



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

EDGE GROVE SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Edge Grove School

Full Name of School	Edge Grove School
DfE Number	919/6002
Registered Charity Number	311054
Address	Edge Grove School High Cross Aldenham Watford Hertfordshire WD25 8NL
Telephone Number	01923 855724
Fax Number	01923 859920
Email Address	enquiries@edgegrove.com
Head	Mr Ben Evans
Chair of Governors	Mrs Jean Scott
Age Range	3 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	419
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (256 boys; 163 girls)
Numbers by Age	2-5 (EYFS): 60 5-11: 294 11-13: 65
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 403
Number of Boarders	Total: 16 Full: 9 Weekly: 7
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Gill Emmerson
EYFS Gender	Boys and Girls
Inspection Dates	22 Sep 2015 to 25 Sep 2015

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. 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 boarding intermediate inspection was in October 2012 and the previous ISI integrated inspection was in November 2009.

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 and with the chair of governors and other governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Pat Preedy	Reporting Inspector
Mr Brian Hays	Team Inspector (Director of Co-Curriculum, IAPS school)
Mr Michael Higham	Team Inspector (Former Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mrs Virginia Jackson	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Elizabeth King	Team Inspector (Former Head of Pre-Prep, IAPS school)
Mrs Linda Smallwood	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Bridget Forrest	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Edge Grove School is a co-educational day and boarding preparatory school situated 15 miles from central London in Aldenham, Hertfordshire. It was founded in 1935 as a preparatory school for boys and became co-educational in 1999. The school caters for pupils from the ages of 3 to 13, and is set in 28 acres of parkland. Accommodation is arranged in and around the original house. The school is a registered charitable trust, administered by a board of governors. It celebrates its Christian heritage whilst embracing the religious and cultural traditions of all pupils. Since the previous inspection many of the school's facilities have been upgraded, including refurbishment of the science laboratories, the provision of an adventure playground and tennis courts, and new facilities for home economics, textiles and graphic design.
- 1.2 The school aims to foster self-confidence and a lifelong love of learning within a secure and happy environment in which pupils feel safe, nurtured and valued. It seeks to ensure that all pupils reach their full potential by promoting high standards of academic achievement through innovative, reflective teaching, focused assessment and a rigorous curriculum. It sets out to encourage pupils to discover and develop their interests, including service to the school and beyond. The school also seeks to promote spiritual and moral awareness, underpinned by the values of respect, empathy and kindness, to support all pupils to become mature, engaging and thoughtful people.
- 1.3 There are currently 419 pupils on the school roll, comprising 256 boys and 163 girls. The school is divided into the Pre-Prep, which includes Nursery through to Year 2, and the Prep School, which is sub-divided into Lower School for Years 3 and 4, and Upper School for Years 5 to 8. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), for children up to the age of 5, comprises 60 children. There are 80 pupils in Years 1 and 2, 113 pupils in Year 3 and 4, and 166 pupils in Years 5 to 8. Pupils come mainly from professional or business families and from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. The school provides boarding on a full, weekly or flexible basis for pupils from the age of seven. Boarding accommodation is located in the main house. At the time of the inspection there were 48 boarders, including 32 boarding on a flexible basis, of whom 29 were boys and 19 girls.
- 1.4 Results of standardised tests across the school indicate that the ability profile of the school is above the national average. A total of 48 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 15 receive specialist support in school. No pupil has an education, health and care plan. Support is also provided for the 19 pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). Most pupils remain at the school until the age of eleven or thirteen, transferring mainly to independent day or boarding schools, or to maintained grammar schools.
- 1.5 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 school is highly successful in meeting its ambitious aims. Most pupils gain their first-choice place in competitive entry to senior independent schools, and each year a considerable number are awarded academic, art, music or sporting scholarships. At all stages of the school, the quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent. Key factors supporting high achievement are the extensive and innovative curriculum, pupils' outstanding attitudes towards their learning and excellent teaching. The quality of a few activities is not in line with the excellent standard of the majority. Teachers throughout the school plan and assess carefully, and use a wide range of teaching methods. All pupils, including the more able and those with SEND or EAL, are mostly well supported, making at least good, and often excellent progress. In a small minority of lessons the available information to support pupils with SEND is not used effectively to provide targeted intervention. Staff mostly implement the school's marking policy, but do not yet consistently provide pupils with the next steps for learning. By the end of the EYFS, the majority of children meet the expected levels of development for their age, with many exceeding them. The recommendations from the previous inspection to develop the outdoor learning environment and the key person system have been fully met.
- 2.2 The quality of pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils are exceptionally polite, caring and well behaved. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. From an early age pupils understand the need for rules, contributing maturely to discussions, including the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy. Welfare, health and safety are excellent. Appropriate health and safety checks are carried out. As required from the previous boarding inspection, new staff do not take up appointment until a check against the barred list has been made. The pupil council and tutor time are being further developed in order to ensure that pupils have a strong voice. The quality of boarding is excellent. Pupils are positive about their boarding experiences, including the opportunities provided for activities and the development of their leadership skills. The school promotes a healthy and active lifestyle.
- 2.3 The effectiveness of governance and leadership and management is excellent. The ethos, values and strategic direction of the school are clearly articulated, underpinned by comprehensive educational and operational policies. Governors are highly committed to the school, with a clear focus on the quality of teaching and learning. Following a recommendation from the previous inspection, a coherent system for the monitoring of teaching and learning and the sharing of best practice has been implemented. The wide range of duties and responsibilities undertaken by academic and pastoral senior leaders means that they do not have sufficient time to monitor all areas, or to fully support the many excellent initiatives that are being developed. Links with parents are excellent, and in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire and in discussions they expressed high levels of satisfaction with 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

