



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**KING'S COLLEGE SCHOOL, CAMBRIDGE**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

**FINAL VISIT**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## King's College School

|                           |   |                              |                  |
|---------------------------|---|------------------------------|------------------|
| Full Name of School       | <b>King's College School</b>  |                              |                  |
| DCSF Number               | <b>873/6000</b>   |                              |                  |
| Registered Charity Number | <b>X6753A</b>   |                              |                  |
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| Head                      | <b>Mr Nicholas Robinson</b>   |                              |                  |
| Chair of Governors        | <b>Professor Ross Harrison</b>  |                              |                  |
| Age Range                 | <b>4 to 13</b>  |                              |                  |
| Total Number of Pupils    | <b>402</b>  |                              |                  |
| Gender of Pupils          | <b>Mixed (241 boys; 161 girls;)</b>   |                              |                  |
| Numbers by Age            | 0-2 (EYFS):   | <b>0</b>                     | 5-11: <b>281</b> |
|                           | 3-5 (EYFS):   | <b>35</b>                    | 11-13: <b>86</b> |
| Number of Day Pupils      | <b>376</b>  | Capacity for flexi-boarding: | <b>16</b>        |
| Number of Boarders        | Total:  | <b>26</b>                    |                  |
|                           | Full:   | <b>23</b>                    | Weekly: <b>3</b> |
| Head of EYFS Setting      | <b>Mrs Dawn Daly</b>  |                              |                  |
| EYFS Gender               | <b>Mixed</b>  |                              |                  |
| Inspection date/EYFS      | <b>12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> January 2010</b>                                  |                              |                  |
| Final (team) visit        | <b>8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> February 2010</b>                                  |                              |                  |

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. It 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 May 2006.

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 2003 as subsequently amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) The quality of education provided (Curriculum)
- (b) The quality of education provided (Teaching)
- (c) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) The welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) The suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) The premises and accommodation
- (g) The provision of information
- (h) The manner in which complaints are to be handled

Legislation additional to the welfare, health and safety Standard 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 31<sup>st</sup> August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

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

The inspection does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 King's College School is situated near the centre of the historic city of Cambridge and was founded in 1441 by King Henry VI to educate the sixteen choristers who sing the services in the college chapel. The school is an integral part of King's College and the Provost of King's is its chair of governors. The school governors are appointed by King's College and include both a number of King's fellows and those recruited from beyond the college. The school, which moved to its current site in 1878 and whose pre-preparatory department has expanded from three to six classes since the last inspection, is fully co-educational and continues to educate the chapel's choristers.
- 1.2 The school caters for 402 pupils between the ages of four and thirteen, of whom around five-eighths are boys and 27 are boarders. Up to sixteen boys may board on a flexible basis. Thirty-five pupils attend the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), of whom nineteen are boys. The school is divided into four sections; the pre-preparatory department, comprising the EYFS and Years 1 and 2, the Junior Department (Years 3 and 4), the Middle School (Years 5 and 6) and the Senior School (Years 7 and 8). Thirty-five pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), of whom four receive support for their English. The school has identified 73 pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). All receive specialist learning support from the school and five receive additional support from external services. Results of standardised tests indicate that the ability profile of the school is above the national average. The majority of pupils come from white European backgrounds, though a diverse range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds is represented in the school.
- 1.3 The school aims to provide a caring, family-based community in a flexible and inclusive academic environment in which all children are respected and valued, based on an historic foundation of musical excellence. It seeks to prepare its pupils, as individuals, to be confident in a future with exceptional possibilities.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL AND ACTION POINTS**

