

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Summer Fields School

Full Name of the School	Summer Fields School
DCSF Number	931/6067
Registered Charity Number	309683
Address	Mayfield Road, Oxford OX2 7EN.
Telephone Number	01865 454433
Fax Number	01865 459200
Email Address	schoolsec@summerfields.org.uk
Headmaster	Robin Badham-Thornhill
Chairman of Governors	Edward Davidson
Age Range	7 to 13
Gender	Boys
Inspection Dates	16th to 19th March 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 inspection was not carried out in conjunction with Ofsted, Children's Directorate, and the report does not contain specific judgements on the National Minimum Boarding Standards. 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 and development in general. The full Ofsted report can be found 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 Summer Fields was founded on its present site in 1864 as a boarding school for boys. The school has a board of governors, and the present headmaster was appointed in 1997. Since the previous inspection in 2003, the age range of pupils has been extended from eight to thirteen by the addition of a class of seven year olds. The school is principally a boarding school, with boys allocated to one of seven boarding lodges according to their age; it currently has 241 pupils, of whom 35 are day pupils. The average class size is thirteen.
- 1.2 Summer Fields is a selective school, with places offered after consideration of the previous school's report, and assessments of literacy and numeracy skills. Standardised tests show the pupils' average ability in most years to be well above the national average, with pupils having a wide range of ability; one in ten pupils has been assessed as having ability below the national average.
- 1.3 Entry to the school is chiefly at eight years of age, but pupils can join at any age if places are available. Some pupils enter from maintained schools but most come from independent feeder schools; they remain at the school until moving to senior schools at the age of thirteen. Most pupils come from professional families, often with experience of independent education. A third of the pupils come from London and a tenth live overseas. An eighth of the pupils receive some fee assistance from the school. Eight pupils do not have English as their first language; seven of these are receiving additional support. Forty-seven pupils have individual specialist lessons for their learning difficulties, usually once or twice a week, and the majority are supported by reports from educational psychologists; no pupil has a statement of special educational need.
- 1.4 The school is centred on a Victorian house and its chapel, with 70 acres of grounds, much of this devoted to playing fields and a golf course. Major developments of an academic, sporting and creative nature have taken place over time. Since 2003 a new lodge has been built and the catering, dining and laundry facilities significantly upgraded. Nearly all staff live on the campus, and the boarders spend all of each day in the school, treating their nearby lodge as a home in which to relax and sleep.
- 1.5 The aim of the school is to ensure that boys of all abilities reach their potential and achieve excellence. It seeks to provide outstanding pastoral care in a happy, caring, well-disciplined, boarding environment, and to educate boys in the widest sense by providing a great variety of creative and sporting activities. The school encourages strong moral and Christian values, and helps boys grow in confidence, acquire self-discipline and discover and express their own individuality.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

School	NC name
Mynors	Year 3
First year	Year 4
Second year	Year 5
Third year	Year 6
Removes	Year 7
Fifth year	Year 8

