



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**ST PETER'S SCHOOL**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of School	<b>St Peter's School</b>
DfE Number	<b>878/6020</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>N/a</b>
Address	<b>St Peter's School Harefield Lympstone Devon EX8 5AU</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01395 272148</b>
Fax Number	<b>01395 222410</b>
Email Address	<b>hmooffice@stpetersprep.co.uk</b>
Headmaster	<b>Mr Noel Neeson</b>
Proprietors	<b>SPL Education Ltd</b>
Age Range	<b>3 to 13</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>260</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (162 boys; 98 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): <b>0</b> 5-11: <b>154</b> 3-5 (EYFS): <b>57</b> 11-18: <b>49</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total: <b>258</b>
Number of Boarders	Total: <b>2</b> Full: <b>0</b> Weekly: <b>2</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Laura Clifford</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection dates	<b>13 November 2012 to 16 November 2012</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 October 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, with one of the proprietors and with the chair of the Board of Reference, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the boarding accommodation and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mrs Jane Chesterfield	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Loraine Cavanagh	Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Sandra Kiddle	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Carol Evans	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Debbie Buckenham	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 St Peter's School is a preparatory school for boys and girls aged 3 to 13 years. Founded in 1882 as a school for boys, the school moved to its present site in 1949. Girls were first admitted in 1974 and Nursery children in 1995. The school is situated in 28 acres of grounds, overlooking the estuary of the river Exe, and occupies a Georgian country house, surrounded by a number of buildings added subsequently to meet developing educational needs. The school is a limited company and is run by an Executive Management Team, assisted by the Board of Reference which acts in a consultative capacity.
- 1.2 The school aims to give all pupils the opportunity to develop their full potential through provision of a broad curriculum and full programme of activities, excellent pastoral care, small class sizes and committed teaching. It seeks to encourage pupils to learn and work independently, to provide an environment in which they can feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are heard, and to foster in them an appreciation of the need to be courteous and considerate and to use their common sense in all areas of life.
- 1.3 The school offers boarding facilities for pupils from the age of seven, and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision in its Nursery and Reception classes. At the time of the inspection there were 260 pupils on roll, 162 boys and 98 girls, with 57 children in the EYFS. No pupils board on a full-time basis and two pupils board on a weekly basis, but around forty others are flexi-boarders; the school's capacity for flexible boarding is thirteen. The school is non-selective. Standardised test results indicate that the ability profile of the pupils is above the national average, but with a wide spread of abilities. Most pupils come from a white British background.
- 1.4 Sixty pupils have been identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), mainly difficulties with literacy or numeracy, or specific conditions such as dyslexia. Two pupils have a statement of special educational needs. No pupils have been identified as having English as an additional language.
- 1.5 There have been a number of changes in staffing since the previous inspection, including the appointment of the current headmaster in September 2009, and that of the head and assistant head of the junior school, the director of studies, the head of learning success and the boarding house parents.
- 1.6 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used by the school from Reception and throughout this report to refer to year groups. The school refers to its Nursery as Kindergarten.

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

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

- 2.1 The school is extremely successful in meeting its aims. Pupils achieve exceptionally well from the EYFS onwards, both in their academic work and their extra-curricular activities. They reach high standards and make consistently good and often excellent progress from their different starting points. Pupils are articulate and thoughtful, and are always eager to contribute in lessons. They have well-developed literacy and numeracy skills, and are able to apply these very successfully across different subjects of the curriculum. Pupils are equally successful outside the classroom, achieving highly in sport, art, drama and other extra-curricular activities, such as chess. The high quality of pupils' achievement results from the excellence of teaching and the curriculum. The quality of marking and assessment of pupils' work, which was an area for improvement at the time of the previous inspection, is now exceptionally good, and as a result, teachers are able to plan carefully to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. There has been significant improvement in this area too since the previous inspection. The introduction of the St Peter's Baccalaureate has been an exciting innovation, inspiring pupils to be creative and independent in their learning. It is helping to reduce the use of worksheets in humanities and religious studies, as the school intends. Display work is of a high quality throughout the school, although inconsistent use is made of children's work in displays in the EYFS.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent throughout the school; they are growing up to be successful and self-confident individuals, in line with the school's aims. They are reflective, sensitive to the world around them and beyond, have a strong sense of responsibility towards the school community and an awareness of the wider community, and respect cultures other than their own. Pastoral care is excellent in all parts of the school, and so pupils thrive in a warm, supportive and caring atmosphere. Good attention is given to pupils' welfare, health and safety, though record keeping in the recruitment files for some boarding and non-teaching staff is not always systematic. The quality of boarding is excellent, and all pupils are enthusiastic about staying at school overnight.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is excellent. Proprietors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and meet their statutory obligations in full. Leadership and management are excellent in all areas of the school, and the school has made great improvements to its systems for monitoring, tracking and appraisal since the previous inspection. Senior staff have an excellent oversight of the work of the school and clear plans for improvement. Links with parents and carers are excellent, and they are exceptionally happy with the school and what it offers their children.

