



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
TALBOT HEATH SCHOOL**

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Talbot Heath School

Full Name of School	Talbot Heath School		
DfE Number	837/6001		
Registered Charity Number	306321		
Address	Talbot Heath School Rothesay Road Bournemouth Dorset BH4 9NJ		
Telephone Number	01202 761881		
Fax Number	01202 768155		
Email Address	office@talbotheath.org		
Headmistress	Mrs Angharad Holloway		
Chair of Governors	Mr Graham Exon		
Age Range	3 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	523		
Gender of Pupils	Girls		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	0	5-11: 164
	3-5 (EYFS):	34	11-18: 325
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	487	
Number of Boarders	Total:	36	
	Full:	31	Weekly: 5
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Karen Leahy		
EYFS Gender	Girls		
Inspection Dates	10 to 13 February 2015		

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 March 2011.

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) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations 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.

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

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

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

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

registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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

Inspectors

Mr Graham Sims	Reporting Inspector
Miss Naomi Bartholomew	Team Inspector (Head, GSA School)
Mrs Helen Chalmers	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS School)
Mrs Barbara Denning	Team Inspector (Former director of sixth form, GSA School)
Mr Christopher Holmes	Team Inspector (Former head of public relations, HMC School)
Ms Ruth Mercer	Team Inspector (Head, GSA School)
Mrs Anne Longton	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Wendy Bowring	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Talbot Heath is a day and boarding school for girls aged 3 to 18. The school aims to provide its pupils with the best possible education to fulfil their potential and acquire the knowledge and skills to equip them for life in a rapidly changing world. The school is founded on Christian principles and is designated as a Church of England school, but works with members of other major world faiths to foster understanding between pupils of all faiths. The school is a charitable trust, administered by a board of 14 governors.
- 1.2 There are 523 pupils, of whom 36 are boarders and 34 are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The school is divided into three sections. The Pre-Prep caters for children in the EYFS and pupils in Years 1 and 2. The Junior School caters for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Around half of those leaving Year 6 in the Junior School enter the Senior School which caters for pupils in Years 7 to 13. Over half of the pupils joining the Senior School in Year 7 come from a variety of other schools. The ability range of the pupils is wide and differs from one year group to the next, but overall is above the national average in all three sections. The school provides specialist learning support for 69 pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The school has 33 pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL); of these, 11 receive support for their English. The large majority of pupils are White British, whose parents are from professional and business backgrounds. The majority of boarders are from overseas, largely from Hong Kong, China and Russia.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, the school has ceased to admit boys into the Pre-Prep. It has undertaken a major refurbishment of the boarding house. The current headmistress was appointed in September 2010.
- 1.4 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.

Pre-preparatory Department

School	NC name
Kindergarten	Nursery
Reception	Reception
Year 1	Year 1
Year 2	Year 2

Junior Department

School	NC name
Year 3	Year 3
Year 4	Year 4
Year 5	Year 5
Year 6	Year 6

Senior School

School	NC name
Upper 3	Year 7
Lower 4	Year 8

Upper 4	Year 9
Lower 5	Year 10
Upper 5	Year 11
Lower 6	Year 12
Upper 6	Year 13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school is highly successful in meeting its aim to produce confident, competent and thoughtful individuals who are ready to make the most of their opportunities and contribute positively to the society in which they live. The pupils' achievements are excellent. The very large majority of children reach a good level of development by the end of the EYFS. By the end of Year 6, pupils' literacy skills are very well developed, although their mathematical skills are not as secure. In the senior school, pupils achieve high standards in GCSE and A-level examinations, and most pupils proceed to their first choice university. By the time they leave, pupils are highly articulate and have very good literacy, mathematical and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Pupils with SEND and EAL achieve well throughout the school because of the support they are given. The range of pupils' achievements in music, drama, sports and other activities is outstanding. The school provides a curriculum which is tailored extremely well to the needs of the pupils and an excellent range of extra-curricular activities for a school of its size. Throughout the school, the teaching is predominantly of good quality and there is much which is excellent. In a very small proportion of lessons from the EYFS through to the Senior School, the teaching does not give enough opportunity for pupils to develop as independent learners, restricting the progress of some pupils, particularly the most able. The school has responded well to an issue from the previous inspection to improve outdoor facilities for children in the EYFS. However, children do not yet have enough opportunities to use this facility to enhance their learning. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire are pleased with the progress their children are making and with the quality of teaching. Pupils, too, are pleased with the support they receive from their teachers.
- 2.2 The personal development of the pupils throughout the school is excellent and is supported by excellent pastoral care and good attention to their safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Arrangements for maintaining a safe working environment are managed extremely well, and the day-to-day procedures for pastoral care and managing pupils' welfare are extremely thorough. Throughout the school, the pupils have excellent attitudes to learning, participate well in lessons and are highly industrious. They are confident, self-aware and considerate. Behaviour throughout the school is excellent, as are relationships between pupils and staff and among the pupils themselves. The quality of the boarding provision and care is excellent. The school's response to issues raised in the previous inspection of boarding has been extremely thorough, and the boarding accommodation has been refurbished to a very high standard.
- 2.3 Good governance, leadership and management ensure that the school's aims are fulfilled. Governors have a very good insight into the school and provide good challenge and support for the school's leaders. Although all staff have been checked for their suitability to work with children, the governing body's and school leaders' monitoring of the school's compliance with regulatory requirements for the recruitment of staff has not been sufficiently rigorous. The governing body has suitable procedures for reviewing the school's policies and procedures, but some of the policies in use within the school are not the most current versions and there is unnecessary duplication. The school's leaders provide very clear direction for the school. They have not only implemented recommendations from previous inspections, but have made many improvements to the school in recent years,

