



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION  
GRESHAM'S PREP SCHOOL**

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## Gresham's Prep School

Full Name of School	<b>Gresham's Prep School</b>
DfE Number	<b>926/6003</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>1105500</b>
Address	<b>Gresham's Prep School Holt Norfolk NR25 6EY</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01263 714600</b>
Fax Number	<b>01263 714060</b>
Email Address	<b>prep@greshams.com</b>
Headmaster	<b>Mr James Quick</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Andrew Martin Smith</b>
Age Range	<b>3 to 13</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>320</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (173 boys; 147 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>3-5 (EYFS): 33    5-11: 169 11-13:        118</b>
Number of Day Pupils	<b>Total:        287</b>
Number of Boarders	<b>Total:        68</b>
	<b>Full:          33    Flexi: 35</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Janette Davidson</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Boys and Girls</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>09 Feb 2016 to 12 Feb 2016</b>

## PREFACE

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

The previous ISI boarding intermediate inspection was in December 2013 and the previous ISI integrated inspection was in March 2010.

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

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

This inspection contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education, personal development and welfare.

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

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

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

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

**'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements.

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

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

### **Inspectors**

Mrs Jan Preece	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Jeanette Adams	Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Miss Penelope Kirk	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Ms Jane Stevens	Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, ISA school)
Mrs Eileen Grimes	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Ros Ford	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Gresham's Prep School is located just outside the market town of Holt in North Norfolk. The senior school, Gresham's School, was founded by Sir John Gresham in 1555 as a free grammar school and has a strong association with both the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers and the City of London. Both schools belong to a charitable foundation and are administered by the charity's trustees as a common governing body.
- 1.2 The prep school, which was established as a distinct school in 1984, educates boys and girls from the ages of 3 to 13 years. Within it, the pre-prep is managed separately in its own building across the school playing fields and has 95 pupils aged from 3 to 8 years, including 33 children up to the age of 5 in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The prep has 225 pupils aged from 8 to 13. Of these, 33 are full boarders and 35 flexi-board on a regular basis, and other pupils board occasionally. The prep school uses some senior school facilities including sports pitches, the sports hall, swimming pool, chapel and theatre. No significant changes have occurred since the previous inspection. Most pupils come from the locality and some boarders from further afield in East Anglia or London; these are almost entirely of White British ethnicity. A small proportion comes from overseas and of these a very small minority are not British.
- 1.3 The principle aim of the senior and prep schools is to provide a caring, challenging and enlightened education which celebrates British values in a Christian setting. The prep school aims to provide a happy, caring, inclusive and vibrant environment where pupils are enthused and confident about learning. It seeks to develop the skills that pupils need to achieve their potential at school and in later life, and to foster pupils' self-respect and sense of duty to their peers, their community and the wider world.
- 1.4 Pupils may join in any year and the size of year group increases as pupils grow older, with a significant intake at Year 7. Older pupils are assessed on entry to ensure that the school can meet their needs. The pupils' ability overall is above the national average. A total of 79 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 67 receive specialist help. The school has 2 pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English as spoken as an additional language (EAL) by 9 pupils, all of whom receive extra support. A large majority of pupils transfer from the pre-prep to the prep, and most then transfer into the senior school at the age of 13.
- 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 The school is extremely successful in meeting its aims. From the EYFS, where children become enthusiastic and motivated learners who reach or exceed the expected levels of attainment, pupils make good and often excellent progress in relation to those of similar ability. They therefore achieve high standards across a broad curriculum which focuses on developing pupils' curiosity and confidence in learning. Teaching of an excellent standard makes a strong contribution towards pupils' achievement, challenging them to think for themselves and using varied and enjoyable approaches. The progress of pupils with SEND or EAL is promoted successfully through class teaching which is carefully adapted to ensure that it meets their individual needs, as well as through highly effective specialist support. More able pupils make rapid progress due to the provision of work that provides additional challenge and extra-curricular activities which enrich their learning.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent. They are confident and respect difference and individuality due to the school's encouraging approach, and they value reflection and self-expression. Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of British values, the law and public institutions, though schemes of work do not ensure that these areas are progressively covered. Pupils display a strong moral and ethical code as reflected in their exemplary behaviour and respect for one another. Staff throughout the school provide outstanding care and guidance for pupils. Excellent communication between staff ensures that any concerns are disseminated efficiently. Relationships between teachers and pupils, and amongst pupils themselves, are strong. Pupils are confident that teachers are approachable and will listen to their views and address any concerns that they may have. Throughout the school the safeguarding and well-being of pupils is afforded high priority, and well-implemented policies and procedures ensure their welfare and safety. The quality of boarding is excellent, and promotes and develops the boarders' personal development most effectively.
- 2.3 Governance of the school has been strengthened significantly since the previous inspection and is now excellent. Governors have a wide range of expertise and many have strong connections with the school to ensure that they provide excellent oversight, support and challenge to stimulate further school improvement. They pay careful attention to regulatory requirements, in conjunction with senior leaders. Excellent leadership and management ensure that both the prep and pre-prep schools function as one with a shared vision. This strongly supports the pupils' educational achievement and personal development. The school maintains excellent links with parents, most of whom are happy with all aspects of the schools' operation. Parents are provided with a wide range of information. Reports provide detailed information about pupils' progress but the next steps for improvement are not consistently stated. The school has successfully addressed all recommendations from the previous inspection.

