

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Orwell Park School

Full Name of the School	Orwell Park School
DCSF Number	935/6005
Early Years Number	EY 360462
Registered Charity Number	310481
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Chairman of Governors	Mr David Wake-Walker
Age Range (of the whole school)	2 to 13
Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	9th to 12th February 2009
Head of Early Years Setting	Miss Jenifer Hillman
Early Years Age Range	2 to 5
Early Years Gender	Mixed
Early Years Foundation Stage Inspection Dates	4th to 5th February 2009

This inspection report follows the framework laid down by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The inspection was carried out under the arrangements of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. It was also carried out under Section 162A(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002 as amended by the Education Act 2005, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended with effect from January 2005, May 2007 and February 2009.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31st August following their fifth birthday. The inspection was carried out by ISI, a body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting EYFS provision in schools belonging to the ISC Associations. Section 7 of this report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the EYFS 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 registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the Statutory Framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The inspection was not carried out in conjunction with Ofsted, Children's Directorate, and the report does not contain specific judgements on the National Minimum Boarding Standards. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education and development in general. The full Ofsted report can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Inspection reports/Boarding schools.

The inspection does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 Orwell Park School is a co-educational day and boarding preparatory school for pupils between the ages of two and thirteen years. Only a few miles from Ipswich, the school stands on the banks of the River Orwell in extensive and historic parkland which has been designated an area of outstanding natural beauty. The main building is a magnificent Georgian mansion house complete with its own observatory, clock tower and water tower. The grounds give ample space for pitches, including an all-weather surface, for all team games, tennis courts, a nine-hole golf course and an assault course, while the mansion and its extension accommodate classrooms, specialist rooms, dormitories and common rooms. The sports centre and theatre complex is a more recent addition. The pre-preparatory department, which incorporates the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), is also situated within the grounds and has its own secure outdoor play areas. Founded in 1868, the school became an educational charitable trust in 1967, with a board of governors who are also trustees.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide for its pupils an academically challenging, stimulating, happy and fulfilling all-round educational experience in a caring and trusting environment. It seeks to motivate each child to want to learn, explore and experiment and to take pride in achieving high standards and contributing to the community. The school wishes its pupils to develop self-confidence, self-discipline and a sense of responsibility, together with increasing independence, in preparation for the next stage of their education and a happy, successful adult life. The aims of the school are underpinned by core Christian values.
- 1.3 The school was last inspected in 2003, followed by a boarding inspection in 2006 and an Early Years inspection in 2007. The present headmaster took up his post in January 2009.
- 1.4 There are 286 pupils on roll including 180 boys and 106 girls between the ages of two and thirteen years. Pupils may board from Year 3; 144 (92 boys and 52 girls) are boarders, the majority of whom board for three or four nights a week; a core group of pupils, some from abroad and some living more locally, board every night of the week. There are 44 pupils aged between two and five years old in the EYFS, with seventeen attending part time and 27 attending full time. In Years 1 and 2, there are 33 pupils with 132 in Years 3 to 6, and 77 in Years 7 and 8. Many day pupils start in the Nursery and continue through the school and others are admitted to Years 3 to 8 on the basis of placement tests in reading, mathematics, English, verbal and non-verbal reasoning. Younger pupils are required to spend a morning with their year group for an informal assessment. The school is divided into the pre-preparatory department which includes Nursery through to Year 2, and the preparatory department for Years 3 to 8. Pupils are mostly taught by their class teachers up to Year 4, then by specialist subject staff from Years 5 to 8.
- 1.5 The majority of pupils live near the school or in the surrounding counties. They mostly come from families with business, professional or farming backgrounds. Year 8 pupils generally proceed to a range of independent, mostly selective, day and boarding schools.
- 1.6 The range of ability within each group is wide, with a small proportion below average in ability, and a much higher proportion above or well above average. Standardised tests indicate that the overall ability profile of current pupils is above the national average. The majority of pupils are British, with a few pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and faiths. Six pupils are receiving support for their English, because it is not their principal language. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The school has identified 77 pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) and 41 pupils who would benefit from

extra help; these pupils receive specialist learning support from the school; a further nineteen are regularly monitored and may receive assistance in class.

- 1.7 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

Early Years Foundation Stage

School	Age of children
Nursery 1	Two +
Nursery 2	Three +
Reception	Four +

Pre-Preparatory Department

School	NC name
Pre-Prep 1	Year 1
Pre-Prep 2	Year 2

Preparatory Department

School	NC name
Form I	Year 3
Form II	Year 4
Form III	Year 5
Form IV	Year 6
Form V	Year 7
Form VI	Year 8

- 1.8 See Section 7 for the report on the Early Years Foundation Stage.