particularly with regard to the curriculum, reporting procedures, support for pupils with SEND and the way different sections of the school work together. The most recent initiative to provide tablet computers for pupils and staff is beginning to have a noticeable impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Links with parents are excellent. The school provides parents with a wide range of information, and parents appreciate this.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and therefore it is required to:
- ensure that the required recruitment checks, concerning the barred list check, identity checks, qualifications, references and medical fitness, are made on all staff before they begin work at the school [Part 4, paragraphs 18.(2)(c), (d) and (f); 18.(3); 21.(3)(ii) and (vi) and 21.(4), under Suitability of staff; and, for the same reasons, Part 3, paragraphs 7.(a) and (b), and 8.(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety of pupils, National Minimum Standard 14.1, under Staff recruitment and checks on other adults, and National Minimum Standard 11, under Child Protection].
- 2.5 The school does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013, 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. Ensure that teaching always identifies and meets the needs of all pupils in the class, and provides suitable opportunities for independent learning.
 2. Provide more opportunities for children in the EYFS to make regular use of the outdoor environment in all areas of learning.
 3. Ensure that the progress in Maths in Years 3-6, is in line with that of English.
 4. Rationalise the school's policies and guidance for staff to avoid duplication and ensure staff have access only to the latest guidance.

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 school is highly successful in meeting its aim to offer pupils the opportunity to fulfil their potential and to acquire the knowledge and skills to equip them for life in a rapidly changing world. Parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire indicate that they are very pleased with the progress their children make.
- 3.3 In the EYFS, children of all ages and abilities make good progress in relation to their starting points. Children enjoy their learning, sustain concentration and work well independently and in pairs on set tasks. They enjoy exploring and active learning, but there are not enough opportunities for them to engage in investigation and problem-solving activities or to develop their creativity. Children in Nursery recognise their names, form letters and numbers correctly, and become engrossed when listening to stories. Children in Reception use their knowledge of the sounds that letters make when they attempt spellings, write short sentences and read simple texts. They form letters and numbers correctly, can identify the properties of simple two-dimensional shapes and work with numbers up to 20. Children of differing abilities are supported well by their teachers, the special educational needs department and, when necessary, external agencies. Although some children have EAL, parents have expressed a desire for them to be educated in English, and help is accessed if necessary to support them in their mother tongue. By the end of the EYFS, most children meet the expected levels of attainment in all seven areas of learning and many exceed them.
- 3.4 Throughout the school, the pupils demonstrate good subject knowledge, skills and understanding in most areas. They have excellent speaking and listening skills and are highly articulate. Their reading and writing skills are well above those expected nationally, and pupils demonstrate the ability to read literature critically. Pupils' mathematical skills and their ability to apply them are not always high enough in the Junior School, but are very well developed by the time they reach Year 11. Skills in ICT develop well; many pupils now have access to tablet computers throughout the day and use them with great confidence and skill. Sixth-form pupils' work for the Extended Project Qualification demonstrates highly developed ability to think both logically and creatively.
- 3.5 Pupils' achievements in their extra-curricular activities are excellent. Pupils gain awards in a wide range of subjects, such as mathematics, biology and chemistry, and many pupils achieve high standards in music, drama and dance examinations. Young chefs have taken part in a local fair trade event and young chef competition. In both the Junior and Senior Schools, pupils perform in choirs, musical ensembles, school productions and local music festivals. Many pupils have achieved notable success in a very wide range of regional and national sporting events. Junior pupils reached the IAPS netball finals. Pupils in Year 7 reached the national indoor rowing finals. The school has achieved remarkable success in tennis, being the first school ever to have held the Year 8, Year 10 and Under 19 national titles at the same time. Most pupils achieve places at their first-choice university when they leave.
- 3.6 Pupils' attainment in Years 1 to 6 cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be high in relation to national age-related expectations for English and appropriate for