1. Allocate sufficient time to academic and pastoral leaders in order that they are able to effectively monitor and fully support the many excellent initiatives that are being developed.
2. Consistently use the excellent additional needs information provided to staff to plan and implement targeted support during lessons.

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 effectively fulfils its aims to promote high standards of academic and personal achievement. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all parents stated that they were pleased with the progress made by their children. Key factors supporting high achievement are the extensive and innovative curriculum and the pupils' excellent personal development.
- 3.3 Achievement of children in the EYFS is excellent. All children make strong progress in relation to their starting points. The majority of children reach, and several exceed, the Early Learning Goals. Nursery children are confident and articulate. They understand and use a wide range of vocabulary when thinking critically, and they solve problems during their child-initiated outdoor learning. By the end of the year, all children make a good attempt to write simple words, to match items to numbers and to solve simple addition sums. Reception children use tablet computers competently and independently to play problem-solving games. They learn their sounds and use them to decode simple words. By the end of the year, they write in sentences and make a logical attempt to spell words independently. They add numbers up to 20. Children with SEND or EAL are given the individual support they need to enable them to make excellent progress.
- 3.4 As they move through the school, pupils read and write with increasing fluency and for a wide range of purposes. The library is well used, supporting both reading for pleasure and the development of research skills. Writing in all subjects is of a high standard, showing clear evidence of creativity. Artistic skills are exceptionally well developed, as the high standard of artwork produced in lessons and on display clearly demonstrates. Pupils' creativity is also showcased in music, and in drama productions that include all members of the school. The pupils' physical skills are highly developed in a wide range of activities, including outstanding use of the woodland learning environment.
- 3.5 Pupils make excellent use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum to support their learning. They demonstrate an excellent ability in number, using a variety of methods for problem solving and applying mathematics in a practical way. Understanding of scientific concepts and investigative skills are also highly developed. Pupils are articulate, and highly effective listeners. They think critically and logically, responding thoughtfully to their teachers and to one another.
- 3.6 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but on the evidence available from the results of standardised tests, the destinations of leavers, discussions with pupils, observation of their learning and scrutiny of their written work, it is judged overall to be high in relation to national age-related expectations. This level of attainment, as judged, combined with detailed tracking of pupils' progress over time, indicates that pupils make at least good and often excellent progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. More able pupils make excellent progress because they are provided with challenge, support and guidance in most subjects. Pupils with SEND make excellent progress in relation to their starting points, as do those with EAL. The early and accurate identification of special educational needs, combined with appropriate intervention for individuals

and small groups, underpins the frequently rapid progress of these pupils, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

