Entrance or other entrance examinations. The ability profile of the school is above the national average overall, with a fairly wide range.
- 1.3 The school aims to prepare its pupils successfully, both academically and socially, for the next stage of education, through a wide range of educational experiences, in a safe and secure environment where they feel valued. It seeks to identify pupils' individual needs and help them to move towards realising their potential academically, intellectually, socially, culturally and spiritually. It also aims to work closely with parents for the good of the pupils.
- 1.4 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 The school aims to identify and develop the potential of individual pupils across all areas of school life; it is highly successful in this aim. Children make an excellent start in the EYFS; they enjoy coming to school and are active, enthusiastic learners. Throughout the school, pupils make rapid progress in relation to their abilities as a result of teaching of high quality, which supports individuals, encourages independent thinking, and is delivered with enthusiasm and extensive subject knowledge. In the small number of lessons observed where pupils were given less opportunity to think for themselves, teaching was less successful. Support for pupils with SEND is excellent, as is that for the more able pupils, so enabling them to make excellent progress. Pupils' achievements are particularly notable in literacy, numeracy, music and dramatic arts. This is due to the pupils' enthusiastic attitudes to their studies, together with their good behaviour and their extremely strong relationships with each other. The wide range of extra-curricular opportunities enables pupils to flourish, preparing them fully for the next stage of their education.
- 2.2 The personal qualities of pupils within the context of the school are excellent. Older pupils look after younger ones and the whole school community works as a large family. The pupils' personal development is fully supported by excellent pastoral care and by arrangements to ensure their welfare, health and safety. Risk assessments are detailed, and there is a robust safeguarding policy in place. Pupils demonstrate a strong moral awareness. They are respectful of one another's differences and collaborate well when working together, and are naturally tolerant of one another's' viewpoints. They are given many opportunities for responsibilities and accept these with enthusiasm and pride. For some, the additional responsibilities of boarding encourage self-reliance alongside community living.
- 2.3 Governance, leadership and management are excellent. The governors have guided the school's success and strategic development extremely well and exercise effective oversight. They offer strong support for the senior management team, who provide outstanding day-to-day guidance for staff. Since the previous inspection, the school has developed excellent arrangements to monitor the curriculum and teaching and learning across the school, providing a coherent approach to monitoring and evaluation throughout all subject areas. A system for tracking pupils' progress across the school is in the early stages of development. The school promotes strong links with its parents. Parents' responses to pre-inspection questionnaires were extremely positive about the school and the care given to their children. A small number commented that teachers do not always respond to incidents of bullying, and that insufficient information is given on their children's progress. From discussion with pupils and observation of the care given to them and information provided, no inspection evidence was found to support this.

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. In lessons, ensure that pupils are consistently given opportunities to work independently and think for themselves.
 2. Develop further and consolidate the system for tracking pupils' progress across the year groups.
 3. Implement a more formal system for the induction of boarding staff and the review of performance in boarding practice.
 4. Implement a more formal system for the monitoring of accidents and medical records by senior staff.
 5. In the EYFS, build on the existing strengths of encouraging parents to participate in their children's learning and development.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The pupils' success in academic work and the wider curriculum fulfils the school's aim to encourage them to achieve in all aspects of their development. During their time at the school, all pupils, including those with SEND or EAL, become increasingly confident in their individual abilities and make great strides in their academic progress, showing high levels of knowledge and understanding, and well-developed skills. Key factors supporting these are the broad curriculum and the pupils' extremely positive attitudes towards their learning.
- 3.3 Pupils of all abilities apply their literacy and numeracy skills well across all subjects. Pupils' literacy skills are of particular note. They read intelligently, and write fluently and with considerable sensitivity for a variety of purposes and audiences. In lessons, interviews and informal conversations, pupils' input was open and interesting. They are articulate when answering questions and presenting their ideas, and when working in pairs or small groups. Pupils discuss information in a mature way, listening to the ideas of others and adapting their original viewpoint as they feel necessary. This practice is encouraged throughout the school. Younger pupils animatedly discussed and decided on the musical instruments to use in their haunted house presentation, and exchanged ideas about their routine to excellent effect. Numeracy skills are highly developed from an early age and applied competently to solving problems. The pupils have well-developed information and communication technology (ICT) skills that they use creatively across the curriculum. Logical thought in science is good and pupils engage with enthusiasm in scientific investigation.
- 3.4 Less able pupils and those with SEND make excellent progress because they are extremely well supported. They are withdrawn from lessons for individual work and regularly supported in class by their teacher or classroom assistants. More able pupils, and those with particular talents, are well catered for in lessons and in the enhancement classes provided for them. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 benefit greatly when the class is divided for mathematics and English, so enabling all pupils' particular needs to be met.
- 3.5 Progress is further enhanced by the pupils' excellent behaviour in class and very good time keeping. The school's timetable requires that the pupils maintain a rapid pace throughout the school day.
- 3.6 In Year 8, the pupils perform very successfully in Common Entrance examinations. Recent scholarships to senior schools have included several academic, art, music, drama and sports awards, reflecting the extra-curricular programme that is particularly strong in sport, music and art.
- 3.7 Pupils' achievement is excellent in a broad range of contexts, including musical events, drama productions and sporting activities. Pupils' creative and performing skills, particularly in music, are exceptionally high. Music is a strength of the school: the majority of pupils are involved in singing or playing an instrument and pupils regularly join together for musical events in and out of school. They are very successful in examinations in music and in speech and drama, the vast majority attaining distinctions.