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

- 2.1 The quality of pupils' achievements is good. Pupils are well educated and achieve high standards across the ability range in their learning and attitudes. Their skills are well developed. Curricular and extra-curricular provision are outstanding. A suitably broad and carefully balanced curriculum results from prudent monitoring and analysis of provision. Speaking and listening skills are especially good. Pupils read well, use information and communication technology (ICT) successfully and written work is of a high standard and well presented. They have very positive attitudes towards their work and are very supportive of one another in their learning. They work well independently and collaborate to good effect, both in small groups and in pairs. Pupils, including those with LDD and the most able, have suitable access to the curriculum and achieve well in relation to their ability. Those requiring extra support enjoy excellent individual tuition and tasks at an appropriate level in the classroom. Pupils continue to a wide range of senior schools, a significant proportion gaining scholarships. They also achieve well in music, sport and other extra-curricular pursuits. Excellent extra-curricular provision arises from a wide choice of engaging and carefully planned activities, commended by both pupils and parents. Several are specifically planned to address particular academic, emotional or pastoral needs. Charitable and cultural links, both overseas and within the local community, complement curricular and extra-curricular provision and enable pupils to develop valuable awareness and understanding of the wider world. The high standards in teaching noted at the last inspection have been maintained. Teaching is good overall and a significant proportion is outstanding. It is well planned and energetic, drawing successfully on a thorough understanding of pupils' aptitudes and needs and keenly fostering their interest and enthusiasm. Outstanding teaching is characterised by good pace, proficient management of time, and high expectations. Teaching successfully encourages pupils to think for themselves, apply themselves well and enjoy their work. It makes good use of an extensive range of resources, including interactive whiteboards. Since the last inspection the school has made significant improvements in the gathering and use of assessment data. Marking is up to date, consistent and thorough. Pupils find it supportive and encouraging. It provides appropriate indications of how work can be improved further.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Their spiritual understanding develops positively, both within and beyond the curriculum. They are self-confident, their self-awareness is strong and they value and respect one another's differences. Pupils have a well-developed moral understanding, fostered by their participation in the development of and their adherence to the school's code of conduct. They have a keen sense of right and wrong and are aware of their social obligations and the needs of others. They develop a growing social awareness through the school's 'buddy' system and talks in assembly. Well-focused extra-curricular activities ensure that social skills and awareness develop strongly. The pupils' cultural awareness is well developed; they gain a good understanding of their own and other cultures. They enjoy a rich musical experience and gain a very good understanding of local culture and history in Cambridge. The school provides excellent pastoral care and support and a high quality of welfare, health and safety in a caring, family environment. Pupils benefit from relaxed relationships and find the staff very helpful. They feel secure and have high regard for the support provided by the 'buddy' system. The provision of a school listener enables pupils to talk in confidence about matters of concern. The

school ensures that new pupils settle in quickly and transition through the school and beyond is smooth. Pupils care for each other and standards of behaviour are good. Clear measures and good support deal effectively with any unacceptable behaviour. Safeguarding measures are robust and well-known to staff. Effective measures guard against fire and ensure health and safety and good provision is made for pupils who are ill. Risks are thoroughly assessed and well managed. Off-site visits are planned efficiently and undertaken with a good understanding of safety awareness. Pupils enjoy good provision for healthy exercise and meals are nutritious. They gain a good understanding of healthy living. Boarding provision is highly successful and provides an important focus to school life in a caring environment. Accommodation is of a high standard and experienced and caring staff know the boarders very well and provide very effectively for their needs. Boarding routines are well managed and enable the choristers to fulfil their demanding duties. Parents and pupils who responded to the questionnaire were unanimously appreciative of boarding provision. The recent Ofsted boarding inspection report made only minor recommendations, all of which have been appropriately addressed.

- 2.3 Governance of the school is good. Governors have a wide range of backgrounds and experience and gain a clear oversight of the school through an effective structure of sub-committees. Governors have a good insight into the school's work and a thorough understanding of the school's successes and achievements. They undertake relevant training and work well with leadership and management to identify and address areas for development. Governors ensure that they meet their legal obligations for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Leadership and management, founded on a large and effective senior management team, are highly successful throughout the school and keenly promote the school's aims. Openness in a well-informed and well-understood management structure welcomes frank discussions and new initiatives and ensures a clear understanding of roles at all levels. Both academic and pastoral direction are very strong and closely integrated, successfully informing curriculum planning and improvement. Heads of departments monitor standards effectively and strong leadership of the learning support department enables pupils with particular needs to make good progress. The auditing of the work of the school is proficient and a thorough appraisal scheme supports staff and clearly identifies development and training needs. All staff are involved in development planning and a recent review has resulted in a thorough revision of policies. Management is now beginning to ensure that staff fully understand and implement the new procedures. All staff undertake child protection training and robust arrangements are in place for checking and recording the suitability of staff, governors and volunteers. The school has strong links with its parents and the parents' association supports the work of the school extensively. Parents receive regular and timely information and are able to contact staff easily. Parents who responded to the questionnaire felt universally that the school helps their children make progress and that they are offered an appropriate range of subjects. Almost all agreed that the school achieves high standards of behaviour and promotes worthwhile attitudes and views. Many parents stated that the school handles their concerns with care and nearly all parents responded that they can communicate easily with the school and receive timely responses to their questions. Parents have good opportunities to be involved in their children's progress and work. They receive detailed and clear reports but these do not always provide information on what the pupils should do next to improve their work.

