



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

BILTON GRANGE SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Bilton Grange School

Full Name of School	Bilton Grange School		
DfE Number	937/6002		
Registered Charity Number	528771		
Address	Bilton Grange School Rugby Road Dunchurch Rugby Warwickshire CV22 6QU		
Telephone Number	01788 810217		
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Email Address	headmaster@biltongrange.co.uk		
Headmaster	Mr Peter Kirk		
Chairman of Governors	Mr Jeremy Greenhalgh		
Age Range	4 to 13		
Total Number of Pupils	304		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (187 boys; 117 girls)		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	N/A	5-11: 201
	4-5 (EYFS):	25	11-13: 78
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	260	Capacity for flexi-boarding: 80
Number of Boarders	Total:	44	
	Full:	14	Weekly: 30
Head of EYFS Setting	Mr Adrian Brindley		
EYFS Gender	(Mixed)		
Inspection dates	18 Oct 2011 to 19 Oct 2011		
	16 Nov 2011 to 18 Nov 2011		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in November 2007.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

*These Standards Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

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 31st 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 Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of boarding was not carried out in conjunction with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills, and the report does not contain 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 and development in general. The full Ofsted/Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) report refers to an inspection in May 2011 and can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Children's social care/Boarding school.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will 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.

CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL	3
(a) Main findings	3
(b) Action points	4
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	4
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	4
3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	5
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills	5
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	6
(c) The contribution of teaching	7
4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	8
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	8
(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	9
(c) The quality of boarding education	10
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	11
(a) The quality of governance	11
(b) The quality of leadership and management	11
(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians	12
6 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE	14
(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	14
(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	14
(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	14
(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	15
INSPECTION EVIDENCE	16

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Bilton Grange is a co-educational preparatory boarding and day school, located in 100 acres of parkland on the edge of the village of Dunchurch near Rugby. The school was established as a boys' boarding preparatory school in 1873 and relocated to Bilton Grange in 1887. The school became a charitable company directed by its governors in 1945. Bilton Grange became co-educational in 1992 at which point the adjacent building, Homefield, became the Pre-prep Department and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for Bilton Grange. The name Homefield was discontinued in 2005 to underpin the fact that it is one school for pupils aged four to thirteen.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection there were 304 pupils (187 boys and 117 girls) at the school, including 44 regular boarders. Many more pupils take advantage of the flexible boarding arrangements from time to time. Almost all pupils transfer at age thirteen to selective independent schools, nationally as boarders and locally as day pupils or boarders. Pupils come from a wide range of economic backgrounds and the vast majority are of white British origin.
- 1.3 The ability profile of the school is above the national average, but, as a non selective school, there is a wide spread of abilities represented. Thirty-four children have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), supported by the learning development department within the school, which also supports five pupils from overseas who speak English as an additional language (EAL).
- 1.4 The school aims to create a happy and secure environment in which children enjoy a rich childhood in a community based on Christian principles; providing a breadth of opportunity academically, in the sports, in the arts and in technology. Supported by such a rich environment, pupils are encouraged to develop high levels of confidence, self-esteem and independence. Although the school is founded on Christian principles and practice, children of other faiths and of no faith are welcomed, but they and their parents are expected to support the school's ethos.

- 1.5 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 tables.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Reception	Reception

Pre-preparatory

School	NC name
Yr1	Year 1
Yr2	Year 2
Yr3	Year 3

Preparatory School

School	NC name
Juniors	Year 4
3 rd Form	Year 5
4 th Form	Year 6
5 th Form	Year 7
6 th Form	Year 8

