



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**PERROTT HILL SCHOOL**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

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## Perrott Hill School

Full Name of School	<b>Perrott Hill School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>933/6016</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>310278</b>		
Address	<b>Perrott Hill School North Perrott Crewkerne Somerset TA18 7SL</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01460 72051</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01460 78246</b>		
Email Address	<b>headmaster@perrotthill.com</b>		
Head	<b>Mr Robert Morse</b>		
Chairman of Governors	<b>Lord Bradbury</b>		
Age Range	<b>3 to 13</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>218</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (122 boys; 96 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>19</b>	5-11: <b>151</b>
	11-13:	<b>48</b>	
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>162</b>	
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>56</b>	
	Full:	<b>8</b>	Weekly: <b>22</b> Flexi: <b>26</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Rebecca England</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection dates	<b>15 Oct 2013 to 18 Oct 2013</b>		

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in February 2008.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

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

This inspection contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education, personal development and welfare. Until September 2011, Boarding inspections were carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills.

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

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgements.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the

beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'satisfactory' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chairman of governors and two 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 Paul Spillane	Reporting Inspector
Dr David Livingstone	Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mr David Tidmarsh	Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mrs Vivienne Wells	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Eithne Webster	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Perrott Hill School is a co-educational boarding and day school for pupils aged from 3 to 13. It is housed in a Grade II listed building near Crewkerne on the Somerset-Dorset border. The evacuation of a Surrey preparatory school in the Second World War led to the premises' first use as a school: Perrott Hill was established in 1946 as a proprietorial boarding school for boys. In 1967 the school became a charitable trust and registered company under the trusteeship of a board of governors. Co-education was introduced in 1991 and the pre-prep section and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting opened in 1993.
- 1.2 The school's stated mission is to provide the highest standards of academic teaching and pastoral care within a stimulating, safe, happy and supportive environment which addresses all aspects of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It aims to encourage a lifelong love of learning and to inculcate in pupils an understanding of the importance of manners, respect for one another and the value of living and working together productively. The school also seeks to develop pupils' independence, self-esteem and self-confidence.
- 1.3 There are 122 boys and 96 girls in the school, of whom 8 are full boarders, 22 are weekly boarders and 26 board on a flexible basis. In the EYFS there are 19 day children, and Years 1 to 8 comprise 199 pupils. Years 3 to 8 are known as the prep school, Years 1 and 2 as the pre-prep, and the EYFS setting as the Montessori Foundation Stage. Eight pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL), all of whom receive specialist support for their English. The school has identified 40 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to all of whom it gives specialist support. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Day pupils come mainly from business and professional families in the neighbourhood; boarders come more widely from the United Kingdom and overseas. The ability profile of the school is above the national average, with a fairly wide spread of abilities represented, although most pupils are of at least above average ability.
- 1.4 Since the previous ISI inspection a new sports hall has been built and an all-weather sports surface has been laid. The former sports hall has been converted into a theatre and the library has been re-established in new premises. The present Headmaster took up his appointment in 2009.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