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 The educational experience provided is excellent and is entirely consistent with the school's aims and ethos. Since the last inspection the school has enhanced an already busy academic programme by adding drama across all year groups, as well as devolving information and communication technology (ICT) so that, in addition to being a discrete subject, it is now also successfully embedded in many areas of the curriculum. It is used increasingly in mathematics and modern foreign languages in particular. In Year 6, both Latin and life skills are introduced for all pupils. The creation of a scholarship form from Year 7 has enabled the school to extend its most able pupils. All parents indicated in their replies to the pre-inspection questionnaire that they were happy with the curricular provision and with the excellent range of extra-curricular activities.
- 2.2 The school is very successful in achieving its aim to provide a stimulating and fulfilling educational experience of high quality, within a friendly community and based on mutual respect and consideration. In a very happy, caring environment children can discover their talents and become effective learners. Pupils are prepared thoroughly for the next stage of their education.
- 2.3 Throughout the school pupils enjoy a broad and balanced education. They are given a sound grounding in literacy, and are encouraged to be articulate and confident as they speak about their work and experiences. Throughout the school their writing skills are evident in displays in classrooms and corridors. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) course which incorporates life skills gives them opportunities for discussing thoughts and ideas. Mathematical, numeracy and scientific skills are well developed from an early age; this firm basis enables pupils to enjoy learning new concepts and apply their knowledge to reasoning and problem-solving in mathematics, and making predictions in science. Pupils' creative and aesthetic talents are extremely well served by vibrant art and design and technology (DT) departments, the results of which can be seen in the outstanding displays around the school, and by the good opportunities to be involved in music and drama. The vast majority of pupils learn to play a musical instrument and have the opportunity to play together in the many ensembles which take place each week. This year's school play, *Bugsy Malone*, was performed enthusiastically during inspection week. A wide and varied physical education (PE) programme, and extremely good use of the extensive grounds, supports pupils' physical development well. Team sports are coached to a notably high standard. An extensive fixtures programme aims to give all pupils the opportunity to represent the school, whatever their ability.
- 2.4 The PSHE programme, which begins in the Early Years and becomes focused on life skills from Year 6 onwards, ensures that pupils, such as the present Year 8, are well prepared for change and able to look forward with a quiet confidence to their move to senior school. An extremely wide and varied extra-curricular programme, which includes visitors to the school and educational trips out, enriches the learning experience considerably, and is much appreciated by both boarders and day boarders. It offers pupils the opportunity to learn new skills such as ceramics, canoeing or playing the bagpipes, or just to have great fun, perhaps on the assault course. Pupils benefit greatly from the opportunity to board which gives them ample time to enjoy after-school activities such as the DT club.
- 2.5 Close cooperation between staff in the EYFS and Year 1 ensures that Reception children are very successfully prepared to move happily to the next class and that their new staff are well informed through samples of work and assessments. Transition between the pre-preparatory

and preparatory departments is well managed. Staff meet to discuss the needs of their pupils, who visit the main building prior to moving up. The needs of older pupils moving on to senior schools are also well managed. The school works hard to ensure that children are well prepared for the next stage of their education and assists parents in selecting a school that will best serve their child's educational needs. Many pupils and their parents welcome the opportunity to increase steadily the extent of boarding in preparation for transfer to senior school.

- 2.6 Curriculum planning and policy documents are highly detailed and provide continuity and development in learning across the school. All pupils are considered and benefit from the extensive range of activities provided within the school day. The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum.
- 2.7 Provision for pupils who require learning support is outstanding. Highly detailed, child-centred individual education plans have been produced for these pupils; their needs are discussed carefully with the staff concerned and with their parents. Staff follow the advice they receive from the learning support department and, although not evident in all lessons, many examples of teaching tailored to suit these pupils were seen. When appropriate, specialist learning support staff assist pupils in academic lessons. For those with English as second language, a one-to-one support programme is provided both in and out of class.
- 2.8 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.9 Pupils throughout the school acquire a very thorough grounding of knowledge, skills and understanding which they learn to apply effectively. Their learning and achievement is good and the school achieves its aims to motivate children to learn, to take pride in achieving high standards and to develop all their talents. Since the previous inspection, increased emphasis has been given to providing more opportunities for intellectual challenge, while also ensuring that success over a wide spectrum of interests is acknowledged. Pupils were in virtually total agreement in their replies to their questionnaire that their teachers helped them to learn.
- 2.10 Attainment is mostly good in relation to ability and, in many areas of the curriculum, high standards are reached. Pupils' skills of speaking and listening, literacy, numeracy and mathematics are extremely well developed. Capability in literacy begins in the EYFS where Nursery and Reception children are inquisitive, investigative and extremely confident in talking with their peers and with adults with whom they come into contact. Writing is a particular strength from Years 1 and 2 onwards and pupils use their English skills effectively through all curriculum areas. They are confident, articulate speakers in all situations and aspects of school life, and are able to discuss and express their opinions. In an English lesson, older pupils demonstrated public speaking of a high order.
- 2.11 Creative skills in music, art and design and technology are outstanding. Pupils listen intently to music, responding to what they have heard with maturity. Their acquired skills and their ability to use them are excellent. In an art lesson, pupils displayed high levels of understanding, skill and application as they described the intentions of artists.
- 2.12 Pupils are confident in their use of ICT both in designated lessons and in other subjects throughout the school. Many examples of the good use of ICT included the use of digital images, the creation of animated films, the preparation of presentations, the use of digital cameras and web cams, and the development of research skills in art and listening skills in French.