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Pupils throughout the school achieve well in relation to their abilities. Good and sometimes outstanding teaching enables most pupils to achieve the highest academic standards of which they are capable, and ensures that pupils of all abilities make at least good progress. However, some aspects of teaching need to be applied more consistently to ensure that the needs of all, including the more able, are met. While academic success is reflected in excellent Common Entrance and Scholarship examination results, opportunities to develop independent learning, individual research and initiative are limited. The curriculum is suitably broad, ranging from the Classics through to environmental education and aesthetic understanding within the outdoor setting of the Forest School. In addition to traditional sporting activities and matches, the range of extra-curricular provision is extensive and imaginative, both for day pupils and for boarders. A particular strength is the involvement of most teachers in boarders' weekend activities, ensuring that boarding is integral to the school.
- 2.2 The personal development of pupils is outstanding. Relationships of trust and respect are central. They ensure excellent achievement and very high standards of behaviour, creating a happy and secure environment in which pupils enjoy a rich childhood in a community based on Christian principles, which is the fundamental aim of the school. Pupils develop high levels of confidence, self-esteem and a degree of independence. Throughout the school, attitudes to learning are excellent and there is a willingness to co-operate and to offer one another assistance. The school is developing its local links and supports other communities through charitable giving. Cultural awareness could be enhanced with the increasingly diverse nationalities of the growing boarding community. Parents are highly supportive of the school's promotion of strong moral and spiritual values. The school makes excellent provision for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety of pupils, who all profess to feel safe, cared for and valued. Boarding, which is accessed by many through the school's flexible arrangements, makes an excellent contribution to pupils' educational achievements and to their personal development.
- 2.3 Governance, leadership and management are good, with some outstanding elements. The senior management team and governors have a clear vision for the school. Parents express their full trust and confidence in the governance and management of the school. Since the previous inspection, the senior leadership team has been restructured, ensuring further strengthening of pastoral support and greater integration of the preparatory and pre-prep departments. The focus is now on enhancement of academic monitoring and development of the role of tutors and middle managers, in response to the recommendation of the previous inspection.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Create greater opportunities within the academic curriculum for more extended and independent research
2. Ensure that those identified as gifted and talented have more structured opportunities to achieve their full potential.
3. Develop the use of data to enable the staff to plan more thoroughly for individual needs, and to involve the pupils in discussing their progress and agreeing their targets for improvement.
4. For the EYFS, develop the outdoor classroom and produce a programme of study for use of the Forest School area, as outlined in the development plan

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills

- 3.1 The pupils are very well educated in accordance with the school's stated aims. The pupils' overall achievements are good throughout the school with many examples of excellent work or performance seen during the inspection.
- 3.2 The pupils' speaking and listening skills are excellent. They are articulate and were seen to be consistently willing and thoughtful listeners. Good use is made of statistics in several subjects and there is clear understanding of shape, form and measurement in many practical lessons. Pupils display a high degree of confidence and self esteem. The best examples of pupils' written work are well structured and fluent. Pupils of all ages display high levels of creativity in many subjects including poetry lessons, design technology, information and communication technology (ICT) and art. For example, during a pre-prep ICT lesson pupils were taking photographs and using them to develop a story board illustrating strategies to deal with bullying, as a part of anti-bullying week. ICT is applied well in many subjects and interactive whiteboards were seen being used by the pupils to very good effect, during lessons in many curriculum areas.
- 3.3 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2008 to 2010. These are the most recent three years for which comparable statistics are currently available. In the national tests taken at the ages of seven and eleven, pupils reach above average standards compared with all maintained primary schools. Overall, inspection evidence shows that pupils make good progress compared with pupils of similar ability nationally. However, whilst pupils with SEND and EAL make good progress as a result of the support that they receive, those identified as gifted and talented do not always do so. Whilst those on the scholarship programme are challenged appropriately, the work provided in many lessons does not take enough note of the needs of the more able. In 2011 all pupils performed well in Common Entrance examinations and secured places at their first choice of senior school; awards were made to two pupils by their chosen senior school for excellent Common Entrance results. Eleven pupils received scholarship awards across a range of curriculum areas.
- 3.4 Beyond the academic curriculum, pupils achieve high standards of success on the sports field in a variety of team games. In music, Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music examination results are very good and a number of awards have been made by the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art in the performing arts.
- 3.5 Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning throughout most areas of the school. They work co-operatively and are keen to support one another. They display tremendous enthusiasm and enjoyment in the majority of their lessons and activities. Most pupils have developed good organisational skills, but few examples were seen in lessons of children engaging in self-directed learning or individual research.