## **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 best practice in meeting the needs of all pupils is evident in all planning and lessons.
  2. Reduce the use of worksheets in humanities and religious studies, in accordance with the strategy for curricular development.
  3. Improve the quality of record keeping in the recruitment files for some boarding and non-teaching staff.
  4. Increase the use of children's work in displays in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Throughout, pupils reach high standards in their work, in accordance with the school's aims for them to develop their full potential and progress to their senior schools as successful and self-confident individuals. In the EYFS, children enjoyed cooking and were able to name the colours of the French flag in French. In the Nursery, they are confident about counting objects up to ten and sometimes beyond. Reception children confidently add and subtract one to or from a number, making repeating patterns and using interactive whiteboard games to reinforce their learning. They made good use of the outdoor play area for a wide range of activities.
- 3.3 Pupils in the main school have a very wide range of skills that are promoted exceptionally well by the school's carefully planned curriculum. They have well-developed literacy and numeracy skills, and are able to apply these very successfully across different subjects of the curriculum. Their reading abilities are above those expected for their age, and they are able to apply their mathematical skills effectively in other areas, such as science and geography. Pupils are articulate; they express their ideas thoughtfully and coherently. They have a thorough grasp of number work and well-honed information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Pupils with SEND often make exceptional progress because their needs are swiftly identified when they arrive at the school and very effectively supported.
- 3.4 Music, drama and sporting achievements are also excellent, and artwork is of a high quality. Almost 70 per cent of pupils have instrumental tuition and achieve high grades in examinations. In other extra-curricular activities, pupils are successful at county and national levels in rugby, squash and hockey, and perform in theatrical productions in Exeter and nationally. Some have also achieved highly in chess, art and design competitions.
- 3.5 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but on the evidence available it is judged to be high in relation to national age-related expectations. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability, owing to the exciting curriculum and the consistently high quality of teaching. For the last three years all Year 8 pupils have secured places at their first choice of senior school, and in 2011 to 2012 sixty per cent gained scholarships, representing a significant increase on the previous two years. The proportion of scholarships for pupils achieving highly in all areas of the curriculum has risen markedly.
- 3.6 Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They are bright, lively and interested learners who show much enthusiasm and are full of ideas. Pupils try hard to improve the presentation of their work, encouraged by their teachers. They behave exceptionally well in lessons throughout the school. Pupils have excellent relationships with one another and with adults, and work very readily and happily with others. They relish opportunities to work independently and find things out for themselves. They persevere hard with their tasks and respond positively to teachers' marking, correcting their own work, assessing their own achievement and

acting on next steps for improvement. This helps them to make at least good, and often excellent, progress relative to their abilities.

