



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

LANGLEY SCHOOL STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Langley School

Full Name of School	Langley School		
DfE Number	926/6005		
EYFS Number	EY360772		
Registered Charity Number	311270		
Address	Langley School Langley Park Loddon Norwich NR14 6BJ		
Telephone Number	01508 520210		
Fax Number	01508 528058		
Email Address	office@langleschool.co.uk		
Headmaster	Mr Dominic Findlay		
Chair of Governors	Mrs Margaret Alston		
Age Range	2 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	729		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (429 boys; 300 girls)		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	24	5-11: 125
	3-5 (EYFS):	47	11-18: 533
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	648	Capacity for flexi-boarding: 0
Number of Boarders	Total:	81	
	Full:	50	Weekly: 31
Head of EYFS Setting	Mr Simon Marfleet		
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection dates	18 Jan 2011 to 19 Jan 2011		
	16 Feb 2011 to 18 Feb 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 March 2007.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The inspection of boarding was not carried out in conjunction with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills, and the report does not contain specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education and development in general. The full Ofsted report refers to an inspection in March 2008 and can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under 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 Langley School is a co-educational day and boarding school, founded in 1910 in central Norwich as Norwich High School for Boys; it became a registered charity in 1960 and has admitted girls since 1978. In 1946, the senior school, for pupils from the age of eleven to the age of eighteen, moved to a grade I listed mansion about twelve miles south-east of the city; the preparatory school, for pupils up to the age of eleven, moved to the east side of the city in Thorpe St Andrew. In September 2010, the preparatory school merged with a local girls' school, forming Thorpe House Langley Preparatory School, based largely on the girls' school site; within this school, pupils from the ages of two to five form the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Thorpe House Langley Preparatory School is now integrated with the senior school.
- 1.2 Both prep and senior schools share the same governing body; the prep school headmaster has considerable day to day autonomy, but he reports to the headmaster of the senior school in his capacity as chief executive. Since the previous inspection, in addition to the merger with the girls' school, significant new teaching accommodation has been provided in the senior school this year.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, there were 196 pupils in the prep school, of whom 71 were in the EYFS. The senior school contained 533 pupils, of whom 81 were boarders. In both parts of the school, about three-fifths of the pupils are boys and two-fifths girls. Pupils are drawn from a mix of professional, business and agricultural family backgrounds across a wide area in East Anglia and the school organises an extensive transport network to support this. Boarders come mainly from the same area, with a small number from overseas. Most pupils are of white British origin, with a smaller number from a range of other ethnic backgrounds.
- 1.4 Pupils are admitted without academic testing, following interview. They have a broad range of ability which is, overall, in line with the national average; the range of ability in the sixth form is broader. In the prep school, no pupils have statements of special educational needs (SEN) but twenty-four have been identified as requiring support for learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). In the senior school, three pupils have statements of SEN, and one hundred and one pupils have been identified with LDD. In addition, twenty senior pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), for which they receive support in school.
- 1.5 The school aims to provide education where pupils are active partners in a friendly and inclusive environment, and can discover their individual talents and abilities within a family atmosphere. Almost all pupils progress from the prep school to the senior school, and almost all senior pupils move to higher educational institutions at eighteen.
- 1.6 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 achieve good standards throughout. From the beginning, they have a good grounding in knowledge, skills and understanding, and this develops into a thorough grasp of advanced concepts by the sixth form. Literacy and numeracy develop well but the pupils' strong information and communication technology (ICT) skills, used well in the senior school, are not used consistently across all subjects in the prep. Pupils are extremely positive towards their learning, work well together and enjoy lessons. Results have been above the national average at GCSE and in line with it at A level; GCSE results improved considerably from 2009 to 2010. Teaching is good overall and often excellent, enabling good progress in both prep and senior schools. Assessment is excellent in the senior school but is not based on a secure understanding of the pupils' abilities in the prep. The pupils' education is supported by a broad curriculum and excellent range of activities. The senior school provides an extremely flexible curriculum giving a wide range of examination options, and opportunities in design and technology are exceptional. Pupils with LDD or EAL are very well supported and progress well. The school provides a stimulating range of opportunities for more able pupils outside the classroom but provision in lessons, though excellent in places, is less consistent.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is outstanding throughout, based on a strong sense of community and a caring ethos. Pupils are well mannered, confident and sensitive to the needs of others, both through charity work and as shown in their own actions. They are reflective and self-aware, and relate well to those of other cultures. Pastoral care and relationships are excellent throughout both parts of the school, and arrangements for welfare, health and safety are robust. New pupils are quickly made welcome, misbehaviour is rare and quickly dealt with, and issues relating to pupils are discussed promptly. Boarders are well cared for within a homely atmosphere. Pupils say they are confident, that they have adults they can talk to and that they appreciate the family atmosphere; they were very positive about the school in the pre-inspection questionnaire.
- 2.3 Strong leadership from governors and senior staff has supported a complex merger whilst maintaining a clear vision and strategy for the future; issues in the senior school from the previous inspection have been addressed well. Staff work well together with a common sense of purpose and community. Middle management plays a key role in both parts of the school in developing teaching and learning, though in the prep school this role is still very new. Staff recruitment is secure and staff are well trained in child protection. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the education it provides to their children; the concerns raised by a minority of them about support for pupils with LDD were not borne out during the inspection. Their concerns about homework were reflected in discussion with pupils, who said that in some subjects it lacks purpose at times.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

