



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**SWANBOURNE HOUSE SCHOOL**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Swanbourne House School

Full Name of School	<b>Swanbourne House School</b>			
DfE Number	<b>825/6022</b>			
Registered Charity Number	<b>310640</b>			
Address	<b>Swanbourne House School</b>			
	<b>Swanbourne</b>			
	<b>Milton Keynes</b>			
	<b>Buckinghamshire</b>			
	<b>MK17 0HZ</b>			
Telephone Number	<b>01296 720264</b>			
Fax Number	<b>01296 728089</b>			
Email Address	<b>ckelly@swanbourne.org</b>			
Heads	<b>Mr Stephen Goodhart and Mrs Julie Goodhart</b>			
Chairman of Governors	<b>Mr J Leggett</b>			
Age Range	<b>3 to 13</b>			
Total Number of Pupils	<b>383</b>			
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (214 boys; 169 girls)</b>			
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>73</b>	5-11:	<b>240</b>
			11-18:	<b>70</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>343</b>		
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>40</b>		
	Full:	<b>28</b>	Weekly:	<b>12</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Linda Anstee</b>			
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>			
Inspection dates	<b>07 May 2013 to 10 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 February 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.

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 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 Sara Wiggins	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Hilary Betty	Team Inspector (Former Senior Mistress, IAPS school)
Mrs Jennifer Burrett	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Mick Jonas	Team Inspector (Academic Deputy, IAPS school)
Mr Richard Yeates	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Rosalind Hayes	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Yvonne Parry	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>(a) Main findings</b>	3
<b>(b) Action points</b>	4
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	4
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	4
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>5</b>
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning	5
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	6
(c) The contribution of teaching	7
<b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>9</b>
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	9
(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care	10
(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	11
(d) The quality of boarding	11
<b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>14</b>
(a) The quality of governance	14
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	14

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

- 1.1 Swanbourne House is an independent day and boarding preparatory school for boys and girls from three to thirteen years of age. The school is a charitable trust and is administered by a board of governors. It has a Christian foundation and admits pupils of all faiths. The school was founded in 1920 with a roll of 43 boys and became co-educational in 1978. The school is set in 50 acres of parkland near to Milton Keynes. The pre-preparatory department is housed in a converted Tudor building in the school grounds. Home Farm, a day-care centre catering for children from three months to five years, was opened in April 2007. Swanbourne House has overall managerial responsibility for the centre but is not involved in its day-to-day running. It is registered separately and its provision is not included in this report. Since the last inspection a second all-weather surface has been laid, the library has been extended and the changing rooms refurbished. A new headmaster has been appointed to commence in September 2013.
- 1.2 The school aims to find and recognise individual talents, to provide a broad education and to stimulate a lifelong love of learning. It aims, through its academic and boarding structure, to foster positive relationships, to give Christian teaching and to offer a wide range of activities and so prepare pupils for their future lives.
- 1.3 The school has 383 pupils on the roll: 214 boys and 169 girls. In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) there are 29 part-time and 44 full-time children. In Years 1 to 6 there are 240 pupils and 70 pupils are in Years 7 and 8. The school is divided into two sections: the pre-preparatory department (Nursery, Reception to Year 2), and the preparatory school (Years 3 to 8). From Year 3, pupils may elect to full or weekly board, or on a 'flexi' basis, with 75 pupils being able to be accommodated. The extended day operated by the school reflects its boarding provision.
- 1.4 The ability profile of the school is above the national average, with a wide spread of abilities represented, although most pupils are of at least above average ability. The school draws pupils from diverse rural and urban backgrounds. A very small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Seventy-two pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 34 receive support in school. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Eight pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) with two pupils receiving additional support. Some pupils leave at the end of Year 6, to continue their education in the maintained sector or to go on to senior independent girls' schools. The majority of pupils transfer to independent day and boarding schools, both locally and in other parts of the country.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following tables.