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

- 3.7 Curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 The newly developed baccalaureate enables the school to achieve its aims for a broad curriculum. It is well balanced, with an emphasis on skills, and provided through a range of stimulating activities. It is predominantly topic based in the lower part of the school and contributes significantly to the excellent standards that the pupils achieve because it excites pupils and staff alike. It also promotes high quality assessment. The school continues to provide an excellent educational experience, as it did at the time of the previous inspection.
- 3.9 The newly refurbished library and ICT areas contribute to curricular provision by extending opportunities for independent research and developing critical thinking skills. The curriculum is tailored to the needs of all age groups and abilities. Across the curriculum, pupils with particular needs receive excellent support from the learning support team through early intervention, in-class help and the provision of comprehensive individual education plans. Targets are agreed with the individuals concerned and communicated to all staff. Pupils report that they enjoy the subjects they study and value the opportunities provided.
- 3.10 Opportunities exist for pupils to excel in the many areas of the curriculum, especially in music, art, and sport. The curriculum is supported by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sailing, cooking, the 'big bang' science club and street dance. A range of trips, such as the Year 5 overnight visit to a residential centre and the Year 7 French 'immersion' visit, plays a significant role in widening the pupils' experiences. The curriculum is further enhanced by a number of enrichment days, such as the recent art day for gifted and talented pupils, which are open to local primary schools. Independence and confidence are further developed through initiatives such as the 'cross keys' awards, for the achievements of older pupils.
- 3.11 In meeting the needs of the range of children who attend, the EYFS provision is excellent. The planned educational programmes give children many opportunities to express themselves clearly, confidently and with much enjoyment. The children also perform their own assemblies. Outside visits include a local farm and a 'wellie walk' around the village. Children benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum that includes specialist teaching in French, physical education and music. The children have been introduced to the outdoor woodland classroom as a weekly project in which they all delight. It links successfully into the EYFS curriculum, for example making patterns using autumn leaves and colours. The older and younger Nursery classes regularly play together, as do the Reception and Years 1 and 2 classes, thus ensuring a smooth transition within and from the setting.
- 3.12 An overwhelming majority of parents indicated in the pre-inspection questionnaire that they are happy with the curricular and extra-curricular provision of the school.

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

- 3.13 The quality of teaching is excellent.
- 3.14 Teaching is effective in enabling pupils to make excellent progress and is highly successful in supporting the aim of the school to provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve their potential. The comprehensive schedule of assessment, tracking and target setting in place contributes significantly to the improvement in teaching since the previous inspection. Pupils benefit from the enthusiasm, commitment and secure subject knowledge of their teachers, which foster the pupils' interest at all levels and enhance their learning. The best teaching develops thinking and reasoning skills, through a wide variety of activities, and allows the pupils to achieve at a high level. Resources are very effectively used to generate interest and support pupils' learning. Planned tasks, such as the activities for Year 3 on arrival each day, encourage pupils to become increasingly independent. In a small number of instances there is an over-reliance on commercially produced worksheets in foundation subjects, particularly in the lower part of the school.
- 3.15 Teachers know their pupils well and demonstrate understanding of their needs, both in tutor time and in lessons. They have high expectations for both standards of achievement and of behaviour. The strong relationships between staff and pupils, based on mutual respect, trust, and the courtesy, consideration and common sense that the baccalaureate promotes, result in a positive and purposeful atmosphere in lessons. Teachers are skilful in recapturing pupils' attention on the rare occasions that their concentration may lapse. Emphasis is placed on the quality of presentation of pupils' work.
- 3.16 Teachers successfully create a supportive and yet challenging environment, encouraging pupils to work together. Attractive displays celebrate the pupils' work. Some of the displays of children's work in some EYFS classrooms are of excellent quality, but this is not consistent across the setting.
- 3.17 Marking is excellent, with all teachers marking thoroughly and comprehensively, and providing targets for improvement. Pupils respond well to comments. Assessment information is used effectively for lesson planning in the majority of cases, taking account of individual needs, including those of gifted and talented pupils.
- 3.18 Medium-term planning makes similar effective provision to meet different needs, although it is not consistent through all subjects and year groups. The most successful teaching includes planning for those pupils identified as having SEND or as being gifted and talented. Whilst the majority of teaching shows clear awareness of the needs of these pupils, in a very small number of lessons, different tasks are not clearly defined, the pace is more sedentary and pupils do not progress as well.
- 3.19 Although the four EYFS classrooms are in different buildings, staff work extremely well together as a team and have high expectations of the children, engaging and motivating them successfully. They are knowledgeable about how to promote learning and development, and have a good range of resources to achieve this. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, with emphasis on independent learning and how to make choices. Since the previous inspection, the staff have worked effectively to put into place new systems for assessment and planning, together with a three-year curriculum rolling programme.
- 3.20 Assessment processes are extremely effective in the EYFS. A baseline assessment of each child is conducted within the first six weeks in the setting, and children's

progress and achievement are monitored carefully through commercial programmes and the EYFS profiles. Assessments in the form of photographic evidence and observation notes are recorded each day and used to inform planning for the next stages for individual learning. Excellent support is given to children with SEND or those of high ability by experienced teaching assistants and the head of learning success.

