



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

BEESTON HALL SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Beeston Hall School

Full Name of School	Beeston Hall School		
DfE Number	926/6058		
Registered Charity Number	311274		
Address	Beeston Hall School West Runton Cromer Norfolk NR27 9NQ		
Telephone Number	01263 837324		
Fax Number	01263 838177		
Email Address	rcg@beestonhall.co.uk		
Headmaster	Mr Robin Gainher		
Chairman of Governors	David D Marris		
Age Range	7 to 13		
Total Number of Pupils	139		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (77 boys; 62 girls)		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	0	7-11: 81
	3-5 (EYFS):	0	11-18: 58
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	79	Capacity for flexi-boarding: N/A
Number of Boarders	Total:	60	
	Full:	60	Weekly: N/A
Inspection dates	12 Oct 2010 to 13 Oct 2010		
	08 Nov 2010 to 10 Nov 2010		

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 2004.

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.

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 January 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.

CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL	2
(a) Main findings	2
(b) Action points	3
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
(ii) Recommendation(s) for further improvement	3
3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	4
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills	4
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c) The contribution of teaching	5
4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	7
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	7
(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	8
(c) The quality of boarding education	9
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	10
(a) The quality of governance	10
(b) The quality of leadership and management	10
(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians	11
INSPECTION EVIDENCE	13

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Beeston Hall School is an independent co-educational day and boarding preparatory school for pupils between the ages of 7 and 13 years. The school was established in 1948, and is owned by a charitable trust and administered by a board of governors. It has been developed around a large Regency house, to which has been added a range of purpose-built educational facilities. The school occupies a site of 30 acres and is located on the north Norfolk coast near Cromer. Within a nurturing Christian environment it endeavours to place the individual learning needs of every pupil at the heart of all that it does and ensure the relationship between school, parents and pupils is based on mutual trust and respect. It aims to provide a learning environment that allows all pupils to enjoy and explore their intellectual curiosity while valuing and respecting those around them. Pupils join the school at different ages, although the majority enter in Year 3 or Year 4. All boarders are full boarders. Transitional boarding arrangements are provided for younger pupils. Day pupils called 'daily boarders' may board for short periods if they wish. Except for Year 3, all pupils attend school on Saturday morning.
- 1.2 Pupils join the school following an assessment in spelling, reading and mathematics. Standardised tests indicate that the ability profile of the school is above the national average within a wide ability range. Of the 139 pupils (62 girls and 77 boys), 60 are boarders. Almost all pupils have white British heritage. The school has identified 41 pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) and 30 receive specialist support. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs and one pupil has English as an additional language (EAL). The majority of pupils transfer to independent day and boarding schools after taking the Common Entrance or scholarship examinations in Year 8.
- 1.3 Reorganisation of the school has provided an Upper School for pupils in Years 6 to 8 and Lower School for pupils in Years 3 to 5, and new personnel have been appointed. The boarding accommodation and music school have been refurbished and new sporting facilities provided. Information and communication technology (ICT) facilities have been developed. The headmaster has been in post since September 2009.
- 1.4 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 Pupils progress well in their learning and achieve good and often high standards. This is because of the rich educational experience provided and the effective teaching that engages the interest of competent learners. On occasion, pupils are not sufficiently challenged to think critically and independently, which hinders the rapidity of their learning. The pupils' obvious enthusiasm and enjoyment of their learning, together with the strong relationships with each other and their teachers, significantly contribute to their academic achievement and personal development.
- 2.2 Excellent pastoral care is a significant element of the school's ethos which, together with good welfare arrangements and effective procedures for the pupils' health and safety, supports their all-round achievement well. The strong sense of family and community, underpinned by warm supportive relationships and mutual respect, is central to the pupils' positive attitudes. Pupils grow into confident, mature young people, well prepared for their next school as a result of the strong support they receive.
- 2.3 The school is supported and guided by an informed governing body that sets appropriate school aims. Governors have a good overview of the school's direction but their role in strategic planning is less well developed. In addition they have worked hard to bring about significant improvements in the buildings and the grounds, to the benefit of the pupils.
- 2.4 Strong leadership and effective management have ensured an accurate evaluation of the school's work, with appropriate focus on those areas that can be strengthened. This provides the school with an excellent capacity for further improvement. Subject heads are more closely involved in monitoring and assessment but this varies from subject to subject. The school's development plan is at the end of its time span. Plans are in hand to produce a new one that covers the review and development of all aspects of school life. The school works hard to engage parents more closely with their children's learning and development. Parents are particularly pleased with the teaching and the broad curriculum, the information received from the school and provision for boarding. Some parents expressed concerns regarding their involvement in the school, the school's handling of concerns, homework and the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Inspection findings do not support these concerns. The school has responded well to the recommendations from the previous report. In addition it has taken immediate action to rectify a recent regulatory shortcoming.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

2.5 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:

- print out or back up electronically the admission register each month and retain it for three years after the school year in question [Part 3, paragraph 17, under Welfare, health and safety].

2.6 At the time of the final team visit, the school had rectified the above shortcoming, as noted in the text of the report.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.7 In addition to the above regulatory action point, the school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Set out the school's strategic vision with clearly defined priorities for the short, medium and longer term in a whole-school development plan, and ensure that middle managers play a full part in the self-evaluation of their own areas.
2. Encourage all pupils to think critically and become more independent in their learning through the use of specific teaching methods.
3. Establish uniformity of assessment across all subjects by ensuring that staff consistently adhere to the whole-school marking scheme.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 Pupils are well educated, and the good quality of their achievements and of their learning, attitudes and skills successfully fulfils the school's aims of placing the individual learning needs of every child at the heart of all that it does.
- 3.2 Pupils are confident and articulate speakers who develop high standards of literacy and numeracy as they move through the school. They listen attentively, and read and write intelligently and fluently. Pupils express themselves clearly. They show good use of appropriate vocabulary in a range of subjects and make thoughtful contributions to discussion. Year 3 pupils wrote stimulating accounts about their day out to Norwich Castle Museum, whilst Year 8 pupils demonstrated excellent use of vocabulary in their scientific explanation of photosynthesis. Pupils are able to reason well and think critically when given the chance, such as in a Year 7 French lesson where they used high level reasoning skills to match English to French vocabulary. However, this is not consistently developed in all subjects. The pupils' numerical skills are well developed and are put to good use in activities that require high levels of accuracy. Year 4 pupils worked with considerable speed when carrying out an on-line mathematical challenge with children from other countries. Older pupils demonstrate high levels of mathematical competence which they use effectively in a range of subjects. In ICT, pupils demonstrate good keyboard skills and work effectively with a range of software across the curriculum. The pupils' creativity is particularly strong, as evidenced in the stimulating art and craft work displayed around the school.
- 3.3 In addition to academic and general scholarships, pupils gain awards in art, music, sport and design technology. Many achieve well in graded music examinations, often gaining distinctions and merits. Individual and team sporting successes are well established in a wide range of sports at local, county and sometimes national level. Other notable individual achievements include pupils taking part in national youth orchestras or in sailing regattas, gaining recognition in external competitions and completing outstanding personal projects. This success owes much to the pupils' positive attitudes, the opportunities provided by the curriculum and the quality of teaching.
- 3.4 Although there are variations in ability levels in and between year groups, the ability profile of the pupils is above the national average. A range of nationally standardised tests is used and results confirm the good levels of achievement observed in the scrutiny of work in the school. Pupils, including those with LDD or EAL, make good progress over the course of their education, in relation to their ability. This is reflected in their success in Common Entrance and scholarship examinations, where high standards are attained in many subject areas.
- 3.5 Central to the ethos of the school is the mutual respect between staff and pupils; this gives pupils every opportunity to learn and achieve successfully. Pupils are eager learners and respond positively to the high expectations of their teachers. They are interested in their topics and they sustain focus on their work throughout the lesson. Despite one or two lapses, behaviour is almost always good and pupils settle willingly, listen attentively and work with maturity both independently and collaboratively. They are keen to contribute to the lesson, particularly when they are given active and challenging tasks.

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

- 3.6 The overall contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent. The school provides a broad curriculum at all ages and meets its aims. It covers a wide range of areas of learning including French, Latin, drama, religious studies and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). The curriculum is planned well and this enables pupils to make good or better progress as they move upwards in the school. The timetable is arranged so that pupils in the Upper School can be split into ability groups for English, mathematics and science. Pupils of this age benefit from these divisions, where they can work at a pace and level more suited to their individual needs. The comprehensive programme for PSHCE covers a suitable range of topics and effectively supports pupils' personal development. Pupils who require extra support with their learning are strongly supported through the work of the learning support department. Gifted and talented pupils are often given challenging activities or extension work in their own class.
- 3.7 The extra-curricular programme is extensive and of high quality for a school of this size. It provides well for a full range of interest. Time is used well and the curriculum is enriched as a result. Often the activities and curriculum are mutually supportive which results in pupils extending their personal qualities and skills as well as enhancing their enjoyment of school life. A good programme of educational visits is organised to places of historical, artistic and musical interest which helps to foster new skills. The school has several strong links with the community which benefit the pupils; including shared musical events with local primary schools and regular attendance at local church services. The considerable effort of the staff enables the school to provide a wide range of activities.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.8 Good quality teaching, with some that is excellent, enables most pupils to make good or better progress, in line with the school's aims. Teaching has significantly improved since the previous inspection. The teachers' subject knowledge is strong and they use this to raise the quality of pupils' learning. Resources are used appropriately in generally well-planned lessons. The best lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and include effective questioning techniques that encourage pupils to think for themselves and develop their knowledge, understanding and skills well. Praise and encouragement help the pupils to enjoy the subjects they study. On occasions, pupils are not given as much opportunity to develop their independent learning and thinking skills because activities are over directed by teachers and, in some cases, a lack of pace, excessively long introductions and an over reliance on worksheets lead to insufficient challenge. In these instances learning is less rapid. Teachers are fully aware of the individual challenges of pupils with LDD or EAL and generally tailor tasks to their needs. The calm and supportive manner in which teachers manage the pupils ensures that, overall, pupils behave well and transgressions are usually minor.
- 3.9 Teaching is well informed by a good range of assessment procedures that have been strengthened since the previous inspection. Standardised tests are carried out regularly and although in its infancy, a system is in place for staff to track under-performing and high achieving pupils. In some subjects pupils are given the opportunity to self-assess their performance and begin to understand what they need to do to achieve specific levels. Not all staff adhere to the school marking policy. The best marking is developmental and encouraging, and leads to greater

efforts and understanding by the pupils. In some subjects marking is cursory and fails to give pupils an indication of how they can improve. Classrooms are well resourced, with an improvement in ICT provision since the previous inspection. The school has installed interactive whiteboards in most classrooms. Where they are used effectively, they add greatly to the pupils' enjoyment and interest through the visual aspect of learning.

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' personal development is excellent at all ages and is effectively supported by a nurturing school community in which all staff members show a high level of commitment to pastoral care. Throughout, pupils have extremely well-developed personal qualities, in accordance with the school aims.
- 4.2 Pupils demonstrate strong spiritual awareness. They develop excellent self-esteem and self-confidence. They are supportive of each other and show tolerance and understanding. Pupils in Year 6 displayed empathy for the evacuees in World War Two after visiting the theatre to see *Carrie's War*. The pupils' awareness of Christianity is particularly strong, supported by religious studies, and chapel and church services, but their understanding of other major world religions is more limited as these are not covered as part of a structured programme. The spiritual life of the school is enhanced through the choir who sing regularly at church services or in assembly. The school's chapel provides a calm environment for reflection or prayer.
- 4.3 Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong, and they successfully place moral issues into real contexts. They show sympathy to those less fortunate than themselves by supporting a range of charities. Pupils have held a special meal to raise funds for the victims of the Haiti earthquake; they support Jeans for Genes and at Christmas, the charity Night Shelter. They understand a wide range of topics through the PSHCE course and have a strong sense of justice. They benefit from visits from Members of Parliament, and sportsmen and women who have achieved distinctions in their chosen fields. This gives pupils the impetus to persevere.
- 4.4 Pupils are pleasant and courteous, and have excellent social skills. They feel valued and relate positively to one another. They undertake posts of responsibility reliably and seriously throughout the school. Those elected to the school council organised and run by the pupils take pride in their position and work hard to put new ideas into place. Boarders have their own council and go to great lengths to ensure everyone is represented fairly. Pupils represent their forms well; they listen to each other during meetings and know that their views will be taken seriously. Year 8 prefects provide excellent role models for the younger pupils.
- 4.5 The pupils' cultural awareness is strongly developed. Through a broad involvement in music, art and drama they gain an appreciation of their own and other cultures. Their study of cultural diversity in subjects such as PSHCE, geography, history and music further develops their understanding. The pupils are given the chance to take part in overseas residential visits and extend their cultural knowledge. Visits by musical groups, theatre outings and various themed days ensure they develop an excellent awareness of their cultural heritage.

