



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

LUDGROVE SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Ludgrove School

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------|-----------|
| Full Name of School | Ludgrove School | | | |
| DfE Number | 872/6002 | | | |
| Registered Charity Number | 309100 | | | |
| Address | Ludgrove School Ludgrove Wokingham Berkshire RG40 3AB | | | |
| Telephone Number | 0118 978 9881 | | | |
| Fax Number | 0118 979 2973 | | | |
| Email Address | office@ludgroveschool.co.uk | | | |
| Headmaster | Mr Simon Barber | | | |
| Chairman of Governors | Mr Philip Edey | | | |
| Age Range | 8 to 13 | | | |
| Total Number of Pupils | 185 | | | |
| Gender of Pupils | Boys | | | |
| Numbers by Age | 8-11: | 108 | 11-13: | 77 |
| Number of Day Pupils | Total: | 0 | | |
| Number of Boarders | Total: | 185 | | |
| | Full: | 185 | Weekly: | 0 |
| Inspection Dates | 10 Mar 2014 to 13 Mar 2014 | | | |

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 2009.

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, as amended. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website 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.

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', 'requires improvement' 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, 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 David Horn

Mr Alan Laurent

Mr Howard Tuckett

Mrs Anne Longton

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding

CONTENTS

| | Page |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL | 1 |
| 2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL | 2 |
| (a) Main findings | 2 |
| (b) Action points | 3 |
| (i) Compliance with regulatory requirements | 3 |
| (ii) Recommendations for further improvement | 3 |
| 3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS | 4 |
| (a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning | 4 |
| (b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils) | 5 |
| (c) The contribution of teaching | 6 |
| 4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT | 8 |
| (a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils | 8 |
| (b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care | 9 |
| (c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety | 9 |
| (d) The quality of boarding | 10 |
| 5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT | 12 |
| (a) The quality of governance | 12 |
| (b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians | 12 |

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Ludgrove School is a boarding school for boys aged from eight to thirteen years. It was founded in 1892 in Cockfosters, in north London, and moved to its present site on the outskirts of Wokingham in 1937. Housed in a converted mid-Victorian building, the school is situated in 130 acres of countryside that includes gardens, woodland, playing fields and a golf course. In 1972 it became a charitable trust administered by a board of governors. Boarding facilities are housed within the main school building. The boys' dormitories are situated entirely on the first floor, while classrooms are spread over the ground floor and in adjacent purpose-built facilities. Since the previous inspection, additional amenities have been developed. These include an artificial turf pitch, a customised medical centre, and the refurbishment of changing rooms, dormitories and kitchens. Historically, the school has usually had two headmasters, however in 2013 the present incumbent took over sole responsibility for the running of the school.
- 1.2 The school aims to develop pupils' confidence in a caring, supportive environment, where they are valued as individuals and learn to live as a community. It seeks to encourage pupils to develop in an atmosphere of high achievement, happiness, good manners and kindness.
- 1.3 A total of 185 boys attend the school: 108 in Years 4 to 6 and 77 in Years 7 and 8. The school has identified 28 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive specialist support. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Six pupils come from families who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and receive specialist support with their spoken and written English.
- 1.4 There is no entrance examination or interview for pupils joining the school and all those registered are invited to an open day where they engage in activities and meet the leadership. The large majority of pupils join the school in Year 4; later admissions are subject to availability. Almost all of the pupils in Year 8 move to independent senior schools. The ability range of the pupils is wide, but overall the ability profile of the school is above the national average. Pupils are drawn mainly from the surrounding area and come from professional and business families. A few come from abroad, mainly Europe. The majority are from a white British or white Western European background.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its NC equivalence are shown in the following table.

| School | NC name |
|-------------------|---------|
| VIK, VIJ | Year 4 |
| IVPH, IVB, IVD | Year 5 |
| III, IIIH, IIIM | Year 6 |
| Shell, Remove, II | Year 7 |
| I, IA, IB, IC | Year 8 |