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

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

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

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2003, as subsequently amended.
- 2.5 In order to comply with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school was required to:
- within the final term of the EYFS, provide the parent of a child in relation to whom the EYFS Profile has been completed with a written summary reporting the child's progress against the Early Learning Goals and the assessment scales.

### **(ii) Recommended action**

- 2.6 In order to develop further the high quality of its provision, the school is advised to make the following improvements:
1. ensure that recently updated policies and procedures are fully understood by all staff and become embedded in school practice;
  2. further develop written reports to parents to ensure that they include information on how pupils can take the next steps in their progress;
  3. in the EYFS, develop the outdoor area to provide a wider range of activities on a regular basis.

### **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 quality of pupils' achievements is good. They maintain high standards in their learning and attitudes and their skills are well developed. The school fulfils its aims to prepare its pupils, as individuals, to be confident in a future with exceptional possibilities and enable the achievement of musical excellence. Pupils are well educated and achieve high standards across the ability range. Their speaking and listening skills are especially good; in interviews they were very confident and fluent in discussing their work. They are articulate in their effective use of language to extend their learning. Pupils take good advantage of the school's extensive creative provision, notably in music. This is an area in which not simply the choristers, but all pupils, participate and many excel. Pupils read well and scrutiny of their books showed their written work to be of a high standard and well-presented.
- 3.2 Staff and pupils have good access to ICT and use it well in many areas of the curriculum. Open-ended tasks enable pupils to work well independently, notably in science. They apply their mathematical skills well in other curricular areas and collaborate to good effect both in small groups and in pairs.
- 3.3 Results in standardised tests show that pupils achieve well in relation to their ability. Pupils with LDD and the most able achieve well. Pupils continue after Year 8 to a wide range of senior schools; in recent years all pupils have gained a place at the school of their choice. A significant proportion gain scholarships; many reflect academic or music ability, with other pupils gaining drama, sport, design technology, and all-rounder awards. Pupils also achieve well in music, sport and other extra-curricular areas, notably chess, where a significant number have been selected to play at county level. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their work. They allow others time to speak in discussion and are very supportive of one another in their learning.

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

- 3.4 Curricular and extra-curricular provision are outstanding, ensuring that the school fulfils its aim to provide a broad, flexible and balanced curriculum, suitably enriched by a wide variety of high quality extra-curricular activities. The curriculum is suitably broad and carefully balanced, enabling pupils to study a range of linguistic, scientific, technological and creative subjects and have the option of learning additional foreign languages. Breadth and balance is achieved through the effective alternating of some subjects during the school year and the careful monitoring and analysis of provision.
- 3.5 Considerable thought has been given to ensuring that all pupils have suitable access to the curriculum, irrespective of their individual abilities. Those requiring extra support enjoy excellent individual tuition and tasks at an appropriate level in the classroom. The school has recently renewed its focus on provision for the most able and talented pupils and they are duly challenged.
- 3.6 Extra-curricular provision is excellent and pupils across the whole age range of the school take advantage of a wide choice of engaging and carefully planned clubs, societies and activities. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, both parents and

pupils commended the range and quality of activities. Several are specifically and carefully planned to address particular academic, emotional or pastoral needs. Charitable and cultural links, both overseas, such as the partnership with a school in Sri Lanka and the Year 8 French trip, and also within the local community, such as the 'Chorister Outreach Programme', enable pupils to develop valuable awareness and understanding of the wider world. At the time of the inspection new music practice facilities were nearing completion and a new indoor sports facility has been planned.

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

- 3.7 The high standards in teaching found at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. Teaching is good overall. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed during the inspection and a significant proportion was outstanding. Teaching is very effective in promoting pupils' progress and supports the aims of the school.
- 3.8 Teaching is well planned and energetic, and draws successfully on a thorough understanding of pupils' aptitudes and needs. It benefits from a close rapport with pupils, resulting in a strong sense of inclusivity, which keenly fosters pupils' interest and enthusiasm.
- 3.9 Schemes of work and individual lessons are well planned, ensuring, for example, a high degree of consistency between parallel classes. Where outstanding teaching was observed, it was characterised by good pace, proficient management of time, and high expectations of the pupils across the ability range. Teaching successfully encourages pupils to think for themselves. Stimulating, well-presented topics ensure that pupils apply themselves well, enjoy their work and maintain good standards of conduct.
- 3.10 The setting of classes by ability in mathematics from Year 3 and in several subjects in Years 6 to 8 is the cornerstone of teaching which is well-tailored to enable pupils of all abilities to make good progress. Within these classes, further management of tasks and expectations ensures that individual needs are met. Teaching makes good use of the interactive whiteboard technology, sometimes involving pupils in using the board themselves with appropriate and engaging software. Teaching exploits an imaginative range of teaching styles to promote learning and benefits from excellent subject knowledge. It is supported by an extensive range of quality resources, which are very effectively used.
- 3.11 Well-organised systems strongly support the monitoring of teaching and learning. Since the last inspection significant improvements in the use of assessments throughout the school have furnished detailed information to support planning and teaching. Throughout the school marking is up to date, consistent and thorough. In their responses to the questionnaire and in interviews, pupils commented that they found marking and the guidance they receive in class very helpful. Marking is supportive and encouraging and provides appropriate indications of how work can be improved further.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

- 4.1 The overall quality of pupils' personal development is excellent, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. The school meets its aim to ensure that pupils are respected and valued. The pupils' spiritual understanding develops positively, both within the curriculum and in many other areas of school life, notably through assemblies and the extra-curricular programme. All pupils experience the awe and wonder of King's College Chapel, through its use for key school occasions. Their self-confidence grows markedly through involvement in performance, such as music, drama and debating and as a result of the support and encouragement they receive from the staff and each other. Self-awareness is strong and pupils value one another's differences. They are very proud of the success of the choristers and fellow pupils' wider achievements.
- 4.2 Pupils have a well-developed moral understanding. Their participation in the development of "The King's Way", the school's code of conduct, provides them with a sense of ownership, motivates them to adopt the code and underpins their moral awareness. They have a keen sense of right and wrong. Several initiatives within the school, such as 'citizen of the week', ensure that pupils are aware of their social obligations and the needs of others. They develop a growing understanding through talks in assembly and engage fervently in charitable fundraising. At the time of the inspection pupils had recently raised £3000 to assist earthquake relief in Haiti. The 'buddy' system, which pairs up Year 8 pupils with pupils in younger classes to provide support, leadership and someone to turn to, together with a range of well-focused extra-curricular activities, ensures that social skills and awareness develop strongly.
- 4.3 The pupils' cultural awareness is well developed; they gain a good understanding of their own and other cultures. The link with a school in Sri Lanka enables pupils to correspond and exchange information. Overseas trips and themed days in school, such as Chinese New Year, which took place during the inspection and was strongly supported by the catering staff, are key factors which successfully promote pupils' cultural experience and understanding. All pupils enjoy a rich musical experience and, through history topics and visits, including a view of Cambridge from the chapel roof, gain a very good understanding of local culture and history in the city.

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

- 4.4 Staff provide excellent pastoral care and support. The school provides a good quality of welfare, health and safety, both in the daytime and boarding areas, ensuring that it meets its aim to provide a caring, family environment. Pupils commented in discussion that the staff are very helpful. They have high regard for the 'buddy' system and appreciate the support it provides. Pupils benefit from relaxed relationships and gain a strong sense of security. Relationships between staff and pupils are very strong in a nurturing environment. The provision of a school listener, who ensures a good profile through visits to classes, enables pupils to talk in confidence about matters of concern. Class surveys help to identify and address welfare considerations, and posters around the school promote safe practice and healthy lifestyles. The school ensures that new pupils settle in quickly and that transition through the school and to future schools is smooth. Pupils care for each other and standards of behaviour are good. Clear measures and good support deal effectively with any unacceptable behaviour. Staff are conscientious in

educating pupils about the harm caused by bullying, notably through assemblies, personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons and the 'buddy' system, and are proactive in tackling potential bullying issues. The school's safeguarding measures are robust and well-known to staff, all of whom undertake appropriate training. Nominated governors ensure that safeguarding measures are regularly reviewed.