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 The educational experience offered to pupils is outstandingly successful in reflecting the school's aims and ethos. Pupils enjoy a full and all-embracing life at school. Since the last inspection, personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons have been added to the curriculum, teaching rooms equipped with interactive whiteboards and a second information and communication technology (ICT) room provided. Pupils now have day rooms in the school, organised by year group, as an additional, indoor social base.
- 2.2 Pupils in Years 4 to 8 have an extended school day, which continues to seven or eight in the evening. All National Curriculum subjects are taught; mathematics and English are given priority in the curriculum of the younger pupils and French is taught to all age groups. The curriculum is broadened further from Year 5 by the teaching of Latin. Scholarship pupils learn Ancient Greek and middle-ability classes in Years 7 and 8 are taught German. ICT lessons are used for teaching computer skills, and are increasingly linked to work in other subjects as pupils get older. Music lessons for pupils in Years 4 to 6 include tuition in the playing of three instruments.
- 2.3 Up to a third of a pupil's time is spent in sporting, creative and non-examined pursuits; pupils relish this variety in their school day. Most play the major games of soccer, rugby and cricket five times a week, and many represent the school in teams; the less able have minor sports such as athletics and swimming on two of these days. Once a week, extra variety is provided by the teaching of individual sports, such as golf, judo, water polo, squash, horse riding and rifle shooting; fives players practise their skills on a number of occasions each week. Music, art, drama and design technology (DT) are all strongly encouraged. Art displays of high quality are evident throughout the school and a major dramatic production takes place each term. The senior choir of thirty pupils, supported by many staff, sing in a number of prestigious venues, as witnessed in an excellent choral evensong in an Oxford college chapel.
- 2.4 The list of well-organised activities is extensive and diverse; clashes are reduced by choral and instrumental music practices being organised earlier in the day than other activities. Many evening activities are on a voluntary basis and pupils have much freedom, including the option of free time in which to relax and enjoy the company of others. On Tuesdays before supper, all pupils have a non-sporting activity with those in Years 4 and 5 changing their activity each half term, thereby experiencing twelve activities during those two years. All staff take activities and they are augmented by a number of qualified, outside coaches. Pupils enjoy the activities and pursue them enthusiastically. Those attended by pupils are well monitored in terms of range and quantity.
- 2.5 The educational experience of pupils is enhanced each year by visiting speakers and by a number of curriculum-based trips to places such as museums and castles, and for geography fieldwork. Pupils in Years 6 and 7 enhance their knowledge of France and its language by staying in that country for ten and fourteen days respectively, with lessons, outings and diary writing a part of each day. Pupils' talents are also developed during the holidays when they enjoy choir trips and rugby tours as well as an annual ski trip.
- 2.6 Pupils in Year 8 are very thoroughly prepared for entrance and scholarship examinations to senior schools. The older pupils are increasingly given more responsibility for their lives in school and in their lodges. In their final year, they are allowed to visit the local shops and a leavers' course is provided for their last weeks in the school. The curriculum is effectively planned to give all pupils appropriate access. Years 4 to 8 are taught in streamed classes and

are placed in sets for mathematics, increasing the effectiveness of the teaching. The curriculum is kept under review and food technology has recently been introduced into the timetable for Years 5 and 6.

- 2.7 The provision for pupils requiring learning support is excellent. The learning support coordinator screens all Year 4 pupils very effectively as well as any others whose progress is causing concern. When necessary, pupils receive extra specialist help at times that do not usually involve withdrawal from normal lessons. Pupils for whom English is a second language receive extra tuition from a suitably qualified member of staff. The needs of gifted and talented pupils are largely met through streaming and the provision of extra-curricular activities; brain teasing, debating, share dealing and science club are among the regular activities designed to extend the most gifted pupils. Additional teaching for pupils entered for senior school scholarships takes place outside the normal timetable.
- 2.8 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.9 Pupils learn effectively and achieve well in relation to their ages and abilities, successfully fulfilling the aims of the school that all pupils should reach their potential. They are thoroughly grounded in the essential knowledge and skills of all their subjects, and are very successful in their entrance examinations to senior schools. Their behaviour and their attitudes towards learning are very good. The good standards recognised in the previous inspection have been well maintained.
- 2.10 Throughout all ages, achievement is good, with pupils developing their skills and understanding. Good progress in the core subjects is made as pupils move up the school. Pupils are highly articulate, answer questions eagerly and listen respectfully to the responses of others. They are able to express their own views and debate with passion; in reference to cloning, a pupil concluded that "playing God is wrong. He does his job very well by Himself". Pupils read intelligently and older ones have an excellent appreciation of complex texts such as Jane Eyre. They think creatively and critically when given the opportunity; however, the development of these abilities is inhibited by an over-reliance on worksheets and limited opportunities are given to pupils, particularly the more able, to write at length about a topic. Pupils acquire a range of mathematical skills and are able to apply concepts accurately. Those in Year 8 were able to apply their knowledge of the reactivity series of elements to new situations. During the inspection, pupils rarely used ICT in lessons; however, substantial evidence was found in pupils' work and on displays to show that ICT is being used effectively to support learning in some subject areas.
- 2.11 No significant difference was apparent in the attainment of pupils in any subject or at any age, relative to their abilities. Pupils progress at a good rate, relative to their abilities, both in lessons and over a period of time. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress, helped by expert specialist tuition outside the classroom. The most able pupils and those with learning difficulties are recognised by teachers and allowances are made. However, the most able in a class are rarely given more challenging tasks when they complete class work before other pupils.
- 2.12 National tests in core subjects are not taken at the age of eleven, but progress is well monitored through cognitive ability tests, twice yearly school examinations and end-of-topic tests in some subjects. Each year about eight awards are gained to senior schools, half of them for academic excellence and others for musical or all-round ability. Four-fifths of the pupils learn a musical instrument, and many successfully take music examinations each year, often gaining distinction or merit grades, with a quarter passing at an especially high level.

