



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

ARDINGLY COLLEGE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

The senior school was inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School	Ardingly College Preparatory School		
DfE Number	938/6200		
EYFS Number	EY360002		
Registered Charity Number	1076456		
Address	Ardingly College Preparatory School College Road Ardingly Haywards Heath West Sussex RH17 6SQ		
Telephone Number	01444 893200		
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Email Address	chris.calvey@ardingly.com		
Head	Mr Chris Calvey		
Chairman of Council	Mr Jim Sloane		
Age Range	2½ to 13		
Total Number of Pupils	379		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (206 boys; 173 girls)		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	8	5-11: 221
	3-5 (EYFS):	46	11-13: 104
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	358	
Number of Boarders	Total:	21	
	Full:	0	Weekly: 21
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Hilary Nawrocka		
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection dates	06 Feb 2012 to 09 Feb 2012		

PREFACE

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

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed through the following link: www.legislation.gov.uk. Search for Independent School Standards Regulations and enter date 2010, to find Schedule 1, Parts 1-7.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Equality Act 2010 (including race, gender, special educational needs and disability).
- (ii) The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, banning corporal punishment.

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

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

Under Government arrangements, the inspection of boarding became an integrated part of ISI inspections from 1 September 2011. 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. Boarding inspections were previously carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills. The relevant Ofsted report refers to an inspection in March 2011 and can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Children's social care/Boarding school.

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.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality

judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'satisfactory' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chairman of council, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the boarding house and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Jan Preece	Reporting Inspector
Mr Richard Morgan	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Maureen Smith	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Richard Yeates	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Richard Balding	Team Inspector for Boarding (Former Head of Department, IAPS school)
Mrs Patricia Griffin	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Ardingly College Preparatory School is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils between the ages of two and a half and thirteen. It is part of Ardingly College, a school in the Woodard Corporation, with a strong Anglo-Catholic tradition, although pupils of all faiths or none are welcome. The college was founded by Canon Nathaniel Woodard in Shoreham in 1858, and moved to its present location of 260 acres in the West Sussex countryside, close to the town of Haywards Heath, in 1870. The college is governed by a board of governors known as the School Council. The spiritual life of the school is supported by the provost of the southern division of Woodard Schools, to whom the chaplain is responsible. The preparatory school was founded in 1912. The headmaster of the senior school has overall responsibility for all sections of the college but the head of the preparatory school has operational responsibility for both the preparatory and pre-preparatory departments; the latter has its own headmistress and includes the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- 1.2 The school aims to enable all pupils to develop their love of learning, academic potential and individual talents in a community that fosters sensitivity, confidence, a sense of service and enthusiasm for life. Since the previous inspection, the pre-preparatory department has been rebuilt, and the preparatory department is part-way through a phased relocation to refurbished accommodation in a central position on the college campus.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection there were 379 pupils on roll. The pre-preparatory department comprised 54 pupils in the EYFS and 59 pupils in Years 1 and 2. There were 266 pupils in the preparatory department. The school provides day education, and weekly and flexible boarding on a regular or occasional basis for 157 boys and 109 girls in Years 3 to 8. At the time of the inspection, there were 21 pupils staying for all or part of the week.
- 1.4 Pupils are mainly from business and professional families and most come from the local area. Admission into the pre-preparatory department is open to all. Pupils seeking admission to Years 3 to 6 attend a taster day and are assessed in literacy to ensure that they will benefit from what the school has to offer. Candidates for entry into Years 7 and 8 are selected through an entrance examination.
- 1.5 The ability profile of the pupils, as indicated by standardised tests, is slightly above the national average in Years 3 to 6, with most pupils having an ability that is average or above average. The ability profile of pupils in Year 7 is above the national average, and a notable proportion has well above average ability.
- 1.6 The school has identified 65 pupils as requiring some degree of learning support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Of these, 57 receive specialist learning support in school. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Currently, there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language.
- 1.7 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school is highly successful in meeting its aims and offers an excellent educational experience to its pupils. Throughout the school, achievement, both in academic work and in extra-curricular activities, is excellent. The pupils make good, and in some cases, rapid progress in relation to their abilities as a result of the excellent teaching they receive, most of which enables them to exercise creativity and independent thought. In a few instances, teaching does not encourage them to think for themselves and take risks. The pupils' achievements are well supported by the excellent, broad curricular provision and range of extra-curricular activities and visits provided. At all stages, the pupils' achievements are enhanced by their positive attitudes to their studies, by the high quality skills they develop during their time in the school and by their generally exemplary behaviour.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent throughout the school. Their spiritual development is outstanding and they have an excellent awareness of moral issues. They display a mature social responsibility and their cultural development is strong. Pupils of all ages have a clear sense of right and wrong, and they demonstrate a high level of mutual respect and support for each other and for all members of the school community. They willingly take on responsibility and make a valuable contribution to the school, of which they are proud. Arrangements for both pastoral care and measures to safeguard and promote the pupils' welfare, health and safety are excellent. The excellent provision strongly supports the boarders' personal development and sense of well-being.
- 2.3 Governance is excellent. Since the previous inspection, the School Council has been organised to ensure that governors give effective oversight to all sections of the school. Governors are aware of their responsibility for regulatory matters and have ensured that the school has met the requirements of the previous inspection in relation to recruitment checks and the recording of these, through regular compliance reviews and appropriate training. The quality of leadership and management is excellent and includes strong links with parents, who say that they are happy with almost all aspects of what the school provides. The requirements of the previous report in relation to dealing with complaints have been met. Parents particularly appreciate the care given to their children, curricular and extra-curricular opportunities and boarding provision, and that their children are happy at school. Pupils spoken to by inspectors were exceedingly positive, and are happy and proud of their school. Senior managers have established highly effective systems to monitor standards in teaching, welfare and boarding, and strong liaison with the senior school through a whole-college leadership group ensures clarity and continuity of purpose, and meets the recommendation of the previous report. Leadership and management systems are highly effective in supporting the pupils' academic and personal development, as well as ensuring that they are well cared for. The school has met all of the recommendations of the previous inspection report in relation to teaching and the provision of outside play areas.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is available through the link described in the Preface)

