

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Bilton Grange School

Full Name of the School	Bilton Grange School
DCSF Number	937/6002
Registered Charity Number	528771
Address	Dunchurch, Rugby, Warwickshire CV22 6QU.
Telephone Number	01788 810217
Fax Number	01788 816922
Email Address	headmaster@biltongrange.co.uk
Headmaster	Mr Peter Kirk
Chairman of Governors	Mr Jeremy Greenhalgh
Age Range	4 to 13
Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	30th October to 2nd November 2007

This inspection report follows the framework laid down by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The inspection was carried out under the arrangements of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. It was also carried out under Section 162A(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002 as amended by the Education Act 2005, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended with effect from January 2005 and May 2007.

The inspection was not carried out in conjunction with Ofsted, Children's Directorate, and the report does not contain specific judgements on the National Minimum Boarding Standards. 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 and development in general. The full Ofsted report can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Inspection reports/Boarding schools.

The inspection does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
	Characteristics of the School	1
2.	THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION	3
	The Educational Experience Provided	3
	Pupils' Learning and Achievements.....	4
	Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils.....	7
	The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment).....	8
3.	THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS	11
	The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils.....	11
	The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community.....	12
	The Quality of Boarding Education	13
4.	THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT	15
	The Quality of Governance	15
	The Quality of Leadership and Management	15
5.	CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS.....	17
	Overall Conclusions	17
	Next Steps.....	17
6.	SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE	18
	List of Inspectors	18

1. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 Bilton Grange School is a co-educational boarding and day school for pupils aged 4 to 13 years, situated in and around a nineteenth-century mansion set in 150 acres of attractive parkland on the outskirts of Rugby. Although a fifth of Year 6 pupils, mainly girls, leave at 11+ after winning places at local grammar schools or selective independent schools, most stay until 13+ before transferring to selective independent schools, nationally as boarders and locally as day pupils or boarders.
- 1.2 Founded in 1887 and co-educational since 1990, Bilton Grange is a charitable trust administered by a governing body. The education is founded on Christian principles and practice. Children of other faiths and of no faith are welcomed, though they and their parents are asked to support the school's ethos.
- 1.3 The school aims to combine the best of traditional and contemporary teaching methods in order to nurture the full potential of each child, to develop confidence, self-esteem and independence in its pupils, to offer the highest quality pastoral care, and to provide a secure and happy environment. The school is proud of its sense of community, the quality and range of its facilities, and the beautiful house and grounds.
- 1.4 Since the previous inspection in 2001 a new chairman has been elected and the workings of the governing body revised; a new headmaster was appointed in 2003; links between the Pre-prep and the Prep School have strengthened; a new senior management team has been created; the curriculum has been re-organised; methods of assessing pupils' attainment and progress have become more rigorous; a new staff appraisal system has been introduced; school policies have been updated.
- 1.5 There were 336 pupils in the school at the time of the inspection: 124 in the Pre-prep (Reception and Years 1, 2 and 3) and 212 in the Prep School (Years 4 to 8). Year groups vary from 28 to 51; the ratio between boys and girls is 3:2. Full boarding is provided for 11 boys and 6 girls; weekly boarding for 12 boys and 15 girls; many other pupils board occasionally. Day pupils live within 10 miles of the school whilst boarders reside throughout the country; almost all come from homes in which one or both parents are engaged in professional occupations, often in London. The parents of 16 pupils have ethnic minority backgrounds, 16 are foreign nationals, and 2 are expatriates.
- 1.6 Admission to the Pre-prep is non-selective. Pupils are then assessed before entry to the Prep School in a manner appropriate to their age to ensure that they are well matched to the school's curriculum. Non-verbal reasoning scores for pupils in the Prep School show that pupils' abilities span the full range; the average ability is close to the national average. The school enters its pupils for national tests at ages 7 and 11; if pupils perform in line with their abilities, their results should be similar to the average for all maintained primary schools.
- 1.7 Fifty-three pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and one pupil has a statement of special educational need. Another fifteen pupils have English as their second language.

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

School	NC name
Dove, Lark	Reception
Thames, Willow	Year 1
Devon, Swift	Year 2
Avon, Calder, Trent	Year 3
Juniors	Year 4
Thirds	Year 5
Fourths	Year 6
Fifths	Year 7
Sixths	Year 8