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school is extremely successful in meeting its aims and provides pupils with an excellent start to their education. It identifies and cultivates potential and supports pupils' particular needs, enabling them to become well-rounded and well-balanced individuals. The curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities are excellent, providing pupils with many occasions to use their skills and knowledge across a range of subjects and activities. High standards and breadth characterise extra-curricular activities. Pupils are well versed in communication skills, including information and communication technology (ICT), and progress in literacy and numeracy is excellent. They have a good facility in ICT, although opportunities for developing their skills are restricted by inconsistent teaching and limited provision in this area. Many pupils gain places and awards to selective senior schools. Pupils' excellent achievements are reinforced by their eagerness for learning, by a particularly vibrant curriculum and by good teaching. The range of teaching styles is, however, inconsistent: where teaching is appropriately diverse and challenging, it stimulates pupils' thirst for learning and successfully fosters independent and co-operative learning skills.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent. They respond very well to the family atmosphere of the school's community and the excellent boarding experience. Pupils enjoy high quality boarding facilities and activities, and are extremely well cared for. They have a strong awareness of themselves as individuals and of the wider world beyond, together with a clearly defined sense of right and wrong. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority expressed dissatisfaction regarding the fairness of sanctions and opportunities to express their views, although those engaged in discussion with inspectors did not substantiate these views. Pupils are very proud of being part of the school community, and have a strong awareness of other cultures and society as a whole. They care for one another and are socially adept, friendly and polite to visitors. Pastoral care and arrangements for pupils' safeguarding, welfare, health and safety are excellent and fully reflect the school aims.
- 2.3 Governance is excellent throughout the school, reinforcing and supporting pupils' excellent achievements and personal development. A positive response to the recommendations of the previous inspection has ensured compliance with all regulations. Governors have a very clear oversight of the school, including the boarding arrangements, and have continued to invest wisely in the school's future development. Senior leadership provides a clear vision for the school, with a strong emphasis on developing pupils' emotional well-being, supported by all staff. Occasionally, the roles of responsibility at middle management level are not well defined. Leadership encourages staff to succeed and to value pupils' contributions. Links with parents are excellent. Questionnaire responses indicated that parents are extremely pleased with the school's pastoral and academic provision, and are thoroughly supportive of what it achieves for 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 2013.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Develop a greater range of teaching styles to further challenge pupils in their learning.
 2. Ensure that management roles of responsibility are clearly defined.
 3. Develop further the provision and teaching of ICT across the school.

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 Pupils are very well educated in accordance with the school's aims of preparing them to meet the challenges at the next stage of their education with confidence and good humour. Throughout the school, pupils have strong literacy and numeracy skills. These are effectively applied across the curriculum in a wide variety of different contexts. Pupils apply scientific thinking to make predictions in new situations, and have good practical skills to test their theories. They make good use of ICT to support their learning and they are able to present information in a variety of formats. Pupils write imaginatively and with an inventive use of written language. They read text proficiently and recognise well-structured and effective writing from each other's prose. They speak with confidence and clarity, respecting the opinions and ideas of others. Their observational skills are honed through exploratory work, for example on electrical circuits and finding angles in a polygon.
- 3.3 Pupils thoroughly enjoy participating in an exceptional range of games and activities. In recent years, teams have competed to a high level in regional competitions in hockey and cricket, and several boys have been successful in national preparatory school athletics. Pupils perform with much proficiency and confidence in musical activities such as the chapel choir and school concerts, as well as further afield with professional groups in London. Their artistic skills are demonstrated to a high degree through their paintings, carpentry and ceramics. They participate enthusiastically in drama lessons and rehearsals for whole-school and smaller productions. Pupils achieve success in their individual instrumental and speech and drama examinations, where a substantial proportion gain passes with high marks.
- 3.4 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against a fixed national norm, but on the evidence available it is judged to be good in relation to national age-related expectations. Pupils' progress is excellent throughout the school in relation to their ability. This enables them to attain the level required for success in competitive entry examinations to senior schools, with a significant number gaining scholarships.
- 3.5 Pupils with SEND or EAL make a high rate of progress in mathematics and reading, due to the excellent support they receive from specialist staff. Pupils who are particularly able make good progress because questioning and extension tasks support and extend their individual needs appropriately. Their attitudes to learning are excellent and they thrive at school in an atmosphere of honest endeavour and enjoyment. The excellent relationships forged with their teachers and with each other have a positive impact on their achievements.
- 3.6 Pupils organise themselves efficiently in practical subjects within curriculum time and during extra-curricular activities. They listen attentively to each other and to their teachers and are capable of working successfully in small groups and pairs, relishing opportunities to test and extend themselves. Pupils of all ages are keen to learn and commit themselves to producing work of the highest standards, taking pride in their achievements. From their first year at school, pupils approach tasks with enthusiasm and persevere when they are challenged. They stated that they find their work interesting and enjoy working independently on tasks.