## **2.(b) Action points**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

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

### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that reports consistently indicate the next steps for improvement in each subject.
  2. Ensure that teaching about British values, the law and institutions is structured progressively throughout the school.

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

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Children in the EYFS are motivated and enthusiastic learners who respond well to the staff's high expectations of them. They begin to fulfil the school's aim for pupils to be enthused with a desire to learn and to have the confidence to enjoy the learning process. Children are encouraged to think, to be creative and to enjoy investigating. When provided the opportunity, they display good levels of independence and try to solve problems for themselves. Children communicate effectively with each other and their teachers. They make good progress relative to their ability and needs and the majority reach, and some exceed, the expected levels of attainment at the end of Reception. Well-planned interventions for those with SEND or EAL support their learning most effectively so that they also make good progress. The younger children are able to recognise initial sounds in words, join in with songs and rhymes, and move creatively in dance. Their fine motor skills are developing appropriately and they can concentrate for sustained periods of time. Reception children can sound out and form words using their phonic skills and some have started to write simple sentences. They recognise numbers up to 20 and beyond and perform simple addition sums using coins. The children enjoy choosing suitable materials for their creative tasks, such as making dragon masks and dens.
- 3.3 From Year 1 onwards pupils express themselves confidently and clearly, including in the modern foreign languages that they have studied such as Spanish, French and Mandarin. They listen to each other and to their teachers well, and many read fluently for their ages. The pupils' success in reading and spelling is very well supported through the consistent use of a carefully graded phonics programme in the Years 1 to 3. Pupils leave the pre-prep demonstrating considerable abilities in extended and creative writing, which develop well as they mature and are exemplified in writing for a range of purposes. They develop high standards in mathematics and apply their knowledge and skills effectively in subjects such as information and communication technology (ICT) and science. They use ICT confidently to support their work across the curriculum.
- 3.4 Pupils demonstrate high levels of curiosity and excellent reasoning skills, such as when creating webpages and in philosophical discussions. They develop competent skills and understanding in science, where they use equipment carefully to conduct investigations, and they apply their scientific knowledge efficiently. Pupils display high standards of creativity and confident performance skills in music and drama, and their artistic flair is exemplified in the displays of their art and three-dimensional work. They have well-developed physical abilities due to the many opportunities provided for sport.
- 3.5 Pupils are successful in a wide range of pursuits. Many learn a musical instrument from an early age and pupils are successful in termly external examinations. All pupils have the opportunity to sing in a choir, and the prep school choir recently reached the finals of a national choral competition and performed at the Royal Albert Hall. Pupils in both schools perform in frequent dramatic and musical productions. Many play sport to a high standard, competing successfully in national competitions and gaining places in regional and national teams.

