



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

THE NEW BEACON SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

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The New Beacon School

Full Name of School	The New Beacon School		
DfE Number	886/6017		
Registered Charity Number	307925		
Address	Brittains Lane Sevenoaks Kent TN13 2PB		
Telephone Number	01732 452131		
Fax Number	01732 459509		
Email Address	admin@newbeacon.org.uk		
Headmaster	Mr Michael Piercy		
Chairman of Governors	Mr Rupert Horner		
Age Range	4 to 13		
Total Number of Pupils	402		
Gender of Pupils	Boys		
Numbers by Age	4-5 (EYFS):	42	
	5-13:	360	
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	398	
Number of Boarders	Total:	4	
	Full:	0	Weekly: 4
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Judy Arney		
EYFS Gender	Boys		
Inspection dates	05 Feb 2013 to 08 Feb 2013		

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 2007.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. 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 members of staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the boarding house and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr David Bunkell	Reporting Inspector
Mr David Aylward	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr David Edwards	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Miss Karen Tuckwell	Team Inspector (Head, GSA/IAPS school)
Mrs Sue Bennett	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Eithne Webster	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The New Beacon School is a day and boarding preparatory school for boys aged from 4 to 13, situated on the outskirts of Sevenoaks in Kent. The school moved from elsewhere in the town to purpose-built premises on its present 21-acre site in 1900. Since then, other facilities and buildings have been added within the grounds. Previously privately owned, New Beacon Educational Trust was established in 1967 with a board of governors who are also the trustees.
- 1.2 The aims of the school are that boys should be happy and healthy, feel safe, enjoy and achieve in both work and play, and be positive about school, the wider community and life in general. The school seeks to ensure that every boy who enters the community is valued, regardless of academic ability. It sets out to enable each individual, through good teaching and encouragement, to reach his full potential academically against the background of a broad and balanced education. The school intends to promote in all its activities, by teaching and example, respect for learning, consideration for others and self-esteem.
- 1.3 Currently, 402 pupils attend the school. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) consists of forty-two boys in three Reception classes within the Pre-Prep building, with access to an outdoor learning area. Boarding is on a flexible basis from Monday to Thursday nights. The boarding accommodation is on an upper floor of the main house, comprising three dormitories, with eighteen beds in total. At present, forty pupils in Years 6 to 8 board regularly, the majority for one or two nights weekly, with four boarding throughout each week.
- 1.4 Admission to the school in the Reception year is not selective on the grounds of academic ability. The ability profile of the school is above the national average. Few pupils are of below average ability, and in some year groups a notable proportion of pupils are of well above average ability. The school has identified 61 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who receive support as necessary. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. In total, 58 pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL), and a few are assisted with their English. The majority of pupils are of white British or European heritage, with a few from Asian or black British origin. Almost all live within ten miles of the school.
- 1.5 Since the previous inspection a new headmaster has been appointed, the management structure has been revised and the school has been restructured into four distinct sections: Pre-Prep (Reception to Year 2), Junior School (Years 3 and 4), Middle School (Years 5 and 6) and Senior School (Years 7 and 8).
- 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 achievement of the pupils is excellent. A strong contribution is made by pupils' extremely positive attitudes to learning; they approach every task enthusiastically. The pupils move from the school to a number of selective independent senior schools, often achieving scholarships. Good teaching also contributes to this success, although in some lessons pupils have little opportunity to show initiative, or to be responsible for their own learning. Some marking is very thorough and includes much well-deserved praise and advice for improvement, but on other occasions it is purely congratulatory. Pupils are successful beyond the classroom, with significant achievement in sport, music, art and drama. Extra-curricular activities contribute highly to school life. Enhancements to the excellent curriculum by trips and visitors add to the school's success. Achievement in the EYFS is excellent. All the adults have a detailed knowledge of how young children learn, and this experience is used well when planning for the learning, development and care of all the children, and in carrying out these plans.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent. Many pupils show great maturity in the way in which they care for each other and look after any visitors. Relationships within the school are extremely positive: adults serve as excellent role models, providing exemplary pastoral care for the pupils. Pupils are able to take on responsibilities within the school. Arrangements for health and safety are good. Safeguarding the welfare of the pupils is of paramount concern to all staff, and when it was identified that some checks on a very small number of recently recruited staff had not been carried out before appointment immediate remedial action was taken. The availability of high quality boarding is much appreciated by senior pupils and their parents, and serves as effective preparation for those who may be considering boarding at senior school.
- 2.3 The governors provide good oversight of the school: they discharge most of their statutory duties diligently, and they have clear vision for the school's future development. Good leadership and management enables day-to-day school life to proceed efficiently, although a new rigorous system of staff appraisal has yet to be established fully. In responses to their pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were largely supportive of all that the school does for their children. Some felt that information about their children's progress and future educational needs is somewhat limited and inspectors found that some reports had not provided sufficient individual guidance. One of the three recommendations of the previous inspection has been met in its entirety, regarding developing links with the community. The recommendation regarding opportunities for pupils to exercise initiative and pursue independent enquiry, and that relating to staff appraisal, have both been addressed, but further work remains to be done in each case.