- 2.13 Pupils throughout the school make good progress and many attain high standards. In the EYFS and Years 1 and 2, pupils acquire a good work ethic and a passion for learning new information. Learning and achievement is strong in many curricular areas. In English, Year 2 pupils have an excellent knowledge of phonics and understanding of parts of speech, grammar and punctuation. A Year 8 scholarship class, in their work on Shakespeare's sonnets and in the composition of their own poems, showed an excellent understanding of poetic devices and figurative language. In mathematics, numeracy skills are good throughout the school and pupils in higher sets display advanced problem-solving skills. Year 5 displayed a high level of knowledge and understanding of composition and colour as they worked on their observational drawing of cakes and biscuits in the style of Wayne Thiebaud. Year 5 were very competent for their age in their use of tools and machines to cut and shape wood and metal in the manufacture of garden forks as presents for Mother's Day. In music, an excellent start is given in Year 1 where listening skills develop and pupils identify instruments heard within a piece and use descriptive language to explore their feelings. Year 8 combine their musical knowledge of dynamics, texture, balance and structure, together with their skills in ICT, to compose and record a three-minute backing-track for a film about rivers. The learning support department is particularly successful in assisting and encouraging individuals throughout the school and in Latin, for example, good collaboration ensures that pupils achieve well regardless of ability.
- 2.14 The school does not participate in national tests and is presently trialling and evaluating the use of standardised tests throughout the school to enable them to measure and monitor individual progress and further track development over time. Pupils gain places at their chosen selective secondary schools and win a creditable number of scholarships.
- 2.15 Individual and group achievements are encouraged and valued. Individual achievement is celebrated through the use of 'good marks' and 'send ups' to the headmaster. All pupils celebrate each other's success in assemblies; and pride in, and recognition of, achievement is evident in school newsletters, on school honours boards and in the school magazines. School teams achieve well in games as well as horse-riding, cross-country running and swimming. Over the last year, pupils have represented the school in athletics, cross-country running, horse-riding, cricket, squash, rugby and hockey at county level or above.
- 2.16 Pupils enjoy significant achievements when they work cooperatively in teams on technology challenges. Many pupils develop their talents through various in-school activities and encouragement to enter a wide range of competitions.
- 2.17 The skills and attitudes of pupils for their work and study are good. Presentation of pupils' work is often a credit to their work ethic, as many take great care to organise their files and books neatly, and take pride in the appearance of their work, sometimes having extremely high expectations of themselves. Throughout the school, pupils learn to make choices about their own learning, and independently organise themselves to work.
- 2.18 Pupils are responsive to learning and have excellent relationships with their teachers and with each other. They have many opportunities to work co-operatively and collaboratively with their peers, and do so with great enthusiasm and maturity. Pupils were observed offering very good peer support and sharing knowledge with each other. Whilst undertaking practical work in science, pupils worked and studied well together. In food technology and DT, pupils cooperate well and share and take turns naturally as they use the different machines and equipment. Group achievements through the house system encourage and acknowledge the efforts of pupils working as a large team; they are always praised for the efforts they make.
- 2.19 Pupils settle quickly to their tasks and remain engrossed in their activities, often persevering in order to extend themselves. Pupils think for themselves and use their creative skills to be

individual in their responses, such as in a Year 2 science lesson where pupils were allowed to show initiative and independence in their learning, as they investigated and invented different ways to keep ice from melting for as long as possible. Excellent behaviour and self-discipline was also observed in the design and technology workshop. Many examples of pupils enjoying their learning were observed. Year 2 pupils spoke excitedly about their writing opportunities, such as making log books for *Starship Zeus 1* in English. During a Year 4 food technology lesson, as they cooked their spaghetti carbonara, a pupil stated with great enthusiasm, "I am going to make this when I get home." Round-the-class games and community singing in Latin were also enthusiastically enjoyed.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.20 The development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is an outstanding feature of the school. The strengths evident during the last inspection have been further developed and reflect the school's ethos, which is securely underpinned by Christian values. The school provides a caring and trusting environment where pupils, especially those who board, learn to live together and contribute to their community whilst developing self-confidence and self-discipline, together with a sense of responsibility and greater independence. Parents are virtually unanimous in their praise for the attitudes and values which their children display.
- 2.21 Pupils are reflective and open-minded in their approach to, and awareness of, the spiritual dimension of life. A house assembly on memories promoted a sense of each individual's identity and own self-worth and also of differences between individuals, as pupils were asked to reflect on and share their childhood experiences and recollections. Pupils have a strong sense of belonging and develop their self-esteem and confidence in a supportive and caring environment. Opportunities for collective worship during assembly enable the pupils to develop spiritual awareness as they sing hymns, respectfully listen to prayers carefully linked to the theme of the assembly, and say other prayers together. The choir sings and performs in the village church which stands in the grounds, and pupils say grace before mealtimes. Pupils benefit greatly in a spiritual sense from the dramatic beauty of the school's surroundings. Music is regularly used to evoke feelings of awe and wonder and reflection on personal experiences, thinking beyond themselves. Teachers support pupils' awareness by encouraging them to develop reasoning skills to make informed decisions about their own spirituality. Within the curriculum, staff encourage pupils to see beauty in the changing world around them and explore world religions and cultures.
- 2.22 The development of the moral and social awareness of pupils is excellent. From a young age, pupils have a very strong sense of right and wrong and develop understanding of moral values through the effective guidance of all staff. They have a thorough knowledge of the school's 'Golden Rules'; they value their right to be treated fairly and appreciate the importance of caring for their peers. Moral issues are portrayed through stories, in assemblies, religious education and through projects in art and ICT where animated stories are created with a moral theme.
- 2.23 At all ages, pupils have many opportunities to develop moral and social awareness, to show initiative, take responsibility and contribute to their community. Importance is placed upon pupils developing life skills which permeate through all school life. Staff and pupils genuinely respect each other, and the pupils' exceptionally good manners are very natural. They take responsibility for their own behaviour and contribute to school life enthusiastically. The excellent boarding ethos and the PSHE programme also make important contributions.

- 2.24 The school council enables pupils to have a voice and to seek to improve their school community. Councillors take their role seriously, putting themselves forward for election, firmly believing in their ability to make a difference. During life skills lessons, older pupils demonstrated a good understanding of the election process and were able to present their speeches for election with humour, wit, persuasion and some humility.
- 2.25 Pupils throughout the school support their peers, from Year 2 as they aspire to receive their Helping Hand award through to Year 8 boarders as they encouraged each other at the time of scholarship examinations. Pupils develop a general knowledge of local services, public institutions and current affairs through life skills lessons supported by visits such as a trip to the Houses of Parliament.
- 2.26 Pupils are extremely aware of, and very appreciative of, their own cultural traditions and those of others. The celebration of national cultural events such as making dragons for the Chinese New Year helps to develop an understanding of the diversity and richness of the cultures of other countries. Staff and parents give their support by sharing their own cultural traditions, such as a Japanese tea ceremony and the traditions of the Hindu faith. Within the curriculum pupils have experiences of many world faiths. During interviews, pupils said that learning about and celebrating other cultures is an aspect of their education that they particularly enjoy. The art and design and technology departments have created many excellent opportunities for cultures to be explored through their work. Pupils have an opportunity to take part in residential visits to France and Finland, and to learn about cultures around the world through international students and visitors who are made to feel very welcome by the school community.
- 2.27 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.28 The school provides very effective teaching and achieves its aim of enabling pupils to reach their full potential and to gain entry to their chosen senior schools. Teaching was good in a large majority of lessons and in a significant proportion of these it was outstanding. However, in a small minority of lessons the lack of variety in activities and teaching styles did not meet the needs of the pupils. An innovative child-centred system of assessment, introduced two years ago, has successfully reached the final stages of development. As recommended in the last report, the school marking policy is used more consistently, and greater use is made of the results of assessments to identify targets. A high percentage of parents considered that the teaching led to their children making good progress and they were also very appreciative of the learning support department and the high standard of behaviour of their children.
- 2.29 The majority of teachers are highly committed and approach their work thoughtfully. With the needs of their pupils in mind, they produce well-paced and carefully structured lessons. They use comprehensive methods of assessment to help them plan their teaching and to monitor pupils' attainment thus enabling pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties or with English as an additional language, to make good progress, increase their understanding and develop relevant skills.

- 2.30 From the Nursery onwards, where children begin to make choices, independent learning is encouraged. In a Year 5 art lesson, pupils were encouraged to give their opinions as their work was assessed and next steps were discussed. Good examples of independent problem-solving were seen in mathematics in a Year 7 lesson on polygons, where pupils were encouraged to challenge themselves with a variety of independent tasks.
- 2.31 Pupils are expected to work hard and to become fully involved in their learning. Pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations; they give of their best and behave sensibly. A high percentage of pupils said that they enjoyed their lessons.
- 2.32 In the most successful teaching, extensive planning and preparation is evident in the pace of lessons and the variety of work prepared for different levels of ability, so that all pupils have a sense of achievement and make rapid progress. In lessons where there was little variety of approach or material or too much time was spent listening and writing notes from dictation, pupils behaved well but learning and progress were limited.
- 2.33 Teachers know their pupils well and use their knowledge of individual needs or difficulties effectively in both the tasks they set and in the level and style of support offered in lessons. Similarly, they are aware of strengths, and frequently challenge and extend the most able. Teachers are friendly and supportive. The atmosphere of mutual respect in which lessons take place reflects clearly the school's ethos.
- 2.34 Teachers are well qualified for the age groups and subjects they teach. Several are involved at a high level in their specialist subject or in professional associations. In the many successful lessons observed, teachers transmitted to pupils their knowledge, enthusiasm and love of their subject and encouraged them to play an active part, whether it was singing songs or appreciating jokes in Latin, or using digital photography in art.
- 2.35 The EYFS and the pre-preparatory classes benefit from a wide range of excellent resources which are used by the staff to enhance the teaching and learning. In the preparatory school, art and DT benefit from abundant resources which are used to maximum effect in well-planned and clearly structured lessons, allowing pupils of all abilities to make excellent progress.
- 2.36 Information and communication technology is also well resourced with two well-equipped ICT suites. Art, DT and music have their own computers, the latter being used very effectively by pupils of all ages to develop their musical knowledge and to compose their own tunes. All but a few teaching rooms are equipped with electronic whiteboards or projectors and these were seen being used effectively in a variety of lessons, including particularly good use in mathematics. However, not all teaching made full use of the interactive capacity of whiteboards as a stimulus to learning.
- 2.37 The school has invested heavily in online interactive resources. For example, an interactive mathematics programme allows pupils to practise and develop their mathematical skills away from the classroom, either in prep or at home, and allows staff to monitor the progress of each individual pupil.
- 2.38 The extensive school grounds give ample opportunity for outdoor education and are used very effectively to enhance teaching in science and physical education, in addition to offering boundless opportunities for relaxation and recreation. Younger pupils enjoy pond-dipping, while older pupils use quadrants for data collection in the woodland for biology.