- 3.6 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests. On the evidence available it is judged to be high in relation to national age-related expectations. This judgement is confirmed by the pupils' work, lesson observations and interviews with them, and is further supported by evidence from the school's tracking of individual performance in standardised tests. Pupils' performance in lessons indicates that they make progress that is at least good and often excellent in relation to those of similar ability. The more able gain scholarships both to the senior school as well as to other independent schools. Pupils with EAL and those with SEND make similar progress according to their starting points, as demonstrated by the improvement in their classwork and assessment results. Those who have a statement of special educational needs make good progress due to conscientious provision for their needs. The more able pupils make excellent progress as a result of the challenging work they cover in class and the enrichment offered in extra-curricular activities.
- 3.7 Pupils' learning is successful because it is underpinned by their excellent behaviour and enthusiasm for learning. They are well focused, whether working independently or in collaboration, and display evident enjoyment and excitement in the challenges set by their teachers. As they grow older they organise themselves and their work efficiently, taking great care with its presentation. Their highly motivated attitudes are fully in accordance with the school's aim for pupils to be enthused and positive about their learning. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, all pupils and an overwhelming majority of parents agreed that pupils are making good progress.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of the curricular and the extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 The educational programme in the EYFS covers all seven areas of learning and provides interesting and challenging experiences which provide children many opportunities to interact with one another, sustain their concentration and persevere with tasks. A strong emphasis on language development ensures that they develop communication skills appropriate to their age. Planning is thorough and includes a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities which provides children with opportunities to solve problems, create their own play and explore their ideas, both inside and outdoors. Focused attention to the early acquisition of reading, writing and number skills is a significant feature of the provision for older children, and helps prepare them for their next stage of their learning. Specialist teaching for swimming, dance and music enhances further the children's learning and development.
- 3.10 The curriculum for Year 1 to Year 8 supports the school's aim to provide a happy, caring, inclusive and vibrant environment where pupils are enthused and confident about learning. It is broad and balanced, and covers all the key areas of learning. The curriculum presents excellent opportunities for developing the pupils' intellectual curiosity. Pupils' learning experiences are enhanced as a result of the school continually seeking to improve and add breadth to the learning programme. Curriculum documentation is thorough in all subjects. Since the previous inspection much work has been undertaken to develop the curriculum and, due to an increased focus on independent learning and critical thinking, pupils display an eagerness to learn. Challenging questions posed on the digital screen outside the dining room add to the focus on critical thinking. The introduction of a new curriculum for Years 7 to 9 provides continuity into the senior school, and a modern foreign languages carousel that begins in Year 2 effectively introduces pupils to a broad range of languages.

Pupils are able to develop computing knowledge and skills in discrete lessons, as well as to use computer technology to support their work in other subjects.

- 3.11 Provision for music and drama is extremely strong and pupils are offered frequent opportunities to learn performance techniques and to perform in public. Similar excellent provision is made in art and design technology; the creative work on display is a testament to this. All pupils are offered a wide range of sports. The curriculum includes the promotion of British values and the balanced presentation of political views within religious studies (RS), assemblies and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Arrangements to meet the needs of pupils with SEND or EAL are excellent due to the well-targeted activities and assistance that they consistently receive in class, and individual specialist support. A well-planned extension programme is highly effective in stimulating the learning experience of the more able pupils.
- 3.12 The school offers an extensive choice of extra-curricular activities which includes ballet, gardening, tennis and art in the pre-prep, and a wide range of lunchtime and after-school activities in the prep. The school responds to and has introduced pupils' suggestions for activities such as gymnastics, taekwondo and street dance, and it has also recently introduced signing and astronomy. Many clubs provide pupils the opportunity to develop their interests further, particularly in sports and the performing arts, for example swimming, squash, chapel and chamber choirs, and various instrumental ensembles. The curriculum is enhanced by theatre trips, author speakers, museum visits, field trips, sports tours, competitions and inter-school matches. Older pupils lead chapel service on Saturday morning. Pupils in the pre-prep engage in woodland learning activities during the summer term and older pupils have many residential trips such as outward-bound training, language immersion in Pas-de-Calais and choir tours both in England and abroad. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses an overwhelming majority of both pupils and parents indicated their satisfaction with the range of subjects and breadth of available activities.
- 3.13 The school has strong links with the community, which include many visitors who develop pupils' awareness of other cultures and also their sensitivity to the needs of others. Parents play an active role in sharing family cultures, such as when Chinese New Year was celebrated with the help of a family from the school. Events are held with the local community such as a cricket festival, an arts festival and an annual strings day, as well as joint school concerts with local junior schools. The school supports a wide range of local and overseas charities.

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

- 3.14 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.15 In the EYFS, staff are adept at instilling a love of learning in the children, and they guide them in exploring and trying out new activities appropriate to their stage of development. The EYFS staff have a very good understanding of the requirements of the EYFS curriculum and how young children learn. They plan activities carefully to ensure that children are encouraged to become active and independent learners, though on occasion staff step in too quickly and do not allow children to explore fully their own ideas. Good use is made of detailed observations and assessments to monitor progress and identify the next steps in the children's learning. Planning is effectively adapted to ensure that activities arouse children's curiosity and respond

to their interests. Staff make effective use of an improved range of good-quality resources to provide a stimulating environment for the children to learn in.

