

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Woodbridge School

Full Name of the School	Woodbridge School
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Age Range (of the whole school)	4 to 18
Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	16th to 19th November 2009
Head of Early Years Setting	Mrs Jan King
Early Years Age Range	4 to 5
Early Years Gender	Mixed
Early Years Foundation Stage Inspection Dates	16th to 17th November 2009

This inspection report follows the framework laid down by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The inspection was carried out under the arrangements of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. It was also carried out under Section 162A(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002 as amended by the Education Act 2005, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31st August following their fifth birthday. The inspection was carried out by ISI, a body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting EYFS provision in schools belonging to the ISC Associations. Section 7 of this report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the EYFS Statutory Framework published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection was carried out in conjunction with Ofsted, Children's Directorate. The Ofsted report is available separately at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Inspection reports/Boarding schools.

The inspection does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 Woodbridge School is situated just outside the town of Woodbridge, which overlooks the River Deben. It was founded in 1577 on a previous site in the town, and benefited from Thomas Seckford's endowment to the town in the time of Queen Elizabeth I. In 1949 the Seckford Foundation acquired the Abbey manor house and made it a preparatory school known as the Abbey. The school became fully co-educational in 1974. In 1993 the pre-preparatory school moved from the Abbey to its present location on the senior school site, where it is known as Queen's House. The proprietors of the three schools are the trustees of the Seckford Foundation, a registered charity. The Foundation has several committees which include responsibility for the school. The members of the school committee have delegated oversight of the school.
- 1.2 The school's mission statement is to excel in the education of the young. The school aims to produce confident, secure and well-educated young people who will become versatile and responsible adults. To achieve this, it seeks to balance academic rigour with the development of creativity, performance and leadership skills, promoted by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. It proclaims its belief that the quality of relationships has high priority and that good pastoral care lies at the heart of academic success. It makes a point of welcoming the participation of parents in the pursuit of its aims and encouraging their active involvement in the local and wider community.
- 1.3 Since the last inspection, in November 2003, the Abbey has received new art, design and technology and science facilities, and at the senior school new buildings have included the Seckford Theatre, changing rooms, the design and technology centre, the sixth-form centre and the humanities teaching area. The school has also benefited from refurbishment and increased facilities in various areas.
- 1.4 The total number of pupils is 925, 497 boys and 428 girls. In Queen's House, there are 79 pupils, 20 of whom are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and 59 in Years 1 and 2. In the Abbey there are 222 pupils in Years 3 to 6. The senior school has 624 pupils, of whom 440 are in Years 7 to 11, and 184 in Years 12 and 13. School House has 29 boarders, 18 boys and 11 girls. They represent a mix of nationalities from the United Kingdom, Europe, the Far and Middle East and the Americas. Weekly boarding is available from Year 9 and full boarding from Year 10. Flexible boarding arrangements are available for day pupils.
- 1.5 No pupil has a statement of special educational needs, but 53 are identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities; 47 of these receive specialist learning support from the school. Twenty-five pupils have English as an additional language and all receive support from the school.
- 1.6 The day pupils come from various parts of Suffolk, largely near the East coast, and are predominantly of white British parentage. Their parents are mostly in professional, business or public service occupations, with significant representation of art, music, science and technology. About a fifth work in London.
- 1.7 Entry to Queen's House, the Abbey and the senior school is selective at each stage. As indicated by standardised tests, the average ability of pupils in the Abbey is well above the national average. A small proportion are average or below and the proportion of pupils far above average is about one in five. If the pupils were to perform in line with their ability, their results in National Curriculum tests in Year 6 would be well above average.

- 1.8 In the senior school, the overall ability of the pupils is similar. It is well above the national average for all maintained secondary schools but below the average for selective maintained schools. If the pupils were to perform according to their ability, their results in GCSE examinations would be well above the average for all maintained schools nationally, but below those for maintained selective schools.
- 1.9 On the basis of tests taken at the beginning of Year 12, overall ability in the sixth form is above the national average, and of those taking A levels about a quarter are below average and a quarter well above. If pupils were to perform according to their ability, their results would be above the national average for all maintained schools, but below the average for maintained selective schools.
- 1.10 Almost all pupils pass from Queen's House to the Abbey and from the Abbey to the senior school. On leaving from Year 13, almost all pupils proceed to well-known universities or colleges.
- 1.11 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.
- 1.12 See Section 7 for the report on the Early Years Foundation Stage.

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

2.1 Throughout the school, from the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards, a good range of educational experiences is provided. The curriculum is broad and covers the necessary areas. It meets the aim of producing confident and secure young people, and it provides appropriately for the aptitude and abilities of the pupils and for successful development throughout the age range. The programme of extra-curricular activities is among the many strengths of the school. The school is successful in creating an atmosphere in which the pupils are happy and hard working, and parents greatly appreciate the educational experiences provided for their children. Since the last inspection, good improvements have been made.

The Abbey and Queen's House

2.2 Through the curriculum, pupils' linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human, social, physical, aesthetic and creative needs are well met. Pupils have excellent provision to develop their skills linguistically and creatively. A dynamic programme in Years 3 and 5 significantly enhances speaking and listening skills. Since the last inspection, improvements have been made to the school's information and communication technology (ICT) facilities, and these offer pupils greater support in developing their technological skills. However, ICT is not fully integrated into other subjects in the Abbey.

2.3 The school's games programme and extra-curricular activities have a positive influence on creative, sporting, and musical skills. Music is a great strength, and in the Abbey pupils enjoy individual music lessons and perform in choirs, orchestras and ensembles. In Queen's House, individual music lessons are available from Reception, all the children in Year 2 learn the recorder, and there is a large-scale summer concert and a Christmas Nativity play.

2.4 The school's aims are well reflected in the way personal, social and health education (PSHE) is embodied in school life generally and is supported by the formal programme of PSHE lessons. The school council provides for innovations such as the 'friendship bench' and the organisation of fund-raising activities for local and national charities. In Year 6, pupils take turns as 'leaders' to provide support for younger pupils and to undertake duties to assist staff with the smooth running of the school.

2.5 Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Throughout Queen's House and the Abbey, pupils become confident and articulate. The school places a strong emphasis on speaking and listening. During Years 5 and 6, pupils spend two taster days at the senior school before joining, and pupils from Queen's House have a taster day before joining the Abbey. Good liaison between the learning support teachers in Queen's House, the Abbey and the senior school ensures that information is disseminated effectively. Senior school pupils help with the activity programme at the Abbey.

2.6 The curriculum is planned effectively to meet the needs of all pupils, thus providing equality of opportunity. Schemes of work ensure that learning progresses continuously. Pupils in the Abbey are encouraged to participate in sporting activities, whatever their level of skill and aptitude. The extra-curricular activities cover many interests and add vibrancy and visible equality to the provision. Examples in the Abbey include horse eventing and dressage, gymnastics and chess; in Queen's House, jewellery making, board games and drama nurture talent and enable all pupils to flourish.