3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)

- 3.6 The excellent curriculum presents the pupils with a substantial breadth of opportunity academically, in the sports, in the arts and in technology, reflecting one of the aims of the school. The academic curriculum in the main school is diverse, ranging from the Classics to environmental learning and aesthetic appreciation in The Forest School classroom in the grounds. The curriculum makes good provision for the core subjects and offers pupils significant additional opportunities in design and technology, art, drama, music and on the games field. The Scholarship Programme enhances this provision for the most able.
- 3.7 The pre-prep curriculum is well structured and encourages pupils to participate fully in a wide range of cross-curricular activities. During the inspection, it was Chocolate Week for Year 2 pupils, which pupils were relishing. They particularly enjoy musical activities and frequently have opportunities to sing and to play a variety of instruments, as was observed during the Diwali celebrations. There is a pre-prep orchestra and all pupils have an opportunity to perform in drama productions on stage. Transition between the sections of the school is eased by the very positive links between the pre-prep and prep school. Heads of academic departments in the main school communicate effectively with subject co-ordinators in the pre-prep in order to ensure a continuity of curriculum.
- 3.8 The excellent extra-curricular programme, encourages children to take responsibility for a proportion of their time and to select activities in which to participate, in line with the school's aims. Activities such as sailing, climbing, squash and drama are popular with the students and very much enjoyed. However, the provision goes beyond the traditional to include Zumba dancing, orienteering and campcraft, which makes good use of the excellent grounds in which the school is set. Pre-prep pupils enjoy extra-curricular activities such as chess, ballet, board games, gardening, hockey, art, riding and golf. The learning themes are evident in the free-flow activities of the EYFS and the cross curricular topic weeks.
- 3.9 The curriculum is well supported through links with the community. The pre-prep children visit a centre for the elderly, to sing carols. The school is developing links with a nearby primary school, and also with a project in India. Pupils' international understanding is enhanced by a number of sports tours, most recently to Barbados. A good number of visitors and visiting speakers play a part in enriching the curriculum and many visits are enjoyed beyond the school, such as choir tours to New York, and to sing evensong in a cathedral. The work of fourteen pupils was recently displayed in the Young Art 2011 exhibition at the Royal College of Art in London.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.10 The quality of teaching throughout the school is good overall, with a significant proportion that is excellent. The school creates an atmosphere in which pupils develop high levels of confidence and self-esteem. Teachers promote effective learning by maintaining high standards of behaviour, using praise and encouragement. All children are treated as of equal worth, with a strong emphasis on courtesy, good manners and personal responsibility. Excellent relationships are established with pupils, and these have a substantial impact on the achievements in the classroom. A calm and purposeful atmosphere pervades the school and classroom management in all lessons observed was clear and secure.
- 3.11 A number of pupils have been identified as gifted and/or talented within the context of the school. The Scholarship Programme addresses the needs of many of these pupils. However, in the classroom, most pupils were seen to be pursuing the same work. In several subjects this was in excellent, school specific, topic based workbooks, but these do not allow for much variation or extension work to challenge the most able. Performances observed in association with worship and assemblies were of a very high standard.
- 3.12 Most teachers employ a suitable variety of activities and techniques that allow pupils to sustain involvement in and enthusiasm for their work, stimulating lively discussion and encouraging active participation. For example an upper school lesson about the gunpowder plot conducted around a campfire ensured understanding of the historical events, but also evoked the atmosphere and emotions of the plotters.