***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting***

School	NC name
Nursery	Nursery
4s	Reception
5s	Year 1
6s	Year 2

***Pre-preparatory/Preparatory/Junior Department***

School	NC name
Transitional	Year 3
8s	Year 4
9s	Year 5
10s	Year 6
11s	Year 7
Top Year	Year 8

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

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

- 2.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent. Pupils achieve extremely well across the curriculum and in many areas reflecting the school's aim to find and recognise individual talents. Pupils think logically, reason carefully and become highly skilled in independent research. The quality of provision in the EYFS is excellent as a result of detailed educational programmes and the high expectations of caring staff. The outcomes for children are excellent. Pupils receive a high-quality curriculum that covers all the required aspects of learning and enables pupils of all ages to reach their full potential through acquiring appropriate knowledge and skills. Throughout the school pupils with SEND are extremely well supported. Excellent teaching with a rich variety of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities enhances learning resulting in challenging, enjoyable and interesting lessons. Assessment data is not always used in a focused and systematic way to stretch more able pupils and support further those with EAL.
- 2.2 Pupils have an extremely high standard of personal development by the time they leave the school and they are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. The pupils' self-awareness and spirituality are excellent; they are courteous, extremely well mannered and respectful of others. The policies and procedures for pastoral care are highly effective in supporting pupils. In the EYFS children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent. They willingly share and take turns, whilst showing genuine care and respect for each other. The arrangements for welfare, health and safety are good. Safeguarding overall is sound. Training in safeguarding is a priority for the school and all staff, including those in the EYFS and the designated child protection officers, are appropriately trained. The overall quality of boarding is good. The school is highly successful in providing a dynamic, supportive and caring environment which allows boarders to grow in confidence, independence and sensitivity to the needs of others. Boarding staff know the boarders well and boarders are complimentary about the care they receive.
- 2.3 Governance, leadership and management are good overall. Governors have a clear vision for the school, understanding the features that make it distinctive. However, statutory responsibilities have not always been fulfilled in the past in regard to safe recruitment practice, with some recruitment checks on a very small number of staff not being undertaken rigorously. The development team and senior managers share a common vision extremely well and pupils' excellent achievements result from the strong family ethos within the school. The recommendations of the last inspection have been effectively implemented. Imminent changes in leadership have resulted in management roles that continue to evolve. The school greatly values the strength of its partnership with parents. When concerns are raised, the school takes these seriously, keeps careful records and responds with due care.

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

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

- 2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:
- implement all appropriate safeguarding arrangements [Part 3, paragraph 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b) under Welfare, health and safety of pupils], and for the same reason National Minimum Standard 11 and the EYFS statutory requirement 3.4;
  - implement all recruitment checks on staff before they begin work [Part 4, paragraphs 19,2(a ),(e) and 3, under Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors], and for the same reason National Minimum Standard 14.1.
- 2.5 The school does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2011, as described above.

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

- 2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Use data and guidance systematically in order to stretch more able pupils and support further those with EAL.
  2. Use the evolving roles of management to establish consistency and clarity across policies and procedures through an effective system of monitoring.

### **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 Pupils achieve extremely well across the curriculum, showing high levels of knowledge and understanding and well-developed skills which reflect the school's aim to find and recognise individual talents. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, parents and pupils indicated that they were pleased with the progress that pupils make.
- 3.3 In the EYFS, outcomes for children are excellent. By the end of Reception, most children are familiar with numbers up to 30 and the more able recognize and order numbers to 100. Children in the Nursery accurately count the legs on caterpillars they make and confidently use computers to count and match. In Reception, children write simple sentences unaided using capital letters and full stops. They read confidently at an appropriate level with the more able reading at a level above their chronological age. Throughout the school pupils learn to make themselves heard when addressing an audience and they listen attentively. Older pupils write successfully in a wide range of genres and are inspired by their reading. Pupils' mathematical knowledge is excellent; they apply their understanding of calculations very effectively and use their prior knowledge and higher order thinking skills to solve algebraic problems. They understand geographical concepts such as how fossils are formed and are strongly aware of the world around them. Pupils use scientific skills highly effectively as they create circuits and make organic cosmetics. As they move up the school, pupils speak French with confidence, and through their study of classics develop excellent linguistic discipline. Pupils use computers extremely competently both for research and technical composition across a range of subjects.
- 3.4 Elite sports teams develop exceptional physical skills, and through the range of activities both individually and at team level the school has, in recent years, won a large number of local and regional competitions. Pupils participate keenly and excel in singing and in musical and dramatic performances, with many gaining high levels of success in playing a musical instrument and in LAMDA awards. Work in art and design and technology shows exceptional creativity and technique, whether pupils are designing, problem solving or drawing. Pupils think logically, reason carefully and become highly skilled in independent research.
- 3.5 Pupils are successful in gaining places and a number of scholarships to senior schools. They achieve highly in regional and national competitions such as the junior and primary mathematics challenge, recitation competitions, and in the Saatchi Gallery art prize for schools. They are encouraged to aim high in activities and as a result individuals have represented their county in a variety of sports including archery, cricket, gymnastics, hockey and rugby. The inclusive nature of the school ensures that pupils with SEND achieve highly in overcoming difficulties and succeeding in a wide range of activities, including the 'green curriculum' where produce is sown, tended and cooked in the school kitchens.
- 3.6 By the end of the EYFS the majority of children achieve or exceed the expected goals and children make substantial progress in relation to a wide range of starting points and capabilities. Throughout the school 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, the breadth of the curriculum, scrutiny of work and discussions with individual pupils confirms this judgement. This level of attainment, taken together with inspection evidence, shows that pupils, including the most able, make good progress. High-quality support for pupils who have SEND enables them to progress rapidly, for example in reading and writing and mathematics. Pupils with EAL make good progress, often as a result of the excellent support provided by their peers.

