



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**BELMONT SCHOOL**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of School	<b>Belmont School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>936/6175</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>312077</b>		
Address	<b>Feldemore Holmbury St Mary Dorking Surrey RH5 6LQ</b>		
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Email Address	<b>schooloffice@belmont-school.org</b>		
Head	<b>Mrs Helen Skrine</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Nick Butcher</b>		
Age Range	<b>2 to 13</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>183</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Boys and Girls</b>		
Numbers by Age	2-5 (EYFS):	<b>20</b>	5-11: <b>132</b> 11-13: <b>31</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>155</b>	
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>28</b>	
	Weekly:	<b>2</b>	Flexi: <b>26</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Kate Ward</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Boys and Girls</b>		
Inspection Dates	<b>06 Oct 2015 to 09 Oct 2015</b>		

## PREFACE

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) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*. The inspection on which the report is based took place over a period of four continuous days in the school.

The previous ISI EYFS intermediate and boarding intermediate inspections were in January 2013 and the previous ISI interim inspection was in March 2011.

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.

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.

## **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 governors, 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 Christopher Emmott	Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mr David Tidmarsh	Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mr Richard Gibbs	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mr Chris Manville	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Belmont School is a co-educational day and boarding school for children from the ages of 2 to 13. It was founded in London in 1880 and is now situated in the Surrey Hills close to the town of Dorking. Teaching accommodation is centred around a restored arts-and-crafts mansion set in 65 acres of wooded parkland which provides playing fields, tennis courts and an outside swimming pool, in addition to a sports hall and theatre. The school is a charitable trust administered by a board of governors. Since the previous inspection several areas of the school have been refurbished and in 2015 the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), for children up to the age of five, moved into its own area on site in The Mews, whilst Years 1 and 2 were relocated to work alongside Years 3 and 4. Within the grounds is a school run completely independently from Belmont for dyslexic pupils. These pupils join with the Belmont pupils for games, assemblies, lunch and extra-curricular activities but are not part of this inspection, with the exception of four who board, whose experience was included.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide a healthy, happy, safe and caring environment for young children, conducive to effective learning and to lead pupils through a carefully prescribed curriculum, balanced with sport, music and other cultural and creative pastimes. It seeks to provide a broad and balanced education, across a wide range of intellectual capabilities, equipping pupils with the knowledge, skills and attributes to gain entry to their preferred senior schools, for work and the future. The school aims to produce well-rounded, confident, polite and friendly boys and girls ready to take on the challenges ahead of them and to make a positive contribution to the society in which they will play a part.
- 1.3 Most pupils come from professional British families who reside in the local area, though a number have international backgrounds. At the time of the inspection there were 183 pupils on roll of which 120 were boys and 63 were girls; of these, ten boys and ten girls were in the EYFS. The school has identified 39 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 37 receive specialist help. There are no pupils with an education care and health plan or a statement of special educational needs. Two pupils use English as an additional language (EAL), one of whom receives support in learning English. The ability profile of pupils is slightly above the national average, though pupils demonstrate a wide range of abilities.
- 1.4 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the EYFS and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

### ***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting.***

<b>School</b>	<b>NC name</b>
Transition	Nursery (age 2-3)
Pre-Reception	Nursery (age 3-4)
Reception	Reception (age 4-5)

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

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

- 2.1 The school is most successful in achieving its aims. Children in the EYFS make an excellent start from their relative starting points so that they progress to Year 1 with strong foundations of learning and personal development. The recommendation from the previous intermediate inspection of the EYFS, concerning the development of the roles for staff supervision, has been met. Development planning in the EYFS is clear, but lacks sufficient detail for the impact of actions to be evaluated. From Year 1 pupils make good and often rapid progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills so that they gain entrance to the senior school of their choice. Pupils benefit from an interesting and broad curriculum, which makes excellent use of modern technology to excite their interest and stimulate independent learning. Consequently they have a very positive attitude, work hard and are proud of their achievements. Teaching across the school is of high quality and utilises excellent analysis of assessment data to ensure that pupils' individual needs are addressed. The provision of well-targeted support for pupils with SEND and suitable challenge for the more able contributes strongly to their progress.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent. They learn to co-operate and respect one another from an early age and as they grow older develop high levels of self-esteem. They have strong moral awareness and a keen sense of justice and fair play, and their manners and behaviour are excellent. The school has dealt with a recommendation of the previous inspection so that pupils now demonstrate a strong appreciation and respect of cultural diversity. Arrangements for the pastoral care of pupils are excellent and the quality of welfare, health and safety is good. The happiness and well-being of pupils is central to the school's ethos so that across the school staff develop close and supportive relationships with pupils within a strong family atmosphere. The quality of boarding is good. Many pupils enjoy the experience of boarding regularly or occasionally and the boarding house has a strong sense of community. The house is well led and boarders are well cared for. One of the recommendations from the previous boarding welfare inspection, concerning contact between boarders and their parents, has been resolved and plans are drawn up to complete the other, concerning improving the boys' showers.
- 2.3 Governance, leadership and management of the school are good. Committed governors bring a useful range of expertise to their roles and endeavour to exercise effective oversight of the school. The monitoring of risk assessments and the recording of suitability checks has been insufficiently rigorous. Senior leaders throughout the school provide clear educational direction and ensure its core values are upheld. Systems to ensure policies are correctly implemented are largely informal with the result that at the beginning of the inspection there were a few shortcomings, which were rectified promptly during the visit. Parents are very happy with the education and care that the school provides. Since the previous inspection effective initiatives have been introduced throughout the school. These have ensured that the high quality educational experience and excellent pastoral care have been maintained.

