



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**KITEBROOK HOUSE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Kitebrook House

Full Name of School	<b>Kitebrook House</b>		
DfE Number	<b>931/6118</b>		
Address	<b>Kitebrook House Little Compton Moreton-in-Marsh Gloucestershire GL56 0RP</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01608 674350</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01608 674887</b>		
Email Address	<b>head@kitebrookhouse.com</b>		
Headmistress	<b>Ms Pippa Quarrell</b>		
Chair of Trustees	<b>Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher</b>		
Age Range	<b>3 to 13</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>139</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (68 boys; 71 girls;)</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	5-11:	<b>83</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	11-18:	<b>13</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>113</b>	
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>26</b>	
	Flexible:	21	Weekly: <b>5</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Chrissy Reeves</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection dates	<b>22/01/2013 to 25/01/2013</b>		

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous inspection was conducted by Ofsted in February 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) (England) Regulations 2010. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the

beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'satisfactory' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the principal of the trust, 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 Diane Gardiner

Mrs Annabelle Hancock

Mr Alexander McCullough

Mrs Diane Martin

Mrs Sally Gray

Reporting Inspector

Assistant Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Head ISA School)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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

- 1.1 Kitebrook House is an independent co-educational day and boarding school for pupils between the ages of three and thirteen. It was founded in 1955 as a proprietorial boarding school for girls in Somerset and moved to its present site near Moreton-in-Marsh in 1959. In 2007 it became a member of the Cothill Educational Trust which administers five other similar schools, and field study centre in the United Kingdom, and one school in France. Together with others in the trust, the school is governed by a board of twelve trustees. The schools share human resources, bursary and compliance services. The school is housed in two substantial Cotswold houses a mile apart; Hillside accommodates the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 8 are housed at Kitebrook House. Girls and boys have the opportunity to board on a weekly or more flexible basis.
- 1.2 Since accreditation a significant building programme has provided the school with a number of new facilities including learning spaces for art, science and information and communication technology (ICT). In addition to this a new classroom block has provided extra space for teaching of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), three extra classrooms and an adaptable space for drama and other events. The library has also been completely re-furnished.
- 1.3 The school aims to educate pupils in a caring, supportive, family-based environment by celebrating the values and innocence of a traditional childhood. It aims to place academic matters at the heart of school life and to develop personal qualities, such as respect for others, independence and individuality to enable pupils to develop into rounded and energetic people and progress into the senior school of their choice.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection, 139 pupils were on roll, 71 girls and 68 boys. There were 43 children in the EYFS, 83 pupils in Years 1 to 6 and 13 pupils in Years 7 to 8. There were 26 boarders, either weekly or on a flexible basis. Pupils come mainly from local professional families. The school has identified 26 pupils as requiring some degree of support for SEND. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Currently, there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language.
- 1.5 The school provides for a wide range of ability. The average ability of the pupils is above the national average.

- 1.6 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following tables.

***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting***

School	NC name
Acorns	Nursery
Oaks	Reception

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

School	NC name
Year 1	Year 1
Year 2	Year 2
Lower 3	Year 3
Upper 3	Year 4
4s	Year 5
5s	Year 6
6s	Year 7
U6s	Year 8