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

- 4.6 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good. The school cares effectively for the pupils' well-being, in line with its aims.
- 4.7 The school provides an excellent standard of pastoral care and support for the pupils. This makes an effective contribution to the educational standards achieved and the personal growth of all pupils, and as a result they develop into happy, confident and secure young people. Academic and personal progress is monitored systematically and with good consultation at every level to ensure that a clear overview is maintained for every pupil. Teachers work closely with form tutors and house staff to ensure that arrangements for the pupils' care are effective. In this they are well supported by the matrons and learning support department. The morning registration period is used productively to ensure that pupils are prepared for the day. An appropriate range of purposeful activities is undertaken in the tutorial period.
- 4.8 The excellent relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst pupils themselves are built on mutual trust. Channels of support are clearly laid down and members of staff deal sensitively with any issues that may occur. Both day and boarding pupils were clear that if they had a concern they could readily seek help from a member of staff. The school's arrangements to promote good behaviour and guard against harassment and bullying are effective. The ethos of the school is one where pupils are expected to behave in a tolerant, courteous and respectful manner. A system of rewards is in place to celebrate pupil achievement and positive behaviour. Appropriate sanctions for misbehaviour are clearly set out. Most pupils spoken to feel that rewards and sanctions are appropriate although a few older pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire do not feel they are always applied fairly. On investigation, no evidence was seen to confirm this and pupils spoken to said they are very happy.
- 4.9 The safeguarding policy contains all the necessary elements, and safeguarding arrangements, including those for boarding schools, have proper regard to statutory guidance. The school's designated officers have received up-to-date training for inter-agency working and they have trained all others working in the school. The policy is shared with boarding pupils and suitably publicised. The school has taken all necessary measures to prevent the risk from fire and other hazards. Pupils know the procedures for emergency evacuation of the buildings. Termly planned fire practices are held, including one in the boarding houses during darkness hours. They are properly recorded. Fire safety audit and risk assessment recommendations have been acted upon. Appropriate checks are made on all fire-fighting equipment, including the regular weekly testing of alarms. All electrical equipment is tested regularly and records kept.
- 4.10 A well-documented health and safety policy is in place and any matters are appropriately supervised by the health and safety committee who meet regularly. The surgery provides good quality facilities and constant support, with well-qualified staff. Full records are kept of all medication administered. The access plan for those with disabilities has a wide scope, with timetabled improvements. School food is healthy and varied, and pupils are encouraged to be healthy by taking part in the extensive sports and activity programme. Attendance registers are properly maintained and suitably stored for three years. Whilst the admission register is maintained correctly, a copy had not previously been made each month as required.

Since the initial visit, the school has backed up the admission register electronically each month.

4.(c) The quality of boarding education

- 4.11 The excellent boarding experience plays a valuable part in the pupils' education. It strongly promotes the personal development of the pupils and contributes effectively to the school's aims. The boarders are proud of their houses and describe them as welcoming, homely and fun. The friendships that form and develop, the opportunity to spend time with their peers and the enjoyment of the activities on offer were all given by the boarders as reasons for enjoying boarding life. Boarders enjoy a safe, busy and supportive environment run by caring staff who understand their needs and make good provision for both academic support and extra-curricular activities. The high quality of welfare is strongly supported by good relationships between the staff and boarders, and amongst boarders themselves. Older boarders view the experience as invaluable preparation prior to moving to a larger environment at their chosen senior schools.
- 4.12 Boarders are provided with an excellent range of activities outside the school day and at the weekends. During the evenings they make good use of the school's facilities, including a pool room. A variety of weekend activities is organised which includes the local environment and venues further afield. The school holds regular Saturday services and the boarders attend the local church services on Sunday, with provision for Roman Catholic pupils to attend the church in a nearby town.
- 4.13 The accommodation has been recently decorated in the main house. Sufficient room is provided for personal space and individual storage. Boarders enjoy well-resourced communal spaces to watch television and films. They enjoy this time and the interaction with the house staff. The showers in the girls' area are not in the best condition and boarders reported that they do not work very well. This was confirmed during the inspection. However, the boarders spoken to were extremely positive and enthusiastic about all aspects of the boarding experience. The school promotes boarding with trial sessions for day pupils. This is enthusiastically received and used. All the recommendations of the previous Ofsted boarding welfare inspection have been acted upon, whereby all risk assessments are monitored and clear records kept, including those for fire safety.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The governing body provides good support and oversight of the work of the school. Its effectiveness is further ensured by the wide range of professional skills that governors bring. They are successful in securing the school's aims. Governance has strengthened since the previous inspection and governors have acted on the recommendations made at that time.
- 5.2 Structures and management arrangements of the governing body are well defined. Governors receive detailed and regular reports from the headmaster, which gives them a good insight into the school. Close liaison with the bursar supports sound financial planning to ensure that a high quality of resources, accommodation and staffing is maintained. Since the previous inspection their success of careful financial management is evident in the new and refurbished facilities. The governors take a close interest in development planning but the current plan is at the end of its cycle. The need for a longer-term vision with clear priorities has been recognised to establish the direction the governors now wish to take.
- 5.3 The governing body understands the school and its needs well. Communication between the chairman and headmaster is regular and open. The deputy chairman works closely with the bursar on matters of health and safety. Governors have positive and constructive relationships with staff who welcome the support and encouragement they receive. On occasions staff have taken opportunities to make subject presentations to the governors. Governors plan for these to be a more regular feature at the newly formed education committee. Although governors often attend formal and social functions they are aware that not all parents are fully informed about the responsibilities of governance and recognise this as an area for future development.
- 5.4 Governors endeavour to keep abreast of their roles and responsibilities through appropriate training. They are highly committed to the well-being of the pupils, and their role of monitoring and review of policies and procedures, including those for child protection, is taken very seriously. One governor has nominated responsibility for child protection. Governors' oversight of some aspects of health and safety procedures has been less assured. The earlier procedural deficiency relating to the admission register has now been rectified.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.5 The good quality of leadership and management ensures that the school's expressed aims are fulfilled well, evident in the happy, self-confident pupils, who are keen to learn. The school is strongly led, providing clear and imaginative direction and a vigorous sense of purpose. This is challenging everyone to build on the school's existing and well-established strengths.
- 5.6 Clear educational direction is provided by those in management positions. Those with academic, pastoral and boarding responsibilities are fully involved, liaise often and show great care and commitment for both pupils and staff. Management is mostly successful in ensuring that the evaluation and implementation of all policies and procedures are regular and effective. House parents are successful in creating the supportive ethos necessary in their houses. Subject leaders have made

significant progress in improving their subjects by providing good quality handbooks and subject development plans. However, their role of monitoring and evaluation is not sufficiently effective in all subjects to ensure a secure view of areas for development. Thorough and effective self-evaluation demonstrates an accurate analysis of the school's needs. A new development plan is currently being formulated to identify clearly the school's educational objectives and the means to achieve them.

- 5.7 Good recruitment and induction procedures contribute to the appointment and retention of well-qualified staff. Staffing levels meet the needs of the curriculum and enable strong support to be given to all pupils, including those who have LDD or EAL. The enthusiasm, hard work and motivation of both teaching and non-teaching staff, together with their excellent relationships with the pupils, contribute significantly to pupils' learning and welfare. The appraisal system has been recently updated. The strong support for in-service training and professional development meets the recommendation of the previous inspection. Arrangements for the training of staff in safeguarding, welfare, and health and safety issues are secure and well established. All those working with children are suitably checked through recruitment procedures that are followed rigorously and include the particular requirements for staff in a boarding school. A centralised register records the recruitment checks carried out when staff are appointed.

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

- 5.8 The school has maintained a good and effective relationship with parents since the time of the previous inspection, in accordance with its aims. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were extremely pleased with many aspects of the school's work, including teaching, the curriculum, the wide range of extra-curricular activities and the information received from the school. A small but significant number of concerns were raised, including homework arrangements and the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Inspectors found that pupils with LDD are supported well, often achieving standards above expectations and that overall, where set, the prep arrangements are appropriate to the ages and abilities of the pupils. Pupils stated that they are happy with their prep arrangements.
- 5.9 A small minority of parents felt that they have insufficient involvement with the school. However, inspectors found that parents are welcomed throughout the school. They are invited to major functions, and encouraged to support their children at sports fixtures and to join them at social functions or informative lectures. Suitable occasions are provided for parents to hear about the life and work of the school. Regular newsletters and the school magazine keep parents fully up-to-date. The increasing use of electronic methods of communication provides an efficient means of contacting parents, which they very much appreciate. The prospectus, handbooks, calendars and website ensure that all parents gain a good insight into the school. Parents receive clear and useful reports covering most aspects of academic, extra-curricular and personal development. Although reports outline effort, progress and attainment they do not always provide targets to show how a pupil's work can be improved or extended.
- 5.10 A few parents expressed a lack of confidence in the school's ability to handle concerns. Inspectors found that the school is responsive when parents feel they need further discussion and that parents are encouraged to come into school to

discuss any concerns. The school has appropriate procedures in place to handle concerns, which are followed correctly and with due care.

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

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 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 Gail Purt

Mr Gordon James

Mr Paul Easterbrook

Reporting Inspector

Headmaster, IAPS school

Headmaster, IAPS school