- 3.13 Planning throughout the school is thorough and effective and on the whole meets the pupils' needs well. Teachers display a secure knowledge of their subject and as a result teaching throughout the school fosters good learning habits, although much of the work is teacher directed, with few opportunities observed for independent learning or research. Pupils with SEND or EAL are well supported by specialist teachers as was recommended in the last inspection. Positive and consistent use of individual education plans enable staff to respond appropriately to pupils' differing needs, adapt their teaching accordingly and make effective use of teaching assistants. Whilst the needs of the more able pupils are met through the scholarship programme, this is not always the case in timetabled lessons.
- 3.14 Generally good use is made of a wide range of resources that are readily available to the teaching staff. In some lessons excellent use is made of the interactive whiteboard and pupils are challenged to develop independent learning skills, but this is not consistent across all subject areas. The school has developed its own range of workbooks for several subjects, specific to its needs. Whilst these ensure work is retained securely and in an organised manner, and they encourage good assessment with teachers' comments, they also limit the opportunities for extension and challenge of the most able, as all pupils use the same workbook.
- 3.15 In response to the recommendation of the previous inspection the school follows a core marking scheme, around which individual departments are encouraged to make appropriate additions. This strategy creates a good basis for an approach to marking and assessment but it lacks consistency of application. The best examples of marking are thoughtful, supportive and often provide guidance on how to improve. However, assessment of all kinds rarely includes specific target setting, or input from pupils to ensure their understanding of how to improve.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The pupils' personal development is excellent. They are confident and friendly, are excellent listeners and are polite and welcoming. In line with the school's aim, the children can develop with confidence free from fear, safe in the knowledge that their right to be heard will be respected. They demonstrate tolerance, together with an understanding of the needs of others.
- 4.2 Spiritual development is outstanding. The pupils are self-aware and confident. They are reflective in chapel services and show an understanding of the tenets and festivals of other faiths. Older pupils, through their display on Remembrance Day, showed powerful empathy with and understanding of the suffering of young 'Old Biltonian' soldiers. During the inspection the children showed a strong awareness of the needs of others through supporting the Samaritan's Purse Christmas Child Appeal which was the focus of an outstanding performance in an alternative worship session. The friendly and trusting atmosphere of the whole school community is valued by all, including international pupils. Self-esteem is developed by celebrating all achievements in an assembly, whether for acts of kindness, good work or success in activities within or beyond school. In the pre-prep celebration assemblies, pupils are made to feel equally special and their achievements are widely recognised
- 4.3 Throughout the school the quality of the pupils' moral development is excellent. They understand the need for high standards of behaviour and know right from wrong. New pupils quickly assimilate the values of the school. Older pupils are encouraged to consider their response to current issues such as bullying and younger children demonstrate acts of kindness towards others. Pupils recognise personal, social and health education as being relevant and important to their own welfare. The pre-prep pupils' observation of the 'golden rules' underpins the exemplary behaviour throughout the school.
- 4.4 Pupils are courteous and mature, and show strong social skills. They are confident with adults and with each other, and work collaboratively very successfully. Year 8 prefects clearly understand their roles. When asked to describe some of their duties, their immediate responses centred on helping, caring for and watching over others, particularly through the regular support for the pre-prep children. The school is very active in raising money for a wide variety of charities, and pupils are aware of and keen to support those who are less fortunate than they are. During the inspection, pupils were raising money to support Children in Need by making and selling cakes.
- 4.5 Cultural development is good. Through their study of religious education (RE), in assemblies and in the services they attend, pupils acquire a thorough knowledge of both Christian belief and practice, and show an understanding of other faiths. Some of the pupils come into contact with other cultures through their family visits to other countries and they were seen to bring that understanding into lessons such as geography. The school has also organised a number of tours or visits overseas, most recently a netball and cricket tour to Barbados, and on-going links are beginning to be forged with a project in India.