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

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that teaching consistently supplies sufficient challenge for the most able pupils in both prep and senior schools.
 2. Embed ICT fully into teaching across the prep school curriculum.
 3. Ensure, in the prep school, that the monitoring of the pupils' progress is firmly based on an understanding of their abilities.
 4. Develop both planning and resources for the outside environment in the EYFS to ensure continuous provision across all areas of learning.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

Prep school

- 3.1 The pupils' overall achievement is good; they are well educated, in line with the school's aim to develop pupils who work purposefully and co-operatively in the pursuit of an excellent educational experience. Pupils are well grounded in knowledge, skill and understanding across the curriculum. They read well, achieve a satisfactory grasp of grammar and spelling, and use adjectives well in imaginative writing. They apply their good grasp of number well, showing their ability to think logically and analytically. Pupils have excellent ICT skills but the application of these in other work is limited. The school's recent focus on English and mathematics has strengthened older pupils' skills in these areas, for example in creative writing. Pupils have a good grasp of scientific vocabulary and develop their understanding by asking questions such as "what makes you sweat?" Pupils show a sound grasp of musical vocabulary. They use their creative skills well, for example when younger pupils used a collage of dragons to illustrate work in English. They participate with enthusiasm in the excellent variety of activities and enjoy considerable success in chess and swimming, as well as in athletics. For example, they are county champions and national chess runners-up in their class.
- 3.2 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but on the evidence available, it is judged to be good in relation to national age-related expectations. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make good progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability. Pupils with LDD are well supported and also progress well. However, the most able pupils make less rapid progress as they have too few opportunities to undertake more challenging work.
- 3.3 The pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent; they are willing learners who have a positive and enthusiastic approach. They are comfortable when working independently. They are also happy to co-operate with each other and do so successfully; when engaged in extended writing tasks, pupils in Years 4 and 5 confidently assessed each other's work and in music, older pupils worked well in groups to produce a critique of a pop group using appropriate musical terms. Pupils are articulate and keen to share mature ideas that are well thought out. They converse easily with both peers and adults, and listen to others' points of view and respect their opinions. The pupils' achievements are recognised in 'good work' assemblies, and pupils wear their merit badges with pride.

Senior school

- 3.4 Pupils achieve good, and often excellent, overall standards throughout the senior school, in line with the school's aims. From the time they arrive, pupils show a thorough knowledge and understanding across the curriculum. By Year 11, pupils are highly articulate, make excellent use of their own and other languages, and express themselves clearly on paper. They show well-developed numeracy skills. They use ICT well in a wide range of subjects; it is particularly embedded in their study of language. In the sixth form, pupils develop a thorough grasp of challenging concepts in science, talk sensitively about poetry and its language, and apply their theoretical understanding to complex problems in subjects such as English, mathematics and geography. They engage thoughtfully with philosophical issues, showing a good grasp of logical thought. Pupils play sport to a high standard, debate well, achieve excellence in both drama and music, and play a crucial role in producing a school magazine. Both in lessons and in activities, the quality of art and other creative work is excellent, and work in design and technology has achieved national recognition in a wide variety of competitions.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2007 to 2009. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results at GCSE were above the national average for maintained schools and A-level results were similar to the national average. Between 2009 and 2010, the proportion of A* and A grades at GCSE increased from just over a quarter to just over a third; at A level, they were slightly improved and in 2010, just over half the pupils gained A or B grades.
- 3.6 These results show that pupils make good progress. At GCSE, their results are above the average for pupils of similar ability. At both GCSE and A level, they gain on average about half a grade higher than those predicted from the results of standardised tests. Pupils with LDD or EAL progress equally well as a result of the support they receive.
- 3.7 From the time they join the school, pupils are focused and interested in almost all lessons. They are active and co-operative workers, who show curiosity and enjoy their lessons. They work well together and are engaged and alert. Older pupils, at GCSE and A level, are highly committed and determined, thoughtful and imaginative, and listen carefully to each other's points of view. In particular, they evaluate both their own work and that of others in a positive but constructive way. They show considerable pride in their work.