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 all required checks on the suitability of staff are made before they start work in the school [Part 4, paragraphs 19.(2)(a), (c), and 22.(3)(b), (d), under Suitability of staff and proprietors, and for the same reason, Part 3, paragraphs 7.(a), (b), and 8.(a), (b), and National Minimum Standards 11 and 14.1].
- 2.5 The school does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2011, as described above.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action point, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Identify further opportunities for pupils to extend their independent learning skills.
 2. Keep parents fully informed of their children's progress and give sufficient guidance about future educational needs.
 3. Ensure that the staff appraisal system is implemented in its entirety.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The school fully meets its aim to enable each individual to reach his full potential academically, whilst receiving a broad and balanced education. The pupils are successful in making links across the curriculum, using their skills in a wide variety of situations, recalling facts skilfully and employing them successfully in a range of contexts. For example, pupils in Year 1 applied their knowledge of phonics when decoding words on a mathematics worksheet. In Year 4, pupils showed a good understanding of rules for the formation for plurals. The pupils articulate their opinions confidently during lessons and listen attentively, both to their teachers and to each other. They read and write fluently and show themselves capable of logical and independent thought. The pupils apply mathematical principles successfully and engage enthusiastically in physical activities. They show high levels of creativity: they are skilful when composing and performing musically and on stage. Pupils of all ages are adept in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and apply these skills and knowledge in support of their wider learning.
- 3.3 The range of significant achievements is broad. In the EYFS, high standards were seen in all subjects, particularly in numeracy and literacy, where excellent progress has been made, relative to the children's starting points. They can recognise numbers, many children adding and subtracting figures up to 20. This was observed when lining up to go to another class.
- 3.4 As they progress through the school, pupils with EAL achieve in line with their peers, as do those with SEND. In the EYFS, all children receive the support they need to progress, including those who require external assistance such as speech therapy or English language support.
- 3.5 Performance in Common Entrance examinations is excellent; pupils often gain scholarships to their chosen senior schools and admission to schools which have high standards of entry. They enjoy success in local and national competitions, and achieve a notable range of academic, musical and sporting awards, including gold awards in a national junior mathematics challenge. A small number of pupils were selected recently for the National Youth Orchestra, and the under-12 team won county cricket championships.
- 3.6 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations. The pupils follow a suitably demanding curriculum and, on leaving the school, they all gain entrance to their chosen, academically selective, senior schools.
- 3.7 The pupils make good progress overall, compared with others of similar ability nationally. The good progress of pupils with SEND was observed in their participation in lessons and in discussion, building self-confidence and the determination to succeed. Only the youngest pupils with EAL require linguistic support, and these pupils make good progress as they move through the school. The most able pupils make good progress overall, though this is limited in some lessons where they undertake the same tasks as all other pupils, and are not given opportunities to develop individualised learning. In the EYFS, children's educational

progress is outstanding, and the skills and attitudes they develop prepare them very well as they move to the next stage of their education.