mathematics. Standardised measures of progress indicate that pupils make progress that is good overall relative to the average for pupils of similar abilities. The inspection evidence, based on lesson observations, scrutiny of written work and interviews with pupils, confirms this judgement.

- 3.7 For the Senior School, the following analysis uses the national data for the years 2011 to 2013, being the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. Results at GCSE and A level have been well above the national average for girls in maintained schools. Well over half the passes at both GCSE and A level have been at grades A* or A. This level of attainment, and standardised measures of progress that are available, indicate that pupils make progress that is high in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Inspection evidence, as assessed in lesson observations, pupils' written work and interviews with a range of pupils, indicates that the progress of current pupils is at least good throughout the Senior School.
- 3.8 At all ages, pupils with SEND and those with EAL make at least good progress thanks to the early identification of their needs and the support they receive. Able pupils also make appropriate progress overall, helped by recent initiatives across the school to provide important opportunities for them to extend their learning.
- 3.9 Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. The pupils are enthusiastic, confident and supportive of each other's learning. Many show maturity and sensitivity in their work. They enjoy opportunities to investigate, to work collaboratively and to present their findings. Teachers and pupils work together to identify areas where pupils can improve. Younger pupils are given designated time to reflect and evaluate their learning, and senior pupils have thorough discussions of their targets with their form tutors. Pupils take pride in their work, and the culture of the school ensures that pupils' individual achievements are recognised and celebrated.

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 academic curriculum covers the required elements and meets the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities. In the Pre-Prep, pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are given great importance. All pupils in Years 1 to 6 study English and mathematics every day, and all pupils in Years 3 to 6 learn French. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 study a core of subjects for GCSE, including three sciences and one foreign language, and choose from a wide variety of optional subjects. In the sixth form, the curriculum largely reflects pupils' choices from a reasonable range of subject options. Throughout the school, creative, expressive and practical subjects play an important role in the curriculum.
- 3.12 In the EYFS, a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities engages children in imaginative play and active learning. Most areas are extremely well resourced with an extensive range of equipment from which children can select. This includes disabled, elderly and ethnic minority play figures that promote understanding of different groups of people, and trains, construction kits and cars as well as dolls, push chairs and 'home corner' role play. Although the outdoor environment has been improved since the previous inspection, there are not enough opportunities for the children to choose to further their learning outside, and there are limited opportunities for children to use ICT.