- 2.7 Enrichment of the curriculum is widespread within the school environment, in the local area and through trips out and visiting speakers. In the Abbey, the extensive programme of visits includes an adventure weekend for Year 6, and in Queen's House outings are made to nearby places of interest, such as the trip to Southwold to complement the Year 2 study of the Victorians.
- 2.8 The school has explicit policies and good provision for pupils needing learning support, for those with English as an additional language and for the gifted and talented. Assessments are carried out by the learning support teachers and individual education plans are formulated. When necessary, pupils are withdrawn from lessons for additional support or adjustments are made within the classroom. Teachers use individual education plans effectively in their careful planning for lessons.

Senior School

- 2.9 Pupils are enabled to acquire a full range of skills. Speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy are promoted with great success. Mathematics and science are strongly represented, with separate sciences from Year 9. Latin and French are taught in Year 8, with the option of either Spanish or German. History, geography and religious studies cover the human and social areas of learning and the expressive and creative are represented in art, music and design and technology.
- 2.10 Optional subjects chosen in Years 10 and 12 aid this development. Since the last inspection, the school, aware of the need to promote independent learning, has added the sixth-form subject of critical thinking and an option to write an extended project. Mandarin and Japanese have joined the range of modern foreign languages. An AS course in computing stretches able pupils in Years 10 and 11 and a course in dance is available. Drama provision has been increased. The considerable influence of the chaplaincy and the weekly chapel services provides much religious education and makes good the lack of compulsory curricular religious studies beyond Year 9. The PSHE programme is in keeping with the school's aims and helps to promote its ethos.
- 2.11 A vast array of well-supported activities allows pupils to develop the skills of leadership and teamwork. Numerous opportunities provide for pupils of all ages to attend clubs and societies, to represent the school or their house at different levels in various sports, and to perform in plays, musical groups and other competitive activities. The arrangement for all pupils to take part in activities on Friday afternoons emphasises the importance the school attaches to extra-curricular provision. A thriving Combined Cadet Force and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme each attract large numbers.
- 2.12 Sport at Woodbridge is very strong. The school takes much pride in the many teams of boys and girls who play matches in each age group. Even the less talented players represent the school or their house in competitive sport, with the benefit of good coaching. The school makes high quality provision for pupils to play chess. Many pupils take part and standards are exceptional. Music and drama are first class and a considerable number of pupils perform to a high level in a variety of recitals, concerts and productions. Parents support these activities enthusiastically. The school has a vibrant creative life, and it is a place where the performing arts live up to their name.
- 2.13 Service to the local community is an outstanding feature, not least through links with local schools, through a London school for disabled children and through the large sums which the pupils raise for local and national charities. International links are also strong. The school provides an award-winning exchange programme and organises various language exchanges and trips abroad.

- 2.14 The school operates a thorough programme of advice, each stage of which is appropriate to age. Careful guidance is given for GCSE, AS and A-level options, and the school provides a session on decision-making for Year 9 pupils. The focus in the sixth form is essentially upon the move to university. A great deal of support is given for the application process. At present, the school has no compulsory programme of work experience, but is taking steps to increase participation.
- 2.15 The subject curriculum and extra-curricular activities are well planned, documented and reviewed. They promote participation in a wide range of activities. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported and speak highly of the guidance provided. Careful screening and individual or group support ensure that these pupils make good progress and are able to participate fully in the curriculum. In addition, staff are provided with in-service training and feedback at departmental and head of department meetings. Clear procedures facilitate the exchange of information to support pupils with specific difficulties and this is effectively reflected in the detailed individual plans agreed by pupils, parents and staff. These are updated and reviewed regularly. Pupils for whom English is an additional language receive support through sessions which focus on subject-specific learning. However, some of the individual plans for support lack specific, detailed targets and a formal system of review.

Whole School

- 2.16 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.17 After a strong start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils achieve good standards in relation to their age and ability throughout the school. They gain a thorough grounding in knowledge, skills and understanding of English, mathematics and science. The effective standards of learning and achievement have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils develop their individual talents and skills in line with the school's stated aim to produce well-educated young people by providing an environment in which pupils enjoy stretching their intellectual ability and achieve their best in all areas of the curriculum, exercising imagination and enjoying diversity of interests. Throughout the school, pupils record outstanding achievements in a rich variety of extra-curricular activities.

The Abbey and Queen's House

- 2.18 The pupils listen attentively, being articulate and confident speakers. This is evident in the pupils' success in English speaking examinations, and when reading aloud and performing in front of an audience. In creative lessons, they are encouraged to be critical in evaluating one another's work in a positive way. In activities such as war gaming, karate, science club and chess, pupils are challenged and learn the importance of self-discipline and logical thought. Critical thinking is evident in opportunities such as 'news round' in Year 2 and in responding to assemblies. Pupils show a positive approach to all their work. Expressive use of technical phrases is clearly evident in creative and physical lessons. The pupils demonstrate good mathematical competence, showing a variety of skills such as measuring, data handling and identification of two- and three-dimensional shapes. In all age groups, pupils acquire effective ICT skills but have limited opportunities to apply these in other subjects.

- 2.19 No significant difference is apparent in the relative attainment in separate classes within the same year group, across subjects or between pupils of differing abilities. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve at a level in line with their abilities. More able pupils and those identified as having exceptional ability also make good progress, given their ability levels.
- 2.20 Pupils' performance over the last three years in national tests at the age of 11 has been far above the national average in maintained primary schools for English and mathematics and well above in science. Results are good in mathematics and English and in line with ability in science. Work scrutinised during the inspection in science and other subjects shows good achievement.
- 2.21 Sport is a clear strength of the school. The day of sport held at Queen's House celebrated nine sports and concluded with a spectacular karate display. Success has been achieved in horse riding and highlights of the past four years have included places in the top ten in national schools championships. The rugby Under 11 A team was undefeated last season. The school has had exceptional success in national schools biathlon finals. Other strengths are in musical and creative activities. The enthusiastic choirs sing regularly for the school and in the community. The talented chapel choir is due to perform the world premier of the *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis*, composed specifically for them. Pupils participate regularly in chess competitions, many pupils took part in a dance display with the senior school, and three pupils had their artwork displayed in a public gallery.
- 2.22 Pupils are effective in organising themselves and their work. Independent learning was limited in the lessons observed, though there were exceptions, such as where pupils worked together investigating the changes when materials are burnt. Pupils work hard and study effectively on their own and with others. They are good at taking notes and drafting work.
- 2.23 Good levels of communication and team work were observed; for example, as pupils encouraged each other to improve their techniques in a Year 5 ball skills lesson and as they worked in pairs to sort shapes in Year 1 mathematics.
- 2.24 Pupils settle quickly and show positive enthusiasm for learning; for example, as they rapidly gained understanding of the Greek alphabet. Pupils show a high level of perseverance across subjects regardless of difficulty. They take pride in their work, whether in their study books or in displays around the school. Enthusiasm and enjoyment are evident in all areas of the school: in the classroom, travelling between buildings, in the dining room and at break times.

