



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

THE MOUNT SCHOOL, YORK

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

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The Mount School, York

Full Name of School	The Mount School, York		
DfE Number	816/6003		
Registered Charity Number	513646		
Address	The Mount School Dalton Terrace York North Yorkshire YO24 4DD		
Telephone Number	01904 667500		
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Email Address	principal@mountschoolyork.co.uk		
Principal	Ms Julie Lodrick		
Clerk of School Committee	Dr Elisabeth Wilson		
Age Range	2 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	278		
Gender of Pupils	Boys aged 2 - 7; Girls aged 2 - 18		
Numbers by Age	2-5 (EYFS):	30	11-16: 130
	5-11:	53	16-19: 65
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	210	
Number of Boarders	Total:	68	
	Full:	57	Occasional: 11
Head of EYFS Setting	Miss Rachel Capper		
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection dates	16 Oct 2012 to 19 Oct 2012		

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 October 2007.

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. 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.

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

This inspection contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education, personal development and welfare. 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. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'satisfactory' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

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 clerk of the school Committee, 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 Michael Buchanan	Reporting Inspector
Fr Christopher Cann	Team Inspector (former Chaplain, IAPS School)
Miss Anne Yeomanns	Team Inspector
Dr Stephen Downes	Team Inspector (Head of Upper School, HMC School)
Mrs Kate McCarey	Team Inspector (Assistant Head, HMC School)
Miss Adrienne Richmond	Team Inspector (Director of Studies, GSA School)
Mrs Anne Longton	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Lynda Sharpe	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The ethos and curriculum of The Mount School are designed to promote the Quaker values of peace, equality and social justice; the school strives to encourage and develop the individual within a small, caring community with an emphasis on involvement in activities, sport and community service alongside academic study. Founded in 1785, the school moved to its present site in 1857; a spacious, green, sixteen-acre campus with gardens, mature trees and playing fields just outside York's city walls. It now provides an education for girls aged 2 to 18 and boys aged 2 to 7. Boarders make their term-time home at the school from the age of 11 with some choosing to board on an occasional basis when in the upper years of the junior school. The school is governed by the school Committee made up of Quakers and non-Quakers; nominated Committee members take a particular interest in boarding, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the junior school and safeguarding as well as having links with all departments.
- 1.2 There are 278 pupils in the school; 83 in the junior school and 195 in the senior school of whom 130 are in Years 7 to 11 and 65 in the sixth form; 57 girls are full boarders and a further 11 board occasionally. International pupils make up the majority of the full-time boarders. There are 24 girls and 6 boys in the EYFS.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection in 2007 a new principal has been appointed, flexible boarding has been introduced, and the age to which boys are educated in the school has been lowered so that they now move on to other schools after Year 2. In October 2012, a nursery was opened for children from the age of two.
- 1.4 Most day pupils come from families with professional backgrounds in York and the surrounding area and reflect the ethnicity of the area; most full-time boarders are from overseas including south east Asia, eastern Europe and Africa.
- 1.5 In general, pupils of all ages are of above average ability. In the senior school, 36 pupils receive support for a variety of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and 21 in the junior school. There are three pupils with a statement of special education need. There are 30 pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) when they join the school from overseas, most studying for GCSE and A level examinations.

- 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 tables.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Pre-School	Nursery
Reception	Reception

Junior school.

School	NC name
Junior 1	Year 1
Junior 2	Year 2
Junior 3	Year 3
Junior 4	Year 4
Junior 5	Year 5
Junior 6	Year 6

Senior School.