- 3.8 The school celebrates a number of achievements in sports by individuals and groups. An inclusive approach enables all pupils to represent their school and both boys and girls enjoy success in inter-school sports matches.
- 3.9 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations. Inspection evidence based on observations of lessons, scrutiny of work and discussions with individual pupils confirms this judgement. This level of attainment indicates that pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability.

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

- 3.10 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.11 The curriculum is highly effective in its coverage of the required areas of learning. It has an excellent balance of breadth and depth, offering pupils many exciting learning opportunities whilst retaining a strong focus on English and numeracy. Sport is given a generous time allocation, while the performing and creative arts are significant elements and add much to the pupils' educational experience. Established provision for ICT in the wider curriculum is supported by its teaching as a discrete subject. The curriculum is further broadened by the inclusion of French from Year 2 and Spanish from Year 5. The recent curriculum review has resulted in a broader and clearly targeted curriculum in Years 7 and 8, preparing pupils for Common Entrance and scholarship examinations. High quality personal, social and health education (PSHE) is taught as a discrete subject, and is also provided and monitored across the curriculum. This contributes well to the pupils' excellent personal development.
- 3.12 Curricular documentation is thorough throughout; individual departments have well-organised schemes of work and handbooks which support teaching extremely well. Progression is planned effectively in all areas.
- 3.13 Curricular support for pupils with SEND is excellent. Clear targets are set which allow these pupils' needs to be met in individual and group lessons and with excellent support in mainstream lessons. The learning of the most able pupils is carefully extended in many lessons. In addition to this, they are challenged outside the classroom through the extra-curricular opportunities and work in scholarship groups in Years 7 and 8. Pupils with SEND or EAL and those who are more able value the intervention and support given.
- 3.14 The extra-curricular provision offers pupils of all ages a wide range of clubs and activities. These are available both in school and at the end of the day. They enable pupils to pursue many interests, in accordance with the school's aim of encouraging them to reach their potential in all areas. The many, varied activities include the well-supported 'eco-warriors' group and a Latin club for talented linguists. High quality opportunities are provided to develop the pupils' creative and sporting talents and for them to make music and sing, including choirs and musical ensembles and an active creative arts group.
- 3.15 Throughout the school, pupils benefit from a full programme of speakers and visits to local areas of historical interest, businesses and events. The school has strong links with the local community through, for example, musical events and the Black Mountain Challenge in aid of Mountain Rescue. Older pupils' independence is developed through residential visits abroad, particularly the trip to South Africa,

