



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**ST GEORGE'S SCHOOL
STANDARD INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

St George's School

Full Name of School	St George's School		
DfE Number	868/6006		
Registered Charity Number	309141		
Address	St George's School Windsor Castle Datchet Road Windsor Berkshire SL4 1QF		
Telephone Number	01753 865553		
Fax Number	01753 842093		
Email Address	enq@stgwindsor.co.uk		
Headmaster	Mr Roger Jones		
Chairman of Governors	The Right Revd David Conner		
Age Range	3 to 13		
Total Number of Pupils	404		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (231 boys; 173 girls)		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	0	5-11: 261
	3-5 (EYFS):	77	11-18: 66
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	377	Capacity for flexi-boarding: 30
Number of Boarders	Total:	27	
	Full:	23	Weekly: 4
Head of EYFS Setting	Miss Patricia Griffin		
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection dates	01 Feb 2011 to 02 Feb 2011		
	02 Mar 2011 to 04 Mar 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 February 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.

Under the Care Standards Act 2000, an inspection of boarding was carried out at the same time by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills. The report of this inspection is available separately 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 St George's School is located in the centre of Windsor, just below the northern ramparts of the castle. Its extensive playing fields are adjacent in Home Park Private. The school dates back to 1352, and for many centuries existed within Windsor Castle solely to educate boy choristers to sing daily services in St George's Chapel. In 1895 the school took over a nearby building called Travers College and admitted non-chorister pupils for the first time. The school became co-educational and opened a Pre-Prep Department in 1996.
- 1.2 The school aims to develop happy, confident pupils who are effective communicators, by providing a friendly, ordered community where all members feel valued. It seeks to provide a broad and challenging curriculum to extend all pupils to their potential, with an ethos in which effort as well as achievement is rewarded. High priority is given to the development of individuals who respect the needs and values of others.
- 1.3 The school is a charitable trust, administered by a board of governors. The Dean and Canons of Windsor form the majority of members, with others recruited for their specific expertise. Since the last inspection, another nearby building, Old Bank House, has been acquired and accommodates the Middle School, comprising Years 3 to 5, and the music department. Further improvements have provided additional accommodation for science and installed information and communication technology (ICT) facilities in the library.
- 1.4 At the time of inspection there were 404 pupils on the school roll, of whom 77 were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Currently, twenty-three pupils are full-time boarders, including the choristers, and another four board part-time. Some pupils, particularly girls, who comprise about two-fifths of the pupil population, board on an occasional basis. Most pupils come from business and professional families who live within a ten-mile radius around Windsor, though choristers may come from further afield. The choristers receive bursaries, and a number of other bursaries and scholarships are awarded.
- 1.5 The ability profile of the school is above the national average. Fourteen pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), of whom five receive additional support. Sixty-five pupils are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) and one has a statement of special educational needs (SEN). Of these, fifty-four receive extra help. The main entry, following an interview with parents, is into the Nursery, and a small number of pupils join in Reception. Pupils entering the school in other years, should places become available, are informally assessed and interviewed to ensure that they will benefit from the provision offered. About two-thirds of leavers progress to boarding schools, whilst a minority go to local independent and maintained day schools.
- 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 From the EYFS onwards, pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills are of good quality. Pupils make effective and, on occasion, rapid progress in their learning, through strong teaching within a broad curriculum. Pupils with LDD, with statements of SEN or with EAL also make good progress according to their abilities. This fulfils the school's aim to extend all pupils to their potential. Pupils' high standards in a range of subjects are reflected in their consistently good record of success with entry to their senior schools. The exceptional standards reached by the choristers play an important part in the high musical achievements evident throughout the school. Good use is made of ICT to support learning, an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils' positive attitudes to their work and their good behaviour contribute significantly to their academic and extra-curricular achievements.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent. Their self-esteem, confidence, respect and social responsibility are fostered most effectively, so that they play and work alongside each other co-operatively. Their cultural understanding is developed well, both within the curriculum and through external visits. Excellent pastoral care, effective welfare arrangements, and good health and safety procedures strongly promote pupils' well-being. Boarders' personal development is significantly enhanced through their enjoyment of the boarding experience and the positive feeling of living in a community that it gives them. Pupils enjoy their time at the school, and the choristers are busy but say they are happy and proud of their role.
- 2.3 The work of the school is well supported by committed and experienced governors who have good general oversight of the school. Some deficiencies in staff recruitment checks have been overlooked in the past. However, these have been rectified, as far as it is possible to do so, and a robust system for staff appointment now exists. Good and measured leadership has ensured that the recommendations from the previous inspection in the areas of assessment, monitoring of the curriculum, staff development and school development planning have been successfully implemented. The school development plan lacks detail for monitoring and evaluating its execution, and does not link with a strategic plan. Links with parents and carers are good. Parents' replies to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that they are very happy with many aspects of school life, such as the curriculum and range of extra-curricular activities, the high standards of behaviour achieved by the school, its pastoral guidance and promotion of worthwhile values. Some are dissatisfied with arrangements for pupils with additional learning needs, others felt that they do not receive regular information about their children's progress, and others felt that their concerns are not handled well. Inspection evidence did not support these views. A significant number of parents would like greater opportunities to be involved with the life and work of the school. Inspectors found that not all parents are aware of existing ways in which they can become involved, but that limited opportunities currently exist.

