



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

GREAT WALSTEAD SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

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Great Walstead School

Full Name of School	Great Walstead School		
DfE Number	938/6203		
EYFS Number	EY404963		
Registered Charity Number	307002		
Address	Great Walstead School East Mascalls Lane Lindfield Haywards Heath West Sussex RH16 2QL		
Telephone Number	01444 483528		
Fax Number	01444 482122		
Email Address	admin@greatwalstead.co.uk		
Head	Mr Colin Baty		
Chair of Governors	Mrs J B Lee		
Age Range	2 to 13		
Total Number of Pupils	392		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (245 boys; 147 girls)		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	13	5-11: 162
	3-5 (EYFS):	68	11-18: 149
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	352	
Number of Boarders	Total:	40	
	Flexi:	39	Weekly: 1
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection dates	02 Oct 2012 to 05 Oct 2012		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in November 2009.

Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'satisfactory' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors and another governor, 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 Sue Vale	Reporting Inspector
Mr Brian Hayes	Team Inspector (Director of Studies, IAPS school)
Mr Mark Potter	Team Inspector (Director of Studies, IAPS school)
Miss Angela Rawlinson	Team Inspector (Headteacher, IAPS school)
Ms Ann Longton	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Catherine Lane	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Great Walstead School is set in 270 acres of woods and parkland on the outskirts of Haywards Heath in Sussex. It has occupied its present location since 1927. The school was a boys' preparatory school, mainly boarding, until 1976 when girls joined. Pre-Prep and Nursery and 'the Keep', providing after-school care, were added in the 1990s. Full boarding ceased 10 years ago and now continues on a flexible basis.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection, there were 392 pupils in the school, of whom 147 were girls and 245 boys, and up to 40 pupils were occasional boarders. Thirty-one children out of 81 in the EYFS, consisting of the Nursery and Reception, were part time. The rest of the pre-prep, Years 1 and 2, and Juniors, Years 3 and 4, comprised 70 and 92 pupils respectively, and Middles and Seniors, Years 5 to 8, 149.
- 1.3 Entry to the EYFS is non-selective, and pupils entering at Year 1 and above are informally assessed. Results of standardised tests taken in all year groups show that the pupils occupy the full ability range, but that their average ability is above the national average. Within this context, however, about a quarter of pupils receive specialised support for a range of learning difficulties, although none has a statement of special educational need, and a very small minority have English as an additional language (EAL).
- 1.4 Pupils proceed to senior schools, which are mainly local, via entry examinations at 13+.
- 1.5 The foundation of the school has a strong Christian element embodied in its mission statement. Amongst the school's aims are the promotion of hard work and high achievement in a happy, well resourced, atmosphere, where moral and spiritual values are a foundation for life, and where each child is valued as a very special individual. The school's vision is to inspire all pupils to achieve their potential in all areas, through the support and dedication of staff, in a caring Christian environment.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The quality of the pupils' academic achievements is excellent, in line with the aims of the school. Pupils are articulate, mathematically and scientifically able, and have well-developed information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or with EAL make excellent progress because of the high quality of the support. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning, participating well and with enjoyment in lessons. Their good progress is supported by good and often excellent teaching and a highly effective curriculum, including an outstanding programme of extra-curricular activities.
- 2.2 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils are well mannered, considerate and delightful with each other, and their behaviour is excellent. They are genuinely caring members of their own community and understand their social responsibility to help others who are less fortunate. This is particularly evident in the way Year 8 support younger classes during wet playtimes. Excellent pastoral care is a strong contributory factor to the pupils' excellent personal development. Relationships between pupils and staff and among the pupils themselves are extremely positive. The arrangements for welfare, health and safety, including safeguarding, are good, and in the EYFS excellent. The quality of boarding is good. Boarders and those who stay for taster nights enjoy the experience and staff support them well, not only in their individual welfare needs, but in developing their own interests and skills.
- 2.3 Governance is good. Leadership and management at all levels are good and united with a clear vision for the future based firmly on the aims of the school. The school has moved a considerable way in the past two years, as recognised by both parents and staff alike. There is still scope for a more rigorous approach to the monitoring of formal administrative responsibilities. Links with parents and carers are excellent; in response to the pre-inspection questionnaires parents were highly supportive and complimentary about all aspects of school life and inspection evidence confirms these views.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:
- ensure that there are sufficient washrooms and hand basins for staff and pupils. [Part 5 paragraph 23, under (j)].
- 2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2011.