- 2.13 Pupils achieve well in a wide range of sports and activities. Some of these are linked to the curriculum, with two pupils reaching the finals of the national primary mathematics challenge. Recently, four cricketers have played for their counties and teams have won tennis and swimming tournaments in competition with other preparatory schools. Pairs have reached the semi-finals of the preparatory schools' fives competition in each of the last two years.
- 2.14 When given the opportunity, pupils are able to write their own notes and organise their work independently; history and geography projects are undertaken successfully. In DT classes, pupils design wooden boxes and catapults before constructing them using power tools, needing relatively little help from the teacher. Pupils' enjoyment of these lessons is obvious. Pupils work effectively when collaborating together, as evident in an English lesson when they worked in pairs to consider topical issues such as the role of the monarchy and the benefits of single sex education, outlining both sides of the debate. Excellent co-operation occurs in games lessons.
- 2.15 Pupils arrive promptly at lessons and settle quickly and quietly. They are exceptionally well motivated and are willing to work hard on their tasks, persevering even when the work is pitched at an ambitious level.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.16 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, reflecting the school's aims of encouraging strong moral and Christian values, respect for others, and helping pupils grow in confidence and acquire self-discipline. The high standards noted at the time of the previous inspection have been fully maintained.
- 2.17 Pupils' spiritual development is aided by four chapel services each week where they have the opportunity to explore the values and beliefs of Christianity. Pupils use these services, led by the chaplain, for calm reflection, with senior pupils reading from the Bible. The choir takes a prominent role in the Sunday service. Approximately fifteen pupils are confirmed in the chapel each year. Music, art and drama all contribute to the spiritual development of the pupils by enabling them to explore their own creativity. At the time of the inspection, all pupils in the school were in the process of contributing to a 'Tree of Life' sculpture initiated by an artist in residence. Every November, pupils learn the name of an Old Summerfieldian whose name will be read out in a remembrance service in the chapel; further research is done on the lives of these old boys when pupils visit the Somme. In religious studies (RS) lessons, pupils demonstrate spiritual attitudes towards life through discussions on such topics as the Auschwitz concentration camp. The two morning assemblies each week usually have a moral theme and are occasions when pupils' achievements are celebrated, thus enhancing their personal self-esteem and confidence. Pupils feel valued and able to develop as individual personalities and their lives are enriched by the many opportunities to be successful. The school enjoys extensive grounds and the development of a reserve has allowed pupils to enjoy nature by building shelters and camping out overnight.
- 2.18 Pupils adhere to a strong moral code and have respect for their community. Great value is placed upon acceptable behaviour and traditional values. School rules are clear and succinct, and pupils understand the need for boundaries of acceptable behaviour. Moral issues, such as the rights of a child, capital punishment and cloning, have been discussed openly with teachers in lessons. Pupils distinguish right from wrong, and they demonstrate sportsmanship and respect for the rules when playing sport. During a citizenship lesson, sharing and helping was agreed to be an example of good citizenship.

