



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**KING'S HALL SCHOOL**

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## King's Hall School

Full Name of School	<b>King's Hall School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>933/6187</b>		
EYFS Number	<b>EY474760</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>1103346</b>		
Address	<b>King's Hall School Kingston Road Taunton Somerset TA2 8AA</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01823 285920</b>		
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Email Address	<b>Schooloffice@kingshalltaunton.co.uk</b>		
Head	<b>Mr Justin Chippendale</b>		
Proprietor	<b>King's Schools Taunton Ltd</b>		
Chair of Council	<b>Mr Roger Knight OBE</b>		
Age Range	<b>2 to 13</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>300</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (161 boys; 139 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>8</b>	5-11: <b>166</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>41</b>	11-13: <b>85</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>245</b>	
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>55</b>	
	Full:	<b>22</b>	Weekly: <b>5</b> Flexi: <b>28</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Claire Luckhurst</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection Dates	<b>06 May 2014 to 09 May 2014</b>		

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in November 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, as amended. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://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. The newly opened nursery for two year olds is not reported on in this inspection.

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', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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

### Inspectors

Mrs Serena Alexander	Reporting Inspector
Ms Linda Glithro	Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, GSA junior school)
Mrs Deborah Nisbet	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Mr David Williams	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Richard Gibbs	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Jenny Clayphan	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 King's Hall is an independent day and boarding school for pupils aged from 2 to 13 years, with a boarding community of full-time, weekly and flexi-boarders. Formed in 1987, from the amalgamation of two existing schools, the school is set in extensive grounds on the outskirts of the town of Taunton, in Somerset. Extended care for pupils is available both before and after school each day. Since the previous inspection, the school has extended the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) by opening a Nursery class for two year olds, the swimming pool has undergone a complete refurbishment and the design and technology (DT) workshop has had a refit, compulsory academic lessons on a Saturday morning have been discontinued and replaced with optional activities, and the leadership and management of the school has been re-organised.
- 1.2 The school is part of the Woodard Schools Group, the values of which are based on Christian principles. The school has a close association with King's College, Taunton and the two schools share the same board of governors, known as the Council. The two schools are on separate sites and in their day-to-day management each is independent of the other.
- 1.3 The school aims to develop within each pupil an appreciation of their artistic and cultural heritage, to encourage each to make the most of their intellectual potential and to discover talents and interests beyond the classroom. The school seeks to encourage every pupil to be thoughtful and sympathetic to others whilst confident to express and defend ideas and opinions, to behave in a socially acceptable manner and to develop a spiritual awareness through the tenets of the Woodard Schools group in a manner appropriate to their age.
- 1.4 There are 300 pupils on roll. The pre-preparatory department (Pre-Prep) includes the EYFS, with 23 full-time and 26 part-time children, and Years 1 and 2, with 46 pupils. There is also a preparatory department (Prep) for Years 3 to 8 with 205 pupils. There are 55 boarders of which 22 board full time.
- 1.5 The ability profile of the school overall is above the national average. There is a wide spread of abilities represented, although a notable proportion of older pupils are of well above average ability. Pupils mainly come from professional and business families drawn from the local area. Boarders come from a range of countries and ethnic backgrounds and many are children of forces personnel.
- 1.6 There are 86 pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and 67 of them receive specialist learning support. Nine pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and receive help with the development of their English skills. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs.