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 all recruitment checks on staff are completed before, or in the case of Criminal Records Bureau checks as soon as is practicable after, their appointment and entered correctly in the single central register of appointments [Part 4, paragraphs 19.(2)(a), (b) and (c), 19.(3) and 22.(3)(c), under Suitability of staff and proprietors; and, for the same reason, Part 3, paragraph 7.(a) and 7.(b), under Welfare, health and safety].
- 2.5 At the time of the final team visit, the school had rectified all of the above shortcomings, as far as it was possible to do so, 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 the school development plan links with a strategic plan and has clear steps to secure its objectives, monitor its progress and evaluate its success.
 2. Consider further ways for parents to be involved in its life and work.
 3. In the EYFS, extend opportunities to inform parents of how they can be involved in their children's learning in all six areas of the curriculum.

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 standards of pupils' achievements and the quality of their learning, attitudes and skills are good, and excellent in some respects, in accordance with the school's aims to value effort as well as achievement in encouraging all pupils to reach their potential. Children's achievement in the EYFS is outstanding. Pupils of all ages achieve well both in lessons and extra-curricular activities. The most able pupils make good progress, supported by a developing programme of extra challenge including theatre trips and visits to senior schools. Pupils with LDD, with statements of SEN or with EAL also make good progress according to their abilities, through effective monitoring and additional support. Standards of speaking and listening across the school are exceptional. In discussions, pupils offer thoughtful and articulate responses to one another's ideas and respect each other's views. Throughout the school, pupils exhibit high reading standards and strong proficiency in writing. These enable older pupils to research and present information competently and independently in subjects such as English, history and geography.
- 3.2 Pupils' good and, in some cases, excellent numeracy skills are applied well in a range of subjects, such as science and geography. Throughout the school, ICT skills are strong and used well across the curriculum in areas such as music composition and projects. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils demonstrate independent thought and reasoning in lessons such as personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) and religious studies. Standards in music are excellent, reflecting the importance it has in the life and work of the school.
- 3.3 Pupils are very successful in a wide range of activities. Many learn a musical instrument and most pass their examinations with merit or distinction; a significant number of pupils reach the higher grades. Pupils enjoy notable success in ballet and speech and drama examinations, and do well in a national mathematics challenge. School teams are regularly successful in sport. Individual pupils play at regional and national level, and the school's netball, swimming and judo teams have competed nationally. Both the chapel choir and the 'supers' choir for non-choristers regularly perform locally and nationally. Pupils' achievements in art are displayed each year in the cloisters of St George's Chapel, where they are enjoyed by the many visitors to the castle.
- 3.4 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 in national tests taken at the age of seven have been excellent in relation to the national average for maintained primary schools. For older pupils, attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations. Pupils follow a wide curriculum and are well prepared for their future schools; they are consistently successful at gaining places at the senior school of their choice at the age of thirteen, and each year a number win scholarships and exhibitions. This level of attainment, as judged by lesson observations, pupils' written work and curriculum interviews with them, indicates that pupils make at least good progress in relation to those of similar ability.