## **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 pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils' spiritual development is strong; confident and self-aware, they appreciate non-material aspects of life, including the religious and philosophical, and are emotionally mature for their age. The pupils appreciate life beyond the physical, in art, drama and music activities, plays, junior and senior choirs, and brass ensembles. During the inspection, the chamber choir performed with much feeling in assembly. High standards in the creative arts enhance the pupils' awareness of beauty and spirituality. Their self-confidence and self-esteem are increased by participation in sports teams, house competitions and other performances.
- 4.3 Pupils have an extremely well-developed sense of right and wrong, and have a deep respect for the codes of good conduct expected of them. They are proud of their school, understanding its rules as well as the moral and ethical values reflected in the many wall displays and inspirational quotations prominently placed in classrooms and elsewhere. The pupils explore moral issues effectively in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) lessons and in thoughtful assemblies. Older pupils undertake debates, such as a recent one on euthanasia, and were able to discuss their views coherently.
- 4.4 Pupils develop extremely well socially and this is a strength of the school. They accept responsibility and show initiative, contributing much to the life of the school community. The school council allows pupils the opportunity to have a say in the workings of their school, and where appropriate, to make a difference. An example is the refurbishment of the girls' changing room. Fund raising for good causes, such as the recent Christmas box appeal, encourages pupils to think of those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils develop political and economic awareness through PSHCE lessons, which for the older year groups involve current affairs, where studying newspapers on issues such as racism are used to develop debating skills and self-expression. Mentors or 'guardians' are appointed to help new pupils settle in. Care and kindness towards others are demonstrated throughout and are evident in lessons, where pupils listen respectfully to each other's views. Pupils demonstrate good citizenship.
- 4.5 Pupils understand and respect other faiths and cultures. Lessons and activities underline this, promoting tolerance and interest in cultures and traditions which are different from their own. Religious studies and PSHCE lessons, and many interesting displays in classrooms and around the school, reflect the wide range of cultural interests and activities, geographical, historical, religious, social and political, for instance excellent work in the art room on tribal masks and a World War 1 artist.
- 4.6 By the time they leave the school, the personal development of the pupils is excellent. The EYFS children are enthusiastic yet polite to their peers, promoted by the 'golden rules' and the 'good to be green' behaviour scheme. They understand how to share, be kind and stay safe. They respond well to praise and encouragement, and find learning fun. They are all happy coming to school and confident about moving on into Year 1.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 This is in accordance with the school's aims to provide an environment where pupils become self-confident, courteous and considerate individuals. Pupils feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to in a school community that fosters responsibility, friendliness, care and a sense of humour.
- 4.9 Staff members know the pupils extremely well and all adults in the school work together to give the pupils exceptionally effective support and guidance. Relationships between staff and pupils are extremely strong and respectful; teachers are both committed and enthusiastic about their pastoral duties. Form tutors have initial responsibility for the pupils' well-being, and pupils commented that they feel very well supported by their teachers and that it is easy to discuss a concern with them.
- 4.10 Pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles. Healthy eating is promoted through their PSHCE lessons and many pupils speak highly of the high standard and variety of food served. A wealth of opportunities exists for pupils to partake in physical activity through games lessons and activities, and the play equipment and swimming pool in the grounds also provide exciting ways to exercise.
- 4.11 The school is extremely effective in promoting good behaviour. Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of codes of behaviour and the staff are excellent role models. Measures are in place to deal with any bullying should it occur and cyber safety is strongly promoted. During the inspection, a visiting police sergeant gave a talk on this subject to pupils in Year 8. A clear philosophy of expectations helps to engender a very strong sense of responsibility and community. Mutual respect for all members of the community is strong.
- 4.12 Considerable care is taken to provide help and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and there is a suitable plan in place to improve access for these pupils.
- 4.13 Various reward systems, such as bonus points, celebrate both academic and personal achievement. In response to the questionnaire, pupils expressed their strong satisfaction with all aspects of school life.
- 4.14 The contribution of the EYFS provision to children's well-being is excellent. Key people are known to all the children and parents, and the system works well. They promote good behaviour and co-operation, and ensure that the children are happy and feel secure in a warm and welcoming environment. The children are exceptionally well behaved and confident when talking to adults.
- 4.15 Children in the EYFS understand the need for staying safe, the meaning of healthy eating and the significance of exercise. For example, in a lesson on developing ball skills, a Reception class discussed the importance of warming up before exercise. The children bring healthy snacks for morning break and a nutritious hot lunch is served every day. In the afternoon, fresh fruit is available.
- 4.16 A 'buddy bench' has been introduced in the EYFS playground. The children know all the staff well across the setting and feel secure and safe. Excellent relationships with staff enable children to respond confidently to all the educational experiences on offer.