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 The educational provision is excellent and successfully reflects the school's aims. Substantial progress has been made since the previous inspection.
- 2.2 The education is consistent with the declared aims to provide a secure and happy environment in which pupils enjoy a rich childhood within a community based on Christian principles. The school offers a breadth of opportunity in academic, creative, physical, technological and cultural activities. The balanced curriculum promotes good attainment, progress and behaviour for all pupils. This meets a recommendation of the previous inspection.
- 2.3 Outstanding provision begins in Reception where pupils work towards the Early Learning Goals. Pupils there acquire good skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy. They benefit from stimulating classrooms and a well-resourced adjacent outside area. Provision for creative development is good and physical skills are promoted through gymnastics, dance, games and swimming. Pupils benefit from an early introduction to information and communication technology (ICT). All recommendations from the recent Ofsted nursery inspection have been met.
- 2.4 Provision of this high quality is maintained throughout Years 1 to 8. When interviewed, Year 6 pupils expressed appreciation of all that is on offer and revealed their pride in the school. A Year 8 pupil reported: "I love it here and will miss it loads when I leave". The acquisition of skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy is high. A whole class of Year 6 pupils presented a dramatic retelling of the Guy Fawkes story in assembly with verve and panache, whilst a chapel reading by a Year 8 pupil was both masterful and poignant. Pupils throughout the school express numerical concepts clearly and apply mathematical terminology appropriately. Attainment in French and Latin in all years is at a high standard, with a happy balance of rigour and fun. Year 4 registrations were conducted in several languages. Impressively organised netball and rugby training contributed to the high standard of play witnessed in the matches against visiting schools. Attractive and abundant displays throughout the school acknowledge the importance of art, design technology (DT), drama and music. The literacy programme is enriched by the effectiveness of both the main library at the heart of the Prep School and the library in the Pre-prep. Collaboration between these two libraries is well advanced. Much science is taught through the appropriate use of everyday examples to anchor the concepts, as when Year 4 pupils investigated states of matter. In interview a Year 7 pupil reported: "we have fantastic grounds at this school"; many teachers make excellent use of them to stimulate their pupils. ICT is applied to great advantage by teachers and pupils; this meets a recommendation of the previous inspection.
- 2.5 The extensive programme of extra-curricular provision presents excellent opportunities for pupils to broaden their interests and develop their skills in activities appropriate to their age and capabilities. The purposeful deployment of teachers, GAP Year students and visiting senior school pupils on work experience is very effective. Facilities in all areas are outstanding. Numerous educational outings enhance the curriculum, including those to theatres, museums, science parks and adventure centres. Residential holiday activities are both popular and efficiently planned, ranging from weekends in the Welsh mountains, through half-term expeditions to Pompeii, to the universally acclaimed outward bound opportunities at a Scottish island exploration centre each July. Links with the community are strengthened through visits to local places of worship and by choirs singing at a variety of

- venues, whilst the school's amenities are shared with, for example, swimming groups of parents and toddlers and a summer holiday music school.
- 2.6 The preparation for each successive stage of education is well managed. New arrivals in Reception are sensitively introduced to the school and new pupils in all years benefit from a 'buddy' system. Teachers liaise closely to manage a smooth transition at the end of each academic year, discussing each pupil's strengths and weaknesses, and passing on educational and pastoral information. Links between the Pre-prep and the Prep School have been enriched by management changes and the innovation of exchange afternoons for both teachers and pupils. Year 7 pupils in interview cited the advantage of weekly boarding as training for life at senior school. The preparations for entrance and scholarship examinations are ably accomplished in Years 7 and 8 through the increasing academic rigour and stronger self-discipline that is applied to all aspects of pupils' work. Pupils feel ready for the next stage of their education. Year 6 pupils in interview exhibited very good general knowledge of current and world affairs, whilst the use of ICT websites assisted a Year 8 pupil from overseas to keep in touch with his home culture in preparation for his return for senior schooling.
- 2.7 From the Early Learning Goals in Reception, through the National Curriculum in Years 1 to 6, and culminating in preparation for senior schools in Years 7 and 8, the curriculum content is carefully chosen and well matched to pupils' needs. The curriculum is appropriate for the age and abilities of all pupils. The introduction of setting has greatly enhanced the self-esteem of all pupils. Music and drama priority slots and improved communication between teachers running sports and activities enable pupils to participate in a broad programme without a conflict of interest. Annual, termly and weekly plans are of good quality and a curriculum review is conducted regularly to ensure that these are fully implemented.
- 2.8 Specialist teachers assess all pupils for learning difficulties when they are new to the school. Provision for pupils who are supported in lessons by a teaching assistant or tailor-made learning aids, or who are withdrawn from class to receive individual teaching from a specialist teacher, is most effective. So, too, is the communication about these pupils between the specialist teachers and other teachers. Not all teachers, however, use this information and the support provided by teaching assistants to the fullest advantage of their pupils. A register lists pupils who are gifted and talented, and teaching is adapted to meet their needs. Support for pupils with English as an additional language, whether through individual tuition or in-class assistance, is outstanding.
- 2.9 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.10 The school successfully meets its aim to develop knowledge, skills, understanding and application. Standards have improved since the previous inspection and all recommendations have been met. The quality is good throughout the school, and some is outstanding.
- 2.11 All pupils are well grounded in knowledge, skills and understanding. Attainment is high and progress is rapid in all areas of the curriculum and through all stages in the school. In lessons observed and work scrutinised, pupils achieved particularly well, for example in DT, drama, English, French, geography, history, physical education and religious studies (RS). Pupils speak articulately, listen attentively, apply number work accurately, investigate logically and are expressive in the arts. They think clearly and show evidence of creativity. Pupils in Year 6 produced imaginative extended writing in English, whilst those in a Year 8 Latin lesson drew parallels with their French grammar. Year 5 pupils have a sound sense of historical chronology, and those in Year 6 could apply lessons learnt from the story of Adam and Eve