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

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

- 2.1 The pupils' positive approach to their studies and exemplary classroom behaviour, and the high quality of teaching, are reflected in pupils' high rate of progress and substantial academic achievement at all levels. In their response to the questionnaire, the pupils affirmed that they are very pleased with their progress. Throughout the school, pupils, including those with SEND, display secure knowledge, skills and understanding of the material covered in their syllabuses. The quality of the marking in exercise books is variable. Pupils reach high standards of personal fulfilment. With notable success in many areas, they participate enthusiastically in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which enrich their educational experience and enable them to develop their talents and aptitudes enjoyably and fruitfully. In the EYFS, as elsewhere, the needs of all the children are successfully met: the staff create a safe, stimulating environment in which every child is highly valued, and consequently the children make very good progress in their learning and development.
- 2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent, reflecting the school's highly effective emphasis on their welfare, safeguarding and well-being. The excellent standard of pastoral care is a strength of the school, and the caring and supportive example set by the staff is mirrored in the way pupils behave towards one another. They show genuine concern for each other's welfare and grow strongly in self-awareness and self-esteem. Relationships are excellent throughout the school, which is a happy place: the pupils are very proud of it and feel a strong sense of belonging. They are very appreciative of the beauty of their surroundings. Pupils benefit from the many opportunities for leadership and service, and take their responsibilities seriously. Parents commend the high standards of behaviour and evidence gathered during the inspection fully supported this judgement. Pupils very much enjoy boarding. Parents are unanimous in their satisfaction with all aspects of the boarding provision.
- 2.3 That the school's aims are being successfully realised is a strong testimony to the high quality of governance and to the dedicated and energetic leadership and clear direction from senior management. Following the example of the leadership, all staff put the best interests of the pupils at the heart of their work. Highly efficient and well-developed management systems ensure that the school runs smoothly. The school has met the recommendations made in the previous ISI and Ofsted reports. The school enjoys extremely good relations with parents, who express great satisfaction with the education that their children are receiving and the way in which the school is being run.

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

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

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.
- 2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2011.

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

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that the quality of the marking of pupils' work is of a uniformly high standard.
  2. In the EYFS, ensure that all tasks are matched to the age and ability of the children.

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

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Children in the EYFS are active and energetic learners, who make good progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities, including those with SEND. Children achieve very well in what they know, understand and can do. They develop their knowledge of phonics and begin to read. They can form letters and draw enthusiastically. They extend their communication skills and vocabulary. Children use Montessori equipment to compare, order, select and discriminate on the basis of various attributes. Number concepts develop steadily. Children generally speak in sentences and learn to converse fluently. All children are helped to develop the confidence that underpins their increasing independence and capacity for exploration. From the youngest age, they take a measure of control of their learning, for instance being confidently able to access and return equipment. Children are enquiring and adventurous, and benefit from the application of the Montessori ethos, which emphasises the importance of developing their independence.
- 3.3 Throughout the school, the pupils display secure knowledge, skills and understanding of the material being covered in their lessons. The overall standard of logical thought, application of mathematics, creativity, literacy and articulacy is a particular strength. Pupils become proficient in information and communication technology (ICT). In recent years, all of the Year 8 leavers have been successful in gaining places at schools of their first choice; 62 scholarship awards have been won by the 106 leavers moving on to independent senior schools, 20 of them in 2012.
- 3.4 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but based on standardised tests of attainment and inspection evidence from observation of lessons, scrutiny of samples of pupils' work and discussions with individual pupils, it is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils also achieve a high rate of progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. Less able pupils and those with SEND or EAL make excellent progress because they are extremely well supported when in class and when withdrawn from class for specialist help. More able pupils and those with particular talents are challenged in lessons through enrichment and extension tasks, so enabling them to achieve in line with their potential. In their responses to the questionnaire, pupils agreed that they are making good academic progress.
- 3.5 Pupils avail themselves of the extensive range of opportunities for developing their talents and personal qualities, with the senior pupils in particular achieving high levels of fulfilment as they conscientiously discharge their duties in positions of responsibility and service. Extra-curricular achievement is very strong. Many of the scholarships to senior schools have been sport, music, drama, art and all-rounder awards. There has been increasing regional and county representation in hockey, cricket, netball, rugby, tennis, badminton and swimming. Pupils have won notable successes in athletics, badminton, hockey, sailing and art in national preparatory school competitions. Excellent artwork was observed during the inspection. Choral singing is an extra-curricular strength: the large choir performs to a high standard, and recently sung at a mass in St Peter's Basilica, Rome. The school has a good record of success in external instrumental and performing arts examinations.