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

***Early Years Foundation Stage***

School	NC equivalent
Pelican Nursery	Nursery
Nursery	Nursery
Reception	Reception

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 The achievement of the pupils is excellent and fulfils the school's aims. The pupils' attitudes to learning are highly developed and they are very well supported by good teaching, although opportunities for them to learn independently are limited. They are very successful in their entry examinations to their senior schools and win a large number of scholarships. The school's marking policy has been developed and implemented, in response to the last inspection, but guidance as to how pupils may improve is not yet consistent. The curriculum is good and provides a balanced range of learning opportunities. Art, design, music, drama and sport feature strongly and there is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. There are many opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology (ICT) in the Pre-Prep although in the Prep its use is not yet embedded in the broader curriculum. The quality of provision in the EYFS is excellent. All the staff have a thorough understanding of the children in their care and use this to plan rich opportunities for children to investigate and learn at their own pace.
- 2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent. At all ages, the pupils are self-aware, confident and considerate, showing respect for others. They benefit significantly from the strong sense of family that is a highly valued attribute of the school community. Pupils are appreciative of the excellent quality of pastoral care and comment very favourably on the support that they receive from the staff. This ensures they are happy at school. The quality of arrangements to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. The safeguarding of pupils is taken very seriously and recruitment procedures have recently been reviewed successfully. Boarding is excellent. Buildings and grounds are well maintained although it is recognised by the school that some accommodation is of a lesser standard than others. Relationships across the boarding community are warm and respectful. Weekly and full boarders regard the school as their term-time home, and occasional boarders also value and appreciate the provision.
- 2.3 The quality of governance, leadership and management is good. Governors have a wide range of professional expertise and show great commitment to the school. Governors carry out their statutory annual review of safeguarding policies and procedures but have not always referenced this to up-to-date statutory guidance. The leadership of the EYFS is excellent, and makes a significant contribution to the school's strong links with parents although communication of the week's timetables and learning activities is not consistent across the setting. In response to the previous inspection, there has been a greater focus on improving and developing the skills of middle managers through further training and the implementation of a marking policy, although marking is not yet consistent in the Prep. An effective cycle of teacher review continues to monitor the development of all staff.

## **2.(b) Action points**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.
- 2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013.

### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Increase opportunities for independent learning and use of ICT across the curriculum.
  2. Ensure that improved marking includes more consistently clear subject-specific guidance as to how pupils may improve and include this in reports to parents.
  3. In the EYFS, ensure that the communication of the week's timetables and learning activities outside the classroom is consistent across the setting.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievement and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The school successfully fulfils its aim of encouraging every child to make the most of his or her intellectual potential. In the EYFS, all children are happy, confident and curious learners. They all make rapid progress in relation to their abilities. In the Nursery, children start to recognise the first sound of their names, remember small groups of objects accurately and perform very simple addition. Children make pertinent observations, listen attentively and develop their fine and gross motor skills well. They speak with increasing fluency and express their ideas clearly. By the end of Reception, many children have exceeded the Early Learning Goals in all the areas of learning. They confidently use their phonic knowledge to write simple words and short sentences, and when reading. They recognise a wide range of two-dimensional shapes, name simple three-dimensional shapes and use mathematical language to describe their properties.
- 3.3 Older pupils are highly articulate and many demonstrate a wide and sophisticated vocabulary for their age. The successful teaching of the early skills of literacy in the Pre-Prep ensures that pupils learn to speak, read and write successfully and they then develop these skills in Prep with increasing accuracy, fluency and confidence. They listen carefully to instructions as well as the ideas and opinions of their peers. Pupils read with clarity and appreciate a broad range of literature, supported by a well-stocked and managed library. The content of the pupils' writing and the quality of their presentation is very good.
- 3.4 The pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding are well developed and the pupils successfully reason mathematically. Pupils conduct science experiments effectively and with great enthusiasm both in the laboratory and outside, using the surrounding woodland areas as a valuable resource. Senior pupils solve problems and demonstrate critical thinking skills. Pupils become confident in developing ICT skills in the Pre-Prep but the further development of these skills in Prep is limited. Excellent foundations in creativity are established in the EYFS and Pre-Prep; these and older pupils show high levels of creative skills. Older pupils perform well in drama and music and particularly so in art and DT.
- 3.5 Pupils achieve a wide range of individual and team successes in both local and national competitions. These include national mathematics challenges, local music festivals, quiz and general knowledge competitions and a local Art Cars competition; the winning design was placed on a new car and revealed in front of the whole school. Sport is a strength of the school; successes include a cricket team unbeaten for three years, the under-13 girls' hockey team winning the county championship, and the under-12 hockey team reaching the national finals and winning a local tournament. Pupils are regularly selected for county teams in a wide range of sports and for national prep schools athletics finals.
- 3.6 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but, on the evidence available from scrutiny of pupils work, responses at interview and observation, it is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. The pupils all gain places at their first choice of senior school. Outcomes for the most able are excellent and a very large