Senior School

- 2.25 Boys and girls participate with enthusiasm and commitment, demonstrating a positive attitude to their learning, which is enhanced by the excellent relationships which exist between pupils and staff. Pupils acquire a secure grounding in knowledge, skills and understanding. They apply these confidently and effectively, both in lessons and in their written work, and they frequently demonstrate their ability to think critically and creatively. Members of the sixth form take part in a critical thinking course, enabling them to develop skills of reasoning and logical writing, to the general advantage of their studies. At all stages, pupils listen attentively and speak effectively. They are fluent in putting forward their views and ideas, both orally and on paper, and demonstrate a high level of mathematical competence. They are articulate, reflective and accomplished learners, able to deploy their subject knowledge to analyse problems, construct cogent arguments and arrive at clearly expressed judgements. Boys and girls make good use of ICT as a vehicle for learning and research. In work scrutinised and lessons observed, there was no significant variation in relative attainment between subjects or between different groups or ages of pupils.

- 2.26 In the past three years, results in GCSE examinations have been good, well above the average for maintained secondary schools and similar to those for maintained selective schools. No national comparison for the 2009 results is yet available, but pupils gained over 90 per cent A* to C grades, half of which were at grades A* or A. Results in A-level examinations have also been good, above the average for all maintained schools and similar to those for maintained selective schools. No national comparison for the 2009 results is yet available, but the proportion of A or B grades was close to two-thirds.
- 2.27 Pupils take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the school, and they participate with enthusiasm and outstanding achievements in a wide range of academic and extra-curricular activities. This exemplifies the excellent level of co-operative endeavour that exists between teachers and pupils. A large number of boys and girls achieve representative honours at regional and national level in sporting activities, and the school has developed a structured programme to develop excellence in those most talented in sports. Success has been achieved in horse riding and highlights of the past four years have included places in the top ten in national schools championships. Pupils from Woodbridge are represented in the National Youth Choir, Strings Academy and Orchestra and many are involved in musical and drama performances, for which the school enjoys a high reputation locally. Results in speech, drama and music examinations are strong. The school has an established record of success at a national level in the intellectual challenge of competitive chess and in mathematical and scientific Olympiads. Success is enjoyed in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, the Combined Cadet Force, Young Enterprise business projects, debating, environmental projects, and charity and community work. Pupils, staff and parents are justifiably proud of these achievements.
- 2.28 Pupils are conscientious and industrious. They enjoy their work and take pride in it. Work habits are well established and pupils are familiar with what is expected of them. They are well prepared for the requirements of examinations. Much of the work in their books and files is carefully compiled and well organised. However, the quality of presentation is uneven and opportunities for pupils to take the initiative through independent research are not always exploited.
- 2.29 Pupils are willing and co-operative learners, eager to express their own ideas and opinions. They work collaboratively to apply their skills and further their understanding. They listen attentively and respect the ideas and opinions of others. They are well-motivated, conscientious and diligent. They settle quickly to work and are keen to participate in lessons, encouraged by the supportive ethos which pervades the school. Most are swift to take responsibility for their own progress and are eager to please their teachers. When presented with demanding tasks, they rise to the challenge set. Teamwork is the essence of much that they achieve.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.30 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is exceptional and the school is conspicuously fulfilling its aims in this area to produce young people who are likely to become responsible adults. Since the last inspection, provision at the Abbey has been improved by the promotion of effective teaching schemes and programmes of study, and at Queen's House a new separate personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) policy linked to assembly themes has made a significant impact on pupils' awareness and development. In the senior school, the role of the chapel in the day-to-day life of the school has expanded. The chaplaincy has a powerful influence in all aspects of school life, and members of staff set a fine example to pupils, showing a genuine interest in pupils beyond examination results and success in extra-curricular activities. The development of the PSHE and citizenship programmes has also helped the development of spiritual beliefs.

The Abbey and Queen's House

- 2.31 The Abbey and Queen's House meet their aims of gaining spiritual strength from each other as part of a community that respects and understands other faiths and beliefs. Pupils demonstrate excellent personal qualities, supported and promoted by an ethos which emphasises personal responsibility, self-worth, strong values and a genuine concern for others.
- 2.32 The spiritual development of pupils is excellent. Boys and girls of all ages and religious backgrounds show high self-esteem. At Queen's House, this is developed through circle time, where pupils freely discuss current issues under the guidance of the class teacher. In school assemblies at the Abbey, pupils explore values and beliefs through the weekly themes, such as those of 'community' and 'water', which are linked to the annual Harvest Festival. Pupils have caring attitudes towards each other and towards staff. This is promoted through the study of the major world religions, alongside the Christian faith, which is central to the school's ethos. Pupils demonstrate self-confidence, which is apparent when their special achievements are highlighted in assemblies. They reflect on the meaning and purpose of life in a context that evidently values and respects the beliefs and opinions of others.
- 2.33 Pupils develop strong moral values. They follow a clear set of guidelines which they understand and respect. Pupils think of the effect of their actions on others, which they demonstrate in the way they move around the school sensibly and courteously. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and the importance of making choices, and their very good understanding of moral issues and respect for the law are carefully nurtured. At the Abbey, pupils accept the very straightforward school rules which are explained at the beginning of each year, and the pupils at Queen's House similarly respect their 'golden rules'. Pupils understand that rules exist for the benefit of their community. By being involved in organising a range of charitable events at school, such as mufti days and cake sales, pupils demonstrate well-developed understanding of their obligations to one another as well as to those who are less fortunate than themselves.
- 2.34 Pupils' social development is a strength of the school and stems from the many opportunities they are given, or create for themselves, to co-operate and take responsibility: pupils' relationships with peers and staff are excellent, behaviour is exemplary and the pupils move around the school in a calm, purposeful way. At the Abbey, an active and highly productive school council regularly meets to discuss pertinent and current issues. Influenced by the caring ethos of the school, pupils demonstrate their awareness of the privileges they enjoy through service in the community. Pupils in Queen's House and the Abbey are given good opportunities to assume positions of responsibility, and do so conscientiously and with pride.

- 2.35 Each year, pupils at the Abbey play joint sports alongside local maintained schools, and thus gain a strong sense of identity and shared community values. The PSHE programme at the Abbey, including a knowledge of public institutions and services in England, contributes effectively to pupils' good understanding of how society functions. Pupils at Queen's House make regular visits to a number of local institutions including the local police station, church and the town hall. Pupils accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and contribute well to community life. Through clear guidance from staff, pupils understand what is expected of them and achieve high standards of behaviour.
- 2.36 Pupils show an excellent understanding of the diversity of their community and the world in which they live, and are respectful of the different cultural heritages they encounter at school. At the Abbey, through a European initiatives programme, pupils learn about other cultures. They have extended this understanding through exchange visits to Italy, Spain and Finland. Pupils recently spent five days working alongside Estonian students and sharing their experiences of school with them. The pupils' cultural awareness is promoted by eye-catching displays and, through a wide range of visits and visitors, pupils become sensitive to cultural differences. For example, they have gained awareness of life in Kenya, and pupils at Queen's House have celebrated Chinese New Year, learning to use chopsticks under the instruction of Chinese visitors.