- to their own lives. Pupils' creative skills are well developed in art, DT, drama and music. They have wide-ranging ICT skills and effectively apply techniques learnt in ICT lessons to other subjects and to their homework.
- 2.12 Pupils in different groups throughout the school make good progress and attain high standards in all areas of the curriculum. Girls outperform boys in national tests at ages seven and eleven, but this imbalance ends by Year 8 in entrance and scholarship examinations to senior schools. Brisk progress is made in lessons, and the scrutiny of pupils' work revealed good development over time. Subject setting and the use of support staff within the classroom combine to ensure that less able pupils attain well; the recommendation from the previous inspection report has been addressed effectively.
- 2.13 Achievement is good in Reception and almost all pupils are expected to attain the Early Learning Goals before the end of the academic year. In Years 1 to 6, the school uses commercially-produced tests to assess attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science, and compares the results with national norms. The findings demonstrate that both attainment and progress are good in relation to pupils' abilities. Results in national tests at ages seven and eleven over a three-year period show that pupils' attainment is well above the national average for all maintained primary schools and is good in relation to their abilities. Success rates are high and improving in competitive entrance examinations to senior schools at 11+ and 13+, and the school has a good record in scholarship examinations; these results, however, cannot be nationally standardised.
- 2.14 The school is a strong community where individual and group achievements are encouraged and valued. Many pupils gain awards from national governing bodies of art, DT, drama and music, whilst individuals and teams have won national and regional sporting honours in chess, cross-country, golf, hockey, polo and squash. Parents report that the standard of concerts and drama productions in the school is consistently high and that the majority of pupils participate in both.
- 2.15 The school meets its aims of developing confidence, self-esteem and independence in each pupil. Skills and attitudes for work and study are good and often outstanding, an improvement since the previous inspection.
- 2.16 Pupils are articulate, listen effectively, read expressively, and write fluently and intelligibly. Attainment in English ranges from good to outstanding. Year 3 pupils made effective use of the school grounds to stimulate a multi-sensory approach to creativity when writing a poem about leaves. Pupils in a Year 5 RS lesson needed no prompting to use their dictionaries to explain the complex vocabulary in the Beatitudes. Derivation parallels with French and English were drawn in a Year 8 Latin lesson. Language was used eloquently by pupils in interviews, and technical vocabulary was applied accurately in geography, mathematics and science lessons. Pupils listened attentively in all assemblies.
- 2.17 The application of mathematics and mathematical concepts by pupils is effective. Numeracy skills throughout the school range from satisfactory to good. Year 3 pupils maintained good concentration on extended calculations, whilst those interviewed in Year 4 accurately analysed graphs on permeability of soils. Pupils in Year 2 used correct terminology to explain the partitioning of numbers into their constituent parts. Geography project work in Years 6 to 8 showed effective use of tables, charts and graphs.