where the school has forged a strong link. Such activities provide pupils with memorable experiences that develop their self-confidence and self-knowledge.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.16 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.17 Teaching throughout promotes the pupils' progress and supports the aims of the school well; it makes an excellent contribution to pupils' high levels of achievement. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons and the variety of teaching methods employed. Teaching at its best is characterised by clear objectives and effective questioning, whereby teachers freely challenge pupils, setting a well-judged framework for them to investigate and explore. Excellent opportunities are provided in many lessons for pupils to work in pairs or groups, enabling them to use discussion to develop their understanding and collaborative skills. Questions are carefully targeted to support individual pupils' ability and pupils are placed in groups where they can help each other. In less successful lessons, opportunities for such independent thought are limited and less progress is made.
- 3.18 Teaching meets the needs of pupils of different abilities extremely well. The more able pupils and those with SEND and statements of special educational needs are supported most effectively in lessons by their teachers and the wealth of teaching assistants, enabling them to make excellent progress. Teaching plans build very well on the regular assessment of the pupils' previous attainment and this information is used to identify those who are achieving well in relation to their ability and those who require support. A system for tracking pupils' attainment across the year groups is being developed to support pupils' progress even more effectively.
- 3.19 Marking of books is generally excellent, with realistic targets for improvement set. The school has a clear marking policy and pupils of all ages said that they understand the marking scheme. When marking is not so rigorous, less direction is given for pupils to improve. Since the previous inspection, effective systems have been put in place to monitor planning across the school and within departments.
- 3.20 Teachers have high expectations for pupils, and praise and encouragement are used to good effect. All staff know their pupils well and the excellent relationships are marked by mutual respect, creating an environment conducive to learning.
- 3.21 The use of ICT is widespread across the school and it is evident in all subjects. Classrooms are well resourced, and in some lessons the use of interactive whiteboards by staff and pupils is excellent.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent
- 4.2 The personal development of the pupils throughout the school is excellent. Pupils are responsible, well mannered and tolerant, and work together in harmony, developing a sense of responsibility for others and the wider world, and benefiting from the supportive and warm environment. The school meets its aim to create a safe, caring and happy environment within which all pupils feel valued and secure.
- 4.3 The pupils' spiritual development is outstanding. They are confident and self-aware, and can articulate their developing spirituality because the school promotes a clear set of shared values, the St John's Way. Through the effective delivery of religious studies and PSHE, pupils gain insight into world religions and are given opportunities for discussion. Pupils have a strong sense of self-esteem as a result of the recognition they receive for their successes, both in class and in assemblies. They demonstrate a strong sense of reflection on non-material aspects of life when taking part in assemblies, the creative arts and the many uplifting musical activities, such as the chamber choir.
- 4.4 Moral development is excellent at all levels. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong, and this is reinforced in lessons and assemblies. A clear ethos of mutual trust exists throughout the school and the mature behaviour of older pupils contributes to the well-developed sense of community. Pupils are unfailingly helpful and kind to one another. Pupils are aware of laws within society, and the 'eco' committee is active in making staff and pupils aware of environmental issues locally and further afield. Pupils understand that there are others less fortunate than themselves, and their contributions to charities, local, national and international, are significant. Displays around the school are testimony to their consideration of issues in the wider world.
- 4.5 Pupils' social development is excellent. They are at ease talking with adults and with pupils from different year groups. They are confident with setting themselves targets and enjoy the school's rewards systems. Various badges of merit and house allegiance are worn with pride by pupils of all ages. Pupils make an exceptional contribution to the life of the school through many positions of responsibility, for example as school councillors and sports captains. All Year 8 pupils take on the role of prefect and undertake responsibilities that are understood and respected by the younger pupils.
- 4.6 The pupils' cultural development is excellent. They have a strong appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures. They encounter and discuss cultural issues in subjects such as geography and history, and also through off-site trips, ranging from visiting local churches and historical sites to a cultural exchange with South African pupils.

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

- 4.7 The arrangements for pastoral care are excellent.
- 4.8 Staff support and guide pupils extremely well through a highly developed and well-managed pastoral system, in accordance with the aims of the school. Pastoral arrangements are clearly understood by both staff and pupils. All staff share responsibility for pastoral care, which they exercise conscientiously and sympathetically. Consideration of individual pupils is a standard agenda item at staff meetings and relevant information about them is carefully recorded. The pupils' questionnaire responses and interviews both showed that they understand these procedures and are confident that they can ask an adult for help or advice if they have a concern. They feel safe and secure, and are confident that their concerns will be sympathetically addressed.
- 4.9 Across all areas of the school, relationships between staff and pupils are warm. The school has excellent systems to promote good behaviour. Consequently, behaviour is excellent and manners and respect are evident throughout the school. In discussion, Year 3 pupils showed a mature understanding and respect for the rewards and sanctions system, which is related to the needs of individual children.
- 4.10 The school council meets regularly, giving pupils a voice within their school community, and an ideas box is also available to gather pupils' views. In addition, the school council pastoral representatives meet regularly and help to support younger pupils with any concerns that they might have.
- 4.11 Pupils have a firm understanding of what constitutes healthy eating and this is supported by the school's provision of excellent, nutritious and well-balanced meals. Exercise is valued and excellent opportunities are provided by the school for pupils to take part in a variety of physical activities. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.12 The provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is excellent.
- 4.13 Policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust and thorough. All staff and named governors have undertaken child protection training, are aware of their responsibilities and update their training every three years. Designated senior people have received specialist training every two years and ensure that all staff are trained at the appropriate time. Senior staff and governors review the safeguarding policy on an annual basis. Safer recruitment procedures are meticulously followed on all new staff appointments and the centralised register is accurately maintained.
- 4.14 Health and safety procedures are rigorously adhered to, with regular risk assessments in place for all areas of the school and external visits. Fire practices are carried out on a regular basis, and fire prevention and fighting equipment is checked routinely. In response to the previous inspection, all staff now receive regular training in fire prevention.
- 4.15 Sick or injured pupils are well cared for by suitably trained staff. Medical record keeping and procedures are thorough and parents are kept well informed. All staff have a good knowledge of the specific needs of individual pupils, for example those with SEND, medical conditions or allergies.