3.6 Throughout, the pupils display an excellent attitude to learning, in fulfilment of the school's aims. They apply themselves with evident enjoyment, keen to do well and eager to be challenged. Enthusiastic participants in their lessons, they are readily responsive, offering answers and opinions articulately and confidently. Their behaviour in class is exemplary. They work conscientiously, displaying perseverance and determination. When working in pairs or groups, they co-operate very well. They produce a good volume of work that is, on the whole, neatly presented, reflecting pride and care. In their responses to the questionnaire, the pupils unanimously affirmed that they find their work interesting. Pupils participate in extra-curricular activities in a similarly spirited and enthusiastic way.

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

3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.

3.8 The EYFS provision successfully meets the range of children's needs. Thorough coverage of the defined areas of learning, together with the Montessori ethos and specialised equipment, enables all children, including those with SEND and those who are more able, to reach the expected levels of development. Children with SEND are given extra support in order to help them to settle and achieve. Staff also ensure that they foster individual children's interests and enthusiasms. Specialist teaching for physical education (PE) and music further enhances the educational provision.

3.9 Pupils in the older year groups are enabled to achieve high standards in all subjects, and the provision supports the school's aims to develop pupils' independence, self-esteem and self-confidence. The curriculum is balanced and broad, with clear planning for each subject, and it caters for the needs of pupils of all abilities and ages. Activities within the curriculum are rewarding and challenging. Since the previous inspection, it has been developed further to improve the pupils' skills in independent learning and research, which encourages their curiosity. Pupils follow a wide-ranging course of personal, social and health education (PSHE).

3.10 Drama has been introduced to the older pupils in the academic curriculum, which has given them the self-assurance to speak and act in small groups. The addition of study skills has also been a benefit to the learning process. Pupils are offered one modern foreign language, and Latin is also taught from Year 5 upwards. The allocated time for the subjects allows the pupils to work independently and collaboratively. More able pupils conduct independent research through ICT or are challenged by extension activities. Most parents consider that these pupils receive appropriate support.

3.11 The well-staffed learning support department provides excellent specialist help to individual pupils. Their needs are identified early by class teachers or through assessment, and a variety of effective strategies is put in place. Pupils make good progress through a carefully structured programme and they work confidently alongside their peers. Pupils with EAL are also given excellent support in individual lessons which allows them to access the main body of the curriculum and reach a good level of English.

3.12 Excellent extra-curricular provision fulfils the school's aim to encourage pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem, and to promote the value of working together. Pupils and parents view the provision as a strength of the school. The opportunities include sports clubs that cater for both talented pupils and those who wish to try new

recreational sports such as golf and archery. High quality provision for music includes the school choir. Scottish dancing and ballet broaden the variety of activities on offer. The pupils also have the opportunity to use the extensive grounds. Art and woodwork develop pupils' creative skills. The activity programme extends beyond the school site: the Young Farmers club visited a goat farm and were present at live births, helping to deliver the newborn animals.

- 3.13 The curriculum is enriched by a variety of links to the community. The pupils' sense of their presence in the community is enhanced through enacting a mock magistrates' court with a local primary school, as well as art and music days. The Year 8 'task force' undertakes a programme of community service which includes helping at the parish Church and with a local food bank. Pupils also harvest fruit, which is pressed and bottled at a local farm.
- 3.14 The overall curriculum is enriched by outside speakers and visits to places of interest, museums and galleries, and, for older pupils, by residential trips.