- 3.7 In the EYFS children, including those with SEND, enjoy their learning and are happy. Pupils have highly positive attitudes to learning and enjoy their studies. Older pupils discuss ideas enthusiastically, and are constantly engaged. Pupils are able to work independently, taking pleasure in finding information from a young age. They organise themselves efficiently and are highly co-operative when working as a group. They take full advantage of the opportunities the school provides, in the classroom, in the school grounds and in clubs, where participation is high.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 Pupils receive a high-quality curriculum that has been refined since the last inspection and strongly supports the school's aim to provide breadth and balance for each pupil. From the EYFS stage upwards the curriculum covers all the required aspects of learning, and enables pupils of all ages to reach their full potential through acquiring appropriate knowledge and skills. Throughout the school pupils with SEND are extremely well supported in the way that teachers plan and teach the programmes of study, taking cognisance of targets and strategies on the individual education plans. Provision for pupils with EAL is appropriate, aided by their inclusion in the English Speaking Board programme; however, support in the classroom is less well developed. The needs of those who are gifted and talented are recognised through a formal register and well supported through the extra-curricular programme, although on occasion this is not as evident within the classroom. In the EYFS the progress of children is carefully assessed and needs are identified quickly so that children with SEND and EAL are sensitively supported.
- 3.10 The curriculum meets the needs of all ages and abilities. Setting in English, mathematics, French and Latin enables older pupils to work at a pace and level appropriate to their abilities. Excellent timetable provision for English in the oldest and youngest years allows for the development of strong literacy skills that are encouraged across the curriculum. This provision is not consistent throughout the school. In Years 7 and 8, a particular emphasis is placed on Common Entrance and scholarship requirements. Excellent provision in the arts and practical subjects fosters pupils' accomplishments in creative and performance skills. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is well embedded across the curriculum, and the 'green curriculum' enhances pupils' awareness of and respect for their environment. In the EYFS the children's needs are extremely well met. High-quality planning and organisation and detailed educational programmes ensure that every child is suitably challenged by the learning experiences provided. Curriculum documentation across subjects is thorough with the best highlighting lesson objectives and meeting the differing needs of pupils. Information and communication technology (ICT) is well embedded in the curriculum and strongly supports pupils' research and creativity. A well-resourced library provides further support to the curriculum.

- 3.11 The curriculum is enhanced by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. The programme is extensive and offers pupils the chance to take part and try new challenges. An impressive range of trips and visits significantly enhances pupils' knowledge, interest and understanding. Residential visits are well established and include sports tours, a trip to a French chateau and expeditions to field study centres. The Year 8 leavers spend a week on Dartmoor as part of their extensive post-Common Entrance programme. A leadership and command course gives older pupils the opportunity to aspire to positions of responsibility for their final year in the school.
- 3.12 Links with the local and wider community are very strong, both enriching pupils' experiences and fostering their accomplishments. Pupils benefit from the tutelage of a local dance school and the visits of local community bodies such as the fire service, and the school contributes to the local community by permitting the use of its facilities to further sports development in the area. The pupils raise substantial amounts for charities, which extends their understanding of the world around them.