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

- 4.6 The school has excellent arrangements to promote the pupils' welfare, health and safety within a very happy, caring and inclusive environment. The staff provide most effective support and guidance, in accordance with the school's aims. A current focus for the school is to enhance the role of the Form Tutor and this is very well supported through discussion and in-service training.
- 4.7 Pupils say they find it easy to consult form teachers and boarding staff on personal and academic issues and are confident they will be listened to; this reflects the excellent relationships throughout the school. There are many opportunities for the pupils to voice their thoughts, ideas and concerns, including the school and boarders' councils. In addition boarding staff meet weekly to discuss individual boarders, concerns and suggestions from the pupils. The school is currently implementing a new management information system, which is intended to store and facilitate the use of pastoral as well as academic data.
- 4.8 Parent and pupil questionnaires revealed a reassuring trust and satisfaction in the care and guidance pupils receive, and in the relationships promoted. The school has effective strategies to guard against bullying. Pupils were able to differentiate between isolated socially unacceptable incidents and sustained bullying. Many pupils said they were unaware of any bullying and all said that if unacceptable behaviour occurred it would be dealt with quickly and effectively. During the inspection the school was acknowledging anti-bullying week.
- 4.9 Within the culture of pastoral care, the school protects its pupils with a comprehensive child safeguarding policy, which is clearly understood by staff and pupils. Staff training in this area is appropriate and up-to-date and the school has good links with the local authority in these matters. Comprehensive checks and documentation underpin the secure system for recruiting staff and governors. Health and safety measures, including fire safety, are thorough and well documented. In line with the equal opportunities policy, there is an up to date access plan for those with SEND. Pupils are provided with a balanced diet, with vegetarian and salad options, and healthy eating is promoted. Inspectors, in dining with pupils, confirmed the quality of the food. Medical support is well managed and resourced; the staff provide excellent medical and emotional support, including the provision of a night duty matron throughout the week. Physical exercise is widely promoted and enjoyed through the extensive games and physical education programme. Admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained and stored.

