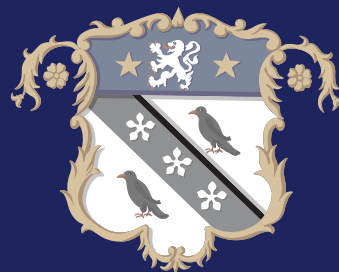


SAINT RONAN'S SCHOOL



Integrated Inspection 2013



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Full Name of School | St Ronan's School |
| DfE Number | 886/6006 |
| Registered Charity Number | 1066420 |
| Address | St Ronan's School Water Lane Hawkhurst Kent TN18 5DJ |
| Telephone Number | 01580 752271 |
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| Email Address | info@saintronans.co.uk |
| Head | Mr William Trelawny-Vernon |
| Chair of Governors | Mr Colin Willis |
| Age Range | 3 to 13 |
| Total Number of Pupils | 314 |
| Gender of Pupils | Mixed (178 boys; 136 girls) |
| Numbers by Age 3-5 (EYFS): | 40 5-13: 274 |
| Head of EYFS Setting | Mrs Kathryn Bender |
| EYFS Gender | Mixed |
| Inspection dates | 01 Oct 2013 to 04 Oct 2013 |

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors and another governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the boarding house and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

INSPECTORS

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Mrs Penny Horsman | Reporting Inspector |
| Mr Andrew Cowell | Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school) |
| Mr Kerry Lord | Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school) |
| Mr Adrian Lowe-Wheeler | Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, IAPS school) |
| Mr Patrick Wenham | Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school) |
| Mr Jason Hyatt | Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding |
| Mrs Eithne Webster | Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years |

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the ISI schedule, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in January 2009.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

This inspection contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education, personal development and welfare. Until September 2011, Boarding inspections were carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills.

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

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

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

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'satisfactory' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

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THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Ronan's School is a co-educational day and boarding preparatory school for pupils between the ages of 3 and 13. Founded in Worthing in 1883, it was relocated to its present site in Hawkhurst, Kent in 1946. It was a proprietorial school until 1997, when it became a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. The trustees form the governing body. The main building is Grade II listed and is set in 249 acres of parkland and landscaped grounds. The school has a Christian foundation but welcomes pupils of all denominations and faiths as well as those with no faith background.

The school seeks to provide a good all-round education with a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities. It aims to nurture a happy family environment in which pupils enjoy school, relish the opportunities offered and are inspired to work hard and be kind, gentle, courteous and honest. Since the previous inspection the school has added a sports hall to its accommodation and has developed a small farm within the site, which has pigs, chickens, ducks and alpacas. For the youngest children a woodland experience programme has been introduced. Design technology (DT) has been added to the curriculum for all pupils.

Of the 314 pupils on roll, 178 boys and 136 girls, the majority are day pupils, but the school provides flexible boarding on 3 nights each week for up to 45 pupils from the age of 9 upwards. There are 40 children, 20 boys and 20 girls, in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and half of these attend part-time. The school comprises the Pre-Prep (EYFS, and Years 1 and 2) and the Prep School (Years 3 to 8).

The ability profile of the school is above the national average, with very few pupils being of average or below average ability. The school has identified 108 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and of these, 71 receive specialist support, while none has a statement of special educational needs. No pupil has English as an additional language at a level that requires additional support.

Pupils come from families who live within 20 miles of the school and who have professional or business backgrounds. The vast majority are from a white British background, with a small minority coming from several other different ethnic groups.

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

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

| School | NC name |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Caterpillars | Nursery (age three) |
| Frogs | Nursery (age four) |
| Hedgehogs / Rabbits | Reception |

Years 1 to 8

| School | NC name |
|------------------|---------|
| Owls / Squirrels | Year 1 |
| Badgers / Otters | Year 2 |
| 3 | Year 3 |
| 4 | Year 4 |
| Shell | Year 5 |
| Midway | Year 6 |
| Upper | Year 7 |
| Remove | Year 8 |

THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

MAIN FINDINGS

From the EYFS upwards, all pupils, including those who board, are highly successful in their learning and personal development. Their achievement is excellent. The school successfully meets its aim to provide an all-round education within a happy environment where opportunities are relished. The excellent teaching contributes to the high standard of achievement but tracking of pupils' progress is not yet wholly consistent throughout the school. The pupils' attitudes to their work are excellent. They are interested in their studies and appreciate the many activities offered to them, both within and outside the curriculum.

Throughout the school the pupils' personal qualities are excellent. The warm and caring atmosphere fosters pupils who are well mannered and unfailingly polite. The school fulfils its aim for pupils to enjoy school, to be inspired to work hard and to be kind, courteous and honest. Pupils reported that they are proud to be at the school. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents of pupils in all sections of the school, including the EYFS and those who board, were overwhelmingly positive. This reflects their strong satisfaction with the education and care their children are receiving. Staff, both teaching and non-teaching, provide excellent pastoral care and their example promotes the purposeful atmosphere that pervades the school. Arrangements to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety are excellent.

In all sections of the school, leadership and management are excellent. The school benefits from the strong leadership provided to the staff at senior management level. Senior leaders have responded to the recommendation of the previous inspection to improve the marking of pupils' work. The governors are committed to the school, including the EYFS. Their experience and expertise have played a significant part in the development and improvement of both the buildings and facilities. Several of them visit regularly and have an excellent working knowledge of the day-to-day life of the school.

ACTION POINTS

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2011.

Recommendation for further improvement

The school is advised to make the following improvement.

Extend the systems for the tracking of pupil progress to ensure consistency throughout the school.

'The excellent teaching contributes to the high standard of achievement'

'The pupils' attitudes to their work are excellent'

'Pupils report that they are proud to be at the school'

'Parents of pupils in all sections of the school ... were overwhelmingly positive. This reflects the strong satisfaction with the education their children are receiving'

'A supportive environment where children become eager and exuberant learners'

'Excellent use is made of the woodland learning environment to stimulate learning'

'These provide pupils with a rich and satisfying musical experience'

'For the many able, gifted and talented (A, G, and T) pupils, extension activities are provided within and outside the curriculum, which challenge their thinking'

'Mathematical skills are strong throughout the school'

THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' ACHIEVEMENTS AND LEARNING

The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.

Throughout the school, including the EYFS, pupils are well educated and extremely successful in their learning across all subjects and activities. The school fulfils its aim to provide an all-round education. In the EYFS, children make excellent progress in their learning and development in relation to their starting points. The staff provide a secure, supportive environment where children become eager and exuberant learners, taking pride in and gaining confidence through their achievements. Reception children make a good start at learning to read using a fast-paced phonics system involving the introduction of a sound a day, and can recognise commonly used words such as and, can and will. All EYFS children are keen to explore and investigate. The children's independence is developed effectively through the many opportunities for them to choose freely from activities both inside and in the outdoor learning areas, and excellent use is made of the woodland learning environment to stimulate learning. Their thinking skills develop, for example when studying fossilised dinosaur eggs.

Higher up the school, pupils show clear understanding in lessons and in their written work and make good and often excellent progress. They read well in lessons. The quality of writing in a literacy lesson with younger pupils demonstrated use of descriptive language when they produced book reviews. Pupils have a marked ability to listen to each other, and speak well when conversing with adults. Younger pupils demonstrated excellent singing, speaking and performance skills when they gave an assembly. Mathematical skills are good throughout the school, including in the EYFS. Younger pupils were able to successfully complete a task of working out how to spend £200 on books for their library.

The pupils' creative skills are clearly evident in art displays around the school, both two- and three-dimensional, which provide stimulus and interest. Individuals attain high levels in music and drama examinations. Numerous opportunities exist for musicians to play in one of the many group ensembles such as those for bassoon flute, guitar, strings and the school orchestra. These provide pupils with a rich and satisfying musical experience. Pupils are offered many opportunities to take part in master classes both at the school and at senior schools, which enrich and develop their talents.

In information and communication technology (ICT), pupils reach good levels of competence and use it successfully in many curriculum subjects. Pupils display highly developed physical skills across a range of sports, enjoying individual and team successes. They have reached the finals of local and regional competitions in, for example, hockey, football, rugby, lacrosse, netball and cricket. Pupils also achieve success in local and regional competitions, including art and science challenges and general knowledge competitions. For the many able, gifted and talented (A, G and T) pupils, extension activities are provided within and outside the curriculum, which challenge their thinking. Extra sessions in many subjects are offered for scholarship candidates, and opportunities to join clubs such as debating or computer programming enrich pupils' experiences and aid achievement and progress.

When they move on at the age of 13 to their senior schools, many of the pupils gain awards for sport, music, art, drama or academic achievement, and almost all of them have gained places at their first-choice school in recent years.

The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related ex-

pectations. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress when compared with those of similar above average ability. Pupils with SEND benefit from careful planning for their needs from the EYFS upwards, and from the specialist individual help offered. From conversations with these pupils and from scrutiny of their work it is clear that their progress is often rapid. Able, gifted and talented pupils also make good and sometimes excellent progress, as seen from observation of their work and discussions with them.

Pupils thrive in the atmosphere of hard work, enjoyment and effort. They work very well together. Their attitude to their work is excellent and they take pride in both their own achievements and those of others. They sustain high levels of concentration during lessons and activities, maximising all opportunities presented to them.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF CURRICULAR AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR PROVISION

The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.

A broad curriculum, accessible to pupils of all ages and abilities, is at the centre of the school's provision. It is well balanced, with equal emphasis placed on academic, creative and cultural learning for all. Conscious attention ensures that the value of extra-curricular provision is fully exploited. Pupils identified with SEND and those who are A, G and T are very well catered for: individual education plans are devised, implemented and effectively reviewed. This information is automatically shared with relevant staff through the school's information management system. In the EYFS, effective use is made of specialist teaching and resources in physical education and music; the children respond with enthusiasm. A range of both teacher-directed and child-initiated activities is provided. These enable all children, including those with SEND and those who are A, G and T to make excellent progress relative to their starting points and to reach the expected levels of development.

Opportunities for pupils to excel exist across the curriculum, but particularly in music, art, sport and DT. Specialist ensembles for all instrument families are organised for those pupils identified with high ability, aptitude or talent in music. Opportunities for all pupils to play in a school team are provided across the ability range. The newly established DT department is well equipped and has enabled pupils to produce high quality work. The curriculum is enriched by visits to local places of interest linked to various subjects, and to theatres, galleries and museums.

Extra-curricular provision is excellent. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires parents were overwhelmingly positive about the range of extracurricular activities available. A stimulating mix of opportunities offers cultural, sporting, creative, expressive and cerebral activities such as bee keeping, mountain biking, ballet and fencing. The mini-farm, which is run with the pupils' help, raises livestock to supplement the school menu and generates produce sold in aid of charity or to fund development. Activities are timetabled sympathetically to ensure that all pupils are able to access them according to their needs, interests and abilities. Each term a cross-curricular week involves pupils in a variety of trips, including a residential visit to France and a residential outdoor education excursion to Cornwall. The weekly 'Friday gathering' involves visits from a range of outside speakers. Such experiences broaden pupils' outlooks.

Links with the community are excellent and add a further dimension to the curriculum: local orchestras, sports teams and societies share the school's facilities and, in return, provide opportunities for involvement and extension which benefit pupils. A 'church hop' offers pupils visits to a range of local churches of different denominations. Pupils have opportunities to visit sheltered accommodation and to become involved in a community mission initiative run by a local church. A strong link has been established with a local primary school, which has promoted initiatives for joint learning.

'Pupils thrive in the atmosphere of hard work, enjoyment and effort'

'Opportunities exist to excel across the curriculum'

'A stimulating mix of opportunities offers cultural, sporting, creative, expressive and cerebral activities'

'Highly effective teaching has a direct impact on pupils' high achievement'

'Positive and trusting relationships are established between teachers and pupils'

'Teaching is supported by well-maintained and well-resourced classrooms'

'Excellent use is made of the woodland learning activities'

THE CONTRIBUTION OF TEACHING

The contribution of teaching is excellent.

Highly effective teaching has a direct impact on pupils' high achievement across the curriculum and fully supports the aims of the school to provide an all-round education. In their questionnaire responses and in interviews, pupils indicated a high level of satisfaction with teaching and this is corroborated by parents and inspection evidence. Positive and trusting relationships are established between teachers and their pupils, with emphasis placed on emotional well-being and individual needs as well as academic progress. In the EYFS, children benefit from a welcoming and stimulating environment. They use interactive whiteboards and handheld computers throughout the setting in activities which motivate and engage the children. The high expectations of the staff promote learning, and the computerised tracking and assessment system, carefully evaluated by staff before its introduction, is monitored rigorously to ensure that it is used to best effect.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. An appropriate range of methods and styles is employed to encourage pupils to work both independently and collaboratively. Many opportunities are provided for the development of oral skills in class discussions and through the skilful use of question and answer sessions. In a French lesson, younger pupils focused on developing vocabulary, and the teacher's enthusiastic engagement led to rapid progress. The logical thought of older pupils was challenged when asked to consider the differences between religion and science when studying the Creation. The integration of ICT into teaching strategies is reflected in the developing use of interactive whiteboards, the growing use of handheld computers as a teaching aid and the use of laptops by some pupils with SEND.

Lesson planning is often excellent, and at its best, is guided by assessment, reflects previous attainment and sets learning objectives for the lesson or activity. In the Pre-Prep, a rigorous academic tracking system is in place. Academic tracking in the Prep School is less comprehensive, but the school management system provides a useful centralised database, which tracks pupils' all-round progress and achievements. The award of grades every two or three weeks also helps teachers to monitor pupils' performance. Pupils are given the opportunity to self-assess their performance before the publication of these grades. Marking, which was identified as a weakness at the time of the previous inspection, generally praises achievement and encourages further effort, often with good guidance to pupils as to how they can improve. However, some inconsistency in practice remains.

Teaching is supported by well-maintained and well-resourced classrooms. In the Pre-Prep, excellent use is made of woodland learning activities, and the extensive school grounds provide a rich and well-used learning resource. Older pupils were taken for a walk in the grounds to record sounds and take photographs to produce stimulus for creative writing.

The setting arrangements for older pupils and the small class sizes ensure that teaching generally meets the pupils' differing needs very well. Provision for the most able pupils is not consistent in all lessons, though is very strong in extra-curricular activities. Pupils with SEND are extremely well catered for, with close liaison between the learning support department and the teaching staff, and detailed individual education plans in place for each pupil on the SEND register. Additional support beyond the classroom for pupils with SEND is outstanding, with effective systems for tracking and monitoring in place. The learning support department works collaboratively with parents, making excellent use of a parent communication book.

Homework, which is set for the older pupils, places appropriate emphasis on reading and research, and continues the learning that has taken place in lessons. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, some pupils expressed the view that homework is excessive. Inspectors investigated these views and judged that the amount of prep set is appropriate.

THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

THE SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PUPILS

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.

Pupils' personal development is of the highest standard throughout the school, in accordance with its aims to encourage their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils often reflect on their own achievements and can offer critical observations of their own work and behaviour. In the EYFS, children come into school cheerfully and co-operate well with their peers, showing respect for each other and sharing toys. They much enjoy coming to school and are confident that staff care for them and will keep them safe. The behaviour of these young children is exemplary; they are familiar with routines and expectations, and are well prepared for their move into the next stage of their education.

Pupils have excellent spiritual awareness. This is developed through such experiences as hearing readings about former pupils who were casualties of World War 1 and hearing the school prayer sung as a solo. Pupils are able to reflect on non-material aspects of life during the twice-weekly chapel services. This awareness is further enhanced by enjoyment of the natural beauty of the school's grounds. Pupils have a strong sense of self-worth, promoted by the reward system and recognition of their successes, which is carefully managed.

The pupils' moral development is excellent. They have a clear sense of right and wrong from an early age. Older pupils showed clear understanding in discussion of the need for rules, and respect for the school's code of conduct. A culture of mutual respect and care is implicit in school life. Pupils have a strong understanding that others may have different views from their own and acknowledge their worth.

The strong relationships throughout the school are the result of the pupils' excellent social development within a caring community. In the EYFS, children are happy and confident in their interactions with each other. From this early age upwards, pupils are at ease talking with those in different year groups and with adults. Older pupils are offered the opportunity to take on responsibility as elected members of the school council and recognise this to be a democratic way for their views to be aired. They contribute to the wider society in which they live through organising their own fund raising for those less fortunate than themselves.