Senior School

- 2.37 Pupils exhibit a notable degree of spiritual awareness and welcome the opportunities for reflection in chapel. They also achieve a broader spiritual awareness in their approach to their studies and to one another, and in their appreciation of the arts, literature, music and drama. In the PSHE programme and in the critical thinking work in the sixth form, pupils examine their own values and beliefs, and in tutorial time they express their sense of self-worth and their tolerance of others.
- 2.38 The pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. This is reflected in the calm, ordered atmosphere around the school. Pupils exhibit a good understanding of the rationale underlying the school rules and they respect these rules, as can be seen in the high degree of consideration and courtesy shown at all times. In the PSHE and citizenship framework, they discuss the law and the legal system in the United Kingdom. They also deal with ethical issues on an international scale through the Model United Nations programme and debating societies.
- 2.39 Pupils' social development is excellent. They are unfailingly courteous, holding doors open for adults and standing aside for others. They accept responsibility for their own behaviour in recognising that punishments when given are fair. In their questionnaire returns, a small minority of pupils felt that their views were not taken into account by the school, but other pupils held the work of the school council in high regard in this respect. Pupils are conscious of the need to contribute positively to the life of the community, as shown in their participation in visits to special schools both locally and in London, the sports leadership programme and numerous other initiatives. Pupils are actively involved in charitable work on a local, national and international scale and display an exceptional commitment to fund-raising. They show maturity in the way that they work and play together. Prefects take their responsibilities seriously for promoting the ethos of the school.

- 2.40 Pupils display an outstanding level of cultural awareness and tolerance for different cultural traditions. Many pupils develop this awareness through the full programme of exchanges and study visits, as well as the international exchange programme, which has been recognised by a British Council award. Inspired by the flying of different national flags on days of significance, pupils discuss world issues and gain a greater understanding of other countries and their concerns. Pupils joining Woodbridge from abroad develop their cultural awareness of the United Kingdom through the 'SCHOLA' programme for integration into English society, customs and language. Pupils develop their cultural awareness through literature, music and drama.

Whole School

- 2.41 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.42 Throughout the school, the overall quality of teaching is good and a significant proportion of excellent teaching was observed. The teaching contributes strongly to pupils' good attainment and progress throughout the school. The exceptionally constructive relationships between staff and pupils are essential factors in promoting the pupils' successful learning and standards. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the children are afforded excellent opportunities to develop independence and curiosity and, from these years onwards, teaching is a strong contributor to the school's aim to produce well-educated pupils. The standards of the last inspection have been maintained. As the school strives for even higher achievement, the evenness of teaching and marking quality is on its agenda.

The Abbey and Queen's House

- 2.43 Teaching enables pupils of all abilities to acquire knowledge, make good progress, increase understanding and develop skills. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and those with English as an additional language are identified and receive well-judged support, enabling progress and assisting concentration and application. High levels of challenge are provided for the most able pupils.
- 2.44 Enthusiastic teaching fosters pupils' application of intellectual, physical and creative effort. It inspires interest and enjoyment and improves the pupils' skills. Examples of independent work have included current affairs, where pupils have brought in their own work for an effective display. However, in some lessons insufficient emphasis is placed on helping pupils to think and learn for themselves. Teachers encourage the pupils to behave responsibly and enjoy learning. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils respond to the positive example and encouragement of staff.
- 2.45 In the pupils' questionnaire, concerns were expressed about the amount of homework set; however, evidence from observations and interviews led to the judgement that the amount is appropriate.
- 2.46 Teaching is well planned, supported where necessary by detailed individual education plans, and related closely to subject documentation. The most effective teaching has clear learning objectives with a variety of fast-moving activities that fulfil these objectives in a sharply focused and well-organised manner. Less effective teaching is a result of less detailed planning and pace.

- 2.47 Teachers know their pupils well. With few exceptions, they are consistent and rigorous in determining the pupils' aptitudes, needs and prior attainment. The good knowledge that most staff have of their subjects is a strong basis for the good quality of teaching and learning. Teachers are enthusiastic and share their enthusiasm with their pupils, stimulating them to learn. Praise and encouragement are widely used, which adds to pupils' enjoyment of their learning and develops self-confidence. The use of specialist teachers in music, art and physical education is beneficial and, together with high expectations, contributes significantly to pupils' achievements and rapid progress in these subjects.
- 2.48 Teaching is supported by a good range of resources, which are generally used effectively by teachers. Teachers at Queen's House make excellent use of their interactive whiteboards. As the school is aware, at the Abbey learning is limited by the lack of ICT facilities in classrooms and the quality of some of the textbooks. In the well-used library, limited space and low stock restrict pupils' opportunities for research.
- 2.49 Comprehensive assessment and tracking systems are proving to be effective in monitoring pupils' progress and achievement. However, the information gained from assessments is not consistently used to inform planning and ensure that all pupils are achieving to their full potential. Marking does not always follow the school's policy. The best marking is encouraging, and gives clear guidelines to pupils on how they can improve, but some marking is cursory, with a tick at the bottom of the page and no comment. However, teachers often discuss work in detail with pupils and give constructive verbal feedback as well as including targets for improvement. Pupils are increasingly becoming involved in self-assessment using the 'traffic light' system or smiley faces, and appropriate arrangements enable pupils' performance to be evaluated according to the school's aims and with reference to national norms.

Senior School

- 2.50 The quality of teaching is good, with a significant proportion outstanding. Very little unsatisfactory teaching was noted. Teaching supports the school's aims, and the overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. In all subjects, boys and girls of all abilities acquire new knowledge, make progress, increase their understanding and develop their skills. Parents express great satisfaction with the quality of the teaching their children receive. However, the quality of marking varies considerably.
- 2.51 Conscientious and industrious teaching encourages pupils to have an interest in their work, whether intellectual, physical or creative. Lessons take place in a positive and purposeful atmosphere and teachers are swift to offer assistance and encouragement. Pupils feel supported, respect their teachers and work diligently for them. The best lessons move at a brisk pace and are characterised by the active involvement of pupils in tasks which promote their capacity for independent learning. Pupils are confident in offering their own ideas and suggestions. They are ready to take risks and rise to the challenge set. The most able pupils are entered for AS examinations in science and computing before Year 12. The less good lessons were characterised by a lack of urgency and a limited and mundane range of activities which failed to provide sufficient challenge.
- 2.52 Teachers are secure in their classroom discipline, display energy in their planning and most have high expectations of their pupils. Pupils behave well and maintain focus in lessons. They expect to work hard and follow instructions carefully, enjoying much of the work that they do. Tasks are planned carefully. Teachers ensure that learning objectives are clearly communicated and they make good use of time. The school has developed a policy on teaching, accompanied by recommendations for good practice, which encourages application, enthusiasm for the subject and the capacity to display initiative and to work independently.

These guidelines are amplified appropriately in department policies and shape the good teaching witnessed. Most departments have developed detailed schemes of work which are appropriate to the age and ability range of the pupils.

