



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**ORWELL PARK SCHOOL**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Orwell Park School

Full Name of School	<b>Orwell Park School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>935/6005</b>		
EYFS Number	<b>EY360462</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>310481</b>		
Address	<b>Orwell Park School</b> <b>Nacton</b> <b>Ipswich</b> <b>Suffolk</b> <b>IP10 0ER</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01473 659225</b>		
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Email Address	<b>headmaster@orwellpark.co.uk</b>		
Headmaster	<b>Mr Adrian Brown</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr James Davison</b>		
Age Range	<b>2½ to 13</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>280</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (162 boys; 118 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	2-3 (EYFS):	<b>22</b>	5-11: <b>160</b>
	4-5 (EYFS):	<b>16</b>	11-13: <b>82</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>146</b>	
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>134</b>	
	Full:	<b>19</b>	Flexi: <b>115</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Vikki Wiggins</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection Dates	<b>14 Oct 2014 to 17 Oct 2014</b>		

## PREFACE

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

Professor Pat Preedy	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Sylvia Chetwood	Team Inspector (Academic Deputy, IAPS school)
Mrs Amanda Stables	Team Inspector (Academic Assistant Head, IAPS school)
Mr Richard Yeates	Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mr Richard Gibbs	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Deborah Buckenham	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(a) Main findings</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(b) Action points</b>	<b>3</b>
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	3
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>4</b>
(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
<b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>8</b>
(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	10
(d) The quality of boarding	11
<b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>13</b>
(a) The quality of governance	13
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	13
<b>6 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	<b>16</b>
(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	16
(b) The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being	16
(c) The leadership and management of the early years provision	17
(d) The overall quality and standards of the early years provision	17

## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Orwell Park School is a co-educational day and boarding preparatory school for pupils aged from 2½ to 13. It is set within 110 acres of grounds, in Nacton, near Ipswich, overlooking the River Orwell. Founded in Lowestoft in 1868, the school moved to its present site in 1937, becoming an educational charitable trust with a board of trustees in 1967. The main Georgian mansion house accommodates specialist rooms, dormitories and common rooms. Other specialist facilities include a newly built pre-prep department, sports centre, theatre, playing fields and outdoor facilities.
- 1.2 Within a Christian and boarding school ethos, the school aims to provide an academically challenging, stimulating and fulfilling all-round education. It seeks to enable pupils to grow in confidence and self-esteem within a caring, trusting and happy environment. Staff strive to provide a strong framework of pastoral care, motivating and supporting pupils to explore, develop their independence and a love of learning.
- 1.3 The majority of pupils live near the school or in the surrounding counties. They mostly come from families with professional and business backgrounds. Currently, 280 pupils attend the school, including 134 boarders aged from 7 to 13. Most boarders board flexibly up to five nights a week, with some boarders who are full-time. There are 38 pupils aged between two and a half and five years in the EYFS, with 22 attending part-time. Admission for Nursery pupils is based on observations conducted during school visits and optional home visits. Pupils from Reception to Year 2 are admitted on the basis of assessments in literacy, numeracy and social skills. In Years 3 to 8, pupils are admitted on the basis of assessments in verbal and non-verbal reasoning, mathematics, English and the school's ability to meet individual needs.
- 1.4 The school is divided into the pre-preparatory department which includes Nursery through to Year 2, and the preparatory department which is sub-divided into middle school for Years 3 to 5, and senior school for Years 6 to 8. Pupils are mostly taught by their class teachers up to Year 5. They are then set for most subjects according to ability, and taught by specialist subject staff. Year 8 pupils generally proceed to a range of independent, mostly selective, day and boarding schools.
- 1.5 The ability profile of the school is above the national average, with a fairly wide spread of abilities and variances between cohorts. The school does not enter pupils for National Curriculum tests. Ability is measured using verbal, non-verbal, spatial and quantitative reasoning tests. Pupils also take standardised tests of attainment in reading and spelling. Results in these tests indicate that pupils' performance in reading is higher than national norms.
- 1.6 Thirty-seven pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Seven pupils have been identified as needing support for English as an additional language (EAL). No pupil has a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.7 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