School	NC name
Year 7	Year 7
Year 8	Year 8
Year 9	Year 9
Year 10	Year 10
Year 11	Year 11
College 1	Year 12
College 2	Year 13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent. Pupils do particularly well in their overall achievement because of their learning skills and their success in artistic, creative, practical and extra-curricular activities. They are highly educated in accordance with the school's aims. They are notably articulate and demonstrate advanced skills and knowledge. They are eager to contribute to the school community and express opinions with great confidence and appropriate modesty. Nearly all are energetic learners who listen and support each other well, displaying high levels of numeracy, logic and perseverance. Pupils of all abilities, including those in the EYFS, make good progress; A-level pupils, the most able and those with SEND or EAL demonstrate high levels of progress. The excellence of the pupils' achievements marks a notable improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils enjoy school thoroughly and have highly positive attitudes to their work and their involvement in activities in response to an excellent curriculum and programme of activities. The quality of teaching is good and often excellent; it is effective in promoting the pupils' progress and it supports the aims of the school. However, some teaching is less effective when it fails to take into account the pupils' prior learning or their responses, or because it lacks pace and challenge.
- 2.2 The quality of pupils' personal development is outstanding, reflecting the school's aims. A tangible Quaker ethos permeates every area. There is a clear sense of mutual respect and co-operation. The pupils' spiritual development is noticeably strong and they have a highly developed sense of morality. Complex ethical issues are discussed with confidence by pupils in the senior school. Pupils are courteous, mix well as boarders and day pupils and across the age groups. They have a very well-developed cultural awareness; international boarders speak warmly of their experiences. The quality of boarding is good and the outcomes for boarders are excellent. The personal development of the boarders is enhanced by the rich experience provided in the boarding houses. The encouragement to consider and follow the Quaker ethos results in a calm, friendly atmosphere in the boarding houses. Boarders are confident, self-reliant and tolerant towards each other. Welfare, health and safety are good and pastoral care continues to be a major strength of the school.
- 2.3 The quality of the governance, leadership and management of the school is good overall. The school Committee provides effective oversight of the school in line with the Quaker ethos and its aims to encourage and develop the individual pupil within a small, caring community with an emphasis on involvement in activities, sport and community service alongside academic study. The leadership and management provide clear educational direction, as reflected in the quality of the pupils' education and the standard of their personal development. There are clearly defined roles across all areas of the school which reflect the school's aims and ethos, and relationships with parents are close, open, positive and respectful at all levels. The leadership of pastoral care is particularly strong and that of boarding is good; both have a significantly positive impact on pupils' personal development and achievements. However, at the time of the inspection, governance and leadership had not ensured that all required recruitment checks had taken place, and middle leadership is sometimes ineffective in monitoring and evaluating the quality of the teaching, which limits its impact on the academic achievements of pupils. The school has met all the recommendations of the previous report.

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 all required checks are carried out prior to the appointment of staff [Part 3, paragraph 7(a) and (b), paragraph 8(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety; and for the same reason Part 4, paragraph 19 (2) (c) and (e) and (3), under the Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors; also National Minimum Standards 11 and 14.1, under Child protection and Staff recruitment and checks on other adults respectively].
- 2.5 The school does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2011, for the same reasons as given above.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Improve the monitoring of teaching and marking to enable the standard of all teaching to reach that of the best.
 2. Extend the provision for, and use of, outdoor play in the EYFS.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils are highly articulate and extraordinarily supportive of each other; in accordance with the school's aims, they demonstrate well-rounded skills and high levels of knowledge. They are eager to contribute to the school community and they express their opinions with great sensitivity and confidence. Pupils are highly engaged, energetic learners with excellent attitudes. They listen to each other with great respect. Senior school pupils regularly take the initiative, for instance in their involvement in leading school activities such as the Mandarin club. Most pupils throughout the school display high levels of numeracy, logic and perseverance although some pupils lose interest quickly when they are insufficiently challenged. Pupils acquire appropriate competence in information and communication technology (ICT).
- 3.3 Pupils are highly creative, well-organised, mutually supportive and modestly proud of their work, such as the products created and displayed in design and technology (DT). They achieve highly in activities such as music, speech and drama and in a range of regional and national events such as a regional courtroom advocacy competition and a national DT competition. As seen in lessons and their work, the achievement of the most able pupils and those with EAL and SEND is excellent as a result of the individual planning for their needs and the quality of teaching; they make excellent progress. In all areas, the small number of boys in the lower years of the junior school achieve equally as well as the girls.
- 3.4 The following analysis uses national and international data for the years 2009 to 2011, the most recent years for which comparative data is available. The pupils' attainment in the junior school cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but, on the evidence available, as seen in lessons and their work, it is good in relation to national age-related expectations. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that their progress is good in relation to pupils of similar ability. Results in GCSE have been good in relation to the national average for girls in maintained schools. In 2012 more than a quarter of pupils achieved five A*s with 86% of all grades at A*-B. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make good progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability. A-level, Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) and AQA Baccalaureate results have been well above the average for girls in maintained schools in 2009, and above in 2010 and 2011. Results for 2012, with nearly half of all results achieved at grade A* or A, performance in lessons and success in achieving desired university destinations indicate that this standard has been maintained. This level of attainment in the sixth form indicates that pupils make a high rate of progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability.
- 3.5 Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and have highly positive attitudes to their work and to their involvement in activities, particularly when they work together in small groups. All, including those in the EYFS, respond well to praise and encouragement, deriving great pleasure from their learning.
- 3.6 In the EYFS, all children, including those with EAL, make good progress from a wide range of starting points. They learn to count, order numbers and develop their understanding of the necessary sounds of letters for reading. They show increasing