- 3.7 Pupils mostly achieve high standards in a range of extra-curricular activities. There are numerous individual and team successes at local and regional level. Many pupils take part in the choir, and many achieve distinction and merit awards in Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music examinations. Several pupils also gain merits and distinctions in London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art awards.
- 3.8 Pupils' are caring, polite and exceptionally well behaved. They are diligent in their approach to lessons and their behaviour is exemplary. Throughout the school pupils are confident and clear in class discussions, and are able to work constructively, conscientiously, independently and as members of a group. Most pupils gain their first-choice place in competitive entry to senior independent schools, and each year a considerable number are awarded academic, art, music or sporting scholarships.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.10 The school successfully meets its aim to provide a wide range of opportunities that enable pupils to develop their interests and experiences. Almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires stated that their children are offered an appropriate range of subjects and areas of experience. The school's guiding principles of creativity, independent thinking and global responsibility are embedded throughout the curriculum, contributing strongly to pupils' excellent achievement. In discussions, pupils stated how much they enjoy the range of the curriculum in each subject.
- 3.11 The EYFS provides a broad, creative curriculum throughout every area of learning, enhanced by specialist teaching in music and physical education (PE). The excellent balance of child-initiated and adult-led learning supports and challenges all children. The stimulating outdoor experiences, which foster independent learning and calculated risk taking, are a particular strength. Children begin to understand how to use positive learning behaviours to further their learning. Reception children enjoy a variety of extra-curricular activities, such as ballet and football.
- 3.12 The school has undertaken an extensive review of the curriculum. The adoption of a number of different curricular programmes, including a woodland activities curriculum, combined with the provision of high quality resources, ensures that coverage exceeds the requisite areas of learning, that the curriculum is suitable for all ages and abilities, and that there is a smooth transition between age groups. The personal, social, health and economic education programme contributes effectively to the pupils' personal development. The timetable has been revised, enabling more effective coverage of the curriculum during longer lessons. Work is carefully planned across each year group, including cross-curricular themes, coverage of political issues, implementation of British values and a balanced presentation of opposing views. Extension work for the more able is integrated into planning and effectively implemented across the curriculum. Appropriate plans are devised for pupils with SEND and for those with EAL. These have clear targets for improvement and are effectively implemented individually, in small groups and in most lessons.
- 3.13 In Years 1 and 2, form teachers are responsible for planning and teaching the majority of academic subjects, with specialist teaching for French, PE and music. Written homework is gradually introduced, and all pupils benefit from daily home

reading and learning spellings at an appropriate level. This organisation enables teachers to ensure a smooth transition from the EYFS whilst preparing pupils for the rigour of subject teaching as they move through the school. The outdoor learning curriculum, provided by qualified and enthusiastic staff, and swimming off site also enrich Pre-Prep provision. From Years 3 to 8 the curriculum is increasingly delivered by subject specialists, whose subject knowledge greatly enhances the quality of the topics covered. Careers education for Years 7 and 8 is enriched by visits from carefully selected outside speakers. The setting and grouping of pupils enable staff to adapt the curriculum in order to meet the needs of all age groups and abilities.

