



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION  
ST CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## St Christopher School

Full Name of School	<b>St Christopher School</b>
DfE Number	<b>919/6028</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>311062</b>
Address	<b>St Christopher School Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 3JZ</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01462 650850</b>
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Email Address	<b>school.admin@stchris.co.uk</b>
Head	<b>Mr Richard Palmer</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Bertie Leigh</b>
Age Range	<b>3 to 19</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>494</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (302 boys; 192 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>3-5(EYFS):31    5-11:        110 11-18:        353</b>
Number of Day Pupils	<b>Total:        460</b>
Number of Boarders	<b>Total:        34 Full:           7        Weekly: 27</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Katie Wright</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Boys and Girls</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>26 Jan 2016 to 29 Jan 2016</b>

## PREFACE

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](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.

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*. The inspection on which the report is based took place over a period of four continuous days in the school.

The previous ISI integrated inspection was in February 2010 and the previous ISI boarding intermediate inspection was in April 2014.

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

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

This inspection contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education, personal development and welfare.

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

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

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

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

**'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for children aged under two), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff, the chair of governors and other governors. Inspectors observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. They 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**

Mr Michael Buchanan	Reporting Inspector
Mr Andrew Carter	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Susan Clifford	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Michael Goodwin	Team Inspector (Head, Society of Heads school)
Dr Andrew Storey	Team Inspector (Senior teacher, HMC school)
Mr Jim Turner	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Ros Ford	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years
Mr Matthew March	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding

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

- 1.1 St Christopher School is a co-educational day and boarding school situated in Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire. It was founded in 1915 by members of the Theosophical Education Trust and since 1928 has welcomed pupils of all faiths and those of none. The school is a charity, overseen by a board of governors. It comprises of the junior school, including the Nursery, and the senior school which includes the sixth form. Boarders live in one of two houses within the school grounds.
- 1.2 The school aims to have a commitment to service, informality, healthy living and self-government. It also seeks to be a continuously developing community of children and adults working together in an open atmosphere, where all are valued as individuals and encouraged to develop in curiosity, competence, judgement, kindness and courage. Thus the school seeks to prepare the pupils for happy and fulfilled lives in the service of others. It aims for pupils to become self-disciplined and self-motivated individuals, who are independent learners and creative thinkers able to make informed choices.
- 1.3 A total of 494 pupils are on roll; 302 boys and 192 girls, including 31 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The junior school comprises 110 pupils. The senior school has 353 pupils, including the 34 boarders. Boarders are accommodated in 2 boarding houses on the school site, with 1 specifically for those in the sixth form.
- 1.4 The pupils' ability on entry varies widely but is generally above the national average; in the sixth form the pupils have ability which is similar to the national average. Pupils come largely from families with professional backgrounds in Hertfordshire and the surrounding counties including north London. Boarders are from UK or overseas families. The majority of pupils have a white British heritage, with some from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- 1.5 The number of pupils requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is 108. The school has 1 pupil with a statement of special educational needs. A total of 14 pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL); 7 of whom require specialist support.
- 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 NC equivalence are shown in the following tables.

**Early Years Foundation Stage Setting**

<b>School</b>	<b>NC name</b>
Monte	Nursery
K Group	Reception

**Junior School**

<b>School</b>	<b>NC name</b>
J Group	Year 1
H Group	Year 2
G Group	Year 3
F Group	Year 4
E Group	Year 5
D Group	Year 6

**Senior School**

<b>School</b>	<b>NC name</b>
I Group	Year 7
II Group	Year 8
III Group	Year 9
IV Group	Year 10
V Group	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13