- 3.16 From Year 1, high-quality teaching across the curriculum contributes strongly to pupils' achievement. Both experienced and recently qualified teachers display notable subject knowledge and have high expectations for all pupils. Teaching in all subjects is well planned. Lessons are thoughtfully and conscientiously prepared, and set interesting tasks which challenge pupils to reason and think for themselves, drawing on their current knowledge. This improvement successfully addresses a recommendation from the previous inspection. Pupils are encouraged to be creative, to use their initiative and to think independently. Learning is enhanced by the use of resources that, together with the use of interactive whiteboards and tablet computers, increase pupils' focus and engagement. Teaching is conducted at a lively pace, and employs varied and enjoyable approaches that capture pupils' attention and develop a strong work ethic. Teaching objectives are clear, shared with the pupils and often revisited at the end of lessons so that both pupils and staff may assess understanding and progress. In their questionnaire responses a very small minority of pupils disagreed that homework and prep work helps them learn, though no concerns were voiced in interviews and inspection evidence found that tasks set are appropriate.
- 3.17 A particularly positive relationship between pupils and teachers fosters a happy learning environment. The encouragement and praise that pupils receive in recognition of their efforts prompts a taste for success and a determination to persist and do their best. Pupils work together in a tolerant and respectful learning environment where they feel safe to suggest ideas and share learning with their classmates; this takes place in a positive atmosphere where it is fully acceptable to learn from mistakes. Staff ensure that teaching that involves political issues is covered in a balanced way. Behaviour in class is exemplary due to pupils' engagement with the learning activities. Teachers are adept at circulating and noting any pupils whose attention is waning. They ask pertinent questions or suggest a new direction, which rekindles interest and keeps these pupils on track. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, all pupils agreed that teachers help them learn and the vast majority indicated that teachers provide them individual help when they need it.
- 3.18 Teachers extend their skills and share good practice by mutual observations. They analyse their own effectiveness perceptively so that they are aware of the rare occasions when a lesson has been less successful, such as when there has been an imbalance between talk by the teacher and pupils' active participation, or when an activity set was insufficiently challenging. A particularly favourable adult-pupil ratio enables pupils to be taught in small classes. Excellent communication between teachers and the learning support department ensures that teachers are aware of pupils' specific learning needs and abilities, including for those who have a statement of special educational need or an EHC plan. Teaching is made appropriate for all abilities through setting, carefully chosen resources and adapted activities, effective adult support, and partner and small-group working. Extension work and extra challenges are consistently provided for more able pupils.
- 3.19 Work is marked conscientiously and encouragingly. Marking sometimes includes advice for improvement, though this is not done consistently. Assessment throughout the school is thorough and well collated, and information is transferred when pupils move to the senior school. Annual assessments in English, mathematics and science enable the school to track pupils' progress year on year.

Results are shared between all teachers and inform their teaching plans. Individual progress is recorded and evaluated, and identifies whether a pupil requires additional support or extension. Since the school began holding its own final examination, teachers have developed more creative cross-curricular methods to cover the new curriculum. The school's tracking of assessment results demonstrates that pupils continue to make excellent progress.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 In the EYFS, children's personal development is excellent. They are happy and thoroughly enjoy coming to school. Children are encouraged to learn together through gentle reminders about sharing and helping one another. They are asked to suggest topics and contribute ideas about what they would like to include, as observed in the Nursery class when children were discussing the seaside in preparation for 'Norfolk Week'. Each child learns to take responsibility through taking turns to carry out simple tasks such as the role of line leader. The children's behaviour is exemplary. They respect each other's differences, and parents of different faiths and cultures are invited to talk to the children. Cultural celebrations are also experienced such as those for Chinese New Year and Diwali. British values are actively promoted through the 'Golden Rules' which promote tolerance, respect and kindness. Children in Reception begin to experience the democratic process through involvement in the pre-prep council and they learn about some British institutions through topic work on 'people who help us', from visits from the local Royal National Lifeboat Institution crew and other members of the emergency services. The younger children interact extensively with those in Reception during activities and extended day sessions. Children in Reception join with older pupils at play time, lunchtime and assemblies, preparing them well for the next stage in their education.
- 4.3 Pupils in Years 1 to 8 are confident and have a strong sense of self, fostered by the school's encouraging approach. They respect one another's differences and individuality, understanding the importance of mutual acceptance regardless of personal characteristics. They value non-material aspects of life through the many opportunities that they are provided to reflect and express themselves through music, art and drama. Pupils consider moral and philosophical questions in many subjects and develop excellent discussion skills. In debate they are articulate, accepting that all have a right to their own view, and they are empathetic listeners. They study thought-provoking texts in English and find a sense of wonder and awe in their study of science and space, such as when observing the International Space Station when visible over the school.
- 4.4 The pupils have a strong moral sense of right and wrong, underpinned by the school code for which they have respect and which makes clear the moral dimension and expectations of the school. The younger pupils are guided by the 'Golden Rules' and learn to express their views in circle times. News and current affairs are discussed in PSHE, tutor groups, assemblies and through the Headmaster's quiz and news board. Older pupils discuss ethics and morality in RS and PSHE, for example in their study of current affairs and world problems. The pupils are prepared to defend what they believe to be right. They understand British values and have some knowledge of democracy, the law and public institutions, gained from the promotion of the school's ethos and teaching in PSHE and other subjects. This area is not consistently covered in schemes of work to ensure that pupils gain a progressive understanding.
- 4.5 The pupils' social skills are very well developed. They are polite and well mannered, respect others and look for the good in people. Pupils take on a range of roles of responsibility and the school seeks to involve them in elections for these posts. A