imagination, creativity and a growing knowledge of the world. The children display a wide range of interests and enjoy choosing their own activities. By the end of Reception, children can read well, write in sentences using simple punctuation, add and subtract competently and solve simple mathematical problems. They are unfailingly polite, well behaved and considerate towards others.

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

- 3.7 The quality of the curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 The curriculum is broad, well planned, and suitable for all ages, learning needs and abilities. It successfully supports the school's aim to encourage pupils to live and think adventurously and develop a critical consciousness. A wide range of extra-curricular activities makes a strong contribution to the pupils' achievements. Responses by pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires indicate an exceptionally high level of satisfaction with their school experience.
- 3.9 All aspects of a well-rounded education are provided, enabling linguistic, mathematical, scientific, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative development. The Quaker ethos permeates the curriculum by providing opportunities for individuals to develop their own talents and interests with a highly successful emphasis on co-operation and space for reflection.
- 3.10 In general, planning in the different sections of the school is carefully co-ordinated and the transition from junior to senior school is greatly enhanced by the alignment of timetables. The quality of curricular planning varies between different subjects in the senior school and different years in the junior school. The best includes information on approaches to learning and assessment as well as how work should be matched to the pupils' needs, including those with EAL or SEND. Some planning lacks clarity in these areas and hence its effectiveness is limited.
- 3.11 The skills-based curriculum in the junior school follows the National Curriculum (NC), with the addition of personal, social and health education (PSHE) taught in all years. It faithfully reflects the school's aims and ethos. Pupils learn about Quakerism and world religions. Their linguistic skills are developed very well through literacy sessions and lessons in French as well as English from the Nursery, and German from Year 3. Talented mathematicians from the junior school are successfully challenged through participating in master classes in the senior school. The outdoor woodland environment greatly enriches the pupils' investigative skills.
- 3.12 At A-level, GCSE and in Years 7-9, pupils select from a good variety of options. A-level pupils have the opportunity to undertake the EPQ and the AQA Bacculaureate. Pupils are prepared strongly for their future lives at university and beyond because of an effective emphasis on guiding them to courses suited to their interests and talents.
- 3.13 First-class liaison ensures that transitions between EYFS classes into Year 1 are well managed and children are well prepared for the next stages in their learning. A similar approach assists pupils when they move from the junior to the senior school. A well-planned and thorough careers and higher education programme means that pupils receive helpful and focused guidance from Year 9 onwards including knowledge of employment opportunities. General advice is provided by tutors in a methodically planned scheme and detailed careers profiles are constructed for each pupil. Regular careers events and assessments are held and the school makes use of the expertise available from external careers organisations.