- 2.19 Pupils of all ages show excellent social awareness; they are thoughtful, considerate, well mannered and well behaved. They exude enthusiasm and confidence in an open and unaffected way; the staff act as excellent role-models in promoting these qualities. Pupils of all ages mix well together, and a warm and friendly family atmosphere is evident throughout the school, with a buddy system helping the induction of new boys. Both the prefect system in Year 8 and an army leadership course encourage older pupils to take responsibility; the prefects are valued and respected by the younger pupils. Although the school does not have a school council, pupils have many opportunities to voice their opinions through lodge parents and tutors. Pupils are encouraged to act independently by organising their own free time and activities. They also have a chance to manage their own finances by having a small account at the school shop. Pupils have access to the internet, radio and newspapers which helps them to keep in touch with the world beyond the school.
- 2.20 Pupils develop a good sense of their own and other cultures and traditions. In RS lessons, pupils study Islam, Judaism, Sikhism and Christianity; reference was made to other cultures in a music lesson and the slave trade was discussed in a senior assembly. Pupils have watched cultural films in their lodges and have attended lectures on cheetah conservation, Afghanistan and the 'Living Rainforest'. The kitchen staff organise Chinese, Indian and Italian themed lunches and the school has a link with a school in Tanzania for which the pupils raise money. Since the last inspection, there has been an increase in the number of pupils attending the school with faiths other than Christianity; their beliefs and practices are respected and accommodated.
- 2.21 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.22 The overall quality of the teaching is good, and a number of outstanding lessons were observed in a range of subjects. The teaching has improved since the last inspection, but certain aspects of teaching techniques and methods sometimes reduce the impact of lessons that have other commendable qualities. Assessment is frequent and careful, and the school's monitoring of each pupil's progress and attainment is clear.
- 2.23 In all subjects, teaching enables pupils to acquire new knowledge, make progress according to their abilities, increase their understanding and develop their skills. The system of streaming pupils according to their ability helps the teaching to be pitched at a suitable level. The mathematics and science work in the scholarship classes is demanding and challenging, and pupils in a Year 8 English lesson discussed, with considerable insight, Keats' 'Ode to Autumn'. Pupils with learning difficulties are very well tutored by the learning support staff; subject teachers are aware of these pupils and those for whom English is a second language, and give them additional help.
- 2.24 The teaching fosters intellectual, physical and creative effort in pupils. A strong feature of many lessons is the expert knowledge, enthusiasm and sense of purpose of teachers; in French and history lessons, these qualities inspired pupils and motivated them to work hard. Sometimes, the enthusiasm results in lessons being too dominated by the teacher, with pupils listening for long periods of time. In the most successful lessons, expectations are high and the pace is brisk and pupils feel encouraged by their teachers.

- 2.25 Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent; these allow pupils to volunteer their ideas and opinions freely. Teachers know the pupils well and are aware of their abilities and prior attainment. Lessons are carefully planned but often an over-reliance on worksheets reduces their effectiveness; whilst this helps pupils working at a slower pace to have a reliable record of the lesson, it limits the opportunities for pupils to learn for themselves and to write at length. Some teachers use question and answer sessions effectively to develop understanding and to encourage pupils to think. Teachers sometimes plan different activities for pupils with differing abilities; for example, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, different tasks were provided on the addition of money for the more and less able. The management of class time is outstanding and pupils move quickly between lessons.
- 2.26 The teaching facilities and resources of the school are excellent and are used effectively. The well-stocked library is managed efficiently and valued by pupils as a place for relaxation and reading for its own enjoyment. The adjoining ICT facilities are used by pupils for carrying out their own research, such as when they were preparing for the public speaking competition.
- 2.27 The assessment of pupils is thorough. Pupils sit standardised tests each year, allowing comparison with national expectations. The results of these tests are carefully analysed by senior management and used to track each pupil's progress; they help identify underperforming pupils, those who may need learning support or who are gifted, and to decide on form placings. They are kept electronically and are available to all staff, as are the effort and attainment grades that are completed every three weeks.
- 2.28 A whole school marking policy has been established and many departments have generated their own subject specific policies. Marking is generally thorough, frequent and positive and a number of teachers make constructive comments and set targets for improvement. In some subjects, such as art and mathematics, pupils are beginning to carry out self-assessment and this helps them to see where greater effort needs to be invested.
- 2.29 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 pastoral care of pupils is an outstanding feature of the school, as is the school's concern for pupils' welfare, health and safety. The excellence of the pastoral care noted at the time of the previous inspection has been fully maintained and pupils' welfare enhanced by the provision of a new kitchen and increased attention to risk assessments. The quality of the relationships between staff and pupils helps the school fulfil its aim of being a happy, caring, well-disciplined environment.
- 3.2 The school provides excellent support and guidance for its pupils. At the heart of the pastoral care system are the tutors, and form teachers for the youngest pupils. Each tutor looks after about seven tutees, usually throughout their final four years in the school. Tutors meet their tutees individually each week, as well as seeing them as a group for letter writing to their families; this system ensures close monitoring of the academic progress and welfare of each pupil, as well as overseeing their involvement in activities and use of free time. Many other staff, especially lodge parents, the chaplain, medical staff and senior managers, are actively concerned with the welfare of the pupils, sharing with tutors any concerns about pupils. Communication between staff about the needs of the pupils is frequent, through daily briefings and informal meetings. The outcome of this multi-layered system is happy, confident pupils who feel secure at school. Pupils comment favourably on the individual support available, both at regularly appointed times and in moments of difficulty.
- 3.3 The staff provide high quality care within a family environment. The positive, friendly and relaxed relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils and their peers, are evident in all aspects of school life. For example, in a RS lesson open relationships enabled an honest discussion about self-sacrifice. Appropriate behaviour is expected at all times, with an emphasis on self-discipline within the framework of the school rules; these are based on shared community life, mutual respect and kindness. The pupils appreciate the system of rewards and sanctions, with many more of the former being earned; each morning pieces of work of exceptional quality are taken to the director of studies for recognition.
- 3.4 The school's pastoral policies are clear and informative, and are implemented well. Pupils report that bullying is minimal and dealt with effectively. The youngest know what to do if bullying or unkindness happens and are taught to report it, not to accept it as inevitable. Appropriate child protection procedures are in place with the headmaster as the designated child protection officer; all staff have received training on child protection issues. Pupils are clear about what to do if they are unhappy and are able to talk freely to staff about any issues.
- 3.5 The school provides a safe and healthy environment in which pupils thrive. Measures have been taken to minimise the risk of fire and other hazards, and regular fire practices occur, both in the lodges and in school; the pupils know what to do in case of an emergency. Thorough risk assessments have been carried out for all areas of the school and for all activities that are conducted off-site.
- 3.6 The school has a comprehensive health and safety policy. Meetings of the health and safety committee, chaired by the bursar, take place regularly. The school sister and senior matron provide excellent care in the surgery for accidents or ailments; meticulous records are kept of medicines dispensed. A doctor visits the school twice a week.

- 3.7 A new kitchen and servery make an attractive addition to the school environment. The imaginative range of food choices encourages healthy eating and caters for individual food preferences and dietary needs. The food, overseen by the domestic bursar, is of good quality and quantity and is appreciated by the pupils. Pupils lead active lives and the games and activities programmes ensure they take regular exercise.
- 3.8 The school's admission register is well maintained. The attendance registers are completed satisfactorily twice a day for day pupils; spot checks on the presence in the school of boarders are carried out as well as regular ones during weekends and after games afternoons. The school has written a full disability access plan indicating how accessibility can be improved over time.
- 3.9 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

- 3.10 The quality of the school's links with parents and the local community are outstanding. Parents provide strong support for the school and are exceptionally well informed about the progress of their sons. Since the last inspection the school has increased its many links with the local community and with schools overseas.
- 3.11 Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed themselves highly satisfied with every aspect of the school's academic and pastoral provision; critical remarks were extremely rare and glowing comments were made about the school generally, with the care of the staff especially praised.
- 3.12 Prospective parents receive full and detailed information from the school's marketing department, and those new to the school are assisted by informative handbooks written specifically for parents of boarders, day pupils and those in Year 3. The Year 3 teacher also holds an informal meeting with parents early in the school year. Parents are kept very well informed about the school through its extensive website, which is continuously updated and includes sections for parents as well as sports results and the latest news from the school. They also receive a high quality newsletter each term and an annual magazine. The school is helped in its desire for first-rate contacts with parents by having a senior member of staff responsible for parental relations. Many parents attend Sunday services and come to concerts, plays and matches; a number of events, such as a staff versus parents cricket match, are arranged by the school and are very well supported. Some parents spend a summer term Sunday in school with their son using the grounds for a picnic, and enjoying the swimming pool and golf course.
- 3.13 Parents receive high quality reports at the end of the winter and summer terms; staff write perceptively and at length about each pupil, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement. Reports state what the class has covered in each subject, and include a sheet recording examination marks and the numbers of rewards and sanctions. At the end of the spring term, the tutor writes letters detailing the academic and social progress made by each of his tutees. Parents also receive, every three weeks, their son's effort and attainment grades in each subject studied, and many e-mail contacts are made between staff and home. Consultation meetings regarding pupil progress are held annually, organised by year groups, with the opportunity taken when appropriate to speak to a group of parents on matters such as choosing senior schools and the Common Entrance examination to be sat at the age of thirteen; much good advice is available for parents unsure of the right senior school for their son. The meetings for parents of boys in Years 3 and 4 are helped by an appointments system with form teachers. For parents who live abroad, special arrangements to discuss

progress are made when they visit the school. Parents have easy access to staff, especially tutors and lodge parents, by mobile telephones and e-mails, and are very appreciative of the prompt and professional response they receive. Parental complaints are very rare, and the responses are recorded carefully.

- 3.14 Local senior citizens are welcomed to plays, concerts, and the 'bring and buy' harvest festival. The school has long-standing links with the local United Reform church, and the choir sings in the local community, notably in the chapels of two Oxford colleges; it also brings very welcome cheer to local retirement homes and hospices at Christmas. The links with two local primary schools are increasing and currently extend to sharing teaching with one and exchanging art lessons with the other. Among the charities supported by the pupils are a local children's hospital and schools in Tanzania and South Africa, the latter started after visiting the school during a rugby tour of that country. All these activities contribute to pupils' personal development.
- 3.15 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

- 3.16 The quality of boarding education in the school is outstanding. The whole life of the school is devoted to the needs of the boarders, and the aim of providing a happy, caring, well-disciplined, boarding environment is very well achieved. The recommendations made by Ofsted in 2007 have all been attended to, and a rolling programme of refurbishment and redecoration has resulted in continuously improving, high quality facilities. Since the last inspection, the role of the master in overall charge of boarding has been formalised and extended most effectively.
- 3.17 Each lodge has its own character relating to the age of its boarders, the personalities of the lodge parents and the lay-out of the building. What they have in common are committed lodge parents who, together with other staff, provide a warm, welcoming home for the boarders to return to at the end of the school day; after relaxing in the lodge, they prepare for bed and sleep, and next morning go into the school for breakfast. Thus, boarders regard their lodge as their home. They are very appreciative of the support of the adults and the care and kindness shown to them. Relationships within the lodges are outstanding; the boarders are at ease with the adults and one another. Sanctions and rewards are effective. Nearly all the teaching staff perform duties in the lodges. The lodge book containing medical treatment is the main form of communication between the surgery and each lodge, and is transferred at the beginning and end of each school day.
- 3.18 The commitment of the staff to the boarding life of the school is evident in the large number of activities provided each evening. On Sundays, the boarders take advantage of the many activities, including science club, workshop, which occur in the school and its grounds, as well as arranged outings. Particular care is taken of the new Year 4 boarders who have a planned activity every Sunday, either at the school or locally. The Adventure Quest, with its great range of outward-bound possibilities, operates on many Sundays and is especially popular. At leave outs, half and end of term, coaches are organized to take boarders to and from London, with taxis for those needing to go to airports. Boarders can also go home on extra weekends during the term, especially in their first year of boarding; however, many choose to stay in school and enjoy each other's company and all that is provided for them. The presence of GAP Year students from Australia and South Africa enables experiences of life on different continents to be acquired.