3.5 Pupils' success is fostered well through their positive attitudes towards learning. In lessons, they work well independently or co-operatively. The school places high priority on the acquisition of life skills including tolerance, respect and caring, which results in good behaviour and relationships. These are conducive to a purposeful learning atmosphere in class which facilitates good progress in lessons. Most pupils apply themselves well to their work and take great pride in presenting it to a high standard, although their focus diminishes a little and progress is less rapid when teaching uses a limited range of methods and is less stimulating.

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

3.6 The quality of the curriculum is excellent and makes an effective contribution to pupils' achievements and personal development. It is commensurate with the school's aim to offer a broad and balanced curriculum that develops pupils' particular strengths and supports their needs. Good progress has been made in the provision of ICT since the last inspection. A new computer room, favourable time allocation and a dedicated subject teacher enable the effective application of ICT across the curriculum.

3.7 The curriculum is well suited to pupils' ages and abilities, and provides well for their academic, creative and sporting development. All the requisite areas of learning are covered, as well as French, German and Latin. Drama is included for younger pupils. Specialist teaching for older pupils enhances their learning and younger children benefit from this in music, French and physical education. Around the school, imaginative displays of two- and three-dimensional work reflect the good provision for creativity through art and design technology. The library is well resourced and in constant use throughout the day. The programme for PSHCE is comprehensive and reflects well the aims and ethos of the school, covering such topics as sex and relationships education, awareness of drug and substance abuse, and citizenship.

3.8 Subjects are given an appropriate time allocation within the timetable, with a focus on literacy, numeracy, speaking and listening skills. Curriculum planning across the school is thorough and well documented, and provides a smooth progression throughout. Extra support or challenge for pupils are given within some lessons where they are divided into smaller ability groups. The provision for pupils with LDD, with statements of SEN and with EAL is strong. Detailed individual education plans are reviewed termly, when targets are set and discussed with parents, and appropriate support provided. Able, gifted and talented pupils are identified, and provided with extension work in lessons and visits beyond the curriculum. Appropriate emphasis is given to cross-curricular links, especially for younger pupils. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

3.9 The provision of extra-curricular activities is excellent and firmly in line with the school's aims. An extensive range of activities, available at lunchtime and after school, is very popular and contributes significantly to pupils' personal development. High quality opportunities to develop sporting talents are available, and all pupils are encouraged to represent the school in competitive fixtures. Many musical activities are provided, such as the two major productions a year for middle and senior pupils and frequent concerts. Many pupils take up the excellent opportunities to learn an instrument, play in lunchtime ensembles and sing in a range of choirs. In addition, activities which cater for the pupils' eclectic tastes, such as drama, ballet, chess and astronomy, are available.