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

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.16 In half of the lessons observed in Years 1 to 8, teaching was excellent and none was less than satisfactory. This accords with the school's aim of providing the highest standards of academic teaching and encouraging a lifelong love of learning.
- 3.17 In the EYFS, staff are enthusiastic, have high expectations and engage extremely well with the children. New children are assessed during their first weeks of attendance, thus meeting a recommendation of the previous ISI report; a continuing programme of assessment supports children's development and identifies their next stages in learning. In the most effective classroom sessions, staff provide appropriate activities well matched to the developmental stage of the children so that they are engaged and motivated, and thus they make good progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. A few activities observed, however, were not suitably matched to the age and abilities of the children. The scenic grounds, including the Forest School, are used to excellent effect to develop learning through imaginative and co-operative play. Enjoyable, carefully planned and well-resourced experiences promote learning and resilience, as well an excellent understanding of how to manage risk and challenges within a secure setting where the highest priority is paid to safety.
- 3.18 Throughout, teachers establish a cordial atmosphere; the warm and friendly relationships between pupils and staff contribute strongly to the effectiveness of the teaching. Teachers know each pupil exceptionally well and are especially sensitive to the range of ability in the classes. Both learning support and work varied to suit the more able contribute significantly to pupils' excellent academic progress. Teachers are adept at assessing the pupils' progress during lessons, providing appropriate work and explanation. They have a clear understanding of the required levels which pupils must reach in order to gain places or scholarships at the senior schools of their choice. All pupils spoke with notable confidence and enthusiasm about their learning, and they appreciate their teachers' support and encouragement.
- 3.19 Teachers are knowledgeable, and the use of subject specialists enhances the younger pupils' learning, such as in ICT, PE, French and music. The school encourages pupils to work independently, for example on extension tasks and

projects, and some teaching promotes the use of ICT for research. Frequently reflective, inspiring and imaginative, teaching allows pupils to think for themselves and results in high quality work, both orally and on paper. Enthusiastic and responsive, pupils are stimulated to achieve their best.

- 3.20 Excellent opportunities are provided in many lessons for pupils to work in pairs or groups, enabling them to use discussion to develop their understanding and collaborative skills. Praise and encouragement are given consistently. A significant majority of the lessons benefit from a brisk pace and time is managed effectively. A high proportion of teaching is lively and well paced, sets high standards and engages pupils well. In a small number of less effective lessons, over-direction by the teacher restricts opportunities for pupils to engage fully in their learning. As a result, lessons lose pace and pupils are less able to sustain concentration.
- 3.21 Teaching is supported by a suitable range of high quality resources that are used to good effect to engage the pupils and increase their enjoyment of learning. The accommodation for specialist subjects is good. An excellent theatre provides suitable opportunities for drama, whilst the library has a wide range of reading material and magazines. The new sports hall and all-weather sports surface are excellent facilities that cater for a variety of activities.
- 3.22 Since the previous inspection, and meeting one of its recommendations, the school has introduced initial assessment of pupils' capabilities on entry. The school has an effective means of tracking pupils' progress. Regular assessments are used to inform planning in lessons and standardised assessments identify the most able pupils. Learning programmes for pupils with SEND are well maintained and understood by the staff.
- 3.23 Many lessons include both formal and informal assessment of the pupils' learning. The use of self- and peer-assessment helps pupils to take responsibility for their work. The quality of the marking in exercise books is variable. In the best examples, positive and informative comments, including realistic targets for improvement, help the pupils to make progress. Pupils are made aware of their progress and standards of achievement through reports, assessment results and grades.