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

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
 - 1. Ensure that all teaching provides opportunities for pupils to exercise creativity, investigation and risk taking, to match the standard of the best.
 - 2. In the EYFS, ensure that plans to develop the outside classroom to cover all six areas of learning are carried out in full.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The overall achievement of the pupils is excellent.
- 3.2 In accordance with the school's aims, pupils develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to fulfil their academic potential and individual talents. Across the school, they demonstrate attentive listening skills and the ability to respond sensitively to one another's ideas. They are able to think for themselves from a young age and articulate their ideas confidently, displaying mature reasoning. Reading standards are high throughout the school, and a significant strength of the pre-preparatory department. Pupils develop proficient skills in writing and successfully apply their ability to draft clear factual reports, such as in geography and science. They demonstrate excellent creative writing skills across a range of subjects, such as English, history, and divinity and philosophy.
- 3.3 Numeracy skills are high, particularly in the preparatory department, and pupils apply their mathematical knowledge competently in subjects such as geography. When given the opportunity, older pupils demonstrate independent thinking and skills in problem solving through mathematical investigations. The pupils' scientific knowledge and skills are strong, and so they make plausible deductions and use scientific vocabulary confidently. The pupils' use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum has improved since the previous inspection and they demonstrate their skills and knowledge effectively in many subjects, such as English, Spanish and geography. Attractive displays around the school demonstrate the pupils' capacity for creativity and imagination.
- 3.4 Pupils achieve high standards in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. They achieve high levels of skill in sports and enjoy a good measure of success at both team and individual level, such as in hockey, football, athletics and cricket. Pupils are successful in chess, music and drama, and individuals represent the county, gain membership of prominent national musical ensembles and win professional acting roles. They are successful in instrumental and singing examinations, and regularly gain distinctions in the highest grades. Standards in drama are notable. The pupils' enthusiasm and confidence in the performing arts are promoted effectively through the opportunity to take part in performances with the senior school.
- 3.5 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but on the evidence available it is judged to be good in relation to national age-related expectations. This level of attainment, as judged by curriculum interviews, the quality of teaching and learning seen in lessons and the scrutiny of written work, together with the pupils' response to the broad and demanding curriculum, indicates that they make good and often rapid progress in relation to those of similar ability. Pupils with SEND make good or better progress in relation to their needs due to the well-organised and sympathetic support they are offered. Those who are identified as the most able make similarly good or rapid progress through the challenging extension and enrichment activities on offer both within and outside of the curriculum, such as debating and drama clubs, and challenges in the school's 'blue sky' room. At the end of Year 8, a small number of pupils proceed to other independent schools, while the vast majority transfer to the senior school, with a significant number gaining scholarships for entry each year.

- 3.6 Throughout the school, the pupils' generally exemplary and polite behaviour and positive attitudes towards their work strongly support their achievements. As a result of characteristics promoted in the Ardingly Learner Profile, pupils strive towards and frequently demonstrate key learning skills, such as a spirit of enquiry and articulate communication of their ideas, as well as a willingness to take responsibility for their learning. They are enthusiastic and keen to succeed, taking care to present their work neatly. As pupils grow older they demonstrate substantial ability to work independently and with considerable initiative. They also collaborate highly effectively with their peers, remaining focused when sharing their ideas.

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

- 3.7 The quality of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 The broad curriculum is highly stimulating and strongly supports the development of the pupils' individual talents, in line with the school's aims. It is highly effective in covering the requisite areas of learning, and facilitates the attainment of high standards. The provision of French throughout the school, and the introduction of Latin in Year 4 and Spanish as an alternative for older pupils, enhance the pupils' linguistic skills. The focus on a pupil-centred curriculum in the pre-preparatory department and the emphasis on a creative cross-curricular approach in Years 1 to 4 enable pupils to make connections in their learning, to solve problems and to employ critical thinking. They apply this particularly well in literacy, and in creative and technological subjects. The programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is comprehensive and encompasses topics that further the pupils' personal development. Excellent opportunities in the arts foster their accomplishment in creative and performance skills. The large choir offers many pupils the opportunity to perform and work as a team, including at the weekly Eucharist.
- 3.9 The extensive sporting programme focuses on the development of excellence and opportunities for all to represent the school. A comprehensive range of well-attended clubs and activities for all ages stimulates the pupils' interest in wider learning and supports their personal and social development. Pupils identified as able in particular areas are extended and challenged through clubs such as debating, drama, graphic novels and sailing. The school has addressed the recommendation and required regulatory action of the previous inspection and now makes best use of the available space for creative and expressive play. Through the Ardingly Learner Profile, pupils learn to appreciate, celebrate and develop specific aspects of learning, key to the aims of the school. The learning experience of the pupils is enhanced by the 'blue sky' room, designed to encourage problem-solving, reasoning and thinking skills, which is regularly used by an enthusiastic and large number of pupils who engage in investigations and challenges.
- 3.10 Curricular documentation is thorough and supports teaching well, ensuring continuity and progression. In nearly all respects, senior management and heads of department rigorously monitor the curriculum to ensure that it suits the needs of all pupils, and makes best use of opportunities for cross-curricular links. Pupils with SEND are supported well across the curriculum by the excellent management and organisation of learning support, both within class and in withdrawal sessions.
- 3.11 An extensive range of trips and visits significantly enhances the pupils' knowledge, interest and understanding. These include residential trips to France for older pupils. The school has extensive links with the local and wider community. For

example, pupils in Year 3 undertake a cross-curricular project on Ardingly Village and members of the public attended the Year 8 production of *The Dickens Testament* at a local theatre during the inspection week. Pupils suggest charities that they would like to support and they raise funds for local and international causes, including through sponsored events such as the 'hunger lunches' to support children in Kenya.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.12 The quality of the teaching is excellent.
- 3.13 Teaching is highly effective in supporting the school's aims and promoting pupils' progress. The school has made strong progress in raising the quality of its teaching to that of the best since the previous inspection. A common feature is thorough planning, where the needs of individual pupils are taken into account, and there is an appropriate balance of input from the teacher and opportunities for the pupils to think for themselves and discuss their ideas. The most effective teaching takes account of the different learning styles of the pupils, and includes imaginative and stimulating tasks to broaden their knowledge and understanding. For example, in a science lesson, the pupils were able to acquire new knowledge through the interactive whiteboard, before performing a piece of drama, followed by a written task that enabled them to reinforce and demonstrate their learning in different ways. A high level of subject knowledge is evident in all teaching. Teachers make excellent use of good quality resources, such as the interactive whiteboards and artefacts, to make lessons interesting. The library is well used, both within the timetable and at breaks and after school.
- 3.14 A strength of teaching is the use of targeted questioning that skilfully elicits responses from the pupils and leads to deeper understanding. This is typically encompassed within a framework of brisk, timed tasks that lead to lessons of a good pace, and results in significant progress. On the rare occasions when teaching is less successful, pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to exercise extended reasoning or creativity. They are not challenged to take risks or to think independently therefore, and so progress, particularly for the most able, is reduced. The Ardingly Learner Profile is prominent in all lessons, and the pupils are encouraged to consider and apply skills such as enquiry and decision making, and to explore connections in their learning. For example, in a design and technology lesson, whilst the pupils were working individually and acting on their own initiative, they were also encouraged to reflect on their progress constructively and to take risks with their practical work as they realised their ideas.
- 3.15 Relationships in the classroom between teachers, support staff and pupils are excellent. In their discussions with inspectors, the pupils consistently reported that they feel supported and confident in their learning. Teachers' high expectations ensure that the pupils' attitudes and behaviour in class are excellent. A good number of pupils also stated that the best aspect of the school was the help and guidance they receive from their teachers. Praise and encouragement are used to good effect, and this adds to the pupils' enjoyment. Throughout the school, pupils with SEND are catered for with sensitivity and understanding. The thorough knowledge of these pupils shown in teaching and the appropriate support and challenge to extend them result in the good achievement of all pupils in discussion, written work and interactive activities.

- 3.16 Assessment systems are thorough, and data collected through standardised tests is used alongside the teacher's own knowledge of the pupils to ensure an appropriate level of progression for each individual. Information regarding pupils with SEND is used effectively, and all pupils set and review their own half-termly targets in every subject. Assessment data is also used well to identify more able pupils requiring additional challenge, and Year 8 pupils identified in this way are challenged by preparation for scholarship examinations. In some lessons the pupils are encouraged to assess each other's work through peer observation. For example, in a drama lesson, the pupils were asked to pause from their activity and speak positively about a peer's work, before suggesting ways it could be improved. Pupils responded well to this challenge, offering affirming as well as constructive comments. Marking is frequent and regular, but does not always offer advice for improvement. The best marking is positive and helpful, suggesting targets and means to improve, and the pupils are effective in answering the questions written in their books by their teachers.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The personal development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The pupils' spiritual development is outstanding. They are confident and self-aware, and can articulate their developing spirituality because the school promotes a clear set of shared values that are reinforced by the Woodard tradition. As they grow older, pupils express mature self-knowledge through plentiful opportunities for discussion in lessons, such as in PSHCE, and divinity and philosophy. They display high self-esteem due to the constant positive messages they receive. Pupils visit the chapel regularly and have good relationships with the chaplaincy. Many clearly appreciate the time and space for reflection, celebration and prayer it affords, and an increasing number of pupils volunteer to accept responsibility as sacristans. Many pupils appreciate the Eucharist celebrated on a Friday afternoon, and find it a helpful conclusion to a busy week. This was articulated in comments such as: 'the chapel is important to us here; it is at the centre of our school'.
- 4.3 The pupils demonstrate excellent moral development. They listen carefully to and value the ideas and opinions of others. They are also willing and confident to articulate their own views. Through their positive, caring and supportive behaviour, pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They demonstrate a mature empathy for the needs of others, such as in a geography lesson where older pupils clearly understood moral implications regarding the plight of sweat shop workers. They develop a mature understanding of moral dilemmas such as that of advertising to children, through the many opportunities given for discussion across the curriculum.
- 4.4 The social development of the pupils is exceptional. They are encouraged to accept responsibility and are happy to do so. Older pupils contribute to the life of the school in many ways, one of which is by supporting and assisting younger children in the library and the 'blue sky' room. Pupils in Year 8 accept responsibility as prefects and contribute to the decision-making process through discussions about pastoral care at their weekly meetings with staff. Pupils contribute to the wider society through community service and fund raising. They reflect upon the needs of others, and charity monitors in each house take responsibility for initiating and organising fund raising for their chosen charities.
- 4.5 The pupils' cultural development is strong. They have a very good understanding of Western European culture, which is enhanced by external visits to theatres, museums and galleries, and by visitors to school. They are culturally enriched through the excellent opportunities to develop their abilities in the performing arts. Pupils develop an understanding of the diversity of different cultures. They are introduced to world faiths and develop an appreciation of the beliefs of others. For example, pupils demonstrated a good understanding of Hinduism, as they shared stories, made clay vessels and necklaces, cooked Indian sweets and visited a Hindu temple. Residential visits to France enable pupils to gain valuable first-hand experience of the language and culture of another country.
- 4.6 The innovative Ardingly Learner Profile is highly effective in developing pupils' personal attributes so that they become caring, principled, reflective and open-minded. By the time they leave the school, pupils display a mature level of personal

development, characterised by perceptive self-knowledge, confidence, empathy and social concern.

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

- 4.7 The quality of pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 The school has a welcoming, caring ethos in accordance with its aims to create a community that fosters sensitivity, confidence, a sense of service and enthusiasm for life. Relationships are built upon mutual respect and trust. The staff know individual pupils very well, and provide highly effective support and guidance. The school has strong procedures to support positive behaviour and to guard pupils against bullying. Excellent arrangements reward good work and promote kindness, and so instances of bullying are rare. Pupils of all ages understand the rules for good behaviour and are motivated by them. The school deals with any poor behaviour in an efficient and sensitive manner; any incidents are recorded and monitored, and information shared appropriately with relevant staff. In their interviews with inspectors, the pupils stated that they feel safe and well cared for, and that the friendliness of the teachers is a major reason that they enjoy school. They also appreciate that all members of staff, including the most senior, are always willing and available to listen to them. Relationships between pupils of all ages are excellent and they show high levels of tolerance, respect and concern for each other. The co-operation and courtesy evident all around the school result in a warm and nurturing atmosphere.
- 4.9 The pupils' awareness of the need for healthy eating is reinforced during relevant lessons, by the catering staff and in displays. The school provides a wide choice of food of excellent quality, with salad and fruit available every lunchtime. Pupils have excellent opportunities to become physically active and appreciate the need for regular exercise. The school has a suitable three-year plan to improve educational access for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 4.10 The pupils' views are listened to and taken into account. They feel that this is beneficial to them, but also appreciate that they cannot always effect change when other factors are considered. The regular meetings of the pupil council are the main means for pupils to voice opinions, but in weekly meetings, prefects discuss their ideas for improvements and plan ways to implement them.

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

- 4.11 The quality of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.12 Measures to ensure that pupils are safeguarded are fully in place. The school ensures that all staff, including those with particular responsibilities, receive training in child protection at the required intervals, so that they have a thorough knowledge of issues and fully understand procedures to be followed should a concern arise. The safeguarding policy is implemented well.
- 4.13 Excellent arrangements for health and safety are competently overseen by a full-time health and safety officer. Procedures and policies for health and safety are comprehensive and efficient. They are reviewed termly and taken to a whole-college steering group for annual review. All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards, procedures are practised regularly and efficient records kept. General risk assessments ensure that safety is a priority and actions identified as requiring attention are dealt with swiftly. Detailed risk assessments are undertaken to ensure the safety of pupils whilst on trips.

Arrangements to ensure that pupils are correctly supervised whilst on site are robust, and rigorous safety procedures are observed as pupils move around the site.

- 4.14 Provision for pupils who become ill or are injured are excellent. Appropriate numbers of staff are trained in first aid at a level commensurate with their duties, including paediatric first aiders in the EYFS. The medical centre, which is operated day and night by qualified staff, provides excellent medical care. The school's admission and attendance registers are maintained rigorously and correctly stored.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.15 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.16 Outcomes for the boarders are excellent. They learn to live in a community with different age groups, which enhances their maturity and tolerance towards others. Boarders enjoy and are keen to take part in the many well-planned activities that increase their confidence and self-reliance. They show much care and consideration to their peers and to adults in the boarding house and school, demonstrating clearly the successful development of personal integrity. Boarders are very happy and keen to talk about their boarding experiences. They interact confidently with day pupils for academic, sporting and social activities. Boarders demonstrate a relaxed and warm, yet respectful relationship with house boarding staff.
- 4.17 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. The school offers flexible arrangements ranging from single night stays to weekly boarding, and liaison with parents requiring boarding for their children is efficient and informative. Staff keep accurate records of all boarders, including of their activities. Any concerns or issues that arise are conscientiously communicated to day staff. This ensures consistency of care and continuity. There is a thorough process of induction and the school's boarding aims are clearly available on the parents' portal of the school website as well as in the boarders' handbook. Boarders have a choice of many adults should they need help with a personal difficulty, including access to independent advice.
- 4.18 Boarders are helped to stay fit and healthy. They benefit from the excellent care provided by the school's medical centre. Boarders are provided with three nutritious meals that take into account special dietary needs. For those boarders who stay more than one night, there are efficient arrangements for clothes to be laundered. The provision of lockable storage ensures the safety of each boarder's possessions. Fire safety drills in the boarding house take place each term. All boarders feel very well looked after and treated equally. The boarding routine after supper provides boarders with a wide choice of activity, followed by a quiet time to catch up with work, to do their music practice or to read, and to relax before they go to bed. Weekly outings to local activity centres are very much enjoyed by the boarders.
- 4.19 The boarding area is warm and well decorated, and provides a welcoming and comfortable environment. Well-furnished common rooms provide well for the boarders' leisure time. The school ensures that dormitories may only be entered by boarders. The telephones situated on both floors enable all boarders to have direct access to their parents or carers at any time and they can all use alternative, electronic methods of communication if they wish.
- 4.20 The effectiveness of arrangements for welfare and safeguarding is excellent. A clear and comprehensive policy and robust safer recruitment procedures ensure the boarders' well-being. Effective policies to ensure the supervision of visitors to the

school enhance their safety. The excellent relationships between boarders and staff ensure that good behaviour and consideration for others are the expected norm and that should difficulties arise, they can be dealt with calmly and openly. Should sanctions be necessary, these are administered in line with detailed policies and careful records kept. The careful supervision of boarders ensures that their whereabouts are known at all times and there is a comprehensive policy for any missing boarder. The fact that at least three staff members sleep in the boarding house at night reassures all boarders, who know that there is an adult that can be contacted if needed.

- 4.21 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the boarding provision is excellent. Enthusiastic staff, including Gap Year students, give their time and energy to enrich the boarders' enjoyment. Any health and safety issues are raised at the weekly boarding meetings, which helps to facilitate the smooth running of the house. Close contact with the maintenance department means that minor repairs are completed promptly. Detailed records are kept of any medicine that is dispensed and parents are kept informed at all times. All boarding staff are suitably trained in first aid, child protection and boarding matters. The regular attendance by boarding staff on relevant courses keeps them up-to-date with latest developments and enhances the care they give to the boarders. The boarding development plan has clear priorities as well as aims, in order to improve this key, excellent feature of the school community.
- 4.22 Nearly all parents are highly supportive of the boarding provision, saying that it is well managed, safe and comfortable, and that it helps with their children's development and progress. These views were supported by inspection evidence.
- 4.23 The school has responded positively to the recommendations made at the previous boarding inspection, undertaken by Ofsted. Medical consent forms are now sent out to parents and guardians, and information within the child protection file is now consistent and contains all the recommended documents.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The School Council ensures that the preparatory school is supported in securing its aims and ethos. Governors are highly committed to the whole college and its continuing development, and support the academic achievement and well-being of the pupils, though currently none have experience in preparatory education. The role of provost provides additional support for senior staff as well as a valuable link with the corporation and strengthens the core spiritual values of the school. Governors' strong strategic vision is realised in a comprehensive development plan, devised with the school leadership team following consultation with staff. Governors ensure that finances allow for sufficient staff of high calibre as well as the provision of good quality resources. Their prudent financial management, which allows for a rolling programme of maintenance and improvement works to the buildings and estate, has enabled the relocation and refurbishment of the preparatory school. Governors maintain well-informed oversight of the school through carefully constituted committees that include education, finance and estates.
- 5.3 New governors receive useful induction training. Strong staff representation on the education committee allows direct communication, and governors receive detailed reports from the head and the headmistress of the pre-preparatory department. Link governors for both sections of the school visit regularly, and governors attend school events whenever they can and meet with groups of staff following School Council meetings. These measures enable governors to have strong insight into issues relating to the preparatory school. In response to shortcomings in regulatory compliance found during the previous inspection, the School Council appointed one of its number to take responsibility for ensuring that compliance and oversight of child protection, welfare, and health and safety are fully monitored. Safeguarding is considered at all full School Council meetings and the nominated child protection governor meets each term with the school's child protection officers.

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

- 5.4 Leadership and management at all levels are excellent.
- 5.5 Senior leaders set a clear educational direction for the school, which means that self-evaluation, leading to development planning, is a key priority and extremely thorough. The school has made significant progress since the previous inspection and pupils benefit from strong leadership, and so academic standards are high and they are cared for exceptionally well. The leadership places spirituality at the centre of school life, which contributes to the strong personal development of all pupils. Highly effective leadership ensures that the school's aims are well met.
- 5.6 Senior staff from both the senior and the preparatory school form the college leadership group to oversee strategic planning. Working together in this way has enabled leadership to develop to a high standard and results in greater cohesion between sections of the college than at the time of the previous inspection. This has led to joint initiatives, such as the Ardingly Learner Profile, which enhance the pupils' learning, as well as a five-year development plan that is well underway, with clear

priorities and targets for each aspect, and a focus on benefiting all pupils. Consultation with staff at all levels is linked to development planning. The pupils' personal and academic progress is monitored carefully, and so they enjoy a smooth transition through the preparatory school and on into senior school.

- 5.7 Roles and job descriptions are clear and focused on ensuring the highest standards of teaching and learning. The leadership has established effective systems to monitor the educational experience of the pupils in response to a recommendation of the previous inspection. The senior management team and the academic committee meet regularly and have made expectations clear to heads of department, who monitor teaching and learning rigorously. The appraisal system is thorough and identifies needs for professional development which are fulfilled through appropriate training, including in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Regular lesson observations and more informal visits by senior leaders ensure an open and positive attitude to school improvement and the sharing of best practice. Excellent teaching is clearly identified and support is given where it is less successful, to ensure that standards are generally high. Staff feel well supported, yet accountable.
- 5.8 The school's ethos and values are modelled by leaders at all levels. Excellent oversight ensures that policies and procedures are consistently implemented, which results in high standards of pastoral care and excellent provision for boarders.
- 5.9 Procedures in relation to the appointment of suitable staff, volunteers and governors are robust and meet the requirements of the previous inspection report in terms of the implementation and recording of checks. The chaplaincy is involved in the appointment process and this supports the Christian ethos of the school. New staff are supported through an exceptionally thorough induction programme during the course of their first year.
- 5.10 All staff, including those in support and ancillary capacities, are committed to the quality and success of the school. This was illustrated by how quickly and efficiently they ensured that the school was clean, safe and ready for operation, following a snowfall.
- 5.11 The school has maintained the strong and worthwhile relationship with parents, carers and guardians identified at the previous inspection. In discussion and comments in pre-inspection questionnaires, parents were overwhelmingly appreciative and supportive of the school. They especially value the care their children receive, the curricular and extra-curricular provision, the happy boarding environment and the fact that their children love coming to school. Inspection evidence confirms these views. Parents appreciate the ease of communication with the school. Staff email addresses are published to parents and staff respond sensitively and promptly to any concerns or queries. The school has an appropriate procedure for dealing with any complaints of a more serious nature, and meticulous records indicating how concerns are resolved are kept. The requirements of the previous inspection report in this area have been met.
- 5.12 There are many valuable opportunities for parents to become involved in the life of the school and in the work and progress of their children, particularly through the website. This also provides pupils and their parents, and parents of prospective pupils with the required policies regarding arrangements for safeguarding and the handing of complaints. The parents' portal on the website provides regular updates on school life and pupils' achievements. Comprehensive handbooks ensure that parents have a well-informed understanding of the ethos and expectations of the

school, as well as curricular information. Parents have access to senior leaders as they leave their children each morning, and the school has an 'open door' policy.

5.13 Termly consultation evenings enable parents to discuss individual pupils' progress. To ensure a seamless transfer from the pre-preparatory to the preparatory department, additional information evenings are held. Written reports are regular, encouraging and comprehensive, and targets are consistently set to aid progress.

5.14 Parents and staff work together on the Friends Committee to support both the school and charities through regular social events and fund raising. Many parents provide help with reading and other classroom activities. Parents are involved in the school in many and various ways, including the enrichment programme. They are a welcome and invaluable resource.

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

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

6.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.1 The overall effectiveness of the EYFS provision is outstanding. The children's welfare, learning and development needs are exceptionally well met by caring staff, excellent teaching and a supportive environment. Safeguarding procedures are robust. Children are enabled to make very good progress, irrespective of gender, ethnicity or ability. Parents are overwhelmingly appreciative of the care and education their children receive. Staff maintain high standards by regularly identifying areas for improvement and planning to address these.

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

6.2 Leadership and management of the setting are outstanding. Comprehensive policies and procedures, including robust risk assessments, are implemented rigorously to safeguard children. All adults have been carefully checked for their suitability to work with children, and are well qualified and trained. Excellent relationships with parents and links with local agencies contribute to the comprehensive understanding that adults have of each child. Clear vision and regular self-evaluation ensure excellent capacity for continual improvement. Staff actively promote equality and respect diversity. The effective use of plentiful and high quality resources leads to successful outcomes for all children.

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

6.3 The quality of the provision is outstanding. Relationships between staff and children are excellent. Adults support learning and development enthusiastically and therefore children are eager to learn. Staff working with children under the age of three develop firm foundations for learning by encouraging excellent social and communication skills. Indoor and outdoor facilities are spacious and well planned. Classrooms are vibrant and richly resourced. Staff have identified that the outside classroom does not yet provide learning opportunities across all six areas. Children's interests and needs are at the heart of planning and this leads to an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Thorough initial and ongoing assessment identifies what children can do and informs the next steps in their learning. Children who have additional needs are identified early and the local authority provides helpful support. Sensitive staff promote independence, personal hygiene and appropriate behaviour. They are vigilant in their care of children, helping them to develop safe and healthy habits. Facilities are provided for children under the age of three to rest after lunch. The after-school club provides suitable care and activities for children who stay beyond the end of the school day.

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

- 6.4 Outcomes for children are outstanding. Children, including those under the age of three, are enthusiastic, inquisitive learners who enjoy coming to school and make rapid progress. They reach consistently good and often excellent levels of achievement. By the end of the EYFS, most children have achieved the Early Learning Goals in all six areas of learning. The children's excellent personal and emotional development is apparent. Exemplary behaviour is the norm because children absorb the school's culture of respect and co-operation. They learn to share, take turns and form happy friendships. They play together harmoniously and show care and kindness. Children under the age of three order numbers to six on the computer competently and are eager to share books. They are becoming independent. Nursery children count and recognise numbers to ten and they are beginning to have some understanding of letters and sounds. Reception children read well and enthusiastically. Their emergent writing is excellent for their age. They are able to collect and handle data. Children of all ages display an excellent knowledge and understanding of the world. They use ICT, according to their age, with confidence. They feel safe and know about how to remain so and how to keep healthy, and they follow the rules for good hygiene. They are prepared well for their next stage of learning.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

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

Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.