(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. Develop a more rigorous oversight of teaching and learning by senior leadership, sharing more widely the good practice seen in some lessons of planning to meet the particular educational needs of individuals.
 2. Implement more robust monitoring systems in order to keep administration of checks on the school's regulatory compliance up to date and efficient.
 3. Monitor rigorously all existing boarding systems and processes and ensure that information is communicated clearly between school administrative records and boarding practice.
 4. In the EYFS develop a more rigorous approach to assessment in order to inform teachers' planning and to support children in the next stage of learning.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 This reflects the school's aim for all pupils to achieve their full potential. Pupils are highly articulate and confident in their discussions with teachers and listen well to each other. Pupils' reading, writing and numeracy are of a high standard. Written work is well presented by pupils of all ages, in line with the school's stated policy.
- 3.3 Over the last two years there has been considerable progress in the development and use of assessment. Assessments are used to set appropriate targets in external exams for senior pupils and to review some key aspects of the curriculum, although they are not yet sufficiently embedded in order to evaluate their full impact. Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performances achieved in tests at the ages of 7 and 11 but, on the evidence available, from the scrutiny of pupils' work and lesson observations, it is high in relation to national age-related expectations. The significant number of pupils with SEND are particularly well supported and make excellent progress towards the targets that have been set for them. There are appropriate strategies in place to extend the most able in most subjects and these include 'Personal Enrichment Days' and an activity for the 'Academically Ambitious' to extend and enrich pupils' learning.
- 3.4 Pupils' physical skills develop well in the many opportunities which abound both inside and outside the curriculum. Even the less sporting individuals are encouraged to compete and take pride in representing the school, whilst a full range of activities is offered for pupils who do not take part in Wednesday matches. The school competes successfully in a number of sports and has had individual representatives qualifying for national IAPS competitions in swimming, athletics and fencing, in addition to the Under 11 football team winning the Lancing Cup.
- 3.5 The quality of art, drama and music is particularly strong and pupils gain scholarships to their senior schools in these specialist areas and also in sport and information and communication technology, whilst the notion of internal scholars gives pupils a genuine pride in their achievements. Success is also reflected in the very high standard of results achieved in music and Lamda exams. Pupils achieve very high standards relative to their age across the three strands of craft, design and technology (CDT); home economics, ceramics and technology. The school also runs a popular chess club which has had success in a number of junior tournaments around the county.
- 3.6 Year 8 pupils perform successfully in the Common Entrance exams and all pupils gained admittance to the school of their choice in 2012. Around half of pupils are successful in gaining scholarships in academic, sports and all-rounder categories as well as the regular achievement of more specialist awards.
- 3.7 Pupils' good progress and their success in a wide variety of fields owe a great deal to their exemplary attitude to learning. Pupils display an increasing willingness to take responsibility for their own learning as they move through the school and are confident in asking for help and support from their teachers. Stickers and other forms of reward encourage pupils to develop a 'have a go' philosophy and to become risk takers.