The pupils' cultural development is excellent. They have an awareness of and respect for their own and other faiths and cultures. Their understanding of world religions is developed successfully through religious education lessons and visits to local churches. Trips to galleries, museums and places of historic interest offer the pupils an insight into Western culture. The curriculum enhances their understanding of the lives of people in other countries and older pupils are given the opportunity to experience French culture during their residential trip.

By the time they leave the school at the age of 13, pupils' personal development is excellent. They feel ready to move on and are well prepared for their next schools.

'Pupils' personal development is of the highest standard throughout the school'

'A culture of mutual respect and care is implicit in school life'

'The strong relationships throughout the school are the result of the pupils' excellent social development within a caring community'

'Pupils have a strong sense of self-worth'

'In all areas of the school, members of staff are committed to ensuring that the pastoral needs of every pupil are met'

'The quality and variety of the food provided for all pupils, including the EYFS, are excellent'

'Pupils are encouraged to live healthy lifestyles'

'Pupils are confident and articulate, and spoke positively about the friendly and caring nature of their teachers'

THE CONTRIBUTION OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR PASTORAL CARE

The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.

In all areas of the school, members of staff are committed to ensuring that the pastoral needs of every pupil are met, in accordance with the school's aims to provide a happy environment with effective support and guidance. In the EYFS, staff ensure that the needs of each child are met and encourage the children to develop positive relationships.

Relationships between teachers and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves, are excellent. In the Prep School, the effective school database allows for extensive monitoring of individual pupils, and provides an in-depth awareness of pupils' needs, enabling staff to be proactive in their pastoral duties. Close links between boarding and academic staff facilitate their sharing of pastoral issues. The quality and variety of the food provided for all pupils, including the EYFS, are excellent, and pupils commented positively about this during interviews. Pupils are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles by developing healthy eating habits and taking regular exercise. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

The school has a clear and positive code of conduct. In the Prep School, 'shows' are awarded to recognise good behaviour, kindness and effort. The system is carefully monitored to ensure any that pupils who are lacking recognition are identified and supported. In the Pre-Prep, pupils are awarded ticks and place leaves on a class tree to celebrate their contribution. Achievement is celebrated in assemblies. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaires, some pupils expressed the view that the rewards and sanctions system is administered unfairly. Inspectors found no evidence to support these views. The school keeps careful track of how these systems are used. A large prefect team, elected by the pupils, undertakes a wide range of roles. Emphasis is placed on setting the best possible example, assisting with the younger pupils and playing a part in the smooth running of the school. Prefects record any concerns in a dedicated book and similarly highlight children who they feel deserve praise.

Pupils are confident and articulate, and spoke positively about the friendly and caring nature of their teachers; they know who they can turn to if they have a concern. Questionnaire responses and interviews confirm pupils' views that bullying is rare and that should it occur, pupils have confidence that staff would deal with it quickly. Pupils' opinions are valued and the school employs effective methods to seek their views. The school council, to which a member of each class is elected, meets termly, and improvements made as a result of its suggestions include alterations to the dining arrangements and the refurbishment of the boys' changing rooms.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR WELFARE, HEALTH AND SAFETY

The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.

Safeguarding procedures are thorough and have regard to official guidance. The school places high priority on safeguarding and pupils' safety. All staff are trained at the appropriate level in child protection. Close and effective relationships are maintained with local children's services.

The necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and the school uses an advisory body for fire prevention matters. Regular fire drills are held and appropriate records are kept. Staff receive clear guidelines on fire safety as part of their induction training and are given regular updates. Electrical testing is regular and is recorded appropriately. Thorough risk assessments covering all relevant areas are in place, with careful consideration paid to any potential hazards.

Pupils who are ill or injured are cared for in a well-equipped medical room and appropriate records are kept. Almost all staff have received training in first aid, and EYFS staff are trained in paediatric first aid. A health and safety committee meets termly and carries out its role effectively, keeping detailed minutes of all meetings.

The admission and attendance registers are suitably maintained and correctly stored.

THE QUALITY OF BOARDING

The quality of boarding is excellent.

Outcomes for boarders are excellent. The happy relationships amongst the boarders are a feature of the boarding community. Boarders of all ages work and live together in a harmonious environment. All boarders who responded to the questionnaire reported that they enjoy boarding and feel safe. They are positive about all aspects of boarding within the school. The opportunities offered enable them to develop excellent interpersonal skills with visitors, staff and their peers. They value the friendships they make and enjoy their interaction with friends.

