



BEARWOOD COLLEGE



ISI Standard Inspection Report 2011

Independent Schools Inspectorate




In the period since our last ISI Inspection, Bearwood College has grown and developed considerably. We have established important new aspects of College – the Nursery, Pre-Prep and Prep Schools. Our intention is to offer those special qualities of Bearwood, both academic and pastoral, to children from 3 months to 19 years and build a successful and fulfilling community for all. Bearwood College is a beautiful, safe and stimulating environment where individual talents can be developed to the full.

Inspections are an important part of the life of a school and we take the recommendations of the inspectors seriously and positively. You will see later in this document that Stephen Aiano, our Headmaster, will address these specifically to give you a view on our immediate and medium term plans.

One of the roles of the Board of Governors is to offer support and guidance to the senior management of the College. We seek to do this by spending time with the senior management team, heads of department and in classroom and extra-curricular sessions with subject teachers and scholars. Above all, the Board's aim and responsibility is to see that through the competent running of the College every child has the opportunity to thrive and develop to their full potential. It was gratifying to see that the inspection team recognised those goals in action during their visit.

As is always the case with any inspection it is vital to study the commentary, implement recommendations, identify other opportunities for development and build for the future. This means identifying areas of excellence, which the inspectors did, and ensuring that excellence continues to spread throughout College. Our scholars, as ever, are our most important asset and to see them praised throughout the inspection report is very pleasing. This indicates that one of the objectives of the College for a free-flowing, variable yet focussed interaction between scholar, school and home continues to be beneficial to the community at Bearwood.

As we look to the future, these are exciting times for Bearwood College and we will continue to develop and improve the school, reporting to all our stakeholders on a regular basis and ensuring that the young citizens who leave College have fulfilled their potential both academically and in a wider context in readiness for the challenges that will face them in later life.



Elizabeth Langley
Chairman of Governors





INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

BEARWOOD COLLEGE

Full Name of College	Bearwood College	Age Range	0 - 19	
DfE Number	872/6001	Total Number of Pupils	489	
EYFS Number	EY304376	Gender of Pupils	Mixed (348 boys; 141 girls)	
Registered Charity Number	285287	Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 70	5-11: 34
			3-5 (EYFS): 57	11-18: 328
Address	Bearwood College Bearwood Wokingham Berkshire RG41 5BG	Number of Day Pupils	Total: 409	Capacity for flexi-boarding: 20
		Number of Boarders	Total: 80	
			Full: 70	Weekly: 10
Telephone Number	0118 974 8300	Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Lorraine Beamish	
Fax Number	0118 977 3186	EYFS Gender	Mixed	
Email Address	headmaster@bearwoodcollege.berks.sch.uk	Inspection dates	04 May 2011 to 05 May 2011 18 May 2011 to 20 May 2011	
Headmaster	Mr Stephen Aiano			
Chair of Governors	Mrs Elizabeth Langley			



PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *STANDARD ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an *INITIAL* two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day *FINAL* (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in February 2005.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government 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*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

*These Standards Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

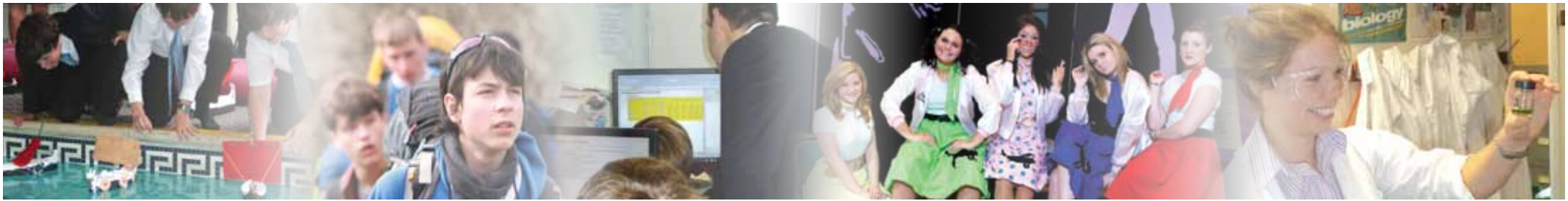
The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

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

The inspection of boarding was not carried out in conjunction with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills, and the report does not contain 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 and development in general. The full Ofsted report refers to an inspection in November 2009 and can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Children's social care/Boarding school.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will 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.