- 2.53 Members of the teaching staff know their pupils well and help pupils of all abilities to make effective progress, refine their subject skills and develop their knowledge and understanding. Teachers are swift to offer assistance and encouragement. Pupils who require special provision are equipped with individual education plans and the learning support department provides valuable guidance to assist teachers in meeting their pupils' needs.
- 2.54 Teachers demonstrate a good knowledge of their subject and convey their enthusiasm to pupils. They place a strong emphasis on academic study. Departments are very familiar with the requirements of examination specifications and attention is focused on ensuring that pupils are well prepared for public examinations.
- 2.55 Teaching is supported by high quality resources, which are well husbanded and effectively deployed to the benefit of pupils. Many teachers use ICT to stimulate and develop the understanding and skills of the pupils. The library is a useful resource for private reading and research, but its potential is not fully exploited by departments and, as reported in the last inspection, few pupils readily turn to books to extend their knowledge and awareness. The newly completed Belstead Centre provides outstanding facilities for teaching.
- 2.56 The school has developed a policy for the assessment and evaluation of performance, the principles of which are reflected in most subject areas, whilst the detail of marking policies is left to the discretion of separate departments. Older pupils are very conscious of the assessment criteria used in examination syllabuses and teachers are rigorous in their application of these. However, not all teachers make use of data gathered from the assessment of children's work to inform their future planning. Practice is best in departments where marking is analytical, with careful annotation to suggest how the work might be developed. Elsewhere, inconsistency within and between departments renders marking less effective than it should be. The assessment of routine notes is cursory whilst some teachers' marking consists of a simple grade with few, if any, comments to help pupils to improve the standard of their work.
- 2.57 The school has devised well-conceived and effective arrangements for pupils' attainment, effort and progress to be evaluated. Performance is analysed predominantly in terms of school examination and assessment results, which are routinely recorded and compared with information obtained from nationally standardised baseline tests. Teachers have a good understanding of the pupils' previous knowledge and tutors are able to review a pupil's progress, identify those who are not meeting expectations and initiate appropriate action. Care is taken to communicate the information to pupils and parents alike.

Whole School

- 2.58 The school meets the regulatory requirements for teaching [Standard 1].

3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS

The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils

- 3.1 The quality of pastoral care is excellent and the provision for the welfare and health and safety of pupils is good, reflecting the school's commitment to the effective support of pupils. Strong encouragement is given to developing a healthy lifestyle. The pastoral care contributes to the school's success in its aim to produce confident, secure young people, and a well-ordered and disciplined community. The school has built on the high standards of pastoral care reported at the last inspection.
- 3.2 In all sections of the school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, appropriate policies and procedures are in place to deal with issues of child protection should they arise. Child protection training of staff is carried out at least every three years and the designated child protection co-ordinators have inter-agency training every two years. Those appointed to the school undergo the necessary checks before appointment. Child protection procedures form an important part of the induction of new staff. A designated governor has been appointed and the governors carry out an annual review. The revised safeguarding policy is comprehensive.
- 3.3 The school has been active in instituting the necessary measures required to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. Regular fire drills are held and the outcomes are recorded. Appropriate records show the maintenance of fire-fighting equipment and teaching and non-teaching staff are trained in its use. Clear signs are displayed to indicate fire exits, the location of equipment and fire activation points. Risk assessments are thorough and reviewed regularly, including those for activities and educational visits. They identify fire and other hazards and they include the recommended precautions.
- 3.4 The school takes its responsibility for health and safety arrangements and their management seriously, ensuring compliance with statutory regulations. Staff and pupils are made aware of safe working practices and the need to adhere to them tenaciously. The health and safety committees, comprising staff from Queen's House, the Abbey and the senior school, meet termly and all staff are able to contribute to the agenda. Problems are dealt with quickly. All necessary safety precautions are in force, with high risk areas such as senior school science laboratories and workshops receiving special attention.
- 3.5 Registration takes place twice a day, admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained, and suitable records are kept.

The Abbey and Queen's House

- 3.6 The school atmosphere is calm, warm and welcoming. The staff and pastoral arrangements provide outstanding support and guidance for pupils. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and are built on mutual respect. The pupils are well known by the staff. Pupils feel valued and are relaxed and confident with their teachers. Pupils are not afraid to express their feelings, and find staff responsive and decisive when issues arise. Pupils are confident that concerns put to staff will be addressed effectively.
- 3.7 At Queen's House and the Abbey, a comforting environment is provided for pupils who are unwell. The medical rooms have suitable facilities and staff and parents are kept well informed of any medical issues for pupils. The school chaplaincy provides excellent support, with weekly visits, lunch-time contact and ready availability. All teachers are trained in first aid and procedures ensure high levels of medical attention.

- 3.8 Teaching and non-teaching staff work together very well to provide pastoral care. Registration, circle time, assemblies and PSHE lessons are used to consider pastoral issues. Staff are guided by detailed policies, pastoral issues are prioritised at the regular staff meetings, and a variety of notices and displays in classrooms and corridors provide pupils with ready reminders of expectations and procedures. Careful measures ensure a smooth transition between Queen's House and the Abbey, and between the Abbey and the senior school.
- 3.9 In lessons and around the school, behaviour is positive and supportive among pupils. The tone is set by the school's values of courtesy, confidence, self-discipline, responsibility, loyalty and leadership. House points, commendations, certificates and stickers reward endeavour and good behaviour and assemblies are used effectively to reinforce the school's ethos.
- 3.10 A detailed reward and punishment system reinforces good behaviour and the fulfilment of potential, and clear school rules set high expectations of behaviour. Many initiatives, such as the Queen's House 'golden rules' and the Year 3 'friend of the week' foster responsible, inclusive behaviour. A rigorous anti-bullying policy operates and reminders are published on notice boards and in handbooks. Incidents of bullying are rare, and are dealt with effectively.
- 3.11 Nutrition forms part of the curriculum, and displays in classrooms and corridors reinforce the importance of healthy eating and living. Pupils enjoy nutritious meals prepared on site and served in the spacious and attractive dining rooms. Physical education is well represented on the timetable and in extra-curricular activities. Ample outdoor space allows pupils to exercise effectively.

Senior School

- 3.12 Staff provide exceptionally successful support and guidance for all pupils, as was endorsed in the parents' questionnaire and by most pupils. During the inspection, pupils reported that they felt able to turn to their tutor, housemaster or housemistress, the chaplain, matron or older pupils for help. In its changes to the pastoral system, the school has placed greater emphasis on the role of tutors, and pupils report that they are very well supported and valued. Pupils receive continuity of care whilst benefiting from links between pupils of different ages, and tutors know them well. A rotational system for attendance of year groups at chapel enables tutors to focus on the age-specific needs of those in their tutor group who are not attending chapel on a particular day. Additional arrangements in Years 12 and 13 provide greater focus on preparation for university applications.
- 3.13 A 'pupil support group' has been re-launched this year to make advice on individual problems even more widely available. Induction arrangements for those joining Years 7 and 12 are valued by pupils and they feel warmly welcomed. The school encourages pupils to seek support from school and home if they have any concerns, as explained in the statement *Worried at Woodbridge*, which is at the front of prep diaries, and this also promotes close links between home and school.
- 3.14 Excellent relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils are evident in lessons, activities, tutor time and elsewhere. Pupils are friendly and respectful towards staff and helpful to visitors. The tutor groups of different ages enable younger pupils to benefit from older pupils' knowledge and experience of the school. Prefects attached to Year 7 tutor groups enable younger pupils to feel part of the wider community, and tutorial time is used to supplement their PSHE provision. The older groups have no tutorial programme, but the time is used for debates and work on personal statements or social interchange.