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

- 3.13 The quality of teaching is excellent.
- 3.14 High-quality teaching makes a significant contribution to the school's achievement of its aims. There has been improvement since the last inspection with a focus on assessment for learning strategies, the use of a rich variety of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities and the application of hardware and software to enhance learning. These and specialist expertise result in largely challenging, enjoyable and interesting lessons. Much teaching is based on excellent planning and organisation to support and challenge individuals within small teaching groups, and is developed and defined by a careful knowledge of pupils' attainment and needs and warm and genuine relationships. Less successful teaching observed did not always set the appropriate expectations or give the appropriate support for all individuals, including the most able and those with EAL. Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent and they set rigorous and challenging objectives and expectations, teaching in an engaging and informed way and enabling pupils to gain knowledge and achieve highly in skills and understanding. Teachers ensure that pupils of all abilities take pride in their work and that presentation matters to them. This is reflected in the excellent display work throughout the school. In the EYFS excellent teaching is rooted in a secure knowledge and understanding of the children and high expectations by the teachers enthuse, engage and motivate the children. An appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning, both indoors and outdoors, encourages independent learning, problem solving and exploration. The children have easy access to a wide range of resources of good quality, enabling independence, creativity and critical thinking to be developed successfully through self-initiated activities.
- 3.15 Teaching sets a pace commensurate with the ability of the pupils, managing time effectively. An independent approach to learning has enabled excitement and creativity, dialogue and increased reasoning and thinking, including opportunities to research. Teachers fully exploit the resources available. This is particularly evident in the use of the excellent wooded school grounds and the forest school's play area, which appeal to all pupils, as resources for exploration and play. It also supports the pupils' appreciation of practical science. Teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively together.

- 3.16 Effective assessment is evident from the knowledge that teachers have of their pupils' progress and the consistent, high-quality marking and oral feedback, an improvement since the last inspection. Target setting in books and self-assessment is inconsistent; the most effective sets clear targets for pupils' improvement and pupils say that they value this. Targets are also set in reports, which can result in a high number of targets for some pupils. A considerable number of methods to assess and track pupils' work through the school are in place, including standardised tests for all pupils, providing a comparison with a wider pupil population. Skills, aptitudes and abilities are further measured through school-devised examinations and tests and the results are carefully analysed, helping to decide changes in curricular planning. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses a small number of parents expressed concern about the support provided for the very able and the amount of homework provided. Inspectors saw a great deal of excellent teaching for the most able; however, teachers do not always use data and guidance in a focused and systematic way to stretch more able pupils and support further those with EAL. During interviews pupils reported that they felt that the homework set was appropriate, and inspectors concur.

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

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

- 4.1 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 The school is extremely successful in developing pupils' personal qualities, in line with its aims. In the EYFS children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent. They have well-developed social skills, relate well to their peers and adults and willingly share and take turns, whilst showing genuine care and respect for each other.
- 4.3 The spiritual development of pupils is excellent. Pupils reflect widely and develop an excellent understanding of spiritual matters which are woven through the curriculum. Christianity is embedded and embraced by the school community. Pupils participate joyfully in acts of corporate worship and share music and prayers with a profound sense of reverence. Pupils show excellent emotional maturity and self-awareness as, for example, they reflect on their confirmation and how the experience brought them closer to God, changing the way they looked at the world. Younger pupils, including those in the EYFS, develop an excellent understanding of the world around them as they investigate in the forest school. Pupils are confident and articulate and their levels of self-esteem are extremely high.
- 4.4 Pupils' moral awareness is excellent. Pupils have a very clear understanding of right and wrong. They appreciate the system of rewards, such as stars and stickers, which clearly motivates them, although in their responses to the questionnaire a minority of pupils stated that staff were not always consistent in its application, and inspectors agree. Pupils are aware of the need for sanctions and incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with promptly. Pupils have a strong awareness of ethical issues, such as the impact of climate change on different people around the world. They discuss moral issues with openness and interest, as, for example, when they considered whether the death penalty was morally permissible. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of environmental issues both in the school and the wider environment through the eco-council, the 'green curriculum' and the careful consideration of waste management.
- 4.5 The pupils' social development is excellent. Pupils are courteous, extremely well mannered and respectful of others and they greet visitors with warmth. Boarders and day pupils mix well and many make lasting friendships across year groups. Pupils gain social, political and economic awareness at appropriate stages through the well-planned PSHE curriculum. Pupils show real concern for others; they choose their own charities and generate fund-raising ideas, showing commitment and enthusiasm in the process. Individual efforts have included a cycle ride to Cardiff and back for the Joss Parkes Searchlight Charity, resulting in a Diana Award. In the pre-inspection questionnaire responses a small minority of pupils indicated that they have few opportunities to take on responsibility. Inspection evidence did not support this view. Diverse roles range from form captains to school council members, as well as a variety of volunteering tasks such as icing cakes for the Ascension Day party and helping at school events. Pupils at interviews felt strongly that younger pupils were encouraged to take responsibility for themselves first and foremost. Opportunities to take the lead increase further up the school culminating in the extremely effective leadership course, which prepares senior pupils for positions such as prefects, monitors and sports captains.