- 3.13 Able and gifted pupils benefit from tailor-made extension work to the curriculum. For example, pupils in Years 3 to 6 organised an Easter Fair from scratch last year, which involved advanced mathematical skills, running a budget and contacting suppliers themselves. Around half of pupils in Year 12 completed their Extended Project Qualification in 2014 with impressive results; an even greater proportion is participating this year. A dedicated, well-organised team ensures that pupils with SEND and EAL receive specialist support so they can take full advantage of the curriculum on offer; pupils were fulsome in their appreciation of this support. The team also provides helpful information about pupils' needs to class and subject teachers.
- 3.14 Comprehensive careers advice is given from Year 7 onwards, and pupils in Years 9, 11 and 13 have individual interviews with the careers co-ordinator. Pupils can attend a careers convention organised in October each year in collaboration with two other local schools. The comprehensive personal, social and religious education (PSRE) programme in Years 7 to 11 provides excellent guidance on issues such as the misuse of drugs and alcohol, different faiths and politics; coverage is non-partisan.
- 3.15 Teachers are able to cover topics in greater depth this year, thanks to significant changes to the school's timetable which came into effect last September. Longer lessons give more time for physical education (PE) and science practicals, for example, and pupils spend less time travelling around the school site.
- 3.16 The curriculum is extremely well supported by an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, which cater for all ages, abilities and needs, in accordance with the school's stated aims. Pupils' participation in a wide variety of sports is encouraged and leads to many pupils achieving regional and national success. Pupils can also choose from a wide variety of clubs and societies that meet regularly throughout the week, from a code-breaking club to the spectacular aerodance club. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award has grown immensely in popularity, with over 110 pupils currently taking part in the gold, silver and bronze awards.
- 3.17 Pupils learn much about the wider world through the many charitable activities which are a central part of school life. Volunteers work in local charity and fair trade shops, and boarders open their home to the elderly in the community for an annual tea party. Pupils enthusiastically show local primary schoolchildren the refurbished bunker which provides a dramatic and powerful reminder of life in the Second World War. Ten years ago, the school established partnership with a school in Rwanda, and has since raised money for projects such as mosquito nets for dormitories and the installation of a water tank, while a strong link exists between the school and a local hospice, which clearly has a profound impact on the pupils.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.18 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.19 The teaching makes an effective contribution to pupils' achievements and progress and supports the aims of the school well. The teachers know their pupils very well, and pupils are very appreciative of the amount of time that the teachers give to them to support them individually both in and out of lessons. In interviews, they spoke highly of the care and attention that they receive from their teachers in pursuing their personal academic goals.

- 3.20 In the EYFS, teaching challenges children well, especially with tasks planned for differing abilities in literacy and numeracy. However, a great deal of work is completed on repetitive worksheets or in published workbooks which limit opportunities for problem-solving, exploring and creativity. Good medium-term plans identify outcomes across all seven areas of learning. Children are sometimes involved in identifying the next steps in their learning in order to contribute to their on-going record of learning and development. The progress of individual children is assessed, but is not always formally recorded.
- 3.21 Throughout the school, the large majority of lessons are well planned and make use of carefully chosen and often stimulating resources. These provide enjoyment of learning for the conscientious and well-motivated pupils and contribute well to developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. When they are given the opportunity to do so, pupils enjoy working collaboratively, presenting their views coherently and listening respectfully to the opinions of others. Their behaviour shows a deep awareness of the importance of the need for mutual respect and understanding, very much in accordance with the school's aims.
- 3.22 Most teaching displays strong subject knowledge and, at its best, a detailed understanding of the specific needs of individual pupils, including the most able. This provides good opportunities for pupils to develop successfully as independent learners. When pupils are allowed to direct their own learning, they show strong aptitude for higher-order thinking, intellectual self-reliance and resourcefulness. Skilful questioning encourages pupils to take intellectual risks and to challenge themselves effectively.
- 3.23 Throughout the school, specialist support provided for pupils with SEND and EAL is excellent, and pupils speak highly of this. Much good practice exists in supporting these pupils in lessons across the curriculum, but this is not always done consistently well in a small proportion of cases. Teaching makes full provision for any pupil who has a statement of special educational needs; requirements are met effectively and sensitively by teachers.
- 3.24 In response to the previous inspection report, the school has improved opportunities for independent learning throughout all areas of the school. As a result, pupils are given greater opportunity to think for themselves, for example through the increased use of ICT. Teachers are also thinking up radical ways in which teaching and learning could be transformed in the future. However, in a very small proportion of lessons, the teaching is too prescriptive of pupils' activities, failing to take advantage of their potential for independent learning, and restricting the progress of some pupils, particularly the most able.
- 3.25 The school has recently reviewed its approach to marking and to the monitoring of pupils' progress. At present, marking does not consistently contain comments that show pupils how they might improve their work; the exemplary use of comments seen in some areas shows what is possible. A thorough tracking system enables staff to review pupils' progress at regular intervals. The use of standardised assessment tests is being developed to help this, but staff have yet to make full and effective use of this in their lesson planning.
- 3.26 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a number of pupils indicated concern about the quantity of homework set. In interviews, inspectors found that the school had listened to pupils' concerns and modified the amount of homework set;