- 3.10 Guest speakers enhance the curriculum, and educational visits to places of interest, for example to the theatre and Hampton Court, extend pupils' experiences. On Expedition's Day, choristers' duties are waived so that they, too, may be included in visits. Residential visits abroad add considerably to pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils benefit greatly from the close links with Windsor Castle, and from singing with local primary schools and in the community as a whole. They also make full use of external provision such as the local leisure centre. Fund-raising for a number of charities raises pupils' awareness of those less fortunate than themselves.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.11 Teaching is of a good quality overall and a significant proportion is excellent. This quality of teaching, together with improvements in the use of assessment data, makes a significant contribution to the achievement of pupils and especially the good progress of those who have LDD, statements of SEN or EAL. These pupils receive beneficial support in a range of ways best suited to their needs, either in class, in small groups or as individuals. Extra challenge for pupils who are able, gifted and talented is most prevalent in English, the humanities and music lessons. Teaching assistants in the younger classes are well deployed, working with small groups to give all pupils extra individual attention.
- 3.12 Some subject specialists, and many generalist teachers in the younger classes, greatly motivate pupils through their confidence and enthusiasm. These teachers use their good subject knowledge and interesting resources to prepare fast moving and varied lessons, where carefully individualised questioning affords pupils opportunities to develop their critical reasoning and draws on their strong oral skills. Relationships in class are generally good and teachers make effective use of praise to encourage pupils. In many successful lessons, teachers use assessment of pupils' differing aptitudes to plan material at an appropriate level. Learning objectives are clearly explained and pupils feel a sense of accomplishment when they realise they have been successful. Consequently, pupils of all aptitudes make good progress according to their abilities and they are keen to improve still further. Occasionally, when planning has not taken into account differing levels of understanding, all pupils receive the same task; this results in insufficient challenge for the most able and causes others to struggle to complete their work independently. In a few lessons observed with older pupils, teachers employed a limited range of methods, and so teaching was unimaginative. Pupils therefore tended to lose interest and become inattentive, which resulted in less secure learning.
- 3.13 In response to a recommendation from the previous inspection, the school has developed comprehensive systems of assessing pupils and recording their progress. This information is generally referred to by teachers in their planning and contributes well to teaching when it is at its best. In accordance with the school's aim to value all aspects of pupils' development, pupil records include details of any pastoral concerns as well as their academic progress. Staff hold termly meetings, attended by all those who teach the pupils, to discuss all aspects of each individual's progress. Those requiring support and others who require additional challenge are identified. In instances of underperformance, pupils are given targets and parents are involved in the school's plans to boost their children's progress. Throughout the school, work is regularly marked with encouraging comments and often offers advice for future improvement. Pupils know and understand the school's marking criteria and are clear about where their personal targets lie.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent. Their personal qualities are developed and manifested extremely well, in accordance with the school's aim for pupils to show tolerance and respect for others. A high level of mutual respect exists between staff and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves.
- 4.2 Pupils' spiritual development is extremely good. They express themselves and their feelings clearly and have strong self-esteem, which is encouraged by the school's support and awareness of all their achievements and spiritual well-being. Their sensitivity to the wonders of nature and significance of history is enhanced by the full use of the unique environment in which the school is set. They visit St George's Chapel regularly for assemblies and to mark Christian festivals. Pupils respond reflectively to stories, such as their empathetic response to the poem *Death of an Innocent* in a PSHCE lesson, and they display sympathy for those suffering hardship in various situations. Pupils develop an effective appreciation and understanding of the major world religions.
- 4.3 Pupils' moral development is excellent. They articulate their ideas with conviction. Their positive behaviour, both inside and outside the classroom, is a reflection of their capacity to distinguish right from wrong. In lessons, in activities and around the school, pupils of all ages listen, share and aspire to do what is right. Through their charity work and consideration for each other, they reflect upon the needs of others and are conscientious in their support and help. Pupils discuss moral issues very well, for example the importance of relationships in making them feel safe. In PSHCE lessons, they reflect on the consequences of anti-social behaviour for individuals and communities, linking this with bullying and racism.
- 4.4 Pupils demonstrate an excellent social awareness. Many older pupils assist younger ones who may be in need of a comforting or encouraging word. Pupils, particularly those who are senior, are given ample opportunities to undertake positions of responsibility and they carry these out conscientiously. They also embrace the mentor programme for younger pupils, and this encourages playground friendships across year groups. In lessons, pupils collaborate extremely well in pair or group work. They have a good understanding of the democratic process and know about local voluntary groups. This develops their interest in the neighbourhood community. The school council enables pupils from Year 3 to Year 8 to offer suggestions for things they would like to see improve.
- 4.5 Pupils have a clear understanding of British culture, enhanced by their close proximity to Windsor Castle, and visits to local museums and other places of interest. They gain valuable first-hand experience of other cultures through exchange visits to France and Germany, and in lessons, such as when they study Japanese and African music, and Chinese opera. They also have an effective awareness of celebrations such as Diwali, Eid and Chinese New Year. Their understanding is enhanced by a range of interesting visitors to assemblies; such as when a parent spoke to Year 6 about life in Kenya.