Relationships between boarders and boarding staff are a particularly positive feature and underpin the success of boarding within the school. The teaching and pastoral staff are highly regarded by all of the boarders interviewed. Staff are aware of the needs of every boarder and their welfare is well monitored. Both girls and boys display exemplary behaviour. The boarders' daily and termly prizes are a highlight, helping to promote good behaviour. Nominated boarders are given the responsibility of looking after their dormitories. They are keen to express their views, taking an active role in meetings and having representation on the school council. Boarders enjoy taking responsibility for the evening menus, creating their own ideas in conjunction with the catering manager. Mealtimes are relaxed yet ordered, ending with a formal grace led by individual boarders. Boarders make good use of the new serving arrangements within the dining room, which offer a greater choice of food. Additional support is available in prep for boarders with SEND on the particular nights that they board.

The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. All areas are secure, homely and welcoming. Boarding accommodation for both girls and boys is comfortable, with pleasant and well-maintained facilities. New boarders and their parents are provided in advance with comprehensive documentation and guidance. More experienced boarders and boarding staff support new members of the boarding community, ensuring a smooth transition. Boarders are able to contact their families by telephone and email. They have access to current affairs through daily newspapers and televised news. Food is healthy and plentiful. The catering staff are aware of the requirements of boarders with particular dietary needs. They produce an excellent, varied and nutritious menu that is well liked by the boarders. All meat, fruit and vegetables are sourced locally. In the evenings, boarders have access to a well-equipped kitchen within the boarding house

'The school places high priority on safeguarding and pupils' safety'

'The happy relationships amongst the boarders are a feature of the boarding community'

'Boarders of all ages work and live together in a harmonious environment'

'Relationships between boarders and boarding staff... underpin the success of boarding within the school'

'Food is healthy and plentiful'

'The school's extensive grounds facilitate excellent opportunities for boarders to both relax and enjoy physical activities'

'A firm approach is in place to prevent bullying'

'All of the parents who responded to the questionnaire reported that their children enjoy boarding'

to prepare additional snacks before bedtime. The range of extra-curricular activities is wide. The school's extensive grounds facilitate excellent opportunities for boarders to both relax and enjoy physical activities, such as ballet, dodge-ball and working on the school's farm.

The effectiveness of arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are excellent. A clear and comprehensive safeguarding policy and efficient recruitment procedures are in place. All staff have appropriate training in safeguarding and the procedures are clear and well monitored. The designated senior person for safeguarding has excellent links with the local authorities. A firm approach is in place to prevent bullying. Bullying is not identified as a concern amongst the boarders and they know that a number of adults are available to talk to.

Detailed risk assessments for fire safety are clear and regular fire practices are carried out within the boarding house at various times of the day or night. Good links exist with the local fire authority and actions have been carried out to meet recent recommendations. A well-resourced medical room is managed by a trained matron, providing a warm and caring environment to the boarders. Accurate medical notes are kept on each boarder and all necessary information is passed on to teaching staff through the school's management information system and regular staff meetings. The provision of accommodation for those boarders who are unwell is adequate, but in most cases boarders go home. Boarders have access to a well qualified independent listener, who has medical and safeguarding expertise. Staff know the whereabouts of the boarders in their care through accurate registration procedures and they have a clear knowledge of the missing child policy.

Leadership and management of the boarding provision are excellent. The head of boarding is a member of the senior management team and ensures that life runs smoothly within the boarding area. An effective system of self-evaluation of boarding within the school is overseen by the governing body. The school's appraisal system covers the full-time boarding staff and is seen as a positive method of staff development, although boarding does not feature as a formal issue in the appraisal of teaching staff who also work within boarding. Sanctions and rewards are recorded in a daily logbook: these are monitored and the necessary information is passed to tutors and class teachers, ensuring a seamless link. A suitable number of experienced staff are on duty each evening. Regular formal boarding meetings are held and issues are forwarded to the relevant school staff. Clear development plans for boarding provision link into the school's overall plan. All new staff involved with boarding receive thorough induction training on safeguarding and the procedures for the boarding house.

All of the parents who responded to the questionnaire reported that their children enjoy boarding and that the school keeps their children safe.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

THE QUALITY OF GOVERNANCE

The quality of governance is excellent.