- 2.18 Excellent and effective use is made of ICT, both as a discipline in its own right and as a tool in all subjects. The recommendation of the previous inspection is met in full. Whether using their own computers or working on classroom interactive whiteboards, pupils demonstrated confident familiarity and wide-ranging skills. Computer-aided design is regularly used in DT; digital images enabled pupils to recall sights and sounds from a 'listening walk' in a Year 1 science lesson; Year 7 pupils compiled geography projects that could be displayed to all the class; Reception pupils demonstrated excellent mouse skills. Colourful displays in corridors and classrooms are much embellished by use of ICT.
- 2.19 In general and subject interviews, pupils displayed independence of thought and voiced their ideas with clarity of expression. For example, those in Years 4 and 7 were able to go beyond the work already studied in history and science, and supported their assertions with effective reasoning. Other pupils in Year 7 were sharp in a quick-fire quiz on volcanic eruptions, whilst historians in Year 6 ably assessed the claims of rival factions at the time of the Norman Conquest. Year 3 pupils in a science lesson made accurate predictions on the behaviour of magnets. Pupils in Year 4 were both active and skilled in directing a play in drama.
- 2.20 Registration sessions were used efficiently by all classes to prepare for the day ahead: timetables were checked, resources were gathered, and a businesslike air was instilled. Good working habits are fostered in Reception and are developed throughout the school. A Year 2 mathematics class worked diligently without fuss or distraction whilst some of their peers were still receiving instructions. Pupils in Year 5 applied corrections from a previous French lesson to new work without prompting. Year 8 pupils with English as their second language worked independently on their tailor-made computer programs to improve their language skills. The scrutiny of pupils' work showed that almost all tasks were completed, though unfinished work was evident in some Year 2 books.
- 2.21 Pupils study and work effectively as individuals, co-operatively in small groups, and as a whole class. Year 6 pupils in history pooled ideas in small groups as a preparatory exercise prior to recording their findings. Pupils in a Year 1 DT lesson happily shared resources in pairs whilst searching out different pop-up mechanisms, whilst those in a Year 4 French lesson used each other's portrait photographs in an age-guessing exercise. Four groups of four pupils in a Year 6 RS lesson produced helpful role-plays about 'temptation' in rapid time. Pupils work well in teams, as seen in netball practice.
- 2.22 Classes settle quickly and pupils maintain a good work ethic. They enjoy their studies and activities. Spontaneous applause greeted the successful completion of a task in a Year 4 French lesson. Happiness was evident in a Year 3 music lesson as pupils learnt about rhythm and notation. Perseverance was demonstrated by Year 1 pupils in DT as their own pop-up mechanisms took shape. Touch-typing pupils in a Year 4 ICT lesson showed mature application and concentration. Year 7 pupils progressed quickly from task to task in a geography lesson.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.23 The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The school successfully meets its aims of enabling pupils to become confident and independent young people who treat others with consideration and compassion. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
- 2.24 The school provides excellent daily opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual awareness and personal faith through chapel and assemblies, and to share the experience with parents and friends at occasional Sunday services. The traditional approach in chapel is balanced by the modern WOW (Worship on Wednesday) format that is very popular with pupils. Together they appeal to a wide spiritual audience. Chapel assemblies may include topical and humorous drama. The outstanding example observed during the inspection made pupils aware of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the Gunpowder Plot. Messages were reinforced in prayer and immediately the congregation became quiet and respectful, showing due reverence for their surroundings. The same calm reflection at assembly time was observed at the Pre-prep. The youngest pupils stood calmly in silent reflection as they listened to music linked to Remembrance Day. All age groups sing very well and obviously enjoy this aspect of their devotion. RS lessons and visits to places of worship provide a forum for exploring values and beliefs in Christianity and other faiths. Pupils' respect for themselves and each other is nurtured through highlighting and praising their achievements. Their self-confidence is further developed during residential experiences such as adventure training, sports tours and other trips requiring teamwork and co-operation. The attractive buildings and beautiful grounds enable pupils to respond sensitively to their surroundings. A Year 3 class during the inspection found inspiration for an English lesson among the autumnal leaves and pupils interviewed about the organic gardens revealed their wonder and pleasure when growing vegetables from seed.
- 2.25 As a result of outstanding provision, pupils develop a strong moral code. Even the youngest pupils in the Pre-prep understand the purpose of the 'Golden Rules' and a 'polite reminder' quickly settles all issues that might arise. A Pre-prep assembly stressed making the right decision, avoiding temptation, and the right to say no to peer pressure. Prep School pupils respect the school rules and have a good understanding of right and wrong. Opportunities to gain moral awareness are provided throughout the curriculum. A Year 4 history class assessed the character of Henry VIII; Year 5 pupils in RS examined the components of virtuous living; and Year 6 pupils in interview showed concern for the induction of new pupils. Pupils' sense of self and growing moral identity are clear. Commendations are awarded for acts that are kind, helpful and thoughtful. Assemblies and the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum make a significant contribution, and all teachers and non-teaching staff are excellent exemplars. Form tutors play a crucial role in helping their charges to develop as responsible citizens. Pupils are encouraged in a supportive and encouraging environment to express their views on moral and ethical issues and to practise decision-making. Fair play was observed in the playground and during games lessons.
- 2.26 Social development is excellent. Pupils relate well to each other and adjust appropriately to a range of group situations. At all ages they are eager to take responsibility for tasks which benefit their own and the wider community. Pupils new to the school gain a 'buddy' or escort to guide them through the first few weeks. The school council has representatives from each Prep School form and gives pupils the opportunity to be part of the democratic process. The prefect system highlights the responsibility that senior pupils have for their juniors, for each other, and for the fabric of the school. All Year 8 pupils are given responsibility. One such pupil in interview described with pride his role in chapel assemblies. Pupils participate in a variety of charity fund-raising events. Pre-prep pupils

wore their jeans to school earlier in the term to raise money for children with genetic disorders. Year 7 pupils were enthusiastic about a project to design and build a new play area in the school grounds and they plan to man their own stalls at the May Fair to raise money to help fund it. Contributions in the classroom, addresses in assemblies and targeted PSHE lessons ensure that pupils have a lively general knowledge of national and international issues whilst, as interviews with senior pupils confirmed, encouragement to read newspapers and to follow news programmes keeps them abreast of current affairs.