proportion gain scholarships and awards to their senior schools, both academic and also for talents such as in art or sport. Pupils with SEND and EAL make very good progress because they are identified early and are well supported.

- 3.7 Pupils are thoughtful and hardworking and express their ideas with consideration for their audience. They apply themselves conscientiously and use classroom resources effectively to enhance their learning. Pupils co-operate very positively throughout the school; they persevere on tasks and obviously enjoy much of their work. Although they are given limited opportunities for independent learning, the pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. EYFS pupils investigate happily and learn very effectively at their individual rates.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.9 The curricular provision provides a balanced range of opportunities in accordance with the school's aims. In the EYFS, the learning environment provides rich opportunities for children to investigate and learn at their own pace. All children, including those with SEND and the most able, are given tasks appropriate to their understanding and are supported expertly. The use of phonics is encouraged in numerous situations throughout the EYFS so that, by the end of Reception, children use their phonic knowledge confidently. Resources are plentiful and used skilfully. There is a judicious balance between adult-led and independent, child-developed activities. This fulfils a recommendation of the previous inspection.
- 3.10 From Year 5, the combination of streaming and setting for mathematics and English allows an appropriate curriculum to be delivered to all pupils. In addition to National Curriculum subjects, Spanish is introduced in Year 5 and the top stream study Latin. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme contributes to the pupils' very effective personal development, which meets the school's aims. The library is well resourced and well managed and is much appreciated by pupils. Opportunities for pupils to understand and use technology in the EYFS and Pre-Prep are good. In the Prep, although ICT is taught as a discrete subject, its use is not embedded in all areas of the curriculum and therefore pupils do not have the opportunity to develop their skills to an appropriate level. The grounds and extensive outdoor learning environment, including the keeping of chickens, provide particularly rich opportunities for pupils, including children in the EYFS, to explore and investigate the natural world.
- 3.11 Since the previous inspection, subject documentation has been reviewed and is consistent in approach across the school. Curriculum provision for SEND pupils is good; they receive support from the learning support department and, in discussions, pupils talked of how much they enjoy their support lessons. Consequently, they are able to access the curriculum fully. Resources enabling EAL pupils to access all areas of the curriculum are generous. There are additional opportunities available for able, gifted and talented pupils, such as a Year 8 specialist art trip to a local sculpture garden.
- 3.12 Music, drama, art and sport feature strongly across the whole school curriculum. The provision for sports and games is comprehensive. A full programme of fixtures gives all pupils the opportunity to participate and represent their school. Changes to Saturday schooling and an extended day during the week allow for increased provision of clubs and hobbies, which has been broadly welcomed by the pupils. An

excellent range of extra-curricular activities encourages the pupils to develop and extend their interest, abilities and knowledge in many sporting and creative areas and remains a strength of the school. Around forty activities occur. Tae Kwon Do, Yoga and fencing are some examples of new activities on offer. Parents and pupils, in their questionnaire responses and at interview, expressed their appreciation of the range of opportunities available.

- 3.13 The pupils benefit from a range of educational day and residential trips, many of which are closely linked to the curriculum and include visits to the local church, a geography field trip and a residential trip to London. Pupils benefit from the school's growing links with the local community, including those with local independent and maintained schools. As well as hosting sporting events, such as an under-11 primary schools' football competition, pupils enter local sporting competitions.