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

Prep school

- 3.8 The school provides a good, broad and balanced curriculum in accordance with its aims. This is enhanced by an excellent choice of wide-ranging extra-curricular activities in which pupils of all ages participate and which they greatly enjoy. In most respects, the curriculum meets the pupils' needs and enables them to make good progress. All the requisite areas of learning are covered well, with a strong emphasis on English and mathematics. French is taught from Reception and the pupils' learning is enhanced by specialist teaching in science, mathematics, English, drama, French, music and ICT above Year 3. A new programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) ensures that this makes an important contribution to the pupils' personal development. Newly appointed curriculum co-ordinators have introduced monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum to ensure continuity and progression through different age groups.
- 3.9 The pupils' individual educational needs are taken into consideration through setting in the core subjects. Advice is provided by the special educational needs co-ordinator to enable teachers to support and extend every child. Pupils with LDD or EAL are given appropriate support but those with special talents are supported less well.
- 3.10 An excellent choice of extra-curricular activities is provided for all pupils and ranges from tennis to golf, chess to tapestry, and modern dance to reading. Links with the local community support the school's holistic approach to education. Visitors to the school, along with visits by pupils to events elsewhere, further enhance the curriculum strongly. Pupils also benefit from links with the local church. The school raises funds for local, national and international charities, supporting causes such as motor neurone disease, leukaemia research and children abroad in need.

Senior school

- 3.11 The school offers a good, broad and balanced curriculum, with flexibility that is extremely well suited to the pupils' interests. In response to the previous inspection, the school has increased the amount of time given to religious studies (RS) and PSHE, and has successfully increased the proportion of pupils taking a modern foreign language to GCSE level. The option blocks at GCSE and A level are well designed to give the pupils the maximum amount of choice and they are adjusted where possible to cater for each pupil's needs. The wide choice of subjects enables pupils of all abilities to follow a curriculum in which they can be successful. The exceptional provision for design and technology in the extremely well-equipped workshop is one of the many strengths of the curriculum. Careers advice commences in Year 9 and pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- 3.12 Pupils with LDD or EAL are extremely well catered for, receiving the support they need to enable them to progress well. They are well known to teachers, who make suitable provision for them in lessons. The school's aim of improving provision for gifted and talented pupils has been approached in a variety of ways. Many departments provide good opportunities outside the classroom, for example the discussion group for pupils aiming for particularly competitive universities, the

biology Olympiad, art trips and music recitals. However, provision for these pupils is less consistent from day to day, though some excellent practice was observed.

- 3.13 Pupils enjoy an excellent range of extra-curricular activities; these are well organised and participation is now monitored. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in activities on four afternoons each week. Games, music and drama have a high profile, and the wide range of clubs and societies enables pupils to develop their interests. Throughout the school, trips are arranged to local places of musical, scientific and artistic interest which broaden the pupils' academic and aesthetic development. Pupils enjoy a wide range of house activities, competitive sports, music concerts and drama productions. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in the Combined Cadet Force (CCF), The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and the community service programme in the sixth form.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