- 4.6 Pupils demonstrate excellent cultural awareness. They are open-minded and keen to understand and appreciate differences in cultures and faiths, as for example when they considered architecture in India. Pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures is enhanced by a range of trips such as visiting the Jewish Museum and immersing themselves in the culture of France. Pupils further develop their extensive cultural understanding through the International Education programme from which, for example, they learn about the work of a missionary working as an IT consultant translating the Bible into other languages.
- 4.7 Pupils have an extremely high standard of personal development by the time they leave the school and they are very well prepared for the next stage of their education, including those children in the EYFS.

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

- 4.8 The arrangements for pastoral care are excellent.
- 4.9 The policies and procedures for pastoral care are highly effective in supporting pupils, fulfilling the aims of the school. Staff know pupils extremely well and provide excellent support and guidance. There are highly positive relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves. A caring ethos is embedded throughout the school, contributing strongly to the family feel; expectations are high and the pupils and staff live up to them. Staff regularly share concerns at meetings and act swiftly to support pupils where necessary. In the EYFS individual children's needs are carefully met through the consistently calm, positive approach of each child's key person, assuring exemplary behaviour and fostering a warm, happy learning environment in which children feel safe and develop effectively.
- 4.10 Pupils enjoy a wealth of exercise and activity through which they keep fit, develop a healthy lifestyle and understand the importance of a balanced diet. In the EYFS children are taught the importance of exercise and hygiene routines. Lunch and snacks not only provide the children with quality nutrition, but also promote healthy eating, good manners and respectful conversation.
- 4.11 Careful records are kept to monitor the comprehensive policies and procedures that effectively guard against bullying. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of parents felt that the school did not deal with some incidents of bullying effectively. The inspection evidence does not substantiate this view. Pupils were positive in their questionnaire responses and during interviews and they feel that incidents of bullying are dealt with swiftly. Behaviour is excellent throughout the school and incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with promptly. Pupils know to whom they can turn and that help will be given if they experience a problem. Older pupils support and help look after younger ones.
- 4.12 The school has an effective plan to improve access for pupils with SEND. A small minority of pupils stated in responses to the questionnaire that the school did not always ask for their opinions or respond to them. However, this was not borne out by inspection evidence. The school council elects representatives and pupils bring forward agenda items; there is also an online questionnaire about pupils' attitudes and views. Changes are made where appropriate, for example girls now wear fleeces for games when cold and pupils are provided with additional snacks during the day.

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

- 4.13 The arrangements for welfare, health and safety are good.
- 4.14 Health and safety procedures are comprehensive and include provision for pupils who are ill and those who have SEND. Staff are appropriately trained in first aid and paediatric first aid. Risk assessments are carried out regularly for each area of the school including the EYFS, and for specific activities and visits out. The health and safety committee meets regularly and site checks are detailed. In the EYFS daily checks take place. Pupils and parents were highly positive in their questionnaire responses and in interviews about feeling safe within school. Safeguarding overall is sound. The child protection policy has not always had sufficient regard to official guidance, as recruitment procedures have not been sufficiently rigorous for a very small number of staff. Training in safeguarding is a priority for the school, and all staff, including those in the EYFS and the designated child protection officers, are appropriately trained. Relationships with external agencies are strong, advice is sought whenever appropriate and careful records maintained.
- 4.15 Appropriate measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards. Checks and tests on fire safety appliances are carried out and recorded. The school holds regular fire practices to ensure that all parts of the building can be evacuated quickly and safely. The admission and attendance registers are completed correctly and backed up as required.