## **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.
- 4.2 In the EYFS, the children's personal and emotional development is excellent. They understand the significance of making a positive contribution to school life and take pride in being helpers. Children's familiarity with pupils from older classes and the setting's strong support for their personal development give them confidence and prepare them extremely well for their move to the next stage of their education.
- 4.3 The school fully meets its aim to provide an environment that addresses all aspects of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The ethos of a family community permeates the school, allowing pupils to grow and flourish in confidence, happiness and self-worth. Lively and articulate, they are well mannered, unfailingly polite and helpful individuals, in accordance with the school's aim to inculcate an understanding of the importance of manners, respect for one another and the value of living and working together productively. Visitors are warmly welcomed and the pupils are excellent ambassadors, speaking with pride about their school. The pupils' evident appreciation of non-material aspects of life is developed through topics in religious education (RE), art, music, poetry and literature. Awe-inspiring experiences, such as the uplifting surroundings throughout the seasons, singing in the Vatican and assisting in the birth of animals, enhance and enrich pupils' spiritual awareness.
- 4.4 The pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong, and their behaviour is exemplary. They have a clear understanding of moral issues, through debates on subjects such as animal testing. There is an ethos of co-operation in helping both one another and the staff. They trust the staff to deal with any transgressions quickly and sensitively. Debates and acting out mock trials introduce the older pupils to British institutions such as parliament and the justice system.
- 4.5 The pupils have a strong sense of service and of stewardship regarding their school and the environment in general. Many take on positions of responsibility, for example in the form room, on the four school committees and in the many Year 8 posts, where they carry out their duties very conscientiously. Pupils of all age groups relate very well to each other in an exceptionally friendly and welcoming environment. The younger pupils speak enthusiastically about the help they receive from older ones. Inside and outside the classroom, they are co-operative and supportive across the age groups. Well aware of others less fortunate than themselves, pupils take the initiative in fund raising for local, national and international charities.
- 4.6 The pupils understand and respect other faiths and cultures through a wide-ranging programme that includes RE lessons, educational visits, assemblies and visiting speakers. Within the cultural diversity of the school community, relationships are very harmonious, and all pupils enjoy themed days and meals which provide insights into other cultures and traditions.
- 4.7 The older pupils have an excellent standard of personal development by the time they leave Perrott Hill: they are mature and self-aware.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 The school fully meets its stated aim to provide the highest standards of pastoral care within a stimulating, safe, happy and supportive environment.
- 4.10 In the EYFS, the provision for children's well-being is excellent. Every child has a key person, who has particular responsibility for ensuring that his or her needs are met. The staff create an environment where the children feel secure and know that they are well cared for. Consequently, the children greatly enjoy their learning experiences and confidently make choices between activities as they explore their surroundings. Keen to meet staff expectations, the children behave very well. They have excellent relationships with the staff and with one another. They share toys, take turns and help their peers.
- 4.11 In the pre-prep and the prep school, pupils' personal development is fostered by the outstanding support and guidance provided by all staff. The pastoral system is centred on a 'circle of care' which is understood and used by all the pupils. This extensive network of help underpins the pastoral ethos of the school, which is greatly appreciated by parents and pupils alike. Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves are excellent, based on mutual trust and support. The dedicated staff know the pupils exceptionally well and are all on hand to help if required. The pupils state that they like and trust the staff, and are confident that any difficulties or concerns will be quickly resolved.
- 4.12 The pupils feel that their voice is heard in the school committees, and these have changed aspects of school life, effecting, for instance, improvements to the menus and break time facilities.
- 4.13 The food is nutritious and contributes to a healthy lifestyle, alongside ample opportunity for exercise during games, PE, activities and free time. At lunchtime there is a choice of a hot main course, including a vegetarian option. Water and fruit are available all day. Pupils receive regular advice through PSHE and science on leading healthy lifestyles. The youngest children in the EYFS have a sure understanding of the importance of healthy food and exercise, and they can manage their own hygiene needs.
- 4.14 Pupils behave in an exemplary manner, conducting themselves with courtesy and consideration. Bullying is reported as being extremely rare, with any instances having been resolved quickly and fairly.
- 4.15 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND, further demonstrating its commitment to care of the individual.