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

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

- 2.1 Pupils of all abilities are well educated in accordance with the aims of the school. In the EYFS, most children achieve or exceed the expected level of development by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils in the rest of the school also achieve well, including those with SEND, EAL and the more able. Results at GCSE and A level are above average and reflect the pupils' good progress. Pupils listen well and are encouraged to voice and justify their views. As a result their oral contributions are often robust, thoughtful, considered, imaginative and articulate. Their good achievement is supported by an excellent range of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities, and by good teaching. They achieve most highly when challenged to think independently and to express their own opinions. Pupils are generally co-operative and compliant, demonstrating respect for silence when it is requested. A minority of the teaching does not stimulate nor successfully meet pupils' individual needs. When this happens, pupils' progress slows. Those in the sixth form achieve well because teaching enables them to be focused, self-motivated and independent.
- 2.2 The excellent personal development of the pupils is in response to the school's aim to develop pupils' commitment and self-government. It is supported by excellent pastoral care and rigorous attention to pupils' welfare, health and safety. All safeguarding matters are robust. Pupils throughout the school are happy and thoroughly enjoy coming to and, in the case of boarders, living at school. All have extremely well-developed and mature attitudes for their age. They behave with assuredness and self-confidence. Pupils express pride in, and an understanding of, the role of the school council which makes a significant contribution to school life. Pupils and adults work together to resolve conflicts when they occur. The regular designated silences are respectfully observed; pupils appreciate these quiet moments of contemplation. Great care is taken to help all pupils find an educational and personal path that will enable them to flourish.
- 2.3 The governance and senior leadership are good. Both carefully protect and maintain the distinctive nature and ethos of the school, demonstrating great respect for others and a commitment to open discussion. The leadership and management work closely with the governors in establishing the priorities for the school's future development and have responded positively to the recommendations from previous reports. They successfully provide support, challenge and stimulus in many areas. Leadership and management are effective in discharging their duties for child protection, welfare, health and safety throughout the school. Their oversight of the EYFS and junior school, however, is not fully developed and they have not yet ensured consistency in high-quality teaching. Links with parents are strong at all levels. The overwhelming majority of parents were highly positive about the education and support provided by the school.

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

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

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- 2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015.

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

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Improve the effectiveness of governance in the EYFS and junior school.
  2. Ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently high throughout the school.
  3. Ensure that leadership at all levels focuses even more rigorously on raising the pupils' academic achievements.

### **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 in accordance with the aims of the school to develop curiosity and independence in learning. From an early age they make good progress. Parents express strong satisfaction with their children's achievements.
- 3.3 The EYFS children are able to select their own activities and apply themselves to tasks for sustained periods. For example, they use programmable toys to plot a journey and manipulate a mouse to drag and drop items into the appropriate places. Hence they successfully develop their fine motor skills. The children are beginning to read well and can write short sentences using simple words. Their independence is well-established as observed during a session in the woodland classroom when investigating the natural surroundings. Children enjoy their learning. The majority reach, and some exceed, the expected levels of attainment at the end of Reception.
- 3.4 In the junior and senior schools, pupils achieve well in a range of subjects including technology and creative subjects. Pupils develop good levels of knowledge, understanding and skills. They listen well and from an early age they are encouraged to voice and justify their views. As a result, their oral contributions are often imaginative. They achieve most highly when challenged to think independently and to express their own opinions, for example in a sixth-form psychology lesson when examining the theory of attachment. Many pupils are adept at reading, and write with accuracy and fluency. Much written work is restricted to short notes and hence pupils' writing does not match their verbal dexterity. Pupils gain a secure grasp of mathematical principles as they progress through the school, and they use mathematical skills effectively. Information communication technology (ICT) is also used effectively for routine work such as note taking and research.
- 3.5 Pupils achieve a high standard in a wide range of extra-curricular activities including sport, music, drama and debating at both district and national levels. For example a senior school netball team were runners-up in the England emerging schools' netball championships, and pupils participate in county and national orchestras. A number of pupils are successful in graded music examinations from the junior school onwards, and pupils have successfully staged plays at competitive festivals. Pupils leave the sixth form with excellent skills and good qualifications which enable them to proceed to a variety of universities and other higher education institutions, some with demanding entrance requirements. They are very well prepared for life beyond school.
- 3.6 In the junior school, the pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to the average performance against national tests. On the evidence available from lessons, work books and interviews, pupils' attainment is judged to be good in relation to national age-related expectations. The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2012-2014. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results at GCSE have been above the national average for maintained schools. Results at A-level have been similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. Results improved further in 2015. As indicated by the results mentioned, all groups of pupils at all ages make good progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability. This is also demonstrated by standardised measures of progress.