4.(c) The quality of boarding education

- 4.10 Boarding was previously inspected by Ofsted in May 2011 and this is subject of a separate report. There were no reported regulatory shortcomings and no recommendations for improvement in that published report. The current ISI inspection considers the impact of the boarding experience on the pupils' education and personal development, in response to the school's aims.
- 4.11 The boarding provision is outstanding. Pupils describe it as 'homely, like a sleep over where we can have fun with our friends – I love this school'. A particular strength is the nature of relationships amongst boarders, and between the boarders and the staff. The housemaster and housemistress are supported by a well-qualified team, including academic staff, a nurse, matrons, four international gap-year students and a night duty matron.
- 4.12 Alongside a small number of British and international full boarders, the school offers weekly and flexible boarding, which are popular. The integral nature of boarding is emphasised as each member of the teaching staff participates at weekends with the boarders on a rota basis. This provides a wide variety of weekend activities including ice skating, circus skills and bowling. Pupils are also appreciative of the recently introduced opportunities with no timetabled activity, simply to relax and unwind.
- 4.13 Accommodation is comfortable and homely, and parents are appreciative of the 'home from home' environment and strong community spirit. Older pupils share smaller rooms with a few others, whilst younger pupils enjoy sharing with a larger group. There is ample communal space within the boarding houses, but the boarders also benefit from having access to many of the facilities both inside and outside the building, including the library, ICT suite, swimming pool and sports hall and the extensive grounds and woods. Year 8 boys and girls enjoy the opportunity to socialise in their common room before going their separate ways at bedtime. Boarders complete their prep in school before supper and so time in the boarding house is relaxed. However, pupils also feel that they benefit from the opportunity to engage with staff over academic matters after formal school time and they say that they enjoy the opportunity to help one another with any extra work.
- 4.14 The atmosphere pervading the boarding house is calm, purposeful and friendly. Boarders enjoy each other's company, whilst appreciating the opportunity to have someone with whom they can discuss concerns. In addition to the boarding staff, there is an external listener. Regular meetings of the boarding council provide opportunities for boarders to discuss matters with the house staff. Pupils unanimously feel that they have developed more self-confidence and independence as a result of their boarding experience, and this contributes positively to their personal development.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The governing body provides excellent support for the aims and management of the school. The board brings together an extensive range of expertise, enabling oversight of all aspects of the school as an education provider in an increasingly competitive commercial marketplace. The board offers the school strong support for growth and development, and governors and the headmaster have a shared vision for the future of the school. The responses to the parents' questionnaire illustrated great faith in the leadership, management and governance of the school.
- 5.2 Individual governors or small committees are responsible for maintaining an in-depth understanding of each facet of operations of the school. Each term, these individuals or committees report to the full board. In this manner, the governing body discharges its statutory obligations well. Welfare is carefully monitored, as are the procedures for the appointment of all staff, governors and volunteers. A nominated governor is responsible for oversight of the safeguarding of pupils and all governors are involved in the annual review of child protection and other policies. Health and safety are monitored by a staff committee and chaired by a governor.
- 5.3 Governors have good insight into the life of the school through direct involvement, as well as receiving reports and presentations. They maintain a high profile, with many attending major events such as the recent Remembrance Sunday service. The more locally based governors play a more active role in the school's life and work.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.4 The leadership and management of the school are good with some outstanding features. They strongly support the aims of the school, to provide a happy and secure environment in which pupils can enjoy a rich childhood in a Christian community, and to supply a breadth of opportunity academically, in the sports, in the arts and in technology. The senior management team oversees a curriculum that ensures a high level of success in Common Entrance and scholarship examinations, and which promotes excellent standards of personal development and an extensive range of extra-curricular activities.
- 5.5 The leadership team is generally effective in ensuring that policies are implemented and that practices are monitored regularly. It exercises a high level of pastoral care to ensure the protection of pupils through a strong culture of safeguarding, anti-bullying and internet safety throughout the school, including in the boarding houses. This is supported by a thorough staff development programme including child protection, health and safety, and risk management. This allows the school to fulfil its aim to create a secure environment, but one in which pupils can enjoy the richness of a childhood which includes campcraft and adventurous activities; learning how to manage associated risks for themselves.
- 5.6 The senior management team is fully committed to the Christian ethos, and encourages spiritual development through traditional, but very engaging chapel activities and alternative acts of worship.
- 5.7 There is a clear vision for the school, although this is not always based on self-evaluation of the school at all levels. Since the previous inspection, pupils' pastoral

care has been strengthened and transition between sections is better supported by the creation of very effective additional senior leadership roles and recently by successfully raising the profile of the form tutor in the Prep department. Links between the Pre-prep and the Prep departments have improved. The focus is now on raising the quality of teaching and learning. There is an appraisal process in place. The school has recently introduced a computerised information management system in order to enhance target setting and to play a part in raising attainment of all groups of pupils. However, pupil tracking, work scrutiny, marking and especially formative assessment are not yet consistently used across departments. Although data is used extremely well to support those with SEND or EAL, this is not the case for the gifted and talented pupils.

- 5.8 Management of academic departments is good. Heads of department are involved in the development of academic policy and in the annual auditing of departmental performance. Staff recruitment is managed efficiently, and the procedures for checking all school staff and governors are thorough and very well documented in a single central register. The induction programme is thorough, but although some further lesson observation and work scrutiny is undertaken, these lack consistency across all departments as yet.

