



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

FINBOROUGH SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Finborough School

Full Name of School	Finborough School		
DfE Number	935/6062		
EYFS Number	EY311246		
Address	Finborough School The Hall Great Finborough Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 3EF		
Telephone Number	01449 773600		
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Email Address	admin@finboroughschool.co.uk		
Principal	Mr James Sinclair		
Proprietor	Mr John Sinclair		
Age Range	2 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	274		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (139 boys; 135 girls)		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	0	5-11: 92
	3-5 (EYFS):	32	11-18: 150
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	213	Capacity for flexi-boarding: 25
Number of Boarders	Total:	61	
	Full:	51	Weekly: 10
Head of EYFS Setting	Mr Ashley Martin		
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection dates	20 Sep 2011 to 21 Sep 2011 17 Oct 2011 to 19 Oct 2011		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in October 2005.

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

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

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

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

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

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31st August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of boarding was not carried out in conjunction with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills, and the report does not contain specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education and development in general. The full Ofsted report refers to an inspection in April 2008 and can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Children's social care/Boarding school.

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

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features

- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Situated in Great Finborough, just outside Stowmarket in Suffolk, Finborough School provides day and boarding accommodation for girls and boys aged two to eighteen. The school is overseen by a proprietor. The school's principal, appointed in 2008, is the son of the proprietor. The school aims to provide each pupil with the best preparation for life and its motto, "Strive for the Highest", is applied to all aspects of life, including academic, sporting and personal health.
- 1.2 The school has occupied its current site since 1980 and the current proprietor took over sole responsibility in 1992. It is set in a 40 acre site, centred around a late eighteenth century hall with a number of additional buildings built around it.
- 1.3 Most pupils at the school live locally, although some boarders travel from overseas and others are from military families. Boarders range in age from eight to eighteen and are housed in two boarding houses, one for boys and one for girls. Pupils are predominantly white, reflecting the local population, although a few pupils from different ethnic backgrounds also attend the school. The youngest pupils are educated in the Nursery, from which they move into the prep school. These, and the senior school, are close to one another, which helps the school to create a family atmosphere.
- 1.4 Since the previous inspection, a new leadership team has been appointed, comprising a new principal, human resources director, communications manager, head of senior school and head of prep. Facilities, including rooms for teaching, boarding and information and communication technology (ICT), have been refurbished. The accommodation for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), housed in the main building, has been upgraded and new prep school accommodation established.
- 1.5 The ability profile of both the prep school and the senior school to GCSE is above the national average. Although a wide range of abilities exists, the majority of pupils are at least above average. The school has recently introduced cognitive abilities testing for sixth form pupils although it is too soon to make a judgement on their overall ability profile.
- 1.6 The school has no pupils with a statement of special educational needs but has identified 50 pupils as having special educational needs and/or learning difficulties (SEND) of whom 40 receive additional support. There are four pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL). At the time of the inspection there were 274 pupils in the school, comprising 139 boys and 135 girls: 32 in the EYFS; 92 in the prep school; 128 in the senior school and 22 in the sixth form. There were 213 day pupils and 61 boarders.
- 1.7 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills is good. Pupils of all ages focus well in class; they listen carefully, contribute freely to discussions and work well both individually and in groups. They develop basic skills well, including the use of ICT, and reflect on their work intelligently, identifying for themselves areas which need to be developed further. Homework tasks are carried out thoroughly and presented neatly. Pupils take pride in their work and achieve in line with their abilities in national examinations. In extra-curricular activities pupils participate enthusiastically, enjoying the range of sports, creative arts and cultural activities on offer. Talented individuals achieve well in these areas, but pupils of all abilities enjoy the opportunities to join in.
- 2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils relax and flourish in the school's family atmosphere, with older pupils instinctively offering support and advice to those younger, both in the boarding houses and in the whole school community. They enjoy taking on responsibility for organising events, such as assemblies or charitable fund-raising activities, or for taking on positions of responsibility. They have a very good understanding of the needs of others, both in school and in the wider community. Pupils of all ages are courteous, respectful and confident. They are kept safe by good arrangements for welfare, health and safety, and always encouraged by the team of dedicated and positive adults in the school who promote high values and high expectations. Although, in the past, some areas of welfare procedures, such as those for registration, were not consistently implemented, current practice is good. Boarding contributes extremely well to the personal development of its pupils. Different age groups live happily together. The boarding community shows tolerance of the differences of individuals and acceptance of people for who they are.
- 2.3 Effective governance, leadership and management enable the school to develop. An excellent leadership team is giving clear direction to the school and improving key areas of the personal and academic development of pupils. Although not all of the new systems have yet had time to become embedded, others, such as the consistent tracking of pupils' progress, are already beginning to yield results, with pupils now clear about their current standard and, when guided by specific formative and summative comments on their work, how to improve further. Many facilities have been upgraded recently, ensuring that curriculum requirements are met and pupils have the best opportunities to develop as individuals, helping the school to meet its aim to provide the best possible education. Almost all pupils completing the questionnaire said they liked being at this school.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school did not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it was required to:

- ensure that admission and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 [Part 3, paragraph 17, under Welfare, health and safety].

2.5 At the time of the final visit, the school had rectified the above shortcomings, as noted in the text of the report.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure that procedures are in place for those with responsibility for governance to maintain consistent oversight of regulatory matters.
2. Ensure greater consistency in the implementation and monitoring of whole school policies and procedures.
3. In the EYFS ensure consistency in writing provision for the needs of individual children into daily plans and including individual targets for children in written reports to parents.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

3.1 The overall quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills is good. The school succeeds in helping its pupils to "Strive for the Highest" according to its motto.

3.2 Pupils achieve well in both curricular and extra-curricular activities, including those with EAL and SEND. They are articulate, listen and focus well, read fluently and write cogently. Pupils of all ages take pride in their work, organising and presenting it well. They can use numerical skills effectively, for example younger senior school pupils successfully created a balanced meal within a stated budget in an enrichment lesson. They are confident users of ICT and enjoy using these skills when opportunities arise. They also achieve well in creative areas of the curriculum, acting enthusiastically in both drama lessons and in assemblies, and singing well in assemblies and in local festivals. Many examples of the pupils' technically excellent and imaginative artwork are exhibited around the school, enhancing the environment and creating aspirational models of best practice for others. Examples of high quality curriculum work are displayed in classrooms, celebrating achievement in both the prep and the senior schools. Older pupils achieve well in national mathematics challenges, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) scheme and in inter-school quizzes. Pupils of all ages succeed in the county festival for arts, as individuals and in groups, achieving distinctions in choral music and speech and drama. Individuals also achieve success in music and rugby, which in athletics is at regional, and in golf at national level. Many pupils regularly participate in team sports within the locality and, for their houses, in school enabling those of different ability levels to achieve well.

3.3 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2008 to 2010. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. Results in GCSE have been good in relation to the national average for maintained schools. At A level, results have been below the national average for maintained schools. Boys' results have been higher than those of the girls; in 2008 and 2010 they were in line with the results for boys in maintained schools. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make appropriate progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability in Years 7 to 11. The small number of pupils in the sixth form makes a secure judgement difficult, but the pupils' work and responses in class indicate that they make appropriate progress. The pupils' attainment in the prep school cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be good in relation to age-related expectations. Pupils in Year 4, for example, demonstrated a good understanding of synonyms and those in Year 6 the role of connectives in complex sentences. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that prep school pupils make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. Those with SEND are carefully monitored in both the prep and the senior schools to ensure at least comparable progress with that of their peers; indeed, analysis of the achievement at GCSE of those pupils with SEND shows that their progress is even greater than the average for the school.

3.4 Pupils of all ages have very good attitudes to learning. They come to lessons expecting to work hard and carry out homework tasks diligently. They are supportive of one other and work effectively both as individuals and in groups. They

will ask for help when they need it, or offer it to others if required. In discussions, they spoke enthusiastically about their work and in class responded willingly to questions.

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

- 3.5 The quality of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good overall and in some respects excellent. The curriculum is broad and is suitable for all ages and abilities. Since the previous inspection the school has created a written policy on the curriculum which includes an annual review of the provision to ensure that it meets the needs of all of its pupils. In the senior school, religious studies is now incorporated in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and the performing arts have been developed, with drama now a GCSE option. In the prep school, pupils study a broad range of subjects, including two modern foreign languages and drama enabling them to develop the range of skills and knowledge base on which to build successfully in the future. The curriculum ensures good development of reading, writing, oral expression, numeracy, scientific enquiry, creativity and ICT skills. In the senior school the curriculum is enhanced by the addition of food technology. Recent developments include the opportunity to study psychology, business and economics in the sixth form. The school has many useful community links, including those locally, for example pupils in the prep and EYFS taking harvest produce to an old people's home and prep school pupils visiting a mosque, and internationally, with links to schools in Spain and China. These enable pupils of all ages to understand better their place in the world and to help them to celebrate differences.
- 3.6 On entry to the school, pupils are assessed to identify any specific learning needs. Most of those requiring additional support have personal lessons, with individual learning plans which are reviewed termly and shared with parents and pupils. Teachers are well informed about the pupils' individual needs and work with the special educational needs co-ordinator to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum.
- 3.7 Pupils take between nine and eleven GCSE subjects, with those with particular ability in mathematics or English language following accelerated courses leading to early entry and achieving very good results; pupils with particular aptitude in science are able to study three separate sciences.
- 3.8 Prep school pupils enjoy the broad range of additional extra-curricular activities on offer, which includes martial arts, crafts and additional sports. In the senior school all pupils take part in an excellent enrichment programme which runs after school. This provides additional sporting opportunities, including those outdoor pursuits linked to the DofE Award scheme, and also cultural and performing arts activities. The all-inclusive approach means that all pupils are appropriately challenged and enriched, with structure, discipline and focus applied by pupils at all levels. Even the least enthusiastic are encouraged and in the sessions observed, pupils committed themselves well to the opportunities on offer. Activities change at half-termly intervals, enabling pupils to try something unfamiliar, without being committed to it for too long. Pupils of all ages interviewed during the inspection were enthusiastic about the range of activities on offer, with survival skills particularly exciting Year 9 pupils who had recently enjoyed skinning a pheasant. A well structured Life Skills programme also enhances the curriculum of pupils in Years 11, 12 and 13 providing

them with a greater awareness of social issues and helping to develop the skills required to be happy and successful in life.

- 3.9 Careers guidance is provided from Year 9, with workshops, guest speakers and visits to develop understanding of options available to pupils. Year 13 pupils were appreciative of the personal advice and support they had received about university applications and those interviewed during the inspection said they felt fully informed about the options available to them when they leave school.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.10 The quality of teaching is good overall, and in some respects excellent. Most is effective in promoting the pupils' progress and supporting the aims of the school.
- 3.11 Teaching demonstrates excellent knowledge of the pupils and genuine concern for them as individuals. In their questionnaires, all pupils reported that their teachers helped them to learn and almost all said they received individual help when this was required. The personal attention given to pupils enables all to succeed, including those with SEND or EAL. Recent training initiatives mean that teaching is now well informed about the preferred learning styles of their pupils and provides well for different needs, for example in a GCSE Spanish lesson where to test vocabulary, pupils played a card game and a computer generated quiz.
- 3.12 Teaching is planned well and shows good subject knowledge. The enthusiasm shown for individual subjects contributes greatly to the pupils' enjoyment of their learning. In the best lessons, teaching provides a good range of activities to accommodate different learning styles and generates a range of learning and assessment opportunities. In a prep school science lesson, drama was used effectively to consolidate the learning of water evaporation; whilst in a geography lesson, younger senior school pupils were encouraged to take tests with different levels of challenge suited to the pupils' ability, and to explain concepts either through written explanations or by making three-dimensional models. In the most successful teaching, teacher-led activities were not allowed to dominate; instead, opportunities for independent learning were provided, along with those for group activities and a brisk pace was maintained throughout. These measures enabled pupils to make more rapid progress. Teaching is supportive and in the teaching observed created an atmosphere of trust in which ideas could be risked, even when the topic was potentially sensitive, such as a GCSE discussion of love in a poetry lesson or a discussion of apartheid by the youngest pupils. Good behaviour is insisted upon, enabling good learning to take place.
- 3.13 In many lessons, a good use of resources helped pupils to learn, for example in a prep school science lesson on digestion where the interactive whiteboard was used effectively to explain the process, or a senior school history lesson using source materials and ICT to help pupils to understand women's suffrage. However, opportunities were not always provided for pupils to learn through using a range of resources themselves.
- 3.14 Teaching has recently started to use national indicators to standardise target setting and measure the pupils' performance, resulting in far closer analysis of pupils' learning needs, but there are variations in the ways teachers inform pupils of current standards and what they must do to improve. There is similar variety in the helpfulness of written comments on the pupils' work. Whilst some provide clear

advice about how to improve, others merely congratulate or encourage the pupil, and some work receives no comment at all.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and helps to fulfil the school's motto "Strive for the Highest".
- 4.2 Pupils' spiritual development is supported by religious education lessons in the prep school and in the senior school by the PSHE programme, which includes religious education. Pupils throughout the school participated enthusiastically in the school assembly, held in a nearby church, and reflected silently on the issues raised in the address. On a daily basis, senior school pupils consider moral and spiritual matters in their thought for the day during registration, discussing respectfully such issues as whether or not an individual's worth is determined by values rather than personal possessions. The spiritual development of pupils of all ages is developed by the sharing of aesthetic experiences, such as listening to choral performances, watching dramatic productions or looking at the inspiring artwork which is displayed on the walls around them. This awareness of a spiritual dimension contributes to the sense of calm inspectors noted around the school. The school has responded well to the recommendations made in the previous inspection to broaden the pupils' spiritual and cultural experiences.
- 4.3 The pupils' moral awareness enables them to distinguish clearly between right and wrong. They understand the consequences of behaving badly and accept responsibility for their actions. Younger pupils discuss relationships in PSHE and explore ways of resolving problems and those in Year 1 commented articulately on the unfairness of apartheid. Pupils of all ages embrace opportunities to take up positions of responsibility, for example as head boy or girl, prefects, or school council representatives. Inspectors observed that they enjoyed talking to visitors during Open Day, demonstrating good social skills, confidence and good manners. The behaviour seen around the school by inspectors was excellent, with pupils showing respect for others and an awareness of their needs. Acts of kindness and concern were also observed, for example, at the end of an assembly on bullying for Years 7 to 9, presented by the GCSE drama group, the actors offered support for anyone who felt the need to talk about bullying. Similarly, in the boarding houses, older pupils look after the younger ones, noticing if they are experiencing problems and quickly offering their help. Pupils voice their concerns and share ideas in the school council, learning to negotiate and to understand other points of view, and they develop a sense of responsibility to others through the many team games they play.
- 4.4 The pupils' awareness of different cultures is enhanced by links with schools abroad, in Spain and China, through assemblies, PSHE lessons and trips to museums, art galleries, festivals and theatres. These opportunities enable pupils to develop a very good understanding of how people in other cultures conduct their lives, and provide them with a good insight into the difficulties other people face. Pupils are socially aware, involving themselves enthusiastically in school events and also in charitable projects to raise money for those less fortunate than themselves or to create boxes of gifts for children at a school in Afghanistan. Pupils take responsibility for organising charitable events; one pupil, for example, is sky-diving for charity, and many participate in Christmas charities for children or play in sponsored sports marathons. The pupils' cultural experiences are enhanced by trips abroad, for example to Venice to focus on art and music. Their understanding of the world they

live in also benefits from listening to visiting speakers, such as the local MP and a children's writer.

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

- 4.5 The quality of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good overall. Staff provide excellent support, guidance and care for pupils in both the prep and the senior schools, which supports their personal development well.
- 4.6 The personal development of pupils benefits from the excellent relationships in the school, both between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves. Both in lessons and around the school, all members of the community interact with ease and respect. The school succeeds in its aim to create a family atmosphere in which its pupils are cared for and can flourish. Adults who work at the school, whether teaching or non-teaching staff, know the pupils well. Pupils and parents are greeted by name and any minor concerns shared and dealt with.
- 4.7 The school has built on the effective procedures acknowledged in the previous inspection report for guarding against bullying. Staff are quick to note any inappropriate behaviour and in the senior school new procedures mean that such matters are now immediately logged on a database which is scrutinised on a daily basis by pastoral heads. This enables them to deal with issues before they can become serious. In the prep school pupils contribute to creating classroom codes of conduct which they then adhere to. Pupils in both schools reported that there was a range of people they could turn to should they need to, including other pupils. In their questionnaires, the vast majority of pupils said that bullying was not a problem and almost all boarders felt that they got on well together. Inspectors found no evidence to contradict these views.
- 4.8 Safeguarding arrangements are robust and staff are fully trained in safeguarding matters; procedures to appoint staff are thorough. The school has an appropriate plan for ensuring access for pupils with SEND and has good facilities and procedures for dealing with pupils who are unwell. All necessary measures to reduce risks from fire and other hazards have been taken and risk assessments are carried out. Arrangements to ensure health and safety are effective and include all members of the school community.
- 4.9 Healthy eating is promoted vigorously, with excellent quantities of high quality food available for pupils. In the prep school, pupils have opportunities to grow vegetables which they subsequently eat. Physical exercise features prominently in the lives of pupils and all willingly join in programmes designed to improve their health and fitness.
- 4.10 Attendance registers were not always correctly completed in the past though current practice is good. At the time of the initial inspection, monthly copies of the central admissions register had not been stored appropriately, but this had been rectified by the time of the main visit.

4.(c) The quality of boarding education

- 4.11 The quality of boarding education is excellent and plays a valuable part in the pupils' education and personal development, contributing well to the school's aims. The school has responded well to the recommendations made in the previous Ofsted report and acted upon all of its recommendations.
- 4.12 Relationships within boarding are excellent. Pupils learn to be tolerant and accepting of others and are quick to support one another. They develop their interpersonal skills well, mixing easily with others. All the boarders interviewed spoke very highly of the house staff, as did pupils in their questionnaires. Pupils of all ages mix harmoniously, though they appreciate the fact that at times they can enjoy separate facilities for relaxation. They learn to accept the individual differences of those around them and are tolerant and caring of one another. The prevailing atmosphere in the boarding areas is relaxed and happy. The houses feel homely, whilst being safe and well-organised. Boarding contributes significantly to the personal development of the pupils.
- 4.13 The range of activities available to boarders in the evenings was criticised by a minority of boarders in their questionnaires, but in discussions boarders expressed satisfaction with current arrangements and inspectors agree with them. The boarders' evenings are structured with periods for study and relaxation. Boarders take part in the enrichment programme, along with day pupils, and therefore have plenty of opportunities to keep fit and sample a range of interesting activities. Weekly boarders increase the numbers during the week; at weekends full boarders are able to take part in activities off site, enjoying such events as ice-skating, outdoor laser quest, shopping or going to the cinema.
- 4.14 Accommodation has recently been upgraded and provides full en suite facilities for most boarders. Younger pupils share rooms, which they enjoy, and boys and girls visit each other's houses in the early evenings to play games or relax. Facilities to make snacks are available and pupils can contact their families by using the internet.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good overall. The proprietor provides strategic direction for the school together with the principal and the human resources director. This team has recently funded considerable improvements to accommodation, resources and staff training, and it has ensured appropriate staffing to provide pupils with a broad education for life.
- 5.2 The principal and human resources director are involved in the day-to-day running of the school and they have an excellent awareness of the working of the school. They provide support, challenge and stimulus to underpin its growth and improvement. Both are in the school every day and attend school events. They have an open door policy and constantly speak to parents, pupils and members of staff, so they clearly understand the key issues of the school and can easily identify areas for development.
- 5.3 Child protection and welfare, health and safety are taken very seriously. Advice from independent experts has been commissioned and recommendations fully implemented. However, the procedures for monitoring all of the key policies in the past have not been sufficiently robust. Very good practice with regard to staff fire training was observed and all new staff are inducted in child protection procedures.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management is good overall, and in some respects excellent. Since the previous inspection, job descriptions have been created to clarify roles and responsibilities of senior leaders although management systems are still not fully developed. Those recently appointed to these positions have initiated new procedures to accelerate pupil progress, and to improve their personal development still further, but these are not as yet fully embedded and are only just beginning to impact on pupils' progress and achievement.
- 5.5 Excellent leadership is driving the school forwards and has enabled the school to introduce a range of innovations in recent months. Senior leaders set priorities and evaluate outcomes. Their shared vision for the school is communicated to the wider school community with different members of this, including pupils, parents and members of staff, all able to contribute to the key development objectives. Throughout the school, department handbooks have been re-written and a start has been made to whole school development planning with staff involved in departmental planning in line with whole school objectives. Self-evaluation now exists at middle management level although there are some variations in the implementation of whole school policies.
- 5.6 A staff appraisal system is in place, which identifies individual training needs and leads to professional development. There is some liaison between subject leaders in the prep school and their senior school counterparts, but this is not formalised. However, good arrangements are in place to ensure a smooth transition between Year 6 and Year 7.
- 5.7 Procedures for recruiting staff are good and all who join the school are quickly trained in procedures for safeguarding and health and safety.

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

- 5.8 The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent and helps the school to create a family atmosphere.
- 5.9 In their questionnaires parents were very supportive of the school. Almost all said they could communicate easily with the school and that they were satisfied about the information they received about their child's progress. All parents reported that they felt an appropriate range of subjects was offered to their children.
- 5.10 Parents receive regular information about their children's progress through good quality reports and at parents' evenings. Reports gave clear indications about pupil progress and the amount of effort given, with explanations of current levels of attainment. Parents are also welcomed into the school at any other time if they require additional feedback. During the inspection, senior school pupils and their parents discussed academic performance using a progress report which succinctly indicated whether or not they were on target and, if not, how they might improve, providing parents with timely information about their children's progress and involving pupils, parents and teachers in helping to maximise this.
- 5.11 Parents can also use a portal on the school's website to access the weekly bulletin, or to check key school policies. The school uses a text message system to alert parents to any unforeseen events. Those interested in becoming more involved in school life can stand for election to the parents' forum. This group meets monthly to arrange fund-raising events and also contributes to discussions about some school development initiatives, for example the introduction of a new uniform or the plans for new facilities. Parents are encouraged to linger when dropping off or picking up pupils. Parents of younger pupils find this a useful opportunity to share concerns with a teacher, others to find out more about an event or activity.
- 5.12 The school handles parents' concerns appropriately and publishes its complaints procedures on the website. In their questionnaires a small number of parents expressed concern regarding the provision for boarders, but inspectors felt that boarders were very well cared for, had appropriate facilities and were extremely happy. A minority were also unhappy about standards of behaviour, but the inspectors felt that the standards of behaviour observed were excellent.

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

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

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

6.1 The overall effectiveness of the EYFS provision is outstanding. A high adult to child ratio ensures that children's needs are very well met within a happy and stimulating setting. Children thrive and flourish within a family atmosphere because they are so well supported by the caring and conscientious staff. Staff work hard together to sustain high standards and improve their setting. Recommendations from the previous inspection have been carried out successfully.

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

6.2 Leadership and management are outstanding. Safeguarding procedures are thorough and effective, and policies to promote equality and eliminate discrimination are strongly implemented. Dedicated and well-qualified staff have an excellent knowledge of both the principles on which the setting operates and the EYFS, and ensure that children make very good progress towards the Early Learning Goals. They work well as a caring and highly effective team with a clear vision, and effectively evaluate their provision to prioritise areas for improvement. The excellent range of sensory resources is well used to further learning, but there is no regular use of the school library. Staff have many opportunities to further their training, in order to fulfil their pupils' needs. Good links exist with the local authority. Parents are delighted with the setting and they are involved in their children's learning.

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

6.3 The quality of the provision is outstanding overall. A welcoming and happy atmosphere, together with a good balance of child- and adult-initiated activities, both indoors and outside, provide children with challenging experiences in every area of learning. Risk assessment is thorough and ongoing. Staff have an excellent understanding of the children's needs and interests. Observation and assessment are used to plan activities, although each child's next steps in learning are not routinely written into planning. Written reports to parents are thorough, but do not consistently give targets for improvement. A wide range of sensory and stimulating resources is easily accessible to pupils. Key persons rigorously promote the health and welfare of children and teach them to keep safe. These staff are highly skilled and sensitive in their management and understanding of children and their behaviour.

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

6.4 Outcomes for children are outstanding. Their achievements are high in relation to their starting points and they begin to develop valuable skills for the future. They are happy, confident, independent learners who respond positively with enthusiasm, curiosity and enjoyment to their stimulating sensory environment. Nursery children accurately and systematically count the number of children present during registration and can add two numbers together; they concentrate and persevere with tasks to develop their eye/hand coordination. Reception children learn to form their

letters correctly when writing in their recipe folders; they use the correct vocabulary when describing the skills they are learning when they “whisk” banana bread mixture; they learn phonics and are able to build simple words; they order fifteen numbers correctly and find different ways of forming nine. In ICT children type their names and change colours independently. They respect and care for one another; behaviour is exemplary because children know what is expected of them. They understand about keeping safe, eating healthily and maintaining good hygiene. Snacktimes and mealtimes demonstrate their growing independence and their good manners. The children’s understanding of the wider world is clearly demonstrated through activities, role play and interaction with visitors.

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the proprietor's representatives, 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 Patricia Taylor

Miss Margaret Pepper

Mr Stephen Greenish

Mrs Bridget Forrest

Reporting Inspector

Former Headmistress, ISA school

Headmaster, IAPS school

Early Years Lead Inspector