- 3.15 The general behaviour of pupils is very good; there is a clear statement of expectations in the front of prep books. Effective sanctions reinforce expectations and change behaviour. In the questionnaire, a small number of pupils indicated that sanctions are not uniformly imposed but the inspectors did not find evidence of this and pupils commented that the system of sanctions is clear. Similarly, a suitable range of measures rewards good behaviour and effort. Most pupils do not consider bullying to be an issue, and when it does occur they feel that it is dealt with effectively and appropriately. The anti-bullying procedure is of good quality.
- 3.16 School prefects, the heads of school, and the ‘pupil support group’ have received appropriate training. Pupils know which members of staff they might approach. Relevant information is exchanged between tutors, house staff, and all interested parties in an efficient and accurate manner. The medical centre is contactable at all times and links to other advisory professionals are prominently displayed. The well-appointed accommodation for sick pupils is airy, bright and clean, with all necessary facilities readily available.
- 3.17 The school takes great care to accommodate the dietary requirements of its pupils. The kitchen is clean and well maintained, with food stored in appropriate containers in temperature-regulated rooms. Kitchen cleaning chemicals are safely stored. The school emphasises daily consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables as part of its campaign to promote healthy eating amongst the pupils. School meals are nutritious and offer pupils a choice of hot and cold selections including vegetarian options. Supper does not always offer the same high standard of choice.

Whole School

- 3.18 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3].

The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community

- 3.19 The school has very good links with parents and outstanding relations with the wider community. From the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards, the school aims to work in partnership with parents and it achieves this aim. It also aims to be a school that supports the local community and is committed to the service of others. Again, the school fulfils its aim. The quality of links with parents is similar to the time of the last inspection, and the senior school has met the earlier concerns by reviewing and rescheduling parents’ evenings and the timing of reports and grades. The school now has even stronger community links. The revised information for parents which has recently been posted on the website is helpfully expressed. It has been made clear exactly which items are now available to them. Parents of prospective pupils receive an attractive and informative prospectus.

The Abbey and Queen’s House

- 3.20 Parents are very appreciative of the school and the education and support provided for their children. Their response to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated a high degree of satisfaction with the range of subjects offered, the promotion of worthwhile attitudes and views, and the good range of extra-curricular activities. A few parents expressed concern regarding the work completed at home. The inspectors considered this and concluded that the school’s provision is appropriate. The vast majority of parents indicated that any concerns they have are dealt with effectively.
- 3.21 Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the activities of the school and in the work and progress of the children. The Woodbridge School Parents’ Association organises social and fund-raising events, including wine tasting evenings, quiz nights and the summer ball, which provide an excellent link between parents and staff. Parents are invited to attend

- sports, plays, musical events and welcome meetings as well as the annual prize giving. Such occasions enable parents to celebrate pupils' achievement and learn about the curriculum.
- 3.22 Communication with parents is strong and parents are kept informed through good quality information. The literature for new pupils is useful and the school's information booklets contain helpful policies and procedures. Parents also receive a three-weekly newsletter and the annual *Abbey Scene* magazine. The school website includes helpful information.
- 3.23 Progress has been made in the quality of reports to parents. Written reports contain substantial information which frequently offers encouragement, but some lack information on what is needed to improve attainment. Parents are invited to attend parents' evenings and are encouraged to speak with staff on a regular basis to further their understanding of their child's progress. The homework diary at the Abbey and the reading card at Queen's House also enable helpful dialogue between parents and staff.
- 3.24 Pupils regularly integrate with the local community through art, chess and sporting and musical events. For example, the chapel choir sings at the local retirement home and the school participates in local sporting fixtures against maintained and independent schools. The school maintains close links with the local church and local businesses and services. Visitors to the school, representing topics such as dental hygiene and horticulture, further develop these links. All pupils raise money for various charities. This encourages pupils to consider the needs of others and those beyond their immediate environment.

Senior School

- 3.25 The responses to the parental questionnaires proclaimed an exceptionally high level of satisfaction with the school. It involves parents in the work and progress of their children, contacting them quickly if there are concerns regarding work or behaviour. Parents are also actively involved if particular measures are adopted to improve a pupil's attitude or behaviour through a pupil contract or the report card system. There are plenty of opportunities for parents to become involved in the life of the school; for example, by providing assistance to the drama department and by helping out with mock interviews for pupils preparing for entrance to medical schools. Parents are strongly supportive of the school's extra-curricular programme and they attend concerts, plays and sports fixtures in large numbers. They have regular opportunities to meet with members of the school's senior management team in formal and informal settings.
- 3.26 Formal reports on pupils' progress are issued regularly. They are positive in tone and are good at encouraging pupils and applauding their progress. They place careful emphasis on pupils' effort and attitudes to work. Senior staff comment in detail. There is, however, inconsistency in the content of reports. Some describe the work covered while others do not. Some helpfully refer to subject-specific factors and give clear directions for improvement, but many do not.
- 3.27 Formal complaints are rare and concerns are handled sensitively and promptly. The school places a focus on face-to-face meetings when there are issues which need to be resolved, but keeps clear and detailed notes on file. Parents are given the home telephone numbers and email addresses of housemasters and housemistresses to facilitate quick and convenient communication, and parents are making increased use of email to contact subject teachers directly if they have questions or concerns.
- 3.28 The school is extremely serious about its responsibilities towards the wider community. Excellent links are established with the town of Woodbridge, with which the school often shares its facilities, such as the excellent modern Seckford Theatre, which hosts community theatre projects; for example, in liaison with the Prince's Trust. Music groups such as the

chamber choir and swing band regularly perform in the local area. The school participates in the Aldeburgh partnership for gifted young musicians and strong sporting links are maintained with local clubs. The sports leadership programme involves notable work in primary schools, and there are powerful links with special schools in Ipswich and London. The school has for many years hosted annual visits from a London school and has a link with a London school for pupils with severe and profound special needs. Moves have started towards the establishment of a closer partnership with a local maintained school. Pupils have raised large sums of money for charity and at the time of the inspection were organising the collection of food for disadvantaged families.

Whole School

- 3.29 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the provision of information and the manner in which complaints are to be handled [Standards 6 and 7].