### **3.(c) The contribution of teaching**

- 3.14 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.15 Teaching is successful in promoting the school's aim to prepare each young person for the future by means of a full and rounded education. The school pursues academic excellence with a commitment to good teaching and effective learning. There is strong mutual respect between staff and pupils. Teachers know the pupils extremely well and care highly about their success and happiness; the pupils recognise and greatly appreciate this.
- 3.16 In the EYFS, staff are experienced and skilful. Staff use an excellent mix of questions and information which stimulates and intrigues the children so that they make rapid progress in their understanding. For example, in the Nursery class counting rhymes were used very effectively to encourage children to work out simple subtraction sums while the rest of the group counted up to ten and back again. Staff expertly judge the balance between challenge and support for the children, and often use children's interests as a starting point, for example, an interest in outer space in the Reception classes. Rigorous assessment is used effectively to plan appropriate, detailed activities and the children's personal pathway plans form useful records of their progress. Staff use a rich range of resources which engage children and ensure that they think carefully and start to learn extremely well, both independently and with support when appropriate.
- 3.17 Throughout the school, planning is thorough, time management is generally very good and teachers demonstrate very good subject knowledge. Where pupils are grouped in sets, the teaching is delivered at an appropriate level, although little variation in the levels of challenge set for individual pupils occurs within the sets. While a variety of teaching methods are used, pupils are not often given the opportunity to take responsibility for their learning. When provided, pupils greatly appreciate these opportunities. For example, in mathematics, Pre-Prep pupils grouped by ability investigated arrays and in DT older pupils designed and printed uniquely styled T-shirts with much success. The post-scholarship project for the oldest pupils, 'Beginnings', provides imaginative and stimulating opportunities for this group of more able pupils.
- 3.18 The school is well resourced and attractive displays, especially in communal areas, enrich the pupils' learning. Good use is made of the grounds for subject lessons in addition to games lessons and outdoor activities.

- 3.19 Pupils with SEND are supported extremely well through appropriate help from their teachers in classes. The pupils from overseas, including those who join for the summer term, are well integrated and supported with appropriate resources.
- 3.20 In response to the pupil questionnaire, pupils were extremely positive, with almost all reporting that their lessons are interesting and that teachers help them to learn. A very large majority were positive about homework. Considerable progress has been made in response to the recommendation of the previous inspection to develop and implement a whole-school marking policy which includes guidance on how pupils can improve their work. Pre-Prep pupils now have targets set in numeracy, reading and writing although this is not yet applied consistently for older pupils and marking is not often accompanied by comments that give pupils the opportunity to respond. Rigorous grade systems assess and report on the pupils' effort. Information from systems to monitor the pupils' potential and their performance is used effectively to plan teaching.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

- 4.1 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.1 The excellent personal development of the pupils fully accords with the school's ethos, grounded in Christian belief, teaching and values. The outstanding care and support of pupils by all adults within the school community gives rise to high levels of self-awareness, esteem and confidence. Exceptionally high levels of personal development are apparent as pupils naturally behave as ambassadors for their school, of which they are duly proud. By the time pupils leave the school, they have reached an excellent standard of personal development and are very well prepared for their next steps in education.
- 4.2 The spiritual development of the pupils is excellent. Lessons in religious education, assemblies and chapel services encourage reflection and the development of spiritual awareness through stories, readings and music. During a chapel service pupils demonstrated emotional maturity and strong spiritual sensibility as they said a blessing for their teachers.
- 4.3 All pupils demonstrate an excellent moral awareness. They adhere to the school's golden rules and code of conduct as appropriate for their age group and have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Boarders respect each other's possessions. Children's behaviour is impeccable throughout the EYFS. They enjoy close relationships with each other and with the staff who care for them, and grow in confidence as a result. All pupils show genuine concern for those less fortunate than themselves. Significant fundraising for local, national and international charities is driven by the pupils themselves through the pupil council and as part of the leavers' activity programme. Pupils have shown great determination and dedication in their fund-raising efforts for the victims of local floods.
- 4.4 Pupils benefit significantly from the strong sense of family that is a highly valued attribute of the school community. They show kindness and consideration towards one another from their earliest years in the EYFS and develop a mature respect for others' opinions and ideas. The behaviour of the pupils is exemplary. At interview pupils, including boarders, showed a strong sense of social awareness. In the questionnaires a few pupils commented on a lack of roles of responsibility for pupils other than those in Year 8, however the evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that responsibilities are well spread throughout the school. In the EYFS, pupils have roles such as fruit monitor or line leader. Pupils in the Prep take on monitor roles within their classes, steadily preparing for greater responsibilities. Year 7 pupils enthusiastically act as Pelican Pals to the Pre-Prep children whilst Year 8 pupils carry out a wide variety of duties with dedication and aplomb.
- 4.5 The pupils' understanding and respect of other faiths and cultures is excellent. They understand that other cultures may hold different beliefs from their own and are welcoming and tolerant of all other practices. A stimulating presentation of patterns from many different countries in art gave rise to discussions by older pupils of cultural significance. Great enthusiasm was shown by younger pupils as they used a variety of artefacts to learn about Kenya. Pupils delight in the opportunity to celebrate diversity with special events where they can experience food, music and clothing that is different from Western cultural traditions.