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

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

- 2.1 The school is extremely successful in fulfilling its aims of providing an academically challenging and fulfilling all-round education, and strong pastoral care where all pupils are able to benefit from a vibrant boarding experience. Pupils make excellent progress as a result of excellent pastoral and personal support, good teaching and excellent support for pupils who are particularly able and those with SEND and EAL. Some departments effectively implement the school's marking policy; however, this excellent practice is inconsistent across all year groups and subjects. A recommendation from the previous inspection to complete the development of the assessment programme has been fully addressed. Individual target-setting for pupils has been introduced. Targets are not yet consistently linked to schemes of work in order that teachers and pupils can evaluate overall progress, and be clear with regard to the next steps required. Greater monitoring of lessons including peer observation and work scrutiny has been introduced following a recommendation from the previous inspection. This has begun to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning, but is yet to be consistently implemented from Year 1, across all subjects and departments. Pupils' behaviour, their attitude to learning and their achievements, including those of children in the EYFS, are excellent. The broad and rich curriculum, together with an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, visits, trips and guest speakers, effectively supports pupils' learning throughout the school.
- 2.2 Pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is underpinned by exceptionally strong pastoral support. Pupils are motivated, confident, articulate, caring and able to empathise with those less fortunate than themselves from a range of cultures. They maturely take positive actions within school and more widely to help others, particularly through identifying and supporting their chosen charities. Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful and positive. Boarding is excellent. A recommendation from the previous inspection to ensure better consistency of décor and lighting in the boys' dormitories has been addressed. Pupils are eager to have a boarding experience and its positive ethos permeates throughout the whole school. Welfare, health and safety are excellent and safeguarding is secure. Appropriate health and safety checks are carried out, including thorough risk assessments. The EYFS is outstanding. Children in the setting enjoy a wide variety of rich experiences and are well prepared for their next steps. Recommendations from the previous inspection to ensure that sufficient staff ratios are maintained during break times, that leadership of the setting is provided with increased designated management time, and more frequent monitoring of teaching and learning, have been fully addressed.
- 2.3 Governance, leadership and management are excellent. Following a recommendation from the previous inspection, a new senior management team (SMT) has been formed including leaders from all areas of the school. Strong leadership has effectively re-established cohesion and unity in the management structure. Governors are highly committed to the school's aims and ethos. They take seriously their responsibility to ensure that statutory and regulatory requirements are fully met. Together with the SMT, they have a well-defined vision for the future, and are fully involved in development planning. Following the appointment of a new chairman and a subsequent transition period, the governing board plans to extend its expertise and support for the school. Links with parents



are excellent. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were overwhelmingly satisfied with the education and care provided by the school.

## **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**

1. Extend new governance expertise and support for the school, including in the EYFS and boarding.
2. Strengthen monitoring by subject leaders in order that the highest standards of teaching and learning are implemented consistently.
3. Ensure that all marking gives clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work and to achieve their targets.

### **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 High standards of achievement have been sustained and built upon since the previous inspection. Pupils across the school are very well educated in accordance with the school's aim of providing an academically challenging, stimulating and fulfilling all-round education which motivates and supports pupils to develop independence and a love of learning. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, a high proportion of parents and pupils were pleased with the excellent progress that pupils make.
- 3.3 Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. They follow a broad and demanding curriculum, consistently gaining their first choice place in competitive entry to senior independent schools. Each year a considerable number are awarded academic, sporting, creative and music scholarships.
- 3.4 Pupils of all ages develop high levels of knowledge, understanding and skills in a wide range of curriculum subjects and extra-curricular activities, particularly in music, creative arts and sport. They have well-developed physical abilities as a result of the many opportunities provided for sport and outside activities. Pupils have an extensive range of knowledge for their age; are highly articulate, listen carefully, read confidently for pleasure and for information and are able to reason logically. They are extremely enthusiastic with regard to learning French, Latin and classics, demonstrating high levels of oral competence. Younger pupils achieve excellent standards of literacy and older pupils write very well, both imaginatively and factually. For example, Year 1 pupils were able to write sentences confidently and independently. Year 6 pupils were able to use their auditory skills to make accurate notes from a complex text. Year 8 pupils were able to talk with exceptional maturity regarding the spiritual dimension of the novel, *'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe'*.
- 3.5 Pupils' mathematical skills are well developed; they can work independently, organise themselves, apply their knowledge and think critically. They are beginning to use information and communication technology (ICT) across a range of subjects. For example, pre-prep pupils were effectively able to use individual electronic tablets to recognise sounds which inspired them to listen carefully and to make responses. Pupils are highly creative, as seen in displays of their exceptional art and design work.
- 3.6 Both group and individual achievements of pupils outside of the classroom are significant. A wide range of extra-curricular activities enables pupils to extend their learning and to develop their interests. Pupils' success in art, music and drama is considerable. Many pupils learn a musical instrument and take part in speech and drama lessons, passing external examinations with merit or distinction. All pupils have the opportunity to engage and compete in a range of internal and external competitions. Each year pupils perform to a very high standard in dramatic and musical productions. Sports teams achieve high levels of success locally and nationally in a wide range of sports, which include rugby, cricket and hockey. Arrangements for specialist teaching beyond the school are made to accommodate the needs of pupils with specific gifts and talents, for example in sport and music.