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

- 4.6 The arrangements for welfare, health and safety are good and make an effective contribution to pupils' personal development. Throughout, the pastoral care afforded to pupils is excellent, meeting the school's aim to provide a friendly and ordered community, with good working relationships between pupils, staff and parents, and where all members feel valued. The school places high importance on pastoral care, which is monitored by a committed pastoral care team. Pupil welfare is given priority by the form tutor up to and including Year 5 and by a personal tutor for older pupils. Relationships between staff and pupils are mostly positive, and the pupils work and play together co-operatively.
- 4.7 The school has comprehensive and efficient policies and procedures for promoting good behaviour and guarding against bullying and harassment, providing clear guidelines in the school code of behaviour, underpinned by a strong Christian ethos. Class rules are displayed in classrooms; for younger pupils, these take the form of 'golden rules'. Rewards and sanctions are effective in promoting positive behaviour and effort, and generally felt by pupils to be fair. In interviews, pupils said that they feel safe in the school, are happy and would know who they could talk to if they experienced any difficulties. They were certain that staff would deal with any bullying constructively on the rare instances that it occurs. A 'concerns box' enables any worries to be communicated in the event of an adult not being immediately located, and in interviews, pupils reported that these were followed up swiftly.
- 4.8 The school has a detailed safeguarding policy that is now implemented robustly, although this has not always been the case concerning recruitment checks on staff in the past. All staff receive regular training to ensure that they have a thorough knowledge of child protection issues and procedures, and designated staff are appropriately trained at a higher level. The admission and attendance registers are accurately maintained and stored.
- 4.9 Policies for health and safety are comprehensive and efficient. All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk from fire, and procedures are practised and reviewed regularly. Medical facilities are suitable and well organised, and two matrons are on site. All staff undergo basic first-aid training and some train at a higher level, in accordance with their duties. The school has an appropriate accessibility plan in line with the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act.
- 4.10 Healthy eating is encouraged through the provision of nutritious lunches that offer a good choice, including the daily availability of fresh fruit. In subjects such as PSHCE and science, due attention is paid to encouraging pupils to live healthily. The close proximity of extensive playing fields adjacent to the school, together with the use of the gymnasium and pool, encourages pupils to stay fit and healthy.

4.(c) The quality of boarding education

- 4.11 A boarding inspection was conducted by Ofsted and is the subject of a separate report. The ISI inspection has considered boarding in the whole-school context only.
- 4.12 The boarding experience makes a strong contribution to the pupils' education and personal development, and contributes effectively to the school's aims. The atmosphere in the boarding house is homely and welcoming. Since the previous inspection, the boarding house has been entirely refurbished. Dormitories are bright

and cheerful, and all boarders are able to personalise the space by their beds to encourage them to feel at home. Washing facilities are good and the comfortable common room offers appropriate space for recreation. Study facilities are excellent, since the library with its ICT facilities is adjacent to the boarders' accommodation. The close proximity of music rooms facilitates daily practice, which is central to the musical development of the choristers and other boarders who learn an instrument. The role of resident assistant house parent has been developed since the previous inspection and boarding staff are well in evidence, promoting relationships that are open and relaxed between adults and pupils. Gap Year students live adjacent to the boarding area, and offer additional help and friendship to boarders.