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 curriculum has considerable breadth and is well balanced, fully covering the key areas of learning. It is highly motivating and strongly supports the development of the pupils' individual talents, in line with the school's aims. It provides an excellent foundation on which the pupils' achievements and learning are based, and makes a significant contribution to the life of all pupils at the school. The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection. In response to a recommendation at that time, the curriculum now includes personal, social and health education (PSHE). In addition, weekly drama lessons for Years 4 to 7 have been included and Mandarin is taught in Year 4.
- 3.9 Pupils develop confidence in speaking and performing through a wide range of creative and performing arts covering drama, art, carpentry, ceramics and music. Latin is introduced in Year 5 and older pupils pursue a two-year scholarship and Common Entrance course in Greek. In Year 8 there is the option of a study skills activity in preparation for Common Entrance. Games form a key part of the school day for every pupil and are taught in the afternoons. The teaching of physical education (PE) is enhanced by specialist swimming tuition in the school's purpose-built pool.
- 3.10 The setting of pupils into ability groups from Year 5 helps to ensure that all receive the support and challenge they need. Curricular support for pupils with SEND or EAL is thorough. Clear targets are established in their pupil profiles and allow their needs to be met with good support in mainstream lessons as well as through individual support out of class.
- 3.11 Curricular documentation is comprehensive and frequently reviewed to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils and covers all requirements. Information and communication technology provision is confined to one computer room that is used as a teaching aid to support some lessons in mathematics, science, French and geography. Other subjects make less use of the facility.
- 3.12 The curriculum is supplemented with a comprehensive schedule of school visits to local and national places of interest such as museums, art galleries, the theatre and concerts. Additionally, sessions are arranged with regular visitors to the school, including authors and performing theatre groups.
- 3.13 Extra-curricular provision at the school is excellent. This range and depth of provision stimulate the pupils' interest and fully support their personal and social development. Activities, many of which are available at the weekends, include badminton, clay pigeon shooting, golf, mountain biking and bridge. Year 8 pupils undertake an annual adventure trip to Dartmoor where activities include climbing, caving and kayaking.
- 3.14 Curricular links with the local and wider community include the availability of the school's cricket pitches and golf course to local friends of the school in the holidays, and the swimming pool is used each week by a local school in term time. Parents' and pupils' responses to the questionnaires indicated a very high level of satisfaction with the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.16 Teaching is effective in promoting pupils' progress and supports the aims of the school, enabling the pupils to develop within a culture of high achievement. It allows all pupils, including those with SEND or EAL and the particularly able, to learn effectively and progress well.
- 3.17 Teachers contribute excellent subject knowledge as well as enthusiasm to their lessons. Consequently, lessons are stimulating and engage pupils' interest. These lessons are often characterised by good planning and involve a variety of teaching approaches that challenge all pupils. A high number of lessons are over directed by the teacher and where this is the case, they lack sufficient variety, pace and challenge for the pupils, inhibiting the development of their full potential. This feature of teaching has not altered significantly since the previous inspection.
- 3.18 Classrooms are well resourced and are stocked with good quality equipment and textbooks to support teaching and learning. An attractive and well-stocked library is in constant use by pupils reading and researching during the day and in the evening. The teaching of ICT has developed further but it is not often used for research or to present information. When it is employed effectively by teachers the pupils' learning improves rapidly, for example in a science lesson where they used a computer simulation to build electrical circuits. Teachers make effective use of praise, which motivates pupils to make further effort. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very positive, and pupils are confident that they make good progress due to the help and advice they receive. Year 8 pupils were happy to report that they have felt able to make good academic progress due to the contribution and support of their teachers. A few pupils felt that their homework does not help them to learn. From scrutiny of work books, inspectors found some homework to be undemanding and repetitive.
- 3.19 Teachers responsible for SEND provide comprehensive information about individual learning strengths and weaknesses to subject teachers, in order that tasks may be adapted or modified where appropriate. The small number of pupils with EAL are similarly well supported. Teaching is most successful when planning draws on this advice, as well as using assessment information for all pupils in the class, so that lessons offer suitably varied levels of challenge. Where teachers were seen not to make sufficient use of this information, pupils with SEND or EAL made less progress.
- 3.20 Lesson planning is good and has improved since the previous inspection. It reflects previous levels of achievement and sets the timed outline for each lesson. Occasionally, learning objectives are described to pupils as tasks to be carried out, rather than what is to be learned, so that they are not always clear how to measure their success. Questioning of pupils in lessons to test their understanding is carefully targeted to individual abilities and fosters interest, encouraging them to think at a deeper level. Careful time management allows for a plenary session to draw learning together and affords pupils time to evaluate their learning.
- 3.21 Assessment procedures for all subjects are thorough. Standardised testing has been introduced and the school is building a database to promote the successful planning of future lessons and topics. Results are stored electronically so that all staff can track the progress of individuals and cohorts of pupils. Teachers are

encouraged to challenge anomalies in pupils' performance and to plan lessons accordingly. Since the previous inspection, a marking policy has been introduced that is monitored by senior management. Pupils reported that they find teachers' comments very helpful in developing their assignments further and helping them to improve.

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 The high standards of pupils' personal development successfully reflect the school's aims and are enhanced further by pupils' strong enjoyment of boarding. Across all ages, pupils demonstrate that they have high self-esteem. They show strong self-awareness and are appreciative of support from staff. Self-confidence is promoted effectively amongst the pupils, who are encouraged to form and voice opinions. In lessons they listen responsively to each other, developing high levels of self-assurance and a sense of personal values. Emotional maturity in older boys is demonstrated both in their willingness to volunteer information during interviews, and, for example, in their clear understanding of issues of discrimination observed in a PSHE lesson.
- 4.3 Pupils display a clear sense of right and wrong, and a desire for fair play. They demonstrated strong moral awareness in interviews, when they discussed the school's rewards and sanctions system. A very small minority indicated concerns in response to the questionnaire about the fairness of school sanctions. However, those interviewed by the inspectors spoke very positively about the rewards and sanctions system. Pupils are open to the views of others and express their own opinions confidently and with great clarity, for example whilst preparing a debate on the subject of competitive sports.
- 4.4 Pupils' social awareness is very well developed. They readily take turns, collaborate with each other, make choices and accept each other's differences. Older pupils are unfailingly polite, standing aside and opening doors for adults. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to take on positions of responsibility appropriate to their age. These include formal roles such as becoming a representative on the school council or informally, when assisting in clearing the tables after lunch. In recent years money has been raised for diverse charities such as Help for Heroes, Guide Dogs for the Blind and New Life Mexico, an organisation supporting vulnerable children and young people in Mexico through social, health and education programmes. During a weekend, all pupils took part in a three-legged race to raise money for Sports Relief, showing a keen sense of responsibility to the wider community and those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils develop an appreciation of service to others when performing their 'daily chore' which might be tidying duty, recycling or helping the staff. Their economic and political awareness is promoted through a daily newspaper review and participation in the weekly 'front page quiz'. Younger pupils begin to learn how to become responsible members of a modern democratic society in PSHE lessons.
- 4.5 Pupils demonstrate an excellent cultural understanding and are mutually tolerant and respectful in their relationships. They develop a good awareness of other cultures and faiths. In a religious studies lesson pupils prepared a newspaper article for Ramadan. Their cultural awareness is further developed through the annual Year 7 residential trip to France, where they immerse themselves in both the language and the culture.
- 4.6 Older pupils show themselves to be confident young individuals who look forward to the next stage of their education, acknowledging a need to be ready for this and to

contribute to society as a whole. By the time they reach Year 8, pupils display excellent personal development and maturity.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 All members of staff throughout the school community support the pastoral care of the pupils. The caring manner of address used by adults towards the pupils is considerate and is reflected in the evident respect and warmth shown by the pupils towards the staff. A culture of kindness pervades the school and pupils describe the school as an 'enormous family.'
- 4.9 Pupils are confident that they can approach any member of staff with a concern should they ever feel the need, and understand that other adults, including the school counsellor and independent listener, are also available. Pupils confirm that incidents of bullying are rare and always dealt with quickly and efficiently. Effective records of all significant pastoral issues and sanctions are monitored and tracked, and a daily staff meeting informs members of staff of current pastoral matters pertaining to individual pupils.
- 4.10 The quality, variety and quantity of food provided are excellent and are appreciated by the large majority of pupils. Menus are published each day and those with special diets are catered for separately. Since the previous inspection a salad bar has been made available to all pupils, providing an additional course or an alternative to the main meal.
- 4.11 Pupils say that they feel safe at school during the day and at night time. During interviews and in less formal conversations, they said that they are very well looked after and well known by all the staff, including catering staff, matrons and nurses. Pupils understand the importance of taking regular exercise and a healthy diet. They report enjoying an energetic daily routine in which activity plays a key part.
- 4.12 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.13 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.14 The school ensures that its safeguarding arrangements comply with statutory requirements and are appropriately implemented. All staff have recently undergone safeguarding training and the designated staff are trained at the required higher level. The school ensures that checks on staff appointments are carried out and recorded correctly. In ICT lessons pupils are alerted to e-safety issues, and all use of the school computer network is carefully monitored.
- 4.15 Measures to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards are robust. Evacuation drills are carried out at appropriate intervals and at different times of the day and night. Fire safety equipment is checked regularly and portable electrical appliance testing is undertaken annually by appropriately qualified staff.
- 4.16 School equipment is regularly maintained and records are thorough. The school has a comprehensive risk assessment policy and a thorough range of risk assessments is in place, covering fire, facilities, the school grounds, activities and school trips.

- 4.17 Arrangements to promote health and safety are effective and include provision for pupils who are ill, injured or have SEND. Medicines are kept in a securely locked cabinet and are administered using appropriate procedures that are suitably recorded.
- 4.18 The admission and attendance registers are well maintained and correctly stored. Suitable arrangements are established to monitor the whereabouts of boarders during the day and night.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.19 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.20 Outcomes for pupils in the context of boarding provision are excellent. They develop confidence and independence from the nurturing environment of the school and relationships with each other are caring and positive. Pupils from different cultural backgrounds are welcomed into the school and soon settle into the school community. Pupils have pleasant and constructive relationships with the boarding staff and feel comfortable when asking them for support or guidance. They feel that they are able to take responsibility for themselves in comfortable and friendly surroundings. They thoroughly enjoy their boarding experience, and genuine happiness and a sense of fun are clearly in evidence. Pupils are self-assured and able to express their views with great maturity.
- 4.21 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. The pastoral care of the pupils is overseen by a team of matrons, the school nurse and duty teaching staff. Staffing levels are generous and this ensures that the pupils' needs are understood extremely well. Pupils entering the school in Year 4 have a dedicated matron and all new pupils are given a 'shadow' who provides support for the first few weeks of term. Helpful guidance on boarding routines is provided and pupils know that there is an adult who can be approached should they have a concern. Pupils are aware of the independent listener and her role; her contact details, along with other appropriate helplines, are displayed on the boarding notice board. Pupils are encouraged to maintain regular contact with their families. Parents are aware of set times when they can contact their children using a matron's mobile telephone and pupils may telephone home during the day. In addition, they may use the school's computer room to contact parents by email.
- 4.22 The medical centre is conveniently situated in the main corridor of the boarding accommodation and provides round-the-clock cover from suitably qualified staff. Additional medical support is provided by a local general practitioner who holds a weekly surgery at the school, in addition to providing an efficient on-call service. Medication is stored centrally for all pupils and effective systems ensure that it is administered safely. Robust policies and documentation support all the necessary requirements. Medical centre staff ensure that provision is made to isolate unwell pupils for care if necessary. Information sharing is carefully monitored and parents are always informed if their children become unwell.
- 4.23 The nutritional needs of the pupils are very well met and locally sourced food is prepared at mealtimes. A small minority of pupils indicated dissatisfaction in responses to the questionnaire with the availability of snacks outside mealtimes. Inspectors found that fruit is provided at breaktimes and that evening snacks are offered to all pupils before their bedtime routine. Drinking water is available from the water fountains situated around the school.