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

- 4.17 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.18 Policies and procedures are carefully implemented in accordance with official guidance to ensure that pupils are kept safe from harm. All staff receive training in child protection at the required intervals, so that they have a thorough knowledge of how to respond should the need arise. The designated person and his deputy have undergone training at a higher level and the named governor has had the relevant training. The school is assiduous in ensuring that the safeguarding policy is implemented well, including in the EYFS.
- 4.19 All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. Fire prevention measures are thorough, practised regularly and efficiently recorded. Fire risk assessments have been undertaken for all areas of the school and all fire safety equipment is regularly checked. All staff receive training in fire safety and procedures.
- 4.20 Thorough arrangements for health and safety ensure the safety of all pupils whilst on site or on trips. These are reviewed each term by the health and safety committee. Risk assessments are detailed for all areas of the school, including the EYFS, and for educational visits, and pupils are supervised carefully whilst moving around or playing on site. Appropriate numbers of staff are trained in first aid, and the recording of treatment and medication given is thorough and detailed. Planning and arrangements for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are excellent. The recent appointment of a compliance officer has enabled all procedures to be co-ordinated and centralised. However, the recruitment processes for some boarding and non-teaching staff are not always efficiently recorded in staff files.
- 4.21 Arrangements are in place to ensure that effective medical care is provided for pupils who are ill or injured. The school's admission and attendance registers are appropriately maintained and have been correctly stored for the last three years.

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

- 4.22 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.23 Outcomes for boarders are excellent. Owing to the warm, supportive and caring environment, they are outgoing, self-reliant, open and confident. They make visitors very welcome and are accepting of one another's individuality. There is no sense of inequality or discrimination. Pupils throughout the academic ability range receive support according to their needs.
- 4.24 Boarders are very proud of their house and of the school. They fulfil their house duties willingly. They can express their views through the school council, regular house meetings and suggestion boxes, and they are confident that attention will be paid. Requests about activities and food have been acted on and the school council, with boarding representatives, had considerable input into the newly refurbished boarding accommodation. Year 8 monitors know how to deal with any concerns.
- 4.25 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. The boarding staff team is new to the school, and has worked very hard and been effective in promoting a family atmosphere in the house, which the pupils appreciate. The staff are fully

committed to providing a happy home for boarders, who eat breakfast and dinner together in the housemistress's flat. The inclusion of pets promotes the boarders' sense of the boarding house as a home. Relationships between all members of the house, boarders and staff, are positive and affectionate. Boarders respond to the staff's caring attitudes with excellent behaviour, treating others with courtesy and consideration. Boarders were seen helping and supporting each other. Boarders are confident that staff care for them, know them well and are interested in their welfare and happiness. Staff demonstrate empathy and understanding towards boarders; they have great fun but also maintain boarders' respect. Staff provide boarders with home comforts, and interesting and life-enhancing experiences and skills. Boarders enjoy a wide range of exciting and imaginative activities in the evenings, such as neon light photography and pottery. They also have regular Friday trips out, such as fishing and crabbing. During the inspection, girls had an evening of pampering and boys went to the beach. They also have free time and designated quiet places if they want to be alone.