- 3.14 Music, art, sport and technology feature strongly. All pupils benefit from playing sport. The curriculum is supported by an extensive activities programme. Pupils have opportunities to take part in a wide variety of pursuits, including cookery, choir, street dance, riding, classical Greek and philosophy. All pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire stated that they are able to take part in a wide range of activities and clubs. The majority of these are of excellent quality, but this standard is not entirely consistent.
- 3.15 The curriculum is enhanced by regular visits to places of educational interest, field trips, visitors to the school and use of the school grounds for fieldwork. Links with the community and regular sports tours, such as the cricket tour to Sri Lanka and the netball tour to St Vincent, further enrich the curriculum and the pupils' personal development.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.16 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.17 The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection, and is a key factor contributing to the pupils' excellent progress and achievement. Pupils stated during interviews and in questionnaire responses that staff know them very well and help them with their work. These positive relationships support the aims of the school to understand and meet all individual needs, and to provide positive, reflective teaching.
- 3.18 In the EYFS, staff work as an enthusiastic team to motivate and inspire children. High quality teaching guides children to become inquisitive thinkers. Staff know when to intervene with pertinent questions to encourage critical thinking and problem solving. All staff share an in-depth understanding and knowledge of the EYFS, and have high expectations of children. Practitioners plan together using assessment data systematically to inform their planning, so that children can achieve the next stage in their learning. An excellent range of imaginative resources helps to develop active learning. The recommendation from the previous inspection to develop the outdoor learning environment and increase daily access for all children, with an emphasis on encouraging independent, problem-solving, inquisitive learners, has been fully addressed.
- 3.19 Throughout the school teaching creates a climate of mutual respect and tolerance. Teachers are well qualified. The majority use their excellent subject knowledge to inspire pupils to attain high standards. Teaching assistants are well deployed and effectively support learning. Lessons are well planned and excellent use is made of the high quality facilities. Pupils are given many opportunities for independent study and research. In the large majority of lessons, time is well managed. Clear learning

intentions and targets support pupils in making excellent progress. Teachers set a variety of tasks, with appropriate use of worksheets and ICT. This was clearly demonstrated in a Year 8 French class where the teacher had created an application on an electronic device with French spellings of varied complexity. This enabled pupils to work at the appropriate level for their ability, and to challenge themselves to reach the next level.

- 3.20 The individual needs of pupils with SEND or EAL and those who are more able are clearly identified, and a carefully monitored intervention programme has been established. These pupils are clearly recognised in lesson plans, and in the majority of lessons their needs are well supported. In a small minority of lessons, the available information to support them is not used effectively to meet their specific needs.
- 3.21 Following a recommendation from the previous inspection, a coherent system for the monitoring of teaching and learning and the sharing of best practice has been implemented across the school. The school has a clear, structured and well-developed assessment system, including a range of nationally standardised tests. Data from these, combined with teacher assessments, is collated and analysed to track progress, to set targets, and to plan interventions for individuals and groups. As a result, the tracking of pupils' progress and attainment throughout the school is excellent. The school has a clear marking policy that includes constructive comments from staff and peer reviews. Marking effectively provides feedback to all pupils with regard to their achievement of the learning intentions, though it does not consistently indicate pupils' next steps for learning.

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 In the EYFS, children are very well prepared for moving from group to group. From an early age, children develop an awareness of the feelings of others. They learn to be independent and to make choices. Nursery children lay the table and pour their own drinks. Reception children choose when to have their snacks and record that they have had them. There are dedicated areas in each classroom where children can talk about their feelings. Children learn to celebrate each other's cultures, for example when celebrating Chinese New Year, Diwali and an international day. They fulfil the staff's high expectations for behaviour. They learn about fundamental British values, making decisions together in role play and learning why rules are necessary.
- 4.3 The pupils' spiritual development is excellent. The school has a Christian ethos, and assemblies provide a clear sense of worship and spirituality. Pupils regularly choose to sit in the school's beautiful remembrance garden, enabling them to deepen their self-knowledge through quiet reflection. Throughout the school, pupils feel valued, known and respected. The guiding principles of the school are attractively displayed, enabling pupils to reflect upon their personal qualities and values.
- 4.4 Pupils develop excellent moral awareness, and have a strong sense of right and wrong. They are polite and proud of their school, abiding by its code of conduct and guiding principles. Pupils display exemplary behaviour, understanding a need to treat people without discrimination. Year 8 pupils demonstrate concern for others by completing a period of community service. Fund-raising activities enable pupils to respond to the needs of those less fortunate than themselves.
- 4.5 Pupils' social development is excellent. They demonstrate respect and care for others, celebrating individual and team success, and greeting each other, staff and visitors politely. Acts of kindness are recognised in the form of 'golden moments'. In pre-inspection questionnaire responses and during discussions, most pupils stated that they are given opportunities to take on responsibility. They develop their confidence through assuming roles that promote perseverance and effort, such as captaining sports teams, becoming a prefect, mentoring younger pupils and belonging to the house system, and through performing for their peers in school productions, serving on the charities' committee and volunteering to be 'eco warriors'. The house mentoring system enables older pupils to be involved in the support of younger pupils, reinforcing the school's strong sense of community.
- 4.6 The school actively promotes fundamental British values in lessons and through encouraging a culture of respect and tolerance for other faiths and traditions. Pupils learn to appreciate the need for rules and acquire an understanding of the way English law seeks to promote a harmonious and tolerant society. Activities such as electing pupil council members and applying for the job of house captain enable pupils to understand democracy. Pupils' understanding of public institutions and services is promoted through school events, a trip to Parliament, mock elections, and visits by the police, fire service and a magistrate.
- 4.7 The pupils' cultural development is excellent. The diverse school community supports pupils in understanding cultural differences and in developing global