pupils recognised that, although homework may occasionally still be time consuming, it can be of benefit to them.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 The high level of pupils' personal development throughout the school embodies the school's Christian principles and realises its aim to take active steps to produce young women who have an awareness of contemporary social, religious and moral issues, and who develop their own personal values. As a result, they are confident enough to question why things are as they are. By the time they leave school, they are extremely well prepared to make their mark and become young women who are able to go out into the world with confidence.
- 4.3 The personal, social and emotional development of children in the EYFS is excellent. The children are extremely well behaved at all times, and form excellent relationships with their peers and adults. They co-operate well, are very cheerful and enjoy everything that Talbot Heath offers them. They are extremely well prepared socially for their transitions within the EYFS and to Year 1.
- 4.4 The spiritual development of the pupils is excellent. The pupils are self-assured, articulate and emotionally mature for their age. They have a high level of mutual respect and tolerance for others. The pupils develop empathy for others in the wider community through their charity work and their understanding of local issues, such as the proposed development of a wind farm. They appreciate non-material aspects of life as they engage well in the many opportunities for worship and personal reflection. They are comfortable exploring their own faith and develop a good appreciation for other faiths, which is enhanced by visits, for example, to a local synagogue.
- 4.5 The pupils' moral development is outstanding. The pupils have extremely well developed personalities for their age. They understand clearly the difference between right and wrong, and show respect for good conduct and the over-arching nature of the law. The pupils' courtesy and behaviour is outstanding. The pupils appreciate that they are privileged to have the wealth of opportunities available to them. They have a strong sense of ethical matters, as demonstrated by pupils in Year 1 when discussing what effect humans have on the world. Senior school pupils' strong moral compass was clearly demonstrated in a lesson in Year 12 on euthanasia.
- 4.6 Pupils' social development is excellent. Relationships between pupils and staff and among the pupils themselves are respectful and caring. The pupils feel a personal responsibility for looking after each other's welfare, respecting differences. They relish being able to take on one of the many positions of responsibility, which range from the more traditional head girl to 'digital leads' and 'eco reps' and which they carry out with commitment and great enthusiasm. The pupils' sense of responsibility is such that they regularly volunteer and give freely of their time to help others. For example, pupils in Year 8 have volunteered to take on the responsibility of helping in the Pre-Prep to re-organise the library and encouraging young readers during library club. Pupils show a well-developed sense of responsibility for those who are less fortunate. They enjoy the challenge of being involved in charity work and fundraising, often through events which they themselves initiate in response to a local issue or need. The pupils, especially those in Years 12 and 13, enjoy taking responsibility for events and contribute very well to school life.

- 4.7 Pupils' cultural development is outstanding. The pupils appreciate the cultural diversity of the school community. They have developed an excellent understanding of their own and other cultures through their curricular studies and extra-curricular activities, such as the annual junior school multicultural day. The strong links with a school in Rwanda further enhance the pupils' cultural awareness. Pupils' develop a strong appreciation and respect for other faiths and traditions, for example from visitors to the school such as a local rabbi. As they move through the school, the pupils demonstrate the importance of combating discrimination.
- 4.8 The pupils' very good knowledge of public institutions and services in England is greatly enhanced by an innovative programme of global citizenship and leadership. They understand the democratic system well. For example, from Year 3 upwards pupils vote for their class form leaders, in Year 7 a project linked with ICT develops their understanding of the British political system in an even-handed way, and in Year 8 the 'Dragon's Den' project encourages entrepreneurship. Pupils play an active role in the development of the school through the Junior School council and the Senior School forum, and through school groups such as the Eco Club and the school Amnesty International group set up by pupils in the sixth form.

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

- 4.9 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.10 In all parts of the school, the school's aim to provide a safe, secure and happy environment for the students is met extremely well. A highly effective pastoral structure, centred around form teachers in Years 1 to 6 and form tutors in the senior school, ensures every pupil is known well and is carefully monitored, resulting in confident, considerate and caring pupils who feel secure in their environment. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all parents said their children feel safe and well looked after.
- 4.11 Pastoral care in the EYFS is excellent. Extremely strong bonds are forged between staff, children and their families. Each child has a key person who ensures that their needs are met. Parents are happy to seek help and advice from teachers and assistants alike, and recognise the high level of teamwork that exists among all the adults working in the setting. Staff provide excellent role models, demonstrating respect for everyone, patience and professionalism. Children feel extremely safe when they are at school and are comfortable with everyday routines. They are confident in seeking help from adults who demonstrate great patience, care and concern when dealing with their issues. Staff are always at hand to encourage children to work and play well together. Children also benefit from the support of older children; for example, pupils in Year 2 act as responsible playground monitors, and pupils in Year 6 are enthusiastic reading buddies to Reception children.
- 4.12 Relationships within the school are excellent. Pupils feel a real sense of belonging and know to whom they can turn if they have a problem. Pupils value the support of the school nurses and the school councillor. In the Junior School, pupils feel that their views are heard through the school council, which has managed to bring about some changes such as improved equipment for outdoor play. In the Senior School, the strong relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils themselves is evident in all areas of school life. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a minority of students stated that their opinions are not heard or acted upon. Inspectors found evidence to suggest that the strong pastoral care structure provides ample opportunity for pupils to voice their opinions. Pupils could also cite various changes

which have come about after voicing concerns, such as the availability of drinking fountains around the school and changes to catering and the school uniform.