- 2.27 Cultural development is good. Pupils appreciate their own way of life and the diversity of others' through the many links in the curriculum and the activities programme. There are regular visits to art galleries, concerts and theatres. Drama groups bring plays and workshops to the school. The school celebrates different cultural traditions through themed meals and festivals. Pupils visit the local church and Hindu and Sikh temples as part of their RS course, and welcomed a Buddhist monk to their lessons. In a subject interview, Year 7 pupils discussed arranged marriages in a mature and open manner. Year 3 pupils were observed on a geography outing to Dunchurch. Residential trips to France and Pompeii and a sports tour to Sri Lanka provide further good opportunities for pupils to broaden their experience. Pupils are enriched through daily encounters with the values and traditions of the different faiths and cultures among their friends at school and with antipodean GAP Year students. Mutual tolerance and harmony is evident.
- 2.28 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.29 Good teaching and assessment enables pupils of all abilities to achieve standards in accordance with the school's aims and aspirations. The quality has improved since the last inspection and all recommendations have been met.
- 2.30 The quality of teaching is consistent throughout the school. In all year groups teaching was good or better in most lessons, and in a quarter of those observed it was outstanding. Focus on improving the behaviour, attainment and progress of less able pupils, in response to a recommendation from the previous inspection, has been successful. In addition, rigour in the teaching of English through the increased use of specialist teachers has produced a marked improvement in pupils' literacy skills to the benefit of teaching of all subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties or with English as their second language are well supported by specialist teachers and most other teachers respond well to their different needs, adapt their teaching accordingly, and make effective use of teaching assistants. The needs of the most able pupils are also carefully considered and addressed through extension exercises or additional tuition. The observation of a Year 8 lesson for pupils with English as a second language illustrated the excellent provision in this area.
- 2.31 Teaching throughout the school fosters good learning habits. Most teachers employ a variety of activities and techniques that allows pupils to sustain involvement in and enthusiasm for their work. Reception pupils received early teaching on the importance of accuracy and were already adept at self-correction. Each pupil in a Year 5 DT double lesson maintained the pace to transfer the design, learn how to use the machinery, and manufacture a key-fob. The confidence that a teacher of RS placed in pupils to produce and perform a role-play in 15 minutes was well founded. After an initial introduction, pupils in a Year 7 music lesson made group compositions, recorded their work, played it to their audience, and evaluated the results. Challenging teaching to Latinists in Year 8 promotes scholarly analytical skills beyond their age.

- 2.32 Teachers' planning throughout the school is thorough and effective. Most lessons are thoughtfully prepared and employ a variety of suitable activities. In the most successful lessons observed, teachers' energy and enthusiasm stimulated lively discussion and encouraged active participation. The pace of these lessons was brisk and demands challenging. Year 2 pupils successfully manipulated two-digit numbers in mathematics after a clear introduction, effective demonstration on the interactive whiteboard, and dispersal into ability groups with tasks of graduated difficulty. In a Year 6 history lesson on contenders to the English throne in 1066, pupils listened attentively to an audio-visual presentation, evaluated the evidence, and took part in a lively and sustained discussion. Use of the interactive whiteboard was effective in almost all lessons observed, but reliance on it in a few was unimaginative. Senior managers are aware of this inconsistency.
- 2.33 Lessons are generally adapted well to the needs and prior attainment of all pupils. The new setting arrangements ensure that pupils are gathered in ability groups for all subjects and, where necessary, supported by teaching assistants. Almost all teachers pay close attention to the guidance for pupils with learning difficulties compiled by specialist teachers. Activities appropriate to the age and ability of pupils were observed in almost all classes. In a Year 3 mathematics class on division and grouping, teaching was carefully matched to allow pupils of all abilities to progress with confidence. Ingenious and imaginative teaching of history in Year 6 enabled pupils quickly to grasp the importance of accurate evidence to support conclusions. Foreign national pupils in Year 8 gained insight into British culture as they improved their English whilst exploring a website about Guy Fawkes.
- 2.34 Teachers in all stages of the school and across all disciplines demonstrate secure knowledge of their subjects and understanding of the needs of different age-groups. For many teachers, this is combined with great enthusiasm.
- 2.35 The provision of premises and resources for teaching throughout the school is excellent. Their effective use was observed across the curriculum and in the activities programme. Notable facilities include those for DT, drama, ICT, music, PE and science. The grounds provide a wonderful setting and varied educational resources that are capitalised upon by many teachers. Almost every classroom has an interactive whiteboard. These are used extensively and purposefully by the majority, following in-house training led by a senior teacher. This satisfies a recommendation of the previous inspection. ICT is well served through the appointment of skilled support staff, but the lack of technical help in the science laboratories demands that teachers spend much time putting out and clearing away resources.
- 2.36 Policies guide teachers on the presentation, correction and marking of pupils' work. These are applied consistently to meet the recommendation of the previous inspection. Assessment is good overall and, for the most part, pupils' work is marked regularly and thoroughly. The best marking provides both detailed comments and helpful indications of the next steps pupils should take to improve further. Some pupils in interviews remarked that it was difficult to read what some teachers wrote. Where pupils have been encouraged to assess their own learning, good practice has enabled them to set themselves appropriate targets. Carefully prepared pupil profiles are initiated in Reception and they follow pupils as they progress through the school. In Years 4 to 8, examinations are held twice a year. Records of results are kept by form teachers and used to track pupils' progress. The results of these assessments also guide planning and teaching, and assist when assigning pupils to different subject sets.