- 4.16 Admission and attendance registers are accurately completed and appropriately archived.

4. (d) The quality of boarding

- 4.17 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.18 Outcomes for boarders are excellent and their personal development is enhanced by the very positive atmosphere within the boarding community. Boarders are enabled to grow in confidence and develop self-reliance and independence. They learn to value each other, accept differences and live constructively with one another. Boarders demonstrate excellent, positive relationships with each other, and those who are older show enormous care for younger boarders within a family-orientated atmosphere. Boarders are at ease with one another and with the adults who care for them, and show loyalty to the house. Full boarders greatly enjoy boarding and those who board on an occasional basis look forward to the opportunity. Boarders were able to identify a range of adults they could turn to if facing a difficulty or needing support. Behaviour is excellent and any minor misdemeanours are dealt with quickly and fairly. The views of boarders are actively sought through both formal and informal channels. They can express their opinions within the boarding committee or school council and were also observed in day-to-day conversations with house staff where they were comfortable articulating their views, knowing that they were listened to and issues acted upon. Boarders regularly watch televised news and have an awareness of current affairs.
- 4.19 The quality of boarding care and provision is excellent. Boarding staff take a genuine interest in the boarders' welfare and are deeply committed to supporting the needs and well-being of individual boarders. New boarders are enabled to settle quickly through the 'buddy' system and induction process. House staff show sensitivity to those who are homesick and actively manage their support and care. Boarders who are ill are well cared for by experienced and suitably trained staff. Procedures for the safe administration and secure storage of prescribed and household medication are in place. Boarders greatly enjoy the food on offer and are provided with an excellent range of healthy choices. The recent introduction of the 'dish of the day' is particularly popular and served in an attractive new dining facility. Weekend meals are relaxed and leisurely, often eaten within the boarding house. Boarders benefit from a wide range of after-school activities and frequent, varied external outings at weekends, as well as being able to use the school's extensive facilities. Boarders live in comfortable accommodation within a detached house in the school grounds. The girls and boys sleep on separate floors and mix easily within the communal areas. The dormitories and living room have recently been refurbished and now provide an attractive environment that is valued by the boarders. Further upgrading of the boys' bathroom is planned. Boarders keep in regular contact with their parents by telephone or email, whilst the school uses a variety of systems, such as text messages, email, the website and boarding newsletters, to communicate frequently and promptly with parents.
- 4.20 The effectiveness of arrangements for welfare and safeguarding is excellent. The school is proactive in its approach to the recruitment of new staff and volunteers, and has developed robust procedures to ensure that the welfare of boarders is safeguarded. All staff undertake training in child protection and have a good understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. Risk assessments are routinely conducted and health and safety issues are monitored carefully. Fire practices occur regularly, and within boarding time, and boarders are clearly aware of

evacuation procedures. Boarders are extremely well supervised and clear registration procedures ensure that staff know the whereabouts of all boarders at any time. The boarders feel safe within the boarding house and effective policies and procedures promote a high standard of behaviour. Bullying is not identified as a concern within the boarding community.

- 4.21 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the boarding provision is excellent. The school successfully fulfils its aims for boarding, with strong leadership aiding the development of the warm family atmosphere and sense of community. The efficient organisation, positive relationships and relaxed atmosphere enable boarders to grow in self-confidence and value their community. Dedicated and enthusiastic staff work tirelessly to care for the needs of individual boarders. Excellent systems within the school ensure that communication between academic and boarding staff is strong and that boarders' individual needs are well known and supported. Boarding staff are suitably trained and have regular opportunities for additional training. The boarding house development plan aids forward planning and is reviewed annually. New boarding staff receive some induction but systems to review practice and performance are informal. Accidents, medical records and procedures are not sufficiently monitored by senior staff. Recommendations from previous reports have been addressed, including the storage of controlled medication and review of policies, and all of the National Minimum Standards are met.
- 4.22 Pupil and parent questionnaire responses indicate a high level of satisfaction with boarding, praising the pastoral care and the way in which each boarder is treated as an individual.