5.(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians

- 5.9 Links between the school and the parents are excellent, helping to maintain a happy and secure environment in which the pupils will thrive, developing their confidence, self-esteem and independence. The pre-inspection parental questionnaire illustrated a very high degree of satisfaction with the provision of the school, the expectations of the school, the ease of communication with the school and opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's education.
- 5.10 Parents participate fully in many events. During the period of inspection a substantial number attended Remembrance Sunday service in the chapel, a parents' consultation evening, a transition morning for older pupils from the pre-prep, an information evening about a future adventure training week, as well as those on the touchline and the netball court.
- 5.11 Communication with parents is a strong aspect of the school. The parents' handbooks, including the transition guides *Moving In*, *Moving Forward*, *Moving Up*, are comprehensive and welcoming, but more importantly they inspire confidence. Parents of boarders receive additional guidance, which is similarly encouraging and the boys' and girls' boarding houses provide appropriate communication links between pupils and their parents, including the opportunities available through the Internet.
- 5.12 All required information about the school and its policies is readily available to parents, including the safeguarding policy and the procedure for parental complaints, which are accessed via the school's website. The number of formal complaints is published annually, but there have been none requiring review by the governors in recent years. All respondents to the questionnaire expressed their satisfaction with the manner in which the school has handled any concerns they may have raised. All parents also emphasised the ease with which they can communicate with the school.
- 5.13 Since the previous inspection the school has further developed its reporting process. Reports now include detailed comments by subject teachers and pastoral staff,

although they are not yet supported by data driven targets for improvement. In addition to this regular communication, parents also have the opportunity to attend evening consultations to discuss pupils' progress and these are very well attended and productive. Parents in the pre-prep regularly meet with staff when dropping off and collecting pupils, and this is also apparent in the main school.

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

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

6.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.1 This is an outstanding setting, meeting the needs of all children whilst fully appreciating their individual differences. An excellent system of review and self-evaluation ensures the realisation of the school's aims of generating a welcoming, secure and positive environment, in which each child can develop their full potential. The staff sustain existing high standards by regularly identifying areas for improvement, and children's needs are very well met through a broad and exciting range of activities.

6.(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.2 Leadership and management of the EYFS are outstanding. The leadership shares a clear vision and high aspirations with the strong EYFS team. Excellent arrangements ensure that children are effectively safeguarded. All adults have been suitably checked, are well qualified and appropriately trained. Records, policies and procedures are in place, are well implemented, ensure equality and eliminate discrimination. The capacity for sustained improvement is excellent, and is reflected in the perceptive and detailed self-evaluation that identifies priorities and development. Risk assessments have been established to ensure safety and are effectively implemented. The school works well with parents, carers and other agencies. Parents were very positive in their responses to the questionnaire and expressed appreciation of their children's progress and the standard of their care. The effective use and good management of resources leads to successful outcomes for all children.

6.(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.3 The quality of provision is outstanding. All children learn and develop extremely well through stimulating play and valuable first-hand experiences. A well-judged balance is maintained between adult-led and child initiated activities and children regularly benefit from both indoor and outdoor play. Staff plan to improve provision further by developing the outdoor classroom and producing a programme of study for using the Forest School area. Children are observant and inquisitive, and staff ask challenging questions to develop thinking skills. Their work and interests are valued and are reflected in many colourful displays around the setting. Staff promote welfare, health and safety extremely well and children are encouraged to eat healthy meals. The behaviour policy is well implemented, resulting in a happy and busy atmosphere, where children benefit fully from all the opportunities provided.

6.(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

- 6.4 Outcomes for children are outstanding. They make rapid progress and are on course to meet all of the Early Learning Goals by the end of their Reception year. In literacy, children can correctly identify initial sounds and construct simple sentences. In numeracy, children can recognise and recreate simple patterns, confidently using the interactive whiteboard. In music, they consolidate words and melody in preparation for a future assembly. In the outdoor classroom, children are totally absorbed during a story telling session, exhibiting much awe and wonder. During a Diwali celebration, children dress in Indian clothes, enjoy Indian food and dance, and successfully complete a quiz. All children co-operate well, enjoy their learning and can make sensible choices and decisions. Their increase in confidence and self-esteem prepares them for a successful transition to the next stage of learning. Children trust and respect their teachers, they relate well to each other and to adults. They feel safe, understand about eating healthy snacks and lunches, and respond to school life with great enthusiasm and enjoyment.

Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision

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, 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

Mr Paul James	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Serena Alexander	Former Headmistress, IAPS school
Mrs Mary Allen	Headteacher, IAPS school
Mr Ian Parker	Deputy Head, IAPS school
Mrs Lynda Boden	Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector