



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

BEDALES SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Bedales School

The junior and pre-prep schools were inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School	Bedales School		
DfE Number	850/6007		
Registered Charity Number	307332		
Address	Bedales School Church Road Steep Petersfield Hampshire GU32 2DG		
Telephone Number	01730 300100		
Fax Number	01730 300500		
Email Address	admin@bedales.org.uk		
Head	Mr Keith Budge		
Chair of Governors	Mr Matthew Rice		
Age Range	13 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	462		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (202 boys; 260 girls)		
Numbers by Age	13-18:	462	
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	153	
Number of Boarders	Total:	309	
	Full:	309	Weekly: 0
Inspection Dates	01 Apr 2014 to 04 Apr 2014		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in April 2008.

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) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

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. Until September 2011, Boarding inspections were carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills.

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 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

Lady Fiona Mynors	Reporting Inspector
Mr Darrell Farrant	Team Inspector (Former Head, HMC school)
Mr Anthony Nelson	Team Inspector (Former Head of Department, HMC school)
Mr Geoffrey Hill	Team Inspector (Director of Studies, SOH school)
Mr Stewart Roberts	Team Inspector (Former Head, HMC school)
Mr Clive Thorpe	Team Inspector (Assistant Head, HMC school)
Mr Andrew Waddington	Team Inspector (Head of Department, HMC school)
Mr Matthew March	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Bedales School is part of a family of schools which provide education for boys and girls aged from three to eighteen. Dunnanie and Dunhurst educate pupils from three to thirteen years, and Bedales is for students up to eighteen, most of whom are boarders. All the schools are managed separately under the leadership of one head. They are a charitable trust and share a board of governors. Bedales was founded by John Badley in 1893 as an alternative to the traditional boarding schools of the time. Initially it was for boys, and became a fully co-educational boarding school in 1898. It is based in a variety of buildings, some historic and others purpose built, situated in its own grounds in a village location outside Petersfield.
- 1.2 The school has maintained the aims set by its founder to provide a broad education which combines academic and creative studies, linking 'Head, Heart and Hand'. An emphasis is placed on strong academic achievement and developing inquisitive thinkers who love to learn and value independent and innovative thought. These are set within a tolerant community, caring for all its members. Since the previous inspection, the senior management responsibilities across the schools have been redefined, and the core values have been extended to include a strand of 'Global Awareness'.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, there were 462 students on roll, with just under half of the student body being boys. All 309 boarders are full-time. There were 184 students in the sixth form.
- 1.4 The school is academically selective. Students enter from Dunhurst and local maintained and preparatory schools. The ability profile of Years 9 to 11 is above the national average, with around a fifth of students who are of well above average ability. In the sixth form, students' spread of abilities is in line with the national average for students of this age. They are drawn mainly from London and the south-east, and come predominantly from business and professional families of white British origin. Within the boarding community, 12 countries are represented.
- 1.5 The school has identified 158 students as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 105 receive specialist help. There are 19 students with English as an additional language (EAL) of whom 17 have additional support. No student has a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.6 National Curriculum (NC) 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 equivalence are shown in the following table. Pupils at the school are referred to as students, so that terminology is used in the report.

Senior School

School	NC name
Block 3	Year 9
Block 4	Year 10
Block 5	Year 11
6.1	Year 12
6.2	Year 13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school is extremely successful in achieving its aims. It is a mutual learning society, determined to maintain its momentum for continuous development. At all stages, students are well educated, and the quality of their achievement and learning is excellent. Students with SEND or EAL achieve well and make rapid progress through the excellent support they receive as their needs are carefully met. More able students and those with particular gifts or talents achieve suitably high standards in a variety of activities. All students enjoy learning and exhibit a well-developed intellectual curiosity and independence in pursuing their studies. They benefit from high quality teaching, and the excellent, innovative curriculum. Much progress has been made in the creative use of information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons, but its full capabilities are not harnessed consistently across all departments. A wide range of extra-curricular activities, trips and stimulating lectures greatly enhances the students' experiences.
- 2.2 The students' personal development is excellent. They are highly articulate and emotionally mature for their age, learning to take responsibility for themselves and others in the community. Relationships across the school are exceptionally positive, with staff and students working together in a co-operative, purposeful atmosphere underpinned by mutual respect for all. The excellent arrangements for pastoral care ensure that each student's academic and personal needs are extremely well understood and strongly supported. All staff work together to promote the students' welfare, and health and safety policies and procedures are rigorously implemented. The quality of boarding is excellent. Students live harmoniously, enjoying friendships across a wide age range.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is good. Under shrewd leadership, governors have an informed oversight of the workings of the school, and a strong determination to maintain its unusual community ethos based on the founding principles. They have a detailed understanding of the effectiveness of the implementation of safeguarding procedures. However, governors have not carried out a formal annual review of the safeguarding policy, as required. Leadership and management are excellent. The school has made significant progress since the previous inspection. Senior leadership and management responsibilities have been clarified and strengthened, and students accept the school's norms of behaviour, understanding that with freedom comes responsibility. All teachers now understand the individual needs of their students and ensure that they have appropriate work to enable them to achieve and progress well. Links with parents are excellent.

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

- 2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:
- ensure that governors formally review the child protection policy annually [Part 3, paragraph 7.(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety, and National Minimum Standard 11, under Child protection].
- 2.5 The school does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013, as described above.

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

- 2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Develop the imaginative use of ICT across all subjects to match its effectiveness in that of the best.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of students' achievement and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 At all stages students are extremely well educated in line with the school's aims to develop independent, inquisitive thinkers who love to learn. Academic standards have risen since the previous inspection. Students, including those with SEND and EAL, show excellent levels of knowledge, understanding and skills in their academic studies and in their extra-curricular activities. They are exceptionally mature and articulate in discussions, listening carefully and expressing themselves confidently and clearly. Students are logical, and demonstrate that they relish thinking independently. They read well and widely, and use a range of sophisticated vocabulary in their writing. Their linguistic skills are well developed across a range of foreign languages. Students confidently apply their excellent mathematical skills and enter national mathematics competitions, frequently achieving high results. Their physical skills are good. They use their ICT skills very effectively in their studies and presentations.
- 3.3 Students are highly creative and demonstrate excellent skills in music, drama and dance. Their art and design skills are exceptional, as observed in the work on display and shown to inspectors by students. Students with EAL and SEND achieve well in line with their peers. More able, gifted or talented pupils develop their ideas through their work on the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), challenging work in the Bedales Assessed Courses (BAC), and in the opportunities they have to present their ideas to the school community in assemblies. The majority of students go on to higher education, most going to their often demanding first choice of university or college.
- 3.4 Students achieve at a high level individually and in teams in extra-curricular activities. Individuals write articles for national publications, are successful in national public speaking competitions, act in local theatre productions, represent the county in various sports and are members of elite sports' academies. Students are members of national music ensembles, gain diplomas and distinctions in national music and drama examinations. A number attain awards in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE).
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2011 to 2013. These are the most recent three years for which comparable statistics are currently available. Results at GCSE have been above the national average for maintained schools, and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. In 2013 good standards were maintained with over 54 per cent of results at grades A* or A. The IGCSE results have been higher than worldwide norms. At A level, results have been above the national average for maintained schools and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. In 2013 40 per cent of results were awarded grades A* or A and 63 per cent for A* to B.
- 3.6 The level of attainment at GCSE, IGCSE and A level, and the nationally standardised progress data, combined with work seen and students' responses in interviews and lessons, indicates that they make excellent progress relative to the average for students of similar ability. The progress of students with SEND and EAL is excellent thanks to the outstanding support they are given. More able students

achieve high standards as they benefit from many additional challenges in their work and activities. Almost all pupils feel that they make good progress in their work.

- 3.7 Students enjoy learning, relishing the challenges set by their teachers. They are highly motivated with a disciplined approach to their work, exhibiting a well-developed intellectual curiosity. They are highly receptive to new material and are intellectually curious in class, reacting positively to stimulus and feedback. Students work collaboratively with ease, and as independent research and learning is embedded into the ethos of the school, students largely take responsibility for their own learning.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 The school's excellent, innovative curriculum suits the students' needs and abilities, continuing to support the founder's aim to provide a broad education combining academic and creative studies, linking 'Head, Heart and Hand'. It is constantly monitored and developed as reflective practitioners consider how to improve provision. Parents who responded to the questionnaire were extremely pleased with the range of subjects and experiences on offer. The Year 9 curriculum broadens students' experiences, beginning with a residential trip to Ullswater, and their global awareness is enhanced by the programme of lectures and foreign exchanges. A large group of students are involved in exciting plans to develop this into a five year programme leading to an AS level qualification.
- 3.10 Students in Years 10 and 11 study an appropriate core of GCSE or IGCSE subjects which includes at least one modern foreign language. Students also benefit from the opportunity to choose from a varied selection of 11 BAC options. The courses, in place for the last eight years, are developed by Bedales staff. They incorporate coursework and a final examination, and are externally moderated. They challenge students, and create exciting opportunities for them to develop their personal interests. As students commented, the BAC enable them to discover gifts that they did not think they had. Students also independently prepare a demanding, cross-curricular 'Utopia' project for presentation. Those in Years 12 and 13 have access to a wide range of A-level courses, and an excellent enrichment programme. About a 15% of students complete the EPQ. Frequent visits by outside speakers offer stimulating lectures on many topics.
- 3.11 The Professional Guidance department gives excellent support to help students determine their career and life choices. A renewed focus has been placed on developing students' leadership abilities as they learn to chair groups with agreed job descriptions to improve their skills for the future.
- 3.12 The provision for students with SEND and EAL is excellent. Students are carefully screened upon entry and one-to-one teaching is provided as necessary. Specialist staff have appropriate qualifications and seek and take advice from external agencies. Students' progress is carefully tracked, and all teaching staff know which students need additional help. They are kept well informed, through training and electronic alerts, about useful strategies to ensure that students' needs are well managed in lessons. Students with EAL receive individual help, and in lessons, teachers take great care to ensure that they understand the work. In the written work scrutinised, staff had provided helpful advice to students on how to improve their work and explain key language. In interviews, students with EAL and SEND

were well satisfied with the support that they receive, and confident to ask for help. Those who are able, or who have particular gifts are provided for successfully.

- 3.13 Students' personal development is greatly enriched by the unusually varied opportunities available. They can choose to undertake outdoor rural craft work such as laying hedges, tending sheep or newt house building. They are encouraged to create new activities which range from the 'Superhero Film Club' to a music appreciation society. They lead academic societies, take part in sport, music, drama and art activities and strengthen their leadership skills through the DofE scheme. They also benefit from being part of a learning community. This is epitomised by the voluntary weekly lunchtime lectures on the kings and queens of England, attended by a cross-section of the community from senior leaders, members of the maintenance and support teams, to students and staff.
- 3.14 The school's historic belief in students participating in social outreach is still fundamental to their development. It has been invigorated with the appointment of key staff to lead the programmes to develop the students' awareness of their place in their local and global community. They gain a genuine understanding of life for those in very different communities through direct links with students from a deprived urban area and a school in Southsea. Students in Years 12 and 13 undertake community service in local primary schools and benefit from thriving links with numerous associations in Petersfield. Exchange programmes with schools in Shanghai, Dubai and Swaziland further enhance their experiences. At the time of the inspection, several educational visits were imminent including a history trip to Russia and a geography expedition to Morocco.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.16 The style of teaching throughout the school fully supports the school's aim to develop inquisitive thinkers with a love of learning who cherish independent thought. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. At all levels it is frequently excellent and at times inspirational. Students make rapid progress and many gain a genuine love of their subjects. Students describe their teachers as passionate about their subjects and this enthusiasm was observed in many lessons. The positive, informal and respectful relationships form the bedrock upon which teaching takes place. Traditional boundaries between teachers and taught are almost invisible, and the academic journey is one of shared enterprise; as one student commented, positive relationships fuel their inspiration to learn.
- 3.17 The teachers know their students well and are fully aware of their individual needs. Much work has been done in response to recommendations made in the previous inspection to ensure that students with SEND and EAL are well supported in the classroom. This is done sensitively and routinely, ensuring that activities match their individual needs, and teachers are always willing to offer additional support. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all pupils who responded said their teachers helped them to learn, encouraged them to work independently and were willing to help them individually. This was borne out fully in discussions with pupils during the inspection. The school has made much progress in providing opportunities for students to work and think independently, especially in the BAC which offer students a degree of autonomy over what they choose to study. The most able students maintain progress in their learning by being given more challenging work in class.

- 3.18 Well-qualified teachers are extremely knowledgeable about their subjects and have high expectations. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives, and excellent use is made of the time available with a good pace set. Students of all abilities are regularly offered an imaginative variety of activities, including group work, which effectively maintains their interest and enthusiasm as well as encouraging good behaviour. Frequent, targeted questioning effectively checks students' progress and understanding, and they are quick to seek help when they are not clear. Teachers prepare students carefully for examinations.
- 3.19 Regular observation and a process of peer review help teachers to share good practice within and across departments, and encourage experimentation with new ideas. Departments are well resourced and much progress had been made in the innovative use of ICT in lessons, in response to suggestions made in the previous inspection. However, its full capabilities are yet to be harnessed consistently across all departments.
- 3.20 Marking of tests and homework is usually constructive and encouraging, and the best provides suggestions on how to improve further, though this is not consistent across all departments. Where students have taken responsibility for their own notes, checking by teachers is less thorough. The students much appreciate the teachers' oral feedback and find it helpful. They are quick to take up the frequent open invitations to seek further one-to-one help. The students are actively encouraged to take more responsibility for their own progress by assessing their own work, pinpointing areas of weakness and then formulating their own suggestions for remedial action. Whole-school tracking and assessment procedures are excellent. They effectively monitor the students' progress and provide the teaching staff with useful information on an individual's all-round performance which enables them to give advice to them for improvement. Feedback to students by tutors is rapid and consultative and provides an opportunity to set mutually-agreed targets.

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 students is excellent.
- 4.2 Students demonstrate an excellent spiritual awareness. The whole school community ethos supports the spiritual development of the student. Students are articulate, loyal, and emotionally mature for their age. They learn to take responsibility for themselves and for those around them, and have the confidence to endeavour to make a difference wherever they go. Their awareness of the non-material aspects of life is strongly developed through their work in art, drama and music. They particularly value the school grounds and the unusual and special outdoor work area.
- 4.3 Moral development is excellent. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire a very small minority of parents expressed concerns that the school does not achieve high standards of behaviour, but the inspection found that students have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong, and generally behave well. A calm atmosphere pervades the school as students move around the campus in a civilised fashion. This is an important improvement since the previous inspection. Students like to put their point of view, and listen to others, but they recognise that with freedom comes responsibility. They debate moral and ethical issues in many subjects, particularly religious studies and philosophy, and through their concern for the world the school now has meat-free days.
- 4.4 The students have excellent social skills, talking confidently to visitors, taking great pride in showing them round the school, and responding in interviews with ease. The twice-weekly tradition of all members of the school community shaking hands develops the students' social confidence as they look each person in the eye, and exchange a greeting. Although in their responses to the questionnaire, students felt that they did not have opportunities to take on formal responsibilities, the inspection found that an ethos of participation and discussion pervades the school. Older students supervise and oversee the life of younger students in houses. Students also run societies and initiate and run presentations for assemblies. They take responsibility for their own academic research work for the BAC. Students have a well-developed social conscience and are aware of those less fortunate than themselves as they work on local community projects and raise funds for charity and support a school in Africa.
- 4.5 Students demonstrate an excellent understanding of other faiths and cultures. The school includes students from abroad who feel welcome and are supported by their peers when settling into school life. The community is harmonious as everyone gives and receives respect for their different traditions and beliefs, including those of the Western cultural tradition. A wide range of outside speakers, and the opportunity to travel both to and outside Europe for cultural and other purposes, enables pupils to interact and empathise with many others.
- 4.6 Students' personal development is excellent. They are encouraged from a young age to take responsibility for their decisions and to be brave in trying new things. Bedales students are exceptionally well-prepared to take their future life into their own hands.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 The personal development of each student is set at the heart of the Bedales philosophy. The school is successful in its aim to recognize the unique qualities of every student and to allow these to flourish through effective personal relationships. All staff work tirelessly to provide pastoral care for the students and display a thorough knowledge of each individual. Tutors support students extremely well. At a comprehensive academic review meeting during the inspection, every individual from a year group was discussed, and recommendations for any support needed were communicated to the students on the same day. Students value this level of support. Weekly pastoral meetings raise any concerns that staff have about individual students to ensure that they receive sensitive help and guidance. In their responses to the pre- inspection questionnaire, a minority of students felt that they did not know what to do if they were unhappy or concerned, although almost all of them indicated that teachers show concern for them as a person. The inspection found that students have a variety of people who they can turn to for help, including an easily accessible counsellor. In interviews, students readily indicated their awareness of the sources of help.
- 4.9 Relationships between staff and students are exceptionally positive. This is replicated in relationships between the students themselves so that they grow up in a happy and supportive environment, a view endorsed by those parents who responded to the questionnaire. Careful arrangements exist for the induction of new students, and especial care is taken, by the appointment of a specialist co-ordinator, to ensure the integration of those from overseas.
- 4.10 A minority of students raised concerns about the quality of the food in their responses to the questionnaire, but the inspection evidence indicated that a wide variety of good quality food is provided, having regard for individual dietary requirements. In interviews, and when sharing mealtimes with them, students told inspectors that the food was good. Students are also encouraged to be healthy by taking part in regular physical activity, and healthy eating is considered as part of discussions on well-being.
- 4.11 The school is effective in promoting high standards of personal behaviour and guarding against harassment and bullying. Clear policies are in place to ensure that students can thrive safely in the community. A small minority of students and a few parents felt that the school did not always deal effectively with instances of bullying. However, scrutiny of the relevant detailed records show that incidents, although rare, are taken extremely seriously and the clear procedures are followed. The school will not tolerate bullying and vigorous action is taken, carefully recorded and monitored by staff. The school works hard to resolve difficulties in the best interests of all those concerned. A minority of students responding to the questionnaire felt that teachers are not always fair in the way they give rewards and sanctions. Inspection findings show that apart from recommendations in a day book, no formal reward system exists. Scrutiny of documentation relating to disciplinary actions taken by the school show that appropriate sanctions are imposed when necessary, taking into account each situation and the needs and views of the pupils concerned. However, alternative solutions would first be sought before the imposition of sanctions.
- 4.12 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for students with SEND.

4.13 The school seeks students' views in many different ways. A small minority of students felt that their views are not listened to, but the inspection found that they have many opportunities to express their opinions and have them acted on. They are consulted and their views taken seriously in all new initiatives such as the design for the new art and design building. They are helping to develop a new aspect to the curriculum for global awareness, and contribute to the school council. Students also have frequent opportunities to serve on a wide range of advisory councils, such as the teaching and learning group which has representation from each year. Symposiums on various aspects of the school community life always have significant student representation as they are seen as key members of the decision making process. At the time of the inspection, students were observed on an interview panel as part of a staff appointment process, and their views were considered carefully. As part of an increased awareness on environmental issues, students requested and received meat-free days. In the boarding houses they made suggestions, which have been implemented, for a different arrangement for doors.

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

4.14 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.

4.15 The school ensures that the students are looked after in an extremely caring, safe environment. All staff work together to promote the students' welfare in a community in which the well-being of all its members is fundamental to its ethos. Of the parents who responded to the questionnaire, almost all felt that their children were happy, well looked after and kept safe in school.

4.16 The policy and procedures for safeguarding students are implemented efficiently across the school. All staff receive regular training in child protection, and understand whom to contact if they have any concerns. Designated senior staff who work across all the schools have developed strong links with statutory agencies. They value their professional advice which enables them to take the most appropriate action whenever necessary. Documentation scrutinised indicates that any concerns about students' safety are considered extremely seriously. Advice is sought and appropriate action taken. Detailed notes are maintained. Governors have an informed understanding of the efficiency with which the safeguarding procedures are implemented, and a governor takes a specific interest in safeguarding, meeting regularly with the designated staff to provide support and advice. However, the governing body has not carried out a formal annual review of the safeguarding policy, as required

4.17 All necessary precautions are taken to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards, and related documentation is meticulous. Health and safety measures are monitored regularly through the school's designated committee under strong leadership. Accidents and incidents are carefully recorded and analysed to enable improvement to be made as appropriate. Fire prevention procedures are thorough, and regular fire drills take place. Detailed risk assessments are prepared for activities, and visits are carefully planned.

4.18 Good systems and facilities are in place for students who are ill or injured which ensure that they receive appropriate care. The school has recognised that the staffing arrangements for the students' medical centre need to be improved, and a new structure is in the early stages of implementation. Appropriate care is given to students with SEND. The first aid policy is suitable and sufficient staff have qualifications.

- 4.19 The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained. Electronic records are backed up regularly and stored correctly for three years. Systems to follow up any student absences work well.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.20 The quality of boarding is excellent.
- 4.21 Outcomes for boarders are excellent. Boarders are poised, confident and erudite, engaging openly with one another, their teachers and visitors, and on occasions exhibiting a maturity well beyond their years. A powerful sense of community exists amongst the boarders who exhibit a genuine pride and affection for their school. This sense of community and equality is based upon the school's founding principles and manifests itself in many ways. It is particularly evident through the role of 'dorm bosses' in the dormitories where younger and older boarders share rooms. This long-standing tradition is largely responsible for Bedales' distinctive boarding ethos. Students from abroad feel welcomed, and younger boarders report that they are assimilated quickly and sensitively into the house community. They stated that they had friends in every year. Dorm bosses lead by example, acting as mentors. The atmosphere in houses is collaborative and principled, students and staff working together. This was epitomised by a boarder who said that no-one in Bedales is without a friend. This was endorsed by the responses to the student questionnaires which indicated that almost all boarders get on well together. The Year 13 house, where male and female boarders and day pupils share common facilities, begins to prepare students for life after school. The atmosphere is akin to a university hall of residence within a boarding school. Students have appropriate access to information about the world through daily newspapers, the use of televisions and a wide range of lectures. New boarders receive helpful formal induction. Boarders contribute to the life of the house through regular house councils, making suggestions and sharing community tasks.
- 4.22 Boarding provision and care are excellent. A rolling programme of improvements in the houses has ensured that they are bright, airy and well decorated. Shower and toilet facilities are good, clean and well maintained. Laundry arrangements work well, and students can use washing machines and dryers for their personal use. In preparation for life beyond school, students in Year 13 are responsible for their own laundry. Comfortable dormitory areas vary in size with a few twin rooms in each house, but the majority are larger rooms with no more than six beds. Rooms have individual bed units and all students have a lockable bedside locker. Questionnaire responses suggested that a minority of students felt that they could not keep their possessions safe. However, discussions with boarders and from inspectors' observations, it was evident that this was largely because students choose not to use their lockers. Well-furnished common room areas provide boarders with good social areas. Traditionally, houses were viewed as homes, and not places where students worked. However, appropriate work rooms are provided. Students can use dedicated tablet computers to contact their families safely, although questionnaire responses suggested that this is not always easy because of weak mobile phone and internet coverage in the area. Systems to dispense pocket money are efficient, and students can buy personal items when needed.
- 4.23 Each house has several kitchen areas which are well furnished with basic food preparation facilities including microwaves and toasters. Questionnaire responses suggesting that boarders were not happy with the quality of food and availability of drinks and snacks were not borne out by inspection evidence. Snacks and water

are available, and meals are nutritious with sufficient choice. Boarders have daily access to a comprehensive activities programme, and for those who remain over the weekend a suitable number of activities, both within and outside the campus, are available. Questionnaire responses about the balance of directed and free time suggested that boarders would prefer less direction. In interviews they confirmed that there were times when they could relax in the busy working week, and at a pastoral meeting, staff discussed encouraging a student to rest rather than take on an additional activity.

4.24 Overall, the effectiveness of arrangements for day to day welfare and safeguarding are excellent. Almost all boarders stated in the questionnaires that they felt safe in their houses. The school fully implements its safeguarding policy. The houses are appropriately staffed at all relevant times, and boarders report that they enjoy warm and positive relationships with those who are responsible for them. Designated staff are properly and regularly trained, and careful succession planning is in place to deal with forthcoming changes in personnel. Extremely good links have been established with key staff within the Hampshire social services. House staff have all received the necessary training, and in interviews, they exhibited an excellent understanding of their responsibilities for the boarders. Students have easy access to the school's counselling services and although an independent listener is available, no contact has been made. Policies to promote good behaviour and prevent bullying are clear and are implemented rigorously. Disciplinary issues are dealt with appropriately and meticulously recorded. Boarders report that bullying is rare, and in interviews they were adamant that the community as a whole will not tolerate bullying. Contrary to some questionnaire responses, discussions with students of all ages revealed that they were unanimous in the view that there are many adults to whom they can turn if they had any concerns. They are also aware of relevant external agencies who can offer help as indicated on house notice boards. A powerful informal support network amongst students also exists, largely based upon the mixed-age dormitory system and the pro-active role of dorm bosses. Housemasters and housemistresses are approachable and readily available, and matrons offer valuable pastoral support. Boarders' medical needs are well met. School doctors offer regular surgeries, and the health centre is professionally staffed 24 hours a day. Recent pupil concerns about the staffing of the health centre are being addressed by changes in its leadership. All medicines are properly recorded and securely stored, and medical confidentiality is meticulously observed. Welfare and health and safety policies are comprehensive and clear to all members of the community. Risk assessments are thorough. Parental permission is routinely sought for external activities. Regular fire drills take place in boarding time, and efficient arrangements are in place to prevent fire.

4.25 The leadership and management of boarding are excellent. The school's senior leadership have effective oversight of the boarding provision. A new post for head of boarding is to be introduced at the beginning of the next academic year to provide even stronger communication across the houses. The arrangements for managing the houses work extremely well, with shared responsibilities between housemasters or mistresses. Their collaborative leadership ensures that students are well cared for and enjoy their boarding experiences. Senior house leaders are well supported by additional residential staff, matrons and assistant staff for evening sessions. Regular formal management meetings take place to deal with common issues and decide upon a consistent approach across the houses. All house staff understand and support school policies, and are clearly aware how to contact senior management on house pastoral issues. Links between house staff and academic

staff are extremely good, and any concerns about students' welfare are quickly shared as appropriate. All staff involved in boarding have opportunities to undertake professional training. Good contact is maintained with parents through email and telephone. Parents' views are considered at all levels of boarding, through questionnaires and involvement in forums on a variety of school developments. The detailed and comprehensive boarding review document, which includes ideas from students and parents, is evidence of the school's commitment to boarding and its continued improvement. In their responses to the questionnaires, parents and pupils were overwhelmingly appreciative of the boarding experience.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The governors have ensured that the school is extremely successful in achieving its aims, firmly based on its founder's objectives. Members of the governing body, under shrewd leadership, have an excellent range of skills to support the school. Many attended the school or have children who attend, and are highly committed to maintain its distinctive ethos. Governors have attended relevant training, including awareness of child protection. A strong committee structure enables the governors to maintain effective oversight of all aspects of the school's management and development. Through prudent financial planning, they have ensured that sufficient investment has been made in high quality staff, imaginatively developed accommodation and the provision of excellent resources. Strategic planning is particularly strong, identifying innovative yet realistic areas for improvement to enhance the students' experiences rooted firmly into the school's aims.
- 5.3 The governors have a detailed understanding of the workings of the school. They receive informative reports from senior leaders and presentations from staff on their specialist areas. Governors observe lessons and are frequent visitors to the school, attending informal and formal events. They share their specialist skills and interests with the school community, such as being involved in whole school community action days or giving lectures. Committee meeting minutes indicate that they evaluate the school's provision carefully which enables them to challenge and support senior leaders for the students' benefit. Governors have access to the school's policies but they do not currently review them systematically. Governors have recognised this omission and plans are already in place for policy review to be implemented in the term following the inspection.
- 5.4 Governors are effective in discharging almost all their legal responsibilities. Minutes of governors' meetings show a detailed understanding of the effectiveness of the implementation of safeguarding procedures. Their understanding is strengthened through the well-established links between a specific governor who supports the school in safeguarding matters. However, the governing body has not conducted an annual review of the safeguarding policy as required.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.6 Since the previous inspection, senior leadership and management responsibilities have been clarified and strengthened. Leadership and management are now highly successful in ensuring that the school achieves its aims to provide an exciting learning community in which students thrive as confident individuals, well prepared for life beyond school. Parents greatly appreciate the leadership and management of the school. All school policies, implemented and monitored effectively, reflect management's core concern for students' welfare, safety and happiness.

- 5.7 The school's visionary and approachable leadership team provides clear educational direction which is demonstrated in the high level of the students' achievements and their excellent personal development. All staff strongly support the vision.
- 5.8 A particular feature of the school is its self-awareness, always considering how to improve and innovate for the benefit of the students and the whole community. Bedales is a mutual learning society, at ease with itself, yet determined to maintain a momentum for continuous development. The whole school strategic plan is formulated each year, based on a series of collaborative meetings from all areas of the school which include the students and the administrative teams. These are underpinned by the five strands based on the founding principles. This has ensured that the whole community is clear about the school's direction and the reasons for it. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection when not all students were willing to co-operate with the school's agreed norms and developments.
- 5.9 The quality of academic and pastoral leaders and middle managers is excellent. Departments work collaboratively, sharing their professional expertise and enthusiasm. Since the previous inspection, particular emphasis has been placed on improving the quality of teaching and ensuring that teachers understand students' individual needs, and incorporating appropriate tasks for them in their lessons. Whole staff and departmental training has been extremely successful in achieving this aim. Academic departments are dynamic, routinely sharing expertise, observing lessons and considering ways to develop their subjects.
- 5.10 The school is extremely successful in recruiting high quality staff and supporting them in their professional development. An induction process is in place for new staff who feel that they receive excellent guidance and gain a clear understanding of the nature of the school before they arrive. Significant funds are invested in training for staff. The regular appraisal system supports and challenges staff. Plans are in place to link these appraisals more strongly to training.
- 5.11 Systems to check the suitability of staff, governors and volunteers are thorough, and the central register is maintained meticulously.
- 5.12 The school has excellent links with parents, guardians and carers. In their responses to the questionnaire, parents expressed overwhelming satisfaction for almost all aspects of the education and care provided for their children. Close constructive relationships with parents are maintained in accordance with the school's aims to make them part of the whole school community. A tradition exists of consulting parents via bespoke forums, and regular professionally run surveys of parental views are undertaken. Documents seen during the inspection show that the school takes care to handle any parental concerns swiftly and sensitively, in line with its published procedures. Senior managers and staff are easily accessible at school or via email. The community feel of the school is greatly enhanced by the warm welcome given to visitors and parents by the administrative and support teams.
- 5.13 Parents have good opportunities to be involved with the work and progress of their children. They were involved in the 'Healthy Choices' initiative, and the school has increased parental consultations on such issues as drugs, alcohol and the use of the internet. They attend formal and informal events, and their expertise is harnessed as they offer lectures or help with school projects. The parents of current and prospective pupils are provided with all the required information about the school through its website and informative brochures. A comprehensive weekly e-bulletin keeps parents up-to-date with all the school's activities.

- 5.14 Formal reports to parents are provided each term and these are thorough and helpful. They give useful information on what has been studied as well as guidance on the areas for improvement. Consultation meetings with parents are regular and frequent, and parents are always welcome to contact the school for additional information on their children's progress.
- 5.15 The family feel of Bedales is enhanced by the strong and active Bedales Parents Association which involves all three schools. The Bedales Schools' Partnership Principles statement establishes a clear foundation for a fruitful partnership between school, children and parents that supports the healthy relationships that underpin the whole community.

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