4.6 Throughout their time at the school pupils are given the opportunity to develop as strong, self-aware individuals who feel valued and give value to others. Particular attention is paid in the EYFS to ensure that children move smoothly and happily from one year group to the next. There is excellent liaison between the Prep and Pre-Prep to ensure that Year 2 children make a smooth transition into Year 3. Year 8 pupils feel extremely well prepared for their move to their senior schools.

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

4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.

4.8 In accordance with its aims, a strong sense of community pervades the school. Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves are outstanding. In the EYFS, staff in each year group form strong teams promoting warm, kind relations and providing serene atmospheres so that children feel happy and are confident to try new skills. Trusting relationships are a strength throughout the EYFS, and children have strong relationships with key people. Older pupils praise highly the support and guidance that they receive from the staff that ensures they are happy at school. Boarders are safe and well cared for. Almost all parents, in responses to the questionnaire, were overwhelmingly positive about the way in which their children are looked after.

4.9 Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles, with daily opportunities to exercise and participate in an extensive programme of physical activities and sports. The excellent provision of healthy, nutritious food enables them to develop excellent knowledge and understanding of good eating habits. Pupils in the EYFS know that physical exercise is good for them and that fruit and vegetables "do them good". Snacks and lunches provide healthy food that children enjoy.

4.10 The highly effective house system supports a healthy competitive spirit throughout the school promoting excellent standards of behaviour. Adults act as excellent role models and all staff and pupils guard against harassment and bullying. A very large majority of pupils report the school deals very well with any instances of bullying and they were overwhelmingly confident of finding adult support in the event of any difficulties. Unacceptable behaviour is dealt with in a robust yet constructive manner taking into account any related difficulty or disability. In pre-inspection questionnaires, a very small minority of pupils said that teachers are unfair in giving rewards. Scrutiny of the thorough records of rewards and sanctions shows no basis for this and pupils at interview did not agree with this view.