- 3.7 Pupils have highly positive attitudes to learning. This contributes significantly to the good progress that they make. They engage with enthusiasm and an eagerness to contribute. Pupils enjoy working independently and collaborating; they do so with great success. They are generally co-operative; sixth form pupils in particular are focused, self-motivated and independent as demonstrated in the quality of their coursework across a range of subjects. Pupils have significant resilience and perseverance.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of the school's curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 The school successfully fulfils its aim to help pupils become self-disciplined and self-motivated individuals who are independent learners and creative thinkers.
- 3.10 The programme in the EYFS covers the seven areas of learning well and provides stimulating, enriching and challenging experiences. These are highly effective in promoting the children's language, communication, and personal, social and emotional development appropriate to their age. A good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities enables children to solve problems, create their own play and to explore their ideas both inside and outside. Children are helped to develop excellent speaking and listening skills, and to develop and extend their vocabulary. The curriculum is further enhanced by the work in the woodland classroom and by the use of specialist teaching in areas such as music, French and swimming.
- 3.11 In the junior and senior schools, the broad and balanced curriculum contributes positively to the pupils' achievements and has a substantial impact on their personal development. It is effective in covering the requisite areas of learning and is suited to all ages, abilities and needs including SEND and EAL. Expressive subjects are well represented across the junior and senior schools, providing pupils many opportunities to demonstrate independence and creativity. Pupils benefit from a wide range of options at GCSE and flexible choices in the sixth form.
- 3.12 Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) throughout the school provides thorough coverage of a range of topics. This includes work to ensure the promotion of British values, such as through debating and the presence and actions of the school council. An excellent balance of political views is encouraged, as is tolerance and acceptance. Clear, systematic and effective systems are in place to identify any pupil who may require additional help with learning. Excellent support is provided to these pupils and their progress is well measured and monitored.
- 3.13 Pupils in the senior school and sixth form benefit from helpful careers advice, conferences and a series of presentations from speakers, many of whom are former pupils of the school. Links with local, national and international groups, including for charitable fundraising activities, are a key feature of their school experience. For example, older pupils in the senior school participate in development projects in Ladakh and Rajasthan which are supported by the school. In addition, pupils throughout the school undertake regular residential trips including to countries such as Switzerland and Borneo.
- 3.14 The range of extra-curricular activities is wide and includes intellectual, creative, outdoor and sporting opportunities. Clubs on offer include book club, Japanese, rock club and climbing. The highly popular options system in the senior school allows pupils to experience activities such as cooking, kayaking and chess. All pupils have the opportunity to represent their school in sports matches.

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

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.16 Teaching across the school is effective in promoting the pupils' progress and fully supports the aims of the school, especially in developing curiosity to learn, independence and creative thinking. In their questionnaire responses, parents and pupils were very positive about teaching in the school. Pupils find the work interesting and all agree that teachers help them to learn. Teaching is careful not to undermine essential British values such as the right to individual liberty, and the rule of law.
- 3.17 Staff have a very good understanding of the requirements of the EYFS and how young children learn. They tailor the activities to suit each child and are expert at guiding children and knowing when to intervene. Good use is made of detailed observations to identify children's progress and the next steps in their learning. Children are encouraged to use the well-resourced outside areas to extend their learning in the woodland classroom.
- 3.18 Much teaching in the junior and senior schools is underpinned by a mutual understanding and genuine warmth between the teacher and the pupils. The teaching consistently and frequently creates an atmosphere in which pupils are able to reflect upon and express their considered opinions. For example, in a well-planned tutorial session the pupils were gently and warmly probed to contemplate ideas about personal identity. Pupils respond confidently, originally and thoughtfully, largely because of a palpable culture of trust and respect which is skilfully promoted by much of the teaching. Teaching in all subjects promotes tolerance and respect, and is non-partisan in the coverage of political issues.
- 3.19 Teaching demonstrates excellent subject knowledge. The most effective teaching fosters confidence in pupils, enabling them to express their ideas with eloquence. It provides good opportunities for independent work and collaboration. This allows pupils to demonstrate great interest and thrive on the interactions that arise. For example in the creative and technological areas, pupils respond positively, enthusiastically and appropriately to the many and varied opportunities. In these circumstances the teaching offers fitting support, guidance and challenge. It also provides well-considered interventions based on ambitious expectations.
- 3.20 The school has made some progress in response to the recommendation in the previous inspection to raise the quality of all marking to the standard of the best and to always include written guidance on ways in which pupils can improve their work. For example in a number of subjects in the senior school such as geography and English, cover sheets are added to pupils' work providing detailed feedback on the strengths of individual pieces, highlighting areas for improvement and carefully referencing these against assessment criteria. Much marking of pupils' work is highly congratulatory and supportive but does not provide sufficient guidance on how to improve. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a minority of pupils disagreed that homework helps them to learn. The inspection found that the range of tasks required of pupils in homework is appropriate.
- 3.21 Teaching generally manages learning well, moves at an appropriate pace, uses a range of strategies and styles, and makes good use of varied and well-produced resources, all of which ensures good progress by the pupils. Teachers have an excellent understanding of pupils' needs and often teaching is adjusted to cater for