awareness. Pupils celebrate different faiths, alongside visits to a variety of places of worship. Artistic displays and a programme of drama and musical productions broaden and enrich pupils' cultural experiences. Opportunities to participate in residential trips and extra-curricular activities further develop the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world.

- 4.8 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent by the time they leave the school. Their confidence, self-esteem, respectfulness and intellectual curiosity clearly demonstrate that they are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.

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

- 4.9 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.10 The school fulfills its aim to provide a secure and happy environment in which pupils feel safe, nurtured and valued.
- 4.11 In the EYFS, staff provide a caring and purposeful environment where positive relationships and respect are paramount. The recommendation from the previous inspection to develop the key person system in order that aspects of the role are shared amongst all staff has been fully met. Key people develop strong and supportive relationships with parents. They help children to settle happily, develop good hygienic practices, eat healthily and be physically active.
- 4.12 The school's atmosphere is friendly and calm. Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves are supportive and based upon mutual respect. A small minority of pupils stated in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire that they do not feel the school asks for their opinions and responds to them. The school is aware of this, and is further developing the pupil council and tutor time as a way to ensure that pupils have a strong voice and that issues are discussed promptly and effectively.
- 4.13 Staff have a strong commitment to working with parents in order to develop a shared understanding of managing the pastoral issues that pupils may face, including bullying, cyber-bullying and harassment. In pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a small minority of parents and pupils felt that the school does not deal well with cases of bullying. Discussions with staff and a wide range of pupils, together with close scrutiny of records, indicated that the school takes accusations of bullying seriously and appropriate action. Pupils who are not meeting the school's expectations are supported to improve their behaviour through reflective breaks or targeted support. Where necessary, effective, clear sanctions are imposed. Individual behaviour plans detail communication with parents and support to be given, taking into account any SEND or circumstances. A small minority of pupils expressed in pre-inspection questionnaire responses the view that rewards are not fairly given. However, during interviews, pupils did not confirm this view and were extremely positive about rewards, including merits and 'golden moment' awards.
- 4.14 The school promotes a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are very active, participating in sport most days and playing outside as much as is possible. School meals and snacks are well liked, and the school nurse ensures that pupils select a balanced meal at lunchtime.
- 4.15 The school has a comprehensive and effective plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.16 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.17 The school community is highly committed to safeguarding and implementing procedures should a concern arise. Almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire stated that their children are happy and feel safe at school. The school has fully met the requirement from the previous boarding inspection to ensure that new staff do not take up appointment until a check against the barred list has been made. Policies and administrative procedures have recently been updated and are fully implemented in line with the context of the school and official guidance, including that relating to guarding against extremism. Admission and attendance records are accurately maintained and correctly stored throughout the school, including the EYFS. Pupils' attendance is monitored carefully, and thorough checks are made if a pupil is absent and the school has not been notified in advance.
- 4.18 Safer recruitment procedures are secure, and the designated individuals for child protection, employees and others who have contact with the pupils receive training at the required intervals. Links have been made with local child protection agencies and these are being further developed. The designated individuals communicate regularly with staff, ensuring that any changes to legislation and policy are immediately shared and implemented. Comprehensive records show that staff follow up any concerns raised by parents or pupils, including instances where there are accusations of bullying and where pupils are in need of care and emotional support for various other difficulties. An excellent range of resources is provided to support pupils in keeping safe. These include providing each pupil with named adults in their 'circle of care', contacts for independent listeners, 'worry' boxes and a comprehensive e-safety programme.
- 4.19 The health and safety committee takes seriously its responsibility to ensure that statutory and regulatory requirements are met without delay, including appropriate provision for children's welfare in the EYFS and for those pupils with SEND. Comprehensive risk assessments are in place across the school, and for trips and activities. All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. Procedures are practised regularly and accurate records kept.
- 4.20 Appropriate numbers of staff are trained in first aid, including paediatric first-aid training for EYFS staff. A comprehensive medical policy details appropriate protocols for the administration and recording of medicines, and procedures for dealing with accidents, emergencies and illness. Staff are well informed with regard to individual needs and conditions, and pupils who become ill, including boarders and children in the EYFS, are well cared for by highly skilled, caring and sympathetic staff.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.21 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.22 The school has responded positively to the regulatory non-compliance identified during the previous inspection and to the recommendations. The required recruitment procedures have been fully instigated, effective communication systems have been put in place between day and boarding staff to ensure that medical and welfare issues are shared efficiently at handover, and new beds of appropriate size for older pupils have been provided.
- 4.23 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. The aims of boarding, available in the boarding handbooks, on the website and notice boards, are clearly achieved, and boarding house values and behaviours are familiar to all of the boarding community. The boarders are drawn from a variety of backgrounds, and all feel welcome and accepted. The 'buddy' system, helpful boarding monitors, child-friendly handbooks and welcoming encouragement from the staff ensure that new boarders are fully inducted and settle quickly. They develop confidence and flourish in a secure and healthy environment where the staff know pupils well and where their individual welfare and well-being needs are identified and fully met.
- 4.24 Boarders are confident, polite and articulate. They speak of their school and of boarding with pride and enthusiasm. A strong sense of mutual respect pervades the whole school and permeates the boarding house. Relationships between staff and boarders, and amongst the boarders themselves, are warm, sincere and based on trust. In questionnaire responses, a few pupils professed not to enjoy boarding. During the inspection, all boarders interviewed said that they enjoy boarding very much and would recommend it to friends.
- 4.25 In response to the questionnaire, a few boarders expressed that the school does not ask for their opinions and respond to them. During the inspection, inspectors found evidence of several strategies and opportunities for the exchange of views. Boarders interviewed said that they know that their opinions matter and they have influence through 'dorm meetings', the pupil council, suggestion or 'worry' boxes and informal conversations with house and other staff. In addition, a very small number indicated that they do not know what to do if they are unhappy or worried. In conversations with boarders, inspectors found that all pupils have a wide choice of people to whom they can turn, including the independent listeners and other adults listed in the 'circle of care'.
- 4.26 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. Pupils are positive about their boarding experiences, including the opportunities provided for activities and the development of their leadership skills. Boarders are encouraged to be fit, healthy, considerate and kind. Their behaviour is excellent and they thrive in the nurturing atmosphere of the boarding house. The accommodation has recently been reorganised and refurbished. Dormitories are comfortable, spacious and homely. Bathrooms are clean, practical and well equipped, and ensure the boarders' privacy. There are spaces in which boarders can relax and socialise, as well as a variety of play areas and activities, including board games, televisions and DVDs. A landline telephone booth and access to mobile telephones and visual communication systems ensure ease of communication with parents. Boarders benefit from the wide-ranging extra-curricular provision of evening clubs and weekend boarding activities. The programme is being continually improved and further developments are in process. In response to the questionnaire, a small minority of boarders said

that they are not happy with the balance of free time and activities in the evenings and at weekends. During the inspection, a few boarders said that they would like more free time in the evenings. Inspection evidence supported the majority view that there is sufficient choice of activities, and an appropriate balance of free time and organised pursuits.