- 4.26 The boarding house has been refurbished to a very high standard, for example the dormitories and bathrooms, and the accommodation is comfortable. The house is warm, clean and well lit, with pictures and decorations throughout. Maintenance is attended to promptly. There are two dormitories which means that separation by age is not possible, but the spread of ages, with none dominant, coupled with the family atmosphere, means that older boarders support younger ones, and they look up to their elders. Boarders can personalise their dormitories, and walls display writing linked to the school motto 'Believe it, achieve it'.
- 4.27 Boarders have access to the outside world through television, newspapers and magazines, the internet, residential school trips and boarding outings. Boarders contact families by email and telephone: the school ensures that the latter can be done without permission being sought. There is frequent communication between house staff and parents.
- 4.28 Boarders thoroughly enjoy their meals, in school and boarding, and food is plentiful. Menus are nutritious and balanced, and boarders are encouraged to make healthy selections. Appropriate food is provided for those with religious, medical and other dietary needs. All kitchen and boarding staff have been trained in food handling and hygiene. Boarders have access to drinking water throughout the day and regular snacks up to bedtime.
- 4.29 The effectiveness of arrangements for welfare and safeguarding is good. All staff are trained in child protection. Boarders are not aware of any bullying but are confident that incidents would be dealt with effectively. Photographs and contact details of the two independent listeners are posted around the school and in the boarding house and their role is well known but there are no other details of help-lines and no reference to the Children's Rights Director. The care for ill or injured boarders is effective and all medical policies and procedures are in place. Nevertheless, the physical provision is limited as there is only one bed in the matron's surgery, and no separate toilet facilities. Boarding staff are all trained in paediatric first aid and the administration of medicine.
- 4.30 Although recruitment procedures meet legal requirements, record keeping in the recruitment files for some boarding and non-teaching staff is sometimes untidy and difficult to follow.

- 4.31 Boarders know who is on duty and who to contact during the night, and an appropriate procedure in the event that any pupil who goes missing is in place. Boarders have access to the housemistress's flat but clear guidelines are in place to ensure their safety and her privacy. Boarding accommodation is secure and visitors are supervised by staff. The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the boarding provision is excellent. The leadership has a clear vision for boarding, which enhances the boarding experience for all. This has already proved successful. The boarding team members work very well together. They have a diversity of skills and interests which benefit the boarders, and are enthusiastic and committed to providing them with a fulfilled and happy experience. The house routine is very well organised.
- 4.32 All boarding staff have job descriptions and have had induction and fire marshal training. Some appraisals have already taken place. All staff say that the school supports training for professional development. Boarding staffing cover is good and enables boarders' group and individual activities to take place. There has been improvement in the quality of boarding since the previous inspection.
- 4.33 The boarders' and parents' questionnaire responses show considerable satisfaction with boarding. Parents are happy with every aspect of boarding, while pupils' single concern is that they cannot always make drinks and snacks for themselves when they want. Inspectors found that food and drink provided by staff are plentiful and always readily available.

## **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 proprietors have enabled the school to improve further since the previous inspection, through judicious senior appointments and prudent targeting of funds. Careful management of resources has meant that the school has been able to undertake a systematic programme of refurbishment of the premises. Recent improvements to shower facilities have been greatly appreciated by pupils, while imminent plans include the expansion of car parking spaces.
- 5.3 Recruitment of dynamic and forward thinking senior staff has enabled the proprietors to ensure that the curriculum and educational experiences for pupils are fresh, stimulating and relevant to their needs. The proprietors fulfil their statutory responsibilities extremely well, so that all legal requirements are met. Safeguarding is a priority and is reviewed by proprietors on a termly basis.
- 5.4 In order to regulate and review their activities, the proprietors have in place a Board of Reference, which includes parents and interested professionals, to act in a consultative and advisory capacity. This arrangement works extremely well, enabling the proprietors to hear different views and parents to have an alternative channel for theirs. The chair of the Board of Reference takes a keen interest in the EYFS, visiting and meeting with staff regularly.
- 5.5 Through the work of the Board of Reference, and through regular meetings with the leadership as part of the Executive Management Team, the proprietors have an extremely good insight into the work of the school. They have ensured that matters for attention arising from the previous inspection have been thoroughly addressed.