- 2.39 Assessment of pupils' work is regular and thorough; most work is carefully marked in accordance with the whole-school policy. Comments in books are encouraging and, at best, clear targets for improvement are set. In art and DT, in particular, pupils are encouraged not only to assess their own work but to offer positive constructive criticism of others' work.
- 2.40 An ongoing and developing assessment system allows teachers to gain and provide useful information about pupils' progress. The system involves pupils in keeping their own notes from which they write a self-review, judge their progress and set their own targets. In discussion between tutor, pupil, and parents, effective targets are set to assist progress. Pupils thoroughly understand the assessment system in the preparatory department. In the pre-preparatory department, reading and spelling tests are given at regular intervals and pupils' progress is tracked in mathematics.
- 2.41 Nationally standardised tests to measure attainment and progress have just been introduced in Years 2, 7 and 8. The school successfully prepares its pupils for their next stage of education through preparation for the Common Entrance examination and scholarship examinations for entry to a range of independent schools.
- 2.42 The school meets the regulatory requirements for teaching [Standard 1].

3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS

The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils

- 3.1 The quality of pastoral care is outstanding. It provides a supportive, caring and trusting environment in which all its pupils feel valued, thus matching the school's core Christian values and amply fulfilling its aims. Very careful attention is given to the welfare, health and safety of pupils. The school very successfully achieves its aim to offer its boarding pupils a safe, nurturing and disciplined environment in which they build self-esteem and confidence. Staff care effectively for all pupils' well-being and development and are supported in this by an effective structure. Significant improvements have been made in this aspect since the last inspection with the introduction of improved management systems, pastoral tutors and health and safety officers.
- 3.2 Teaching and non-teaching staff across the whole school community contribute to the excellent care, support and guidance for all pupils. The sense of community is apparent throughout the school and one of the reasons for this is the excellent relationship between staff and pupils, another is the contribution of the boarding ethos.
- 3.3 The pre-preparatory department has its own pastoral system based on close relationships between staff and children. The teachers and their assistants make up a very caring team. These standards of care continue through from the EYFS into the main school, where pupils in Years 3 and 4 can turn to their form teachers for all things pastoral. A rigorous, structured and successful tutor system is established in the top four year groups. Tutors play an important role in the care of the older pupils and know them particularly well, to the point where a tutor was described by a pupil as being 'more like a friend'. Pupils, both day and boarding, have a high regard for the support and care that they receive, they can confidently approach staff and know that their problems will be resolved quickly and efficiently. Volunteer peer listeners in Year 8, especially trained by the teaching staff to offer support to other pupils in time of need, also make a significant contribution to pastoral welfare. Consequently, pupils, day and boarding, feel safe and emotionally secure. A recently formed welfare committee keeps the boarding staff fully informed of the needs of all boarders.
- 3.4 Excellent staff and pupil relationships based on mutual respect, co-operation and good humour are the cornerstone to the very happy school community. Pupils play happily together and show their understanding of each other through their mutual support and care. They are at ease with staff, but retain tremendous respect for them. Pupils' happiness is on the agenda at staff meetings.
- 3.5 Pupils treat each other with consideration and respect in and out of the classroom. The effective house system in the main school enhances the quality of pastoral care by developing a team spirit amongst staff and pupils. In a house assembly on the theme of memories, staff willingly shared personal anecdotes with the pupils in a trusting and humorous way.
- 3.6 Measures to promote good discipline and behaviour are supported successfully by a system of credits and debits; many examples of outstandingly good behaviour were observed. Counselling and art therapy is available when required. The beautiful and spacious school environment impacts very positively on pupils' behaviour.

- 3.7 A comprehensive set of clearly written policies and an effective support system are in place. A strong anti-bullying code and a culture of openness and trust operate. Pupils reported that bullying is rare but, when it does occur, they are confident that it is dealt with constructively and promptly. A child-friendly version of the anti-bullying policy is a recent addition to the pupil dairy. A Worry Box allows the pupils to communicate their concerns to staff. A school council is well established and enables pupils to express their views and opinions. Parents and pupils are happy with the systems in place.
- 3.8 Measures to promote pupils' health and well-being are given high priority by the school and are very effective. This is in line with one of the aims of the school, to provide a caring and nurturing environment for its pupils. There has been significant improvement since the last inspection: documentary and procedural shortcomings have been rectified and policies and procedures brought into line with current legislation and practice. Registers are efficiently maintained. Attendance registers from Year 3 upwards and admission registers are now kept electronically.
- 3.9 Statutory child protection measures are correctly in place. The school has a comprehensive child protection policy. All staff have received appropriate training in child protection procedures, and this has been appropriately extended, for example, to training and guidance for those seniors who choose to become supportive peer listeners to other pupils, and for dormitory captains who have similar responsibilities.
- 3.10 Efficient fire prevention measures are in place, regular fire drills and equipment tests are scheduled and recorded, and fire and other risk assessments are also regularly undertaken and records kept. Hazardous substances, for example in the science laboratories, are stored under appropriate security.
- 3.11 Good care has been taken to ensure that a good proportion of staff is trained in first aid. Some have progressed to an advanced level and, where appropriate, teachers of younger children have been trained specifically as paediatric first aiders. Medical matters are catered for efficiently and effectively and the matrons, one of whom is available to pupils at all times, have a dedicated medical centre in the heart of the school. Pupils who are ill are well looked after.
- 3.12 Meals are appetising, healthy and nutritious, offering a good element of choice, including a vegetarian option and a well-stocked salad bar. Pupils, boarding and day, and staff alike praised the quality and quantity of food provided by the well-qualified and dedicated catering staff. Healthy and responsible eating habits are promoted by staff at meal times, in science lessons and also by posters, some produced by pupils, displayed around the dining hall. In addition, pupils keep extremely fit, benefiting from the availability of the extensive grounds, the excellent sports facilities and the many opportunities for formal and informal outdoor games.
- 3.13 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3].

The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community

- 3.14 The school has developed effective links with parents and excellent links with the wider community. It is successfully achieving its aims through its open-door policy and friendly, family atmosphere. Communication has much improved since the previous inspection and parents and the local community, in particular, have become increasingly involved. All parents from the Nursery upwards receive appropriate parents' information books, in response to a recommendation of a previous inspection.
- 3.15 Parents are generally very satisfied with the education provided for their children and the very extensive range of activities provided. They value the open-door policy and the freedom to see the teachers and tutors to discuss any concerns. These facilities ensure that the parents can feel fully involved in their child's education. They can see work in progress, share information with staff and are kept up-to-date with their child's development and learning, more recently through email. Significant contact within the school community is through sport or music; parents are eager to support their children.
- 3.16 A very small number of parents indicated in the questionnaire that they were, in an unspecified way, dissatisfied with the provision for boarders, but inspection evidence, including that gathered during conversations with parents and pupils, indicated a high standard of boarding education and high pupil satisfaction. A small minority of parents indicated that they did not have sufficient opportunities for discussion about concerns, or encouragement to be involved in school life, while a significant minority were unsettled and anxious about a lack of information at the beginning of the autumn term. The school and the governors were aware of parents' worries and took steps to deal with them. The team considered from their observations and conversations with parents that they are now more confident that any such concerns that they may have will be dealt with efficiently, and that they value highly the unmistakable warm, family atmosphere which does much to draw them into the school community.
- 3.17 Parents are given a wide range of information about events in the school through email; the plasma screen in the imposing yet welcoming entrance hall, where parents gather and sit by the log fire, is an excellent way of communicating the latest Orwell Park headlines, as is the school website, which is password protected. Detailed termly reports, recently revised, are praised by many parents, and keep them increasingly well informed about their child's attainment and effort. A beautifully presented annual magazine, with many photographs of and contributions from pupils, gives parents an excellent overview of the great variety of activities and successes which their children enjoy.
- 3.18 Extensive links between the school and the local and wider community considerably enrich pupils' educational experience. Many of these contacts are through sport and music and some activities, such as plays and public-speaking competitions are organised by the English department. The Community Choir, which rehearses weekly for ambitious concerts, brings together pupils, staff, parents and members of associations who meet at the school, thus strengthening links with local people. Local artists regularly have use of a reception room, which has enhanced natural light, to display their work and enrich the pupils' appreciation of art. Other special visitors to the school this academic year have included around 30 veterans from the 7th Armoured Division, the Desert Rats, who have a memorial in the school grounds.
- 3.19 Charity work close to home, supporting the Woolverstone Project which gives sailing opportunities to people with disabilities, has given pupils an insight into the needs of children with disabilities whilst at the same time raising funds. The school looks beyond the immediate community. It enjoys links with schools abroad and continues to strengthen those

with a school in Sri Lanka where recently raised funds went towards building an English room which is used to train teachers and teach children. Its involvement with the Comenius project, a European initiative, provides links and exchanges with other school children in France, Finland, Hungary and Italy. There is also a link with a school in Norway.

- 3.20 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the provision of information and the manner in which complaints are to be handled [Standards 6 and 7].