- 3.7 Internal assessments, a range of standardised tests, combined with lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and interviews with pupils indicate that pupils make excellent progress. By Year 8, attainment for all pupils, including the most able and those with SEND, is excellent in relation to national age-related expectations. Most able pupils and those with SEND and EAL make excellent progress in relation to their starting points, as a result of good teaching and the excellent specific intervention they receive based upon careful assessment.
- 3.8 Pupils' personal development is excellent. They have a positive approach to learning which strongly supports their overall achievement. Pupils are extremely polite, caring and exceptionally well behaved. They enthusiastically take part in the excellent range of opportunities that are provided by the school's dedicated team.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.10 The curriculum is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs successfully supporting the school's aim of providing an academically challenging, stimulating and fulfilling education. The curriculum for Years 1 to Year 5 is linked to the National Curriculum, with the inclusion of French in Year 1. Planning is around themes, with core teaching in English, mathematics and science. In Years 6 to 8 the curriculum is wide ranging, enabling pupils to be well prepared for Common Entrance and academic scholarship. The curriculum covers all of the subjects of the National Curriculum, together with French, Latin and Ancient Greek. Since the previous inspection, subject time allocations have been adjusted to provide an improved balance between subjects.
- 3.11 All pupils, including the particularly able, are challenged by a curriculum which includes the development of higher order thinking skills, and a *Philosophy for Children* course. Provision for pupils with SEND and EAL is excellent. Their needs are carefully assessed and planned for by the school's learning support department. There is a focus on ensuring that all pupils have access to the full curriculum, as well as individual and group support where required. Through a carefully structured personal, social, health and citizenship (PSHCE) or 'life skills' programme, pupils in Years 3 to 8 are enabled to develop a strong moral code, including a mature appreciation of diversity.
- 3.12 The school is well resourced. The library is well used and much appreciated by the pupils. ICT is taught as a discrete subject, and is now being developed across the curriculum. A mathematics program used to re-enforce topics taught in class is particularly successful, and senior pupils use ICT effectively for research in geography, history and art.
- 3.13 Art, design and technology, music and drama feature strongly within the school's curriculum. High-quality art and design displays illustrate the impact of this exceptional provision on the learning of pupils. A large proportion of pupils enthusiastically learn a musical instrument with the opportunity to take part in numerous bands, ensembles and choirs. Pupils have a weekly drama lesson and several productions take place each year, providing an opportunity for all pupils to develop their dramatic, creative and communication skills. Provision for sports and games is comprehensive complemented by high-quality facilities including a sports hall and extensive, well-maintained games pitches. A full and varied programme of fixtures gives many pupils the opportunity to represent their school with pride.

- 3.14 A stimulating extra-curricular programme enhances the richness of school life for all pupils. Access to art, music and drama as part of the after-school activity programme promotes and further develops pupils' creativity. Other activities available range from football to sailing and gardening to debating. Pupils benefit from a range of educational day and residential trips, many of which are closely linked to the curriculum. Visits have included a Year 7 leadership and modern foreign languages visit to Normandy, a Year 5 weekend at an activity centre and a Year 6 visit to the battlefields near Ypres in Belgium. The popular and thought provoking 'Orangery Lectures' organised by the school, provide regular opportunities to hear and appreciate high-calibre internal and external speakers.
- 3.15 Pupils benefit from the school's diverse range of links with the community. Visits by the local clergy support the school in celebrating carol services, harvest and Easter. Charity days are held regularly to raise funds for a range of charities selected by the pupils. A stargazing event organised in conjunction with a local primary school made excellent use of the school's observatory. The Orwell Park Foundation effectively supports the school in maintaining its historic buildings and landscape. The curriculum is greatly enriched by having access to this magnificent resource for learning.

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

- 3.16 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.17 The overall high standard of teaching makes an effective contribution to the progress and achievement of the pupils, supporting the school's aim to motivate each child to learn, explore and develop a love of learning. Teachers' positive relationships with the pupils and their commitment to providing an all-round education are significant factors in ensuring that pupils achieve high standards. The overwhelming majority of parents and pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires stated that they were pleased with the progress pupils were making. One hundred per cent of parents stated that their child received appropriate homework for his or her age.
- 3.18 Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent. The most effective learning takes place in lessons where teachers demonstrate this knowledge in conjunction with providing clear learning intentions linked to the scheme of work, and a range of activities that challenge and captivate the interest of all pupils. This was clearly seen in a Year 6 Latin lesson where action rhymes, humour and knowledgeable instruction were very effectively intertwined to make the lesson extremely motivating and fun for the pupils.
- 3.19 The majority of teachers use questioning effectively to check pupils' understanding and to foster their listening and speaking skills. Praise, encouragement and rewards are used widely and successfully to enhance pupils' self-esteem and enjoyment of learning. An over-reliance on the use of worksheets in some lessons inhibits pupils' responses. The most productive lessons enable pupils to produce and refine their own work using a range of appropriate resources including ICT.
- 3.20 Teachers diligently ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. In the senior department, setting enables teachers to match work to pupils' individual needs. Many teachers effectively ensure that time is well managed and that the curriculum is not restricted by examination preparation. For example, in a Year 8 French oral revision lesson, the pace was brisk and lively, with continuous constructive feedback used to motivate pupils and to raise their attainment.

- 3.21 Schemes of work effectively cover the school's rich and varied curriculum. Lesson planning is detailed, including good use of excellent information provided by the learning support department with regard to pupils who require additional support, those with EAL and those who are working at a very high level. A recommendation from the previous inspection to complete the development of the assessment programme has been fully addressed. Assessment using standardised tests to measure ability and attainment is now consistently in place, and effectively used to track pupils' progress in English and mathematics. Individual target-setting for pupils has been introduced. Targets are not yet consistently linked to the schemes of work in order that pupils can evaluate their overall progress, and determine their next steps in liaison with their teachers. The school provides regular half-termly reports which include effort and achievement grades with clear criteria for each grade. The reports are successfully used by most departments to support the tracking of pupils for each unit of work and overall.
- 3.22 Following a recommendation from the previous inspection, greater monitoring of lessons, including peer observation and scrutiny of pupils' work, has been introduced. This has begun to have an impact on the overall quality of teaching and learning, but is yet to be consistently implemented across all subjects and departments. Work is mostly presented according to school policy and marked regularly with encouraging comments. Some marking is clearly related to the learning intentions, describes the next steps required and includes responses from the pupils.
- 3.23 Teaching is well supported by a variety of excellent facilities and resources. The extensive grounds and historic building are used effectively to provide rich opportunities such as the production of Shakespearean plays, adventures in the woodland learning environment and projects on the history of Orwell Park School.

## **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 identified in the previous inspection have been maintained, and the school is highly successful in meeting its aim to enable pupils to develop an increasing sense of independence and self-reliance. Detailed and carefully monitored pupil records of achievement provide an excellent means of supporting pupils' personal development and celebrating their academic and personal successes.
- 4.3 Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. Through assemblies and religious education, pupils have time to reflect and develop an excellent understanding of religious beliefs. They are supported in their understanding through the use of carefully chosen resources, for example, multi-faith work for the choir. Pupils freely discuss their own views and demonstrate respect for other faiths and religions. Younger pupils respectfully say 'grace' before lunch and show their appreciation of the food provided. Pupils of all ages are confident and sensitive to the feelings of others. Their broad experiences at school include lessons in life skills in which they reflect and think about the non-material aspects of life. The spiritual development of the school community is greatly enhanced by the inspiring environment, and an attractive display entitled, 'Listening to God'.
- 4.4 Pupils' moral development is excellent. Pupils throughout the school show a mature understanding of right and wrong. They are clear about the strong moral code of the school, willingly supporting and caring for each other. During an assembly, pupils in the middle school demonstrated in a highly amusing way, that unkind words and actions cannot be taken back. One of the house display boards portrays the strong message, 'Do all the good that you can'. Pupils have impressive manners at occasions such as lunch, and their behaviour is excellent. Rewards for work and other contributions are highly valued. Pupils are able to develop strong self-control as a result of the positive guidance they receive from staff, combined with the sensitive use of sanctions underpinned by thoughtful explanation and individual support.
- 4.5 Pupils have excellent social awareness. A strong sense of courtesy, respect and compassion is evident throughout the school. Pupils are confident and self-aware, harmoniously socialising with each other during lessons and recreation times. They feel responsible for their school, responding positively to opportunities to take on roles of responsibility as prefects, house captains and team captains. They keenly contribute to their community, including helping to support younger pupils at breaktimes. They relish contributing in events such as matches, the instrumental music competition and a wide variety of house competitions. Each year pupils present their case as to which charities they wish to support. Careful reflection with regard to the needs of society combined with presenting the value of causes such as the local air ambulance and cancer charities, greatly contribute to pupils' excellent social and moral development.
- 4.6 Pupils' cultural development is outstanding. Pupils have an excellent appreciation of other cultures and religions which is nurtured by opportunities across the curriculum. Outstanding displays in art and design depict a wide range of cultures and food studies include a wide range of countries. International borders are well integrated

into the school providing a rich resource for developing an awareness of different languages and cultures. Pupils enjoy the musical and cultural life of the school with high levels of participation and accomplishment. They enthusiastically share their talents with the wider community including singing at local churches. The opportunity to stay in the Ardeche and experience life in France at the end of Year 8 is eagerly referred to by many pupils. Interviews with staff and people who have detailed knowledge of the school's history, and the regular 'Orangery Lectures' effectively build upon pupils' understanding and knowledge of their own culture and traditions.

- 4.7 By the time pupils transfer to their next school at the age of 13 they have an excellent level of all-round personal development.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 The leadership is strongly committed to high-quality pastoral care. The school is highly effective in fulfilling its aim to create a caring and trusting environment in which pastoral care is given the highest priority. Each pupil's personal development is carefully monitored through a comprehensive system which ensures that they consistently receive exceptional care and support. This contributes strongly to their outstanding personal development. In responses to the pre-inspection pupils' questionnaire and during interviews, pupils overwhelmingly stated that they feel safe and happy.
- 4.10 Relationships amongst the pupils are excellent. Problems rarely occur, but when they do they are swiftly resolved to the satisfaction of pupils and parents, as illustrated in the overwhelmingly positive responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires. Positive relationships between staff and pupils are evident in lessons, mealtimes, on the sports field and during their participation in the extensive range of sports and activities.
- 4.11 Pupils show high levels of understanding and awareness of how to care for themselves, as was effectively demonstrated in a Year 7 life skills lesson. The school's 'sport for all' initiative successfully enables all pupils to understand the importance of keeping fit, taking regular exercise and developing a healthy lifestyle. Tasty and well-cooked meals and snacks are provided, and pupils are encouraged to make healthy choices.
- 4.12 Pupils who make particular progress or achieve a personal goal are awarded in assembly as 'people of the week'. This celebrates and recognises their success as well as placing a high priority on encouraging endeavour and good behaviour. Careful records of incidents of unacceptable behaviour are kept which identify problems at an early stage. Staff meet regularly to discuss any indications of concern. Their rigorous approach guards against bullying or harassment whilst also taking into account any special needs or circumstances. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses pupils overwhelmingly stated that teachers show concern for them and they have someone to turn to if they have a problem. A prominent display encourages everyone to 'stamp out bullying' and a 'kindness' survey was conducted with regard to the feelings, experiences and views of pupils. This resulted in a training programme to help pupils understand bullying and ensure that they know the proper channels for reporting unacceptable behaviour. An internet

safety board draws attention to the importance of using the internet and social media responsibly.

4.13 Rewards and sanctions are clear, communicated to all staff and consistently implemented. A small number of pupils stated in their pupils' questionnaire responses that they did not feel that the school asks for their opinions and responds to them. Inspectors found that the school has a strong ethos of communicating with all pupils through its pastoral system and pupil committees. During interviews with pupils, they strongly stated that staff listen carefully to them and take appropriate action. The school council meets regularly and effectively seeks the views of pupils. Their ideas are carefully recorded, discussed with senior staff and placed in full view of the school. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their opportunities to affect policies and practices and this helps to give them ownership of, and pride, in their school.

4.14 The school has a suitable plan to improve access for pupils with SEND.

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

4.15 The arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent.

4.16 Since the previous inspection, the school has continued to place a high priority on all aspects of health and safety with a focus on all members of the school community taking responsibility for safeguarding. Policies and procedures have recently been updated in line with official guidance, and are fully implemented. Pupils' attendance is monitored carefully and admission and attendance records are accurately maintained and correctly stored. Thorough checks are made if a pupil is absent and the school has not been notified in advance.

4.17 The health and safety committee is diligently led by a member of the SMT. Members of the committee take seriously their responsibility to ensure that statutory and regulatory requirements are met, with appropriate action being taken without delay. Effective use is made of external expertise with regard to the development of policy and procedures and their implementation, including appropriate provision for those with SEND. Provision for health and safety in practical workshops is excellent. Visual reminders constantly reinforce the measures required to ensure a safe working environment. All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards, procedures are practised regularly and accurate records kept. Comprehensive risk assessments are in place across the school, and for trips and activities.

4.18 Safer recruitment procedures are securely in place, and the designated persons for child protection receive training at the required intervals. They, together with the designated governor for welfare and safeguarding, are an excellent resource for staff. The appropriate level of training is provided for employees and those who have contact with the pupils. Links have been developed with local child protection agencies and the school community fully understands the procedures to be followed should a concern arise.

4.19 A comprehensive medical policy details appropriate protocols for the administration and recording of medicines, and procedures for dealing with accidents, emergencies and illness. Appropriate numbers of staff are trained in first aid, including paediatric first-aid training for EYFS staff. Staff are well informed with regard to individual needs and conditions, and pupils who become ill, including boarders, are well cared for in the medical room by sympathetic staff.



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

- 4.20 The overall quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.21 The school comprehensively fulfils its boarding principle to develop well-rounded pupils who are confident in their abilities, respectful of their peers and willing to contribute to the school community. Boarding makes a highly productive contribution to the ethos of the school for both day and boarding pupils.
- 4.22 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. A vibrant sense of community exists amongst the pupils and boarders feel completely integrated into the school with all boarders stating in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire that they enjoy boarding. There is a strong commitment to harmony and tolerance with staff providing exemplary role models. All boarders, including those from overseas feel welcome and comfortable within boarding. They enjoy each other's company and acknowledge the beneficial effect that boarding has on their independence and self-reliance. There are opportunities for self-directed time and a wealth of opportunities for afternoon, evening and weekend activities. These include football, hockey, mountain-biking, sailing, woodland fun, crochet, art, debating, attending lectures and going to the zoo. Boarders are encouraged to contribute their views to the smooth running of the school through participation in the boarders' forum or the school council, as well as through duties as dorm captains or members of the food committee. There is a range of appropriate adults to turn to regarding personal issues. These include members of the senior team, tutors, independent adult listeners and trained peer listeners in Year 8. The overwhelming majority of boarders commented that they know what to do if unhappy or worried. Sanctions for misbehaviour, although rarely necessary, are reported to be fair and understood. Positive behaviour is encouraged by awards such as 'boarder of the week', or by accumulating boarding points, which lead to a number of boarders being taken out for a meal. During interviews, boarders stated that bullying is infrequently encountered and that any incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- 4.23 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. New boarders are given induction materials and are linked to peer guardians. The promotion of boarders' health is highly effective and arrangements for medical care have recently been restructured, and the vast majority of boarders state that they are well looked after if they feel unwell or are injured. Full boarders are registered with a local GP and are taken to appointments at the surgery, as well as to a dentist, an orthodontist and an optician, as necessary. Occupational and speech and language therapists work with pupils who have SEND and a confidential counselling service is provided as required. Boarders with allergies or medical conditions are sympathetically and appropriately treated. A small minority of boarders suggested in their pre-inspection questionnaire responses that they are not happy with the food or the availability of snacks. Inspectors found the food to be of high quality. The majority of food is sourced locally, special diets are catered for and drinking water is readily available. Snacks and regular treats are provided during the evenings. Boarders unanimously reported that the quality of meals on offer is very good and nutritious, and that their suggestions are respected by the catering department through the food committee. Matrons efficiently oversee boarders' laundry and housekeeping. Dedicated cleaners ensure the boarding accommodation is kept to a high standard of hygiene, and maintenance of the premises is thorough. There is an on-going programme of