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

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

- 2.1 Kitebrook House successfully fulfils its aim to educate children in a caring, supportive, family-based environment and instil confidence and independence. Pupils of all ages, whether they are boarders or day pupils are well cared for, enjoy the opportunities on offer to them and make good progress. Teaching is good but is not consistent in its challenge across all subject areas or sections of the school, which limits progress, particularly that of more able pupils. Excellent provision for the creative arts, together with a wide range of visiting speakers and trips enhances and broadens the good quality curriculum to support the pupils' learning and development. As a result achievement is good, enabling almost all pupils to secure places at the secondary school of their first choice. The pupils' support for each other and positive attitude to learning also supports the good level of progress made across the school.
- 2.2 Pastoral care is excellent. Pupils of all ages feel safe and secure which enables them to learn effectively and develop high levels of inter-personal skills. Boarding pupils thrive and enjoy a very positive experience. The warmth of the relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils is instrumental in helping the pupils develop their confidence and sense of self-worth and is a particular strength of the school. By the time the pupils leave the school they are articulate, mature and well prepared for the next stage of their education and life beyond. The arrangements for welfare, health and safety are good; however, attendance registers have not been accurately maintained as required.
- 2.3 The good leadership and management, the support of the trust and a committed group of staff ensure that the individual ethos and aims of the school are maintained. Results of the parent questionnaires show that the majority of parents are happy with the high standard of pastoral care and education their children receive. A number of parents expressed concern about the information they receive about their child's progress, progress in general, behaviour, the way that any cases of bullying were handled and how much they were able to be involved in events and aspects of the work of the school. Inspectors found no evidence to support these views. A few parents felt that the more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged, a view which inspection evidence supports. The senior leadership have put in place a number of new procedures for the monitoring of teaching and learning and on-going assessment but these are not yet fully developed. The school lacks an effective plan for development except in the EYFS, and senior leaders have limited time in which to implement their plans for the school's future. Governance is sound but most of the trustees have limited insight into how the school works on a day-to-day basis. They have not carried out a thorough annual review of the school's safeguarding policy and arrangements.
- 2.4 The school has made good progress in responding to the recommendations from the previous report and has now met all of the regulatory requirements that were mentioned at that time.

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

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

- 2.5 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:
- ensure that the board of trustees undertakes its responsibility to thoroughly review the school's child protection policy and arrangements annually [Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8, under Welfare, health and safety; and, for the same reason, National Minimum Standard 11, under Child protection];
  - ensure that attendance registers for day pupils are completed accurately [Part 3, paragraph 17, under Welfare, health and safety].
- 2.6 The school does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2011, and therefore it must:
- ensure that boarders have an opportunity to contribute their views on the operation of boarding provision [NMS 17 under Securing Boarders Views].

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

- 2.7 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that senior managers have sufficient time, and are supported by suitable structures, to enable them to monitor and develop the school's provision effectively.
  2. Ensure that provision for the more able throughout the school is sufficiently challenging to extend their learning.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is good.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated and the school is successful in fulfilling its principle aim of bringing out the best in each individual. All age groups, including the EYFS, pupils gain a strong grounding in knowledge, understanding and skills. They are articulate and develop good skills in reading and writing for different audiences. Many have highly developed mathematical skills which they apply well across the curriculum. Where they are sufficiently challenged the pupils' independent thinking is well extended, but this is not consistent in all subject areas. Most pupils have competent ICT skills and use these creatively to present their original work and for research when given the opportunity. Those who find this skill more difficult are given a good level of support. In the EYFS children show competence with the computer mouse, use the interactive whiteboard to self-register and use a number of programs with confidence. At all stages, pupils achieve high standards in relation to the aesthetic and physical areas of the curriculum. They develop their ideas thoughtfully as in their presentations in "Prayers", where their listening skills are shown to be very well developed, and in the shades of blue paintings in the style of John Miller in the EYFS. Artwork of high quality is displayed in the art room and on the walls of the public areas of both sections of the school; this is a strength of the school.
- 3.3 The pupils' achievements are notable in a wide range of accomplishments. Pupils are successful in entry examinations to senior schools, on occasion winning scholarships. Many achieve well in external music examinations and all the older pupils take part to a high standard in a nationally accredited public speaking assessment. Drama plays an important role within the school with every child performing in a play each year. In a wide range of sports, pupils are successful in matches against local schools and in local tournaments.
- 3.4 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests but, on the evidence available from their work, their performance in lessons, curriculum interviews and standardised tests, it is judged to be good in relation to national age-related expectations. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils make consistently good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. Pupils with SEND make good progress in all sections of the school including the EYFS, as a result of attending extra lessons carefully timetabled in order to ensure they can access the rest of the curriculum or by being well supported in class. In the EYFS, by the end of Reception, most children are achieving the Early Learning Goals; they can write simple sentences, work with shapes and use numbers to 20 confidently. The most able pupils make good progress when the curriculum provides sufficient challenge.
- 3.5 The pupils' successful achievement is supported by their positive attitudes to learning, and the happy and constructive relationships they enjoy between themselves and with staff. They are attentive and speak of their enjoyment of their learning, although in lessons where challenge is less effective, levels of behaviour deteriorate. In groups or individually, pupils are well motivated, apply good levels of concentration and develop effective organisational skills through the use of planners and homework diaries.