The Quality of Boarding Education

- 3.21 The educational experience provided by boarding is of high quality and has improved in many respects since the last inspection. The several recommendations made in the last Ofsted report have been implemented and major refurbishment of the boarders' facilities has taken place. The senior part of the school has a strong boarding ethos and provides a welcoming, structured, yet flexible introduction to boarding. In this way, the school amply fulfils its aims of teaching young people to live in a community, and to explore and to develop self-confidence in a safe environment. Boarders are significantly assisted in their overall education by the personal, social and emotional support within the boarding community. In line with the school's aim to develop a sense of responsibility, those seniors who are appointed dormitory captains fulfil a role that is respected and valued by younger boarders.
- 3.22 The care shown by the boarding house staff towards the boarding pupils is excellent. House parents and matrons work extremely hard, and successfully promote an environment that is homely and welcoming and one that is fully appreciated by the boarders. Good relationships are engendered by the houseparents and extend between all the staff involved in boarding and the pupils in their care. Indeed, boarders enthusiastically report that the social aspect, that of always having friends of your own age around you with matrons and house staff to help you, is one of the best aspects of boarding. This was confirmed by a comment that "We are one big, happy family really."
- 3.23 Boarders enjoy a very good range of activities during the evenings and at weekends. They have access to the full range of facilities available at the school, so that, for example, the library, sports hall, the music department, the ICT facilities and, in summer, the swimming pool are all accessible to the boarders after day-pupils have returned home. Pupils also say that it is enjoyable to relax with friends and to watch a film together in the evenings. Outings for boarders, especially at weekends, are very popular. Pupils enthuse about trips to the local foreshore, visits to the local ice-skating rink or cinema and opportunities to go ten-pin bowling, while within the grounds camping is organised. They describe enthusiastically how much they look forward to the lighter evenings of the summer term, when there is so much space within the school grounds to organise informal games of football, cricket, tennis or rounders, and to take up opportunities for structured and unstructured play.
- 3.24 The arrangements for boarding are appreciated by parents and pupils alike and the numbers of beds needed for boarders has increased steadily in recent years. In response to this demand, a new girls' dormitory has recently been opened. The accommodation for boarders has been refurbished and modernised. The common rooms are attractively decorated and are warmly, cheerfully and comfortably furnished. Bathrooms are modern, well equipped and provide appropriate privacy. The dormitories are mostly very spacious but are homely too, with boarders being able to personalise their own areas of individual living space. Food for boarders is plentiful and enjoyable, and is much praised by the pupils; they are also appreciative of 'grub', the snacks and drinks provided just before bedtime.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 The school benefits from very effective governance. The structure and management arrangements related to the governing body are very carefully defined and this enables governors to give helpful guidance and thoughtful oversight of the education, aims and values of the school. Their involvement and organisation has improved since the last ISI inspection. The strength of their commitment and vision has enabled the school to move forward significantly in recent years. Over recent months, until the arrival of the new headmaster, the governors assumed a greater executive role and responsibility and gave good support to the acting head, deputy head and business manager.
- 4.2 The governors, some of whom have long-standing connections with the school, offer a valuable range of professional expertise and experience in the fields of education, law, management, business and finance. Of the nine governors, six are past or present parents and these include two former pupils. They are very much in sympathy with the aims of the school and regularly attend training courses relevant to their roles and responsibilities. Suitable induction arrangements are provided for new governors. In addition, there have been two ‘away days’ with the staff in the past year which have enabled a strategic plan to guide school development to be drawn up from their joint deliberations.
- 4.3 Members of the governing body have high expectations and they form an active, forward-looking board who are very involved in educational development and financial planning. They are organised into two committees, finance and general purposes and the restoration of the buildings, which meet regularly and report to the main board. They are very aware of their responsibilities towards the pupils, the staff and the historic house and parkland. A major priority is the replacement of the present EYFS and pre-preparatory department but the planning process for a building in historic parkland and a site of outstanding natural beauty is necessarily lengthy and involved. A parental satisfaction survey in 2005 enabled the board to identify issues and initiate successfully changes and improvements.
- 4.4 With their personal knowledge of the school, in addition to an efficient structure of meetings at which they receive and discuss examination results, detailed academic reports and presentations on subjects in the curriculum, they develop a good insight into the working of the school. Because of their strong family links and their loyalty to the school, the governors are very committed to the school’s growth and improvement and make a significant contribution to the school’s development.
- 4.5 The governors are well aware of their responsibilities for legal and statutory matters, the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff, and child protection; in the latter area their training is exemplary. Health and safety issues raised during the inspection were dealt with quickly and efficiently.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.6 The quality of leadership and management is very effective. The strength of the educational experience, the exemplary care of the pupils, the successful fulfilment of the school’s aims and the preservation of its very special ethos all indicate a senior management which provides very clear educational direction and leadership and a very dedicated and responsive staff. The recommendations of the previous report have been effectively addressed. The senior management team has successfully weathered the inevitable pressures which resulted

- last term from the absence of the then headmaster; they willingly accepted additional responsibilities and committed their own time, as did many other members of staff and governors.
- 4.7 Over the past year, those with senior management responsibilities have effectively analysed the school's needs, in consultation with departmental staff and governors. All departments have contributed to school development planning. As a result, priorities have been set, and planning is in progress to meet these priorities and put the decisions into practice. Recent initiatives have included the further development of the assessment programme linked with the new effort and attainment reporting system, the peer listening scheme, the Young Einsteins club, 'away days' for staff and governors and the ongoing improvement and refurbishment of the boarding accommodation. Financial resources have been very well managed to enable the school to continue to develop buildings and resources for teachers and pupils. The excellent facilities and resources for the academic and boarding sections of the school are proof of the success of both recent and earlier planning.
- 4.8 During the interregnum, responsibilities were shared between those in senior management, to enable the acting headmaster and deputy head to continue teaching their classes to the greatest extent possible. Individual sections, such as boarding, continued to be very well led and managed, but some cohesion and unity in the overall structure was lost because of time pressures. With a new headmaster now in post, consideration is being given to the most effective use of the senior management team's time. For example, the pre-preparatory department is led and managed with great commitment, but it is recognised that more designated management time is required. The present leadership has a clear vision for the school to include a stable, firm management structure and a determination to continue to provide the highest quality education and learning environment for pupils at every stage.
- 4.9 Academic, pastoral and welfare policies and procedures have been updated or, where necessary, introduced during the past year, having been approved by the governors. A process of checking and reviewing policies and procedures has also been established, although it is too soon for this to be totally in operation. Schemes of work have been improved, and some are exemplary. ICT is being successfully developed. Extremely efficient and well-considered new systems for assessment and reporting have been initiated.
- 4.10 The quality of the leadership and management of individual departments varies; where it is exceptionally strong, the dissemination of good practice in the department is achieved through observing teaching and scrutinising work. In a few subject areas, heads of department are not yet monitoring the teaching and learning of their subject, nor recognising the value of reviewing and comparing samples of pupils' work.
- 4.11 Well-considered and successful appointments have been made to the staff; and innovation by new or established staff is effectively encouraged. The staff, teaching and non-teaching, are totally dedicated to the education, care and happiness of the pupils. Staff appreciate the support they are given for professional development within the school or externally. Appraisal arrangements are well established, although they have been in abeyance for a term; they are closely linked to the monitoring of teaching by the senior management team, and to setting targets for staff and professional development requirements.
- 4.12 Appropriate policies and procedures relating to child protection and safe recruitment have been securely put in place to check the suitability of all staff, volunteers and governors. Correct staffing ratios were adhered to in the EYFS classrooms and playgrounds during the main inspection. The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers; effective arrangements are in place for their induction and for the induction of all newcomers to the staff.