- 3.19 Each lodge has between 20 and 30 boarders, all of the same age; this arrangement works very well. Accommodation is provided in seven lodges, four of which have been refurbished in the past two years. The dormitories are of high quality, varying in size from ten beds for the youngest boys to as few as three; bedside lights and pin boards for posters and family photographs help each boarder to feel he has his own private space. Boarders shower or bathe each evening with curtains ensuring their privacy. All the lodges have social rooms in which to relax and play games, and these are equipped with televisions and computers. A sense of companionship and friendship permeates the lodges. All meals are taken in the school dining room and are of a high standard; late evening snacks are provided in the lodges and fruit is available at all times.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 The school is well governed. The governing board is clearly defined with appropriate structures, which enable it to oversee the work of the school effectively. The governors have definite objectives for the school and much development and investment have been successfully undertaken in recent years.
- 4.2 The governing board, and the finance and general purposes sub-committee, meet each term; other committees meet as and when needed. These meetings enable governors to understand school issues and provide the headmaster and his staff with strong support. Governors take seriously their roles of maintaining the ethos, quality and development of the school, and of ensuring compliance with legal requirements. Health and safety is an agenda item each year for the governing board but child protection does not appear as a separate item.
- 4.3 The governors are committed to the school, with the majority being either old boys of the school or parents of former or current pupils. They have expertise in many relevant specialist areas, including finance, law, medicine and education. Governors monitor all financial matters most carefully and discuss education issues with the headmaster. The governors have considered the long-term future of the school and have a detailed, strategic plan, with the clear goal of continuing to be a boarding school for boys, with exceptional pastoral care, strong sporting and cultural provision and high academic success. This plan, based on recommendations by the headmaster after he had analysed the school's strengths and opportunities, envisages encouraging entry at the ages of seven and eight with day pupils often converting to boarding as they grow older.
- 4.4 The governing board delegates the day-to-day running of the school fully to the headmaster and the bursar. Detailed, high quality reports each term from the headmaster, and staff presentations, help governors to be fully aware of staff views and ideas; they also allow the headmaster and his staff to take advantage of governors' knowledge and experience. The chairman is well informed about the school, and maintains frequent contact with the headmaster. The governors' meeting as a board is extended twice a year to include a dinner with a selection of staff and sometimes to observe lessons and activities; this excellent practice enables governors to know the staff well and have an appropriate insight into the working of the school.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.5 The overall quality of leadership and management in the school is good with some outstanding features. The headmaster's clear vision of Summer Fields as a boarding school in which the needs of the pupils are paramount is shared by all members of staff. The members of the senior management team provide excellent support for the headmaster, each successfully undertaking their roles; other staff offer substantial support to the senior managers. A few subject leaders are taking responsibility for the teaching and learning within their departments, and the school is aware this development is in its early stages. Since the last inspection, the monitoring of pupils' progress has been strengthened and the many activities have become more organised and structured. These, along with improvements in boarding facilities, have raised the previous good standards and allow all the ambitious aims of the school to be achieved.