refurbishment in order to ensure high levels of security and continuous improvement in the condition of boarding facilities. The school grounds are much appreciated as a wonderful recreational environment, with fields, all-weather pitches and woodland all providing limitless opportunities. A small minority of boarders commented in response to the pupils' questionnaires that they do not think all of their belongings are safe. Discussions with boarders confirmed that these comments referred to items of sports clothing or kit in the changing rooms, and that usually items were only temporarily mislaid. Information for parents is disseminated by regular electronic mail and newsletters enabling them to feel involved in the lives of their children whilst at school. Boarders report that contact with parents is easily made by telephone, electronic mail and video-conferencing.

- 4.24 The arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are excellent. Robust policies and procedures are fully implemented by all staff. Termly evacuation drills are practised during boarding time, and weekly and flexi-boarders are appropriately instructed when they first come into boarding. Effective anti-bullying and behavioural policies and procedures are in place with six simple rules for boarders which are clearly understood and adhered to. All boarding house staff and adults associated with boarding are up to date in safeguarding training, and confidently know the procedure to follow and who to contact should an incident occur or a disclosure be made. The whereabouts of boarders is regularly monitored, and registers are taken twice every evening as well as during the day. The missing person policy is known by all staff and boarders are at all times under the responsibility of more than one experienced member of staff. A suitably experienced adult is always on call throughout each night. A number of non-resident staff and students are also involved in the organisation of boarding and boarding activities. They are appropriately checked, and their contributions effectively enhance the experiences of boarders. The homeliness of boarding is highly praised by boarders, and in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of boarders and 100 per cent of parents stated that they feel boarding is safe.
- 4.25 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the boarding provision is excellent. A clear statement of the school's boarding principles and guidance on practice is available to parents and staff. Boarding houses are enthusiastically led by highly professional and dedicated house staff who are well regarded by boarders. All boarding staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and the strong and very positive relationships between boarders and staff are a strength of the community. The head of boarding is a member of the SMT and there are weekly meetings of the welfare and boarding staff committees. The head of learning support and the pastoral deputy attend the welfare committee, at which the needs of individual boarders are coordinated. Boarding documentation and policies have been systematically reviewed, and self-evaluation has effectively been introduced as a tool to support the medium- and long-term development of boarding. Training for boarding staff includes Boarding School Association (BSA) conferences, safeguarding and first aid. All boarding staff are familiar with school policies and work as an effective team to fully implement the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools.
- 4.26 The recommendation from the previous boarding and welfare inspection to ensure better consistency of décor and lighting in the boys' dormitories has been addressed. As all boarding accommodation is situated within the original house, adapted to purpose, there is a continual need to update and refurbish the boarding accommodation.

## **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 extremely enthusiastic and committed to the school. They and the school's leadership share a clear vision for the future, and are highly successful in ensuring that the school achieves its aims. Governors have a range of relevant expertise including education, finance and business. An effective committee structure is in place. All aspects of education and care provided by the school, including academic achievements and standards, pastoral and personal education, boarding, EYFS safeguarding, financial planning and investment in staff and learning resources are discussed and monitored. Appropriate governor training is regularly undertaken, including safeguarding and safer recruitment, and the role of the safeguarding governor is well established.
- 5.3 A new chairman has been elected, and following a carefully planned transition, there are plans to extend the number of governors and their range of expertise, in order to effectively support the development of a thriving school which includes the EYFS and extensive boarding provision.
- 5.4 Governors are fully involved in strategic planning providing both support and challenge to senior staff. They work effectively with senior managers and the staff to consider the future developments of the school. The school's leadership provides detailed reports for governors, and staff make regular and informative presentations.
- 5.5 Governors exercise prudent financial management. They invest wisely in human and learning resources. Since the previous inspection they have supported a range of building projects and are developing close links with the school's foundation and alumni in order to ensure the school's heritage is maintained and enhanced.
- 5.6 Governors are aware of their responsibilities regarding child protection, welfare health and safety, ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements. Policies and their implementation are regularly reviewed, including the annual review of safeguarding and the recording of outcomes in the minutes.
- 5.7 Governors maintain a very close view of the life of the school through attendance at school functions and frequent visits during the working day.

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

- 5.8 The overall quality of leadership and management, including links with parents and others, is excellent.
- 5.9 The recently formed SMT includes leaders from all areas of the school. This has re-established cohesion and unity in the management structure, as recommended by the previous inspection. The SMT and the governors have led a rigorous and highly effective process of self-evaluation, deep reflection and school improvement planning, in order to take the school to its next level.