- 3.8 The pupils are interested and motivated learners, who apply themselves enthusiastically to their learning. They are confident in their individual abilities and gain satisfaction from what they do, as illustrated by their eagerness to receive 'quarter plus' rewards and awards for endeavour. They work successfully as individuals and with others, take initiative for their learning and organise their work well. In the EYFS, the children are enthusiastic learners and gain pride and confidence in their achievements.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.10 This supports the school's aims to enable pupils to acquire new skills in and out of the classroom and to develop self-confidence through a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and suitable for all ages and abilities. As pupils move up through the school, the curriculum is geared towards the requirements for examination success at the age of 13, although in Year 8 the timetable includes a generous allocation of time for the arts and physical activity. In the EYFS, there is full coverage of all the required areas of learning, and the new requirements for the EYFS curriculum have been fully implemented.
- 3.11 Curricular documentation is thorough and useful. The division of the school since the previous inspection into four discrete sections has led to improvements in the way in which the curriculum is planned. The recent statutory changes to EYFS requirements have resulted in a review of arrangements, ensuring that by preparing for the end-of-year assessment all children are enabled to reach the expected levels of development. French is taught from Year 5. In questionnaire responses, some parents expressed the view that modern foreign languages are not taught sufficiently early. Evidence from older pupils' achievements in French did not support this view. An excellent programme of citizenship, personal, social and health education (CPSHE) encourages pupils to gain an understanding about themselves, and promotes tolerance and understanding of those from other cultures.
- 3.12 The curriculum is enhanced by a wide-ranging programme of extra-curricular activities and school trips, such as theatre visits, specialist workshops and lectures, and residential outings to places within the UK and abroad. These include regular international performance tours by the chapel choir, ski trips and an annual trip to France. Visitors are invited to share with pupils their specialist skills, experiences and interests.
- 3.13 Sport, art, music and drama are of high quality. Many pupils are members of choirs and ensembles. Sport is given a high priority in the activities programme. Most pupils attend a wide range of clubs during the day and after school, often leading to certification. The excellent indoor and outdoor facilities of the school are put to very good use. Pupils have the experience of performing in plays throughout the school, and enjoy the opportunity of exhibiting their art in the local community.
- 3.14 The school has fully implemented the recommendation of the previous inspection to continue to develop links in order to contribute to and benefit from stronger engagement with the local and wider community.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.15 The quality of teaching is good overall.
- 3.16 Throughout the school, the majority of teaching is of at least good quality, and a significant proportion is excellent, while in a similar number of lessons, the quality of teaching was at best sound. When teaching is of high quality, it has a significant positive impact on the pupils' progress and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and contributes to the high standards of their achievement, reflected in Common Entrance results and scholarships to senior schools. It supports the school's aim for good teaching and encouragement to enable each pupil to reach his full potential.
- 3.17 The teachers are well qualified, enthusiastic and hard working. They demonstrate excellent subject knowledge and they know their pupils extremely well. They manage behaviour very effectively and, throughout the school, mutual respect is evident between teachers and pupils. In the EYFS, this enables children to be happy and enthusiastic. Those who require reassurance are supported sensitively. They have much affection for their school, and are assured that staff care for them and keep them safe.
- 3.18 Teachers give generously of their time. They plan their work carefully, based on pupils' needs, and in general give regular and consistent attention to how pupils of all abilities and backgrounds can develop fully. Lesson planning, individual education plans and specialist support for pupils with SEND ensure that all pupils make good progress in all areas of the curriculum.
- 3.19 Teachers use a variety of methods within lessons, often ensuring that pupils are fully engaged and well motivated as they complete their tasks. The previous inspection recommended extending the challenge and opportunity for pupils to exercise initiative, to think for themselves and to pursue independent enquiry. However, few opportunities are identified to encourage independent learning and to develop personalised skills for learning, due in part to the demands of examination preparation. Use of the main library is based on a schedule of class visits, and for some ICT lessons. Teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively.
- 3.20 In the EYFS, teachers use a wide range of strategies and varied tasks and activities to promote all children's learning, including those with SEND. Skilled teaching provides motivating activities, as observed in a lesson recalling some of the highlights of the previous day's theatre visit, aided by a presentation on an interactive whiteboard with photographs of the children throughout the trip. In the setting, very effective use is made of specialist teaching and resources, such as in music, ICT and physical education where children enthusiastically copied penguins' movements to construct a penguin dance.
- 3.21 Teachers throughout the school demonstrate excellent management of time in many lessons. They use praise, encouragement and reward frequently, and this adds to the pupils' enjoyment and application in lessons. The most successful teaching is typified by brisk pace, enthusiasm, encouragement, clear planning and an awareness of the needs of pupils of all abilities.
- 3.22 Classrooms are light and airy, and meet the needs of the pupils well. Rooms are well resourced and, in most lessons, teachers produce effective materials that support teaching and learning very effectively. Pupils work very co-operatively together and learn from each other, as demonstrated in a Year 8 mathematics

lesson where they solved various probability problems in pairs. Teaching support is a strong feature of the school, and teaching assistants work very effectively, under the direction of teachers, to support individuals and groups of pupils as needed.

- 3.23 Marking of work is regular, with good guidance for individual development. Some marking is limited to praise, but the best identifies clear steps for improvement and provides for evaluative comment from pupils. Pupils of all ages commented in discussion on the helpfulness of the most effective marking, and on the benefit of oral feedback on their work.

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' considerable spiritual awareness is developed through chapel services and assemblies, where ethical and spiritual aspects of life are explored. In an assembly, pupils were keen to contribute their thoughts on the meaning of co-operation, and how compromise could be used as a means to resolve conflict. They are confident and self-aware, appreciating non-material matters, such as the progression of spring bulbs despite the cold weather.
- 4.3 The pupils show excellent moral development, demonstrating high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem. The school fulfils its aims for pupils to learn to live as members of a community with good manners and respect for others. Pupils understand the school's systems of rewards and sanctions, and have a strong sense of right and wrong. Senior School pupils are given responsibilities in roles such as prefects, and company (house), music and sport captains. These duties are carried out with a sense of purpose. The pupils are keen to gain rewards for their company for good work, behaviour and service. Pupils have awareness of those less fortunate than themselves and of the wider world, and support a number of overseas charities. They raised sufficient money to buy a tractor for people in Tanzania. In addition, the school encourages pupils to donate any supermarket fund-raising vouchers to local maintained primary schools.
- 4.4 Pupils' social development is excellent, as they have a strong sense of community. Pupils in Year 7 enjoy hearing readers from Pre-Prep classes, or reading to them; they show care and attention to the youngest pupils. The pupils learn about the democratic process through elections to the junior school council, and in the Senior School through consideration of party political manifestos in CPSHE lessons. The newly formed Eco-committee has fostered a keen interest in environmental matters, and has started a series of related assemblies to consider the plight of endangered animals. In the EYFS, children are confident when talking to adults, and work and play co-operatively. They see friends in other classes and their teachers during the school day, becoming fully prepared for the next stage of their learning. Pupils learn to respect the opinions of others during 'circle time', CPSHE lessons and form time.
- 4.5 Pupils show an excellent level of cultural awareness. They respect those of different cultural backgrounds, showing a good understanding of an array of faiths and traditions. Their growing knowledge is fostered through subjects such as religious studies, geography and art. Displays seen around the school include a Hindu 'shrine', paintings in the style of Van Gogh and artefacts from a variety of international festivals.