- 4.27 Catering provision is excellent. Menus are varied and nutritious, and take into account individual dietary needs. The dining room is attractive and well managed. The meals provided are of high quality and much appreciated by the boarders. In questionnaire responses a small minority of pupils were not satisfied with the availability of snacks and drinking water outside mealtimes. During the inspection, inspectors found that sufficient healthy snacks and water are appropriately made available.
- 4.28 Medical matters are overseen by a well-qualified nurse, in conjunction with the school doctor. Medication is stored and administered with care. Good communication is made between the nurse and the house staff in order to ensure suitable care of any boarders who are ill. Privacy and confidentiality are respected. Record keeping is thorough. The day accommodation includes both the light and airy nurse's surgery and a comfortable rest room. There are two pleasant sick bay rooms in the boarding house if boarders who are ill need to stay overnight or to be looked after in house. Appropriate care is taken of the boarders' possessions. Laundry provision is effective. Boarders are discouraged from bringing valuables to school, but items such as mobile telephones and passports can be stored securely. Personal and stationery supplies and uniform items are provided as necessary whilst boarders are at school.
- 4.29 The arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are excellent. Robust procedures promote the safety of boarders and are managed effectively. Thorough anti-bullying and behavioural policies and procedures ensure that the infrequent incidents are swiftly investigated and resolved. The school's safeguarding policy and procedures are known by all staff and governors. Excellent relationships are evident across the community, and boarders feel secure and confident that any concerns are taken seriously and dealt with promptly. Each individual is known by staff and their whereabouts are carefully monitored. Effective procedures ensure that if any boarder is not where expected, he or she is swiftly found. In response to the questionnaire, a few boarders said they do not feel safe in their boarding house. However, during the inspection, a few pupils explained that they sometimes startle each other by referring to strange noises, but knew that they were actually safe.
- 4.30 The school's database is used effectively for record keeping and communications between staff and parents to ensure the well-being and safety of boarders. Relationships with parents are strong and communication is straightforward and frequent. Appropriate risk assessments are in place. Comprehensive health and safety and fire safety policies and procedures are efficiently implemented. Regular reviews and evaluation inform improvement plans.
- 4.31 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of boarding provision is excellent, and is underpinned by strong relationships between the house staff, senior leaders and governors. These groups are committed to regular reflection and review of policies and procedures, and work effectively together to produce a coherent plan for development and improvement. This self-evaluation benefits from the involvement of a dedicated governor, together with the interest and support of the governing board. All house staff have job descriptions, thorough induction,

mentoring and regular review. The questionnaire responses of the boarders' parents were overwhelmingly positive.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The governing board has a wide range of experience, including educational, financial and legal expertise. Some of the governors are former pupils, or parents of current or former pupils, which further strengthens the composition of the board. Comprehensive induction training on appointment and regular update training thereafter ensure that all governors develop and maintain the skills required to effectively govern the school, including its EYFS provision.
- 5.3 Following a survey of parents and rigorous self-evaluation, the board has developed a clear vision and strategic plan, underpinned by the school's values and aims. Governance demonstrates a determination to support the leadership of the school in providing excellence in all aspects of school life.
- 5.4 Governance diligently discharges its responsibility for standards, financial planning, and investment in staff, accommodation and learning resources through the full board, the finance, estates and education committees, and the appointment of governors with particular responsibility for the EYFS, welfare, health and safety, and boarding. Governors have ensured that recommendations from previous inspections have been fully met. The leadership provides detailed reports for governors, and staff are invited to give presentations. Governors rigorously monitor all aspects of the school, including finance, staffing, pastoral education, the EYFS and boarding. They regularly visit lessons, and all take part in the annual review of child protection, which includes ensuring that policies and procedures are updated and implemented, appropriate training is undertaken and the single central register of appointments is accurately maintained.
- 5.5 Governors exercise prudent financial management, and their deep understanding of the school's history and aims has enabled them to oversee the coherent development of its buildings and grounds, with a focus on providing an excellent indoor and outdoor learning environment. This involves the management of extensive projects such as the construction of new science laboratories and technology facilities.
- 5.6 Staff and parents appreciate the frequent attendance of governors at formal and informal events. Governors provide both support and challenge, and are a significant and integral part of the school's organisation. They are highly committed to continuous improvement, excellence and the school's long-term future.