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

- 3.8 The quality of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 The school fulfils its aim of inspiring all its pupils to achieve their full potential by providing a wealth of opportunities across the curriculum. The school's curriculum is based on the National Curriculum and also meets the requirements of the 13+ Common Entrance and Common Academic Scholarship. The core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT are given due prominence. Alongside the core subjects there is an excellent breadth across many other subjects. ICT is used effectively across different subjects to enhance learning, as in Year 8 geography fieldwork. Creative subjects, such as CDT for older pupils, provide opportunities for pupils to broaden their experiences.
- 3.10 Curriculum planning is thorough and effective, carried out by subject heads and effectively monitored by the senior leadership team. Curricular support for pupils with SEND is excellent. This includes a thorough identification and referral system, in-class support and learning support outside the classroom. Information on learning needs provided by the learning support department to subject teachers is excellent and encompasses social, emotional, physical and academic aspects of each child, contributing to the thorough understanding that teachers have about the children in their care.
- 3.11 The curriculum is highly successful in enabling pupils to develop enquiring minds, investigative skills and independent learning skills. Outdoor learning is a significant element of the curriculum, highly prized by both pupils and parents alike. The ancient woodland on the school's doorstep is fully utilised by 'Forest School' in Nursery and pre-prep, 'Mudlarks' in Years 3 and 4, 'Woodlanders' in Years 5 and 6 and Q Day in Years 7 and 8. This comprehensive outdoor learning programme throughout the school allows pupils to develop excellent life skills and impacts extremely positively on their moral and social development.
- 3.12 There is an extensive sporting programme, which focuses on the opportunities for all to have the opportunity to represent the school. Pupils do not appear to mind which team they are chosen for, as the important thing for them is participation. This reflects their feeling of inclusiveness and their support of each other. Music is equally inclusive whether learning the recorder from Year 3 up or participating in 'Pop Band'.
- 3.13 A diverse extra-curricular programme further enhances the curriculum by providing a wide variety of sporting, creative and academic opportunities. This includes lunchtime and after-school clubs as well as Wednesday activities for those children not selected for sports matches. The pupils also benefit from many links with the local community, including hands-on themed days, Personal Enrichment Days and trips to places of historical or cultural interest, all of which enhance their outstanding personal development.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.14 The quality of the teaching is good.
- 3.15 The majority of lessons observed were good or better, supporting the school's aims and contributing effectively to pupils' above average attainment. Parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire recognised the positive contribution that teaching makes to pupils' progress and achievement.

- 3.16 Effective lesson planning ensures that a wide range of teaching strategies are used to interest and engage learners. In addition pupils said that they feel extremely well supported in lessons. Lessons usually proceed at a brisk pace and varied activities encourage pupils to apply themselves with determination. A particular feature of the successful teaching is open-ended questioning, challenging the learners to think independently and take risks with their learning. In the less successful lessons observed the pace was too slow and tasks were not varied enough and did not cater for individual educational needs or different abilities. Progress was restricted as a result. The overuse of worksheets in some subjects does not always provide sufficient challenge for all learners.
- 3.17 Teachers' marking is prompt, accurate and positive and involves pupils in a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve. In discussions pupils of all ages expressed the view that they could always ask for help when necessary. Assessment from Years 1 to 8 successfully monitors progress and in better lessons contributes to planning.
- 3.18 Teachers are knowledgeable and share their enthusiasm with their pupils. They answer questions in appropriate detail and as they know their pupils well, understand their strengths and areas for improvement. They offer sufficient support to boost pupils' confidence whilst also encouraging them to use their own skills to solve problems. The best teaching observed encouraged pupils to think and learn independently. Excellent behaviour in lessons is expected and is generally achieved without fuss, in line with the school's aim to encourage confident, independent and well-rounded learners. They are encouraged to express themselves freely and to ask questions in lessons, taking into account the opinions of others. Pupils work willingly with teachers, in an atmosphere of shared enjoyment and a common purpose.
- 3.19 All departments and classrooms are well resourced and organised. Stimulating learning environments encourage pupils to check their work, evaluate their learning and set themselves new targets.
- 3.20 Teaching enables pupils of all abilities, including those with SEND or EAL, to acquire new knowledge and understanding, make better than expected progress and develop their skills. This is supported by the excellent help given from teaching assistants and this provision allows all pupils to be well integrated into their classes.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The pupils' personal qualities are exceptionally well developed at Great Walstead, in accordance with the aims of the school. Pupils are well behaved, with confident social skills that are advanced beyond their years. They have a strong sense of community and well-developed morals. This is underpinned by the school's five-core values of Christian belief: Christian Faith, Dedication, Success, Environment and Communication.
- 4.3 A strong sense of faith permeates school life and underpins the values that the pupils hold. The Christian ethos is supported in religious education lessons, and other faiths are studied and pupils encouraged to show empathy towards them engendering respect for others. Pupils are also encouraged to show respect towards their environment through the 'Forest School' and various gardening and ecologically- friendly activities.
- 4.4 Pupils' moral development is very strong. They have a well-developed sense of right and wrong and effective teaching encourages them to work to time limits, thus developing excellent life skills. A strong emphasis on working hard and presenting work to a high standard within lessons fosters their excellent personal development. Because of this, pupils apply themselves extremely well to the tasks that they are given and recognise the importance of hard work. Pupils are able to follow instructions independently and with minimal prompting, such as in a Year 4 registration period. Orderly movement from lesson to lesson shows that pupils have a clear understanding of the need to follow certain routines while still being independent thinkers. A highly effective positive reward system encourages all pupils to be risk takers and to 'have a go'. Pupils are confident and self-aware. When they have misbehaved, they are encouraged to fill in reflection sheets in an effort to encourage them to think about their actions and remedy behaviour.
- 4.5 Pupils have highly developed social skills and personalities. They make an excellent contribution to the life of the school through numerous positions of responsibility, including school councillors, monitors and form captains, which are rotated to include as many pupils as possible. In Year 8, all pupils have a role of responsibility, including peer mentoring, and there is plenty of guidance from staff on how to get this right. This philosophy of giving responsibility to pupils applies also to pupils' lunchtimes, where all pupils are given an exceptional choice of meals and are able to serve themselves. Personal, social and health education lessons encourage development of the idea of community, teamwork and responsibility and this is further enhanced on match days, when there is a very strong sense of 'team'. This extends even to the seating of teams together in lunch before matches begin.
- 4.6 The cultural development of the pupils is excellent. Pupils take part in numerous community projects and competitions such as the ceramics master class, the arts festival and the Rotary public speaking competition. School trips and excursions at local, national and international levels, such as the biennial cricket tour to South Africa, encourage pupils to be aware of the community and the world beyond.