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

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management is excellent.
- 5.7 As a result of the teamwork, organisation and vision of senior staff, the school is extremely successful in meeting its aims, providing a broad curriculum, excellent teaching and pastoral care, and an environment where pupils can feel secure and develop their full potential. Leaders take their responsibilities seriously and ensure that pupils are kept safe through the effective implementation of the safeguarding policy.
- 5.8 The academic team of senior leaders gives excellent direction to the school and monitors its work carefully. The team has established a regular and systematic programme for work scrutiny, review of planning and staff appraisal. Regular formal and informal lesson observations are undertaken, the latter also involving members of the Board of Reference. Monitoring and appraisal were found to be inconsistent and undeveloped at the time of the previous inspection but have been thoroughly addressed since then, leading to good improvement. Other areas for improvement from the previous inspection have also been energetically tackled. The quality of marking and assessment is now exceptionally good, and pupils are fully involved in evaluating their own learning and the next steps for improvement. There are some

excellent examples too of support and challenge for pupils in lessons, so that those with SEND are helped very effectively to succeed, while gifted and talented pupils are stretched to do their best. However, this excellent practice is not consistent in all lessons.

- 5.9 The introduction of the St Peter's Baccalaureate has brought innovation and excitement into the curriculum, motivating staff and pupils alike. Similarly, the establishment of baseline assessment systems has enabled the school to track the progress of its cohorts and identify when additional strategies for success are needed. The quality of the school's self-evaluation, shared with proprietors and Board of Reference members, means that the school is well aware of its strengths and weaknesses, and is able to set realistic and achievable priorities for improvement.
- 5.10 The school has been very successful in recruiting exceptional staff who are given every opportunity to develop their skills and their careers, and are mentored to settle into their roles quickly. Safeguarding training is rigorous, and staff are exceptionally attentive to pupils' welfare and well-being. This is evident in the excellent quality of relationships and the extent to which pupils and their parents and carers are happy with the school and all it has to offer.
- 5.11 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the EYFS provision is excellent. The heads of the EYFS and the junior school have worked well together to create the efficient systems now in place. The required policies, risk assessments and procedures are in place to safeguard all children equally, in a warm, welcoming, safe and secure environment. Staff are well qualified and have appropriate arrangements for continuous professional development.
- 5.12 Links with parents are excellent. The school has developed this partnership extremely well. The leadership is at the forefront of promoting an open and accessible culture, where parents feel welcome. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly supportive of all aspects of the school's provision. They were particularly enthusiastic about the opportunities on offer, the high standards of behaviour and the ease with which they can communicate with the school. Parents new to the school are provided with comprehensive information through a prospectus, open days and tours with the headmaster and current pupils. Children are invited in for taster days prior to entry, which parents appreciate.
- 5.13 The leadership's visibility and accessibility are outstanding features of this effective partnership and the school operates an 'open door' policy. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the life of the school, supporting matches, and attending concerts, plays, sports and speech days. Weekly newsletters, an annual magazine and an informative website all serve to keep the parents up-to-date on events and achievements. Parents' consultation meetings are held twice a year, and parents are given every opportunity to meet with staff at other times should they feel the need. Reports, which are of good quality, give a clear picture of what has been studied, progress made and areas in which the pupils might improve.
- 5.14 Partnership with parents of children in the EYFS is a strength of the setting. When they are ready, children take home reading books each day, and parents also have a special book to record activities at home. They appreciate the numeracy and language workshops provided, and the suggestions of ways in which they can support their children at home. Interesting links with the local community include

visits from a beekeeper, and from a local vicar to assemblies in the lower part of the school.

- 5.15 Parents are encouraged to be involved in a range of social and fund-raising events, such as a summer ball, Burn's night and school discos, through the Friends of St Peter's committee, which regularly raises substantial sums for projects for the school, for the refurbishment of facilities such as the library and squash courts, and for charities. The committee meets regularly to plan future projects and events, and members run the school uniform shop. A recently held grandparents' day was well supported, and grandparents enjoyed seeing many aspects of school life.
- 5.16 The school handles the concerns of parents with care, and any matters are dealt with swiftly and informally. Parents are well informed about the procedures to follow should they wish to make a complaint.

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