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

- 5.7 The quality of leadership and management is excellent.
- 5.8 The overwhelming majority of parents stated in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire that the school is well led and managed. There is a collegiate, reflective and enthusiastic approach to the leadership of the school. This significantly contributes to the successful management of the whole school, and to the fulfilment of its aims.
- 5.9 Working closely with governors and all staff, senior leaders have led a comprehensive process of self-evaluation and school development planning. The ethos, values and strategic direction of the school are now clearly articulated, underpinned by comprehensive educational and operational policies. Respect for others within a democratic society is highly valued throughout the school. Rapid progress has been made in many areas, with a clear focus on the quality of teaching and learning. Monitoring includes work scrutiny, classroom observation and an excellent tracking system used by many teachers to provide information for planning, specific intervention and target setting. Although there is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, monitoring has yet to be extended to include the quality of this provision.
- 5.10 The wide range of duties and responsibilities undertaken by academic and pastoral senior leaders means that they do not have sufficient time to monitor all areas, or to fully support the many excellent initiatives that are being developed. The governors are aware of this imbalance and are reviewing ways of enhancing leadership in order to provide sufficient time and expertise to take the school to the next level of its development.
- 5.11 The senior management team encompasses leaders from all areas of the school, including the bursar. There has been a strong determination to fulfil previous inspection recommendations to strengthen the role of middle managers and subject leaders in order to bring procedures and practices in all departments to the standard of the best. Lower and Upper School phase leaders meet regularly to ensure the efficient running of their departments and a smooth transition at the end of each stage, including transfer to senior school. During discussions, subject leaders displayed great enthusiasm for their subjects, sharing comprehensive policies, schemes of work, systems for monitoring and examples of excellence produced by a wide range of pupils.
- 5.12 The EYFS has a strong leadership team. Self-evaluation underpins excellent practice, and leaders have a fervent shared vision for the setting which emphasises furthering learning opportunities and improving outcomes for children. The setting's policies, including safeguarding, are thorough, reflecting the latest statutory requirements. They are consistently implemented across the setting and closely monitored. The role of key people has been enhanced since the previous inspection. They are able to demonstrate that the setting's regular professional supervision process helps them with their role. Staff have many opportunities to attend courses and share new knowledge, which contribute positively to their teaching, and consequently to children's learning and development. Activities, displays and practice which actively promote equality, diversity and British values are embedded throughout the setting. The setting has productive partnerships with

parents and external agencies, and through appropriate intervention, children are helped to receive the support they need.

- 5.13 The school is successful in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified staff. Systems have been improved since the previous inspection, ensuring that all of the required checks and records are in place. All staff receive appropriate induction training and regular professional development in matters of safeguarding, and welfare, health and safety. A comprehensive system of appraisal, peer observations, training and sharing of effective practice has been put in place as part of the school development plan.
- 5.14 Links with parents are excellent throughout the school. In discussions parents expressed strong satisfaction with the education and care their children receive, greatly appreciating the school's family atmosphere and 'open-door' policy. Communication is excellent. Staff in every area of the school are easily accessible to parents in person, or by telephone or email. Parents have many opportunities to be actively involved in the work and progress of their children. They receive information through the school's regularly updated website, weekly newsletters and information letters regarding the curriculum, social media and text messages. Parents are able to attend annual information evenings, regular consultations to discuss the progress of their children and a variety of workshops. Reports to parents are informative and thorough, and include specific targets for improvement. Parents stated in pre-inspection questionnaire responses and discussions that staff have an excellent knowledge of their children and their needs. They are pleased with the information they receive prior to their children starting school. The parents of new pupils are welcomed to the school and are invited to a range of functions, such as a school ball.
- 5.15 The school has a clear and appropriate complaints procedure. Most parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire stated that the school handles well any concern that they have and that it provides timely responses to any questions raised. Records confirm that concerns and complaints are dealt with in accordance with the school's published procedures. The head and senior staff are also highly visible at the start and end of the day, in order to enable parents to have informal discussions. As a result, the vast majority of issues can be dealt with swiftly and informally.

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