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

- 4.16 The overall quality of boarding is good.
- 4.17 Outcomes for boarders are excellent. The school is highly successful in providing a dynamic, supportive and caring environment which allows boarders to grow in confidence, independence and sensitivity to the needs of others. Relationships between boarders are excellent, with friendships extending across year groups. High standards of behaviour are based on trust and an emphasis on personal responsibility. In discussion, boarders state that when sanctions are necessary they are applied appropriately and fairly. All boarders help with the running of the house whilst the selection of house prefects provides an opportunity for senior boarders to develop leadership skills. Boarders are able to contribute their views on the operation of boarding through the newly established boarders' council.
- 4.18 The quality of the boarding provision and care is excellent. Boarding staff know the boarders well and boarders are complimentary about the care they receive. The family atmosphere helps new pupils to settle in quickly; they are appreciative of the peer 'shadow system' and the support given by boarding staff. A boarding handbook written specifically for pupils provides a clear summary of important information. The medical centre provides excellent daytime care and systems are in place to ensure overnight medical care is effective. Individual care plans are well formulated and shared with appropriate staff. The doctor visits the school once a week and the school nurses make appointments for, and accompany boarders to, the dentist, optometrist and/or other specialist services when necessary. The range of activities available to boarders during the week is impressive. Sport features highly, but music, drama, art, chess, engineering club and the Christian Union are also on offer. At weekends, house staff arrange off-site trips and supervised activities are provided in the swimming pool and sports hall. The extensive grounds provide space for team sport, den building and wide games. Although, in

questionnaire responses, some boarders felt unhappy about the balance between free time and activities, in discussion boarders reported how much they enjoy the weekends in school.

- 4.19 Only a small number of boarders' parents completed the questionnaires; of these a minority expressed concern about the comfort of boarding accommodation, the school keeping their child safe, the experience of boarding helping with their child's progress and development, staff treating their child as an individual, ease of contact with the boarding staff and the organisation and management of boarding. The inspectors found no evidence to support these views. An on-going refurbishment programme is in place and inspectors found the rooms to be suitably furnished with many homely touches. All boarders have individual notice boards allowing them to personalise their space with posters and personal items. The laundry service is very efficient. Fire drills are carried out regularly and include occasional practices when most boarders are asleep. In interviews pupils expressed the view that their belongings were safe, with valuable items being locked away safely in the houseparents' study and inspectors concur that arrangements are satisfactory.
- 4.20 Individual dietary needs are catered for, including allergies; information about pupils with special requirements is posted in the kitchen and in the boarding houses. Water fountains are available throughout the school. A significant number of pupils' responses to the questionnaires express dissatisfaction with the food; interviews with boarders suggest that concern centres on a lack of variety at the evening meal and inspectors concur. Snacks and drinks are provided each evening before boarders go to bed. In discussion, boarders expressed their enjoyment of Sunday breakfast and Sunday lunch. In questionnaire responses, some boarders took the view that it was not easy to contact family and friends outside school. Inspection evidence did not support this view, as the boarding house has two private land lines and boarders may keep their own mobiles; although appropriate restrictions on use are in place.
- 4.21 The effectiveness of arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are good overall. Welfare procedures are managed highly effectively. School policies for countering bullying are clear. In interviews, boarders report that there is very little bullying, but that if it does occur it is dealt with quickly and effectively. Boarders state that there are a number of people they can talk to if they are worried and there is also an independent listener whom boarders can contact directly. Policies for the health and safety of boarders and risk assessments are detailed, understood and appropriately monitored. Supervision levels are good; house parents are complemented by assistant house parents and resident junior staff. Boarding tutors from the teaching staff help to strengthen the link between academic life and work and boarding. Recent modifications to the signing in and out procedure ensure that staff know the whereabouts of boarders in their charge at all times. Procedures for finding a missing boarder are clearly understood by boarding staff. Safeguarding overall is sound. All staff receive child protection training when they start at the school and training is updated regularly. However, the safeguarding policy has not always had sufficient regard to official guidance, as recruitment procedures have not been sufficiently rigorous for a very small number of staff.
- 4.22 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of boarding is good. The school's boarding principles and practices are clearly stated and made available to parents, staff and boarders, and are seen to work. Boarding practices are appropriately reviewed and house parents meet regularly with senior staff to discuss