- 4.6 Discussion of ideas is frequent and regular. A management team, of headmaster, deputy head, bursar, senior master, director of studies, and those in charge of boarding and parental relations, meets weekly and deals with current issues, forthcoming events and major matters; the headmaster also holds individual meetings with many of these senior staff each week. New appointments made at senior and middle management levels have given further impetus to the academic education of the pupils. Heads of department meet with the director of studies at least once a term and consider matters of academic importance, such as the leadership of their departments. Full staff meetings are held every three weeks, principally to discuss pupils' academic and pastoral progress, and briefings are held on most days of the week so that everyone is aware of urgent pupil concerns and any changes to routine. By these methods, all members of staff are kept very well informed about school matters. A development plan, covering each aspect of the school, is produced each year by the senior managers after a thorough review of the previous year's achievements; the current plan also sets out what is hoped to be achieved by 2012. Each academic department has its own development plan, and their excellent resources are well organised.
- 4.7 The appraisal of teachers includes self-evaluation and lesson observation by the director of studies, followed by discussion with the headmaster, with future targets set; this is an effective system and aids the professional development of staff. Individual in-service training is linked to appraisal and to school needs, and members of staff report back to departmental colleagues about courses attended; this training has increased significantly recently but is not yet comprehensive. Whole-staff training usually occurs before the start of term, when other major school issues, such as examinations or discipline, are also discussed. New members of staff are well mentored by an experienced colleague, and their teaching is observed in their first term. The school does not have a newly qualified teacher this year, but when it does it participates in the national scheme, with appropriate mentoring and a reduced teaching timetable.
- 4.8 The staffing is well-balanced regarding teachers' ages and experience in schools. The staff set high standards and help to instil traditional values; their attitudes and responses to the pupils are excellent. The required staffing checks have been rigorously carried out on all academic and non-academic staff; all teachers have contracts and detailed job descriptions.
- 4.9 The nine GAP Year students, overseen by a senior member of staff, provide invaluable help in supporting the school community in many ways, principally by acting as matrons and games coaches, as well as supervising the use of the swimming pool. A classroom assistant makes an important contribution to the progress of the youngest pupils. The work of the non-teaching staff is very supportive and well directed. The grounds and buildings are kept in first-rate order by the maintenance staff. The school secretaries make a major contribution towards its smooth day-to-day running. Parents and visitors appreciate the friendly and very efficient response they receive. The headmaster's wife is well known to the parents, and plays a leading and active role in the school.
- 4.10 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].
- 4.11 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

- 5.1 The school achieves all its aims very well. The staff show great dedication and commitment to the pastoral care of the pupils, with whom they enjoy excellent relationships. Pupils' personal development is an outstanding feature of the school; pupils are articulate and motivated, and they learn to take responsibility for attending activities and how best to utilise their non-programmed time. The all-round education offered by the school is outstanding and gives each pupil the opportunity to develop his talents fully. Staff teach knowledgeably and enthusiastically, and the overall quality of teaching is good although areas for improvement exist. Pupils' educational experience is enriched by the excellent boarding provision. The school flourishes under the clear leadership of the headmaster and his senior managers, and enjoys good governance and strong parental support. Pupils and staff benefit from the school's excellent facilities and resources.
- 5.2 The strengths found at the time of the previous inspection continue to be significant features of the school and a number of improvements have been made. Since the last inspection, the monitoring of pupils' progress has been strengthened, as has the appraisal of staff. The many activities have become more organised and structured, and boarding facilities have been further enhanced. Of the other major recommendations made in the previous report, more use is being made of ICT across the curriculum and a few subject leaders are taking greater responsibility for their departments. Minor issues relating to the boarding arrangements and health and safety matters have been resolved satisfactorily. The school's current leadership and management are fully aware of areas for further improvement and are well placed to take these forward.
- 5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

- 5.4 The following area is suggested for particular consideration in order for the school to improve still further.
1. Raise the standard of teaching by:
 - increasing the formal monitoring of teaching and learning by senior and middle management;
 - reducing the use of worksheets, thereby providing more opportunities for independent writing.
- 5.5 No action is required in respect of regulatory requirements.

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 16th to 19th March. 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 boarding houses and the surgery. The responses of parents to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.

List of Inspectors

Mr David Defoe	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Alison Fleming	Deputy Head, IAPS school
Mr Gordon James	Head, IAPS school
Mr Edward Rees	Deputy Head, IAPS school
Mrs Linda Smith	Head, ISA school