- 4.5 The school has effective measures, organised and overseen by a health and safety committee, to guard against fire and to ensure health and safety. Staff who are well qualified in first aid make good provision for pupils who are ill, in clean and well-equipped facilities. New procedures to strengthen communication with parents about illness or accident at school have recently been introduced. Detailed risk assessments ensure that potential hazards are identified; risks are well managed and off-site visits are planned efficiently and undertaken with a good understanding of safety awareness. The school has planned well to improve educational access to the premises and the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and its attendance and admission registers are duly maintained. Pupils enjoy good provision for healthy exercise. Meals are nutritious and pupils gain a good understanding of keeping healthy, notably through assemblies and aspects of the curriculum, including science, PSHE and physical education.

#### **4.(c) The quality of boarding education**

- 4.6 Boarding provision continues to be highly successful, as noted at the last Ofsted boarding inspection. It contributes very effectively to the school's aim to provide a caring, family-based community. It provides an important focus to school life, the effects of which are positively reflected across the school as a whole. Non-resident staff also undertake boarding duties, ensuring a thorough integration of boarding into the life of the school.
- 4.7 Accommodation is of a high standard and experienced and caring staff know the boarders very well, providing very effectively for their needs. Boarding routines are well managed and supervised. They serve the choristers very well, enabling them to fulfil their demanding duties and undertake their choral and instrumental practice commitments. Parents and pupils who responded to the inspection questionnaire were unanimously appreciative of the opportunities offered by boarding. Choristers constitute the large majority of the boarding population and a clear sense of community within the boarding house ensures that occasional and part-time boarders are welcomed and **feel** part of the community. The recent boarding inspection report made only minor recommendations, all of which have been appropriately addressed.

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

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

5.1 Governance of the school is good. A well-considered and effective structure of sub-committees, which reports to the full governing body, ensures that governors have a clear oversight of the school. Governors have a wide range of backgrounds and bring a breadth of appropriate experience to the governing body. A parent governor serves as a conduit for parents' views and governors gain a good insight into the school's work through presentations from staff, visits to school, meetings with groups of staff and reports from the school's leadership. They have a thorough understanding of the school's successes and achievements and work well with leadership and management to identify and address its areas for development, enabling them to provide strong support and focus for improvement. Governors regularly undertake relevant training and are allocated specific responsibilities, ensuring that they meet their legal obligations for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety.

### **5.(b) The quality of leadership and management**

5.2 Leadership and management are highly successful throughout the school and keenly promote the school's aims of enabling pupils to achieve their full potential. The head has the vision and confidence to include a wide range of expertise on the large and effective senior management team. Its work benefits from an openness which allows frank discussions and welcomes new initiatives. A well-informed and well-understood management structure ensures improved communication and a clear understanding of roles at all levels within the school.

5.3 The efficient use of pertinent data ensures that academic and pastoral direction are very strong and are closely integrated. This is very successful in informing curriculum planning and improvement, an example being the recent pastoral audit of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Clear and effective management systems allow heads of departments to monitor standards and ensure the smooth transition of pupils, both within the school and to their senior schools. Strong leadership of the learning support department provides rigorous systems and well-directed support, which enable pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language to make good progress.

5.4 Measures for auditing and monitoring the work of the school are proficient and a thorough appraisal scheme supports staff and clearly identifies development and training needs. All staff are involved in development planning, channelling their contribution through heads of department. Curriculum meetings and cluster groups of associated subjects are used effectively by heads of department to monitor and audit teaching and learning. The school has recently undertaken a thorough revision of many of its policies. Management is now beginning to ensure that staff fully understand and implement the new procedures.

5.5 All staff have undertaken child protection training and it is included in the induction of all new staff. The school follows the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers (NQT), although currently no NQTs are employed at the school. Robust arrangements are in place for checking and recording the suitability of staff, governors and volunteers.