- 5.10 The ethos aims and direction of the school are clearly articulated and a long-term school development plan has been put in place. Substantial and rapid progress has been made in many areas, particularly pastoral and personal development. This significantly contributes to the successful management of the whole school and to the fulfilment of its aims.
- 5.11 The pre-prep is now more integrated into the whole school. Leadership of this department is strengthening the SMT and the transition of pupils into the middle school. Tutors effectively ensure the smooth running of year groups, including pastoral support and liaison with parents. Heads of department are responsible for leading and developing curriculum areas. Strong leadership in many subjects is reflected in the school's high academic standards. Policies have been updated, schemes of work are being reviewed and following a recommendation from the previous inspection, a thorough all-through assessment and tracking system has been established. Pupils' self-assessment, the use of feedback and the coherence of monitoring throughout each subject, including scrutinies of pupils' work, coaching and peer observations, is still to be fully developed and embedded.
- 5.12 The process for recruiting suitably qualified staff is robust, and all required checks and records are in place. All staff undergo an induction process with subsequent appropriate and regular training in matters of safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. The school seeks to retain and develop its staff, and has introduced an appraisal system which includes professional development and training linked to key priorities identified in the school development plan and individual career enhancement. The recent focus on professional development linked to the use of effective teaching skills is beginning to have a positive impact in lessons.
- 5.13 Communication with regard to pupils' personal development, circumstances and learning needs is a strength of the school. A great deal of informal discussion takes place, as well as regular staff meetings. Daily routines and duties have been reviewed and improved to support the smooth running of the school, particularly during breaktimes and before and after school. There is effective discussion within departments. However, links across the curriculum and departments are not extensively developed.
- 5.14 Links with parents are excellent. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses all parents indicated their strong satisfaction with the education and quality of communications in the school. During discussions, parents were overwhelmingly appreciative and supportive of the school. Parents especially value the care their children receive, extra-curricular provision, the happy boarding environment and the fact that their children love coming to school. Parents also appreciate the school's 'open-door' policy where the headmaster and staff are readily available to speak to before and after school.
- 5.15 Information about school life is plentiful and is available for parents and prospective parents via a comprehensive, up-to-date website, prospectus and parental handbooks. Regulatory policies and other information can be accessed using an on-line link. In addition, regular newsletters and social media provide frequent updates and a wealth of information. Open mornings provide prospective parents with relevant information and an experience of what the school has to offer. Parents greatly appreciate the way the school uses email and text to ensure efficient and timely communication, for example, when matches are cancelled at short notice as a result of inclement weather.

- 5.16 Following parental consultation, half-termly reports have been effectively revised to provide clear effort and achievement grades, targets, and comments from tutors, senior staff and the headmaster. Parents stated during interviews that teachers know their children extremely well both academically and personally, and that they found the reports helpful. Parental consultations and regular opportunities to meet teachers for formal and informal meetings also support parents in gaining a full picture of their children's progress and achievements. In the upper senior school, great care is taken to guide parents and pupils in the selection of the most suitable school to meet the needs of each individual.
- 5.17 Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the life of the school, through a wide range of concerts, plays and productions as well as attending sports matches, speech and sports days. Parents are also invited in to school to share their professional and cultural experiences, as was seen during the inspection when Diwali was celebrated in the pre-prep. Parents are actively encouraged to be involved in a range of social events organised by the recently formed 'Friends of Orwell Park School'. Parents spoke enthusiastically with regard to the range of social events organised including a quiz night and coffee mornings.
- 5.18 The school has a clear and appropriate complaints procedure. Staff respond sensitively and promptly to any concerns or queries, as a result the vast majority are dealt with swiftly and informally.

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

## **6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

### **6.(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend**

- 6.1 The setting makes outstanding provision to meet the needs of the range of children who attend. Excellent educational programmes support a majority of children to reach and in some cases exceed expected levels of development. Sensitive and caring adults use their excellent knowledge of how children develop to support their learning. Excellent support is given to those children who have been identified as having SEND and EAL. More able children are challenged through activities which are carefully varied to match their abilities and interests. Every opportunity is taken to engage all children in a wide range of adult-led and child-initiated practical activities to promote independence. The under threes were observed creating their own pictures using cold spaghetti and paint and were delighted and filled with wonder at colour changes and patterns formed. The curriculum is enriched by specialist teaching in French, PE, music and ICT. Detailed planning, comprehensive observations and assessment based on interests and needs, enable each child's next steps to be identified. Staff diligently ensure that all achieve, make excellent progress and are prepared for their next stage of their learning.
- 6.2 Parental responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive with all stating that they would recommend the setting to other parents. They particularly highlighted that their children are happy, feel safe and secure and that very able children receive appropriate support. Parents very much appreciate daily contact with staff in addition to the home-school communication book and email. Detailed reports are sent out termly, and informative parental consultations are held during the autumn and summer terms.