- 3.14 Provision for pupils requiring learning support is excellent. There are effective systems for identifying their needs and the curriculum matches these. These pupils' progress is carefully monitored through the use of detailed individual plans that are regularly reviewed. Those with EAL are intensely supported by specialist teaching which fosters strong and rapid progress and enables them to achieve in a range of qualifications.
- 3.15 The school plays a prominent part in Independent State Schools' Partnership (ISSP), a local partnership between independent and maintained schools which successfully enhances provision for the most able. In addition, there are academic activities ranging from mathematics and science clubs in the junior school to creative writing and history projects in the senior school. There are strong links with the community, such as with the Quaker Community in York and with several local environmental or social projects.
- 3.16 The curriculum is fully supported by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities that include sports, music, and other performing and creative arts, although there are limited opportunities for some pupils to participate in team sports. The recommendation of the previous inspection has been implemented successfully, so that pupils attend an activities fair at the start of each term and are fully aware of the variety of options available; their choices are effectively coordinated and monitored. Of particular note is that sixth-form pupils select an activity consonant with Quaker principles; these include the eco-committee, Amnesty International and PeaceJam, an international movement of change makers. Throughout the school, the pupils' experiences are greatly enhanced by many enriching visits locally and abroad.
- 3.17 The contribution of the EYFS provision to children's well-being is excellent. Good resources are used and managed extremely well to support learning. The Toddler Room provides a warm and welcoming place for the youngest children and the indoor environment is most welcoming and colourful, unlike the outdoor area, which is not widely used as an outdoor classroom.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.18 The quality of teaching is good.
- 3.19 Teaching is effective in promoting the pupils' progress and supports the aims of the school by encouraging their genuine curiosity, successfully fostering their confidence and instilling in them a strong desire to succeed.
- 3.20 There is a significant amount of excellent teaching which demonstrates the highest expectations of pupils and uses knowledge of the pupils' needs and abilities in planning. It provides space for pupils to hone their skills and synthesise their knowledge without constraint, encouraging adventurous experimentation and enables pupils of all abilities to experience success, including pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The most effective teaching uses a mixture of open-ended and focused questions to assess the pupils' progress, identify and remedy misconceptions and extend the most able. It introduces tasks efficiently and makes timely interventions which enable progress to be accelerated. This high quality teaching is often seen in the senior school across a range of subjects. It is particularly prominent in artistic and creative subjects and in extra-curricular activities, and it leads to excellent achievement. However, some teaching, most frequently in the junior school, is less effective because it does not take into account benchmarking data, the pupils' prior learning or their responses, or lacks pace and

challenge. As a result progress is hindered in these lessons. In contrast, some junior school teaching is inspirational because of its energy and focus, and it results in pupils being highly engaged in their learning. As a result, they make rapid progress in these lessons.

- 3.21 In the EYFS, assessment through observation is part of daily practice and learning journals, shared with parents, are used very effectively to guide planning and target new steps. Expectations of children are high and there are beneficial relationships with parents who are tremendously supportive.
- 3.22 Teaching often shows good subject knowledge and uses a variety of highly successful approaches, particularly in the sixth form, where much one-to-one work is possible which requires an individual response from the pupil. It skilfully incorporates the pupils' ideas and achieves the intended outcomes, is well planned and ensures that appropriate resources are readily available to support the pupils' learning and initiative. In practical lessons, the teaching cleverly demonstrates techniques and provides an excellent model for pupils. In the junior school pupils were given excellent opportunities to explore, investigate and to choose their own method of recording their findings, and senior school pupils were asked to create a physical model of a cell membrane.
- 3.23 Most work is marked regularly but marking is uneven in quality in both the senior and junior schools. Constructive written guidance to help pupils improve their work is sometimes given but much comment is restricted to simple congratulations. By contrast, verbal feedback is given in lessons and this is often closely focused on individual needs, allowing pupils to plan advantageous progress in their work.
- 3.24 The teaching of pupils with EAL and SEND is a significant strength of the school and is based on a careful assessment of needs and targeted support which includes one-to-one and small group teaching. Senior school pupils with EAL are given good help in acquiring the skills needed for extended essay writing; pupils with SEND successfully acquire skills and strategies to support their learning.

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 the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 The pupils' personal development reflects the school's aim to 'Let your life speak'. The strong Quaker ethos which permeates every area of school life is reflected in a calmness of atmosphere and a strong sense of mutual respect among pupils and between adults and pupils throughout the school. By the time they leave the school the pupils are confident and have a good understanding of themselves and others.
- 4.3 The children in the EYFS are well behaved and co-operative, working together harmoniously. They listen carefully to instructions and follow them well. Children understand about keeping safe and benefit from regular exercise, showing good awareness of safety. They enjoy the healthy food provided and understand the importance of good health and hygiene.
- 4.4 The pupils' spiritual development is strong. Pupils have very well-developed self-awareness, which is fostered by the special place given to reflection in the school. Morning Meetings which include the daily text and reflective silence help pupils' spiritual awareness; they speak warmly of the way this practice aids their personal development. They have a strong sense of the beauty and fragility of the world in which they live and are emotionally mature for their age.
- 4.5 Pupils have a highly developed sense of morality and a clear understanding of right and wrong. Excellent wall displays affirm positive behaviour as do codes of conduct in pupil planners. Ecological awareness is a strong feature of the pupils' moral development and the eco-committee encourages everyone to take practical steps to reduce the school's ecological footprint. Ethical awareness is exemplified by the pupils' work on PeaceJam and with Amnesty International. Complex ethical issues are discussed with confidence in the senior school and pupils across the whole school are enthusiastic fund raisers for charities they select.
- 4.6 The pupils have exceptional social skills. They are courteous and mix well as boarders and day pupils and across the age groups. The system of peer mentoring enables older pupils to be successful in assisting younger ones, and pupils from the EYFS onwards have their views sought and acted upon. The pupils' council develops skills of citizenship at all ages and is a dynamic force for change. Senior pupil posts are elected through a pupils' Quaker Nominations Committee and pupils are very positive about this process; all responsibilities are taken seriously. Pupils exercise strong leadership whenever they are given the opportunity and often seek out such opportunities. The pupils' political awareness is noticeably strong in the senior school and they are extremely articulate in voicing opinions on issues of the day.
- 4.7 Pupils in the junior and senior schools have a well-developed cultural awareness gained from varied activities in lessons, trips out of school and informal interaction with other pupils. Opportunities to celebrate festivals of other cultures, such as Chinese New Year and Passover, are taken with relish; the pupils mix readily with others from different cultures and faiths; international pupils speak warmly of their experiences.

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

- 4.8 The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 Pastoral care continues to be a major strength of the school in line with its stated aim to foster the development of each individual. The pupils are known extremely well by staff and are able to communicate effectively both formally and informally in matters of their personal development. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Considerable care is taken to provide help and support for pupils with additional needs. There is an appropriate plan for accessibility for those with particular physical or learning needs. Staff are excellent role models and the pupils feel very well supported and cared for. The strong Quaker ethos in the school creates an environment in which everyone appreciates and values each other, fostering both independence and equality. The pupils thrive in this atmosphere of safety, confidence and trust.
- 4.10 The contribution of the EYFS to children's well-being is excellent. Their personal, social and emotional development is supported through 'circle time', assemblies and a system of rewards.
- 4.11 Behaviour across the whole school is excellent and relationships between pupils are strong and affirming. The school has appropriate measures to guard against bullying. On the rare occasions where relationships sour, action is taken swiftly and justly. Sanctions are rarely used and the pupils receive regular, direct affirmation of their efforts and achievements from staff in lessons, in assemblies and informally around the school.
- 4.12 The school provides an excellent choice of freshly prepared food and encourages pupils to have a balanced, healthy diet; cooking activities for different age groups help to reinforce this message. In the EYFS, lunch and snack times are social occasions, children enjoy the healthy food provided for them and they are taught about the importance of good health and hygiene. Within and beyond the curriculum there are many enjoyable outdoor activities which make a positive contribution to the pupils' physical development. These include sports activities and woodland activities which help develop a strong sense of connection with the natural world. Encouraging pupils to contribute opinions and to have a voice within the school is a powerful feature of the school in line with its Quaker ethos. The pupils' council and other committees provide a positive method by which the voices of pupils can be heard.

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

- 4.13 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.14 All necessary arrangements are made to reduce the risk from fire, and comprehensive risk assessments are in place. Fire drills occur termly and are reported upon.
- 4.15 The school has an appropriate safeguarding policy. Safeguarding training is a priority for the school and teaching and non-teaching staff have a good awareness of their responsibilities, and they know who the designated person for child protection is. In general, due care is taken of each and every individual. The school is aware of local agency procedures and all staff complete child protection training. However, at the start of the inspection a number of the required recruitment checks had not

been undertaken. The school has acted quickly to correct these omissions and has taken steps to ensure that children are safeguarded.