- 4.13 In pre-inspection questionnaires and interviews, most boarders, both full and occasional, said how much they enjoy boarding. In the boarding house, pupils of all ages get on extremely well with each other. Senior pupils adopt the role of an older sibling and take their responsibilities seriously, which contributes to the family atmosphere. Pupils have supervised access to computers in the library to assist with their prep, and are happy with the range of activities available in their free time. In the evening they enjoy relaxing with a DVD or games console, or playing board games. For physical relaxation they may go to the gym or swimming pool, or play outside, according to the season. During the inspection, most boarders took part in a talent show that raised much excitement and enthusiasm, gave them the opportunity to showcase their abilities in a light-hearted way, and encouraged a good balance between mutual support for one another's efforts and good-natured competition.
- 4.14 Boarders are well cared for and their health needs are catered for appropriately. Very good medical care is provided by resident matrons and the school doctor. Meals provided are healthy and much enjoyed by pupils. The school is aware of the potential pressure on choristers to manage their time, and boarding staff try to give them an enjoyable and balanced lifestyle, supporting them with their prep and other obligations at busy times. Similarly, care is taken to support the academic needs of any boarder who has LDD or EAL. Suitable activities are provided for the few pupils who may be in school at the weekend. Boarders, of whom the choristers form the majority, play an important part in setting the ethos of the school. Boarding reflects the school's aim of developing happy, confident pupils by providing a friendly, ordered community where all members feel valued.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 Experienced governors, who are highly committed to the maintenance of the school's aims and ethos, provide good governance. Since the majority of governors are clergy members of St George's Chapel, they augment their expertise with additional lay members who have specific professional skills. An effective structure of sub-committees enables governors to monitor educational developments, health and safety, and child protection, as well as the recruitment of choristers. Governors, therefore, have a good awareness of the school's strengths as well as its areas for development. They have not formalised this into a long-term strategic plan for the school. Therefore, whilst the school development plan is shared with governors, it does not link to governors' strategic thinking. Prudent financial management has allowed the acquisition and building of additional premises, continuous updating of facilities, provision of high quality resources and maintenance of well-qualified staff. Governors have successfully overseen the school's progress in meeting the recommendations of the previous inspection, but are aware that they have not made formal arrangements for the appraisal of the headmaster.
- 5.2 Regular communication, both formal and informal, ensures that governors are well informed about school matters and consequently able to provide astute support and encouragement to the school leadership. Governors gain insight into teaching and learning in the school through regular subject departmental presentations, as well as briefings from senior staff on school initiatives, such as monitoring pupils' progress. They also receive regular reports from the headmaster. A particular strength of governance is the informal day-to-day contact gained through the close proximity of the school and chapel within the castle environs. Whilst governors visit the school for key occasions, they are less familiar to staff and parents who do not have links with the chapel.
- 5.3 Governors are aware of their responsibilities for overseeing welfare, health and safety, and safeguarding matters. They maintain a strong presence on the school child protection committee to ensure liaison with the chapel for the welfare of choristers. However, governors have not ensured that recruitment checks have been correctly carried out and recorded in the past. They are aware that they do not currently have an organised induction programme for new governors or a governor with sufficient training to monitor the school's compliance with regulations.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.4 Leadership and management are good overall and make a significant contribution to the good quality of education offered, and to pupils' strong achievement and their excellent personal development. Senior leaders have clear responsibilities and work as an effective team to promote the school's aims, particularly the development of individuals who, whilst reaching their potential, respect the needs and values of others. However, oversight and leadership of the Middle School are less successful since they are shared between two members of senior management, both of whom have other significant duties.
- 5.5 Members of the senior management team demonstrate a clear understanding of their responsibility to secure good practice across the school. They have ensured that all recommendations from the previous inspection have been successfully

implemented. Since that time, a school development plan has been drawn up. It sets out priorities for improvement across the school, but is not linked to a long-term strategic plan and does not provide sufficiently detailed information as to how targets will be achieved, nor their effectiveness evaluated. The curriculum is well managed and very efficient monitoring systems are used. Heads of department have clearly defined roles and provide strong and committed leadership for their subjects, monitoring teaching and marking carefully. Their work is efficiently communicated to, and monitored by, senior leaders, which represents an improvement since the previous inspection.

- 5.6 The school has secured a well-qualified complement of staff. Swift action since the initial visit has rectified past errors in recruitment procedures and ensured that current practice in relation to the appointment of new staff is now correct. A comprehensive staff handbook gives useful guidance to staff, and good induction arrangements ensure that new appointees are well informed of school routines and safeguarding arrangements. Effective policies and procedures cover all aspects of school life and are conscientiously implemented by staff. In response to a recommendation of the previous inspection, professional development has been improved. A beneficial programme of whole-school in-service training effectively covers welfare, health and safeguarding issues, as well as new educational initiatives. Individual professional development is guided by the appraisal process, which uses classroom observations to help identify strengths as well as areas requiring improvement.

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

- 5.7 The school has maintained the good partnership with parents, carers and guardians identified at the previous inspection. In the parents' pre-inspection questionnaire, they expressed strong support and approval for many aspects of the school. In particular, the curriculum and range of extra-curricular activities were both cited as being of high quality. Parents especially value the high standards of behaviour achieved by the school, its pastoral guidance and promotion of worthwhile values. However, a small minority indicated some dissatisfaction with the handling of concerns. Inspectors found that the school has an appropriate procedure for dealing with complaints and that meticulous records, indicating how concerns are resolved, are kept.
- 5.8 Parents appreciate the ease of communication with the school. The website is an excellent vehicle for involving parents, especially those of boarders, in the daily life and work of their children. The parents' portal to the website provides regular updates on school life and pupils' achievements. The parents' association supports the school and charities through social events and fund-raising. Parents provide help in particular capacities, such as in the library, accompanying educational visits and transporting pupils to fixtures. They occasionally speak to pupils in their professional capacities or about their life and cultural backgrounds, but in the questionnaire say that they would value more opportunities to be involved with the life and work of the school, and inspectors agree that limited opportunities currently exist.
- 5.9 Information for parents is useful and regular. A range of relevant and detailed school policies is easily accessible on the school's website and can be obtained from the school. The prospectus provides a full picture of the school's aims, ethos and expectations, and inserts are regularly updated.