future developments. Opportunities for appraisal are continuing to evolve as are systems to enable all boarding staff to share the most effective practice.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The range of expertise represented within the board of governors enables them to fulfil their responsibilities for educational standards, financial management, and investment in staff, premises and resources. Specific interests, such as for safeguarding, health and safety and the highly effective involvement in the EYFS, has enabled the school, including the EYFS, to be well equipped for its current needs and to plan effectively for the future. Governors new to the board have undertaken appropriate training to extend their expertise in governance.
- 5.3 Governors effectively discharge their responsibilities for health and safety. They are mindful of their statutory responsibilities and have undertaken an annual review of safeguarding policies and procedures. However, as identified in their own recent monitoring procedures, statutory responsibilities have not always been fulfilled with regard to safe recruitment practice. Recruitment procedures are in the process of being reviewed and updated.
- 5.4 Governors are kept informed about the school through regular reports from the leadership and presentations about aspects of the curriculum. Governors are committed to attending school functions and are well known by parents. Visits to the school to observe its day-to-day life are regular, contribute fully to the education of the pupils and are greatly valued by the school community. As a result the governing body provides highly effective oversight of the school, understanding the features that make it distinctive and ensuring that it meets the particular needs of its pupils, so fulfilling its aims.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is good.
- 5.6 The development team and senior managers share a common vision extremely well and pupils' excellent achievements result from the strong ethos within the school, ensuring that it meets its aims. Imminent changes in leadership have resulted in management roles that continue to evolve and have yet to be fully clarified. All the staff, both teaching and non-teaching, strongly support pupils' personal development and welfare. A strong sense of the family community of the school helps to fulfil its aim to stimulate a lifelong love of learning. Helpful policies and procedures have been produced for many aspects of school life and where fully implemented these contribute strongly to the excellent quality of pupils' academic and other achievements. Development planning is thorough and detailed and provides a keen awareness of the school's needs across a wide spectrum. Teaching and learning are carefully monitored through scrutiny of samples of pupils' work and the careful analysis of examination results. Lesson observations form part of the effective appraisal system, including in the EYFS. However, the practice of peer and departmental observation lacks consistency. Throughout the school, opportunities for professional development in pastoral and academic matters are well planned.

- 5.7 In the EYFS leadership and management are good overall and the highly effective and caring team of staff ensure that children are cared for extremely well within a safe environment and with effective use of all resources. Staff meet regularly to evaluate provision and plan priorities for improvement. Supervision of staff is thorough and appropriate links have been developed with outside agencies, including those who support children with SEND, ensuring equality of opportunity. The setting has the capacity to continue to improve.
- 5.8 Recommendations of the previous inspection have been addressed. The curriculum has been refined and marking is consistent.
- 5.9 The school has undertaken disclosure and barring checks on all staff; however, procedures throughout the school relating to a very small number of staff appointments have not always been sufficiently rigorous. Teaching and non-teaching staff throughout the school are appropriately trained in welfare, health and safety and safeguarding. Staff are deployed effectively with teaching assistants providing valuable support to meet the needs of pupils. The induction of new staff is thorough.
- 5.10 The school greatly values the strength of its partnership with parents and, through its open-door policy, establishes a careful bond between home and school. The majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire are particularly happy with the progress their children make at school, the breadth of the curriculum and the excellent range of extra-curricular activities, the high standards of behaviour and the care provided by the school. A very small number of parents were concerned about the information given about their child's progress, their opportunities for involvement in the life of the school, the management of the concerns they had and timely responses to their questions. Inspectors found arrangements to be appropriate.
- 5.11 Parents enjoy many opportunities to be involved in the work and progress of their children. Information about pupils' academic achievement and progress, and their personal development, is clearly set out in detailed reports, and, for older pupils, in their regular progress reports. Parents' evenings take place regularly and additionally parents may contact staff at any time. In the EYFS information is available for parents on noticeboards, passed on at handovers, and given at parents' evenings and through end-of-year reports. Parents' views are actively sought through discussion and surveys.
- 5.12 Parents have excellent opportunities to be involved in the various activities of the school from the EYFS onwards. Thorough information is provided to parents of pupils and prospective pupils. Parents receive helpful information about the school and their children's curriculum, a diary of events, newsletters and a yearly magazine. The school's website additionally provides information about the school, its activities and its policies. The parents' register is an active and supportive body, organising a range of social and fund-raising events, including balls and sporting and charity events and has raised an impressive amount of money.
- 5.13 The school has an appropriate complaints policy that is operated effectively. The inspection team found that, when concerns are raised, the school takes these seriously, keeps careful records and responds with due care.

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