



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

WINCHESTER HOUSE SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

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Winchester House School

Full Name of School	Winchester House School
DfE Number	928/6000
Registered Charity Number	309912
Address	Winchester House School 44 High Street Brackley Northamptonshire NN13 7AZ
Telephone Number	01280 702483
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Email Address	office@winchester-house.org
Headmaster	Mr Mark Seymour
Chair of Governors	Mr George Seligman
Age Range	3 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	308
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (199 boys; 109 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 0 5-11: 198 3-5 (EYFS): 39 11-18: 71
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 274
Number of Boarders	Total: 34 Full: 0 Weekly: 34
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Victoria Berrie
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	12 Mar 2013 to 15 Mar 2013

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 March 2008.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

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

This inspection contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education, personal development and welfare. Until September 2011, Boarding inspections were carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgements.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report,

inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'satisfactory' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff 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

Mr David Horn	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Amanda Stables	Team Inspector (Head of Middle School, IAPS school)
Mr Craig Watson	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Jane Willis	Team Inspector (Head of Pre-Preparatory School, IAPS school)
Mrs Pamela Leech	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Sue Bennett	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Winchester House School, situated in the small market town of Brackley, in Northamptonshire, is an independent day and boarding co-educational preparatory school for pupils aged three to thirteen. The school was founded in 1875 as a preparatory boarding school for boys and in 1922 it moved to its present site. The school was established as an educational trust in 1957, run by a board of governors, and became fully co-educational in 1976. It comprises extensive grounds and is centred around a Tudor manor house. Playing fields, outdoor play areas and gardens, accommodating an outdoor swimming pool, are adjacent to the school. Since the previous inspection in March 2008, development of the school's facilities has included the refurbishment of boys' boarding areas and the complete upgrading of three science laboratories.
- 1.2 Boarding provision begins in Year 3, on an occasional, weekly or enhanced weekly basis. The school can accommodate up to ninety-two boarders at one time. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are based in the Pre-Prep Department, along with pupils from Years 1 and 2, situated in separate accommodation.
- 1.3 The school's core values emanate from its aims of building the confidence to take opportunities, and encouraging all pupils to lift their eyes and aspire. It seeks for pupils to feel secure and valued within a family atmosphere.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection there were 308 pupils on roll. Of these, 199 were boys and 109 were girls. A total of 39 children were in the EYFS, and 55 pupils were in Years 1 and 2. In the Upper School, comprising Years 3 to 8, there were 214 pupils. There were 34 weekly boarders and 34 pupils boarding on an occasional basis. Pupils are drawn mainly from the surrounding area and the majority are of white British or white Western European origin, from families with professional backgrounds.
- 1.5 Children joining the school at the age of three visit for a 'taster' day designed to assess their educational needs. Pupils cover a wide range of ability, though most are above the national average.
- 1.6 No pupils speak English as an additional language. The school has identified 70 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive specialist support. None 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 Pupils are well educated in accordance with the school's aims. The school achieves very high standards in all facets of school life, providing an abundance of educational opportunities for its pupils. All pupils, including those with SEND, achieve and make excellent progress in relation to their abilities as a result of strong support and good quality teaching. Throughout the school, pupils' achievements are excellent, supported by a comprehensive and appropriate curriculum, a plentiful and interesting range of visits, and a notable variety of all-inclusive extra-curricular clubs and activities. Teaching demonstrates creativity and there is excellent individual support, particularly for those with SEND and the most able. Opportunities for using information and communication technology (ICT) in the curriculum are developing. The school is highly effective in systematically monitoring pupils' progress, although the quality of marking in their exercise books is inconsistent.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent. They are self-assured, with high levels of confidence, and have a strong awareness of moral issues. Their social development is strong and they exhibit good cultural awareness. Pupils' achievements are strongly reinforced by their positive outlook towards learning and their high standard of conduct in class. Children in the EYFS are well behaved and co-operative, and have well-developed confidence, imagination and curiosity. The pupils' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire showed great satisfaction with the provision of the school. A small number said that bullying is not always dealt with effectively by staff. This was not borne out by inspectors' subsequent investigations. Pupils are supported by excellent pastoral care and day-to day safeguarding. All staff have undergone criminal records checks. The school's provision for boarding and outcomes for boarders are excellent, as indicated by the responses in both parents' and pupils' questionnaires.
- 2.3 Governance is highly committed to the success of the school and exercises much perspicacity. Governors have a clear oversight of the school and carry out their monitoring role of policies and procedures with care, an improvement since the previous inspection. Senior leadership has had an energetic and positive effect on a management structure characterised by clear lines of accountability, commitment and effective communication. Over time there has been a steady improvement of the school's facilities, to their present high standard. The school promotes excellent links with parents, whose responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire were both large in number and exceptionally positive.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that marking sets out clear targets for improvement and follows the marking policy.
 2. Make greater use of ICT across the curriculum as a tool for teaching and learning.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The school thoroughly fulfils its principal aim to discover the needs and potential of pupils in order to provide the best possible all-round education for each child. Throughout the school, pupils display secure knowledge and skills across a wide range of subjects and extra-curricular activities, and good understanding of a variety of topics covered in lessons. They exhibit self-discipline in the classroom and are able to organise themselves competently in practical subjects. They work collaboratively to a high degree across a range of activities both in and out of the classroom.
- 3.3 The pupils reach high standards in reading from a very young age and they demonstrate excellent numeracy skills. They understand how to explore a problem in order to reach a range of balanced conclusions, for example in a mathematics lesson where Year 6 was investigating the number of possible nets of a cube. Pupils achieve high standards in their cross-curricular topic work where they successfully apply skills learnt in other subjects, including technical aspects of English and creative writing. They apply their excellent scientific knowledge and understanding to make predictions in experiments, and have excellent practical skills to test their own and each other's ideas. In the EYFS, children make excellent progress from their individual starting points, with many exceeding EYFS expectations by the end of the Reception year. Older children use punctuation accurately in their writing and confidently decipher words when reading. Younger children recognise initial letters and enjoy retelling favourite stories to their friends. Excellent opportunities in the EYFS enable children to become active, investigative learners.
- 3.4 Pupils are beginning to use ICT productively in an increasing range of subjects. Their research skills are well developed and they work effectively, both independently and with others on programming tasks. In the creative and performing arts, the pupils demonstrate high levels of skill. This is evident in the vivacious displays of artwork on show around the school, covering a wide variety of genres. The standard of music in the classroom and individually is notably high, with recent individual success in the Banbury Young Musician of the Year competition. Combined arts presentations exhibit pupils' self-assurance, individuality and excellent knowledge of the processes required of a staged production. The pupils demonstrate an extensive range of physical skill through physical education (PE), games lessons and the extensive range of sporting fixtures. Since the previous inspection, the under-13 netball team has won national championships. 'Learn to Lead' expeditions encouraging leadership skills for pupils in Years 5, 6 and 7 have been successfully undertaken to the Brecon Beacons and the Lake District. This programme has begun to permeate other areas of the curriculum, highlighting some notable individual and group successes. At the end of Year 8 all pupils achieve success in Common Entrance examinations, with a significant number gaining scholarships for academic achievement, music, art and sport to the senior schools of their choice, within a wide range of local and more distant independent day and boarding schools.
- 3.5 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to performance against a fixed national average. On the evidence available, including lesson observations,

scrutiny of the pupils' written work, the school's internal past and current data, and discussions with the pupils, it is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations. Pupils follow a demanding curriculum that promotes work at a high level in all subjects. Pupils who receive extra support for SEND make excellent progress in reading and writing tasks both in the classroom and in additional booster groups. The most able pupils make rapid progress, especially in mathematics, English and science, where those preparing for scholarships in Year 8 exhibit exceptional levels of achievement.

- 3.6 In discussion with pupils, they confirmed that they find their work at school interesting. Their attitudes to learning are excellent and they take great pride both in their own achievements and the successes of others. They thrive in surroundings that promote hard work and enjoyment; they listen prudently to their teachers and respond positively. They work effectively together, relishing opportunities to challenge and extend themselves. The pupils are interested and engaged in their lessons. They contribute to the classes confidently, asking perceptive and interesting questions; they sustain their concentration and are very well behaved.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 The curriculum has excellent breadth and includes a stimulating variety of subjects. Along with the extensive extra-curricular programme, it very successfully meets the school's aim of enabling pupils to participate widely in school life and to enjoy a broad range of experiences as they explore and develop their own interests and abilities. The EYFS makes excellent provision in meeting the needs of the children. A stimulating range of activities and resources supports children's learning and development extremely well.
- 3.9 Time allocation for individual subjects has been well planned, providing balance and an appropriate focus on core subjects, and promotes the effective development of pupils' skills in all areas. Pupils' linguistic skills are developed through the learning of French and the provision of options for Latin and Greek. Pupils are taught in a mixture of sets and mixed ability groups from Year 3 by specialist subject teachers. This ensures that pupils are very well prepared for their senior schools, most notably in Years 7 and 8 when they are preparing to sit examinations. For those pupils requiring learning support, lessons are integrated very effectively into the daily programme so that their needs are met, whilst they are still able to take part in the full range of subjects provided. Excellent separate and integrated provision is made for the most able pupils through an effective gifted and talented programme. Inclusive programmes provide excellent support for the individual needs of EYFS children, such as those with SEND or the more able, ensuring that children of all abilities reach at least their expected developmental levels.
- 3.10 The creative arts are well represented in the curriculum, not only in discrete lessons, but also as longer sessions in Years 5 to 8, giving pupils stimulating opportunities to experience a variety of combined disciplines. These include drama, art, music and film making. Additionally, drama and musical productions play a significant part in school life, including plays, concerts and other performance events such as annual music, public speaking and poetry competitions. Lessons in ICT provide pupils with skills to support their work in some other subjects and excellent resources are available in the classroom, used by pupils for research projects. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection, although ICT is not yet embedded fully

across the curriculum. The library has an extensive range of books and is used by the pupils in lessons and at break times for research or reading for pleasure. Opportunities for practical activity in lessons are extremely well supported by the well-equipped facilities for PE, art, design and technology, and science. Three science laboratories enable all pupils from Year 6 to study biology, physics and chemistry separately.

- 3.11 Outdoor learning characterises much of the school's strengths. In the Pre-Prep Department, pupils learn about their surroundings through the Going Wild sessions and in the Upper School, through an environmental studies programme. These lessons take place in the outdoor classroom and the stimulating Secret Garden. The personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) programme encourages pupils to gain understanding about themselves, other people and the wider world, supporting the school's aims. This provision has significantly improved since the previous inspection, when it was identified as an area for improvement.
- 3.12 An extensive and highly innovative extra-curricular programme offers a variety of activities within the Upper School pupils' day, and after school in the Pre-Prep Department, which further develops the pupils' skills and personal qualities. A range of varied sporting activities include squash, badminton and golf. Those who are keen to be involved with music are quickly encouraged to take part in ensembles that include clarinet, guitar and brass groups, as well as the orchestra and choir. Magic Science and Fun with Food for younger pupils and the Lunar Society for those in the Upper School are indicative of the excellent range and breadth on offer. In the EYFS, there is an excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated opportunities for the children. Children talk about their interests in a self-assured manner and greatly enjoy imaginative play opportunities such as preparing breakfast in the role-play corner. After-school clubs, such as jewellery making or tag rugby, enrich pupils' learning beyond the classroom.
- 3.13 The school works hard to promote many links with the local community. An extensive range of visiting speakers enhances learning opportunities for pupils throughout the school. Visits to places of historical and cultural interest, workshops, and an outreach programme with a local primary school widen the pupils' horizons, contributing greatly to their personal development.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.14 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.15 In the majority of lessons observed teaching was at least good and in some lessons it was excellent. Teaching supports the school's aim of building confidence to take opportunities. It influences pupils' progress positively and is frequently reflective, inspiring and imaginative. Pupils are enthusiastic and responsive, and are stimulated to achieve their best.
- 3.16 The EYFS staff have a thorough understanding of how young children learn and plan a vibrant breadth of experiences, which encourage children to explore and become independent, investigative learners. Teachers enthusiastically interact with children and motivate their learning. They use highly effective questioning to help extend children's critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- 3.17 In the Upper School, curriculum planning is thorough and detailed, and the school has an effective means of tracking pupils' progress. Individual educational plans are well maintained and well understood by the staff. In the EYFS, thorough

assessment processes and focused observations contribute significantly to children's learning portfolios and help staff to identify the next stages in learning. Teachers have a good understanding of the required levels pupils must achieve in order to gain places or scholarships at the senior schools of their choice. They are especially sensitive to the range of ability in the classes and within sets, and they know each pupil exceptionally well. Pupils who find some areas of academic work difficult spoke with notable confidence about their learning and appreciate teachers' support and encouragement. Both learning support and the gifted and talented programme contribute significantly to the education provided.

- 3.18 Throughout the school, teachers are knowledgeable and the use of subject specialists enhances the younger pupils' learning, such as in ICT, PE, French and music. The teaching is supported well by classroom assistants in the Pre-Prep Department, for example in a Year 1 swimming lesson. Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching in PSHCE has been further improved. The school encourages pupils to work independently, for example on extension tasks and projects, and teachers encourage the use of ICT for research.
- 3.19 The pupils respond positively to the cordial atmosphere established by the teachers; the relationships between the staff and pupils are warm and friendly. Teaching is supported by a very good range of quality resources that are used to good effect to engage the pupils and increase their enjoyment of learning. Interactive whiteboards support teaching in the majority of classrooms and where they are used imaginatively they help to stimulate and develop the pupils' interest and enthusiasm.
- 3.20 The good quality teaching gives the tangible sense of purposeful enjoyment of the lessons. Praise and encouragement are given consistently. A significant majority of the lessons benefit from a brisk pace and time is managed effectively. The teachers are adept at assessing the pupils' progress during lessons, providing appropriate work and explanation. The quality of the marking in exercise books is variable. In the best examples, positive and informative comments, including targets, help the pupils to make progress, a practice that is not consistently applied throughout the 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 school meets its aims of providing the pupils with a firm set of values, a clear sense of their own identity and an understanding of their responsibilities to themselves and one another, in terms of commitment, friendship and loyalty. Children's personal and emotional development is excellent in the EYFS. They feel safe, secure and happy within the setting. Children are considerate towards each other, relish roles of responsibility, and confidently make decisions and choices between activities. They enjoy receiving praise from staff, which supports their self-esteem and strongly nurtures their positive attitudes to future learning and social interaction within school. Pupils throughout the school, including in the EYFS and the boarding house, are confident, articulate, thoughtful and responsible. They conduct themselves in a mature fashion, with exceptional self-awareness and social development.
- 4.3 The development of the pupils' spiritual awareness is exceptional. They engage with non-material aspects of life, and spiritual awareness is developed through topics in religious studies, art, music and literature. Younger pupils calmly entered assembly to the gentle music of a hymn, which they quietly started singing as others filed in.
- 4.4 Pupils confidently discuss the difference between right and wrong, and understand the need for school sanctions, which they deem to be fair. They all know, understand and abide by the Winchester House Way, which is a set of shared values used throughout the school to develop moral awareness. The PSHCE programme of study also provides ample opportunities for pupils to develop a strong moral code. They trust that any poor behaviour will be handled sensitively and effectively by their teachers.
- 4.5 The pupils possess a strong sense of community. Older pupils value opportunities to sustain the school's community ethos, such as being 'pupil helpers' at break times. Younger pupils' community and academic contributions are celebrated through Achievement Certificates and team points, whilst older pupils work collaboratively together to achieve house points. Co-operation amongst pupils is also evident in many lessons, especially in science, where they were seen to share equipment and help each other to tie up their aprons. Older pupils develop a strong sense of responsibility by helping at break times with younger ones. Pupils' representatives from Year 3 upwards contribute towards the school council, which enables them to take forward the concerns and ideas of their classmates. The school has considered favourably many of these ideas, such as introducing house ties. Younger pupils have a keen awareness of how to treat their friends and demonstrate strong social skills when discussing how to be their 'best self'. Older pupils are well aware of public institutions and how the country is governed, and were observed engaging in a lively debate on criminal law. Pupils of all ages are polite and helpful, and are always ready to talk about the school, of which they are extremely proud. Through their charity work and fund raising for various causes, pupils support people less fortunate than themselves. A pupil's initiative has led to the establishment of a charity in support of children with disabilities, for which the school is currently raising funds.

4.6 Pupils respect their own and other cultures and faiths through the study of religious studies, music, art, drama and dance. They have many opportunities to experience and respond to other cultures through a range of trips and visits. A Year 2 display of Van Gogh's *Starry Night* demonstrates an emerging appreciation of art. Pupils' understanding of their own culture is developed through celebrating national events and special days such as Remembrance Sunday.

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

4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.

4.8 Dedicated staff offer outstanding support and guidance to pupils, in accordance with the school's aims to provide the best possible all-round education and care. The Winchester House Way underpins the pastoral ethos of the school and all pupils clearly understand the need to treat others as they would be treated.

4.9 The provision for children's well-being and development in the EYFS is excellent. The highly effective key person system ensures focused priority for children's happiness and safety. Staff work together strongly as a team, exemplifying the significance of relationships. They actively encourage regular health and safety routines, such as for good hygiene and safe movement around the setting.

4.10 In the Upper School, relationships between the staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves are excellent. Staff tutors understand pupils' individual needs very well. During interviews and conversations, pupils say that they are well supported by staff and are clear to whom they should turn with a concern. 'Problem boxes' and external contact information effectively provide pupils with alternative channels of support. Pupils receive regular advice on leading healthy lifestyles through PSHCE and science. Catering staff provide nutritious meals using fresh and locally sourced products for all pupils, including those with specific dietary needs. Fresh drinking water is readily available throughout the day. Pupils have many opportunities for exercise, such as break times, PE lessons and extra-curricular sporting activities.

4.11 Highly effective policies and procedures support the pastoral arrangements. These provide comprehensive guidance for staff, ensuring a consistent approach to unacceptable behaviour, and take account of any related difficulty or disability. Pupils say that school rules are just and they respect the sanction system, understanding that this benefits their personal development. They report that bullying or harassment of any kind are extremely rare and that if any such incidences were to occur, staff would swiftly address them. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a very small minority of parents expressed concerns over the school's anti-bullying processes. Inspectors found no evidence to support these views.

4.12 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND, demonstrating its commitment to care of the individual. Pupils have excellent opportunities to voice their opinions, through school council representatives and tutorial sessions.

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

- 4.13 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.14 Throughout the school, including the EYFS and boarding provision, the school has in place robust procedures to safeguard the pupils' welfare. These are carefully implemented and periodically updated; all teaching and non-teaching staff routinely receive the necessary training. The school has a comprehensive approach to minimise risk from fire and other hazards. Fire practices are carried out regularly to ensure the safety of the pupils, staff and visitors. Electrical and fire equipment is periodically checked and thorough risk assessments carried out. All staff receive appropriate fire awareness training.
- 4.15 The arrangements to ensure health and safety are the result of a well-considered approach. A high standard of medical support is provided for all pupils who are ill. A well-equipped medical room is very efficiently run by a team of well-qualified specialist staff, one of whom is always available when pupils are at school. Medical records are maintained in an exemplary fashion. Staff are trained in first aid, including paediatric first aid for younger pupils. Appropriate care is given to ensure the health and safety of those with physical or learning needs. Both day pupils and boarders feel safe as a consequence of these arrangements.
- 4.16 Attendance and admission registers are conscientiously maintained. The information is backed up and stored appropriately, and absences are followed up promptly.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.17 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.18 Boarders demonstrate great pride in their school and their boarding houses, and are confident, articulate and polite. Regular and frequent boarding meetings as well as daily informal contact with staff allow boarders to influence their provision. Relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and staff are warm and sincere. A highly committed team of staff works hard to ensure that boarding is an enriching and happy experience; boarders feel very well cared for. Boarders appreciate the many opportunities to undertake roles of responsibility in their houses as head of house, dormitory captains and prefects, frequently demonstrating genuine care for each other and for those who are younger. Boarders are encouraged to be fit and healthy, and enjoy the excellent facilities available to them. Mutual trust and respect for each other are encouraged through the example set by staff, the ethos of The Winchester House Way and apposite posters displayed. Behaviour in the houses is exemplary.
- 4.19 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. The boys' house has recently undergone a substantial refurbishment and offers a more rationalised use of space. Refurbishment of the girls' boarding house is well underway and due to be completed by the end of the summer. Both houses are comfortable, attractively decorated, well maintained and welcoming. Each house has a well-stocked kitchen and appropriate laundry provision. Several common rooms and excellent recreational facilities include an outdoor table tennis table, table football, air hockey, televisions, DVD players, games consoles, karaoke machines and small house libraries. Quiet study rooms allow boarders to read and work by themselves should they wish. Each boarder has a lockable box and staff keep any valuables safe for

boarders as requested. Bathroom facilities are plentiful and good supplies of hot water are provided. Opt-in weekends provide boarders with the opportunity to participate in an imaginative programme of arranged activities. In addition, there are many arranged fun nights, including quiz nights, pizza making, fashion shows and cheerleading competitions, as well as less formal evenings each Wednesday. Boarders may use the sports hall, and when the weather is warmer have supervised access to the heated outdoor swimming pool. Each house has telephones appropriately sited for boarders to speak to family and friends in private. Boarders can also use the house computers to keep in close touch with parents by email, and boarders whose parents are abroad are permitted the use of mobile telephones. Staff maintain excellent communication with parents through email, text messaging and telephone.

- 4.20 The boarding team comprises experienced, dedicated staff and the boarders feel safe and individually understood and valued. An induction programme for new boarders, with a pamphlet, orientation talk and tour, and a 'buddy' system help them to settle in quickly. All house notice boards display comprehensive information and contact details for outside agencies such as ChildLine and the Children's Rights Director. Eye-catching posters help boarders to be aware of the wide range of adults to whom they may go for help. In addition to the boarding and academic staff, each boarder has a tutor and an independent listener is available. House staff are available overnight and easily contactable should boarders need assistance. Appropriate risk assessments are in place.
- 4.21 The catering provision is excellent, with a suitable choice of plentiful, well-cooked and nutritious food. All dietary requirements are catered for and staff are aware of those boarders with particular dietary needs. The medical centre is situated centrally and is staffed by a qualified nurse. Pupils may attend at any time and the school doctor makes weekly visits upon request or sees boarders in a local surgery. Excellent facilities for sick boarders are well supervised by staff and the atmosphere is warm and welcoming. Medication is correctly stored and dispensed with parental consent. All records are appropriately maintained. No boarders self-medicate.
- 4.22 Care for the safeguarding, welfare, health and safety of boarders is excellent. The school has responded positively to the previous ISI inspection finding; all appropriate checks in respect of each member of staff appointed to a position in the school are carried out and recorded correctly. A robust anti-bullying policy and well-developed system of rewards and sanctions are applied consistently in both boarding houses. Boarding rewards and sanctions are specific to boarding and do not carry over into the academic day experience. Boarders are confident when speaking with house staff and understand when and how to report concerns. They are clear in their view that any concerns are quickly and effectively addressed.
- 4.23 Staff are aware of where boarders should be and have excellent systems for checking in and out. The missing child policy is understood by all boarding staff. Regular fire drills take place in boarding time and fire logs are up to date and appropriately stored. Fire alarms are regularly checked. Stationery may be purchased from tutors, and house staff keep a small stock of hygiene items for boarders. Weekends at home allow parents to supplement these as necessary. No boarder requires an independent guardian.
- 4.24 The leadership and management of boarding are excellent. The boarding aims are clearly stated and achieved in full, reflecting the high quality relationships and personal development of boarders. Policies are comprehensive and well

implemented. An induction programme for new staff and an annual appraisal provide boarding staff with good opportunities for professional development. Regular boarding staff meetings allow for constant review of the boarding provision, and a positive initiative is underway to enhance the boarding facilities still further. Boarders' views are sought and influence provision effectively. The friendly atmosphere, house loyalty and excellent relationships are nurtured by dedicated staff, and the care for each individual boarder is exemplary. Parents who responded to the questionnaire are highly satisfied with the provision and care their children receive. The boarders' responses were equally enthusiastic in their appreciation of the boarding provision.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Governance makes a strong contribution to the successful fulfilment of the school's aims and has further developed and improved since the previous inspection. Governors provide an extensive range of valuable expertise and experience covering the law, medicine, human resource management and education. New governors are identified with particular skills to strengthen the board, and to cultivate and broaden the school further. Specific governors take on responsibilities throughout the school, including child protection and safeguarding, the Pre-Prep Department and boarding provision. These positions are undertaken with sensitivity and diligence, and are considered by staff and parents to be of much value to the school.
- 5.3 The governors' vision for the school is developed, fostered and promoted through formal regular meetings and informal discussion and debate. Governors have substantial insight into the workings of the school, through regular contact with the leadership and senior staff. A structured programme of meetings is held throughout the year to discuss the school's planned development. This links to efficient and well-organised sub-committees that enable governors to have a comprehensive understanding of the school's day-to-day operations. Shrewd strategic planning has enabled investment in the maintenance and development of accommodation and resources across the school, including the recruitment of high quality staff.
- 5.4 The governors provide effective oversight of all sections of the school, including the EYFS, boarding provision and extra-curricular programme. Governors attend a broad range of activities at school, including plays, concerts and sports events. They monitor academic performance through Common Entrance and internal examination results, ensuring high academic standards. The education committee invites key members of staff to make presentations that augment understanding of the school's academic provision.
- 5.5 A thorough and effective system of appraisal of the leadership is undertaken every two years which involves internal and external assessment. Several governors have attended relevant courses to increase their knowledge of statutory responsibilities. They undergo appropriate training for this purpose, and whole-school policies covering child protection, welfare, health and safety are monitored and reviewed annually by the governing body. All recent appointments have adhered to the relevant regulatory requirements.

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

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.7 Throughout the school from the EYFS onwards, and including boarding provision, leadership and management are highly effective. As a consequence of cohesive teamwork, effective administration and the clear vision of senior staff, the school is successful in meeting its aims of developing the full potential of all its pupils. An effective senior management team has been extended and reorganised since the previous inspection, and a systematic structure for staff meetings has been established at different levels throughout the school, ensuring the effective promulgation of clearly set out strategies to staff, parents, pupils and governors. The academic team of senior leaders provides excellent direction and evaluates its work carefully. Well-focused educational direction is aimed at upholding and cultivating further the high standards of pupils' academic and personal development. Since the previous inspection of the EYFS, there have been considerable improvements, such as stronger communication links with parents, revised assessment processes and development of the outdoor area. Senior managers in the setting successfully fulfil their oversight responsibilities for educational programmes. There is a strong focus on inclusivity within the setting and excellent provision for children's individual needs, including those with SEND and the more able. The setting has excellent systems for self-evaluation and managers have clear priorities for future improvement.
- 5.8 The senior management team has established a regular and systematic programme of scrutiny of pupils' work, planning review and lesson observation, linked to annual formal appraisal and staff professional development. Staff are expected to attend courses covering a range of topics and encouraged to feed back their observations and conclusions at staff meetings. A rigorous process of self-evaluation has been established and priorities are followed up to ensure the successful realisation of key objectives. The school is led with vision and energy, which ensures that all pupils, including those with SEND or who are more able, are effectively supported in lessons.
- 5.9 The school has been very successful in recruiting high quality staff who are given every opportunity to advance their teaching knowledge and expertise, and who are mentored to settle quickly into their roles. Job descriptions clearly outline accountability and lines of communication. The senior management team carries out its responsibilities efficiently, including those for the safeguarding, welfare, health and safety of pupils, across the whole school and all staff are trained in these areas. Procedures for the appropriate recruitment of staff throughout the school are now in place. The school's strategic development plan is a carefully constructed realistic working document, methodically reviewed and updated periodically by senior staff and governors. Cost implications are linked to financial planning.
- 5.10 Responses by parents to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate a high level of satisfaction with the organisation of the school and recognise value in recent developments and new appointments. Comments regarding the management of boarding and the EYFS are extremely positive.
- 5.11 The school maintains excellent links with parents and very successfully meets its aim to work in close partnership with them from the EYFS onwards. Since the

previous inspection, very effective systems of communication have been developed further, incorporating upgrading of the school's excellent and informative website, which now includes email access. Alongside the detailed parent handbooks for each year group, a termly calendar, notices and weekly newsletters ensure that parents are kept well informed of the daily organisation of the school.

- 5.12 Parents are offered many opportunities to become involved in the life of the school. They help out on class outings and with activities, and the school's environmental work has encouraged parent participation with its Dad and Dens and the Get Your Grown Ups Growing events in the Secret Garden. Parents visit the school regularly for events such as sports fixtures, drama productions, concerts and competitions. During the inspection, parents attended the 2013 music competition grand final. The Friends of Winchester House School association is represented by form representatives and organises social and charitable events such as a summer ball and other fund-raising projects for the school and for charities. It also plays a key part in supporting new parents in becoming part of the school community.
- 5.13 Reports to parents are very comprehensive. Each term parents receive regular and clear information about their children's academic achievement and effort. This includes grade and interim reports, as well as a full end-of-year report that incorporates targets for future improvements. All reports are accompanied by detailed explanatory notes. Formal parent/teacher evenings provide the parents with an opportunity to discuss pupils' progress and achievements. More informal occasions such as Come and Share in the Pre-Prep Department and Years 3 and 4 take place throughout the year, ensuring that parents are kept fully aware of their children's academic and personal development.
- 5.14 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all parents indicated a high level of satisfaction with the education their children receive. Parents particularly appreciate the family feel of the school; boys and girls of all ages are educated and cared for within a happy community. They also feel involved with the life of the school and are very pleased with the information they receive about the school and its policies. Complaints are dealt with sensitively, in line with the complaints procedure.

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