4.11 The pro-active pupil council provides an excellent forum for all pupils to express their views and meets regularly. A small minority of pupils, in response to questionnaires, felt that their opinions are not sought; however, this was not borne out by inspection evidence. The easy accessibility of staff, the pupil council, tutor periods and house meetings give plenty of opportunities for pupils to express their views. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.12 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety are good.
- 4.13 Health and safety measures successfully contribute to meeting the school's aim to provide the best possible care of the children in the school. Buildings and premises are maintained to a good standard. Equipment is checked and meticulous records are maintained. Fire drills are carried out regularly and any recommendations arising from these are acted upon. A fire risk assessment is undertaken annually. Staff undertake appropriate fire training and this is now given more frequently.
- 4.14 Excellent provision is made for those who are unwell or who are injured at school. First aid and medical protocols have recently been reviewed. An appropriate number of staff are trained in first aid. Medicines are stored securely, any accidents or injuries are recorded and parents are kept informed. Accident records are analysed regularly in order to determine any area where the school could improve its procedures. Risk assessments are in place and the school is currently in the process of updating these in line with its recently revised policy. Appropriate provision is made for those pupils with SEND.
- 4.15 Throughout the school, staff understand the importance of keeping children safe. Safeguarding and the welfare of the pupils are priorities for all staff and their requirements are all met. Designated staff receive appropriate training from the local authority. All staff, including non-teaching staff with boarding responsibilities and ancillary staff, receive child protection training as part of their induction and then on a regular cycle of renewal. The school has an excellent working relationship with local children's social care. All staff have been correctly vetted with appropriate recruitment checks. Although some of these have not been rigorously carried out in the past, the current recruitment process ensures that correct procedures are followed before appointment.
- 4.16 The admission and attendance registers have not always been maintained accurately. The admission register did not have some of the required information for all entries. Some of the required entries in the attendance registers had been omitted. Both the admission and attendance registers were completed accurately by the end of the inspection with the additional information entered.

#### **4.(d) The quality of boarding**

- 4.17 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.18 The school fulfils its principles and aims of boarding in providing an open and trusting environment which is safe and healthy and which encourages pupils to develop as individuals with a significant sense of community. The school ethos and the core principles of the Woodard Schools play a central part in boarding. The boarding community contributes significantly to this ethos, not least through the promotion of flexi-boarding which enables many day pupils to participate in the boarding experience. The positive ethos of the school fosters considerable loyalty and pride in the boarders. Almost all parents expressed a high level of satisfaction with boarding in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires. The school has met the recommendations made in the 2011 Ofsted Inspection report.
- 4.19 The outcomes for boarders are excellent and a very strong sense of community exists amongst them; boarders are completely integrated into the school. This reflects the school's strong commitment to family values. The boarders regard staff

as good role models. Relationships across the boarding community are warm and respectful and demonstrate that weekly and full boarders regard the school as their term-time home; occasional boarders also value and appreciate the provision. Boarders enjoy each other's company and acknowledge the beneficial effect that boarding has on their independence and self-reliance. Flexi-boarding is promoted through such opportunities as 'Friday Night at the Movies' and a number of pupils convert to boarding at the end of Year 7 to gain the full benefit of life at the school in preparation for the next stage in their education.

- 4.20 The quality of boarding provision and care is good. The promotion of the boarders' health and arrangements for medical care are well organised. Boarders feel that they are looked after and understand that there is a range of appropriate adults with whom they can discuss personal issues; these include gap year students, EAL and learning support staff, houseparents, and medical staff. Although a small number of boarders responded in the pre-inspection questionnaires that they were unsure about what to do if unhappy or worried, interviews with boarders did not uphold this. Accommodation for boarders who may be ill is spacious and has separate washing and toilet facilities. Boarders' meals are good and nutritious and boarders have very good relations with the catering department. There are facilities for the preparation of toast and drinks in addition to the main school kitchen and the boarders are given refreshments every afternoon and before they go to bed. The grounds are much appreciated by boarders as a recreational environment, with the woodlands in particular being very much enjoyed on summer evenings, with a campfire and toasted marshmallows. Boarders appreciate the opportunity to study in orderly surroundings and also relish the various activities on offer after school and at weekends, including archery, outdoor pursuits, cookery and art. Boarders also benefit from outings on Sundays to such attractions as cycle rides on the nature trails, or 'Splat Ball'. A few boarders expressed reservations about the balance of activities and free time in the questionnaires, and a few voiced concern that their possessions are not safe, but inspection evidence did not find support for these claims.
- 4.21 Boarding accommodation is well maintained, clean, light and airy and noticeboards are used well. Communal social areas have been painted with the boarders' choice of colour scheme. The laundry provision is excellent; clothing is sorted efficiently and distributed by staff who clearly know the boarders and their families well. An ongoing programme of refurbishment ensures necessary improvements are planned and implemented; currently some rooms and facilities, including some showers, are of a lesser standard than others. Information for parents is disseminated by emails and newsletters enabling them to feel involved in the lives of their children whilst at school. Pupils report that contact with parents is available through telephones, email and webcams, though some boarders feel that restrictions on mobile phone usage and the internet are too tight. Postal correspondence is actively encouraged and inspection evidence does not show undue difficulties with making contact with families.
- 4.22 The arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are excellent, with procedures and practices ensuring that the safety of boarders is well promoted and managed effectively by boarding staff at all levels. Evacuation drills are practised every term in boarding time, and flexi-boarders are instructed in this when they first come into boarding. Effective anti-bullying and behavioural policies and procedures are in place and boarders are very much aware of the inappropriateness of bullying behaviour. All boarding house staff and adults associated with boarding (such as cleaners and catering staff) have up-to-date safeguarding training and know the