- 2.37 Teachers promote effective learning by obtaining high standards of behaviour through courtesy, praise and encouragement. Excellent relationships have been established with pupils, who respond appropriately in return. As a Year 6 pupil offered in interview: “teachers are happy and helpful”. A calm and purposeful atmosphere pervades the school and all classroom management is clear and secure. Pupils move about the school in an orderly manner, behave sensibly and courteously in lessons, and settle quickly to their tasks.
- 2.38 Pupils’ performance is tracked across the school in line with a comprehensive policy on assessment, recording and reporting. Some pupils reported in interview that, although they understood the system for recording attainment and progress, a few teachers did not apply it uniformly to all pupils and that grade standards varied across the subjects. Evidence from the scrutiny of pupils’ work supports this assertion. The school uses a whole battery of nationally-standardised tests to monitor pupils’ progress and to compare outcomes with national norms. The findings are used to plan future teaching.
- 2.39 The school meets the regulatory requirements for teaching [Standard 1].

3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS

The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils

- 3.1 Pastoral care continues to be a major strength as at the time of the last inspection, and measures to safeguard the pupils' welfare, health and safety are effective. The aims of the school are met.
- 3.2 The secure and happy environment, which is a key element in the daily life of the school, ensures that pupils thrive in an atmosphere of warmth, good manners and personal responsibility. Pupils develop self-esteem and confidence, safe in the knowledge that they will be both heard and respected. The school provides an environment where pupils grow and blossom. Pupils interviewed reported that they are treated with consideration and are confident that a sensitive approach to advice and guidance is available.
- 3.3 All adults in the school community provide excellent support and guidance for pupils and are good role models. Relationships at all levels are caring and friendly, and the informal atmosphere of respect and sensitivity is central to the school's ethos. Registration times in the Pre-prep provide an excellent example of the calm yet structured start to the day. The youngest pupils happily arrive each morning and immediately engage themselves in the many and varied activities available to them. Older pupils reported that they are happy to talk to any adult about their worries, not just their form teachers. A Year 8 pupil was keen to share how all teachers on duty had helped during prep time to find the solution to a seemingly insoluble mathematics problem. Teachers and non-teaching staff are assisted by effective care arrangements and regular in-service training. The behaviour policy is clear and its consistent application is appreciated by parents and pupils alike.
- 3.4 The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is excellent. The school council provides an effective channel for pupils to voice their opinions. A Year 8 pupil reported in interview: "I think our school community as a whole gets along very well." Respect is shown by pupils to all adults. This was evident when a Year 7 class stood up without prompting when a member of the maintenance team came in to deliver a message to a teacher. Relationships among pupils are caring and thoughtful and many commented to inspectors that they have great friends at the school. Pupils support each other and think about the needs of others. One form representative at the school council requested large-print books for the library especially for a friend.
- 3.5 Measures to promote discipline and good behaviour throughout the school are clear and pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. Suitable procedures are in place to guard against bullying and most pupils, responding in the questionnaires provided before the inspection, felt that these are fair and reasonable. The headmaster and the deputy head meet regularly with prefects to brief them on how to assist discreetly anyone who may be subject to harassment or be unhappy. Pupils are not afraid to report incidents which they consider unacceptable to prefects or members of staff and they told inspectors that these issues are dealt with quickly and effectively. A system of awards provides incentive for positive behaviour, and its certificates and the 'good conduct' cup are highly prized. The school fulfils its aim to provide a secure and happy environment in which pupils enjoy a rich childhood in a community based on Christian principles.
- 3.6 Child protection measures are in place. One teacher is the designated safe-guarding officer and a governor is nominated for child protection. All employees, parent-helpers and governors have up-to-date Criminal Records Bureau checks, and procedures for safe

recruiting are suitably followed. Pupils reported that they feel protected by the school. Admission and daily registers are properly maintained and satisfy the recommendation of the previous inspection, but the admission register has been continuously backed up on the main system rather than kept as separate monthly backup files.

- 3.7 The school takes all necessary measures to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards in all areas of the school. There is a termly practice of building evacuation, and fire drills take place both day and evening once a term in both sections of the school. All fire records are up to date and in order, as is the inspection report from the local fire brigade. Risk assessments for all on-site activities and off-site trips are excellent. Where any problems arise in relation to pupils' safety, the school is thoughtful and active in dealing with them and arranging precautions.
- 3.8 Staff training in first aid is regular and all accident notification is exemplary. Preparation of meals is excellent and the school offers a wide selection of healthy food for both boarders and day pupils. Pupils report that whilst the quality of food is good, there is a tendency for some options to run out for those who are later into lunch.
- 3.9 The school meets most of the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3]. In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:
- (a) keep separate monthly backups of the admission register and retain backups for three years [Regulation 3.(9)].