The school is strongly supported by the governing body. Governors are selected for their experience and expertise from a variety of backgrounds, and the board reflects a valuable blend of both. They are highly successful in providing the stimulus and resources to ensure an effective education in line with the pupils' needs and the school's aims. They exercise prudent financial control and have ensured that the school benefits from high quality buildings, resources and staff. They have oversight and input into the strategic plan for the development of the school.

Governors are aware of their legal responsibilities and the governing body regularly reviews all policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding and safer recruitment. All governors have received training in child protection. They make regular visits to all sections of the school, including the EYFS, and have an excellent insight into the daily experience of the pupils and staff. Staff from various departments make regular presentations to the governors' curriculum committee, which are reported to the other members of the board.

THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING LINKS WITH PARENTS, CARERS AND GUARDIANS

The quality of leadership and management is excellent.

Senior leaders ensure that the school fulfils its aim to provide an all-round education supported by effective teaching and learning. Staff, parents and pupils greatly value the way in which the school is led. Leadership and management contribute fully to pupils' excellent curricular and extra-curricular achievements. The pupils' high level of personal development is a direct result of the ethos that has been created within the school and the examples set within the excellent management of pastoral care. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, an overwhelming number of pupils indicated that they enjoy coming to school.

Excellent educational direction is provided in line with the aims and ethos of the school. Roles within the management structure have been clarified since the previous inspection. The senior management team works effectively with middle managers and the staff as a whole in identifying the school's strengths and areas in need of improvement. Development planning is based upon regular self-evaluation of the school's performance in all sections of the school, including the EYFS. This is formulated by the senior leadership's consultation with staff, pupils and parents, and a review by the governors. Achievement of development targets is carefully tracked. Effective systems for monitoring teaching and learning ensure that high standards are achieved and maintained. Regular scrutiny of pupils' work takes place and the quality of marking has improved since the previous inspection, although implementation of the marking policy is not always evaluated sufficiently well and academically able pupils are not always challenged in some subjects. Regular staff appraisal leads to the setting of clear targets, which, along with an effective approach to professional development for staff, contributes to high standards of teaching and learning.

Leadership ensures that appropriate welfare, health and safety and safeguarding training is organised for all members of the school community, including the EYFS. Safe recruitment procedures are followed when new staff and governors are appointed and these are recorded accurately on the single central register. A rigorous and supportive system of induction for new members of staff is followed. All policies are reviewed regularly and their implementation is carefully moni-

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'An exceptional partnership exists between school and home'

'Parents are regularly informed through the website about news and events'

tored. Staff are deployed effectively. The management of provision for pupils with SEND is excellent.

The quality of the links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent. An exceptional partnership exists between school and home which fulfils the school's aim to maintain a constructive relationship with parents and guardians. In the EYFS, children settle quickly into Nursery and Reception. This is helped by close liaison with parents, who are encouraged to participate in their children's progress by such means as the 'sharing books', containing information about a child's home and family as well as favourite foods, activities and pets. Responses to the parents' preinspection questionnaire demonstrated an overwhelming level of satisfaction with all aspects of school life. Many opportunities are provided for parents to be involved in their children's education. Opportunities to discuss pupils' performance are available at parents' evenings. A comprehensive reporting system enables parents to understand their children's progress. Effort and attainment grades are provided regularly through the course of the academic year, with supporting comments where appropriate. Pupils are involved in the process of evaluating their performance and setting clear and attainable targets for improvement.

Careful records of parents' concerns are appropriately maintained, and matters are resolved swiftly. An appropriate complaints policy is in place. Excellent communication between school and home is available through the parents' portal on the school's extranet. Parents are regularly informed through the website about news and events and many use an interactive forum designed to support the school community. An efficient mobile telephone texting system allows changes of arrangements to be communicated to parents. Helpful booklets posted on the school's website provide information about ways in which parents can support their children's education. Transition booklets are provided to help them support their children as they settle into a new year group. Staff organise regular information events to explain how different subjects are taught.

Parents are involved in many activities at the school. The parents' association raises significant amounts of money to support school projects and organises a range of well-supported social events. These have included successful quiz nights, parents' breakfasts and attendance at a popular social occasion that coincides with the school's annual cross-country event.

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

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