them. In a minority of lessons, progress slows because time is not managed well. Teaching does not always provide sufficient support to pupils, or sufficient challenge for the more able. When this occurs, pupils have inadequate opportunities to demonstrate and test their knowledge. Overall, pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to write extensively or to consolidate their learning.

- 3.22 Teaching makes the provision set out in the statement of special educational needs. Specialist teaching of SEND and EAL pupils is perceptive, carefully tailored, and systematic; all are key factors in the good progress that these pupils make. This specialist support is highly valued by parents and pupils.

## **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 school actively promotes the personal development of the pupils. As a result, pupils develop a zest for life in accordance with the aims of the school. Parents and pupils are highly positive about this aspect of school life.
- 4.3 The children in the EYFS are happy and thoroughly enjoy coming to school. They are encouraged to learn together and from each other, through gentle reminders about sharing and helping one another. Children benefit from the many chances to initiate their own learning and are very confident about making their own decisions. Each child learns to take responsibility through taking turns to carry out simple tasks, such as being a messenger. Their behaviour is exemplary. Children respect each other's differences, and parents of different faiths and cultures are invited to the school to talk to them. British values are actively promoted, for example through the class rules which uphold respect and tolerance. Children in the Nursery and Reception mix together for outdoor activities including playtime and for the extended day sessions, meeting the recommendation of the previous report. They are well prepared for transfer to the next stage of their education.
- 4.4 Pupils develop excellent spiritual awareness. They appreciate non-material aspects of life, for example through their work in art, music and religious studies. They are self-aware and develop high levels of self-esteem. All pupils have extremely well-developed personalities for their age. They behave with assuredness and self-confidence. The regular silences, that are a feature of the school, are respectfully observed by all pupils. They appreciate these quiet moments of contemplation whenever they occur, such as during extra-curricular activities such as potholing, in the dining room during meals or in the daily morning meetings. Pupils are sensitive to non-material aspects of life and demonstrate well-developed aesthetic and spiritual awareness.
- 4.5 Pupils' moral awareness is excellent. They show a keen sense of fair play and right and wrong, and demonstrate appropriate understanding of the civil and criminal law of England. Pupils accept responsibility for their behaviour from an early age. School values are discussed, debated and agreed by all pupils to ensure collective understanding of expectations of behaviour. Adults and pupils work together to resolve conflicts when they occur. Pupils appreciate the circumstances of those less fortunate than themselves. For example, when senior pupils spoke of their visit to India they explained how money raised by the younger pupils was used to help those less fortunate. Pupils express a desire and a willingness to take action to make a difference.
- 4.6 Pupils demonstrate excellent social development. They relish the responsibilities which they have in the school and often initiate activities, such as organising charitable fundraising. Pupils contribute positively and enthusiastically to the lives of those living and working in the locality and beyond. The pupil officers of the elected school council provide a strong lead to others through considered, positive and decisive actions. All pupils show pride in, and understanding of, the school council which is central to the success and development of the school. The pupils' eloquence and reasoning are frequently demonstrated; they acted as advocates for

others in a debate regarding free speech. Pupils in all parts of the school are aware of the significant role of English public institutions in their lives.

- 4.7 Pupils' cultural development is excellent. They demonstrate an easy and considerate approach to people of different nationalities, and an understanding of cultures other than their own. Pupils have a thoughtful and perceptive awareness of British characteristics, such as those related to the democratic process, public institutions and services. This is increased by the responsibility that all members of the school community feel for the success of the democratically elected school council.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 Within the EYFS, all children are assigned a key person. These individuals act as excellent role models and build trusting relationships with the children, making them feel safe and secure. Adults provide clear but gently delivered guidance about the expected standards of behaviour, which results in a happy and busy atmosphere where children benefit fully from all that is provided. Children are helped to understand and manage risk, as observed in the woodland classroom when exploring. A healthy lifestyle is strongly promoted by the provision of freshly prepared lunches, the constant supply of fruit and by access to the outside areas, swimming pool and sports hall for exercise.
- 4.10 Throughout the junior and senior schools, teachers and other adults know the pupils extremely well and are adept at helping them to take advantage of the opportunities provided. These strong and positive relationships are central to the ethos and aims of the school, encouraging pupils to become self-disciplined and self-motivated individuals who are independent learners able to make informed choices.
- 4.11 The school has a highly positive ethos where pupils readily recognise that bullying or harassment of any kind is unacceptable. Inappropriate behaviour is challenged effectively. The PSHE programme is comprehensive and encourages pupils to develop as healthy, caring and considerate individuals. A healthy lifestyle is further encouraged and promoted through sports and other physical activities.
- 4.12 The school has an effective means for gathering the views of pupils through the elected school council which has the right to propose changes, such as the introduction of cookery, for consideration by the governors through a whole-school meeting
- 4.13 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.



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

- 4.14 The contribution of the arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.15 The arrangements are fully in line with the school's aims for maintaining pupils' safety and welfare. The welfare of the children in the EYFS is promoted fully and their safeguarding is a high priority.
- 4.16 Arrangements for safeguarding are systematic and well implemented. The governance and leadership of the school ensure that the requirements for checking the suitability of governors, staff, supply staff, contractors and volunteers are met fully and consistently in line with the official guidance. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Governance expertise ensures a robust annual review of safeguarding. All staff are appropriately trained in child protection, including in identifying and preventing radicalisation. Day-to-day oversight of safeguarding is highly effective with good and regular co-ordination between the staff involved and excellent use of outside agencies.
- 4.17 The governing body takes appropriate steps to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. Fire drills are undertaken at regular intervals in all sections of the school and suitable records are kept. Robust and effective systems are in place to monitor health and safety, including the regular review of risks associated with activities such as outdoor pursuits and spaces such as the swimming pool. Suitable risk assessments are in place for off-site visits and other hazards.
- 4.18 The school site is well-maintained with close attention paid to accessibility, including to the outdoor spaces and perimeter. The arrangements are carefully adjusted to take into account the age of the children. Deficiencies are rapidly rectified; during the inspection high winds damaged some flashing and this was quickly repaired.
- 4.19 Health and safety arrangements are meticulous. Staff hold up-to-date first-aid certificates including a sufficient number of staff with paediatric first-aid training. Detailed monitoring of indicators such as water temperatures and a systematic approach to improvements maintain a strong culture of careful evaluation and improvement. The care of sick and injured pupils is effective, including for pupils with SEND. The facilities for this purpose meet the requirements.
- 4.20 The admissions register and attendance registers are appropriately completed. Registers are suitably stored for three years.

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

- 4.21 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.22 Boarders have an excellent level of personal development. They are confident and erudite, able to relate comfortably to their fellow boarders both older and younger. Boarders live harmoniously together and report that whilst disagreements happen, they are successfully resolved through discussion and negotiation. They are encouraged to develop as individuals and to be themselves. Boarders have positive relationships with the adults with whom they come into contact, and demonstrate affection for both their house and their school which they happily refer to as their term-time home. Older boarders socialise comfortably with those younger. Sixth form boarders provide sound role models, sometimes as peer mentors. Relationships between all age groups are relaxed and positive. Boarders are confident that their views carry weight and that changes can be driven by them. Boys and girls feel well looked after and safe in their boarding environment, and that they have many adults to whom they can turn if the need arises. The school's comprehensive policies contribute well to the effective running of boarding and to the welfare of the pupils. Boarding at the school is a positive experience for both boys and girls.
- 4.23 Boarding provision and care is excellent. All boarders receive formal induction upon arrival. House parents and the resident staff know the boarders in their care well. Academic and boarding staff work well in tandem. The houses have a homely and community atmosphere, and boarders speak warmly of the care that they receive. A good range of extra-curricular and curricular activities are on offer at lunchtime and after lessons. Boarders also take part in evening activities such as swimming, thus meeting one of the recommendations of the previous inspection. Boarders have a variety of ways to demonstrate independence and contribute to the running of the house such as in regular house meetings; some of which are formal and overseen by house staff or run by the boarders themselves. Boarders are able to contact families through the house pay-telephone, their own mobile telephones and the internet. Boarding staff frequently contact parents by email, telephone or text message. Medical facilities and protocols are of a high order and houses are well furnished, with each boarder accommodated in a single room which can vary in size. Common room areas are well furnished and comfortable, whilst suitable washroom facilities are available throughout the house. Personal laundry and bedding is washed for younger boarders, older boarders carry out their own laundry. Boarders are able to purchase necessary personal items locally. Food is nutritious and boarders appreciate the recent change in school policy that has improved variety at breakfast and supper.
- 4.24 The effectiveness of arrangements for boarders' welfare and safeguarding is excellent. Clear and comprehensive policies are implemented fully, including thorough procedures for staff recruitment. The positive and collaborative nature of the boarders and their carers means that bullying is unusual. Boarders report that difficulties are discussed openly amongst themselves and that house staff offer unobtrusive guidance leading to resolution. Safeguarding training of staff is thorough and up to date, and they are aware of procedures including guidance on preventing radicalisation. Behaviour is good and is underpinned by the school's ethos of tolerance. Boarders demonstrate an awareness of the need to report concerns and are also aware of the relevant external agencies, including the independent listener. Risk assessments are regularly carried out. Welfare, health and safety is regularly monitored in order to keep boarders safe. Boarders leaving

the houses sign in and out, and staff are aware of the procedures for finding a missing boarder.

- 4.25 Leadership and management of boarding is excellent. Senior leadership are actively involved in the life of boarding, thus supporting the aims of the school. Policies and procedures are of a high quality, covering all aspects of boarding and carefully implemented. Parents' and pupils' questionnaire responses exhibited a positive commitment to the school's ethos and distinctive boarding philosophy. Houses are run well with a sensitive touch, permeated by a palpable sense of harmony. Staffing levels are good, with house parents and up to five additional staff living within the house thus ensuring a strong, supportive adult presence. New boarding staff are comprehensively inducted and team meetings within the houses are regular and meaningful. The academic and social needs of boarders are well known and records are appropriately kept both within the house and centrally. There are close links between the houses and the senior personnel for safeguarding within the school. Recommendations from the previous inspection have been successfully acted upon.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The governing body is highly effective in protecting and maintaining the distinctive nature and ethos of the school as a community of pupils and staff working openly together. Alongside the senior leadership they are diligent in planning for the future and invest carefully in staff, accommodation and resources to the benefit of pupils and boarders, as demonstrated within classrooms and in the level of adult support provided to pupils.
- 5.3 The governors know the school well as a result of their regular presence in the school and the link arrangements between individual governors and many areas of the school such as boarding. They successfully provide support, challenge and stimulus in many areas. Governors are less successful in this regard within the EYFS and junior school, where their monitoring is less effective. They have not been fully successful in ensuring that the quality of teaching is consistently high across the school.
- 5.4 Governors are effective in discharging their duties for child protection and for welfare, health and safety throughout the school. The governor with expertise in safeguarding is helpfully involved in the monitoring of the policies and procedures, and in working with the school's senior personnel for safeguarding. The governors as a whole carry out a thorough annual review of safeguarding.
- 5.5 The governing body has responded successfully to the recommendations from the previous inspection, for example by providing improved resources within the EYFS and boarding and by ensuring more challenging tasks for the more able pupils.