- 4.13 The school is highly effective in promoting good behaviour, and ensuring that pupils of all ages feel safe and are guarded against harassment and bullying. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a minority of pupils felt that the scheme was not administered fairly, but the inspection team found this view was not supported by the pupils they interviewed. Rare cases of bullying are handled quickly and in accordance with the school's clear anti-bullying policy. Initiatives such as anti-bullying week and sixth-form assemblies enhance pupils' excellent understanding of the different types of bullying and how to deal with them.
- 4.14 Pupils' physical well-being is fostered extremely well through an extensive range of sports. More time has been allocated to PE this year as a result of the new two-week timetable. The new lunchtime arrangements provide pupils with nutritious meals and encourage healthy eating habits. Many pupils expressed their appreciation of the quality of the food and their enjoyment of the new choices.
- 4.15 Children in the EYFS develop a good understanding of the importance of physical exercise through PE and ballet lessons. Careful note is taken of dietary and medical needs and children are taught to understand what makes a healthy meal. Children enjoy the 'family service' arrangements for eating their nutritionally balanced meals, and drinking water is available throughout the day.
- 4.16 Facilities and support for pupils with SEND or EAL are excellent and are highly praised by parents and pupils. A suitable access plan keeps provision for these pupils under review. Particularly able pupils are nurtured through the many extension and enrichment activities provided by the school.

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

- 4.17 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.18 The school successfully fulfils its aim to provide a supportive, stimulating environment in which all pupils feel safe.
- 4.19 Pupils benefit from efficient welfare, health and safety arrangements that adhere to the most recent statutory guidance. The health and safety committee meets monthly to consider all aspects of welfare, health and safety, and minutes are regularly reviewed by the senior leadership team and governing body. Thorough arrangements are in place for child protection and safeguarding. However, the arrangements for checking the suitability of staff have not always been implemented rigorously within the appropriate time frame. Excellent teamwork in monitoring safeguarding issues on a day-to-day basis is a strength of the provision, and is underpinned by strong links with local agencies. Staff receive regular training in safeguarding matters. Pupils and parents are advised on measures to promote internet safety at home and at school.
- 4.20 In the EYFS, staff provide excellent role models, demonstrating respect for everyone, patience and professionalism. Staff are fully aware of policies and procedures to ensure each child is safeguarded, and day-to-day procedures are followed thoroughly. Staff follow a rigorous induction schedule which includes safeguarding training. Regular updates in child protection procedures and other aspects of health and safety such as food handling and fire warden training ensure the safety and security of the children are always uppermost in the minds of staff.

Parents have total confidence in the school's ability to safeguard their children at all times.