leadership day is held to prepare pupils in Year 7 for these roles in their final year. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a very small minority of pupils said that they would like more opportunities for responsibility. The school has identified this as an area for development. Pupils are encouraged to contribute to the school community and to be aware of the larger world community through fund raising for charity, both abroad and nearer home. Individual initiatives from pupils to support good causes are positively encouraged.

- 4.6 Pupils have an excellent cultural awareness and are opposed to discrimination in any form. Within their wide study of languages, art, history, music and classics they develop an appreciation and respect for British cultural history as well as of other faiths, cultures and traditions. They have an age-appropriate knowledge of the world faiths studied in RS and a spirit of religious tolerance is promoted, underpinned by 'The Gresham's Code'. Pupils from other countries introduce festivals such as the Chinese New Year and Australia Day, and the catering department enhances these experiences with special international meals. World-time clocks in the dining room remind pupils of the global community.
- 4.7 By the time they leave the prep school, pupils have a high standard of personal development. In their questionnaire responses an overwhelming majority of pupils agreed that they enjoy being at the school and in interview they stated that they are well prepared for senior school. Almost all parents agreed that their children are happy at the school.

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

- 4.8 The pastoral care throughout the school is excellent.
- 4.9 In the EYFS, key adults are excellent role models and support the children very effectively so that they feel safe and secure and form trusting relationships with both staff and each other. Children willingly go to adults for comfort and reassurance and are happy to talk to them. Clear guidelines are provided about the expected standards of behaviour, which results in a happy and busy atmosphere, where children benefit fully from all the opportunities provided. Very clear explanations help children understand and manage risk, such as how to move the large construction toys about. Children understand the importance of physical exercise, which food is healthy and the need to keep well hydrated.
- 4.10 Throughout the school, staff provide outstanding care for the pupils and give them excellent support, nurture and guidance, in line with the school's aims. Pastoral support is centred on the house system, which includes both boarders and day pupils, and it is a strength of the school because house parents and tutors know the pupils very well. Any concern about a pupil is posted on the school intranet, so that all staff are made aware. Pupils state they have a range of adults who offer support and also appreciate the provision of a school counsellor and independent listener, whom they feel confident that they can easily access and talk to. All the parents who responded the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that their children are well looked after, and a vast majority indicated that their children feel safe.
- 4.11 Relationships between teachers and pupils are exceptionally strong. Pupils trust their teachers, and teachers are highly committed to their welfare. A sense of humour is often present and a happy and confident atmosphere prevails. Pupils relate well to each other and show respect, support and kindness. They have confidence in the prefects and dorm captains. An approach of listening and solving

problems through discussion is fostered. The pupils are encouraged to eat a healthy and balanced diet, enhanced by a high standard of catering and careful supervision of meals. The school council has an input into catering choices and pupils have many opportunities for healthy exercise.