The Quality of Boarding Education

Senior School

- 3.30 The quality of boarding education is good in its promotion of personal development. It provides pupils with opportunities to gain from the experience of living in a close community but with some independence from home, and to be involved in communal decisions about resources and activities through house meetings and the food committee. In the last two years a new team of staff has been appointed and they are working effectively together to enhance the experience of boarding for the pupils. A programme to meet the needs of pupils with English as an additional language has been established. Provision for boarders was judged as good by parental questionnaires.
- 3.31 The relationships between house staff and pupils are strong and positive; boarders value the support of the staff. Boarders are courteous and tolerant, and they have good relationships with one another. In addition, through their attachment to day houses, they have good links with the wider pupil body.
- 3.32 Boarders enjoy the range of extra-curricular activities offered to all pupils but also benefit from access to the sports hall and music centre in the evenings and at weekends, although not the library. Activities at weekends, ranging from shopping to paintballing, bonfire night and cultural trips to the theatre, provide pupils with opportunities to socialise and develop their cultural interests but also to enjoy some unstructured time.
- 3.33 The boarding house has spacious study bedrooms for boarders and a number of social areas. The house staff are working closely with the senior management team to make the building more homely and to improve internet access.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 The Seckford Foundation provides effective governance through its three committees of ‘care and grant’, ‘finance and audit’ and ‘school’. The governors have set and achieved fully appropriate aims for the school. The good quality of governance at the time of the last inspection has been maintained, although in some respects the governors’ monitoring of policies and procedures has not been rigorous.
- 4.2 The governors have a valuable range of skills and maintain close contact with the headmaster, the bursarial department and the activities of the school. They are well informed of pupils’ achievements and matters of staffing and resources. They are effective in discharging their responsibilities for educational development and financial planning and control. They have been successful in initiating and completing an extensive building programme which has secured a high standard of teaching accommodation, together with a new theatre and sixth-form centre and specialist facilities at the preparatory school. They support the school development plans for the different sections of the school, although they have not asked for precise and measurable targets.
- 4.3 Governors visit the senior school, the Abbey and Queen’s House, talk with members of staff and observe lessons. They receive reports on the senior and preparatory schools, and the preparatory school reports include matters from Queen’s House. They meet informally with parents, and attend speech day, sports day, concerts and plays. They acknowledge their responsibilities for health and safety and for welfare, although their arrangements have not ensured close monitoring of policies and procedures. Staff in the senior school, the Abbey and Queen’s House report that they are well supported by the governors and that they have the opportunity to pass on any issues openly.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.4 The leadership and management of the school are effective in working towards the ambitious aim of excelling in the education of the young. This success maintains the standards at the time of the last inspection and is reflected in the pupils’ good achievements, the outstanding quality of their personal development and the excellent pastoral care they receive. The Abbey and Queen’s House have made satisfactory progress in improving the monitoring of teaching and learning at subject level and in increasing the contribution which the subject co-ordinators make to the school development plan. Similar progress has been made in the senior school and includes advances in independent learning. However, in the school as a whole, aspects of development planning and monitoring are a continuing focus for future development.
- 4.5 Checks have been carried out to ensure suitability of governors and all those who work with children, and a thorough central record is kept. The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers and arrangements for enabling them to achieve qualified teacher status are comprehensive. New staff and newly qualified teachers are carefully mentored through their induction year. Well-qualified staff are appointed and they are supported in their hard work and enthusiasm. The grounds are maintained in excellent condition for sport and for recreation. They offer outstanding provision for timetabled and extra-curricular pursuits. Maintenance and catering staff provide strong support for the school. The day-to-day running of the school is friendly and efficient, with office and support staff making a highly significant contribution to the character and strength of the community.

The Abbey and Queen's House

- 4.6 Under the encouraging and caring direction of the headmaster of Woodbridge School and the senior leadership of the Abbey and Queen's House, the needs of the school are well understood and its distinctive ethos is proclaimed across the school community and maintained by highly successful working. Leadership and management of the EYFS are good and benefit from close co-operation between the Abbey, Queen's House and the senior management of the whole school to fulfil collective aims. A team of dedicated staff has been developed, who work well together for the benefit of the pupils in the Abbey and Queen's House.
- 4.7 Those with management responsibilities are effective in analysing the school's needs, setting priorities and putting decisions into practice. Almost all staff are responsible for some degree of curricular or extra-curricular management, and a strong sense of unity exists among them. Much effort is made to ensure both formal and informal contact between phases of the school, incorporating regular meetings of subject staff. This provides opportunities to generate educational vision and to ensure a coherent approach for pupils throughout their time in the school. The performance of pupils is tracked effectively across the school, and information is used to provide appropriate support. The one-year school development plan and subject development plans are based on important issues, but not enough written information is given to show how objectives will be achieved or success recognised.
- 4.8 Good policies and procedures cover many aspects of school life and systems are in operation to check the effectiveness of these and of the school's practices. However, not all policies are fully implemented and, for example, marking is not always consistent. Whilst those responsible for subjects are involved in the monitoring of teaching and learning, senior staff are aware that this is not always undertaken rigorously enough to have sufficient impact on the quality of the educational experience. Health and safety issues are immediately followed up.
- 4.9 Across the school, teaching staff are deployed well and provide strong support for the school's ethos and aims, to the advantage of the care, welfare and education of the pupils. The school has developed an effective cycle of appraisal for its teaching staff and training needs are identified.
- 4.10 Colourful displays of pupils' completed work add considerably to the learning environment. Procedures for budgeting operate efficiently. Subject-specific rooms support the mostly good resources throughout the school. However, ICT facilities in the classrooms and the library facilities are limited at the Abbey, restricting opportunities for research and independent learning.

Senior School

- 4.11 The leadership and management team provides clear vision and direction for the school, maintaining the high standards noted in the last inspection. This is reflected in the good achievement of the pupils, the outstanding quality of their personal development and the excellent pastoral care provided for them. The senior leadership is strong and humane, setting an excellent tone and atmosphere for the work of the school. The school is successful in meeting its aims, which are fully supported by senior managers, who encourage the development of strong relationships. A calm and constructive atmosphere pervades the school. Staff and pupils express pride in their school and in the wide range of achievements for which it is noted. Opportunities now exist for staff to contribute more fully to development planning. Needs are successfully identified, but objectives at whole-school and departmental level lack the specific detail and precision required to enable progress to be

rigorously monitored and evaluated. Well-conceived guidance is provided for marking and reporting, but its effectiveness is not consistent. The school is aware of the need to ensure robust systems for the review of policies and procedures.

- 4.12 There is much good practice at middle management level, but overall quality is uneven. Systems for monitoring the work of departments are effective, but lack consistency. Development planning at this level needs greater clarification and refinement. Heads of department acknowledge their responsibility for monitoring the performance of their teams, but uniformity of practice is not assured, although annual reviews are carried out across the school. Departmental documentation varies in quality. At its best it provides guidance on effective teaching and learning approaches; other examples lack this focus. Liaison across the school for monitoring purposes, for example, to ensure consistently high standards in the quality of report writing and marking, lacks sharpness.
- 4.13 In recent years, several staff have been supported through a graduate teacher programme and subsequent induction year to gain qualified teacher status. An effective system of staff appraisal, involving self-review and lesson observation, takes place annually and is conducted by the appropriate line manager. Ample opportunities are available for staff to progress professionally within the school, which is sympathetic to proposals for development from staff themselves. A generous budget is provided for in-service training, which staff may access to increase and update their skills and knowledge.
- 4.14 School departments are well resourced with individual subject heads receiving substantial budgets. The school library has a useful stock of books with a well-resourced fiction section, but has limited choice of recent publications. Newly built accommodation, such as the sixth-form centre and theatre, has added to the scope of provision for students and other users.