**2.(b) Action points****(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- 2.5 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015.

**(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that the EYFS development plan includes sufficient information for the staff to rigorously evaluate the impact of actions taken.
  2. Develop and implement a rigorous system to record the school's monitoring of risk assessments, safeguarding training and suitability checks.

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

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

- 3.1 The quality of academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Children in the EYFS greatly enjoy coming to school. All children, including those with SEND, achieve well and make good progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities so that a large majority reach or exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year. Children in Nursery enjoy looking at books while retelling familiar stories using props and make spontaneous attempts at mark-making. In Reception the children's phonic awareness develops rapidly as they blend sounds to build words and form letters with increasing accuracy, so that they make plausible attempts at writing words and short phrases and become confident readers. Younger children count forwards and backwards, saying what is one more or one less than a given number in a music and movement session. Older children use mathematical language capably in everyday situations and accurately write numerals in order from 1 to 20. Children move with confidence, as they dance and jump during a music and movement session, or propel and steer sit-on scooters with strong co-ordination at high speed around the playground. Throughout the EYFS, children are engaged and enthusiastic and they make thoughtful choices when selecting resources to achieve their goals. They are active learners, confident to try new activities and learn from their mistakes. They plan, implement and refine their ideas, thinking critically, and show high levels of creativity and inventiveness. Children work with high levels of concentration both in pairs and independently.
- 3.3 From Year 1 onwards, pupils make good and often excellent progress so that they achieve high levels of knowledge, understanding and skills across the curriculum. As they progress through the school they become confident and fluent readers and their writing shows creativity and imagination across a wide range of genres. Pupils are articulate and express themselves confidently. As they grow older they develop excellent reasoning skills. They listen attentively to their teachers and reflect one another's ideas thoughtfully when working with partners. Pupils demonstrate competent numeracy skills and very strong scientific knowledge for their ages, which they apply effectively to problem-solving and investigative work.
- 3.4 Pupils develop confident skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and their capability is enhanced by frequent opportunities to use computers for research and as a learning resource across the curriculum. They are adept at taking notes which enable them to pursue their interest and develop their knowledge beyond lessons. Pupils of all abilities are encouraged to participate in sport and develop proficient physical skills. Considerable creative skills are evident in their excellent and varied artwork, writing, drama and music, which are showcased in the school's annual festival that celebrates visual, creative and performing arts.
- 3.5 Pupils are successful in a wide-ranging extra-curricular programme. All pupils have the opportunity to represent the school in a variety of team sports, including show jumping, and often achieve a good measure of success, such as being selected to play for the county. Individual pupils compete at both regional and national level in pursuits such as gymnastics, swimming, football, rugby, tennis and cricket. Others win competitions, for example, for creative writing and poetry. Many pupils enjoy the regular opportunities to perform in school concerts and musical productions. An increasing number of pupils learn a musical instrument and are successful in external examinations, and some perform well in speech and drama examinations.

Individual pupils pass auditions to perform outside school as a result of high standards achieved in ballet and drama.