The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community

- 3.10 The school maintains good partnerships with parents and the community. These match the school's aims and mark improvement since the previous inspection.
- 3.11 Just under two-thirds of the parents completed the pre-inspection questionnaires. Their overwhelmingly positive response reflects a high level of satisfaction. A few points of issue were raised: these included how to be involved with the life of the school, how to learn more about pupils' progress, and how the school handles concerns. Parents confirmed that these were largely historical and that recent management and organisational changes had brought about improvements. The school was praised by parents for its prompt and effective responses to concerns. Communication was deemed to be swift and informative, and it was hoped that the Pre-prep practice of advising parents on curriculum content will now be extended to the Prep School.
- 3.12 Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the activities of the school. Some help with swimming and transportation; others accompany pupils and teachers on day or residential trips, or join parties on sports tours abroad. Parents with children in Reception are met at the beginning and end of each day, and the new homework diary for all pupils provides a direct and immediate two-way communication between parents and the school. All parents and friends of the school are invited to attend concerts, plays and sports, and they are warmly welcomed at refreshments before and after chapel services and after home matches.
- 3.13 Parents are given clear information about the school. A valuable induction pack for new families provides an effective welcome. Parents reported that they had easy access to teachers, whether in person or by email. Information about their children's progress is obtained through termly reports and thrice-yearly meetings. Reports are clear, informative and detailed; the best include advice on how progress can accelerate and targets for subsequent terms.

- 3.14 The school handles concerns of parents swiftly and with care. Details are recorded in pupils' files and governors are kept informed. The statutory complaints procedure is properly followed. Parents report that management throughout the school now has a reputation for openness; teachers can be approached on matters of concern and are willing to discuss issues that are raised.
- 3.15 The school is aware of its role in the community and has forged effective links. Sixth-form students from several schools gain work experience in the Pre-prep and also help with games, and visiting school ensembles play for pupils. The grounds and many facilities are used by local sports clubs and a nursery. Half the children who attend the summer music school come from maintained schools. The school's own choirs and ensembles regularly perform at venues near and far. Links with Sri Lanka extend beyond the recent sports tour to include support for a nursery school. Pupils chose to donate the harvest festival offertory in support of the 'Send a Cow' initiative to that community. Fund-raising helps many other charities. The school participates in the Warwick Arts Festival and has had noticeable success in national children's competitions in sport and art.
- 3.16 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the provision of information and the manner in which complaints are to be handled [Standards 6 and 7].

The Quality of Boarding Education

- 3.17 The outstanding quality of boarding education fully meets the school's aims. Significant improvements have been made since the previous inspections and all recommendations have been met.
- 3.18 The educational experience provided by boarding produces well-rounded, confident and articulate pupils who live within a secure and happy environment. Full, weekly and occasional boarders all benefit from the excellent pastoral care offered by the boarding team of houseparents, matrons, tutors and GAP Year students. Trial boarding weeks are eagerly anticipated by pupils, and groups of friends come in together to sample the experience. Many parents choose boarding in Years 7 and 8 as a caring and sensitive preparation for life at senior schools.
- 3.19 Relationships between pupils and the boarding team are warm and positive. The combination of a home-from-home atmosphere and effective supervision is well judged. Pupils interviewed spoke happily about the care and support given to them and comments about the leadership of boarding were complimentary. Adults speak with equal warmth about those in their care. Relationships amongst boarders are excellent; pupils are considerate and friendly to one another. Younger boarders look up to their seniors and appreciate the guidance from dormitory prefects. Regular parental contact plays a vital role to enable boarding to complement family life. The informal and friendly atmosphere encourages pupils to express their views and share their concerns.
- 3.20 Boarders are offered an extensive and well-resourced range of after-school and weekend activities. Pupils are appreciative of the time and effort that the boarding team puts into this programme. Here GAP Year students provide tireless leadership and encouragement, and they are popular 'big brothers and sisters'. They, in turn, relish the fun radiated by responsive youngsters. Adventure games in the grounds are a famous boarders' tradition but pupils are equally welcome to simply curl up with a book. All pupils are encouraged to find a balance between work, rest and recreation and to manage their free time successfully in preparation for life at senior school.