CONTENTS

1	THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
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2	THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL	1
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(a)	Main findings	1
(b)	Action points	2
(i)	Compliance with regulatory requirements.....	2
(ii)	Recommendations for further improvement	2

3	THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	2
----------	---	----------

(a)	The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills	2
(b)	The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	3
(c)	The contribution of teaching	4

4	THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	4
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(a)	The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.....	4
(b)	The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety.....	5
(c)	The quality of boarding education	6

5	THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	6
----------	---	----------

(a)	The quality of governance	6
(b)	The quality of leadership and management	7
(c)	The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians	7

6	THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE.....	8
----------	---	----------

(a)	The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	8
(b)	The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	8
(c)	The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	8
(d)	Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	9

INSPECTION EVIDENCE.....	9
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1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

1.1 Bearwood College is a day and boarding school situated near Wokingham in Berkshire. Founded in 1827 as the Royal Merchant Navy School, it moved to its present site in 1921. In 1980 the school separated from the Royal Merchant Navy School Foundation and is now a charitable trust, administered by a board of governors. Bearwood is co-educational throughout, with 489 pupils, of whom approximately seven-tenths are boys. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) has 127 children and Years 1 to 6 of the preparatory (prep) school comprise 34 pupils. The senior school has 328 pupils, of whom 66 are in the sixth form and 80 are boarders.

1.2 Since its previous inspection in 2005, the school has established an EYFS section and developed the prep school. It has also redeveloped its library provision.

1.3 The ability profile of the prep school is in line with the national average. In the senior school, the ability profile is above the national average to GCSE and below the national average in the sixth form. Most pupils are from the local area and from families with professional or business backgrounds. One hundred and five pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), forty-eight of whom receive specialist learning support from the school. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The vast majority of pupils are of white British origin, with a few pupils from overseas, twenty-eight of whom receive support in the development of their English from the English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) department.

1.4 The school aims to enable pupils to achieve personal success through a combination of academic and extra-curricular programmes, and to foster the qualities and achievements that equip a young person for the challenge of independent and responsible adult life.

1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used by the school from the EYFS to Year 6 and throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the senior school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

Senior School

School	NC name
First Form	Year 7
Second Form	Year 8
Third Form	Year 9
Fourth Form	Year 10
Fifth Form	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13



2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

2.1 Bearwood College strongly meets its aim of enabling pupils to achieve success academically and in activity beyond the classroom. It has significantly raised pupils' attainment in public examinations and enables them to achieve success in an interestingly wide range of activities. Pupils' achievement is good and in their learning they are helped to develop skills that not only contribute to examination success but prepare them for adult life, although their application of information and communication technology (ICT) skills remains underdeveloped. The increase in academic performance has been supported by an improvement in teaching, the standard of which is good overall. At its best, teaching involves pupils actively in lessons and challenges them towards higher level thinking. This was not consistently the case in the less successful lessons. The assessment of pupils' work contributes to their success. Pupils benefit from a good academic curriculum and an outstanding extra-curricular programme. The curriculum includes a wide range of subjects for the size of school, offers pupils challenge and supports their learning needs well in respect of those with LDD or ESOL, and those of higher ability. The careers programme does not provide appropriate coverage for all ages, however.

“Pupils' personal development is excellent. From the youngest in the prep school to Year 13, pupils are engaging and unfailingly courteous. They clearly enjoy their lives at Bearwood”

“They have a strong moral awareness, reflected in their sensitive understanding of each other's strengths and weaknesses”

2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent. From the youngest in the prep school to Year 13, pupils are engaging and unfailingly courteous. They clearly enjoy their lives at Bearwood. They have outstanding relationships with each other and their teachers, and in meetings with inspectors, were keen to share their enthusiasms and their challenges. They have a strong moral awareness, reflected in their sensitive understanding of each other's strengths and weaknesses. Pupils benefit from outstanding pastoral care, centred on the houses in the senior school and the form tutor system in the prep school. In responses to the pupils' pre-inspection questionnaire, pupils were positive about many aspects of the school. Some pupils were concerned about the amount of homework, the fairness of sanctions, the school's responses to their views and boarders' weekend activities. Inspectors found that homework is well

monitored, sanctions are fairly given and pupils' views receive due consideration. Inspectors agree that weekend activities for boarders are limited. Outstanding support is given to pupils' personal development through the school's pastoral care, and health and safety practices.

“Bearwood has an excellent relationship with parents”

2.3 The governors and leaders of the school strongly support its aims. Governance, and leadership and management are good. Governors and senior managers work well together and the quality of management is reflected in the school's growth, the developed role of middle managers and in the way the recommendations of the last report have been positively addressed. Regulatory requirements, including the safeguarding of pupils, are rigorously monitored. Bearwood has an excellent relationship with parents. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses parents were highly supportive of the school, particularly extolling its nurturing of pupils' talents, high quality of care and management. Criticisms of the handling of concerns were not supported by inspection evidence. Parents of boarders were concerned about some aspects of boarding, notably resources and decoration in the boys' house and weekend activities for younger boarders, and the inspection team agree with these views.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Share the best practice of dynamic, interactive lessons across all subjects.

2. Enable pupils to develop their use of ICT across the curriculum.

3. Review the careers programme to provide appropriate coverage for all age groups.

4. Write a strategic development plan for the EYFS with a focus on monitoring, evaluation of initiatives and regular communication across the setting.

5. Develop the EYFS outside learning environment to enable access and free-flow movement between the indoors and outdoors.

“Pupils are well educated”



3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills

3.1 Pupils are well educated, in accordance with the school's aim of enabling optimum success through a combination of academic and extra-curricular programmes. Their achievement is good in both academic subjects and in extra-curricular activities that comprise a wide range of sports, artistic groups, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (D of E) scheme and the Combined Cadet Force (CCF).

3.2 The pupils have strong numeracy skills, with interesting examples seen in an A-level business studies manufacturing case study where they confidently interpreted data to justify their answers. Pupils' literacy is good. This was exemplified by pupils in Years 1 and 10 in their interpretation of character through well-chosen words and images. Pupils show good subject knowledge and the ability to apply this in subjects as diverse as history and biology. Pupils often manifest enjoyment in their learning, particularly where they can work co-operatively or undertake independent tasks in subjects such as design technology or theatre studies. Pupils use ICT with ease in subjects such as graphics, in history projects and in the development of 'mind maps' for revision by those with LDD. General application of ICT across the curriculum, however, is less developed, and thus pupils are not able to practise these skills in a wider context. Pupils have limited opportunities to pursue more open investigative tasks to hone their abilities in critical thinking and problem solving. Pupils show good levels of creativity across the full age range, from imaginative



“Pupils from all year groups enthuse about the extra-curricular programme, which is founded on freedom of choice and is a clear strength of the school”

role play in a Year 6 science lesson to the high standard of A-level art and photography displayed around the school.

3.3 Beyond the classroom, pupils achieve very highly in an excellent programme of extra-curricular activities. Notable pupil successes over the last three years have included reaching national cheerleading finals, becoming hovercrafting champions and winning a national poetry competition. The D of E scheme is also thriving, with levels of achievement significantly exceeding expectations in 2011. Pupils from all year groups enthuse about the extra-curricular programme, which is founded on freedom of choice and is a clear strength of the school.

3.4 At the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be

high in relation to national age-related expectations. This level of attainment as judged indicates that pupils in the prep school make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2008 to 2010. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. In GCSE examinations, results have been good when compared with the national average for maintained schools, and at A level, they have been similar to the national average. At GCSE, more than a quarter of the grades were A* or A, and at A level, nearly half of the grades were A*, A or B. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make good progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability, as supported by nationally standardised measures of progress. Good progress was also seen throughout the school in lesson observations, in pupils' written work and in curriculum interviews with them. Pupils with LDD achieve equally well, as confirmed by nationally standardised measures of progress. This good progress stems from the strong and comprehensive support provided by the study support centre, reinforced by the focus on individuals by classroom teachers. Particularly good progress by pupils with LDD in written work was noted in history and English. For the few pupils with ESOL, a parallel system of needs analysis and support also facilitates good progress, an example of which was seen in the strong conversational skills of pupils in Year 10, speaking in their second language. Pupils of higher ability also achieve well, as confirmed by their progress, using nationally standardised measures of progress. With individual support from subject teachers, these pupils are able to analyse and argue at a high level when they are given the opportunity.

“At GCSE, more than a quarter of the grades were A* or A, and at A level, nearly half of the grades were A*, A or B”

3.5 Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They clearly enjoy their studies, particularly where they are working on individual or group tasks where they can use their judgement and initiative. This was strongly reflected in Year 8 drama, with pupils assessing each other's performances, and in Year 12 biology, in pupils' analysis of tissue adaptation. Workbooks and files throughout the school demonstrate pupils' good organisational skills.

3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)

3.6 The academic curriculum is good and the programme of extra-curricular activities is excellent, supporting the school's aim of offering a broad and balanced curriculum suited to all abilities. The curriculum makes a strong contribution to the achievement and personal development of pupils. The prep school curriculum is based on the National Curriculum but with additional subjects and specialist teachers for languages, ICT and music in the higher



years. In Years 7 to 9 pupils study a wide range of subjects, which enhances their general education and prepares them for the GCSE years, in which subject choice is wide. At A level, there are some limitations in choice, but a good range of subjects, including new ones such as psychology, economics and film studies, is still available to underpin pupils' preparation for the next stage of their education. For both GCSE and A level the school operates an option process initiated by a pupil survey, thus maximising flexibility in meeting the choices and needs of individual pupils.

3.7 The school has developed a clear plan for the delivery of personal, social, citizenship and health education (PSCHE) for pupils of all ages, which reflects its aims and ethos. The PSCHE programme is good and taught well by tutors, thus integrating welfare and personal development. Careers advice includes a personalised career choice programme in Year 9 and talks on the GAP Year for older pupils. The programme does not provide appropriate coverage for all ages, however.

“The PSCHE programme is good and taught well by tutors, thus integrating welfare and personal development”

3.8 The curriculum is well supported by the excellent work of the study support centre and also by the ESOL department. The strength of the support was acknowledged by pupils in Years 8 and 10, who take great pride in the improvements they have made in accessing the curriculum. Able pupils benefit from opportunities such as mathematics challenges and a chemistry competition, while for Year 12 an



“Pupils have good attitudes to learning”

enrichment programme provides academic extension and general interest lectures. Prep school pupils also benefit from the work of the study support centre and from the environmental understanding programme, an integral part of its curriculum.

3.9 The educational provision for all pupils is significantly enhanced by a rich programme of extra-curricular activities in both the prep and senior schools. This comprises unusual activities like silversmithing, and a wide range of sports, including water polo, hovercrafting and show jumping. Some activities, such as clay pigeon shooting, contribute towards the D of E. This, along with the CCF, provides many opportunities for expeditions and camping trips. The CCF provision is particularly productive in that it also enables pupils to gain BTEC certification. Other off-site opportunities include visits to see music and drama performances, while the school's professional theatre enables pupils to interact with visiting theatre companies. The school fosters strong community links and pupils support many initiatives, including helping at local

primary schools, music performances in the locality and assisting senior citizens gain confidence with their ICT skills.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

3.10 Teaching is good overall and meets the school's aim to improve learning opportunities for all its pupils, whilst also making an effective contribution to their achievements. Of the lessons observed in the prep and senior schools, a significant amount of the teaching was good or excellent. Excellent lessons were characterised by vitality, variety and pace, with a sympathetic, but challenging, understanding of pupils' needs. In these lessons, independent thought and creativity were skilfully developed. The minority, which were satisfactory, were dominated by the teacher, often lacked excitement of shared discovery and did not challenge pupils towards higher level thinking.



“Excellent lessons were characterised by vitality, variety and pace, with a sympathetic, but challenging, understanding of pupils’ needs”

3.11 Teachers have good subject knowledge and a strong commitment to helping their pupils to become confident learners.

In the lessons observed, good account was taken of those needing extra help or benefiting from extension work; individual help is given by teachers to enable progress in line with the whole class. The acquisition of study skills, such as note taking and ‘mind mapping’, are a feature of the quality of the teaching; pupils take notes as a matter of course. In the best lessons, time is managed carefully so that much is achieved without pupils feeling rushed. Teachers’ fluent use of ICT enhances pupils’ learning but, in the lessons observed, pupils’ use of ICT was not fully integrated into learning. The school has responded positively to the recommendation in the previous report on schemes of work and teaching strategies. Schemes of work and lesson planning across both the prep and senior schools are conscientiously set out and applied, and departmental handbooks give clear guidance on teaching and learning strategies. The weaknesses in teaching raised at the previous inspection have been very well resolved.

3.12 Facilities and resources overall for teaching and learning are satisfactory. The school is aware, however, that these are not fully developed, particularly in some science subjects. Other areas, for example the grandeur of the mansion, the chapel and the capacious modern theatre, considerably add to pupils’ educational experiences. In response to shortcomings noted in the previous report, the library has improved and is now favourably commented upon by pupils; books, periodicals and computers are easily accessible in pleasant surroundings. Care is taken to meet pupils’ interests and capabilities, and library lessons for younger year groups, book displays and visits from professional authors all contribute to encouraging pupils to become committed readers.

“Classroom management in the lessons observed was consistently excellent. Mutual respect and co-operative learning abound; pupils recognise and respect the efforts teachers make on their behalf”

3.13 Classroom management in the lessons observed was consistently excellent. Mutual respect and co-operative learning abound; pupils recognise and respect the efforts teachers make on their behalf. Pupils are given an appropriate volume of work in class and for homework. Suitable systems for assessment are in place and pupils understand their levels of achievement, as seen in a most constructive Year 7 tutorial. Each department in the senior school interprets the whole-school marking policy according to its needs. In the work scrutinised, examples of excellent marking were noted. This quality of marking is thorough and gives detailed advice to pupils on how to improve their work. This high standard is not yet prevalent across all subjects in the school.

3.14 The school has responded very well to the recommendation in the previous report to improve the use of available assessment information in order to monitor more precisely the progress of pupils and identify underachievement. The system of ‘pluses and minuses’ and aspirational grades is used effectively by all staff and is a development well regarded by pupils and parents. In response to the questionnaire, some pupils indicated that they feel that too much homework is set. In discussion with inspectors, pupils did not express these concerns and the effective and regular monitoring of homework was seen to be the norm.



4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS’ PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

4.1 The quality of pupils’ personal development is outstanding and reflects the aims of the school to help them progress in character and maturity.

4.2 Pupils’ sense of the spiritual is outstanding. The chapel plays a central role in the school community, appreciated by believers and non-believers alike. Services are valued and hymn singing is enthusiastic. Pupils with differing beliefs feel happy to share views with the chaplain and value his non-judgemental stance. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the influence on their daily lives of the beauty of the campus, and senior school scientists were animated in discussion about the ‘Science versus God’ debate and the future of medicine. Self-image was interestingly explored by Year 9 art pupils in their creation of expressionistic clay masks. Pupils’ self-awareness is demonstrated

by their willingness to discuss both their successes and difficulties, as in a discussion with those in Year 5.

4.3 The pupils' moral development is excellent. Their moral values are strengthened by the quality of relationships throughout the school. Older pupils play a key role in supporting younger pupils, acting as role models and mentors. Pupils are very well behaved and have developed a clear sense of right and wrong. The PSCHÉ programme encourages pupils to debate moral issues, such as how to make appropriate choices when experiencing peer pressure. In the prep school, pupils showed a strong awareness of moral dilemmas in biotechnology and the use of stem cell research. They are also proactive in supporting the 'green' curriculum through recycling and practical investigations of wind energy.

“Pupils are very well behaved and have developed a clear sense of right and wrong”

4.4 Pupils' social development is outstanding. From the prep school through to the sixth form, pupils have a high sense of social responsibility. They happily take on roles which support the school community, whether formally, for example as school or house prefects, or helping out in the classroom. In the senior school, both day and boarding pupils' sense of responsibility within their community is clear in their commitment to their houses. In response to the questionnaire, some pupils felt that the school does not listen to their views, though through the house and school councils, they are given good opportunities for expressing their opinions

and they receive positive feedback. Senior pupils undertake challenging roles in the CCF which enhance their awareness of leadership responsibility. Pupils are sensitive to those less fortunate than themselves. They also appreciate the needs of the wider world through wide-ranging fundraising activities, including a 'muft' day in aid of the Children's Liver Disease Foundation, and through support of community projects in Brazil and Borneo. Pupils in the prep school showed real awareness of social responsibility in their discussions of how they would respond to provocation. Pupils show understanding of political and social issues, such as the European Union and the ethics of advertisements.

4.5 Pupils' cultural development is excellent. They show a mature understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This was exemplified in the interaction and obvious friendships between boarders from different cultures in both boarding houses. Pupils report how much they appreciate learning about other cultures through whole-school themed days based around national cuisine. Their sensitivity to other cultures and religions is exemplified in a prep school display on induction into religious faith. Cultural stimuli abound



and pupils enjoy The Creative Work of the Week, vibrant art displays in prep school classrooms and the rich musical life of the school. Pupils appreciate the culture of the past through such activities as a visit to Roman baths in Bath and a Year 10 history group's study of the role of the secret police in Stalin's Russia.

“Staff with pastoral responsibilities are highly committed, and take pride in providing supportive and effective pastoral care”

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

4.6 Pastoral care and the arrangements for welfare, health and safety are outstanding throughout the school and make an excellent contribution to the personal development of the pupils, particularly the boarders. The pastoral care enjoyed by pupils clearly meets the school's aim to allow and encourage individuals to thrive. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst pupils themselves is a strength of the school. Staff with pastoral responsibilities are highly committed, and take pride in providing supportive and effective pastoral care within the house structure in the senior school and the form structure in the prep school. Strong leadership by heads of houses and prep school tutors, together with good teamwork and thorough systems, ensures that pupils' academic and social development is carefully monitored and recorded. Through house events, competitions and prep school activities, pupils develop a strong sense of identity and loyalty. For example, at sports day during the inspection, all participants



in events were supported and valued by their house peers and house staff for their efforts, whether they came first or last. Pupils of all ages report that, as well as the formal system of support, they have a wide range of adults with whom they can discuss any issue. The school rules are clearly stated and pupils understand behavioural boundaries; inspection evidence did not support the view expressed by some pupils in response to the questionnaire that sanctions are unfairly given. Anti-bullying procedures are reinforced in PSCHÉ sessions and pupils report that the school handles any bullying concerns promptly, in accordance with the anti-bullying policy. The school is strongly committed to the care of its pupils and works closely with parents in supporting pupils' development, including publishing guidance on a range of pastoral issues.

“The pupils' moral development is excellent”

4.7 The school's practice and procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust. The comprehensive child protection policy is well known by staff and senior pupils. Training in child protection for the designated officer and the staff is up-to-date. Health and safety policies and procedures, including fire safety, are thorough and regularly reviewed. The access plan for those with LDD is appropriate and

up-to-date. Pupils have a good choice of meals and menus support healthy eating. Pupils' views at the mess committee contribute to improvements in catering. The medical centre is well managed and strongly supports pupils' medical and pastoral care. Physical exercise is strongly promoted through sports and physical education, and pupils stated how much they value the range and availability of sporting activity. Admission and attendance registers are maintained and stored correctly.

4.(c) The quality of boarding education

4.8 Boarders at Bearwood enjoy a good boarding experience. Their personal and academic development is significantly enhanced by their boarding life, fulfilling the school's aim for boarders of developing the whole person.

“Outstanding elements of boarding are the quality of relationships amongst boarders, and between boarders and boarding staff, the cultural harmony within the houses and the clear happiness of boarders, who report how much they enjoy their boarding experience”

4.9 Outstanding elements of boarding are the quality of relationships amongst boarders, and between boarders and boarding staff, the cultural harmony within the houses and the clear happiness of boarders, who report how much they enjoy their boarding experience. Boarders mix well with each other within year groups and, notably, across year groups. They speak of the friends they have made throughout the house and the opportunities boarding gives them for understanding and appreciating the different cultures represented. Equally, boarders enjoy strong and supportive relationships with the boarding staff. Respect for the boarding staff is evident, and an ease of engagement was reflected in the natural conversation and banter at a house meeting where success in the annual sports day was celebrated.

4.10 Boarders also speak about the improvements they have made in their academic development. They attribute this to the disciplined study environment in the house and, also, to the support they receive from the heads of the houses and the house tutors in relation to specific academic subjects. They also value support from older boarders in this regard.

4.11 The boarding houses for senior girls and boys are contrasting in character. The decoration and furnishing of the girls' house are of a higher standard than those in the boys' house. The overall physical environment of the boys' house is satisfactory, whilst that of the girls' house is good. The school has responded positively to the recommendations of the most recent boarding welfare inspection, carried out by Ofsted, though parts of the boys' house remain underdeveloped. All boarders report ease of communication with their families and for academic research through

a variety of electronic systems, but equally appreciate the internet safeguarding protocols. Personalisation of bedrooms is the norm, and boarders enjoy comfortable social spaces and games facilities.

“Pupils' social development is outstanding”

4.12 Whilst boarders enjoy the extensive range of extra-curricular activities during the school week, including Saturdays, younger boarders, in particular, report that the activity programme on Sunday is limited. Boarders have access to school facilities such as the swimming pool and ICT rooms, and outings are arranged, but the inspection team agrees with the boarders' views on Sunday activities. Boarders feel that their views are carefully considered by the boarding teams and appreciate the openness with which house matters can be discussed. Boarders enjoy well-balanced, nutritious meals, as well as being able to make snacks in their houses. Above all, boarders confirmed how much they value the individual care and support given to them by the heads of houses, house tutors and matrons, which, together with the high quality of friendships and house spirit, make their boarding experience very happy and rewarding, and contribute strongly to their personal development.

5

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

5.1 The governing body gives good support to the aims and management of the school and, in the last two years, the commitment of the governors in this regard has been



“Pupils' cultural development is excellent”

vital to the continuance of the school on its historic site. The significant improvement in academic standards since the previous inspection and the development of the EYFS and prep school reflect the governors' oversight of educational, financial and physical planning, including staffing, resources and accommodation needs, through committees that support and inform the work of the full governing body. The opportunity for new governor appointments and the updating of the development plan have been restricted by recent challenges but the governors and senior managers have now been able to prioritise additional governor expertise and detailed development planning. In response to the questionnaire, parents showed strong support for the governors' commitment in securing the school's future.

5.2 Governors know the school well, both from the reports of the headmaster and the head of the prep school, and from their regular involvement in the life of

the school. Governors sit in on lessons, discuss matters with heads of department at their meetings and attend school events, all of which inform their awareness of the development of the school. It is clear from the minutes of their meetings that governors offer both support and challenge to senior management, in the best interests of pupils' education.

5.3 Governors discharge their responsibilities effectively. Pupil welfare is carefully monitored and the central record for the appointment of all staff, governors and volunteers is regularly reviewed by a governor. Individual governors have oversight of specific areas of the school such as health and safety, Early Years education and the safeguarding of pupils. All governors are involved in the annual review of child protection and all other school policies.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

5.4 Leadership and management are good and strongly support the school's aims for pupils' educational and personal

development. The improvement in academic results, the excellent standards in pupils' personal development and extra-curricular activities, and the establishment of the EYFS and prep school are all testament to the quality of management.

“Leadership and management are good and strongly support the school's aims for pupils' educational and personal development”

5.5 Senior managers have shown commitment, wisdom and resilience. They ensure that policies are effectively implemented and that health and safety practices are regularly monitored. They give very high priority to the safeguarding of pupils. The culture of child protection throughout the school and the two boarding houses is clear; senior leaders ensure a high quality of training for staff in child protection and health and safety.

5.6 Indicative of the quality of the management of the school is the response to the recommendations of the previous

inspection. The monitoring of pupil progress has been closely linked to the introduction of current grade assessments and aspirational grades, and pupils report that these have helped them to focus more clearly on academic targets. Parents also confirm that the regular reporting of grades helps them to understand their children's progress. The checking of pupils' progress has been complemented by a focus on the monitoring of teaching, the quality of which has improved in a number of areas since the previous inspection. These strategies have underpinned the improvement in public examination performance and the good standards of the prep school.



5.7 In response to other recommendations, the monitoring and leadership role of heads of department has been strengthened and the management of departments is good. Expertise is shared in relation to teaching and learning strategies through departmental and whole-school in-service training, and through a growing culture of lesson observation in other disciplines. Monitoring of marking and written feedback to pupils is not consistent in all departments. The school has responded well to the recommendation in relation to the library, and this now successfully supports the academic life of the school.

The school has responded well to the previous inspection. The development plan is well structured, with areas for targets achieved and long-term aims, although it currently lacks detail in a number of areas. Now that recent difficulties are over, senior managers and heads of department have started to work together on the detailed planning required for the school's next phase of development.

“The school prides itself, justifiably, on its effective communication with parents”

5.8 Systems for the induction and support of new staff are effective, as are the programmes for appraisal and professional development of all staff. Recruitment is managed efficiently, and the procedures for checking all school staff and governors are thorough and very well documented in the single central register.

5.(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians

5.9 Links with parents, carers and guardians continue to be excellent. The school's aim to encourage parents to be part of its community, supporting the education of their children, is thus fulfilled.

5.10 The good response to the pre-inspection questionnaire confirmed parents' commitment to the school and their appreciation of being involved in its life and work. Parents feel that the school is a home-from-home for many pupils and that this is extended to their families. A few parents expressed concern about help for pupils with LDD and about encouragement to be involved in the life of the school. The inspection team found no evidence to support these views.



Bearwood College Governors 2011

“Reports to parents are comprehensive, clear and personalised”

5.11 The school prides itself, justifiably, on its effective communication with parents. The headmaster takes a strong lead in ensuring that parents of current and prospective pupils are given all relevant information and are kept fully informed about school life through parental handbooks and informative weekly newsletters for both the prep and senior schools. These newsletters celebrate pupils' achievements and inform parents about school life, and can be accessed in the parent portal on the school website or in hard copy. Additionally, surveys of parental views on potential changes in school policy are carried out, with appropriate feedback provided to parents. Seminars on aspects of parenting are another example of the school's positive partnership with parents.

5.12 Reports to parents are comprehensive, clear and personalised. Straightforward guidance is given about the meaning of grades, and parents feel confident that their children's attainment and progress are being carefully monitored. Parents' evenings are strategically scheduled throughout the year to help pupils and parents in academic decision making. Parents report that they find these evenings both pleasant and useful.

5.13 The parents' association provides a strong social and fundraising network for the Bearwood community. Its lively website is indicative of its active support for the school. For example, the association has recently supported a 24-hour organ playing marathon in aid of the chapel organ restoration appeal.

5.14 Responses to the questionnaire showed that parents are very positive about the school's education of their children. A very high proportion confirmed that they feel the school promotes worthwhile attitudes and views, offers their children an exceptional extra-curricular programme and is well managed. A few parents were critical of the handling of concerns. The inspection team found no evidence to support this view. The formal complaints policy is appropriate and is made available to all parents; details of complaints and outcomes are suitably recorded. Some parents had concerns about the quality of provision for boarders. The inspection team found that standards of decoration and resources in the boys' house are satisfactory and that weekend activities for younger boarders are limited.

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



6 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

6.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

“The curriculum is fun and child-centred, and children's ideas, individual needs and interests are developed and extended through a variety of sensory and investigative experiences”

6.1 The overall effectiveness of the EYFS is good, with a sense of inclusivity and family community, providing a warm, friendly and caring atmosphere in line with the school values. The setting aims to provide a breadth of experience, with education of quality, and succeeds in this: the curriculum is fun and child-centred, and children's ideas, individual needs and interests are developed and extended through a variety of sensory and investigative experiences. The needs of all children are met well. Since the previous inspection, outside facilities, activity bases and partnership with parents have been significantly developed. An initiative to promote learning through outdoor experiences in a woodland environment has been introduced, showing a commitment to continuous improvement.

6.(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.2 The quality of leadership and management is good. Cohesive teams



work together to implement policies effectively and securely, including those for safeguarding and equality. However, there are inconsistencies in resourcing and practice between the two Nursery units and the Reception class; EYFS team meetings are irregular and there is little self-evaluation and development planning. Staff ratios are good and all staff are suitably qualified, accessing continuous training that has enabled them to manage risk and build stronger partnerships with parents and the wider community. All forms of communication, including responses to the questionnaire, show how highly the parents regard the setting in every respect. They appreciate the genuine warmth and standards of education and care, and consider that the school is providing the best possible start for their children. Planning boards, parent notice boards and displays of photographs encourage parents to involve themselves fully in their children's learning.

6.(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.3 Provision is good, with some excellent features. The warm, caring environment

ensures that children under three settle quickly and develop confidence. Effective planning, based on observations of children's interests and on parental commentary, contributes to the cycle of purposeful play and assessment. Throughout the setting staff use careful prompting and thoughtful questioning to ensure appropriate intervention and provision for those children identified with additional needs. Regular outings are organised, in addition to specialist teaching for music, French and physical education to enhance learning further. The balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities is appropriate. Children's efforts and achievements are highly valued and reflected in bright and colourful interactive displays. Risk-assessed resources are good indoors, enabling children to take the lead in their own experiential learning. Outdoor play is not yet fully embedded as part of the daily free-flow routine to ensure equality in children's choice. Welfare requirements are well met through interesting activities promoting healthy lifestyles, ensuring the emotional well-being and safety of all children. Key people ensure that routines, such as hand washing before meals, are always followed, and they teach children to move around the setting safely.

“Those under three flourish as a result of the ‘have-a-go’ ethos in the Nursery which is continued in the Reception”



6.(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.4 The outcomes for children are good. Those under three flourish as a result of the ‘have-a-go’ ethos in the Nursery which is continued in the Reception play rooms to develop their investigatory competence and build confidence in their speaking and listening skills. Children respond very well to high expectations; many can count to twenty and beyond, and write simple sentences independently, and are clearly motivated to learn. As a result, by the end of the EYFS, many children exceed their profile targets in all six areas of learning. Children show independence and imagination, and use an increasing range of ICT to support their learning. Their personal development is good, with parents

“Children’s efforts and achievements are highly valued and reflected in bright and colourful interactive displays”



remarking that their children develop into rounded individuals. Children feel safe and secure, enabling them to form excellent relationships with each other and their teachers. Older children are excellent role models, encouraging the younger children to acquire valuable skills for the future, such as pouring their own milk and self-managing hygiene routines. They also demonstrate an understanding of how to stay safe by following social rules about boundaries and the correct use of equipment. Children have good opportunities to explore the natural environment.

“Children feel safe and secure, enabling them to form excellent relationships with each other and their teachers”

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

6.5 The school’s registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

Complaints since the last inspection

6.6 Since the last inspection, there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required any action to meet national requirements.

Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.

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

Mr Adrian Underwood	Reporting Inspector
Mr Kenneth Adams	Director of Studies, SHMIS school
Mrs Patricia Frisby	Head of Department, GSA school
Mr Robert Gullifer	Headmaster, IAPS school
Mr John Tolputt	Former Headmaster, SHMIS school
Mr Ian Wood	Former Head, IAPS school
Mrs Kathy McLauchlan	Early Years Lead Inspector
Mrs Emma Stratford	Early Years Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)

I am very grateful to the inspection team for a thorough evaluation of all aspects of the school, academic and pastoral, from early years, through prep and senior to sixth form. Their recommendations have been incorporated into our immediate and medium term plans below:

“Share the best practice of dynamic, interactive lessons across all subjects” As the Inspectors observed, “Excellent lessons were characterised by vitality, variety and pace, with sympathetic, but challenging, understanding of pupils’ needs.” The College conducts a wide programme of mutual lesson observation for the exchange of best teaching practices. This programme will be expanded further, with fuller recording of all activities within it. I am very grateful to the inspection team for a thorough evaluation of all aspects of the school, academic and pastoral, from early years, through prep and senior to sixth form.

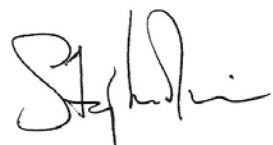
“Enable pupils to develop their use of ICT across the curriculum” The College is currently installing a further major ICT suite as part of our ICT development and renewal programme. We are delivering faster and more supportable core systems, wider deployment of desktops, projectors and smartboards, the replacement of computers in the library and adding / upgrading computer rooms in boarding houses and the prep school. During the Summer of 2011, College-wide WiFi, a fibre-optic network extension and the implementation of a 100 Mb broadband link will be completed. Design & Technology and Maths have been enhanced by the use of Netbooks and tablets. Further investment is planned in the use of computer-aided recording equipment in Music and data loggers in Science. Training continues for all staff further to promote best practice in the effective use of ICT in all subjects.

“Review the careers programme to provide appropriate coverage for all age groups” From September 2011, the College will extend its careers advice programme by making the services of the Independent Schools Careers Organisation (ISCO) standard rather than on an opt-in basis. The cost of this provision will be included in school fees, ensuring consistent advice across each year group and providing access to enhanced career-related materials. In liaison with a range of College stakeholder and commercial counterparties, by September 2011 we shall have further extended our provision of opportunities for Work Experience within College by the development of an entitlement database of Work Experience opportunities.

“Write a strategic development plan for the EYFS with a focus on monitoring, evaluation of initiatives and regular communication across the setting” A new EYFS strategic development plan will have been put in place by September 2011. We are reviewing a reconfiguration of the nursery provision, with the aim of making the formative experiences of the youngest members of our community even more constructive. This will strengthen the focus of the nursery, as well as strengthening sibling attachments and the provision of management support.

“Develop the EYFS outside learning environment to enable access and free flow movement between the indoors and outdoors” The College will soon have relocated and reconfigured the nursery provision, so that the structural issue implicit in this recommendation will no longer exist. We shall continue to maximise our use of the unique outdoors opportunities of our special setting, and to develop our ‘forest fun adventure’ programme, including supervised den building, climbing and the use of our natural areas.

I am delighted to see the fruits of our work at Bearwood, for the benefit of all the children who attend, recognised by the inspection team and thank them for their useful feedback.



Stephen Aiano
Headmaster





“Pupils’ personal development is excellent. From the youngest in the prep school to Year 13, pupils are engaging and unfailingly courteous. They clearly enjoy their lives at Bearwood.”

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Where individuals thrive