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

- 4.7 The quality of pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 It reflects the school's Christian foundation and fully supports its aims. All staff are aware of pupils' individual needs and provide outstanding support in an approachable and friendly manner. The school's pastoral care makes a positive contribution to the academic standards achieved and the excellent personal development of pupils. Pupils say that they are extremely happy at school and if they have a concern they know what action to take and who to go to. The vast majority of parents believe that the school is very caring and supportive of their children.
- 4.9 The recent appointments of a deputy head pastoral and a head of pastoral care, who liaise with staff and parents as necessary, have allowed the high standards outlined during the last inspection to be maintained and further developed.
- 4.10 The school's successful pastoral care depends, to a large extent, on the excellent quality of relationships between pupils and staff and amongst pupils. Not only do staff know and understand pupils well, but they make every effort to support them in and beyond the classroom. Older pupils set a good example for younger ones through both their behaviour and their attitudes. The highly successful peer mentoring programme ensures that there is a real family feel in the school with a genuine appreciation of others achievements.
- 4.11 The 'reflection sheets' in the revised behaviour policy allow pupils to record appropriate actions for improving their own behaviour. The school has an effective anti-bullying policy. Both staff and pupils agree that incidents of bullying behaviour are rare and that any that do occur are dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- 4.12 The provision for children with SEND or EAL is outstanding. Pupils benefit from a sense of empowerment to overcome any difficulties they may face. They make excellent progress in response to the thorough, effective and valuable support and intervention systems that are implemented by all the teaching staff and classroom assistants. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.13 The 'Enrichment Programme' is particularly successful in addressing the needs of gifted and talented children. It is accessible for all pupils and has served to inspire and extend their ideas and achievements beyond the usual range of classroom activities.
- 4.14 The cheerful atmosphere in the dining hall makes all meals enjoyable experiences. All pupils from the Nursery onwards have the opportunity to freely choose from the exceptionally healthy, home-cooked, delicious meals on offer.