### **6.(b) The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being**

- 6.3 Provision for children's well-being is outstanding. Children under the age of three, including those who need support, are known extremely well by all staff. The key persons system enables children to settle quickly ensuring that all children including the very youngest develop close relationships with the adults who care for them. On arrival, all children including those under three self-register, confidently selecting photographs of themselves and placing them on the registration board.
- 6.4 The purpose-built setting is enhanced by exemplary displays of the children's work. Children are rightfully very proud of their achievements. Throughout the EYFS, staff have high expectations of the children. Exceptional behaviour, consideration for others and cooperation with each other, ensure that children are happy and play very well together. Adults act as excellent role models demonstrating how to stay safe. Children were observed following their example by walking safely with scissors in their hand, using knives independently to cut their toast during snack time and enjoying a selection of fresh fruit and raw vegetables.
- 6.5 Children have many opportunities to engage in self-directed play. They are encouraged to follow their own ideas and to use their imagination, for example, through a rich variety of role play, such as a vets surgery and dressing up in a range of costumes from other cultures and countries. They are confidently able to identify

where they are from with the use of world maps and support from staff when needed.

- 6.6 The secure outdoor areas are used throughout the year. Children may access them freely, for example, Reception children built a willow wigwam, weaving different colours and textures of wool and strips of fabric to support the sound 'w' and an older Nursery child delighted in correctly counting seven spots on a ladybird. All children develop independent hygiene routines and understand the need for physical exercise and healthy eating. Children and staff enjoy eating nutritious hot lunches together. Staff encourage children to try new foods and to develop their social skills including excellent table manners.
- 6.7 All children are very well prepared for transitions both within the setting and into Year 1. Children in Reception get to know the Year 1 teacher well through French lessons and during break time duties. They also visit the Year 1 classroom during the summer term. Older Nursery children visit Reception as well as sharing the outdoor playground. Certificates and stars are handed out during a weekly pre-prep assembly for helpfulness, kindness and achievement.

### **6.(c) The leadership and management of the early years provision**

- 6.8 Leadership and management of the setting are outstanding. Governors have facilitated the development of a new unit that provides an excellent environment for young children's learning, and are now seeking further ways to increase their specific involvement in the EYFS. Comprehensive policies and procedures, including risk assessments, are implemented rigorously to safeguard children and ensure that the setting is a welcoming and a safe place to be. All adults have been checked for their suitability to work with children and are very well qualified and trained. Following a recommendation from the previous inspection, designated management and leadership time has been increased and more frequent monitoring of teaching and learning implemented. Regular EYFS team meetings provide effective opportunities for self-evaluation and staff share a vision for the continued development of the setting, and are highly supportive of their colleagues. The exemplary detailed planning and assessment informs the next steps for each child, taking into account their individual needs and interests.
- 6.9 Regular appraisals underpin professional development and staff are actively encouraged to undertake further qualifications and attend training to update and extend their knowledge and skills. Staff appreciate and benefit from the support and supervision meetings provided by the early years co-ordinator. In response to the previous inspection, three members of staff are on duty outside during break and lunchtimes.

### **6.(d) The overall quality and standards of the early years provision**

- 6.10 The overall quality and standards of the EYFS are outstanding. All children, including those under three and those with SEND, make excellent progress overall, relative to their starting points. By the end of the EYFS, a majority of children have achieved the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning and some exceed them. The learning and care provided for children under the age of three enable them to enjoy exciting opportunities to become active, safe and happy learners. Excellent support by their key persons enables children to confidently leave their parents and carers. At this early stage in the academic year, most children can hold a simple conversation.

- 6.11 Children aged three to five are provided with a range of opportunities appropriate to their age and ability, enabling them to develop at their own pace. For example by using pegs to hang up their own autumn pictures on a washing line. In Reception, children were able to express themselves clearly and confidently using adjectives such as 'soft', 'cold' and 'squidgy' to describe a foam, ice and paint mixture. Children have many opportunities for problem-solving activities and exploration within a variety of indoor and outdoor environments. These include a wooded area and utilisation of the high-quality, plentiful resources, as well as ideas often suggested by the children.
- 6.12 Older Nursery children were heard counting up to 20 and sometimes beyond. They are beginning to write their names on paper and the interactive whiteboard. Reception children are confident in recognising letters and sounds. They are able to use their phonic skills to sound out simple words, and some are confidently reading books at this early stage in the year. They can count up to 30 and backwards from 10, and sometimes beyond these numbers. They are able to calculate one more than and one less than. A variety of 2D shapes such as square, rectangle, circle and triangle are confidently recognised and named. All children, including those under three, learn and enjoy ICT through a wide range of resources including interactive whiteboards, electronic tablets and computers.
- 6.13 Exemplary behaviour is the norm. Children know how to share, take turns and form happy relationships. They play together harmoniously and show care and kindness towards one another. Children of all ages including those under three, display an excellent knowledge and understanding of the world, as was observed when a parent visited the setting to share her knowledge of Diwali. Children delighted in making rangoli patterns, painting clay pots for night lights and dressing up in a variety of costumes.
- 6.14 All parents stated in their pre-inspection questionnaire responses that their children love coming to school. This outstanding early years provision gives all children secure and firm foundations for their personal development and later learning.

### **Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three**

The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.