procedures to follow should they have any concern or a disclosure be made. Boarders are very well supervised and know who they should contact should there be a problem, including during the night. Duty staff follow well established routines conscientiously. The whereabouts of boarders is monitored and registers are taken at regular intervals. The missing child policy is known by all staff. Clear sanctions for misbehaviour are in place and are well understood by all, though serious incidents are very rare. Good behaviour and achievement are recognised and rewarded, for example with the award of credits and the star of the week. The gap year students and non-resident staff are integral to the organisation of the houses and contribute effectively to the personal development of boarders. Boarders appreciate their contribution and feel that boarding staff are approachable and willing to provide help or offer guidance as necessary. Boarders praise the homeliness of boarding and a very large majority of them responded favourably about boarding in the questionnaires.

- 4.23 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the boarding provision is excellent. Boarding is well led by professional and dedicated residential staff, who are well regarded by the boarders. They contribute effectively to the detailed school development plan to ensure that refurbishment of accommodation and the development of boarding are maintained as a high priority. All boarding staff have a clear understanding of their roles. Staff meet regularly both informally and formally to discuss the needs of individual boarders as well as to plan activities. Boarding documentation and policies have been reviewed and appraisal has been introduced as a tool to support the development of boarding in the school. Training for boarding staff is provided and staff are encouraged to attend external courses. All boarding staff are familiar with school policies and boarding regulations. Boarders are encouraged to contribute their views on their quality of life and they feel that they have a voice through boarder meetings and the pupil council, though some state that they would welcome more frequent group meetings.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) The quality of governance**

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The council is drawn from a broad range of professions that bring relevant expertise that is very successful in assisting the school to fulfil its aims. Many of its members have a long-standing connection with the school and are highly committed to promoting the pupils' interests. In addition to their committee duties, council members are regular visitors to the school and attend many school events. The annual education day gives them insight into current classroom practice and the workings of the school.
- 5.3 The council is kept well informed by termly reports from senior staff, including safeguarding as well as by a range of sub-committees: including finance, education and pastoral as well as estates. These meet regularly to discuss current issues and to plan for future developments and investment, working with the staff to identify key areas for improvement, such as new facilities for art, DT and science and improvements in boarding accommodation. They provide valuable support with effective challenge and oversee systems for the monitoring of senior staff. Leadership of the EYFS is well supported by interested governance and a person with expertise in this age group has recently been invited to become the designated governor for EYFS.
- 5.4 Governors carry out a regular review of the school's policies which fulfils their responsibility for oversight, including their statutory annual review of safeguarding policies and procedures, although these have not always been informed by up-to-date statutory guidance. Recruitment procedures are in the process of being reviewed with closer attention being given to the monitoring of the single central register of appointments. There is an individual governor with specific responsibility for child protection and another observes and reports on boarding.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is good.
- 5.6 The leadership and management of the school has been re-organised successfully since the previous inspection. In line with the recommendations of that inspection, there has been a greater focus on improving and developing the skills of middle managers through further training. There is now greater consistency in the monitoring of academic policies across departments, and subject leaders are involved in academic planning that links to the whole school development plan. The success of this, and the performance of all staff, is monitored through a very effective bi-annual cycle that closely reviews professional development and encourages further staff training. In addition, and also in line with recommendations, the marking policy has been further developed and implemented across the school. Whilst marking and the setting of grades is now more consistent and an effective system of target setting has been developed in the Pre-Prep, this has yet to be fully established in the Prep department.

- 5.7 Leadership and management of the EYFS is excellent. Rigorous systems are in place to monitor the educational programmes which clarify priorities and ensure further improvement. Self-evaluation is a strength of the setting. The development plan is detailed and appropriate. Expertise is shared and staff work as a close-knit team, with appropriate supervision by senior staff. Ideas are shared following attendance at appropriate courses. This fulfils a recommendation from the previous report. The setting maintains a close partnership with parents, and with external agencies, which give valued support when needed.
- 5.8 Whole school policies are reviewed regularly and their implementation is monitored by the leadership team. The school takes its duty of care seriously and all staff are aware of the school's safeguarding policy. This has recently been reviewed to ensure it meets changes in statutory guidance; great care is being taken to ensure that all staff are kept fully informed of these. The school has a suitable action plan in place to implement the required changes. The recruitment policy has also been revised giving closer guidance over pre-appointment checks for all staff. This meets the new requirements and plans suitably to avoid some past errors.
- 5.9 Leadership is committed to the personal development of the pupils. Senior staff know the children well, are approachable and are quick to address any rare instances of unkindness. The school management system is used efficiently to monitor patterns of behaviour as well as academic progress, and staff communicate readily with each other to ensure that tutors and houseparents are kept well informed. The pupils' educational experience is enriched through the vision of the leadership team as well as through the many opportunities that are made available to them.
- 5.10 The school's nature as a welcoming community is a strength of the school. All staff are trained in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety measures and school routines, guided by an informative staff handbook, and there is an effective programme of staff induction. Staff are encouraged to take advantage of additional opportunities for their academic and professional development. The views of all staff are sought and valued and these have guided the comprehensive school development plan.
- 5.11 Links with parents throughout the school are excellent. Parents who responded to the questionnaire are extremely satisfied with the education and support provided for their children. In the EYFS, staff work closely with parents who appreciate the development of strong relationships and the high quality of their children's learning. They feel that they are well informed about what their children do in school, although information is not always consistently given. There is detailed information displayed for parents of one year group to see what their children will be doing during the week, but not for the other. Parents are welcomed into the setting at the start and end of each day. They are also invited for play-and-stay sessions where they see how well their children are learning. This deepens their understanding and their ability to help their children at home.
- 5.12 Parents of all pupils very much appreciate the warm homely atmosphere throughout the school and the expectations of good behaviour. The school has a complaints procedure which is available to parents on the school website. A very small minority of parents felt that the school had not handled their concerns well. The inspection found no evidence to support this view.

- 5.13 Both current and prospective parents receive useful, good quality information about the school and what their children are doing. In addition, detailed information about the school is available on its website. An electronic text messaging system notifies parents of any last minute changes to routine, while staff can be contacted directly by email if the need arises. In the Pre-Prep, staff meet parents informally at the start and end of each day. The headmaster is also usually available at these times, and all staff are happy to meet parents by pre-arrangement if they have a concern.
- 5.14 Detailed reports are produced three times a year which are personal to the pupil and generally give a clear indication of the progress that has been made, but they do not propose improvements in subject-specific ways. In addition, short half-termly reports give grades for effort and achievement in each subject. There are parents' evenings during the Michaelmas and Lent terms, and termly meetings for parents of children in the EYFS and in Years 1 to 4.
- 5.15 Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the life and work of the school. Parent representatives for each year group actively encourage other parents to be involved in charitable events, concerts, plays and sports fixtures. Some parents also help to run hobby groups and activities, while there is a sociable weekly football session run for the fathers.

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