Prep school

- 3.14 Good teaching enables pupils to progress well and give of their best, in accordance with the school's aims. In general, planning is detailed and related to the pupils' differing needs. In the best teaching, the pace is brisk, activities are varied, resources are used to good effect and the most able pupils are challenged. However, more able pupils are not always given extension work or more difficult tasks to extend their knowledge and skills fully. The minority of teaching that is satisfactory rather than good is well delivered, but lacks sufficient challenge or opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and resources are generally used effectively. Relationships between pupils and teachers are excellent and teachers know their pupils well. They praise and encourage pupils regularly for their efforts and achievements, thereby promoting self-confidence and self-respect.
- 3.15 Marking is regular but variable in quality. Some, but not all, gives clear guidance as to how a pupil might develop or improve his or her work; for younger pupils, the use of 'smiley faces' and house points enables them to understand when their work is of good quality.
- 3.16 The school has a good deal of information about the standard of the pupils' work; for example, standardised tests in English and mathematics are taken each year and expectations in school examinations are related to National Curriculum levels. However, the school does not monitor the pupils' progress in relation to their abilities. Although all pupils have a record sheet that moves with them through the school, the lack of data about their ability means it is not possible to evaluate progress rigorously. Assessment is now informing some planning, however this is not yet undertaken consistently. The school is aware of these issues and currently reviewing its assessment arrangements.

Senior school

- 3.17 Teaching is good overall and frequently outstanding, drawing on excellent subject knowledge. Lessons are almost always well planned, with a wide variety of activities that involve pupils fully and in some cases encourage independent work. Excellent use is made of ICT, both by teachers and by pupils in their work. Lessons are, for the most part, delivered with a brisk pace and considerable enthusiasm, encouraging high levels of involvement. Teachers use 'question-and-answer' very well to draw out ideas and make pupils think. The use of role play in history brings sources to life, enabling pupils to gain a good understanding of North American first nation culture. Teaching stimulates the pupils' thinking and interest, building up their confidence. Pupils with LDD or EAL are supported unobtrusively, and those who find work hard, extremely well; pupils comment positively on the individual help that is readily available. In some lessons, work is also carefully matched to the needs of the most able pupils but this is not done consistently, so that some opportunities for additional challenge are limited. Relationships between teachers and their pupils are exceptional, and contribute much to pupils' learning. In a small minority of lessons with younger pupils, minor behavioural issues are not handled effectively.
- 3.18 Marking is regular and much is of high quality, and gives detailed and helpful comments on how pupils can improve their work; however, this is not undertaken consistently. In addition, pupils said that they are often given verbal feedback and are told how to progress further. Much homework is recognised as useful, although pupils said that in some subjects it appears to be set just because it is due on the timetable and does not support their learning.
- 3.19 Assessment data is used extensively and very successfully to set challenging targets and to track the progress of pupils of all abilities.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Prep school

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent, contributing much to the school's caring, family atmosphere. Pupils are enthusiastic about their school, confident and positive. They are well behaved and respectful. Pupils benefit from contact with senior school pupils on work experience.
- 4.2 The pupils' spiritual development is excellent. Self-esteem is high and pupils demonstrate increasing self-awareness and confidence as they move through the school. An environmental learning project encourages pupils to learn outdoors, for example when constructing an 'igloo' from willow. Weekly RS lessons teach them about major world faiths and include visits to places of worship, for example the Year 6 trip to a Hindu temple. Pupils attend the local church at Christmas and Harvest, and the vicar visits the school to celebrate Easter and Advent.
- 4.3 The pupils' moral awareness is excellent. Pupils uphold the school's core values. They learn to take responsibility for their actions. Pupils take a keen interest in animal welfare. Younger pupils are involved in applying for 'eco-school' status and older pupils are involved with a recycling project. In PSHE, older pupils perceptively discuss questions such as "what does responsibility mean?" Pupils carry out classroom duties and support charities. Some girls attend Brownies once a week and demonstrate good citizenship.
- 4.4 The pupils' social development is outstanding. They are confident speakers and welcoming to visitors. The house system promotes team spirit and personal development well. Pupils in Year 6 become prefects and take their responsibilities seriously; throughout the school, older pupils support younger ones extremely well. The school councils provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to contribute to school life. Badges for posts of responsibility are worn with pride.
- 4.5 The pupils develop a strong sense of their own and other cultures. They develop a broad knowledge of other faiths and are respectful towards those from different cultures. Pupils in Years 4 to 6 gain an understanding of European culture through visits to France. Pupils celebrate Chinese New Year and enjoy taking part in the local Dragon Week.