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

- 4.16 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.17 Arrangements to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils are seen as being of paramount importance. Highly effective, they cover all aspects of the life of the school, including the EYFS. Policies are detailed and wide ranging. Clear procedures for safeguarding children and eliminating discrimination are implemented highly effectively. The required checks on new staff are carried out and recorded correctly. All staff receive appropriate training in child protection at the prescribed intervals.
- 4.18 The welfare of individual pupils is discussed at regular meetings of senior management, the staff and the governors' pastoral committee; issues of health and safety are raised at weekly management meetings. Many advances and improvements have been made since the previous ISI inspection. For instance governors have been given specific responsibility for child protection, EYFS and health and safety respectively. A qualified nurse has been appointed and the school has improved medical facilities and medical record keeping. Pupils' welfare plans have been introduced. Shower, washroom and lavatory facilities have been upgraded.
- 4.19 Pupils are educated in electronic communications safety and appropriate use of the internet; their access to this is filtered. All necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. A fire consultant reports annually on all aspects of the school's provision for fire prevention, and fire practices are held regularly. Electrical equipment is checked through portable appliance testing. Risk assessments are comprehensive and thorough for relevant activities in and out of school.
- 4.20 The school provides effectively for ill or injured pupils and for those with SEND. The needs of pupils with existing medical conditions are well known to staff. Medical facilities are suitable and detailed records of any accidents and illness are filed. Many members of staff are qualified in first aid, some at the higher level. A number are trained lifeguards.
- 4.21 The admission and attendance registers are accurately completed and kept for the required period. Attendance is closely monitored, with a system of immediate response to pupils' absence.

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

- 4.22 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.23 Outcomes for boarders are excellent. They greatly enjoy their boarding experience and are very proud of their school. Many go on to board at their senior schools and their experience of boarding provides them with excellent preparation. It enables boarders to develop independence, self-reliance and personal organisational skills. Boarders feel that they are able to learn to take responsibility for themselves within this relaxed, nurturing environment. Boarders are exceptionally well mannered and courteous at all times. They feel that their experience enables them to widen their friendship groups and helps them value and appreciate those from different backgrounds. They demonstrate open, positive relationships and older ones appreciate the opportunity to get to know those in younger year groups.

- 4.24 Boarders have many opportunities to express their views, both formally and informally. Biannual questionnaires cover all aspects of boarding life. Boarders frequently use the suggestion book and feel that staff take notice of their views. They were, for instance, influential in devising recent changes to their rewards and sanctions systems. All boarders have the opportunity to become boarding captains in their final year and are keen to take on responsibility. In responses to the pupil questionnaires, they expressed full satisfaction with their boarding experience.
- 4.25 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. New boarders are provided with a guide to boarding before they start and where appropriate this information is translated for any boarders from overseas. Those new to the school are able to visit and have a 'trial' stay. Day pupils who are considering boarding, either on a weekly or flexible basis, are encouraged to try it first, and the twice-termly activity weekends are extremely popular. Boarders are looked after well by their peers and a 'buddy' system when they join the boarding community.
- 4.26 Boarders are very well cared for by dedicated and committed boarding staff. Resident boarding house parents, appointed since the previous inspection, have helped to develop and foster the warm, relaxed family atmosphere evident in the boarding community. They are assisted and ably complemented by a team of resident staff. The small size of the school ensures that boarders are known extremely well and that individuals with particular needs are sensitively supported. The girls' house mistress is a qualified nurse and responsible for the medical care of all the boarders. She liaises closely with other boarding staff to ensure effective arrangements for the care of boarders who are unwell. Medicines are stored safely and robust systems are in place for the administration of both prescribed and non-prescribed medication.
- 4.27 Boarders eat most of their meals in the school dining room. Breakfast and supper are relaxed meals when boarders sit with their friends, whilst lunch for some year groups is served in the main hall. Boarders are provided with a choice of healthy and nutritious hot and cold meals that include vegetarian options. Special diets are catered for and staff are aware of individual needs. Themed meals are organised regularly and boarders have recently enjoyed, for example, a Turkish lunch. At weekends, meals are cooked and served within a smaller extended family setting. Snacks are served at regular intervals, and fruit and drinks are readily available throughout the day.
- 4.28 Male and female boarders are accommodated in separate areas on the first floor of the main house. Boarders much appreciate the exceptional setting of the school and many of their rooms overlook open, rolling countryside and the expansive school grounds. All living and sleeping accommodation has been redecorated since the previous inspection and is bright and colourful. Beds are comfortable and storage facilities are adequate for the predominantly weekly or flexible boarders. Boarders appreciate being able to personalise their dormitories and photographs of them are displayed on each room door. Social areas have been refurbished recently, with attractive new furniture, bean bags, televisions and games. Boarders confirm that their belongings are safe and that their valuables are kept securely. The boys' showers and toilets have been upgraded to provide good quality facilities. Plans exist to improve the girls' showers.
- 4.29 Boarders benefit from an extremely varied range of extra-curricular activities throughout the school day. These include cultural and sporting activities as well as Young Farmers and building dens in the woodland area. During boarding time they