- 3.21 The boarding accommodation fully meets pupils' needs. Resources for care and recreation are of a high standard. All recommendations made by the Commission for Social Care Inspection have been implemented. Pupils are happy with their areas and there is plenty of room for rest and recreation. Boarders are encouraged to personalise their own space and the houseparents work hard to make the accommodation homely. Competition for occasional boarding places is strong, with demand at its highest on Fridays.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 The governance of the school is of high quality. Governors meet their declared aims and the quality of governance has improved since the last inspection.
- 4.2 The management structure is clearly defined and efficiently exercised. Governors represent a broad range of professional skills including strong experience of educational leadership; they use their expertise to lead developments in their specialist areas, and they support the school's many activities.
- 4.3 Governors meet their legal, financial and educational responsibilities. They work closely with the headmaster and bursar to devise, implement and monitor overall business and educational strategies and detailed development plans. The views of parents reach them through formal and informal channels, and they work successfully with the headmaster to respond to any concerns.
- 4.4 Excellent systems inform the governors about the functioning of the school. Communication, including appraisal, between chairman and headmaster is regular and open. Governors visit the school often, meet staff and join lessons, are known to many parents and pupils, and share the life of the community. Teachers and non-teaching staff welcome the support, encouragement and gratitude they receive from governors and thrive in the atmosphere of mutual trust.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.5 Leadership and management of the school are outstanding, meet the school's aims, and have improved since the last inspection.
- 4.6 Commendable educational direction and firm yet sensitive leadership are provided by the headmaster. Effective management structures promote excellent delegated leadership by the deputy head, senior teachers, heads of subjects and aspects, and the headmaster's wife who oversees much of the pastoral care and liaison with parents. Consultation is extensive and purposeful; decision-making is well considered and sure; communication to staff and to parents is swift, accurate and informative. This collegiality produces a teaching strategy that is becoming increasingly coherent, in addition to shared goals, awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and a determination to lift expectations and raise standards.
- 4.7 The re-organised senior management team and the re-structured co-ordination of the Pre-prep and the Prep School have ensured that there is a smooth transition across the year groups and that preparation for senior schools is well matched to pupils' needs. This satisfies the recommendation of the previous inspection. Key-stage heads and subject heads have well-defined roles and feel that their contributions to policy and practice are valued. Analysis and evaluation of all procedures and systems are regular and effective. Objective assessment and comparison with national norms provides information on pupils' attainment to guide planning, direct teaching and raise standards.
- 4.8 All teachers are involved in the school's development initiatives and the creation of detailed and effective planning. The commitment to use ICT across the curriculum is successful, and the generous provision of resources is used effectively by almost all teachers. This meets a recommendation of the previous inspection.

- 4.9 The high calibre of the teaching staff has a direct bearing on the quality of education provided. Safe recruiting procedures support child protection. The school currently has no newly qualified teachers (NQTs) but participates in the national scheme for the induction of NQTs. Strong support is given to in-service training and professional development. Monitoring of teaching and learning by senior managers is highly effective and satisfies a requirement from the previous inspection. The school provides a happy working environment for its employees.
- 4.10 Sound budgetary arrangements meet teachers' needs. Generous funding is also provided by the parents' associations. Resources are used effectively and treated respectfully by pupils. Library provision for research, extension study and independent learning is excellent. Accommodation is outstanding, as is maintenance of buildings and grounds.
- 4.11 Administration by the bursar and the non-teaching staff is highly efficient. The reception team is welcoming to all and the support provided to governors, teachers and parents is excellent. The quality of catering and cleanliness is high. The skills of teaching assistants and other employees are used effectively and appreciated greatly by most teachers.
- 4.12 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].
- 4.13 The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers and meets its requirements.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall Conclusions

- 5.1 The school has many strengths and it achieves its aims and objectives. Governance, leadership and management are highly effective. The teachers and non-teaching staff care enthusiastically for pupils, whether boarding or day, and pupil-teacher rapport is excellent. The partnership with parents is strong. Accommodation, facilities and resource provision are outstanding in almost all areas. The school meets pupils' needs in providing thorough teaching, inculcating valuable learning habits, and promoting excellent all-round personal development. Pupils learn effectively and attain well in a calm, harmonious and supportive community. They are articulate and imaginative, enthusiastic and confident, friendly and courteous. Teaching is well matched to pupils' needs, and in some areas is outstanding. The non-teaching team promotes friendliness in a homely environment. Relative weaknesses are very few: not all teaching matches the high quality of the majority; a few teachers do not use to the full the advice and resources provided to assist pupils with learning difficulties; and a few do not apply the school's system for reporting assessment standards.
- 5.2 The governance, leadership and management have transformed the school since the previous ISI and Ofsted nursery inspections. All recommendations have been met. The quality of all aspects has improved and the accumulation of these changes has raised pupils' attainment.
- 5.3 The school complies with most of the regulatory requirements, but does not at present meet Standard 3 (welfare, health and safety).

Next Steps

- 5.4 To continue to improve its already good provision, the school should take the following action.
1. Extend to all teachers the best practice of the majority by taking note of the needs of pupils with learning difficulties, to apply the advice provided by the specialist staff, to make the best use of teaching assistants allocated to them, and to organise their teaching and assessment to allow for these pupils' different needs.
 2. Ensure that marking and assessment are consistently applied across all subjects.
- 5.5 In order to meet all the regulatory requirements, the school must:
- (1) keep separate monthly backups of the admission register and retain backups for three years [Regulation 3.(9)].

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 30th October to 2nd November 2007. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching 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 boarding accommodation and all sickrooms. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a wide range of documentation made available by the school.

List of Inspectors

Dr Malcolm Tozer	Reporting Inspector
Mr Nigel Archdale	Headmaster, IAPS school
Mrs Hilary Betty	Senior Mistress, IAPS school
Mrs Linda Griffith	Headmistress, ISA school
Mr Andrew Holmes	Headmaster, SHMIS school
Mrs Jane Pomeroy	Headmistress, GSA junior school