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

- 5.6 The school has strong links with its parents and particularly close links with the parents of choristers. The parents' association supports the work of the school extensively and, through its involvement in the programme of talks for leavers, makes a valuable contribution to the school's provision. A wide range of measures ensures that parents receive regular and timely information about the school and are able to communicate quickly with members of staff. A weekly newsletter, regular boarding newsletter, electronic notice boards around the school and an informative website, together with the furnishing of parents with staff email addresses, ensure that communication is good and constructive relationships are maintained.
- 5.7 Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire to parents showed that those who replied felt universally that the school helps their children make progress and that they are offered an appropriate range of subjects. Almost all who responded agreed that the school achieves high standards of behaviour and promotes worthwhile attitudes and views.
- 5.8 In the responses to the parental questionnaire many parents stated that the school handles their concerns with care and, during the inspection, this view was confirmed through informal discussions. The school is proactive in communication with parents and nearly all say they can communicate easily with the school and receive timely responses to their questions.
- 5.9 Parents have good opportunities to be involved in their children's progress and work. Communication between home and school in this respect is strengthened through evenings at the start of the academic year, when parents can meet teachers, and tea parties at the end of the year, which enable parents to discuss and contribute to the smooth transition to the next year.
- 5.10 The school provides many opportunities for parents to participate in school life including a parent choir and orchestra, attendance at regular concerts and sports fixtures and a wide range of events organised by the parents' association. Parents of pupils and of prospective pupils are provided with the required information about the school, much of which is available on the website. Detailed and clear reports are sent home every term but these do not always provide information on what the pupils should do next to improve their work.

**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 effectiveness of the EYFS provision is good, and meets its aim to provide a highly effective learning environment where children are confident, independent, kind, courteous and able to display good manners and behaviour within a community ethos that gives them a sense of belonging.
- 6.2 The partnership with parents is robust and trusting relationships are in evidence throughout. The parents are very happy with the outcomes of children's learning and welfare. The quality of teaching and assessment is good providing continuous progression in children's learning. Since the previous inspection, an additional Reception class has been provided and ICT facilities have been improved. Good planning and risk assessment provides effective support to the welfare of EYFS children. Staff teach with energy and enthusiasm to provide a wide range of challenging activities for children to develop. The existing high standards are sustainable as is the capacity for improvement.

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

- 6.3 Leadership and management of the setting are good. All relevant policies are in place to safeguard each child and records of medical provision are kept. Procedures are consistently implemented which are inclusive of all children. Staff are suitably qualified and action is taken to manage risks. The parents are very happy with all aspects of children's learning and welfare. Resources, including stimulating displays of children's work, are good and are used effectively indoors, but the outdoor provision does not offer a fully stimulating learning environment. Staff strive for improvement to provide high quality care and education and set achievable targets. Links with local agencies are maintained and their input is respected. Regular local outings and visitors help pupils gain an understanding of their local community.

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

- 6.4 The overall quality of provision in EYFS is good and is inclusive of all. However, a new and generally effective planning system does not incorporate a sufficiently wide range of outdoor activities. Staff successfully provide a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities that take account of the needs and interests of each individual. Appropriate levels of supervision by qualified staff and strong teamwork are important contributory factors to the success of the EYFS. Adults offer models of safe practice, ask open questions and use praise effectively. Profiles of each child's learning are accessible to parents and staff are available for discussion. The school does not yet provide parents with a written summary reporting their child's progress against the Early Learning Goals in the final term of the EYFS.

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

- 6.5 The outcomes for children in the EYFS are good. The children's progress across all areas of the EYFS is strong, particularly in communication language and literacy. They also make good progress in developing the personal qualities to behave well, co-operate and share with each other, make friends and respond positively to the expectations of adults. Relationships with adults are good. They communicate well, speaking confidently and listening carefully to adults. At lunchtime children make decisions on food choices from a variety of nutritious options. Children explore plants, experiment with construction materials and co-operate in problem solving with a range of resources including ICT. They understand the importance of following rules to keep safe and feel secure, making going to school a joyful experience.

**What the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.**

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with several representative governors, including the deputy chair and chairs of various sub-committees, 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.

### **Inspectors**

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Mr Christopher Sanderson | Reporting inspector                               |
| Mrs Margaret Marsh       | Junior Team Inspector (Director of Studies, IAPS) |
| Mr Jonathan Milton       | Junior Team Inspector (Head, IAPS)                |
| Mrs Sabine Fellows       | Junior Team Inspector (Head, IAPS)                |
| Ms Anne McConway         | Early Years Lead Inspector                        |