are able to make use of the extensive school grounds and facilities, particularly in the summer months. Boarders greatly enjoy the varied evening activities provided. Regular trips for full boarders at the weekends have included farm and country house visits as well as surfing.

- 4.30 Boarders are able to maintain regular contact with parents. In their responses to the questionnaire, parents were unanimous in their happiness with all aspects of boarding care and provision.
- 4.31 The effectiveness of the arrangements for safeguarding and welfare is excellent and has improved since the previous inspection. All staff and independent listeners are trained in safeguarding and have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. Robust policies and procedures are in place and adhered to when recruiting staff. Regular and varied fire practices occur within boarding time and excellent procedures are in place to test and check fire-fighting and prevention equipment. Security systems and procedures are in place within the school to provide for the safety of all boarders.
- 4.32 Bullying is not identified as a concern by the boarders. They report that any past instances of bullying have been quickly and successfully resolved. Boarders are fully aware of the 'circle of care' and can easily identify a range of adults to whom they can turn with difficulties or concerns.
- 4.33 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of boarding is excellent. Boarding fully achieves its aims and lives up to its principles. Governors and senior staff have a clear strategic plan for boarding to remain a central part of the life of the school. The school development plan includes provision for further upgrading and refurbishment of the boarding accommodation. The head of boarding and housemistress, new to their roles since the previous inspection, have received excellent support and training. The head of boarding is a member of the senior management team and ensures that boarding issues and pastoral needs are routinely discussed. All boarding staff are well trained and the head of boarding conducts regular appraisals and reviews of their practice.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The governing body exercises effective oversight and is wholeheartedly committed to the school's aims and ethos. The governors conscientiously discharge their responsibilities for educational standards and investment in staff, accommodation and resources throughout the school, including the EYFS. They monitor all financial matters very closely and take forward-thinking initiatives to promote the well-being of the school. The members of the board contribute a wide range of experience and expertise. The contact telephone number of a parent governor is known to other parents. The governors regularly attend school events and they host social occasions for parents.
- 5.3 Governors give valued support to senior management, with whom they have frequent informal communication in addition to the annual schedule of formal meetings. These regular meetings of the main board and its many committees ensure that the governors are well informed about all aspects of the school. Furthermore, every governor has a specific area of responsibility, such as safeguarding or the EYFS, which ensures close liaison with senior members of staff and a detailed understanding of a particular set of policies and practices. The governors are diligent and effective in discharging their responsibilities for child protection, welfare, health and safety: the whole board annually reviews safeguarding policies and practices and the efficiency with which the related duties are discharged. Whole days spent in school and staff presentations add to the governors' appreciation and understanding of the life of the school.
- 5.4 New members of the governing body undertake an induction process, and governors keep abreast of current good practice by attending training courses that cover defined areas of their duties and responsibilities.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.6 Leadership is highly effective at all levels, communicating clearly defined direction, standards and values which inspire and permeate the whole of the school community. It shapes and shares its vision with everyone involved in helping to achieve the school's aim of high academic, pastoral and personal standards for pupils.
- 5.7 Since the previous inspection, the senior management team has been extended to include managers of all sections of the school. This inclusivity has resulted in smoother transitions between the pre-prep and prep school and ensures that the leadership's energy and drive for improvement benefit all pupils and all aspects of their care and development. The team members work extremely well together and give exemplary support to the school and its staff.