Senior school

- 4.6 The pupils' excellent personal development is a strength of the school, enabling it to achieve its aim of promoting a strong sense of community rooted in sound values and mutual respect. Pupils' development has been enhanced since the previous inspection by the introduction of a new PSHE scheme. Pupils are now taught PSHE by staff with a specialist interest, and care is taken to incorporate a spiritual and ethical component in the programme for each year group. Sensitive issues are addressed with help from outside agencies and speakers, including local health agencies and the police.
- 4.7 Pupils are well aware of the spiritual dimension of their education. They have a capacity for reflection and are sympathetic to each individual's place in the school community. They have a sense of their own worth and are respectful in their dealings with each other. Pupils of different faiths attend their own services. School

services are currently held on site or in conjunction with the local community. However, the school intends that when the refurbishments to the church in the school grounds are completed it will become the natural spiritual centre of the school, with the vicar acting as school chaplain.

- 4.8 The pupils' moral development is excellent. They respect school rules and have a very clear understanding of right and wrong, reinforced through weekly assemblies and boarders' services. They are well mannered, confident and outgoing, and their behaviour is largely exemplary. They show tolerance, understanding and a keen awareness of injustice. The pupils demonstrate their concern for those less fortunate than themselves and regularly initiate charity events or contribute to local, national and international good causes; for example, they take part in a major fund raising campaign for a school and orphanage in Kenya. The 'charity wall' display shows that pupils have supported over fifteen charities during the past year.
- 4.9 The pupils' social development is also excellent. Older pupils support younger ones; for example, sixth-form pupils are attached to the younger pupils' common rooms. Although a minority of pupils said in the pre-inspection questionnaire that the school does not listen to or respond to their views, this was not corroborated by discussions during the inspection. Pupils said they value the school councils, and feel that issues which arise are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility and to exercise leadership, for example as heads of house, sports captains, prefects and members of the various school councils. They show good team spirit, both working together and competing in sporting, musical and inter-house events. They mix easily across year groups at meal times and during house activities, for example during the inter-house 'quidditch' trials that took place during the inspection. The pupils' awareness and involvement in the local community are key features of their social development, and both the CCF and the school's community service programme are well supported, especially by senior pupils.
- 4.10 Pupils respond to diversity within the school's population very positively. They develop their understanding of other cultures and their own heritage well through subjects such as geography, history and music. In RS, they learn of the different world religions and, in PSHE, of the importance of understanding and respecting those from different backgrounds. Specialist cultural days, such as the Year 9 Black History project, usefully bring together the art and English departments, so that pupils discover aspects of cultures new to them and learn about the cultural experiences and histories of their peers. Visits to different countries and commitments to overseas charities further broaden their cultural perspective.

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

Prep school pastoral care

- 4.11 The quality of pastoral care is excellent. Staff know pupils well and relationships are excellent, both between pupils and staff, and amongst pupils themselves. Staff take considerable care to share any concerns about pupils, and these concerns are discussed at each staff meeting. Induction for new pupils is carefully planned; they are invited in for a taster day and mentored by a 'buddy'. Class teachers and other members of staff provide excellent support and guidance to pupils.
- 4.12 Pupils say the school's anti-bullying policy works well, and that they feel able to ask for help should they need it. Issues are few and dealt with promptly, with staff keeping in close contact with parents. Children know of the 'bullying box' and 'worry box', where they can post anonymous notes. The school is active in seeking to prevent cyber-bullying. Pupils say they understand the need for rules, that sanctions and rewards are generally fair, and that good behaviour is frequently praised, with all of which inspectors concur.

Senior school pastoral care

- 4.13 The quality of pastoral care is excellent and the school is committed to creating a strong community rooted in sound values, mutual respect and self discipline. Both pastoral procedures and the support and guidance of staff are much appreciated by parents. Pupil say they feel valued, respected and well cared for. Throughout the school, pastoral arrangements are highly effective and monitored well; lines of communication and responsibility are clear and well understood. The separation of year head responsibilities into academic and pastoral monitoring has further enhanced the support for pupils.
- 4.14 Relationships amongst pupils are strong and supportive, and based on mutual respect. They create an excellent sense of community which permeates the life and work of the school. The school's code of conduct is clear and effective, and emphasises the encouragement of positive behaviour. Appropriate sanctions exist for unacceptable behaviour, and pupils say that discipline is generally enforced fairly, effectively and proportionately. In their pre-inspection questionnaires, a small number of pupils did not think teachers treat pupils equally or fairly but this was not supported in discussion during the inspection. Pupils report that bullying incidents are rare, but, when they occur, staff deal with them promptly and effectively.

Whole-school welfare, health and safety

- 4.15 The school's approach to safeguarding its pupils is robust, with a comprehensive safeguarding policy, well known to staff and senior pupils. The designated teacher's inter-agency training is up to date, as is the training of other staff working in the school. There is a designated governor with specific responsibility for child protection. The school has appropriate plans to promote access for those with physical or learning disabilities, and suitable arrangements are in place for pupils who feel unwell. Registration of pupils is methodical and any absence from lessons is quickly followed up. Measures to prevent risk of fire and other hazards are good, as are the arrangements for health and safety, both in school and on trips. Issues raised at the previous inspection have all been addressed.
- 4.16 The school encourages all pupils, day and boarding, to eat healthily. The catering department aims to produce a balanced diet and pupils mostly praise the quality and variety of the food. Boarders have access to a supply of healthy snacks. Pupils have varied opportunities to engage in physical exercise and make good use of the extensive programme of activities.

4.(c) The quality of boarding education

- 4.17 The quality of boarding provision is good and has improved since the previous inspection. The recommendations made in the most recent report by Ofsted in 2008 have been fully implemented. Boarders are very conscious of the positive effect that boarding has on their independence, self-reliance, education and personal development.
- 4.18 Boarders benefit from the warm family atmosphere which prevails across the school; they enjoy each other's company. Relationships between different age groups within the boarding houses are very good. Older pupils provide effective role models for younger pupils, and relationships are underpinned by trust and mutual respect. Staff are supportive, encouraging, experienced and caring; they know the boarders extremely well, providing effectively for their needs. There is good communication between boarding staff and the pupils' form tutors who oversee their academic and pastoral development. A number of boarders are from overseas, which adds a multi-cultural dimension that is appreciated by both boarders and day pupils alike. Boarders say, in questionnaires and interviews, that they feel safe and well looked after while away from home. They comment: "it's like one big family here", and younger day and boarding pupils both felt that they could talk to anyone if they had any concerns or worries.
- 4.19 The extensive programme of afternoon activities for day pupils and boarders has recently been extended and, in addition, school facilities are available for the boarding pupils in the evening and over the weekend. Weekend activities include access to Norwich and a programme of cultural visits to London.
- 4.20 Boarding accommodation is of a good and improving standard overall, and is both comfortable and practical. Male and female pupils live in separate houses and a number of male sixth-form pupils have the benefit of living in a small detached house that was a former staff residence. Decoration is in good order; renovation work is now complete in the girls' house and a rolling programme of improvements in the main boys' boarding house is underway. Bathroom facilities have been substantially improved.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 Governors bring strong leadership to all aspects of school life, providing a clear strategic vision focused on the school's aims, as well as managing financial and business aspects well. They have recently overseen the complex merger with a local school which has provided the prep school with much improved facilities. They bring a wide range of experience and expertise to their work and have, for example, recruited members with appropriate understanding to lead their oversight of health and safety, and child protection matters, as recommended in the previous inspection report. This enables them to take appropriate responsibility for the pupils' welfare and for health and safety. The world of education is also well represented, with good individual contact between the relevant governors and each part of the school, enabling governors to challenge the school and contribute to development planning.
- 5.2 Governors' work is supported by an appropriate committee structure that includes a prep school sub-committee, enabling them to give detailed support to younger pupils. The education committee, which has been established since the last inspection, provides a good forum for the discussion of educational issues; heads of department appreciate the opportunity to make presentations on the work of their departments and both they, and other staff, feel that governors take a close interest in the day to day work of the school. Governors provide a healthy stimulus for further development of the school and the standards it achieves.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

Prep school

- 5.3 Clear vision and strong leadership have accomplished the merger of two schools and made significant structural change, whilst establishing an holistic educational experience and a happy and supportive community, in accordance with the school's aims. Considerable progress has been made in the short space of time since the merger of the schools, but the school does not yet have robust assessment procedures supporting full challenge for the most able pupils. The school has a clear sense of purpose and strategy, supporting the good quality of the pupils' education and their excellent personal development. The caring ethos is valued by all and reflects good pastoral management and the positive relationships between parents, pupils and staff. Staff work well together to maintain this common ethos and commitment to pupils, reflected through effective pastoral management. The management structure linking the prep and senior schools works well overall, to mutual advantage.
- 5.4 Newly appointed key stage co-ordinators are committed to the further development and monitoring of the curriculum. Through regular meetings, they liaise effectively to ensure that pupils make steady progress as they move through the school. As part of the restructuring, subject leaders have recently been appointed. They meet regularly, and their role in the monitoring of the teaching and learning of their subjects is still developing. Policies and procedures are implemented well, although ICT is not yet used fully across the curriculum. The recent school development plan is comprehensive and sets appropriate targets for the future, based on a review of the school's needs.

- 5.5 Staff are well trained in child protection and welfare issues, and appropriate attention is given to all aspects of staff recruitment. Parents are very supportive of the school, say they have confidence in its leadership and management, and appreciate the efficiency with which it is run. The hard work and dedication of staff make a considerable contribution to the success of the school.

Senior school

- 5.6 In the senior school, strong leadership means that staff at all levels share a common vision of the school, so that it is successful in achieving its aims to support and bring out the best in individuals. Academic development is underpinned in part by the formal structures of professional development interviews, departmental reviews and departmental development plans, all of which provide a firm basis for maintaining and improving standards. Staff find these challenging but supportive, and a suitable focus for both personal and departmental accountability. In parallel, the teaching and learning committee gives an equal stimulus for innovation and development, providing opportunities for senior staff at all levels to play a part in developing new ideas and increasing expertise. The school thus has a strong emphasis on self-evaluation, with particular use made of pupil questionnaires and tracking, so that discussion is based on a clear understanding of the pupils' experience. Policies and procedures are implemented well. Strong leadership ensures good links with the prep school, so that a common ethos and approach are maintained.
- 5.7 Leadership is equally strong in pastoral and boarding areas. The complementary roles of academic and pastoral heads of year enable these aspects of the pupils' experience to be kept in balance. Pupils with particular educational needs are well supported and the number of staff enables pupils to be discussed easily on an informal basis.
- 5.8 Appropriate care is taken over staff recruitment and the necessary employment checks. The school is successful in recruiting staff with an appropriate balance of experience and expertise, all of whom are committed to the school's ideals and aims. Staff have received appropriate training in child protection and welfare issues. Both teaching and non-teaching staff are hard working and dedicated in all that they do, and contribute much to pupils' education and personal development.

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

Prep school

- 5.9 Links with parents are excellent, and parents are very supportive towards the school. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, responses were overwhelmingly positive and there were no concerns raised by a significant number of parents. Parents were particularly positive about the choice of subjects and extra-curricular activities available to pupils, with which inspectors agree.
- 5.10 Parents are kept well informed, both about school issues and procedures, and also about their children's education. They receive all the required information about the school, as well as comprehensive and informative reports on their children's progress twice a year. Parents meetings are well timed: one takes place early in the school year for parents to establish contact with their children's new form teacher and for targets to be considered, and a second half-way through the year to consider the progress that their children are making.

- 5.11 Parents can easily be involved in their children's education. Good use is made of homework and reading diaries for informal daily communication with staff, and parents say they like the new school website and enjoy the weekly publication of the prep school newsletter *Lines*. The school welcomes parents on many occasions, for example to attend assemblies and to assist with trips, productions and sporting events. This is much appreciated by the parents, as some of them said during the inspection.
- 5.12 The flourishing parent-teacher association (PTA) organises social events and raises funds for the benefit of the pupils. It warmly welcomes other parents and has recently provided new computers. The PTA also provides a forum where issues relating to school can be raised.
- 5.13 Parents feel that their concerns are addressed rapidly and the school has an appropriate procedure for any formal complaints, though it has not been needed so far. Parents are very supportive of the governance, leadership and management of the school; they feel that their children are well cared for and are confident that they are safe and happy.

Senior school

- 5.14 The quality of links with parents is excellent. The school maintains a constructive relationship with parents, in accordance with its aims.
- 5.15 In the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were overwhelmingly positive about the school, especially about: the choice of subjects and activities; the attitudes and values it inculcates in pupils; the provision for boarders; the ease of communication; and its leadership by governors and senior staff. Inspectors agree with all these views. They also found that the concerns of a minority of parents about the nature of homework were borne out in discussion with pupils, some of whom feel that, in some subjects, this work often lacks purpose.
- 5.16 Parents are well informed both about the school and about their children's progress, receiving all the information required, including that concerning school procedures. They find the good quality reports clear and helpful. The frequency of effort and achievement grades is considered by parents to be a useful tool in enabling them to monitor the progress of their children.
- 5.17 Parents have good opportunities to be involved with the school and feel included in the wider school community. They say that communication is effective, and they welcome the sensitive and relevant responses they have had from teachers when concerns of any nature have been raised. The ability to contact teachers by email is greatly appreciated. Parents say this facilitates responses and sets up effective channels of communication with teachers, enabling them to be more actively involved in the education of their children. They say they feel listened to. The school has an appropriate procedure for more serious complaints, though this has been rarely needed.

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 is good. The school successfully fulfils its aims to provide a happy, secure and stimulating environment, where children thrive and where their learning is realised and enhanced through play. The school supports all children so that they make good progress in their learning and development. At the time of the inspection, the beginning of the second term following the recent merger, the leadership and management team and other staff were still establishing themselves in the new arrangements and enthusiastically accustoming themselves to their new roles. A comprehensive review of policies and documentation was underway. The setting's vision and capacity to improve, whilst at the same time maintaining the existing high standards, are good.

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

6.2 The effectiveness of leadership and management is good. All staff are appropriately checked and well qualified. Effective policies and procedures ensure that all children are safeguarded, and good practice in the implementation of these promotes equality and eliminates discrimination. Risk assessments ensure that the school is safe and secure. Staff have warm, professional relationships with parents, carers and others, all of whom work together to meet the needs of all the children, including those under three. The parent pre-inspection questionnaires indicated overwhelming support for the school. Self-evaluation takes place through regular observations and monitoring, and also at weekly EYFS meetings where all contribute to the school development plan and thus to further school improvement. Classrooms are well resourced and staff are deployed effectively. The large outside area has limited resources.

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

6.3 The quality of provision is good, with outstanding features. Regular observation and assessment, both by key people and all other staff, are used effectively to plan for individual children's needs. All classrooms provide a stimulating, welcoming environment. The younger Nursery children have direct access to the outside space and the older Nursery children and Reception class are taken out where opportunity arises; however, the outdoor areas are under used as a learning environment. Teaching provides for planned, purposeful play and maintains a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. Useful 'Learning Story' portfolios document the children's learning and personal development in an accessible way, giving a real sense of the individual. Good provision is made for children with additional learning needs. The provision for the children's welfare is outstanding. A high priority is placed on their safeguarding, health, safety and well being. Through excellent procedures and practice, the children are taught about good health, hygiene and safety; children under three automatically use the sanitising gel before having their snacks. Lunch and snack times are sociable occasions, with a good range of healthy food.

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

- 6.4 The outcomes for children are good. All children make good progress in all areas from a wide range of starting points. At the end of Reception, most children achieve the Early Learning Goals, with many working beyond these. Children have a good knowledge of how to keep safe; they are aware of healthy lifestyles. Children are eager to participate and become absorbed in activities. Their personal development and well being are good; they are friendly and well behaved, and respect each other. They approach adults with confidence and are willing to share their concerns. ICT skills are good, and literacy and numeracy skills are developing appropriately; for instance, Reception children are beginning to read and write for themselves. All children, including those under three, work independently in accessing their own resources and enjoy solving problems. Role play areas and projects enable them to learn about the wider world.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

- 6.5 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

Complaints since the last inspection

- 6.6 Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required any action to meet national requirements.

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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

Inspectors

Mr Ian Newton	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Val Clark	Assistant Reporting Inspector (Former Senior Manager, junior section of HMC school)
Mrs Sally Hobbs	Head, IAPS school
Mrs Sue Clarke	Assistant Director of Sixth Form, HMC school
Mr Adrian Downie	Director of Studies, IAPS school
Miss Wendy Griffiths	Head, GSA school
Mr Tony Halliwell	Principal, HMC school
Mrs Linda Macfarlane	Former Deputy Head, HMC school
Mr Mark Robinson	Deputy Head, SHMIS school
Mrs Vivien Tabone	Early Years Lead Inspector
Mrs Sally Gray	Early Years Team Inspector