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

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians is good.
- 5.7 Leadership and management successfully supports the aims and distinctive ethos of the school. The senior leadership and management of the school is effective in enabling the school to be a continuously developing community of children and adults. This community is greatly enriched by the clear respect for others and a commitment to democratic values. The school has a clear educational direction, most particularly in ensuring excellent personal development for the pupils and further improving their academic outcomes.
- 5.8 Leadership in the EYFS ensures that children enjoy a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment and that they are fully safeguarded in a welcoming, safe and stimulating setting. Policies are thorough and regular monitoring ensures that they are implemented effectively. Appointment checks ensure that only suitably qualified adults, who update their training regularly, work with children. The leadership and management ensure a strong emphasis on self-evaluation so that areas for development are quickly identified and action is taken to improve. The educational programmes are carefully monitored and used to check the progress of

each child. Staff meet regularly to discuss policies and review the assessment procedure. The EYFS staff are well qualified and their performance is formally monitored so that areas for professional development are identified. The system for supporting staff through supervision is in place but it is not formally recorded. Children in the EYFS understand the importance of diversity and promoting British values. Following recommendations from the previous inspection, ICT is used regularly by children and integration and communication across the EYFS age groups is much improved.

- 5.9 The leaderships of the junior and senior schools work closely together to ensure a successful transition of pupils from the junior to senior year groups. Leadership and management have not focused sufficiently rigorously on ensuring consistency in the quality of teaching across the junior and senior school, and hence the achievements of the pupils are restricted in some areas. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses parents expressed extremely positive views about the school and its leadership, with a large majority indicating that the school is well led and managed and that they would recommend the school to other parents.
- 5.10 Clear policies are in place and these are successfully implemented to ensure that the school is well run and that measures required to safeguard the pupils are robust and effective.
- 5.11 The leadership and management work closely with governance in establishing the priorities for the school's future development. A strong commitment to include all in this process is evident through the school's system of self-governance, parents' surveys and staff involvement. The use of the elected pupil council in discussion of all aspects of school life is a significant feature of leadership of the school. Senior and middle managers are fully engaged in self-evaluation and all staff are encouraged to contribute. Departmental, junior and senior school planning is mostly thorough with a strong link to whole-school objectives. The successful implementation of these plans varies across the junior and senior schools particularly with regard to ensuring the quality of teaching.
- 5.12 The school successfully recruits and appoints well-qualified teachers and other members of staff at all levels from the EYFS onwards. Senior leadership are suitably trained for their roles in meeting the needs of pupils in areas of safeguarding and safer recruitment. Robust arrangements are in place for the checking of suitability of staff, governors and volunteers to work with children. Staff training is rigorous for their roles in safeguarding and welfare, health and safety.
- 5.13 Links with parents are excellent at all levels, including boarding. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses and in conversation, parents of those in the EYFS are overwhelmingly positive about the setting and the support provided to their children. They particularly value the friendly atmosphere of the setting and the accessibility of all the staff in the EYFS. They respond positively to the suggestions of the school to extend their children's learning at home, and enjoy volunteering to help on school outings, attending lunch and their involvement in the Parents' Circle. Detailed learning journeys, written reports and regular consultation evenings keep parents well informed about the progress their children make against the early learning goals.
- 5.14 Elsewhere in the school, parents receive good opportunities to be actively involved in the work and progress of their children and in the life of the school. Volunteers are welcomed and the school has a fruitful partnership with parents. In their

questionnaire responses, the overwhelming majority of parents were highly positive about the education and support provided by the school for the children and the opportunities provided for parental involvement. They were extremely satisfied with the information and communications provided by the school. These parents were equally positive about the levels of progress made by the children, the extra-curricular programme on offer and the standards of behaviour achieved.

- 5.15 Responses to the questionnaire also indicated that the vast majority of parents were pleased with the timely manner in which the school responds to questions and by the way in which it deals with concerns. The school has a suitable complaints policy which is implemented appropriately. The Parents' Circle meetings and parents' forums provide ample opportunities to discuss issues with senior leaders and managers. These are a distinctive feature of the school, engaging parents in discussion on such topics as diversity and assessment. An annual survey of parents by the school provides a further opportunity for issues to be raised, with the school responding positively, for example in seeking out ways to assist parents of children who are new to the school.
- 5.16 Parents of current and prospective pupils are provided with a comprehensive range of information as required. Current pupils' parents receive regular reports on their children's academic progress. These are detailed, providing information on academic performance and personal development as well as areas for future improvement.

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