- 4.21 The necessary arrangements are taken to reduce risks from fire and other hazards. Staff and pupils are aware of fire exits and routes, and these are clearly displayed. Fire drills take place at least termly, and pupils understand and follow sensible protocols as they move safely around the school. Risk assessments covering all areas of the large school campus are reviewed annually, and those pertaining to off-site activities, such as school trips, are reviewed as necessary.
- 4.22 The school provides an excellent level of medical care. Sick or injured children are cared for extremely well by qualified nursing staff within a dedicated, well-equipped sick room and medical centre. Senior staff monitor records to identify patterns and trends and to implement remedial strategies where necessary. Excellent individual plans are implemented to support the needs of pupils with SEND. Many staff across the school have first-aid training, including paediatric first-aid training for those involved in caring for younger pupils.
- 4.23 Admission and attendance registers are suitably maintained and stored appropriately.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.24 The quality of boarding is good.
- 4.25 The outcomes for boarding are good. The broad experience offered to boarders at Talbot Heath encourages them to be independent, thoughtful and confident. The large majority of boarders enjoy their boarding experience. Communal eating arrangements and the opportunity for all boarders to participate in trips and activities encourage positive friendships across different year and cultural groups; the school seeks to ensure that boarders from different cultural backgrounds integrate well. Boarders show a good level of independence. They say that staff listen to their views and that they are able to make positive contributions regarding the organisation of the house at the regular house meetings. They feel able to discuss any emerging issues informally with the boarding staff. The two heads of house act as good role models and provide friendly support for the younger boarders in particular. A few boarders attend activities, such as a dance club and orchestra, outside of the school, so encouraging links with the local community.
- 4.26 The quality of the boarding provision and care is excellent. New boarders are supported initially through a 'buddy' system to introduce them to the boarding routine and other members of the house. Boarders are aware that they have the opportunity to contact either a chaplain or the independent listener should they require support from someone outside the boarding house. Details of helplines and the Children's Commissioner are posted in houses.
- 4.27 The care for boarders who are ill, either from the nurse-led health centre based in the main school or by the appropriately first-aid-trained boarding staff, is excellent, reflecting clear policies and procedures. An effective overnight call system allows the boarders to contact the night-duty staff. Arrangements for administering medicines meet requirements. Boarders are able to access external specialist services if required.
- 4.28 Boarders feel that the standard of food is much improved since the previous inspection, although responses to the boarders' questionnaire indicate that a

- minority would still prefer more choice at the evening meal over the weekend. Inspectors found that catering staff are sensitive to boarders' needs, seeking their views on what they would like, as well as meeting individuals' dietary requirements.
- 4.29 The housemistress provides secure storage of valuables and a pocket money system, in addition to the boarders having personal lockable spaces in their rooms. The boarders' handbook explains how to make a complaint, should they feel this is necessary.
- 4.30 The boarding house allows the boarders to relax in a choice of comfortable communal TV lounges or quiet areas, and the sixth formers have their own lounge. If the boarders wish to be more active, they have access to table tennis and exercise machines in a large activity room in the boarding house. Following a supervised prep session, free time and supper, an evening activity is often offered. During the week of the inspection, for example, a baking option was offered to the boarders. In the summer and autumn months, the large swimming pool is available to the boarders and, more recently, kick-boxing sessions have been offered on a weekly basis.
- 4.31 The recently refurbished boarding house offers an exceptionally high standard of accommodation. Communal study areas are provided for the younger boarders, while the older pupils usually prefer to use the facilities provided in their rooms. Dormitories and bedrooms are appropriately furnished and cosy. The bed linen is changed at regular intervals by the boarders themselves. If boarders wish to personalise their own dormitory or room space, they are encouraged to do so. Fire safety is of a high standard and reflected in the accurately maintained records of regular fire drills, equipment checks and staff training.
- 4.32 The effectiveness of arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are good. Boarding staff and school leaders have responded very well to the shortcomings identified in the school's previous boarding inspection report. As a result, the school now meets all standards except for those relating to safer recruitment of staff, where the requisite checks have not always been carried out in a timely manner. The boarding facilities are suitably secure. Any surveillance security equipment is used appropriately. In their questionnaire replies, boarders reported that it could be difficult to maintain contact with home. Inspectors found that internet connectivity was slow, although contact by landline and mobile telephones is good. There are good arrangements to promote good behaviour. Boarders say that they feel safe and well supported and that bullying is not a problem. The school holds monthly health and safety meetings, at which immediate concerns and longer-term plans for the boarding areas are discussed.
- 4.33 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the boarding provision is good. There are efficient systems to ensure effective communication between the boarding, pastoral and teaching staff. All staff have received appropriate training, and support is provided as necessary by senior members of the boarding team. Leaders ensure that the school's policies and procedures for boarding are carried out in practice and that they meet the needs of the boarders. They ensure that adequate staffing levels are maintained, and that there is a suitable induction process. The performance of the staff is monitored through an annual appraisal scheme. The boarding staff are encouraged to access additional training to enhance their skills and experience. Documentation and records are maintained to a high standard.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 Governors take a keen interest in all aspects of school life. Their involvement in the EYFS is effective. A link governor visits regularly to meet with staff and the children. Reports on early years issues, including an analysis of the EYFS Profile results and the development plan, are discussed at governors' meetings. Other governors attend special events that involve early years children.
- 5.3 Governors have a good knowledge and oversight of the school. They visit regularly, are well known to the staff, and offer support and the benefit of their expertise in many different ways. Individual governors take on specific responsibilities for overseeing areas or aspects of the school and have formal links with senior leaders, with whom they have regular meetings, as well as receiving formal reports.
- 5.4 In most respects, the governing body exercises its monitoring role efficiently and effectively, provides support and challenge where needed, and ensures that the school is fulfilling its stated aims. The governing body maintains very careful oversight of the school's finances and has a viable long-term, forward-looking financial plan. As a result, the school is well maintained, and there is a strategic plan for the maintenance and refurbishment of all areas of the school. The governing body ensures that the school has a sufficient number of appropriately qualified staff and a good range of educational resources.
- 5.5 The governing body's response to the findings of a previous report on the quality of boarding has been excellent and has led to a marked improvement in the quality of care for boarders who now enjoy facilities which have been refurbished to an excellent standard. The governing body carries out an annual review of safeguarding policy and procedures, but this has lacked rigour, since required recruitment procedures have not been followed. In other respects, all statutory requirements are met.