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

- 3.6 The quality of the curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.7 The school provides a broad curriculum offering a range of opportunities for pupils of all ages and abilities in accordance with the school aims. The school provides all National Curriculum subjects with the addition of French and Latin. The EYFS provides a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning opportunities in a caring, supportive environment. Good planning and monitoring of the curriculum ensures that standards are maintained and improvement is continuous. Staff regularly assess the children's progress to plan the next steps for each child's learning, including those with SEND, but provision for more able children is less well developed.
- 3.8 Provision for more able pupils is effective in several subjects, but not consistently so across all subject areas or sections of the school, in particular in Years 1 and 2. Since accreditation, provision for pupils with SEND has been developed and extended. Individual teaching plans are provided for these pupils and they benefit from specialist individual support or in-class support from teaching assistants. Specialist teaching in some subjects such as music, speech, French, physical education (PE) and games allows greater curriculum depth. Creative, expressive and practical subjects have a prominent place in the curriculum and provision for these is a strength of the school. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is effectively integrated into the curriculum and covers a suitable range of topics. The curriculum supports the achievement of success in the examinations for transfer at eleven and thirteen well.
- 3.9 Since accreditation, new accommodation and provision has improved the integration of ICT into the curriculum and enabled a broader range of activities for pupils, for example the use of animation.
- 3.10 Curricular documentation is thorough and supports teaching well, ensuring continuity of progress across the school. The school has begun to develop cross-curricular links, effectively promoting a greater understanding of particular curriculum areas such as the study of World War 2 supported through work in mathematics, history, art and ICT.
- 3.11 An excellent range of visitors to the school and visits outside are carefully planned to enhance the curriculum. Visitors to the school have included medal-winning Olympic athletes and well known children's authors. Recently there have been many day visits, using the wide range of theatre, literary festivals and museums in the local area. Residential trips include a week-long science course at another of the centres belonging to the trust. Use of the trust schools in France is a positive feature of the school. Year 5 pupils visit for a week and Year 7 experience a full term, benefitting from immersion in the French language and culture for an extended period. There are also good links with the local community; the school carol service takes place in a local church every year and support for local charities is a regular undertaking. These activities support the curriculum extremely well providing pupils with a strong awareness of local and national events and a broader understanding of life in the wider community. This is a strong feature of the school's provision.
- 3.12 The range of extra-curricular activities available is good and plays a useful part in the pupils' personal and social development. Pupils have many opportunities to take part in activities of various kinds and a high proportion enjoys individual peripatetic

music lessons. The pupils particularly enjoy the wide variety of sporting opportunities available.