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

- 4.15 The contribution made by the arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.16 The school meets regulatory requirements in all aspects with the exception of a deficiency in sanitary fittings, as the number of hand basins does not currently match or exceed the number of toilets as is required.
- 4.17 Appropriate measures are taken to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. An external specialist company regularly audits fire procedures and assesses risks. No major issues for concern have been revealed and the health and safety committee

quickly addressed other issues from the most recent inspection of February 2012. All members of staff are issued with a detailed Fire Safety Plan booklet and are required to confirm that they have received and read the appropriate policies. Although regular fire drills are carried out, monitoring does not ensure that all drills are properly recorded in the log book.

- 4.18 The school has developed a clear and appropriate health and safety policy, together with a suitable range of other policies overseen by a health and safety committee, which meets on a termly basis. Risk assessments are also in place for potentially hazardous activities.
- 4.19 Pupils who are ill or injured are well cared for by the School N
- 4.20 nurse and a list is maintained of staff who hold current first aid certificates. The system of medical care for pupils who are away from school on trips or at matches is very thorough.
- 4.21 Safeguarding arrangements have regard to official guidance and include the provision of appropriate staff training. Pupils themselves say that they feel safe and very well cared for in school. During the inspection there were some difficulties in the gathering of information regarding administrative aspects of safer recruitment and maintenance of the single central register. The school rectified these problems during the inspection.
- 4.22 The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and appropriately stored.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.23 The quality of boarding is good.
- 4.24 Boarding is offered on a flexi-weekday basis and numbers vary from day to day. The outcomes for boarders are good. The boarding experience provided encourages the boarders' integrity and tolerance due to the nurturing and positive environment provided. Parents and pupils speak highly of it. A wide variety of extra-curricular activities is arranged on different evenings throughout the week. Boarders speak enthusiastically about these activities and they help to develop their excellent personal development. Results from the questionnaire analysis support these views. Boarders are able to access newspapers and interesting articles in the library, thus encouraging them to be aware of the world outside school. They are encouraged to make a positive contribution towards the development of the community in the boarding house, by participating in the regular school council meetings. These meetings enable pupils to contribute to how the house is run and raise any concerns they may have. Apart from formal council meetings, the boarders communicate with the house parents and gap students freely and feel able to comment on events and any improvements they feel might make towards developing the smooth running of an organised boarding house.
- 4.25 The family atmosphere provided is relaxed but maintains appropriate boundaries and the boarding staff strive for boarders to become confident and self-reliant whilst being sensitive to their individual needs. Internet access allows pupils to gather information to support their homework or communicate via email to family or friends. An e-safety policy, restricted internet access and appropriate supervision ensure that use of the computer is approached in a safe and effective manner. Mobile phone use for boarders is not permitted but they may contact their relatives at any reasonable time via the telephone land-line in the boarding house. Parents are

encouraged to attend matches, events and the fund-raising Friday evening events when pupils are given the opportunity to stay an extra night as a boarder. Boarding staff liaise with parents appropriately if there is a significant issue to discuss. Activities and free time allow boarders to benefit from opportunities for recreational and developmental opportunities in the weekday evenings using suitable facilities. There is an appropriate balance of choosing between organised activities or self-directed time. Pupils report these activities are always fun and much enjoyed.