- 5.8 The leadership and management of the EYFS provision are excellent. The safeguarding of children is carefully promoted in a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment. Staff are committed to the highest levels of achievement for the children. Practice and initiatives are rigorously reviewed in order to assess their impact on the children's learning. An excellent system of evaluation includes a detailed curriculum overview to ensure that all children are able to enjoy a broad range of experiences. A well-recorded programme of staff supervision ensures that all staff work co-operatively, and systematic professional development is helping staff to improve both their qualifications and practice. The setting has made good progress since the previous inspection and its staff speak highly of the involvement and support of the governors and senior management of the school.
- 5.9 On a day-to-day basis the school runs very smoothly and efficiently, resulting from well-organised meetings and meticulous systems. These are carefully managed and reviewed to ensure that no issues regarding pupils' welfare are overlooked. The weekly full staff meeting gives careful consideration to each year group in turn, thus providing the opportunity for discussion of any pupil's academic and general progress. Procedures and policies are clear and appropriately detailed. They are very well understood and implemented by all staff.
- 5.10 Leadership is dynamic and is a visible presence throughout the school: this contributes significantly to the successful management of the whole school and to the fulfilment of its aims. In their responses to the questionnaire, parents expressed great satisfaction with the way in which the school is run and affirm that it handles any concerns very well.
- 5.11 The senior management team is thorough and careful in its implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures. All staff receive appropriate and regular training in matters of safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Further needs for professional development are identified through a thorough appraisal system. Regular lesson observations by teaching colleagues and more informal visits by senior leaders ensure an open and positive attitude to school improvement and the sharing of good practice. Staff feel well supported, yet accountable. The school is successful in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified staff, and all required checks and records are in place.
- 5.12 The school's development plan is clear and comprehensive, with defined targets which are ambitious and realistic. It incorporates a clear vision for the development of all parts of the school, including the EYFS setting. It is regularly reviewed and revised by the governing body and senior management team.
- 5.13 The school has met the recommendations of the previous inspection with regard to the use of initial assessment of children's capabilities on entry, and the improvement of pupils' skills in independent learning and research.
- 5.14 Parents are enthusiastically welcomed in the EYFS. They receive detailed accounts of the development of their children, together with suggestions as to how they may support their children's education. The consequent collaboration between home and school has a directly beneficial impact on the children's progress. Children with identified needs benefit from appropriately devised strategies, involving parents and sometimes outside agencies. Early Years Foundation Stage profiles are meticulously completed and parents informed of the results. Children enjoy showing their parents their achievements and parents are unanimous in their praise of their children's education.

- 5.15 The school as a whole promotes excellent relationships with parents, which are characterised by strong and open lines of communication. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that parents are extremely satisfied with the provision for their children and with the education their children receive. Parents' concerns are heard promptly and treated with care and consideration; as a result there have been no formal complaints in recent years.
- 5.16 Parents receive detailed and useful information about the school in a variety of ways. Both the prospectus and the website are informative for parents of prospective pupils. Regular newsletters, text messages and email allow for a full exchange of up-to-date and accurate information for parents of current pupils.
- 5.17 Parents unanimously agree that they are given many opportunities to be involved in the life of the school. They are encouraged to participate in the learning experience of their children through giving talks and demonstrations, through supporting community projects and charity days, and through volunteering, either regularly or occasionally, in the classroom. An active parents' association, the Friends of Perrott Hill, organises fund-raising and social events. A number of sport and language clubs for parents provide further opportunities for them to socialise and to experience at first hand the benefits of the rich programme of extra-curricular activities enjoyed by their children. Parents are invited to a wide variety of school events, performances and fixtures.
- 5.18 Parents are well informed about their children's progress and achievement through detailed end-of-term reports. Regular grade sheets, profiles, contact books and formal parents' evenings provide them with further information about their children's learning and development.

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