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

- 3.13 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.14 Throughout the school, including in the EYFS, teaching is effective in providing a secure foundation for pupils to consolidate their learning, acquire new knowledge and understanding, make good progress and develop their skills. Most teachers have high standards but where expectations of the pupils are lower, progress is less rapid.
- 3.15 The teaching is effective in capturing the pupils' interest in their work and most teaching secures good progress. In the EYFS staff provide planned, purposeful activities across all the educational programmes, so that children are able to extend their learning effectively. A variety of indoor and outdoor activities promote their enthusiasm to investigate and explore, such as finding out about the properties of snow and ice in ice pictures and snow-castle building at the time of the inspection. Good subject knowledge is an important factor in setting work of a suitable challenge. In most sections of the school, the most successful teaching is characterised by meticulous planning, excellent time management and thoughtfully devised learning tasks, which built effectively on the pupils' prior knowledge, skills and understanding. In such teaching the pace is brisk, the teacher's enthusiasm is infectious and the pupils' engagement and enjoyment are clear. However, in a significant number of lessons the pre-dominance of a teacher-led approach results in limited stimulation and a lack of additional challenge for more able pupils.
- 3.16 The school is well resourced but teaching employs resources with varying degrees of imagination to support the pupils' learning. In the most successful teaching resources, including ICT, promote good or excellent progress by pupils of all abilities; however in some teaching opportunities to enable more rapid progress through use of ICT are missed. Relationships between teachers and pupils are extremely positive; they are founded on mutual respect. Pupils are confident to ask for help, safe in the knowledge that they will receive it. In most lessons observed, the contribution of all pupils was valued and encouraged.
- 3.17 The new library, re-catalogued in September 2012, is spacious and contains a good selection of books; some use is made of the resource for research purposes but this is not yet fully developed. New library software has been installed and pupils enjoy borrowing books.
- 3.17 Pupils are involved in their own learning through target setting and encouragement to focus on lessons through the provision of explicit learning objectives. The school marking system provides very useful feedback to pupils and this information feeds into thoughtfully devised pupil progress report cards; however this system is not yet applied consistently across all subject areas, or at different stages in the school. In the EYFS staff regularly assess the children's progress to plan the next steps for each child's learning, including those with SEND. From Year 3 upwards, a weekly 'group points' reward system provides teachers and senior staff with a clear picture of those pupils who are making strong progress and those who require additional support. The school has begun to make use of standardised data to augment its understanding of the pupils' ability, achievements and progress. The use made of

such data to inform planning and accelerate pupil progress is in its infancy and not yet fully implemented across the school.

## **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 highly successful in developing the pupils' personal qualities, such as respect for others, independence and individuality in line with its aims.
- 4.3 Pupils have excellent spiritual awareness and have opportunities throughout the school, including in PSHE lessons for older pupils, to develop a spiritual understanding. It is enriched by their regular participation in the well-taught and often inspirational creative arts provision which results in a strong awareness of the effect that art and music has on emotional well-being. During "Prayers" for older pupils, a prayers table helps them to reflect upon the non-material aspects of life and improve their ability to present their ideas to an audience and share different opinions. This is further enhanced for all the pupils by their enjoyment of the natural beauty of the school's setting. At Hillside, the giving of commendation certificates provides opportunities for all pupils to have their work acknowledged so developing their sense of self-worth. The pupils' understanding of world religions is developed successfully through religious education lessons and visits such as that to a synagogue and a mosque in Oxford.
- 4.4 The pupil's moral development is excellent. They have a clear sense of what is right and wrong from an early age. Older pupils showed clear understanding in discussion of the need for rules and respect for a code of conduct. They have a strong understanding that people will have different views and acknowledge their worth, as seen in a school assembly where different ideas were shared and considered.
- 4.5 The strong relationships seen throughout the school are a result of the pupils' excellent social development in a caring community. In the EYFS children are happy and confident to talk and play with each other. They demonstrate exemplary levels of behaviour and show respect and care for each other. From Year 1 upwards pupils are at ease talking with adults and with pupils from different year groups. A small minority of pupils felt they would like more opportunities to take responsibility in different ways. However, evidence shows there is a good range of ways in which pupils can take a leading role, for example in Year 5 where all pupils have a class role to fulfil on a daily basis. From Year 3, pupils belong to one of eight "Groups". The oldest pupils lead the "Groups", organising plays, concerts and sports events with the younger pupils. Pupils also introduce a weekly assembly on a current affairs topic which enhances their political and economic awareness, as well as discussing topical issues in form periods and lessons. They contribute to the wider society in which they live through organising their own fundraising for those less fortunate than themselves, such as an orphanage in Belize, Children in Need and help for injured servicemen.
- 4.6 The pupils' cultural development is excellent. Younger pupils enjoy culturally enriching experiences through their celebrations of festivals from around the world such as Diwali and Chinese New Year. Their cultural values and experiences are effectively broadened through such experiences as Year 1's link with a school in America and the studying of French, culminating in the term's residential stay in a school in France during Year 7. The pupils' cultural understanding is further

expanded by visiting speakers and opportunities to visit museums, theatres, places of worship and exhibitions.

- 4.7 By the time they leave the school, pupils demonstrate an excellent standard of emotional maturity and personal development in preparation for the next stage of their education.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 The school achieves its aim of ensuring it provides the highest quality pastoral care which is central to its philosophy of enabling pupils to feel secure in a caring environment. Well-established pastoral care systems are supported by clear policies and implemented successfully. In the EYFS the system whereby every child has a key person to oversee their care ensures that children are happy, confident and develop strong social awareness. Throughout the school pupils understand the procedures for their care and stated in conversations with inspectors that they know who to turn to if they have a problem; they feel confident they can talk to an adult for help or advice and they feel safe and secure in all sections of the school. A detailed plan is in place to ensure that access to buildings for those with physical needs and to the curriculum for pupils with SEND is secure and appropriate improvements are planned.
- 4.10 The high quality support provided by the staff ensures that a caring, family atmosphere permeates the whole school. Form teachers are, in the first instance, responsible for the overall well-being of each pupil. The small size of the school means that every individual, member of staff or pupil, is known to everyone else which results in excellent relationships on both sites. While some pupils say they would like a forum in which to make comments, particularly in boarding, which would be more likely to be positive than of complaint, others said they did not need this as they had sufficient opportunity to express their feelings.
- 4.11 The school's procedures for promoting good discipline and behaviour are wholly effective. Pupils fully understand the system of rewards and sanctions that encourage positive behaviour. Pupils understand the school's appropriate procedures to guard against bullying and are confident that if this occurred, it would be dealt with quickly and constructively. The school strongly encourages a healthy lifestyle and pupils from across the school, including EYFS, have a strong sense of what a healthy lifestyle is like, both in terms of eating and exercise. Mealtimes continue the family feel of the school: the food is nutritious and plentiful and good table manners are insisted upon. Pupils have plenty of opportunities for exercise through the wide range of sport and recreational activities in the beautiful surroundings.



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

- 4.12 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.13 The school has a clear child protection policy that has regard to official guidance. All staff are trained in child protection and the designated child protection officers have received recognised inter-agency training. Relationships with external agencies are strong and advice is sought whenever appropriate. In the EYFS, a comprehensive set of policies and procedures supports all activities and children feel safe and secure and readily share concerns with their key person.
- 4.14 Appropriate measures are taken to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. Checks and tests on fire safety appliances and electrical appliances are carried out and recorded. Evacuation practices take place regularly each term on both sites.
- 4.15 The health and safety committee meets regularly and is involved in regular site checks. Provision for regular maintenance over the school site is less effectively managed. Thorough risk assessments are undertaken for all areas of the school, trips and outings. Care for children in the EYFS is excellent. A high priority is given to safety of the children so that health and safety risks are minimised through careful risk assessments and good practice.
- 4.16 Health care is thorough and effective. In conjunction with a comprehensive first aid policy pupils, who are ill, injured or have different needs are well cared for by the matron or in the EYFS by staff trained in paediatric first aid. The medical room is well equipped and appropriate for its needs and first aid boxes are provided appropriately. Accident and incident books are now maintained efficiently on both sites. The admission register is backed up and stored appropriately; however the completion of attendance registers is not always undertaken using the accepted school codes.

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

- 4.17 The quality of boarding is good.
- 4.18 The outcomes for boarders are good. The small size of the provision and the highly flexible nature of the arrangement for most boarders, ensure that there is a genuinely happy and family atmosphere within the boarding community. The close relationships between boarders and boarding staff are a strength and all boarders display exemplary behaviour. Boarders thrive in the atmosphere of the house where they have fun. They support each other and are polite and helpful. There is no formal allocation of responsibilities because of the flexible nature of the boarding, but some older boarders willingly help younger and less experienced boarders when they come into the boarding house for the first time. Boarders enjoy the boarding experience but their views are not sought formally in any way and boarders themselves do not feel that they are able to make suggestions or give their opinions.
- 4.19 The quality of the boarding provision and care is good. Within the boarding house the standard of pastoral care is very high and all boarders are exceptionally happy. The boarding staff know the pupils extremely well; their well-being is monitored closely and communication at all levels is highly effective. In line with the aim of the school to celebrate the values and innocence of a traditional childhood there is no television or other electronic items in the house. This results in an environment where the pupils are encouraged to interact closely with their peers, play a wide range of games, use the extensive outside space and develop excellent inter-

personal skills. The highly inclusive nature of the boarding community ensures that all pupils including those with different needs are well integrated. An informal induction process for new boarders is in place and a buddy system supports this. A new boarding handbook for pupils is being developed in conjunction with the boarders themselves.

- 4.20 Accommodation is well appointed and comfortable. An appropriate number of well-maintained toilets and suitable washroom facilities are spread among the accommodation. Detailed written risk assessments for different aspects of boarding and for fire safety are in place and regular fire evacuation practices are carried out including out of school time. Mealtimes are sociable and the food is nutritious, plentiful and caters for varied dietary requirements. Senior academic staff often attend the evening meal with the boarders which helps to create a strong family environment. Since the previous boarding inspection boarding staff have undertaken food hygiene training. Any problem or complaint raised is dealt with, recorded on their personal files, and if not resolved on an informal basis, the school complaints policy is used.
- 4.21 Appropriate measures to safeguard boarders are in place. Bullying is not identified as a problem in the boarding house but pupils are confident that should there be an incident it would be rapidly and fairly dealt with and know that there is a range of adults they could talk to. Contact names and numbers of suitable adults outside the school community are readily available. The boarding house staff are easy to access and approachable and boarders feel very well cared for and safe. They do not go outside of the house without a member of staff but when supervised they are free to play in the playground and grounds in line with the school aims.
- 4.22 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the boarding provision is good. Since the previous boarding inspection a new handbook for parents has been developed which clearly sets out the aims of the boarding house. Policies relating to boarding are clear and effective in guiding practice. There are now job descriptions for boarding staff and an appropriate supervision rota employs both male and female staff. There is an excellent level of staffing which enables strong personalised care and monitoring of all boarders. House routines run well. There is a weekly meeting of boarding staff and a supportive appraisal system in place. An effective method of arranging for the change in flexi-boarders nightly keeps all staff well informed. In their response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a high proportion of the parents expressed their satisfaction with the provision and there were no concerns. A small minority of boarders raised concerns about the safety of their belongings, the ease of contact with their parents and who to contact if they had a problem. The inspection team found no evidence to support these issues. Boarders are able to contact their parents in privacy using the school office telephone in the evenings and those boarders interviewed felt that all the staff were approachable and they would be happy to talk to any of them. Boarders do not bring in items of value into the house but if they do so they are held securely by one of the staff.
- 4.23 The school has responded to all of the recommendations of the previous boarding report.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is sound.
- 5.2 The range of expertise represented within the board of trustees, which includes backgrounds in education, law, business and finance, enables the group to provide good oversight and maintain the ethos of the school in line with its aims. They effectively discharge their responsibilities for financial planning and investment in new buildings across the whole age range including the EYFS. Certain responsibilities, in particular estates management, are administered by the trust's centralised bursary, and these arrangements do not always operate with full efficiency.
- 5.3 The head provides a report for the board each term to be considered at trust meetings, which are held in rotation at each of the trust schools. However, most of the trustees, other than the principal trustee, have limited knowledge of the day-to-day running of the school or the effectiveness of the educational provision, as further visits to the school by the trustees are not undertaken except in special circumstances. The limited monitoring of management workloads, lack of independent appraisal for the head and support for staff across the school including the EYFS, is hindering development of the educational provision. At present little training to support the trustees with their responsibilities is available.
- 5.4 The trustees are not fully aware of their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding, and have not undertaken a thorough annual review of the school's safeguarding policy and arrangements. The trust's bursar and the principal oversee the health and safety policy for all of the trust's schools. To strengthen the trust's role in governance a new compliance officer has been recently appointed, however communication between the remote bursary and the school is not always sufficiently clear.

### **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, of the school is good.
- 5.6 Since the change in senior management of the school, leadership at all levels has undergone positive change and development; those with positions of responsibility are now committed to maintaining the individual ethos of the school as well as establishing protocols which are designed to improve educational and personal development standards in all areas. Throughout the school, including in the EYFS, leaders are exceptionally hard-working; however the current management structure does not provide sufficient time for either strategic planning or effective monitoring of the standards of teaching, learning and achievement in the school. Senior managers understand their roles well and have good ideas for school improvement but the workload undertaken at each level of management often prevents the implementation of these ideas.
- 5.7 Individualised support for all pupils is a strong emphasis for the school and owes much to the significance placed on this area by senior leaders and this is reflected in

the excellent standard of personal development evident throughout and the good academic standards achieved by many pupils.