- 4.26 An evening boarding activity between boarders of both genders and mixed age ranges, clearly demonstrated the constructive relationships that develop within the boarding community. This is a reflection of the relationships which are encouraged throughout their school life. An effective house system, prefects and the peer mentors scheme in Year 8, further encourage integration across the school community. A boarding handbook identifies house routines and with whom a boarder may communicate for personal guidance. Staff discuss this information with each boarder when they first experience boarding life. Boarders report they feel safe and staff are approachable, should they have a personal concern or issue they wish to discuss. Alternatively they may contact the school's independent listener if they wish to, either directly or via the 'Voicebox' situated in the boarding accommodation.
- 4.27 The medical centre is efficiently run and the staff endeavour to keep boarders fit and healthy and liaise with other staff and parents effectively concerning medical issues. Appropriate health-related policies are available to staff on the school intranet and referred to in the staff handbook. Individual pupil care plans have been developed for pupils with chronic conditions, boarders are treated effectively when ill or injured and medication is distributed appropriately. The medical centre is staffed by qualified nurses throughout the day and then by a suitably qualified first aider for evening and overnight cover. Pupils say that they are well cared for and feel comfortable accessing the facilities provided by the medical centre; in the event of a boarder becoming ill during the night they access a nearby call bell and report that their needs are attended to promptly.
- 4.28 Meals and food provided are of a very high standard. Food is of excellent nutritional quality, plentiful in quantity with a wide choice, so contributing positively to the boarders' health and well-being. Boarders are encouraged to be independent in choosing and serving for themselves but a member of staff oversees the process. Menus change weekly and are available for pupils to see around the school. The filter water machine in the medical centre is popular with boarders and available for them to access anytime during the day. They have the opportunity to make healthy snacks in the evenings in the boarding house.
- 4.29 Regular fire drills and appropriate safety checks of equipment further ensure the safety of boarders, but the recording of these drills is not rigorous enough. Risk assessments of areas which boarders may access during their leisure time comply with requirements. The boarding accommodation is secure and visitors are suitably monitored.
- 4.30 The boarding accommodation is of a high standard, bright and spacious and dormitory furniture is gradually being replaced on a rolling programme. Even though boarding is of a flexi nature, boarders are often given the same bed and dormitory area when they choose to stay and they may personalise this space if they wish.
- 4.31 Staff demonstrate a full understanding of safeguarding and their responsibilities for this as boarding staff; training is regular and includes new members of staff during their induction period. Effective staff rotas allow adequate supervision of the

boarding pupils. 'Gap' students are integral to the boarding house staff team and provide the boarders with not just supervision but add another dimension to their boarding experience by bringing different skills to share with the boarders. Although the school is compliant regarding staff recruitment and training there were initial difficulties in collating all the detailed administrative evidence to confirm this; appropriate systems are now in place.

- 4.32 Appropriate policies and procedures are effective in safeguarding the boarders' welfare and safety and promote good behaviour, which is evident throughout the school and pupils report there are no bullying issues. A current record of sanctions and any parental concerns is maintained.
- 4.33 The boarding house has effective leadership and management with clear boarding principles in line with the aims of the school. The house parents have a clear vision for further developing and improving the boarding facility. Staff are well trained, suitably chosen and inducted to support an appropriate environment for boarders. Staff maintain good links with academic staff and communicate well with parents.
- 4.34 Recommendations from the last boarding welfare report relating to drugs education, substance misuse and a missing boarder policy have been addressed. Window restrictors have been fitted to all boarders' rooms above ground level and a rolling refurbishment programme continues.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 Governance of the school is good.
- 5.2 The governors are highly committed to the school, to securing its aims, promoting its continuing success and maintaining the pupils' high standards, their excellent personal development and pastoral care.
- 5.3 The governors support new initiatives and ensure that the school maintains its good provision. Their regular review of policies and results and their involvement in school development planning aids understanding of what is succeeding and what requires development. The governors are highly supportive of the school and are proactive in promoting the vision for its future development.
- 5.4 Governors discharge their responsibilities regarding child protection, safeguarding children, safer recruitment, welfare, health and safety suitably. During the inspection there were some administrative errors in the recording of safeguarding and safer recruitment checks but the school worked extremely hard to correct these. Governors have ensured that the school has met the recommendations of the previous inspection.

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

- 5.5 Leadership and management of the school are good.
- 5.6 Recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed well. Dedicated senior managers with high aspirations for the pupils in their care support the school's aims effectively and ensure its success. Team work is exceptional and the commitment of staff is highly supportive of pupils' excellent personal development and high quality pastoral care. They strongly support the religious aspect of the school aims through their spiritual and pastoral guidance to pupils, staff and families.
- 5.7 Those responsible for leading the school provide purposeful leadership supported very well by a concordant senior management team, which has clearly defined roles and which supports their vision for the school's future development. As a result of strong leadership, excellent spiritual and educational direction ensures that the school's aims are fulfilled. All staff are fully involved in the excellent pastoral care of pupils. Appropriate policies have been drawn up covering all aspects of school life, although some administrative detail had to be confirmed during the inspection. The responsibility for policy implementation in the day-to-day life of the school is carried out carefully, including any issues arising from the safeguarding of pupils, where close contact is maintained with social care services.
- 5.8 Self-evaluation of all aspects of school life is accurate. Teaching and learning are regularly monitored but results from this monitoring are not yet fully embedded in all lesson planning and teaching practice.
- 5.9 The school maintains excellent partnerships with parents and their questionnaire returns confirm that they are overwhelmingly pleased with the provision for their children. Parents are actively involved in supporting the work of the school; they particularly praise the way the school cares for their children, providing them with a