- 5.10 Whilst some parents would like more information about their children's progress, inspectors found that this type of communication is regular and useful. Parents receive information about programmes of study through termly curricular overviews and may attend a meeting at the beginning of the academic year to meet their children's tutor. Informative written reports are sent at the end of the autumn and summer terms. These give a clear indication of what a pupil knows and the specific progress made, although they lack clear and consistent targets. Half-termly assessment sheets, including effort and attainment grades in each subject, are also provided. A formal parents' evening in the spring term affords parents the opportunity to discuss their children's attainment and progress. Throughout the year, afternoon or evening meetings are held to give parents the opportunity to view their children's work in practical subjects and to talk with staff. Parents can readily contact staff by email to organise additional meetings to discuss aspects of their children's work throughout the school year. Some parents have concerns about arrangements for pupils with additional learning needs but inspectors found these to be effective in ensuring that they make progress suitable to their abilities.

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, meeting the needs of all children and fully appreciating their individual differences. Constant self-review ensures the achievement of the school's aims to provide a caring and stimulating environment that enables all children to reach their potential. Staff sustain existing high standards by regularly identifying areas for improvement. Children's needs are very well met through a broad and exciting range of activities. Staff have a clear understanding of children's needs and create a stimulating and colourful environment, where children feel valued and safe.

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

6.2 The leadership and management of the setting are outstanding. Excellent arrangements ensure that children are safeguarded. All adults have been suitably checked for their suitability to work with children, and are well qualified and trained. Policies and procedures necessary for the efficient management of the setting are implemented well and ensure that children have equal opportunities to learn and progress. Detailed self-evaluation, which identifies priorities and areas to develop, ensures an excellent capacity for sustained improvement. An exemplary framework for risk assessments is effectively implemented. Parents express strong appreciation of their children's progress and the standard of their care. Termly parents' evenings and half-termly letters keep parents well informed. Every chance is taken to involve parents, and they are given regular opportunities to discuss the curriculum and to contribute towards their children's learning records. In discussions, parents expressed a keen interest in understanding more about the six areas of learning and how they could be involved. The effective use and good management of resources, including those outdoors, lead to successful outcomes for all children.

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

6.3 The quality of the provision is outstanding. All children learn and develop extremely well through stimulating play and valuable first-hand experiences. A well-judged balance is maintained between adult-led and child-initiated activities, and children are given many opportunities for independent learning. Outdoor provision is used very effectively and the children benefit from both indoor and regular outside play. Children are observant and inquisitive, and staff ask challenging questions to develop their thinking skills. Children's work and interests are valued and reflected well in the many colourful and stimulating displays around the setting. Key people promote welfare, health and safety extremely well and ensure that children are taught how to keep themselves safe. The children are encouraged to eat healthy lunches. The behaviour policy is well implemented, leading to a happy and busy atmosphere where children benefit fully from all the opportunities provided.

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

- 6.4 Outcomes for children are outstanding. They make rapid progress and are on course to meet all of the Early Learning Goals by the end of their Reception year. Nursery children confidently used descriptive language when investigating the properties of a sea bass, and Reception children counted accurately to 80 when discussing how many days they had been in school. Children are confident in the use of computers, choosing and loading programmes, and printing out their work independently. They enjoy singing French songs and constructing dragon puppets to celebrate the Chinese New Year. They are inquisitive, enthusiastic and self-motivated, relating well to adults and to one another. Children co-operate well in their learning and begin to make choices and decisions. They trust and respect their teachers. The healthy lunches and snacks are much enjoyed, and children understand about keeping safe. They respond to school life with great enthusiasm and enjoyment.

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, with the chairman of governors and a governors' representative, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the boarding house and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

The National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools were inspected by a team of two Ofsted inspectors over three days.

Inspectors

Mrs Jan Preece

Mr Stephen Player

Ms Sandra Kiddle

Mrs Lynda Boden

Reporting Inspector

Headmaster, IAPS school

Deputy Head, IAPS school

Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector