



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

KENT COLLEGE NURSERY, INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Kent College Nursery, Infant and Junior School

The Senior School and International Study Centre were inspected at the same time and separate reports published.

Full Name of School	Kent College Nursery, Infant and Junior School		
DfE Number	886/6069		
Registered Charity Number	307844		
Address	Kent College Nursery, Infant and Junior School Church Hill Harbledown Canterbury Kent CT2 9AQ		
Telephone Number	01227 762436		
Fax Number	01227 763880		
Email Address	prepenquiries@kentcollege.co.uk		
Head	Mr Andrew Carter		
Chair of Governors	Mr Dudley Shipton		
Age Range	3 to 11		
Total Number of Pupils	167		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (83 boys; 84 girls)		
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	27	5-11: 140
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	160	
Number of Boarders	Total:	7	
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Ruth McSweeney		
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection Dates	20 to 23 January 2015		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI standard inspection was in February 2009 and a boarding welfare intermediate inspection took place in February 2013.

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. 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.

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 members of staff and with the chair of governors and other members of the governing body, 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

Mr Christopher Sanderson	Reporting Inspector
Miss Judith Bate	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Tim Walton	Team Inspector (Head of Department and Housemaster, IAPS school)
Ms Diane Martin	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Dr Wendy Bowring	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Kent College Nursery, Infant and Junior School (the Junior School) is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils from the ages of 3 to 11, located close to Canterbury. It is part of Kent College, which includes the Senior School, to which most pupils progress, and the International Study Centre (ISC), both about a mile away. Kent College, Dubai, a sister school, is due to open in 2016. The Senior School was founded in 1885 and the Junior School added in 1946, originally as a boys' school, becoming co-educational in 1973. Kent College also owns Moat Farm, a resource used by each of the schools, which includes a recently developed equine unit, providing livery and riding facilities.
- 1.2 The Junior School is located in a rural setting in former residential premises. Kent College offers a Christian education, founded on Methodist principles. It is a registered charity, administered by the Methodist Independent School Trust. A single governing body oversees all the schools. Since the previous inspection in 2009, the school has undertaken a number of curriculum changes to further its commitment to the development of individuals, including the restructuring of setting arrangements, the introduction of a 'Gifted, Really Enthusiastic, Able and Talented' (GREAT) programme and an accelerated learning programme in mathematics, English and modern foreign languages.
- 1.3 The Kent College schools share the same aims. Within a caring, Christian family community, committed to the development of the full potential of each individual, the schools seek to maintain high educational standards in all academic, cultural and sporting activities, stimulating high excitement in learning and requiring discipline in study, whatever the ability of the child. They seek to uphold Christian values and make religious education a strong feature of the curriculum, whilst welcoming members of other faiths and none in a spirit of openness and tolerance. The schools seek to value close co-operation between parents, pupils and staff, encouraging enthusiasm, endeavour and self-discipline. The schools aim to engender curiosity, critical awareness and responsibility, to promote fairness, trust and confidence in dealings with one another and to develop initiative, creativity and tenacity in the search for personal growth.
- 1.4 At the time of inspection there were 167 pupils on roll in the Junior School, with approximately equal numbers of boys and girls. This includes 27 children in the EYFS, of whom 12 attend on a part-time basis. The school's seven full boarders, five boys and two girls, are accommodated in a boarding house within the school building and come from both the UK and overseas. The boarding house also accommodates three boarders who are pupils in Year 7 at the Senior School. Provision is made for weekly and flexible boarding. Pupils come from both rural and urban environments, largely from professional or business backgrounds, a small proportion being from other cultures and nationalities. The ability profile of the Junior School is above the national average, with a fairly wide spread of abilities represented. Pupils may enter the school at any age. The school does not select pupils on entry on the basis of ability. There are 21 pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), of whom five receive support for their English. Any who enter the school with very little English initially have tuition with staff from the ISC. The school has identified 28 pupils as requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan attend the school.

- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Pupils' learning and achievement throughout the school are excellent. They have a particularly positive attitude to learning, think critically, reason logically and work well both co-operatively and independently. They enjoy a high level of success academically and also in sport, music and other extra-curricular pursuits. A broad curriculum is well suited to the pupils' ages and abilities and provides well for pupils with SEND and EAL and for the more able. It benefits from specialist facilities and extensive school grounds. It is complemented by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. Excellent teaching is effective in promoting pupils' progress. It is characterised by well-planned lessons, a thorough understanding of pupils' abilities and personalities and excellent questioning techniques, although marking does not consistently provide information on the next steps for improvement.
- 2.2 Pupils demonstrate excellent personal development throughout the school. They are self-confident and demonstrate high self-esteem. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and show respect for the rule of law. Their social awareness is strong. They relate well across the age groups, have a strong sense of community and engage in charitable pursuits. Their outstanding cultural awareness permeates the school. Staff provide excellent pastoral guidance and support, ensuring that pupils are happy, feel safe, demonstrate high levels of conduct and relate well with one another and the staff. Welfare, health and safety are excellent and care is taken to ensure that pupils are duly safeguarded and know how to keep themselves safe online. The quality of boarding is excellent and contributes strongly to boarders' personal development. Boarders receive excellent care, are happy and feel secure. They have plenty of activities to stimulate them in free time and can readily contact their parents.
- 2.3 Governance is excellent. Governors gain a thorough understanding of the working of the school through a range of strategies and specific delegated responsibilities. They ensure that their responsibilities for the safeguarding, welfare, health and safety of the pupils are fulfilled. Leadership and management are good and have a clear vision for the future, contributing strongly to the pupils' academic progress and personal development. Leadership has responded well to a recommendation at the previous inspection relating to management responsibilities. The gathering, management and storage of information about children's welfare, attainment and progress in the EYFS is not systematic. Leadership supports the staff strongly and is effective in setting priorities and ensuring that they are achieved. Measures to ensure the safe recruitment of staff and provide appropriate training ensure that pupils are safeguarded. The school has strong links with parents, who are very supportive of its work.

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 2013.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Improve the quality of marking to include a greater focus on providing pupils with a clear understanding of the next steps for the improvement of their work.
 2. Improve systems of record-keeping across the EYFS to ensure that all data is formally recorded and collated, in order to facilitate ready access for the management of pupils' welfare and progress.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 Pupils' achievements and learning are excellent.
- 3.2 They are extremely successful in their learning, fulfilling the schools' ambitious aim of maintaining high educational standards in all academic, cultural and sporting activities.
- 3.3 Pupils' knowledge and understanding are excellent in many areas. The overall quality and standard of provision for children in the EYFS are excellent, and the learning and care provided ensure that individual children's needs are extremely well met. Children are active learners, able to work independently, think critically and reflect on what they learn. For example, Nursery children explored Cinderella's world with a range of resources; through role-play, Reception children explored life as medics in the doctors' surgery, writing prescriptions, performing life-saving surgery and administering basic first aid. By the end of Reception, most children have met the Early Learning Goals in all areas, and in some cases exceeded them.
- 3.4 In the EYFS, children of all abilities make significant progress. Reception children can clearly identify sounds within words and form letters carefully. Able children can write simple sentences using phonetically plausible spelling. They recognise simple two-dimensional shapes, can add and subtract within 20 and have a useful knowledge of simple French vocabulary. Nursery children confidently make marks to represent writing, can count their steps to 20 when walking, and some can count up to eight in French. More able Nursery children can identify initial sounds. Reception children follow instructions accurately to create independently a moving graphic programme using tablet computers.
- 3.5 Older pupils of all abilities display excellent understanding, particularly in mathematics and, in interviews with inspectors, explained their clear understanding of Fleming's discovery and use of antibiotics. Pupils speak with confidence, listen attentively to each other and their teachers, read extremely well and write to a high standard. They show excellent, prompt recall of previous learning and outstanding reasoning skills. In a Years 5 and 6 netball match, girls drew successfully on a high level of skills and techniques.
- 3.6 Older pupils have been successful in national writing competitions, resulting in their work being published, and the choir, which sings skilfully in two and three parts, were recently finalists in a national singing competition. Corporate singing, observed in assembly, was of a comparably high standard. A high proportion of pupils learn a musical instrument and many are successful in graded examinations in music and drama. Pupils' have registered significant achievements in team and individual physical activity, notably in football, hockey and athletics. Most pupils regularly represent the school, receiving certificates for 50, 100 and 150 appearances. An increasing number of sports awards to senior schools have been gained, including nine sports scholarships in 2014. A number of scholarships have also been gained in art and design, drama and music.
- 3.7 From an early age, pupils demonstrate strong skills in the use of technology, making good use of tablet computers, notably to photograph experiments and report investigations in science. They apply their mathematical skills well across the curriculum, for example using spreadsheets in information and communication

technology (ICT) lessons. Pupils with SEND and those with EAL overcome their difficulties due to excellent support from a well-organised learning strategies department.

- 3.8 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2011 to 2013. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national tests at the age of 11 have been good in relation to the national average for maintained primary schools. The performance of boys and girls was equally good. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make good progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability, as shown by standardised measures of ability. Pupils follow a demanding curriculum, with advanced work in many subjects. On leaving the school, a high proportion of pupils proceed to the Senior School or local selective grammar schools.
- 3.9 The schools' GREAT programme fosters further development of skills and confidence in a number of key areas of achievement. It includes excellent drama and music performance workshops, enabling pupils seeking senior schools' scholarships to receive appraisal from both their teacher and their peers. Music performances were conducted in a most professional and mature manner. The session observed for potential academic scholars enabled pupils to develop their skills in challenging timed thinking activities. Through the programme, pupils also develop their learning in art, design and technology (DT) and physical education.
- 3.10 Pupils have a particularly positive attitude to their learning. They gain enjoyment and satisfaction from their lessons and work with great success, individually and co-operatively. Children in the EYFS engage happily and co-operate fully in every aspect of their learning. Throughout the school pupils are well organised and show strong initiative, for example, entering the room and beginning immediately on the starter activity without the need for instruction from the teacher. They are highly motivated and demonstrate maturity and eagerness to learn.

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

- 3.11 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.12 The curriculum is well suited to the pupils' ages and abilities. It enables the school to fulfil its aim to develop initiative, creativity and tenacity in the search of personal growth. Pupils of all abilities benefit from the broad curriculum, which is supported by an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities, educational visits and tours involving sport and music groups.
- 3.13 The curriculum offers a suitably broad range of subjects and makes a significant contribution to the pupils' educational experiences, personal development and level of achievement, especially in sport and music. The acceleration programme for English and mathematics enables pupils from Years 2 to 6 to be challenged at an appropriate level. Pupils benefit from language teaching in French from EYFS and Spanish in the older classes, as well as specialist teaching in music and sport lessons. The pupils' learning experience is enhanced by specialist facilities for science, DT and art and extensive sports facilities, including an outdoor swimming pool and a sports hall, enabling teaching to provide high-quality curriculum experiences. Older pupils also benefit from access to Senior School music and sport facilities, including the all-weather pitch for hockey. Children in the EYFS enjoy a good-quality learning environment. Nursery and Reception classes benefit from self-contained, well-resourced classrooms, linked by a shared garden area.

Children benefit from using the wider facilities of the school, such as the sports centre and the music room, and make regular use of the extensive grounds, including the woodland areas. An extremely good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities engage children in active learning and imaginative play. They explore and enjoy the outside world, and are often able to choose whether to play and investigate indoors or out. Since the previous inspection, the school has increased the range of fiction and non-fiction books in the EYFS and provides a wealth of exciting, stimulating printed information. It has also developed its ICT provision to promote learning, including interactive whiteboards, computers and tablet computers within the classrooms.

- 3.14 Many stimulating and varied activities enable children in the EYFS to be creative, imaginative and explorative, with a high level of challenge for children of all abilities, well-matched to their individual needs, across all areas of learning.
- 3.15 Throughout the school, pupils with SEND are carefully identified and, in the best lessons, an excellent level of support is provided through detailed planning and small group sessions. Pupils with EAL receive well-focused support from the ISC, as required. Planning makes suitable provision for pupils with EAL and SEND and resources are used effectively, enabling pupils of all abilities to participate fully in the curriculum. Close monitoring of children's learning and development in the EYFS ensures that extra support is available as needs arise. Greater demands are made of able children through discussion, encouraging problem-solving in a number of activities. In the rest of the school, the learning of the more able pupils is extended through the acceleration and GREAT programmes, which provide added breadth and challenge.
- 3.16 The academic curriculum is enhanced by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, which provides high-quality experiences for pupils to develop their skills and knowledge. Activities cover a wide range of interests, such as table tennis, choir and ceramics, ensuring engagement and benefit across the range of ages and aptitudes. Participation is high and pupils speak enthusiastically about the range of clubs available. They enjoy a variety of educational day trips, such as a Year 4 team-building trip to a local pinetum, where they faced a variety of challenges. Year 1 and Year 2 attended a production at a local theatre and the whole school visited a First World War exhibition, as part of recent commemoration events. Residential visits, such as the Year 6 trip to Paris and regular sports and music tours extend provision and are valued by their participants. The educational experience is further enhanced by the extensive school grounds and the use of the college's farm. Pupils can visit the farm on Saturday mornings and use it at other times to support learning in science.
- 3.17 Pupils benefit from good community links. They visit the local Methodist church and value the participation of the school chaplain. They have forged good links with local charities. At harvest, pupils prepare boxes of food to give to elderly members of the local community and a local homeless charity. At Christmas the choristers sing in homes for the elderly. The whole school community is involved in the successful grandparents' afternoon, when pupils share their work and classrooms with their grandparents.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.18 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.19 Teaching is effective in promoting pupils' progress and strongly supports the aims of the schools to develop the full potential of each individual, stimulate high excitement in learning and require discipline in study, whatever the ability of the child.
- 3.20 Lessons are well planned. Clear information in planning enables teaching to help pupils with SEND and EAL to progress and to challenge the most able pupils to excel, although, occasionally, the good planning is not turned effectively into practice, resulting in some inconsistency in learning for these pupils. In the younger classes, high staff-to-pupil ratios facilitate small teaching groups. Together with the strong support of teaching assistants, working with a table of pupils or assigned on a one-to-one basis to pupils with individual difficulties, this ensures that the range of needs of the pupils in the school is well met. Planning in the EYFS is thorough and reflects a clear understanding of the requirements of all areas of learning. The children's individual needs are carefully identified and taken into account. Throughout the school, teaching demonstrates an excellent understanding of pupils' personalities and characteristics and strongly encourages them to take risks in their learning. Staff in the EYFS know their children very well and have an excellent knowledge of child development. They are skilled in making timely interventions to support and extend individual learning.
- 3.21 Excellent questioning techniques and management of classroom discussions strongly encourage pupils to develop their reasoning skills, as observed in a Year 6 lesson on adaptations in animals and plants. The most successful lessons are characterised by a variety of interesting tasks and a brisk pace. Marking consistently praises good work and serves effectively to raise pupils' self-esteem. However, it does not generally provide pupils with clear guidance on the next steps to improve their work and the setting of personal targets. In the best examples assessment and feedback to the pupils were excellent, as seen in the individual review and encouragement given to each pair in a table tennis activity. Teaching is strongly founded on good subject knowledge and flair and enthusiasm for the subject. Punctuation of the lessons with additional facts proves infectious and sparks endeavour and interest in the pupils.
- 3.22 Well-chosen practical activities reinforce and initiate learning. Teaching in modern foreign languages benefits from an excellent command of the language. In the best lessons observed, time was managed well; the pace was fast and time was not wasted, but in a small minority of lessons seen, teaching lacked pace and pupils were not consistently challenged. Teaching uses resources effectively, particularly the tablet computers used by pupils of all ages. Interest is strongly fostered and a high level of thinking and discussion is readily promoted. Teaching effectively aids pupils to develop their ability to work independently.
- 3.23 Comprehensive 'learning journey' files, for Nursery and Reception children respectively, contain evidence of learning and development, although formal record-keeping for children in the EYFS has been disparate and not organised well. A new tracking system records children's developmental progress in the Nursery. Formative assessments of learning in the EYFS ensure that staff provide well for children's next steps in their development. Subsequently from Year 1, pupils' progress in reading, writing, verbal and non-verbal reasoning is carefully monitored.

Starting in Year 2, information from such assessment determines the appropriate set for each pupil in English and mathematics and enables effective teaching. Mixed year group sets, as part of the school's accelerated learning programme, enable pupils of similar abilities to be grouped together and facilitate the planning of work to meet the needs of the range of pupils' abilities. Similar arrangements effectively support the teaching of phonics, modern foreign languages and music. The school's introduction of the tracking of progress has enabled it to refine its systems of assessment, following a recommendation at the previous inspection.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 Their high levels of personal development demonstrate fulfilment of the schools' aims to develop fully the pupils' personal qualities, whilst seeking to uphold Christian values in a spirit of openness and tolerance, where those of other faiths and none are welcomed.
- 4.3 In the EYFS, children are prepared extremely well for their transition from Nursery into Reception. They mix together regularly, enabling all children to become familiar with the staff, the classrooms and the wider environs of the school. Transition from Reception to Year 1 is less effective. Fewer opportunities for familiarisation exist, and, until recently, formal records have not been passed on routinely from one class to the next.
- 4.4 Pupils demonstrate excellent spiritual awareness. They develop self-confidence, self-knowledge and high self-esteem by taking responsibility and making decisions, for example, through captaining sports teams at all age groups and, for Year 6 pupils, in mentoring younger pupils through a buddy system. A vibrant, competitive house system enables pupils to commit and to persevere in a range of scenarios for the good of the team. The pupils are well aware of their own strengths and weaknesses.
- 4.5 The pupils' moral development is excellent. They acquire a clear understanding of good conduct, and exhibit a particularly keen desire to earn house points and other rewards through their excellent behaviour. In the EYFS, children have a clear understanding of their boundaries. Further up the school, pupils understand British values and traditions, such as the need for the rule of law in England and why rules are needed within school and other organisations, and they accept responsibility for their actions. A keen understanding of right and wrong develops through studies of key figures in world history who have undergone persecution, racism or other discrimination, such as Nelson Mandela and Rosa Parks. They develop strong moral and ethical values through the study of the lives of those who have demonstrated selfless acts of kindness, such as Mother Teresa.
- 4.6 Pupils demonstrate strong social awareness. In the EYFS, children are comfortable within the daily routines and are hugely supportive of each other. They co-operate well in pairs and small groups and are very happy to share and take turns. All Year 6 pupils act as leaders and take responsibility within the school. Pupils work well together across different age groups in extra-curricular activities, and older children take great care in supporting the younger ones. The school promotes in pupils an understanding of fundamental British values through the democratically elected school council, which enables pupils to experience the benefits of democracy in a tangible way. The provision of new football goals and re-decoration of the changing rooms have resulted from discussion at the school council, enabling pupils to see the results of a democratic process. Celebratory assemblies raise self-esteem and enable the sharing of the pupils' successes within the close, nurturing community.
- 4.7 The school council takes the lead in a full programme of charitable giving, and funding for overseas projects, including a school and orphanage in Tanzania, enabling pupils to reflect on global issues and the lives of those less fortunate than

themselves, and develop an awareness of economic issues. Pupils demonstrate clear knowledge of the political structure in Britain, the role of the prime minister and leader of the opposition, and can distinguish between their roles and that of the monarchy.

- 4.8 Pupils' excellent cultural awareness permeates the school. They have an exceptionally high awareness of other faiths, and speak with confidence and respect about how other cultures celebrate and express their faith. They show interest and curiosity about those who hold views different to their own and are wholly accepting of people expressing their beliefs. They understand how Western cultural traditions shape their own opinions and experiences. Pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures is enhanced by their enthusiastic participation in an extensive range of creative activities, including music, drama and visits to places of cultural interest.
- 4.9 By the time they leave the school, pupils have a high standard of personal development, which prepares them thoroughly for a positive transition to their next stage of learning.

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

- 4.10 Pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.11 Pupils are extremely well cared for, following the schools' aims to promote fairness, trust and confidence in dealings with one another in the search for personal growth within a caring, Christian family community.
- 4.12 Staff provide excellent support and guidance. From the EYFS onwards, the well-being of children is firmly at the heart of practice. Policies and procedures ensure that children are safe and secure. Children are happy to share their concerns with staff, who sensitively and patiently help them allay their fears. Moving on from EYFS, pupils are closely supported by their tutors and issues are sensitively shared at weekly staff meetings. Pupils have a wide selection of adults to whom they can turn with a concern, the details being included in their academic diary. This includes a counsellor, available by arrangement through the medical centre, and, for the boarders, an independent listener. Although a very small minority of pupils expressed concern in responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire about having a member of staff they could turn to with a personal difficulty, inspectors found this not to be the case. In informal discussion and in their interviews with inspectors, pupils commented that they can always talk to someone who will listen to them.
- 4.13 Relationships between staff and pupils and among the pupils are extremely positive and demonstrate a friendly, trusting interaction. Staff in the EYFS build extremely strong relationships with children and their families. Pupils are provided with healthy meals and have ready access to drinking water. A scheme known as 'Rainbow' links the pupils' learning in personal, social, health and economic education lessons with healthy eating in the dining room and rewards them for choosing a healthy meal. From the Nursery onwards, children understand the need for exercise and the extensive sports programme ensures that they engage in it. Reception children can explain the importance of washing their hands and are extremely independent when managing their personal hygiene, at meal times and when putting on coats, hats and wellingtons. Staff in the EYFS provide extremely strong role models in the way they interact with each other. They encourage the children to believe that it is right and normal to 'have a go', even if they do not at first succeed.

- 4.14 Behaviour is good. Any misdemeanours are recorded electronically and tracked, ensuring appropriate action at each stage. The school guards successfully against bullying. Any potential incident is highlighted on its database and monitored and recorded carefully. In the pre-inspection questionnaire responses a small minority of pupils indicated concern about the manner in which the school deals with bullying. However, following considerable investigation, including the scrutiny of records, study of the school's clear anti-bullying procedures and examination of staff training in this matter, inspectors concluded that the school's measures to prevent and tackle bullying are very effective. Many pupils commented that there is no bullying and feel confident that any incident would be dealt with fairly. Staff take great care to adopt appropriate strategies so that, in dealing with conduct issues regarding any pupil with individual needs, appropriate allowances are made. The school's plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND is thorough and meets requirements.
- 4.15 The school is effective in seeking pupils' views. The school council, consisting of one pupil elected from each class, meets regularly. It enables pupils to influence the work of the school and also to take initiative in the school's charitable endeavours.

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

- 4.16 Welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 4.17 Staff at the Junior School work closely with those at the Senior School who have welfare, health and safety responsibilities across the whole organisation to ensure that pupils benefit from a safe and nurturing environment, in accordance with the schools' aims.
- 4.18 Throughout the school, thorough arrangements for safeguarding, including the regular staff training and its inclusion in the induction programme for new staff, ensure detailed understanding by the staff and contribute strongly to pupils being kept safe and developing an understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. Those with responsibility for safeguarding have relevant training at a higher level. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and during interviews pupils noted that they feel safe. Staff undertake regular refresher training in health and safety procedures and have appropriate training in first aid, including in the EYFS, where staff, as required, also undertake training in food handling.
- 4.19 All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk from fire. A health and safety committee, operating across the schools, provides strong guidance, monitors records and procedures carefully and reports to the governors' estates committee. Fire safety and prevention equipment is tested routinely and regular fire drills, including in boarding time, enable staff and pupils to be familiar with evacuation routines. Careful attention is paid to maintaining high standards of health and safety, particularly in areas requiring a higher level of awareness, such as the kitchen, swimming pool and specialist teaching areas. Electrical equipment is tested regularly and chemicals are stored in accordance with requirements. The careful implementation of detailed procedures for educational visits promotes safe practice on these occasions.
- 4.20 Thorough arrangements provide efficiently for pupils who are ill or injured. Appropriately qualified staff, strongly supported by nursing staff at the Senior School and based in a well-equipped Junior School medical room, ensure the safe storage of medication and the timely and sensitive administration of first aid and medicines.

Information is gathered carefully relating to pupils with medical conditions, including allergies, or SEND, and is appropriately shared, ensuring a high level of care and provision.

- 4.21 Admission and attendance registers are completed and stored with due care, in accordance with requirements.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.22 The quality of boarding is excellent.

- 4.23 Staff strongly support the aims of the school and the boarding mission statement in nurturing tolerance, respect for others and moral responsibility in the boarders, as well as trust and confidence between staff and pupils.

- 4.24 Outcomes for boarders are excellent. Boarders are articulate, confident and happy. The atmosphere of the house is very welcoming and homely and the boarders enjoy their time there. They are positive about the care they receive, one boarder commenting that 'the best thing about school is the boarding'. Boarders have strong relationships with staff and with one another. Staff are approachable and boarders feel that there is always a member of staff that they can talk to. Strategies used in the boarding house enhance the boarders' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils with SEND or from overseas are accepted and supported well. A meeting, in which minutes are taken, known as the 'Weekly News', enables boarders to air their views and boarders can see definite outcomes from their suggestions.

- 4.25 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. The successful induction of new boarders is strongly supported by the use of a buddy system. A 'What do I know' quiz, undertaken a few days after starting, ensures that new boarders are aware of what to do. Sick or injured boarders are looked after well by a first-aid-trained assistant in the Junior School medical centre during the day. In the evening the resident staff look after their needs and, if they need further treatment or require overnight medical supervision, they are expertly cared for in the well-equipped medical centre in the Senior School. Medical protocols are appropriate and handovers between staff are efficient. All the required records are kept, both electronically, some also in hard copy. The quality of care for any pupil with ongoing health issues is assured through a plan, designed to alert and inform the relevant personnel. The independent listener is available one night per week for a drop in session and also by telephone. She is well known to the boarders and used by them in the house. By arrangement through the medical staff, boarders can also meet with the school counsellor, who is based at the Senior School. Boarders responded extremely positively to the pre-inspection questionnaire. They commented particularly favourably about their enjoyment of boarding. No responses to the parents' questionnaire were received from parents of boarders.

- 4.26 Boarders consider the food to be good. It is well cooked, nutritious and designed for the needs and ages of the pupils. Boarders' informal suggestions to the chef have resulted in their being able to influence the menus, for example in the serving of home-made burgers and sausage rolls. Boarders develop some quite advanced culinary skills through the after-school cookery club. Through a number of aspects of the curriculum, boarders learn the importance of regular exercise, which they put into practice through the wide range of sports and sporting extra-curricular activities. Boarders engage widely in recreational and developmental pursuits. They have

access to books, games and puzzles in the evenings and can take part in a range of activities at weekends.

- 4.27 The house is well maintained and requests are rapidly dealt with by the maintenance department. House management staff ensure the efficient running of all the domestic aspects of housekeeping, cleaning, laundry and supplies. Risk assessments for the house and also for boarders' trips are monitored by a senior member of staff and contribute strongly to the boarders' safety. The house staff store pupils' possessions and passports securely. The distribution of pocket money is individually recorded and the record sent to parents at the end of each term. Complaints are dealt with efficiently and a careful record is kept at the Senior School. Boarders have good access to house phones to contact their families and, with appropriate supervision, can use computers to make video calls.
- 4.28 The quality of welfare, health and safety for boarders is excellent. Boarders feel secure and great effort is made to ensure that they are happy, healthy and safe. Noticeboards carry all the necessary information, including who is on duty at any given time. Boarders are carefully safeguarded. Boarding staff have a clear knowledge of the safeguarding policy, undertake relevant training and attend regular update sessions. At the previous inspection of boarding, the school was recommended to ensure that the minutes of the governing body clearly indicate the outcomes of their annual review into child protection, together with the main points of any subsequent discussion and action. This has been attended to and the minutes of the most recent governors' meeting record the annual review in appropriate detail.
- 4.29 Behaviour is exemplary and any minor misdemeanours are dealt with swiftly. Boarders commented that disciplinary matters are dealt with fairly. Boarders and staff agree that there is no bullying in the house. The health and safety aspects of the boarding house are dealt with promptly. Fire drills are undertaken regularly and appropriately, including at times when boarders would usually be in bed, and are recorded systematically. Staff always know the boarders' whereabouts and ensure that they are never left unsupervised. Gap students work under supervision with a responsible member of staff. The school undertakes appropriate safeguarding checks for spouses and other resident family members, who sign a contract outlining their roles within the accommodation and grounds. Recruitment of staff is undertaken in accordance with requirements. The use of door codes at points of entry to boarding accommodation ensures that access is limited to those with appropriate authorisation.
- 4.30 The leadership and management of the boarding provision are excellent. The well-managed and organised house runs efficiently. The director of boarding, based at the Senior School, has overall responsibility and ensures close liaison between the schools, enhancing areas of boarding provision in the Junior School, such as the medical care of the boarders. Jobs descriptions, which detail roles in boarding and full, and annual appraisals of all staff working in boarding ensure a clear understanding of responsibilities in boarding. The appraisals of teaching staff who work in boarding include a section on their boarding role, recognising and evaluating their work in the house. House staff maintain well-kept, comprehensive electronic records and detailed formal and informal communication between academic and house staff strongly supports boarding life. Policies relating to boarding are known well and followed accurately. New staff benefit from thorough induction and, together with regular professional development, this ensures a commitment to on-going improvement.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 Governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Governors have a detailed understanding of, and empathy with, the college's aims and ethos, enabling them to provide informed support and guidance to ensure that the Christian principles are strongly sustained and the schools' aims are conspicuously met.
- 5.3 Governors draw successfully on an extensive range of strategies to maintain a perceptive overview of the work of each of the schools; through their regular visits to the schools, participation in annual subject reviews, presentations from members of staff and scrutiny of results data, for example, they ensure the consistent fulfilment of their responsibilities for educational standards. Several governors' committees, including those covering estates, finance, education and personnel, and the allocation of responsibilities to individual governors, including for safeguarding, the EYFS and boarding, ensure that the full board is kept clearly informed, facilitating the discharging of responsibilities for safeguarding and securing prudent financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding meets regularly with the designated lead safeguarding staff and presents an annual review of safeguarding for approval by the full board.
- 5.4 Governors bring a wide range of skills and interests to the school. A recent self-evaluation provided valuable insight into how governance operates. The selection of new governors is undertaken following careful analysis, to bring specific skills to the board. These measures, together with an induction programme for new governors and regular governors' training, including courses with external providers, ensure that they have an in-depth insight into the working of the schools and are highly effective in monitoring their work and providing perceptive support and challenge to their staff.

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 The senior leadership team has a clear vision for the future direction of the school. It has created an ethos and sense of purpose for the school, which strongly promote fundamental British values. This direction contributes strongly to the high-quality support given to pupils' personal development, the school's pastoral care systems and the careful consideration given to the pupils' academic progress. The senior team is efficient in providing clear educational direction, which support the Kent College schools' aims to maintain high educational standards in all academic, cultural and sporting activities.
- 5.7 Following a recommendation at the previous inspection, the school has reviewed its leadership structure and management responsibilities to clarify line management arrangements. It now has a clear line of leadership, linked to the Senior School, understood by staff and pupils. Subject co-ordinators take their responsibilities

- seriously and have introduced beneficial changes to the curriculum. Such changes are linked to the development of the schools' aims and aid pupils to develop to their full potential. Provision for the subject co-ordinators to monitor teaching in their subject area throughout the school does not match their job descriptions. The gathering, management and storage of information about children's welfare, attainment and progress in the EYFS has been too dependent on informal processes which does not readily facilitate its use in monitoring and tracking their development, both in the EYFS and as they move on to Year 1.
- 5.8 Staff are strongly supported by the leadership team and feel that their opinions are valued. The vision for the school is shared amongst all staff and they are keenly supportive of the schools' aims. Communication and consultation with staff are purposeful and informative and enable them to make their views known and to contribute to policy and practice.
- 5.9 The senior leadership team is effective in its self-evaluation, setting priorities and ensuring they are achieved. Such evaluation and the setting of a timescale for priorities have benefited from the support of an external consultant. A clear development plan has helped the school to prioritise improvements, both to the site and in the quality and style of the education provided. The plan is effectively reviewed on an annual basis and the senior team adjusts its priorities suitably to meet the changing needs of the school and its pupils. Leadership communicates its conviction about the changes it has implemented and its evaluation identifies a positive impact throughout the whole school community, a view endorsed by inspectors.
- 5.10 The leadership team is mostly successful in securing, supporting, developing and motivating high-quality staff. Although EYFS staff have formal opportunities to contribute towards the development of the setting, arrangements for the supervision of staff were not in place prior to the inspection. This has now been rectified and a programme has been put into place with immediate effect. Sufficient staff are trained in safer recruitment; the management of the recruitment and checking of new staff is common to both Senior and Junior Schools and staff are appointed in accordance with safer recruitment requirements, the necessary checks being recorded carefully in the central register, ensuring that pupils are safeguarded. Annual appraisal for all teaching staff ensures discussion about the quality of teaching. The school is strongly committed to professional development, enabling staff to be suitably trained for their roles, including in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Academic staff and teaching assistants are deployed well and administrative, domestic, boarding and maintenance staff make a strong contribution to the life of the school.
- 5.11 The school has strong links with parents, ensuring that it successfully meets its aim of valuing close co-operation between parents, pupil and staff. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were particularly supportive of the school and entirely satisfied with the range of curricular and extra-curricular activities on offer, the timely way the school responds to their queries, and the fact that their child is happy at school. Partnership with parents of children in the EYFS is excellent, and parents appreciate the regular opportunities they have to be involved with their children's learning. An open-door policy allows parents immediate access to the staff, and daily feedback on how each child has fared over the day is an important feature of the partnership.

- 5.12 Good printed information is provided to prospective parents enquiring about the school. Termly information about the curriculum, information about extra-curricular activities and a calendar of dates ensure that parents have the level of detail they need, and a comprehensive website is regularly updated, ensuring that parents receive further up-to-date information. Since the previous inspection, the school has strengthened arrangements for communicating with parents, taking full advantage of technological strategies to keep in regular contact. The school regularly communicates with parents by email, daily instant messaging and by text, which is greatly appreciated by parents as a way of knowing what is going on at school, and with their children in particular. In addition, the website has been further developed, and a termly glossy magazine celebrates the successes of all those in the wider college community.
- 5.13 Parents feel that the school quickly establishes constructive relationships with them, and many share the view that the school is almost an extension of the family. Parents are easily able to become involved in the work and progress of their children. They are extremely happy with the opportunities they have to support their children in competitive sports, regardless of ability, and to celebrate their achievements in a variety of musical and dramatic events. Pupils benefit from the active involvement of parents in their work, for example, through sharing information about their different faiths and cultures. An active parents' association arranges social and fundraising events, such as the Christmas fair, band night and summer ball, which serve to strengthen further the strong links between home and school. The regular coffee mornings, held by the headmaster's wife, strengthen communication and are appreciated by those who attend.
- 5.14 Parents appreciate half-termly effort and attainment grades, through which they can be sure of their child's application and progress over the period. Full, informative reports, produced annually, give a detailed account of pupils' progress in academic and pastoral matters across all curricular and extra-curricular activities. Parents of children in the EYFS hear of their child's progress in learning and development in prime and specific areas of the EYFS curriculum at termly parents' evenings. However, although staff in the EYFS provide written reports to parents on children's progress in the seven areas of learning, their performance in the EYFS Profile at the end of the EYFS and the children's performance in the three characteristics of effective learning are not formally reported to parents. From Year 1 onwards, personal achievement diaries allow parents a two-way flow of information about their child's work. They enable parental concerns to be dealt with speedily. The school handles parental concerns with due care, and in accordance with its published procedures.

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