- 4.16 Arrangements for health and safety are excellent. Risk assessments are completed in a thorough and comprehensive manner. There are clear and effective procedures for educational visits. A health and safety committee meets termly; matters of concern are raised by any employee and subsequently well addressed. There is a clear structure for evaluating issues.
- 4.17 A well-resourced medical centre provides a safe place for pupils to go when unwell or injured. Comprehensive arrangements in the EYFS promote children's welfare and safety; all staff are suitably trained and hold paediatric first aid certificates. The provision for pupils with SEND and EAL throughout the school is excellent. Pupils are well supported across the whole school.
- 4.18 Admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and correctly archived for the previous three years. Registers are taken formally and accurately; any absences are followed up in a timely manner.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.19 The quality of boarding is good.
- 4.20 The outcomes for boarders are excellent. Their personal development is enhanced by the rich experience they receive. Boarders report that they feel part of a close, supportive community. Involvement in the boarding council meetings encourages boarders to make a positive contribution to their community. Quaker Meetings, attended by the whole school, encourage integration with day pupils. Boarding staff mostly have teaching responsibilities; this enables positive links with the teaching staff and allows effective liaison and co-ordination of the needs of boarders. They respect and appreciate the different cultures represented in the houses and hence they develop varied friendships. The encouragement to consider and follow the Quaker ethos results in a calm, friendly atmosphere in the houses. Boarders are confident, self-reliant and tolerant towards each other.
- 4.21 Appropriate systems and facilities are provided for the care of boarders who are ill or require medical treatment. Staff qualified in first aid are on duty when the registered nurse is not available. The medical centre is bright and spacious. All boarders are registered with a neighbouring medical practice. Individual care plans are developed for pupils with chronic medical conditions. Appropriate record keeping is now maintained for pupils who self-medicate. There is good liaison regarding school outings and sports matches to ensure individual boarders' medical needs are met. Boarders are well cared for in the event of becoming unwell during the night. Confidentiality is understood and respected. Boarders feel comfortable with the support from the medical centre and confirm that they have a number of adults to turn to should they choose. They can contact the independent listener in confidence.
- 4.22 Health and safety requirements are met effectively. The boarding accommodation is reserved for boarders. Staff are now aware of the need to supervise fully access to boarding areas by other pupils in the school. Food is plentiful, nutritious and meets the individual needs of those having particular dietary or medical requirements. Water is plentiful and easily accessible from various water fountains around the school campus. Snacks may be prepared in each boarding house.

- 4.23 Recreational facilities for evening and weekend activities allow boarders to enjoy a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. Both boarding houses offer a homely environment including television, games rooms, quiet space and outdoor space for the boarders to use in their leisure time. Weekend activities vary from cultural visits to museums and theatres to shopping trips, including expeditions to London. Each year boarders travel to a co-educational Quaker school and share a lecture, followed by supper. This encourages links with the community outside their own school and increases the boarders' understanding of the Quaker ethos.
- 4.24 Boarding accommodation is comfortable, secure, mainly of a high standard and well maintained with spacious, bright common rooms and washing facilities. Private study is usually undertaken out of the boarding house; but boarders can request to have a desk in their dormitory. Each boarder is provided with a lockable drawer and is encouraged to personalise her own dormitory area. Boarders contact friends and families easily and privately via email, web-cam or use of their own mobile phones. Pupils from overseas report that the boarding staff communicate well with their guardians, and are very helpful with arranging their travel and holiday arrangements.
- 4.25 Boarding staff have a good awareness of welfare and safeguarding procedures and a thorough understanding of their responsibilities. They are well supported by the designated staff. However, a number of the required recruitment checks had not been undertaken at the beginning of the inspection. The school has acted swiftly to correct this and has taken steps to ensure boarders are safe. Boarders are clear when to report a concern and have confidence in the response of the house staff. There is a culture of good behaviour in both boarding houses and suitable procedures operate to counteract bullying. The supervision of boarders is organised effectively, with regular roll-calls and an efficient signing in and out process at the weekends, which allows staff to monitor their whereabouts. The details of the duty house staff are displayed in each house, so that boarders are easily aware of who is on duty; these arrangements work well.
- 4.26 Boarding is well led and managed; staff and pupils demonstrate a strong awareness of the school's clear boarding principles and practice. An excellent standard of personal development is achieved by boarders, by undertaking appropriate roles of responsibility in the running of the house and involvement in the regular boarding committees. The leadership ensures that staff are well-trained, and have appropriate experience, induction programmes and annual appraisals. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection and the recommendations of that report have been met. High standards are maintained. Senior boarding staff have an excellent vision for improvement and regular staff meetings review the development of boarding. Boarding is an important part of school life and efficient links exist between the academic and pastoral staff and the boarding community.
- 4.27 Boarders and their parents generally expressed highly positive views in the responses to the questionnaires.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The governance of the school is good.
- 5.2 The school Committee provides effective oversight of the school in line with the Quaker ethos and its aims.
- 5.3 The Committee monitors closely the skills provided by each member. This ensures a broad range of expertise is deployed in the clear strategic direction the governing body gives and in its oversight of its responsibilities for the quality of the pupils' achievements and personal development. This is enhanced by effective financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources.
- 5.4 The Committee maintains good oversight of the EYFS and boarding through experienced nominated Committee members as well as each Committee member being allocated to a particular department. The school committee reviews the safeguarding policy annually with members of the leadership team and works closely with them to ensure it is implemented effectively. However, there have been shortcomings in monitoring recruitment checks on new staff.
- 5.5 The members of the Committee keep themselves well informed about the progress of the school through personal visits, attendance at staff training, frequent telephone conversations with the leadership team and by receipt of regular evaluative reports at their meetings. A particularly effective feature of their work is the application of the Quaker business method, which requires decisions and minutes of meetings to be agreed and written before the end of the meeting.
- 5.6 Members of the Committee receive induction into their role which includes voluntary attendance at recognised training courses and familiarisation with the school. The school committee has responded positively to the recommendations of the previous report, all of which have been addressed successfully.