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

- 4.6 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.7 This reflects the school's aim to educate pupils in a well-ordered environment in which they can feel both happy and safe, whilst enjoying full engagement in school life. For pupils of all ages, staff provide a high standard of support and guidance. Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils themselves are excellent. The pupils are polite and courteous. Pupils care very well for each other, for example in the Junior School, where high visibility tabards identify 'play pals', helping to maintain peaceable playtimes. Pupils know who to turn to if they need help. In addition, they may express concerns indirectly through the 'private eye' box or 'worry box' as appropriate. Any messages received are dealt with promptly. A small minority of pupils in their questionnaire responses considered that the school does not seek or act on their opinions. Inspectors found that the junior school council provides an effective forum for pupils' views to be heard, and several suggestions have been implemented. In repeated discussion with pupils of all ages, no evidence was found to support this aspect of the questionnaire findings. In the EYFS, the children feel secure and happy, speaking with affection of the adults in school as well as their friends. They enjoy regular routines, and are proud to be chosen as the day's special helper. Staff in the EYFS know individuals very well, each child being assigned to a key person. This ensures that the needs of all children are met, including those with SEND or EAL.
- 4.8 Clear policies are successfully implemented to promote good behaviour and to guard against bullying and harassment. The parents' questionnaire responses showed that bullying or poor behaviour are perceived as a concern by a few parents. This was not reflected in the questionnaire responses of the pupils themselves, almost all of whom considered that bullying is extremely rare, and that when it does occur it is dealt with quickly and effectively. Inspection evidence supported the pupils' views. All staff are fully aware of any issues, facilitated by the use of 'B-Line', an electronic means of disseminating timely pastoral information, in addition to frequent meetings. Behaviour is exemplary in the EYFS; children know what is and what is not expected. If the event that they become over-exuberant, sensitive questioning enables them to describe why that behaviour is not acceptable and they are able to apologise.
- 4.9 The pupils' healthy development is enhanced by well-balanced, nutritious meals, adapted with great care for individual dietary needs. Some negative comments were made about the food in response to the parents' and pupils' questionnaires. The inspectors' experience did not support these views, nor did that of the pupils with whom they ate. The pupils' physical well-being is also facilitated by ample provision for exercise, maximising use of all outside play and learning areas. Pupils are aware of health risks, seen, for example, in a Year 7 lesson regarding the dangers of smoking. In the EYFS, children have many opportunities to exercise, both in outdoor learning areas and in curriculum provision, where they develop skills and proficiency in a variety of sports and games. They understand how they can aid their own healthy development by washing hands, drinking water and making healthy choices at lunch, with the reward of stickers for eating vegetables. The children are becoming independent, both in the classroom and in their personal hygiene.

- 4.10 The school has in place the requisite plan to improve access for pupils with SEND. This includes the intention to improve existing buildings for those who have restricted mobility, installing further stair lifts similar to those in newer buildings.

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

- 4.11 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.12 The policy to safeguard the welfare of pupils is comprehensive, and accurately reflects current practice in all day-to-day matters. Designated people ensure that all teaching and non-teaching staff have a thorough knowledge of their responsibilities for safeguarding, and attend regular training updates. New staff receive high quality safeguarding induction training. Effective links with the local safeguarding children board, alongside designated governors for health and safety, and child protection, further ensure the highest priority for pupils' welfare. The vast majority of recruitment checks on new staff are rigorously undertaken, however a very small number of recent recruitment checks relating to staff from overseas had not been made in their entirety.
- 4.13 The excellent health and safety policy is a highly detailed document, which ensures all aspects of pupils' safety. The fire policy clearly defines emergency practice procedures. Fire drills are regularly conducted in all buildings on the school site; these are meticulously logged and any issues promptly addressed. Additionally, fire and electrical equipment is systematically tested and any deficiencies quickly remedied. Risk assessments are highly detailed for activities and off-site visits, ensuring that the well-being of pupils is always considered. At all times, the welfare of all children in the EYFS is actively promoted to ensure their well-being.
- 4.14 Excellent provision is made for pupils who become ill during the day or night. Caring matrons ensure that pupils are very well looked after until their parents can collect them. Most staff are qualified first aiders and some, working with younger pupils, have paediatric training. Medical records are comprehensive, and any accidents appropriately reported. Excellent channels of communication between the matrons and the teaching and non-teaching staff ensure that individual pupils' medical needs and any requirements for those with SEND are well provided for. Admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained and stored.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.15 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.16 The boarders are happy, and greatly enjoy their boarding experiences. They are confident individuals, proudly showing visitors around their school. A strong sense of community exists within the boarding environment. Boarders of all ages interact extremely well and are tolerant towards the individual needs of each other, such as sensitively explaining instructions to friends during prep time. They willingly take on responsibilities, helping with supper routines and keeping boarding areas tidy. A culture of trust and respect is clearly evident amongst boarders, demonstrating their high levels of integrity.
- 4.17 The boarders' behaviour is exemplary, and they understand simple sanctions and appreciate the guidance provided by rules. Consequently, the boarding provision successfully achieves the school's aim to enable pupils to mature socially, emotionally and academically, in preparation for their future education. The boarders feel safe and treated fairly. In conversation, they commented on the high

levels of support that they receive from the staff who care for them, for both their academic needs and personal guidance. The 'private eye' box ensures that any concerns receive immediate attention, and the boarders clearly understand that they can contact nominated adults outside school for advice. The boarders stressed that incidences of bullying are extremely rare and any disagreements are resolved amicably. The boarders have many opportunities to contribute their views, such as at the nightly meetings with senior house staff, and they commented that the staff are always willing to listen to their suggestions. During discussions, boarders expressed that boarding helps to develop personal independence and prepares them for their future.

- 4.18 Boarding staff provide exemplary individual support and guidance, which have a significant impact on boarders' well-being, ensuring their health and safety. Strong links exist between the academic life of the school and the boarding provision, ensuring equality and continuity for boarders. House staff know the boarders extremely well and provide excellent levels of support for them as individuals.
- 4.19 Caring, experienced matrons oversee the boarders' health. Following recommendations from the last Ofsted boarding inspection, stringent policies and procedures are now in place to support the boarders' welfare and medical needs. The boarders may see a local doctor or other health professionals as necessary. The school keeps comprehensive records for each boarder's medical history, including parents' permission for emergency treatment. Clear procedures relate to confidentiality, self-medication and use of household remedies. Effective arrangements support boarders who become unwell at night. Nutritious and varied menus enable the boarders to eat healthily, and the provision for specific dietary requirements is extremely good. After the end of the school day, the boarders enjoy tea with the house staff during an evening briefing. The toast and hot chocolate snack before bedtime is particularly popular. A minority of questionnaire responses indicated that the boarders cannot prepare their own snacks, but they said that they never go to bed hungry.
- 4.20 During the evenings, an appropriate balance of study and free time ensures that the boarders have excellent opportunities to relax and to enjoy the use of the school's extensive facilities. An exciting evening activity programme includes many physical pursuits and enables boarders to experience a rich breadth of learning beyond the classroom. Boarders cite the activities as one of the most enjoyable components of the boarding provision, together with the chance simply to unwind.
- 4.21 The boarding accommodation is of excellent quality, having been considerably refurbished since the previous inspection. All areas, including washrooms, are clean and well maintained. The dormitories are homely and welcoming, with ample provision for storage of personal effects. The staff look after boarders' valuables when not in use. The boarders may personalise their own areas with posters and items from home. The lounge area is well resourced, and provides excellent opportunities for boarders to enjoy the company of their friends during the evenings. Arrangements for personal laundry needs are thorough and any personal supplies are replenished when needed. The boarders have excellent opportunities to contact their families during the evening. Strong channels of communication between parents and house staff ensure that the boarders' needs are supported extremely well. The school's commitment to inclusivity ensures that parents of boarders are warmly welcomed to all social events, including plays, concerts and sporting fixtures.

- 4.22 The recommendations from the previous inspection regarding fire apparatus checks and records have been fully met. All boarding staff have job descriptions, which support their respective roles. A range of high quality policies and procedures, together with a consistently rigorous training programme, ensures that staff have a thorough understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. Designated people oversee welfare arrangements and have established effective links with the local safeguarding children board. Staff are vigilant in their management of behaviour and anti-bullying procedures. No incidences of serious misbehaviour or sanctions have been recorded.
- 4.23 The safety of boarders is given high priority. Regular risk assessments ensure that all environments are safe for the boarders' use, including robust checks for on-site activities and out-of-school visits. Boarders are extremely well supervised, and effective roll calls, taken before and after supper, ensure that staff know boarders' whereabouts at all times. Fire practices take place regularly, including at night, ensuring that all boarders are fully aware of emergency evacuation procedures.
- 4.24 Boarding is a valued part of school life, and its notable success is promoted by the significant dedication of the house staff. This commitment fully reflects the aims and ethos of the school. Regular meetings are held to review individual staff members' boarding practice and clearly establish priorities for future improvement or training. The school's website, together with supporting documentation, ensures that parents, including those new to the school, receive comprehensive guidance on all aspects of the boarding provision. Policies relating to boarding management are thorough, regularly reviewed and well understood by staff. Responses to pupils' and parents' questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive regarding the boarding provision; parents remarked on the excellent support and care that boarders receive from house staff, whilst pupils commented on their enjoyment of boarding, and particularly, the variety of evening activities. Inspection evidence confirms these views.

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 provides effective oversight of all sections of the school, in line with the aim that pupils should be happy and healthy, feel safe, enjoy and achieve in both work and play, and be positive about school, the wider community and life in general. The governors discharge well their responsibilities for educational standards, financial planning, and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. A system of sub-committees ensures that all relevant matters are considered, and all governors receive detailed information prior to each of the full governing body meetings. Planning for future development is imaginative but realistic.
- 5.3 The governing body has a good insight into the working of all parts of the school and is generally effective in exercising a monitoring role, providing support, challenge and stimulus for growth and improvement. In the EYFS, leaders and teachers speak highly of the involvement of the governors in their part of the school. The well-resourced rooms and facilities in the EYFS are testimony to the support that is provided, so that the children benefit from a welcoming and stimulating environment.
- 5.4 Governance has been effective in discharging its responsibilities for nearly all statutory requirements, including the annual review by the full governing body of safeguarding and child protection arrangements throughout the school. However, a very small number of recent recruitment checks on staff had not been fully completed before appointment.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is good.
- 5.6 The division of the school into four age-specific sections works effectively in terms of day-to-day organisation and administration. This is a change to the management structure since the previous inspection, in that section heads now oversee much routine organisation. Monitoring of the curriculum is developing, helping to improve standards of teaching and learning. The members of the senior management team have clear individual responsibilities, and carry these out to good effect. All other staff clearly know which senior manager to approach for any matter, and all staff feel well supported. This contributes to the successes of the school, and its aim to create a well-ordered environment. Senior staff ensure that resources are provided and maintained, and that all policies are updated as necessary. These are largely implemented effectively: some checks on a very small number of staff recently recruited from overseas had not been carried out before appointment, and immediate and decisive action was taken to remedy matters as speedily as possible. All other recruitment procedures for staff, governors and volunteers have been carried out meticulously.
- 5.7 Clear educational direction is provided by leaders and managers at all levels, contributing to the good quality of education provided for the pupils, and enabling the excellent standards that are achieved in their personal development. Self-evaluation

is a key part of the responsibilities of leaders and managers, and is carried out comprehensively. In response to a recommendation from the previous inspection, a thorough appraisal system for teaching staff has been implemented. Although seen to be effective and beneficial, it has yet to be applied in its entirety for all relevant staff.

- 5.8 In the EYFS, a rigorous system of self-evaluation is used to ensure a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment, and to set challenging targets for improvement. These encompass the curriculum, assessment, training and other necessary areas. The EYFS staff work co-operatively, and effective systems of performance management are in place, including peer observations where teachers can work alongside each other to compare and improve practice. The regular self-evaluation and assessment processes enable existing high standards to be maintained, policies and procedures to be fully implemented, and areas for further development to be identified.
- 5.9 At all levels, priorities are set and followed through to their successful conclusion. High quality staff are recruited. They are seen to be well motivated, and are trained to meet the needs of all pupils. This includes induction training, and thereafter regular further training in safeguarding, and welfare, health and safety.
- 5.10 The school seeks to have a constructive relationship with all parents. Parents have opportunities to be actively involved in the work and progress of their children, especially in the case of the youngest pupils. Parents support school events, for example by attending sporting fixtures, concerts and theatrical productions. The majority of parents are entirely satisfied with the education and support provided for their children, and with the quality of communication with the school. However, in response to the questionnaire, a very small minority of parents expressed the view that they would like to have better or more frequent information about their children's progress. Reports are issued twice a year. Inspectors found that some lack clear advice about how to improve, or offer insufficient individual guidance, with very similar wording found in a number of reports.
- 5.11 Communication of EYFS staff with parents throughout the year is excellent. In exemplary 'home achievement books', parents are provided with a letter within a book, detailing what has been covered in school during the week. Through this, parents help their children to relate what they do at home to what they have learned at school. Parents clearly value this means of communication, and write enthusiastic replies in the books. They speak highly of the personal and social development of their children at this early stage of their education.
- 5.12 Any concerns from parents are handled with care. Many straightforward matters are dealt with through simple exchange of email between home and school, and the school's website is a useful tool for notifying parents of any immediate changes to arrangements, for example during the recent snowfall. In accordance with the school's published procedures, a careful record of any complaints is kept, although in recent years all complaints have been resolved at the informal stages of the process.
- 5.13 Parents of current and prospective pupils are provided with relevant information about the school, with all requisite material published on the school's website.

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