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

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is good.
- 5.7 Leadership and management ensure that pupils leave the school as confident, competent and thoughtful individuals, in line with the school's aims. Leadership and management in the EYFS are good, maintaining a good quality of education since the previous inspection. Leaders ensure that comprehensive evidence of children's development is gathered, and that there is an appropriate system to track and record children's developmental progress through the EYFS. However, the system is not yet fully effective in recording and evaluating how well children learn, or in planning that effective learning is guaranteed. Staff report to parents on children's progress in the seven areas of learning and on their performance in the EYFS Profile at the end of the EYFS.

- 5.8 The reflective culture in the EYFS enables all staff to contribute to setting realistic targets, and advice from the local authority is very much borne in mind. An annual development plan identifies suitable targets, and progress towards these is regularly reviewed. Staff development arrangements are appropriate; all staff are encouraged to attend external courses as well as school-based training. Suitable formal arrangements for the supervision of staff have recently been put into place. Leaders ensure that children are able to learn in a safe and stimulating environment. Partnership with parents is extremely strong and support from external agencies such as the speech therapist is readily accessible when needed.
- 5.9 Throughout the school, leaders provide clear guidance for staff through policies and procedures, but have recognised that the volume of written guidance has become overwhelming and have started the process of rationalising this information. It is not always clear where the most up-to-date versions of policies are to be found.
- 5.10 Leaders give clear educational direction for the school. They have responded well to the recommendations of the previous inspections, taking appropriate action in almost all respects. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and identifies appropriate priorities for development. Leaders are highly reflective, constantly reviewing the school's practice.
- 5.11 Managers have been successful in securing and retaining a body of well-qualified and highly committed staff who are well equipped to meet the needs of the pupils. Staff are extremely supportive of each other, and newly qualified and trainee teachers say there is always someone to whom they can turn for support. New appraisal arrangements have proved successful in identifying strengths and weaknesses within teaching and thus the priorities for staff development. The training which staff receive, either at induction or through the year, emphasises the importance of safeguarding and the welfare, health and safety of the pupils, and ensures the highest standards of care and concern for each individual pupil. However, the procedures for the recruiting and vetting of new staff have not always been carried out within the specified time frame.
- 5.12 Links with parents are excellent. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and written comments indicate that parents have no major concerns about the school and that they are extremely pleased with the all-round education provided for their children, the opportunities they have to be involved in their children's learning and the quality of communication with the school.
- 5.13 Partnership with parents is a real strength in the EYFS. Frequent opportunities to keep abreast of their children's progress are provided through daily feedback and the well-used home-school link book. Regular opportunities to visit the classroom to share their children's learning records are greatly valued. Useful information on each child is collected on entry, for example, through the 'Getting to Know You' booklet. Parents appreciate the opportunities to learn how they can help their children, for example, through the reading workshop and leaflets on reading, writing and numeracy.
- 5.14 Communication between the school and parents is strong. The school aims to maintain close links with all parents directly and by responding promptly to any queries via the telephone, e-mail, texting or a meeting with a member of staff. Any concerns are handled with care and in accordance with the school's published procedures. Parents say that they have excellent opportunities to become involved in the work and life of the school. They can access a wide range of information

about opportunities and activities via the parent portal on the school's intranet. Parents visit the school for social events, such as the forthcoming linguists dinner, fundraising activities, annual parents' evenings and regular e-safety information sessions. Parents of current or prospective pupils are provided with all required information. Newsletters provide detailed information about what is happening. Reports to parents are clear and useful, giving detailed information about their children's work and progress.

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