- 4.12 Good behaviour is promoted through 'The Gresham's Code' and the school's ethos. Unacceptable behaviour is dealt with constructively through a clear system of rewards and sanctions which pupils agree with and understand, although a very small minority of pupils in their questionnaire responses expressed the view that sanctions are not always fair. However, nearly all the pupils in interview expressed satisfaction with them and inspection evidence showed that sanctions are properly recorded and monitored. Pupils say that few incidents of bullying occur and that they are dealt with promptly and well. Pupils, their parents and the staff are provided information and training to avoid cyberbullying and to inform understanding about internet safety. The school has suitable arrangements to improve educational access for pupils with SEND, both through physical adjustments and individually tailored learning.
- 4.13 Pupils feel that they are listened to and that their views are taken into account; staff encourage discussion and self-evaluation. The school council provides pupils an opportunity for input, and its minutes show that the leadership considers their ideas and requests. Pupils feel that they always have someone to whom they can talk about concerns. Pupils can also express concerns through worry and suggestion boxes, and an anonymous email.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.15 Staff in the EYFS afford the highest priority to the safety and welfare of the children. Risk assessments are comprehensive and daily checks ensure that any hazards or faulty equipment are repaired or removed without delay. The relevant health and safety policies are in place and followed appropriately. Staff conduct registration carefully and secure systems are in place to ensure regular attendance. Children manage their own personal hygiene with great confidence and are suitably supported by adults when additional support is required. Generous staffing levels ensure that children are very well supervised while at school, ensuring that they remain safe.
- 4.16 The school implements extremely thorough safeguarding procedures, which include the strenuous promotion of e-safety. All staff are well trained in child protection, including awareness of preventing extremism and radicalisation, both when they join the school and at appropriate intervals. In addition, the school has highly effective pastoral support mechanisms both in-house and through liaison with the local social services and other therapeutic professionals. A safeguarding steering committee comprising all the designated safeguarding leaders meets termly to promote consistency of practice throughout the school. The safeguarding policies for all school sections have now been amended to one common model. New staff appointed to manage appointment procedures identified that recruitment checks on some staff had been insufficiently robust. The school responded vigorously, undertaking a comprehensive audit of all appointments and rectifying them where necessary. Recruitment procedures are now thorough, the staff team undertaking this work implement them rigorously and all appointments made within the past year have been suitably executed.

- 4.17 Measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards on both sites are thorough. Fire fighting and detection equipment is checked and maintained appropriately, fire drills are practised at regular intervals and sufficient numbers of staff are trained as fire marshals. Careful attention is paid to health and safety, and potential hazards are rectified efficiently. Comprehensive risk assessments cover all areas of the school's work, including activities and external visits. The health and safety committee meets each term to monitor these arrangements and agree action to ensure the welfare of staff and pupils.
- 4.18 The school makes suitable provision for the medical needs of all pupils. First aid and care for pupils who are hurt or fall ill during the day are provided within medical rooms in each house and at the pre-prep. Suitable numbers of staff are trained in first aid including paediatric first aid for pre-prep staff, and records of treatment provided or medication administered are suitably maintained.
- 4.19 The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and stored for the required period. Unexplained absence is followed up carefully.

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

- 4.20 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.21 Outcomes for boarders are excellent. The high-quality experience of boarding promotes and develops the boarders' personal qualities. Boarders are confident and self-reliant. They articulate with enthusiasm the pride that they have in their boarding houses, which they refer to as home, and they talk about house parents as a second set of parents. A strength of the boarding is the exceptionally strong relationships which have been established between boarders and house staff. Boarders value these relationships from when they first arrive, and a formal and informal support network is in place throughout the boarding community. Boarders praised the quality of the house staff and the support that they provide, as well as their ever-present nature. In their questionnaire responses the overwhelming majority of boarders agreed that they enjoy boarding and that boarders get on well together, and almost all parents in their responses were highly satisfied with all aspects of the school's boarding provision.
- 4.22 Staff within the boarding houses have the additional support of gap students, who provide an additional link with boarders. They are pro-active in responding to boarders' needs, such as preparing and researching updates to reassure those from overseas should an incident occur in their home country. The happy and relaxed atmosphere in the houses is immediately evident and exudes a strong sense of community. Behaviour throughout the boarding community is exemplary. Boarders have a clear understanding and respect for the house rules, and they know what is expected of them; an ethos of mutual respect permeates the houses. They comment that the system of rewards and sanctions within boarding is fair and equitable. Boarders are happy with opportunities to express their views and opinions through the boarders' council, school council and with all staff.
- 4.23 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. Prior to starting boarding, parents and pupils receive a detailed information pack. Boarders are then supported through the induction process, and are helped by a buddy and the dorm captains. Older boarders enjoy this responsibility; it provides an opportunity to establish relationships and fosters a whole-house ethos. The boarding community is supported by comprehensive health and safety policies, procedures and practices

which includes practising emergency evacuations at various times of the day and night. House matrons ensure that arrangements are in place to enable boarders to stay healthy; all house staff are qualified in first aid. In addition boarders are able to access the health centre at the senior school where the local doctor holds regular surgeries, and they have the additional services of a counsellor. Healthy meals are provided within the dining room and a wide range of snacks and drinks are available within the houses.