Whole School

- 4.15 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].
- 4.16 The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers and meets its requirements.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall Conclusions

The Abbey and Queen's House

- 5.1 The Abbey and Queens's House, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, are highly successful in achieving their aims and aspirations. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional. It is strongly supported by the school's Christian ethos and the outstanding strength of pastoral care. Pupils make a significant contribution to the life of the school through the excellent relationships they have with one another and their teachers. Pupils achieve good standards, which are predominantly due to the effective support they receive from good quality teaching. All pupils enjoy a rich educational experience, significantly enhanced by the outstanding extra-curricular programme. Leadership and management are good and are well supported by hard working and committed staff and the good oversight of governors. They are aware of what they now need to do to take all sections of the school forward, through sharper development planning, increased monitoring and emphasis on the challenging area of independent learning. Parents think highly of the school, often including in their comments enthusiastic descriptions of it as a supportive and caring environment.
- 5.2 The school has improved since the last inspection; senior managers and curriculum co-ordinators are involved in the process of development planning, and those responsible for subjects monitor lessons. The Abbey has benefited from refurbished art, design and technology and science facilities.

Senior School

- 5.3 The school meets its aims very well. The pupils' high achievements are fostered by the effective teaching they receive, their own positive attitudes to work, and the outstanding array of extra-curricular activities on offer. These also play a crucial role in providing the opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, in which the pupils demonstrate outstanding personal qualities. They are mature for their age, well aware of the opportunities available to them, and imbued with a strong sense of community and responsibility. They benefit from an excellent standard of pastoral care, good parental links, outstanding community contacts, a pleasant and friendly atmosphere in the school and successful welfare arrangements. Boarding pupils have a good experience and overseas pupils are helped to integrate into English life. The school's governance, leadership and management are highly successful in facilitating these successes, in spite of lack of precision in development targets and of allowing unevenness in the quality of monitoring, reporting and marking. The pupils' satisfaction in their school is clearly proclaimed in the large number of questionnaire comments expressing affection for it and describing it in glowing terms.
- 5.4 The school has improved since the last inspection. Its accommodation is now of high quality, it has widened participation in development planning, the initiatives in subject review and appraisal are proving advantageous, and it has made progress on the challenging recommendation to increase its provision for self-initiated learning.

Whole School

- 5.5 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

5.6 The school has no major weaknesses but for its future development it should:

Whole School

- (1) improve development planning by providing precise and measurable targets in each section of the school;
- (2) establish more effective monitoring of policies and procedures;

The Abbey and Queen's House

- (3) systematically monitor teaching and learning to ensure that standards are consistently as high as those in the best lessons;
- (4) increase opportunities for pupils to learn independently;

Senior School

- (5) raise the quality of marking and reporting to the quality of the best.

Whole School

5.7 No action is required in respect of regulatory requirements.

5.8 Any failures to meet EYFS requirements are detailed in Section 7.

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 16th to 19th November 2009. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching 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 medical centre. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.
- 6.2 The Early Years Foundation Stage was inspected on 16th and 17th November 2009 by one inspector. The inspector observed sessions, talked to the children, examined samples of work, and held discussions with staff and others. Comments from parents and carers were considered, and the inspector examined a range of documentation made available by the school.
- 6.3 National Minimum Boarding Standards were inspected by one Ofsted inspector over two days.

List of Inspectors

Senior School

Mr Richard Shannon	Reporting Inspector
Mr Bill Chadwick	Director of Staff and Pupil Development, HMC school
Mr Andrew Chicken	Head, HMC school
Miss Theresa Homewood	Pastoral Deputy Head, HMC school
Dr Stephen Hoskins	Science Teacher, HMC school
Mrs Julie Roseblade	Head, GSA school
Mr Michael Windsor	Headmaster, HMC school

The Abbey and Queen 's House

Mrs Sara Wiggins	Reporting Inspector
Mr David Horn	Assistant Reporting Inspector
Mrs Kate Carey	Head of Preparatory School, GSA school
Mr Andrew Cowell	Headmaster, IAPS school
Mr Dominic Crehan	Headmaster, IAPS school
Miss Victoria Goodson	Head of Lower School, IAPS school
Miss Patricia Griffin	Head of Pre-prep, IAPS school
Ms Diane Gray	Early Years Lead Inspector

7. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS)

- 7.1 The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is housed in the preparatory building at Queen's House and is attended by twenty children aged four to five. They are able to use an outdoor classroom, the many facilities of the main building and extensive grounds. The aims of the EYFS correspond with those of the main school, with the addition of learning through play. The school has been working specifically on EYFS provision over the past two years.
- 7.2 The EYFS is of good quality. Children make good progress in all areas of their development and thrive in a well-managed, caring environment which well equips them for the next stage of learning. Good relationships with parents and carers ensure that education is a two-way process, and detailed information makes the progress of children clear to them. Staff meet children and parents in the morning and have contact with them at the close of the school day. Regular parents' evenings also give them a clear picture of their children's progress and they are actively consulted in the formation of the children's individual achievement profiles. Parents demonstrate their appreciation of the school's work. Individual pupil records are carefully maintained and largely accurate. Planning for future learning is affected by them. However, evaluation of the full effectiveness of the unit requires greater accuracy and detail in order to provide a more exact mandate for further improvement.
- 7.3 The leadership and management of the school are good in most respects. All adults in the school work as an effective team and are entirely focused on ensuring that pupils reach their full potential in every area of learning. All staff treat children as individuals in terms of meeting their needs. Close links with other settings and clearly focused training of staff have had a great impact on the high quality provision at the school. Safeguarding procedures are carefully managed through the safe recruitment of all personnel working with or near the children.
- 7.4 The EYFS provision is good. All children enjoy a highly stimulating day which facilitates learning in the six areas, with a combination of independent, guided and teacher-focused activities. Assessment is rigorous and ensures that all children reach their potential with the right amount of challenge, which builds on their confidence and ability. All staff have expert knowledge of what is required to ensure that children make good progress.
- 7.5 The outdoor areas provide a wealth of stimulating experiences as well as challenge for the children. For example, the specific area for early learning has a range of activities which support the current topics, and during playtimes the children are allowed to use the challenging climbing frames and all-weather sports pitch. Risk assessments are in place and procedures are closely monitored. Children eat their nutritious lunch with relish in the company of their friends and teachers, and clear away their own plates. Relationships in the EYFS are exemplary. All staff in the setting ensure that children are cared for and learn quickly to respect themselves and others.
- 7.6 All children make good progress in the six areas of learning and some make outstanding progress. Children develop positive attitudes for learning and demonstrate high levels of independence and imagination. By the time the children move to Year 1, they are well equipped to cope with the rigours of the National Curriculum. Staff remark on the added confidence and creativity the children have demonstrated with the advent of the new EYFS.
- 7.7 Through good planning, the children receive excellent opportunities to develop independence and curiosity both indoors and out. Resources are of high quality and are used to encourage high quality learning; for example, ICT is used to enrich knowledge and understanding of the world as well as to help children develop skills. The EYFS leadership models, guides and

supports learning and is assisted by highly competent staff who are well briefed regarding the expected outcomes of every activity. Children are confident to express their feelings and flourish in an environment which is both caring and highly conducive to their learning and development. Effective systems have been developed for gathering evidence, and the school is becoming proficient at securing judgements for all pupils.

What the Setting Should Do to Improve

- 7.8 In order to improve further, the setting should:
1. ensure that the EYFS Self-evaluation Form is clearly focused to identify areas for improvement and targets for future development;
 2. develop an action plan from self-evaluation processes which clarifies future improvements to all concerned.
- 7.9 The school's provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.