- 3.6 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but, on the evidence available, from standardised tests, lesson observations, scrutiny of samples of work and interviews with pupils, it is judged to be at least good, and for many excellent, in relation to their starting points. The school's assessment data shows that pupils' rate of progress increases as they grow older so that, when they leave the school, their level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils make excellent progress in relation to those of similar ability. Over the last three years every pupil has been successful in gaining entry to the senior school of their choice and each year several gain all-rounder, sport, art or music scholarships. This accords with the school's aim to equip pupils with the knowledge, skills and attributes to gain entry to their preferred senior schools and to prepare them for the future. Pupils with EAL and SEND progress rapidly as a result of well-targeted interventions, the care taken to involve them in writing their individual education plans and well-informed support in class. Pupils who are particularly able make similar progress due to the provision of challenging extension tasks in lessons and enrichment classes. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, all the parents who responded were pleased with their children's progress; almost all the pupils who responded said that they are helped to learn by their teachers and that they feel they are making good progress. This was confirmed in lesson observations and interviews with inspectors, as pupils were highly enthusiastic about their lessons. Pupils appreciate the support they are given and are confident in seeking help when they do not understand.
- 3.7 Pupils' achievement is well supported by their highly positive attitudes towards their learning. In the pre-inspection questionnaire the overwhelming majority of pupils felt they were making good progress. Pupils settle to work quickly and apply themselves well, both when working collaboratively or independently. They conspicuously enjoy working on their own initiative and are proud of their achievements both inside and out of the classroom.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 In the EYFS, children are often given freedom to choose high quality and readily available resources in well-planned, bright and inviting classrooms. Themes, based on children's interests, provide opportunities for cross-curricular activities that meet the full range of children's needs. Daily use of the extensive outdoor areas, which include woodland, playground and gardens, adds flexibility to the curriculum, particularly for promoting physical development. Thoughtful planning ensures an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, and provides comprehensive coverage of all areas of learning and development. Specialist teaching for music, French, ballet and swimming further enhances children's learning. Staff work closely with specialist and visiting staff to ensure activities accurately match children's developmental needs and interests. After-school activity clubs, for example in judo and musical theatre, are available to children in Reception and further enhance the already broad and balanced curriculum.
- 3.10 In Years 1 to 8 pupils are offered a broad curriculum that is appropriately tailored to their ages and abilities and makes a strong contribution to their achievements. This successfully supports the school's aim to balance the curriculum with sport, music

and other cultural and creative pastimes. The overview of the curriculum is very thorough, and careful consideration has been given to allocating appropriate time to the various subjects. The programme covers all the requisite areas in addition to French, drama until Year 6, swimming and games. Pupils are taught in class groups until Year 5 when they are set and taught by subject specialists. The school's leadership team regularly reviews provision in order to maintain improvement and appraise new initiatives. This has resulted in the introduction of study and thinking skills lessons from Year 3 onwards and a comprehensive personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) programme that promotes self-awareness, positive self-esteem and confidence. Staff work well together to plan coherent cross-curricular learning that enables pupils to apply skills across different subjects. Pupils are prepared effectively for life in British society because the curriculum is planned to have a strong emphasis on values such as tolerance, mutual respect for all, behaviour and good manners. These principles are further promoted within the boarding community, where a daily-recorded news bulletin is used to inform on current affairs and promote British values.

- 3.11 The school's preparation for entrance examinations to a variety of senior schools is carefully tailored to the needs of the individual without detracting from the pupils' enjoyment of a broad curriculum which values creativity. Resources for ICT have been significantly developed so that the whole school has access to excellent and very well-used internet-based learning resources. Although in the early stages of implementation, this has already led to a number of new teaching and learning strategies that engage pupils both inside and outside of the classroom. A well-stocked school library provides further good support across the curriculum.
- 3.12 Provision for pupils with SEND and EAL is excellent. They are carefully assessed to identify their specific learning needs and, where appropriate, assigned individual lessons. Pupils told inspectors that they appreciate the help and care that staff provide in supporting their educational and pastoral needs. Similarly, particularly able pupils are encouraged to attend additional group meetings to supplement extension activities provided within lessons.
- 3.13 The extra-curricular provision for pupils is excellent and provides for a wide range of interests such as photography, a ropes course, fencing, science club, public speaking and environmental projects. Most pupils take part in these activities and the school council is very active in putting forward ideas for new clubs. Musical pupils are offered choirs, an orchestra, brass group and string ensemble. The pupils' learning experiences are greatly enhanced by a varied programme of educational visits that include day trips in the locality and residential visits further afield, such as a geography field trip to Iceland. Curriculum workshops and visitors are further evidence of the school's commitment to curriculum enrichment and ensuring that pupils gain a broad and balanced view of the topics they are studying. All the parents who responded to the questionnaire expressed satisfaction with the range of activities available for their children.
- 3.14 Pupils engage with the local community in their charitable activities such as their harvest meal accompanied by entertainment for residents of a local care home, and whole school support for local food banks. Shared use of facilities with local cricket and football clubs encourages pupils to take up sporting opportunities in the local community.

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

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.16 Teaching within the EYFS is excellent. Staff use a wide range of strategies to motivate children's learning and actively encourage their participation. An excellent balance of adult-led and self-directed activities results in a hive of activity where every child is meaningfully engaged. Open questioning is used very effectively to extend children's thinking skills such as when Reception children develop their knowledge and understanding about autumn. Extensive imaginative resources foster their application, such as when children in Nursery use recycled materials to make models. These methods result in long periods of concentrated activity and purposeful play. Staff interact skilfully with children to extend their self-initiated games to provide additional challenge. Occasionally, however, staff are overly directive and inhibit children's creativity. A recently introduced digital monitoring and recording system has had positive impact on the quality of observations and assessment. Frequent formative assessment, based on short spontaneous observations, ensures planning is continuously adapted to the children's individual needs as staff respond to their interests. Children with SEND achieve well due to the staff's excellent awareness of how to address their needs.
- 3.17 Teaching in Years 1 to 8 is consistent with the school's aim of producing an environment conducive to effective learning. The classroom atmosphere is notable for the respect of individual views and of mutual tolerance, which is effectively modelled by teachers; thus teaching does not undermine British values. The majority of the lessons are effectively planned and time is managed well so that teaching moves on briskly and much ground is covered. They have clear learning objectives, which are shared with the pupils. In most teaching, pupils' interest is maintained because the tasks are varied and challenge the pupils thinking. A significant strength of the teaching is that staff, who know their pupils and their individual needs extremely well, provide highly effective support and encouragement in small classes.
- 3.18 Teaching demonstrates excellent subject knowledge and the use of skilful questioning to elicit pupils' knowledge and understanding. This helps pupils to develop their own ideas and to think critically. Praise and encouragement are frequently given and enhance the pupils' enjoyment of their work. Learning support specialists advise staff of suitable strategies to be employed in the classroom for individual pupils. Pupils who are particularly able are given very high levels of challenge, whilst those pupils who require additional help are given suitable resources and sensitive support so that they may achieve well.
- 3.19 Staff use excellent resources creatively to motivate pupils and enable them to work in their preferred learning style. Much of the most effective teaching includes interesting resources, including the effective use of ICT, such as well-chosen video clips. The recent introduction of tablet computers for all staff and pupils, coupled with the creation of an internet-based learning resource, has provided excellent opportunities for independent learning and research.
- 3.20 In the pre-inspection questionnaires a small minority of pupils expressed the view that homework does not help them learn. Most parents however felt that homework was appropriate. Inspectors found that suitable homework is set according to the school's policy, and that it reinforces the excellent work done in the classroom and encourages pupils to work independently.

- 3.21 The school has a thorough process to monitor pupils' learning. This is utilised very effectively to identify individual learning needs, as well as to track individual and group progress. The information, together with regular diagnostic testing, is used to set targets which ensure planning is adapted to meet individual pupils' needs across the curriculum. The teachers' enthusiastic approach, their knowledge of the pupils' abilities and on-going assessment of their progress, inform them of the next steps in learning required and build on previous learning most effectively. Teachers know when to intervene to help pupils overcome difficulties and when to challenge them further. Although there is a clear marking policy it is not consistently followed in all subject areas. The best marking, seen in English and mathematics, provides positive feedback and areas for improvement. In interviews with inspectors, pupils expressed their appreciation of the written feedback in their books and understood where they had made progress and their targets for future development.

## **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 Throughout the EYFS, children make a very strong contribution to the life of the school. They respond positively to adults' expectations for good behaviour and co-operate well, showing consideration for others as they share resources, for example taking turns during a game of hopscotch, or sharing scooters in a chase and race game. Resources throughout the setting reflect and celebrate diversity and equality. Classroom activities promote respect and tolerance for individual differences; for example a discussion on skin tones arose spontaneously when children were painting life-size self-portraits. Children respond positively to the challenges set. They use resources carefully and are very pleased with the outcome of their efforts. Staff work closely with colleagues to ensure that children are well prepared for transitions to the next stage of their education. They have many opportunities to play alongside older pupils who regularly visit their playground and also benefit from using the wider school facilities for music and movement activities, French lessons and assemblies.
- 4.3 As they become older, pupils develop a growing understanding of the British values that are actively promoted throughout the school community as part of the school's ethos. They are given excellent opportunities to develop their understanding of social justice, democracy, cultural diversity and human rights. Staff plan thought-provoking lessons that challenge pupils to deepen their understanding and broaden their views. The pupils demonstrate a mature understanding of current affairs, topical issues, public institutions and services, and core values such as democracy and justice, which is developed through a weekly world assembly. Older pupils were observed highlighting British values whilst studying the struggle for women's rights and the suffragette movement. They went on to contrast the rights of women in Britain with those of women in some other countries.
- 4.4 Pupils' well-developed spiritual awareness is evident throughout the school community. They have a high level of self-esteem, which enables them to communicate their point of view confidently whilst respecting that of others. They value individual and group achievements and the school assemblies are a community celebration of hard work and kindness to others. Pupils exhibit an excellent appreciation for the environment through working towards a national environmental award. They develop a deep appreciation of health, happiness and well-being within the PSHCE programme.
- 4.5 The pupils have a strong moral awareness. They demonstrate an increasing ability to think independently and consider world issues, discussing and empathising with the needs of people in other countries. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong, and of justice and fairness. This was demonstrated when they explored equality issues and discussed the importance of standing up for those who are marginalised. They discuss pastoral matters and think about the consequences of their actions towards others, demonstrating an understanding that they should treat people fairly and without discrimination. Their strong knowledge of what good citizenship means focuses upon being part of a caring community that respects the rights of every individual.

- 4.6 Pupils display excellent social awareness. Very high standards of behaviour are firmly embedded in the culture of the school and pupils demonstrate exemplary co-operative team-working skills, particularly through their involvement in the many extra-curricular activities. The pupils are articulate and have exemplary manners. They respond instinctively in a polite and engaging manner to all adults. They willingly take on age-appropriate responsibilities, and the prefects and monitors support the staff by modelling good behaviour and acting as mentors to younger pupils. Pupils are very active in their charity work and each year select an organisation to support, which forms the focus of their fund-raising, contributing positively to the lives of others from the wider community.
- 4.7 Pupils have a strong appreciation and respect of cultural diversity gained through their work in religious studies on world faiths, cultures and traditions. The school has met the recommendation of the previous inspection to develop opportunities for pupils to further their appreciation of the contribution made by other faiths, traditions and cultures. The pupils' understanding is enhanced by talks from visitors, such as from a holocaust survivor or on Buddhism, and visits such as to a Hindu temple, which stimulated follow-up projects. They show consideration and tolerance for each other as they collaborate effectively with their work partners and in groups.
- 4.8 When they leave the school, pupils have a mature personal development for their age. They are enthusiastic and ready to rise to the challenges they will meet.

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

- 4.9 The school's arrangements for pastoral care are excellent.
- 4.10 Staff in the EYFS, each acting as a key person, develop close, supportive relationships with the children and ensure their needs are well met. Staff are very sensitive to children's emotional needs, providing a quiet, caring environment for those needing a rest after lunch, or a comforting word to anyone who is upset. Staff are equally sensitive to ensuring that no child is left out at playtime, taking steps to integrate them into play activities with others. 'Busy Bee' rules, developed in conjunction with the children, encourage good behaviour and consideration for others. Regular use of the wider school grounds encourages a positive attitude to outdoor learning. Healthy lifestyles are actively promoted. Music and movement sessions and playtimes provide enjoyable physical exercise; personal hygiene routines are consistently reinforced, and at lunch time staff discuss the importance of a healthy diet.
- 4.11 Throughout the school, pupils' well-being is fostered by excellent staff support and guidance in line with the school's aims, and these arrangements make a strong contribution to the pupils' personal development. Through daily briefings, staff work effectively together to share information about pupils' needs. Pastoral records are monitored closely to identify any patterns and promptly respond to any concerns. Policies and procedures support the pupils' excellent behaviour and take into account their specific needs.
- 4.12 Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils themselves are excellent. Within the strong family atmosphere, the pupils speak with pride about their school and say they are able to approach any member of staff with their worries. Pupils told inspectors that they were happy that staff show concern for their welfare and resolve any difficulties they may encounter. This view is supported by records of pastoral meetings and information on the school's database. The chapel

star system, which enables pupils to gain points for house competitions, is very popular with pupils and promotes good behaviour and willingness to give of their best. It also encourages healthy competition between the two houses. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire a few pupils indicated a concern with the school's handling of bullying. Inspection evidence does not support this view. Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare and they were confident that the school would deal with it effectively if the situation occurred. This view is supported by careful scrutiny of the school's records of incidents and sanctions, and by the overwhelming majority of parents who indicated no concerns in their questionnaire responses.

- 4.13 Healthy eating is encouraged through the provision of a nutritious and well-balanced range of dishes at lunchtime, which the pupils clearly enjoy. This is supported by the healthy snacks given to the younger pupils. An awareness of a healthy lifestyle is promoted in both science and PSHE lessons. Throughout the day there are many opportunities for regular exercise in both curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- 4.14 In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils reported that the school does not ask for or respond to their opinions. Inspection found that there are many opportunities for pupils to raise issues, such as the weekly school council meeting. This group has made suggestions to which the school has responded, and thus it has brought about improvements which the pupils appreciate. For example, the buddy bench is a place where pupils who are experiencing friendship issues may gain support and reassurance from an older pupil.
- 4.15 The school has a suitable accessibility plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.16 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.17 Throughout the school, the happiness and well being of pupils is central to the school's ethos and aims, so that child protection arrangements are good and well understood by staff. In the EYFS, children are appropriately supervised and supported at all times due to the careful monitoring of staff deployment by room leaders. The safeguarding policy has been updated in response to the most recent requirements, and to ensure prompt contact with the relevant authorities should there be any concerns. The revised policy was made available to staff and parents during the inspection. The safeguarding governor regularly makes spot checks of the school staff's familiarity with procedures to support implementation. The designated safeguarding leads are trained at the required higher level and both teaching and non-teaching staff receive suitable training at regular intervals. At the beginning of the inspection the school had not formally recorded the safeguarding training of visiting staff; this information was promptly included. Relevant policies are prominently displayed as reminders in various locations around the school. As part of its safeguarding review the school's recruitment policy has been re-written so that it gives comprehensive guidance on correct appointment procedures. All necessary checks are carried out on staff at appointment, though not all information was fully recorded on the single central register of appointments at the start of the inspection. Any gaps were rectified promptly from information kept on file.
- 4.18 Arrangements to ensure that pupils are well cared for should they become unwell or are injured in school are implemented efficiently. A suitable number of staff are

appropriately trained in first aid, including paediatric first-aiders for the EYFS. Records of first aid and the administration of any medication are well-kept.

- 4.19 The school has thorough arrangements to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. Fire equipment is checked at regular intervals and evacuation drills are practised regularly. Equipment and services are maintained at appropriate intervals and records are well-organised. The risk assessment policy provides suitable guidance, and risk assessments for external visits are extremely thorough. The school has appropriate risk assessments for the site and hazardous activities, though at the start of the inspection there was no indication that these had been regularly reviewed. This shortcoming was rectified promptly during the inspection. In the EYFS children have many opportunities to develop an understanding of assessing risk and making appropriate choices to stay safe through daily visits to the woodland area. In the EYFS, procedures to record staff's daily safety checks to ensure a safe and secure environment were formalised during the inspection.
- 4.20 The admission and attendance registers throughout the school are appropriately maintained and suitably stored. Any absences are sensitively investigated and recorded.

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

- 4.21 The quality of boarding is good.
- 4.22 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. Although the core boarding community is small it is a significant part of the school, enabling many pupils to enjoy part-time, flexi or day boarding from the age of seven upwards. This flexibility in arrangements allows pupils to benefit from supervised prep sessions, a range of evening activities and a rich and varied social life. Boarders are proud of the positive ethos within the school. A strong sense of community exists amongst the boarders and they are fully integrated into the school. Boarders regard staff as good role models and relationships across the boarding community are warm and respectful. Boarders are encouraged to contribute their views and they feel that they have a voice via boarding council meetings. Boarders are enthusiastic about their lives in boarding and senior boarders named boarding captains take responsibility for helping lock up at night, keeping order in dormitories and in showing visitors around the accommodation.
- 4.23 Boarders enjoy one another's company and acknowledge the beneficial effect that the experience has on their independence and self-reliance. They enjoy outings to local attractions and the many on-site activities such as two-ball football, swimming, biking, playing board games or reading a book in the evenings, lead to good friendships and help prepare them for the next stage in their education. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire about boarding issues expressed complete satisfaction, and a very large majority of the boarders stated that they enjoy boarding.
- 4.24 The quality of boarding provision and care is good. Arrangements for medical care which promote boarders' health are well organised; record keeping and the secure control of medications are thorough. The current arrangement to accommodate boarders who are ill necessitates some rearrangement of dormitories and toilet facilities. The overwhelming majority of boarders who responded to the questionnaire state that they are well looked after if they are ill or injured and understand that there is access to a range of appropriate adults with whom they can

discuss personal issues. The contact details for external support are clearly displayed on notice boards. Boarders' meals are of a good standard and they report that following recent changes within the catering department the food has much improved. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires a small minority of boarders expressed reservations about the availability of snacks and water outside meal times and indicated that it was not easy to contact home, but these worries were not supported in discussion groups, and inspectors found that drinking water is freely available at night. Older boarders may prepare toast and drinks in the evenings under supervision and all boarders are given refreshments every afternoon and before they go to bed. Parents are contactable by telephone or email in case of need, and all are known to boarding staff who often meet with them informally when on site. An on-going programme of refurbishment is facilitating necessary improvements to the boarding accommodation such as the replacement of beds and carpets in some dormitories. The toilet and bathroom facilities afford appropriate privacy. Boarders are encouraged to personalise their sleeping areas and sufficient pin boards are provided for this purpose. Boarders' possessions are stored securely and access to their accommodation is suitably secure. Almost all boarders report that they feel safe in the boarding house. A rolling refurbishment plan includes other areas such as the common room and some bathrooms. Boarders have supervised prep sessions in adjoining classrooms and access to a variety of areas for recreation, including full use of the school's facilities.

- 4.25 The day-to-day arrangements for welfare and safeguarding in the boarding house are excellent. Procedures and practices, including appropriate risk assessments, ensure that the safety of boarders is well promoted and managed effectively by boarding staff at all levels. Evacuation drills are practised every term in boarding time, and all boarders, whether occasional or regular, are given suitable instruction when they first come into boarding. The required pre-appointment checks have been carried out on all boarding staff. Effective anti-bullying and behavioural policies and procedures are followed but staff have little recourse to them. Clear sanctions for misbehaviour are well understood by all, and boarders appreciate rewards such as being presented with 'Boarder of the Week' certificates at whole school assemblies. All boarding staff have attended recent safeguarding training, know the procedures to follow should they have any concern, and have been issued with the latest guidance. The whereabouts of boarders is monitored and registers are taken at regular intervals. All boarding staff are familiar with the missing person policy. Boarders praise the homeliness of boarding and all those interviewed said that they feel safe when boarding.
- 4.26 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the boarding provision is good. The school fulfils the principles and aims of boarding in providing a fun and enriching experience. Boarding is well led and the residential staff are well regarded by the boarders. All boarding staff have a clear understanding of their roles and the very positive relationships between boarders and staff is a strength of the community. Boarding documentation and policies are up to date and staff are able to take part in external training opportunities. Boarding staff meet regularly, both informally and formally, to plan activities as well as to discuss the needs of individual boarders. The head of boarding meets regularly with the leadership though these meetings have not been minuted. Good communication between teaching and boarding staff, either at daily staff briefings or by electronic mail, ensures that information about boarders' academic and residential lives is effectively shared. Teaching staff with additional boarding responsibilities discuss these as part of the school's appraisal procedure. A boarding development plan is published in the

boarding handbook, and long-term projects are included on the estates plan. All boarding staff are familiar with school policies and the most recent regulatory requirements.

- 4.27 The school was advised to make two improvements in the previous boarding welfare inspection. One of these, to extend the opportunities for boarders to contact their parents or carers by telephone or email, has been fully met. The other, to modify the accommodation for boys' showers to improve the facilities and the efficiency of their use, and to increase privacy, has been partly met but is also on the long-term estates plan, awaiting detailed costing.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) The quality of governance**

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 Governance supports the school's aims in respect of the pupils' achievement and personal development most successfully but has some shortcomings relating to monitoring of welfare, health and safety. Governors take an active interest in the EYFS. The recently appointed EYFS governor has a secure understanding of the relevant regulations and provides strong representation for this section of the school on the governing body so that staff feel very well supported by governors. Governors are strongly committed to the school and bring useful expertise to the board to help it exercise its responsibilities. Governance is well supported by the work of committees, some of which meet regularly with senior leaders to discuss finance, safeguarding, education and health and safety. Careful financial management ensures that the school maintains suitable levels of staffing and resources.
- 5.3 Governors gain good insight into the working of the school through regular detailed reports from the leadership. Those with nominated responsibilities visit the school regularly and facilitate effective links between the leadership and the full board. The full governing board is helped to understand new initiatives, successes and priorities for development through regular presentations from departmental heads. Governors hold an annual strategy day when, in addition to discussions with the leadership on the school's future direction and plans for improvement, they visit lessons and meet with staff.
- 5.4 Governors endeavour to have a good awareness of their statutory responsibilities and have established procedures to check that policies meet requirements through the role of a compliance governor. This has led to a recent review of welfare and safeguarding policies. Procedures to ensure that governors have strong oversight and monitoring of other regulatory responsibilities, such as the single central register and risk assessments, are not yet established.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is good.
- 5.6 Leadership and management within the EYFS help to ensure children are safeguarded on a day-to-day basis at all times. Children's welfare is prioritised and staff take effective practical steps to create a safe and inviting environment, although there have been issues with formal risk assessments and daily safety checks. The EYFS development plan, resulting from discussion in staff meetings and a programme of self-evaluation, contains priorities for improvement, but gives no indication of the resources needed, the timescale for implementation or how any impact will be measured. Senior managers are very effective in monitoring the quality of the educational provision through classroom observations and reviews of assessment and planning documents. Staff attend moderation and standardisation meetings to confirm the accuracy of profile scores. Some analysis of assessment data from the Foundation Stage Profile scores has been undertaken, identifying

areas to further develop the effectiveness of teaching. Staff in the EYFS feel exceptionally well supported within the close knit team. Regular supervision meetings provide on-going support for staff, and underpin the setting's commitment to frequent monitoring and appraisal of staff practice and continuous professional development, a recommendation from the previous inspection. Staff promote inclusion and equality, helping to ensure all children participate fully and achieve their potential. Children are helped to develop an understanding of diversity as they celebrate a wide range of festivals throughout the year. In response to the previous inspection report the setting has made strong progress in developing cohesion in planning between classes, and implementing a highly effective programme for supporting staff development

- 5.7 The senior leadership team of the school is organised to reflect the school ethos of 'Achievement through Happiness'. Leaders have clearly defined roles and responsibilities that help them meet the school's aims and communicate constantly with staff and each other about how to best meet individual pupils' needs. This strong teamwork means that staff work very well together and give pupils consistent and well-planned support when needed. All potential staff are properly checked for suitability before starting work and new staff receive appropriate training in safeguarding. However the school did not accurately record that checks and training had taken place for visiting staff prior to the inspection. The new recruitment and safeguarding policies give clear guidance, but there are no formal systems to ensure that checks are rigorously implemented and recorded.
- 5.8 The leadership is committed to ensuring that all aspects of the school's work reflect its aims. They ensure that potential staff understand and support the school's values, which encourage respect for others and democracy, before recruiting them. Leaders reinforce their expectations of staff through daily communication. These measures lead to the strong coherence of the school's provision for pupils. Subject leaders lead their specialist areas with enthusiasm and expertise and work together very well. They plan in consultation with each other, and help other staff develop their subject knowledge and teaching strategies with the result that pupils are given well-co-ordinated and highly effective educational experiences.
- 5.9 The leadership has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. School development plans identify clear actions to improve teaching and achievement. These actions are carried out effectively. Leaders monitor pupils' progress very closely and accurately to ensure they are grouped effectively and given work that challenges them appropriately. Leaders at all levels encourage staff to feel part of a unified and valued team, and staff feel able to approach them for advice and suggestions as a result. Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching carefully and regularly. They check how well staff have met targets relating to their performance and act quickly to provide support where needed or useful. As a result, teaching has remained excellent over time. Leaders consult staff about their own professional needs and interests and give them good opportunities to receive pertinent and regular training. Because of this, staff are competent and effective, highly motivated and committed to their work.
- 5.10 The school's links with parents and carers are a particular strength of the EYFS. A comprehensive welcome booklet and handbook provides useful information for parents of current and prospective pupils. Ongoing communication, including at drop off and collection times, keeps parents very well informed about events and activities at the setting. Parents feel their children are well supported by knowledgeable, caring staff who know them extremely well. As a result children are

very happy at school. Parents say they are kept very well informed about their child's progress and greatly appreciate the two detailed reports and three parent evenings held each year. Staff encourage parents to contribute to children's learning through 'Wow Moments' that celebrate children's achievements at home, or to share their skills and interests through classroom activities. Links with parents, local agencies and other professionals to secure appropriate interventions for children with additional needs are very strong.

- 5.11 Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that throughout the school an overwhelming majority of parents are highly supportive of all aspects of their children's education. In particular, all parents who responded indicated that their child feels safe and happy, and is well looked after. Almost all parents who responded would recommend the school, including the EYFS, to other parents.
- 5.12 The school develops and maintains constructive relationships with parents through a dedicated parent portal on the school website, a daily email update and the Belmont Bulletin newsletter. Most parents who expressed a view stated that they receive timely responses to their questions, and any concerns or complaints are dealt with promptly and effectively in line with published procedures. A designated parent governor represents the views of parents on the governing body.
- 5.13 Parents have good opportunities to be involved in the life of the school, for example a number of parents offered their experience and expertise in support of the Young Enterprise scheme. The active Friends of Belmont organise social and fundraising events and in recent years have raised considerable funds to provide additional resources. There is no formal forum for parents to share their views with the school leadership, but parent representatives provide a valuable link between the school and the parent body, and governors have conducted a parent survey, which indicated high levels of satisfaction.
- 5.14 Sports fixtures, assemblies, concerts and other performances are extremely well supported by parents, grandparents and others. The school makes information for the parents of current and prospective pupils readily available through its website and detailed prospectus. Regular, detailed reports keep parents very well informed about pupils' progress and the work that has been covered. Reports include clear indications of areas for improvement, and how learning can be supported at home.

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