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 recently restructured board of governors has enabled the school to make excellent progress in all areas. The board now benefits from a wide range of experience and professional backgrounds. It has a clearly defined structure, and effective and supportive sub-committees. The governors provide excellent support and are wholly committed to the aims and purposes of the school. They are fully aware of their responsibilities and determined through financial planning to ensure that the school's accommodation and human and material resources are of a high quality, in order to meet pupils' educational needs.
- 5.3 Governors have a clear insight into the working of the school. Regular and well-minuted meetings of the whole board, and the meetings of the clearly focused committees, ensure that governors are well informed and able to fulfil their responsibilities for the overall strategic planning, educational standards, continued development and efficient management of the school. Visits to the school and regular contact with the leadership keep governors abreast of the daily life and work of the school.
- 5.4 Relationships between governors and staff are strong; governors provide leadership staff with much appreciated help, advice and challenge, while recognising their operational autonomy. Their support is greatly valued.
- 5.5 Governors fulfil their obligations for monitoring both health and safety and child protection, and specific governors have been allocated responsibility for these areas, ensuring that policies relating to these are regularly and suitably reviewed. They recognise their responsibility for the school's compliance with statutory requirements, including the maintenance of a centralised register that records the recruitment checks undertaken on the appointment of staff.

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

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management of the school is excellent.
- 5.7 The senior management team has successfully created an ethos and sense of purpose that fully contribute to the excellent quality of pupils' personal development, and of pastoral care, and teaching and learning. The team is efficient and approachable, and most effective in furthering the school's aims. Leaders at all levels are focused on self-evaluation, setting priorities and ensuring that these are achieved. A strong sense of teamwork is evident and all staff work hard to maintain these principles in the life of the school.
- 5.8 Communication amongst staff is a strength of the school. A great deal of informal discussion about teaching and learning takes place, as well as daily staff meetings and formal monitoring and review. In addition, the school has established effective systems for monitoring the pupils' achievements and progress, and recognises this as an area for continued development. The school's excellent staff portal enables all

staff to be regularly informed about significant pupil matters, which further supports the pastoral care provided.

- 5.9 Staffing levels are excellent, and staff are well qualified. The school pays careful attention to the development of all staff. Through formal staff appraisal and an effective system of subject reviews, which includes the monitoring of teaching and learning and peer observation, the professional strengths and needs of staff are identified and inform school improvement and development.
- 5.10 Staff receive regular training in areas highlighted from their appraisals and in the necessary areas of safeguarding, welfare, health and safety, and show high levels of care and concern for pupils. A comprehensive staff handbook gives them useful guidance, and good induction arrangements ensure that new appointees are well informed of school routines and safeguarding arrangements. Comprehensive policies and procedures cover all aspects of school life; they are conscientiously implemented by staff, who are hard working and strongly committed to the pupils in their care. The enthusiasm and dedication of the staff ensure a sense of purpose and shared vision.
- 5.11 Systems for pastoral care and welfare, health and safety are carefully monitored. All appointments of staff and volunteers follow scrupulously principles of safer recruitment, and the necessary checks are suitably recorded in the central register and individual files.
- 5.12 In accordance with the school's aims, its relationship with parents is excellent and constructive. The school maintains many open and varied channels of communication, and actively encourages parents to liaise closely with teaching staff and to play a part in the education of their children.
- 5.13 Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, although few in number, indicate that parents are extremely satisfied with the provision for their children and with the education their children receive. A small number of parents expressed concerns that the school does not deal with bullying effectively and that they do not receive appropriate information about their children's progress. In discussion with pupils and observations of daily school life, inspectors found no evidence to support these views. Parents commented favourably on the high standards expected of pupils and the support given to them to achieve these. The school has a clear and appropriate complaints procedure. Parents' concerns are heard promptly and treated with care and consideration; as a result the vast majority can be dealt with swiftly and informally.
- 5.14 Information flows freely from the school to parents in a variety of ways. Regular newsletters, text messages and email allow for a full exchange of up-to-date and accurate information, while the prospectus and website are both helpful for parents of prospective pupils. The headmaster's newsletter is posted online for parents on a fortnightly basis and highlights events that have taken place, together with pupils' successes. Throughout the school, information about pupils' academic achievement and progress, and their personal development, is clearly set out in well-produced and detailed reports. Two written reports are sent out annually, with grade sheets every half term to ensure that parents are informed of their children's attainment and effort in all subjects. Reports present a clear picture of pupils' achievements and are supplemented by parents' evenings twice a year.
- 5.15 Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the life of the school. They are encouraged to participate in the learning experience of their children through helping