- 4.24 The boarding accommodation is suitable for the number of boarders and is light, airy and sufficiently warm. Pupils are arranged in dormitories according to age, and Year 8 monitors manage daily routines under the supervision of the boarding staff. Pupils are provided with bright and homely surroundings that they may personalise with photographs and posters. An efficient housekeeping and laundry service encourages a clean, hygienic environment. The recent introduction of matrons working in the evenings provides pupils with consistent and comprehensive care to meet their physical, emotional and pastoral needs.
- 4.25 At weekends the pupils benefit from the rural situation of the school and its excellent facilities. They can use the sports hall, swim or take part in a wide range of other organised activities. They also report that they have ample free time during the week for quieter, more reflective moments, if they wish. The large common room provides a choice of indoor activities, for example table tennis, and is equipped with a television. In the evening, pupils have free time in the dormitory areas and may choose to play card games or listen to staff reading to them. They regularly attend a year group assembly in the chapel during the week and alternative arrangements are made for those wishing to worship at other religious venues at the weekend.
- 4.26 The effectiveness of the arrangements for safeguarding and welfare in boarding is excellent. Robust policies and procedures are now in place and adhered to when recruiting staff. All boarding and other staff are trained in child protection and have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. Regular fire drills, equipment checks and risk assessments are undertaken, covering all the boarding areas. Regular roll calls are taken throughout the day and evening.
- 4.27 Appropriate policies are included in the staff handbook regarding the approach to behaviour, sanctions and rewards. Any incidence of poor behaviour in the boarding house is managed swiftly and efficiently. All issues are recorded in order to track patterns of behaviour, and a daily communication book in the boarding area ensures effective liaison amongst staff. A reward system to encourage positive behaviour and tidy dormitories is monitored fortnightly. Pupils confirm that bullying is not a concern amongst them, and they know how to recognise it and what to do should it occur.
- 4.28 The leadership and management of boarding are excellent. Senior boarding managers provide effective guidance to all staff, resulting in the efficient and smooth running of boarding throughout the school. Staff receive appropriate induction, supervision and annual appraisals, in addition to regular mandatory training that supports their role. Record keeping and documentation are accurate and of a high standard, whilst all the recommended policies linked to boarding have been established and fully implemented. There are clear plans for the ongoing review and development of the boarding accommodation and provision.
- 4.29 In their questionnaire responses, pupils and their parents expressed great satisfaction with most aspects of boarding. A small minority of pupils expressed dissatisfaction with the balance of free time and activities, and felt that their belongings are not always secure. Inspectors found no evidence to substantiate these views; these concerns were discussed with many of the pupils in formal discussions and informally, and procedures and policies were checked. Previous recommendations have all been fully addressed.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Governors are committed to promoting the aims and ethos of the school, and maintain strong oversight of all aspects of its operation through an effective structure of sub-committees that inform their termly meetings. Far-sighted financial management has supported the school and facilitated its successful growth and development over recent years. Substantial development of the school's premises and facilities has included new medical facilities, a new all-weather pitch, and refurbishment of boarding areas and learning support classrooms. Governors have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and combine successfully with its leadership to share a clear vision for the school's future development. The range and breadth of governors' professional expertise have further developed since the previous inspection.
- 5.3 Governors make regular visits to the school, including a recent afternoon where they took part in a child protection briefing, observed some pupils taking part in sports training and met the staff. In addition, governors make visits to the school to support functions such as plays and sports events. Regular reports from the senior leadership team and from the leadership allow the governors to monitor and evaluate the school's work and academic standards, and to discuss and update its strategic development. Minutes of committee meetings indicate that governors have a clear understanding of their monitoring role and ensure the accountability of the school's leadership.
- 5.4 New governors receive effective induction to their role which includes safeguarding and child protection training. Further training for the governing body is planned for the future. The governing body fully meets its statutory obligations. It reviews the school's safeguarding procedures annually, and is fully engaged in the process of evaluating the effectiveness of the school's policies. Previous non-compliance has been appropriately rectified.