- 5.8 Leadership ensures that all policies and procedures, which are developed in conjunction with the centralised trust bursary, are reviewed on a regular basis, communicated to staff and implemented correctly. In all day-to-day practice the safeguarding of children in the school, including the EYFS is assured. Procedures for checking the suitability of staff are secure and entries on the single central register of appointments are now comprehensive. Policies in place to promote equality and eliminate discrimination are effective across the whole school.
- 5.9 A review of the school's strengths as well as areas for further development has been undertaken by senior leaders. In the EYFS this has been developed into a thorough and useful plan for future development driven by ambitious plans for improvement and with contributions by all staff. There is no succinct and cohesive whole-school development plan, informed by all departments within the school, which gives details of required actions, and responsibilities for taking them, timescales and resources to achieve success. Useful development plans exist for some subject areas.
- 5.10 Subject co-ordinators fulfil their roles with commitment, and hold regular meetings between the two sites to ensure that pupils make a smooth transition. Their roles have been clarified by the introduction of job descriptions for new staff. They meet regularly with each other and senior leaders to discuss planning and curriculum matters. They are not yet involved in monitoring of teaching and learning but a useful peer observation process has been introduced which is still in the early stages of development.
- 5.11 In recent times the leadership has been successful in recruiting and developing staff of good quality. Staff handbooks, as well as thorough induction arrangements have been introduced to ensure that all new and existing staff are well informed about school routines, procedures and policies. Staff are suitably trained for their roles in safeguarding, welfare and health and safety and termly in-service training reinforces this. Sound opportunities for staff to improve their professional development are made available through a range of training options such as courses on providing for pupils with different needs in the classroom. The school's internal administration is effective.
- 5.12 Links with parents are good. Most parents are satisfied with the school's provision as they indicated in the pre-inspection questionnaires. In particular they are appreciative of the range of subjects on offer, the level of care given to their children to ensure their safety and happiness and the timely way they receive responses to their questions. Inspection evidence supports these views.
- 5.13 A small minority of parents were not satisfied with the way that any cases of bullying are dealt with and a few with the level of behaviour promoted. Inspection evidence does not support these views as standards of behaviour were noted to be for the most part good and the school has an effective policy to prevent bullying. A number of parents raised concern about their children's progress, the information given with regard to their child's progress and the support given to the more able students. Inspection evidence shows that pupils make good progress in relation to their abilities and the information given to parents is appropriate, however, inspectors support the view that in some subject areas and sections of the school more able pupils receive insufficient levels of challenge. A small minority of parents felt that they were not encouraged to be involved in events and other aspects of the work of

the school. Inspectors judged that there was a wide range of ways parents can be involved in events at the school such as mini-open mornings where they can sit in on lessons, attend a range of information evenings, attend "Prayers" whenever they wish and be involved in coffee mornings, toddler groups and charitable fund-raising events. Parents of children in the EYFS have strong relationships with the school, work closely with them and in the pre-inspection questionnaire were appreciative of the care provided and positive about all aspects of the setting.

- 5.14 A wide range of useful information is available for parents. Parents welcome the level of information they receive about the school and its policies, for example through the parent guide to the school and excellent termly newsletters. The required regulatory information, including policies and procedures is posted on the school website together with accounts of recent events. Parent consultations are held once a year in the spring term but additionally the school operates an open door policy and staff are available to discuss pupil's progress at other times by appointment. Informative reports are written three times a year for Years 3 to 8 and twice a year for Years 1 to 2. These provide parents with appropriate information about the effort their children are making and how well they are achieving. The reports also include useful targets for the future.
- 5.15 Parents' concerns are given careful attention. Should it be necessary they have access to a suitable formal complaints procedure. No formal complaints were received using this procedure in the past year.

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