happy environment in which to learn and to make a start to school life. They are very appreciative of the effective communication systems which provide information about their children's achievements and progress, as well as events and activities that take place within the school community. Parents' concerns are given prompt attention and are sympathetically resolved.

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

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

6.(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

- 6.1 The setting makes good provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. It successfully achieves its aims to support and help children to become independent, confident learners. The good, and for the youngest children, excellent, quality of education and care is founded on close attention to the needs of every child through a diverse range of activities. Children rapidly develop confidence in themselves and think critically about solving problems such as how to construct a three-dimensional map.
- 6.2 The Nursery staff have very high expectations of the children, encouraging them to explore, investigate and think creatively, using language which extends and develops their communication and enquiry skills. For example, on discovering that a dinosaur had laid an egg in the nest, the children wanted to know if it would hatch. The Nursery children are fully engaged in tasks and demonstrate outstanding concentration. There is an effective balance of child-initiated and adult-led tasks.
- 6.3 Staff carry out regular observations as an important part of supporting children's development; this information is shared with children, parents and other staff. Assessment evaluates where the children start, what they achieve and the progress they make. It is not yet used rigorously enough to inform the next steps in children's learning and teachers' planning.
- 6.4 Children with EAL and those with SEND receive excellent help at an early stage. The children themselves are particularly supportive of those with EAL, playing co-operatively and warmly applauding efforts to master the language. Teaching assistants' contribution is most effective when they are involved at an early stage in the planning and organisation.
- 6.5 Relationships are excellent and children feel safe, secure and valued. Parents are highly confident that staff do the best for their child.

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

- 6.6 Provision for the children's well-being is excellent. The safe, secure environment enables children to explore and make decisions with confidence. The 'key persons' expect courtesy, good behaviour and endeavour; they demonstrate these qualities themselves, and children respond appropriately. Independence is encouraged, children can dress themselves and look after their personal hygiene; they form strong relationships with the adults and one another and throughout the setting there is an attitude of enjoyment and self-belief.
- 6.7 Excellent use is made of the shared outdoor area. Routines and resources are familiar and provide comfort and security as children are prepared for transition within the setting and Year 1. The wider school environment with the woods, sports' hall and all the main school facilities greatly enhance their experience. Children have many opportunities to be active and develop a very good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Health, safety and welfare are given high priority.

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

- 6.8 Leadership and management are good. Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. One deficiency is the lack of sufficient hand basins in the toilets. The management of the Nursery and the Reception is the responsibility of two heads of department, one in Nursery and one in the Pre-Prep. The heads of department have a clear vision to extend within the setting the excellent practice that is demonstrated more consistently with the younger children, by developing more rigorous systems for planning, monitoring and evaluation.
- 6.9 There is effective partnership with parents to ensure that children are given appropriate support and intervention using internal resources or external agencies if necessary.

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

- 6.10 The quality and standards are good. Children make good progress in relation to their starting points. All make excellent progress in their personal and social development.
- 6.11 Younger children can manipulate a mouse to use a simple ICT game; they talk confidently about their experiences inside and outside school, clearly enjoy learning and make decisions confidently. They enjoy repeating songs and stories and sustain concentration.
- 6.12 Older children express themselves effectively using an increasingly wide vocabulary and sentence structure. By the end of Reception most children can read and write simple sentences, can count within 20 and manipulate single digit numbers. The children are able to make choices; when activities are carefully planned to provide exciting and thought-provoking activity the children focus well and have a sense of achievement.
- 6.13 Much has been achieved since the last inspection. The setting demonstrates good capacity for improvement through the effective partnership with parents, the imaginative use of the outdoor space, within and beyond the early years' environment

Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision other than take the action specified above.