with homework, giving talks and demonstrations, attending assemblies, concerts, 'stay and play' sessions and charitable events, supporting community projects and charity days, running after-school clubs and accompanying trips with their children. There is an active parents' association which organises fund raising for the school. Recently, this has provided new resources for the newly positioned and refurbished library.

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 is outstanding in meeting the needs of all children, fully appreciating their individual differences. An excellent system of review and self-evaluation ensures realisation of the aim to create a warm, homely and friendly atmosphere, providing a safe, secure, caring, sharing and stimulating environment. The educational programmes provide interesting and challenging experiences for all, and give children many opportunities to express themselves clearly, confidently and with enjoyment. For example in a language lesson, excellent questioning by staff encouraged children to explore the meaning and sound of new words, and they were able to recap rules about listening. All children, including those with SEND, learn and develop extremely well through stimulating play and valuable first-hand experiences, with a wide variety of indoor and outdoor activities and an effective balance of adult-led and child-initiated tasks. The Nursery and Reception areas are stimulating, challenging and productive.
- 6.2 Regular analysis of data from assessments ensures continuity of teaching and informs next steps. Extra support is given to those with SEND, ensuring that all children are supported effectively and make rapid progress, and enabling them to become confident, creative learners whose emotional development is nurtured.
- 6.3 Excellent use is made of a book for links between home and school, enabling parents to share their views in writing with staff. This encourages parents to take an active role in their children's development and learning by sharing their skills and suggesting ideas for topic areas. The Nursery has introduced monthly 'stay and play' sessions to enable parents to spend time at the setting with their children, and information evenings and parents' workshops are provided regularly.

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

- 6.4 The provision for the children's well-being is outstanding. The use of key people promotes strong relationships, particularly for the very young children and those needing additional support, and staff serve as excellent role models. Risk assessments are frequently reviewed and fire procedures are practised regularly. As they grow older, children are taught how to manage risks and what to do to keep themselves safe. Staff promote welfare, health and safety extremely well and children are helped to understand the importance of healthy eating and exercise. All children co-operate well, enjoy their learning, and make choices and decisions. They are well prepared for a successful transition to the next stage of their learning. Children trust and respect their teachers and relate well to each other. They are provided with secure foundations for their future well-being in all aspects of their learning.

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

6.5 Leadership and management are outstanding. The governors' involvement is effective, demonstrating a clear vision and an understanding of high standards. Excellent arrangements ensure that all children are effectively safeguarded in a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment. Adults have a strong commitment to equality and diversity. Staff are well qualified and appropriately trained in the development of young children, child protection and health and safety. Policies and procedures necessary for the efficient management of the setting are regularly updated and implemented rigorously, and the capacity for sustained improvement is excellent. Staff regularly evaluate and monitor individual children's progress, and work together with parents to support children needing help with learning and development, involving external agencies when necessary. Parents expressed appreciation of their children's progress and the standard of their care. The setting has successfully implemented the recommendations from the previous inspection.

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

6.6 The quality and standards of provision are outstanding. All children learn and develop extremely well, making outstanding progress. Babies show that they feel safe and secure in the environment in their willingness to seek out opportunities for play independently and their eagerness to engage in new activities and enjoy new experiences. Nursery children express themselves clearly, and are able to follow audible instructions when playing on the computer. Reception children are able to investigate and identify the five senses and make books about their sensory experiences. They use phonics well to support their reading and writing of simple sentences and enjoy adding single digits. Children's work and interests are valued and are reflected in high quality, colourful displays around the setting.

6.7 The children's personal and emotional development is outstanding. From the youngest upwards, children are happy to share resources, take turns and organise themselves effectively, becoming more independent by the end of their Reception year.

6.8 The school has a strong commitment to continue to improve the EYFS provision. Children appreciate the secure environment, in which their welfare is suitably safeguarded. They relate well to adults and to each other. They feel safe, and respond to the setting with great enthusiasm and enjoyment.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

6.9 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.