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 good.
- 5.6 As a result of the cohesive teamwork, good organisation and clear vision of the leadership, the school is highly successful in meeting its aims of enabling pupils to grow and develop in a happy, caring environment, to explore and expand their potential, and to learn to develop an awareness and concern for others around them. Leaders take seriously their accountability to the pupils, parents, staff and governors. Leaders' high expectations and positive direction are reflected in the strong commitment and dedication of staff, the excellent pastoral care they provide and the high quality of the pupils' achievements. Since the previous inspection, the leadership has continued to cultivate the affirmative relationships that characterise the school and are much appreciated by parents.

- 5.7 The senior leadership team gives firm and positive direction to the school and monitors its work prudently. It has recently established a systematic programme of scrutiny of pupils' work, review of planning and staff appraisal that has enabled the school to develop and make good progress since the previous inspection. More frequent lesson observations are undertaken by senior managers outside the appraisal process which enable all staff to become involved with professional development and progression. An observation week provided the opportunity for staff to observe other teachers' lessons, and to share and discuss teaching strategy and methodology. Leadership and management encourage staff to be imaginative and diverse in their approaches to teaching. Whilst some excellent practice was evident in lessons, this was not consistently observed and has not progressed significantly since the previous inspection. Areas of development have recently included enhanced systems for tracking pupils' progress and disseminating data to staff. This is beginning to prove valuable for pupils with SEND or EAL. The development of an effective system for the monitoring of short-term planning is now well established; this was a recommendation from the previous inspection.
- 5.8 The quality of the senior management's self-evaluation, shared with the governors, means that the school is aware of its strengths and weaknesses, and is able to set realistic and achievable priorities for improvement. The leadership ensures that good quality department resources are provided and senior managers are responsible for maintaining them to a good standard. Subject leaders are not advised of departmental budgets, which has made planning future curriculum requirements difficult. Management roles occasionally overlap and lack sufficient distinctiveness; job descriptions for senior staff are generic in style, without adequate detail or clarity of purpose.
- 5.9 The school has been very successful in engaging high quality staff, who are given good opportunities to advance their talents and careers, and are inducted into their roles quickly and effectively. Appropriate policies have been drawn up that cover all aspects of school life. The responsibility for their implementation in the day-to-day life of the school is carried out conscientiously by senior staff. Regular contact is maintained with the local area designated officer, and all staff and volunteers are trained appropriately in their roles in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Safer recruitment procedures are followed carefully in the appointment of staff, governors and volunteers.
- 5.10 The school's excellent relationship with parents is based on depth of understanding and genuine care for the pupils and their families. In their questionnaire responses, parents' views of the school were overwhelmingly positive. In addition, parents who spoke to inspectors informally were extremely supportive of the school and spoke warmly of the friendliness of the staff and the vibrant family atmosphere. The school maintains an attractive and informative website that provides detailed information to parents of current and prospective pupils. This is updated regularly with photographs, reports on events, match and activity details, dates and times of future planned functions and a weekly newsletter.
- 5.11 Communication between the school and home is prompt and effective. Senior staff and class tutors make themselves available to parents before or after school and at the weekend. Teachers for SEND and EAL make regular direct contact with parents where necessary in order to discuss specific educational matters pertaining to individual pupils. Records show that any complaints are dealt with thoroughly and in accordance with the complaints procedure.

- 5.12 Parents indicate that they are fully informed of their children's work and progress at school and that the reporting system is both informative and helpful. Pupils receive 'orders' every few weeks that provide them with clear information on how they have progressed in their school work and clear targets on how they can improve further. Copies of these are sent to parents electronically. At the end of term, parents receive a full written report including general comments covering pupils' attitude to work and overall well-being, with more specific comments on levels of achievement in separate subjects. Since the previous inspection, where they were judged to be non-compliant with regulatory requirements, the school's reports to parents now include detailed feedback on ICT, music, games and PE.
- 5.13 Parents are able to attend a parents' morning held during the first half of each academic year. They may also choose to meet class and subject teachers at the start and end of weekends when pupils are allowed home. Most parents live within commutable distances from the school, which enables them to attend carol services, matches, concerts and other school functions. The recently formed Ludgrove School Foundation is committed to supporting the future development of the school. Parents visiting the school are always made to feel welcome.

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