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

- 5.7 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians is good.
- 5.8 At all levels of responsibility, the leadership and management of the school are effective in accordance with the aims of the school. Determined leadership at senior level has led to significant, rapid change in the school in recent years which has resulted in notably improved experiences and outcomes for pupils, particularly in boarding and the EYFS.
- 5.9 Leadership and management provide clear educational direction, as reflected in the quality of the pupils' education and the standard of their personal development. There are clearly defined roles across all areas of the school which reflect the school's aims and ethos. However, middle leadership is sometimes ineffective in monitoring and evaluating the quality of the teaching and this limits its impact on the academic achievements of pupils. The leadership of pastoral care is particularly

strong and that of boarding is good; both have a significantly positive impact on pupils' personal development and achievements.

- 5.10 Senor leadership and management are effective in self-evaluation and setting priorities which reflect the needs of the school. Staff with particular responsibilities are asked to identify areas for improvement. This analysis allows a detailed picture of the school to be discussed in an annual formal meeting. All staff have an opportunity to contribute to future objectives, and progress towards these is appropriately evaluated at several points during the year. The performance of all staff is reviewed and evaluated and areas for development identified.
- 5.11 A great deal of productive work has taken place to ensure that policies and procedures are up to date and effectively implemented. This includes the training of all staff in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. However, a number of required recruitment checks had not taken place at the start of the inspection. The school has acted swiftly to correct these omissions and has taken steps to ensure children are safeguarded.
- 5.12 The EYFS is well led and resources are used effectively. Clear priorities for improvement are set and there is a strong focus on the well-being and personal achievement of each child. Self-evaluation is undertaken through regular EYFS staff meetings. Comprehensive arrangements are in place for safeguarding children and all staff are suitably trained. Strong links exist with parents and with external agencies, including the local authority, which offers valued support for staff, extending the skills and information available to them.
- 5.13 Links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent. Relationships with parents are highly constructive, effective and in line with school aims of providing a supportive, friendly and welcoming environment. There are ample formal and informal opportunities for parents to communicate with the school. A very large majority of parents expressed satisfaction with the education and support provided for their children and with the quality of communication between school and home. Inspection evidence supports these views.
- 5.14 The school handles the concerns of parents with due care. An appropriate complaints procedure is followed. There is a concise record of parental concerns and these are followed up and resolved in an appropriate manner, often involving extensive contact and discussion.
- 5.15 The school provides parents of pupils and prospective pupils with the required information about the school, through the school website, electronic news and within the school prospectus. There is an annual information booklet and a parents' handbook for the junior school; these give detailed and comprehensive information. Specific events are organised to keep parents informed and they value these greatly.
- 5.16 Parents are sent annual reports which are clear and useful; they set targets for improvement. Parents are invited to comment following the publication of reports as part of the open communication system between home and school. Parents are actively involved in the work and progress of their children; for example, through the use of the school diary and planner. Parents attend parents' evenings as well as events such as concerts and drama productions. Junior school parents are invited into the classroom to see the pupils' work; for example, in Year 5 when pupils recently had an 'Express Yourself' day. Parents value such opportunities to keep themselves informed about the work of their children. Parents are actively involved

in supporting the school through the Mount School Association. There is a parents' forum where ideas are discussed, opinions voiced and concerns raised. The school responds well to this parental body and values the feedback received from them. Surveys are used to gauge the parents' views and the principal hosts 'At Home' events on a regular basis. These are good examples of the school working with parents in line with its aims.

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