- 4.24 Boarders state that they and their possessions are kept safe. House staff are responsible for any money and this is carefully and meticulously logged. Boarders have lockable drawers within the house and also lockers within the changing area. Boarding accommodation in both houses is furnished to a high standard, boarders are encouraged to personalise their space and they are provided areas for watching television and videos as well as for reading and relaxation. Boarders are able to access a varied range of activities both during evenings and at weekends. They report that they are able to make suggestions for activities through the house forums and that these are taken forward by the house staff. Weekly and flexi boarders often stay at weekends to access these popular activities. Boarding staff ensure that boarders keep in regular contact with parents. Boarders are able to use their own mobile telephones and the internet, and also have access to private land lines within the houses. Overseas boarders are encouraged to consider the time differences and are supported in contacting their parents at appropriate times.
- 4.25 Arrangements for the welfare and safeguarding of boarders are excellent. Safeguarding measures are effective, and all staff are aware of their responsibilities due to regular training. Recruitment of staff is rigorous and all adults within the boarding community and with access to boarding areas have appropriate checks in place. Boarders comment that there have been few or no cases of bullying, but should this occur they are confident to report any issues, certain they would be taken seriously and the concern addressed quickly and efficiently. Boarders have an excellent understanding of e-safety and cyber bullying, and this is supported by the restricted use of mobile phones and ICT equipment. They are very supportive of this policy and say that it ensures that they have time to socialise with friends. They are all aware of whom they may contact for support both within the school and externally. Boarders are supported by an independent listener who has a profound understanding of her role and responsibility and how to discharge these duties. Health and safety issues within all areas of the boarding accommodation are addressed to an extremely high standard, they are supported by appropriate policies and procedures which ensure that boarders are protected and kept safe at all times. Detailed risk assessments which encompass both houses are prepared for the many and varied outings and activities undertaken by the boarders at weekends.
- 4.26 The effectiveness of the leadership and management of boarding is excellent and provides energetic and committed guidance to the boarding staff. The friendly and positive atmosphere within boarding is actively promoted, and excellent relationships exist between boarders and the adults who are responsible for their welfare. Policies are comprehensive, regularly updated and form the framework within which the house staff operate. Alongside daily informal contact, regular meetings are held which are recorded. House staff meet weekly to consider day-to-day pastoral concerns, as well as more strategic issues such as how to improve boarding. A clear development plan is in place and all house staff contribute to and take ownership of it. Self-evaluation is pro-active and encompasses the views of staff, parents and boarders. The duties of boarding staff are carefully constructed and

ensure a high level of cover at all times. Annual appraisals are completed and form the basis of a planned training schedule.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The governing body, which is responsible for all the schools in the Greshams' family has a wide range of expertise. Since the previous inspection oversight of educational provision has been strengthened by the appointment of several governors with a background in education. Many of the governors live locally and have strong connections with the school, and they visit regularly. As a result of these changes, governance provides strong and informed oversight of both the prep and pre-prep schools, including the EYFS. Governors have a clear and aspirational strategic vision for the future development of both the prep and pre-prep. Governors exercise their responsibilities for educational standards and financial planning highly effectively to ensure that both human and material resources and accommodation are well provided for.
- 5.3 Governors gain a clear insight into all areas of school life through reports from the leadership who attend full board meetings and, joined by other senior managers, the education committee. Local governors have responsibility for key areas and discharge these very effectively. The governors with particular responsibility for the prep and pre-prep visit frequently, attending both special events and during the normal school day. They undertake activities such as class observations as well as meeting with staff and the leadership, so that they gain first hand experience of both pupils' and staff's experiences. This enables them to provide excellent support and challenge to stimulate further school improvement.
- 5.4 Governors pay careful attention to their responsibilities for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. A governor chairs the health and safety committee to ensure regulatory requirements are securely followed. Another with relevant expertise and experience oversees safeguarding and ensures that governors are updated at each full board meeting. The board's annual review of safeguarding is well informed by a thorough audit in accordance with local authority guidance, carried out by the safeguarding governor and designated safeguarding staff. The safeguarding governor also conducts regular checks of recruitment to ensure that appropriate procedures are followed.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is excellent.
- 5.6 The EYFS is well led. Senior managers ensure a strong emphasis on self-evaluation so that areas for development are quickly identified and that action is taken to improve. They have an ambitious vision for the setting and are committed to the continual development of the educational experiences provided. Educational programmes and assessment procedures are carefully monitored. Staff meet regularly to discuss children's progress and plan the curriculum. They ensure that that the environment is welcoming, safe, and stimulating. Careful personnel checks ensure that only suitable adults, who update their training regularly, work with children so that children's safeguarding is assured. Staff are well qualified and their performance is regularly monitored through a formal system of appraisal so that areas for professional development are identified. The system for supporting staff through informal supervision is not formally recorded. Strong partnerships with parents and good links with external agencies contribute to the comprehensive understanding that adults have of each child. All in the EYFS understand the importance of diversity and promoting British values. The setting has successfully met the recommendation of the previous report by implementing a new assessment programme, which helps staff to identify next steps in learning for each child and by improving the classroom resources available in the Nursery.
- 5.7 In Years 1 to 8, strong leadership ensures that the management of both the prep and pre-prep function as one with a shared vision. Senior managers plan collaboratively and cohesively to promote the school's principle aim of providing a caring, challenging and enlightened education which celebrates values which encourage respect for others and democracy in a Christian setting. Robust oversight by the leadership ensures governors receive comprehensive reports so that they have the necessary information to be fully informed about academic performance, safeguarding and personal development.
- 5.8 All staff in the school, teaching and non-teaching, play an integral part in the school's success. Monitoring of the quality of educational experience, the curriculum and planning, and the effectiveness of systems, is shared between the leadership, senior managers and heads of department. Regular work scrutiny, lesson observations and discussions about pupils are features of the monitoring process. Senior managers regularly assess the quality of teaching, giving constructive feedback so that standards remain high. Priorities are set, effectively planned and carried out so that provision for resourcing and for accommodation is excellent. An open approach enables staff to participate in decision-making and as a result morale is high and a positive ethos evident. The school has a new strategic plan from which its development plan has been created. This includes targets for future development, identification of priorities and accountability. This addresses a recommendation of the previous inspection but since this is at an early stage, it has not yet had time to be fully evaluated.
- 5.9 Senior managers work well together, and provide consistently good-quality support to the leadership. Since the previous inspection, there have been significant improvements in staff recruitment procedures which indicate that management is successful in securing, developing and motivating sufficient high quality staff and ensuring they are suitably trained for their roles in meeting the needs of all pupils in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. A systematic and comprehensive

induction process ensures that new staff are fully aware of systems to support the progress and welfare of pupils. Staff appraisal is well established though the leaders of both schools have not been appraised recently. Job descriptions are accurate and regularly reviewed. Staff are enabled to reflect on their professional practice through good further training opportunities. A scrutiny of minutes of staff meetings demonstrates the school's clear commitment to pupils' welfare, health and safety. A strength of leadership and management is the communication between the prep and senior schools. Transition between the schools is planned meticulously and seamlessly so that all pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their educational journey. The well-being of the pupils is at the core of everything the leadership and management strive to achieve.

- 5.10 The school has excellent links with parents who state that they value the family feeling within it. They say they feel welcomed into the school even prior to their children starting and through the care that the school takes in providing them with information. Parents feel very well informed about what is going on in the school through the weekly newsletters, text messages and information provided on notice boards and in the school calendar that is provided to each family in the prep school. They value the daily contact they have with very approachable staff, who know their pupils well. Parents appreciate the opportunities to be involved in their children's learning, such as through the 'wow' moments in the EYFS and being able to volunteer to talk to pupils about their interests or to accompany them on outings. They provide good levels of support for events such as sports fixtures, concerts, chapel services, plays and other productions. The very supportive parents association, which is open to all families, organises fund-raising activities in aid of charity and for extra school equipment and has helped launch a new networking initiative for parents.
- 5.11 A wide range of information about the school, including the required policies, is available on the website for both current and prospective parents. A number of evenings to inform parents about the curriculum, assessment and e-safety, are held throughout the year and are open for all parents to attend. Detailed handbooks for pupils and parents about each year group in the school are provided. The school has an open door policy to ensure that concerns and other issues may be raised and dealt with quickly and efficiently. Parents have the opportunity to talk to staff at the start and end of the day and they may also contact staff by email. The leadership encourages parents to share any concerns as they arise and the school's published complaints procedure is appropriate.
- 5.12 In the EYFS, end of year reports and regular day to day contact with staff keep parents very well informed about the progress of their children, including their progress against the early learning goals at the end of Reception. Reports for older pupils provide detailed information about how they are achieving, although next steps to help pupils to improve are not consistently stated. In addition to reports, from Year 4 upwards, parents receive effort grade cards, which are emailed together with explanations of the grading system. Formal meetings with staff for each year group are held twice a year.
- 5.13 In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses and in conversation with inspectors, parents were overwhelmingly positive about the school and the support that their children are provided. They stated that pupils are allowed to be children and that their children love coming to school.

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