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- 4.13 The administration of the school is effective and efficient and underpins the education and care offered by the school. Despite the everyday pressures and demands of a busy school, the administration and finance staff handle all queries with kindness and patience. In a boarding school with extensive grounds and a heritage of a beautiful and historic building and parkland, estate management, house-keeping and catering assume great importance and the loyalty and commitment of all the non-teaching staff are strong.
- 4.14 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].
- 4.15 The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers and meets its requirements.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall Conclusions

- 5.1 The school meets its aims and aspirations and the needs of its pupils outstandingly well. It provides an excellent, academically challenging, stimulating, happy and fulfilling all-round educational experience for its pupils. The quality of the boarding education is high. The family atmosphere and the boarding ethos make a very important contribution to the successful fulfilment of the aims of the school. The pastoral care is outstanding, as is the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Boys and girls are eager to accept new challenges and meet them with a distinctive combination of courtesy and quiet confidence. The governing body, the senior management team and the entire staff, teaching and non-teaching are committed to providing the best possible all-round education and care for each individual child. Pupils are given a lifelong love of learning in academic, creative and sporting spheres. From the good start they are given in the EYFS, pupils grow in self-confidence because they are encouraged to do their best within the context of their own ability, and they take great pride in their school. Learning support and the programme for those with gifts and talents are strong. Standards achieved in literacy and numeracy are good, while creative subjects enjoy outstanding resources and flourish. The excellent games and activities programme enables pupils to participate as widely as possible in school life and to enjoy an extensive range of experience. It also enables the dedicated staff to share their enthusiasms and build a community with the values of respect, commitment, friendship and loyalty at its heart. The teaching in a significant number of lessons was outstanding but a small proportion of the teaching was satisfactory.
- 5.2 The school has made the improvements required by the last major inspection of boarding by the Ofsted inspection team and those of the most recent Ofsted nursery education inspection. The school has made significant progress since its last ISI inspection; its recommendations have been effectively addressed in the areas of the assessment and use of performance data for target setting. The learning support department contributes most significantly to the success of pupils and now includes responsibility for gifted and talented pupils. Excellent progress has been made in the provision for, and use of, ICT across the school and this has contributed significantly to pupils' learning.
- 5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

- 5.4 The school has no significant weaknesses. In order to improve further the existing good education which is offered to the pupils, the school should:
1. extend its lesson observation and monitoring programme to include peer observation and work scrutiny and thus disseminate the best practice in teaching across departments and sections;
 2. complete the development of the assessment programme;
 3. re-establish cohesion and unity in the management structure.
- 5.5 No action is required in respect of regulatory requirements, although at the time of the Early Years Foundation Stage inspection there was a deficiency in staffing arrangements at break times. This deficiency has now been satisfactorily remedied.

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 9th to 12th February 2009. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the boarding house and the medical centre. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.
- 6.2 The Early Years Foundation Stage was inspected on 4th and 5th February 2009 by two inspectors. The inspectors observed sessions, talked to the children, examined samples of work, and held discussions with staff and governors. Comments from parents and carers were considered, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.

List of Inspectors

Mrs Danice Iles	Reporting Inspector
Mr Alfred Bogyor	Deputy Head, IAPS school
Mrs Tricia Fisher	Head, IAPS school
Mrs Julie Habaoui	Head of Pre-prep, ISA school
Mr Nicholas Park	Deputy Head, IAPS school
Mrs Felicity Lawson	Early Years Lead Inspector
Mrs Maggie Evans	Early Years Team Inspector

7. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS)

- 7.1 The EYFS at Orwell Park provides good education and care within a friendly and caring community. The forty-four EYFS children aged between two and five years are housed in the school's pre-preparatory department. Seventeen children attend on a part-time basis and twenty-seven are full-time. Two children in the EYFS are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). No children are classified as having English as an additional language. The EYFS has happy, confident children who enjoy their time in school, and make good progress in their learning and development. Children benefit from shared facilities in the school, specialist teaching in information and communication technology, French, physical education, and music and optional before and after school care. The school is set in beautiful surroundings which the children have many opportunities to explore. The hardworking, enthusiastic staff work well as a team, and provide a calm, relaxed atmosphere where children thrive. The system for making home visits before children start Nursery is most effective and eases the transition between home and school. Excellent links with parents help to involve them in their children's care and education.
- 7.2 Most children, including those with LDD, make good progress in relation to their varying starting points. They work and play well on their own and with others. They are encouraged to express their views and develop good attitudes to learning. They can take responsibility for choosing activities and demonstrate a good understanding of what they are learning. Children make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development because their adult carers are good role models. As a result, the children behave very well and show good care for themselves and others.
- 7.3 The overall personal development and well-being of the children is good. The high quality of support and intervention from staff gives strong encouragement for children to participate, make choices and share. Everyday gentle reminders ensure children learn the rules to keep them safe both indoors and outside. Nutritious and well-presented food and the good opportunities provided for physical development contribute effectively to the good health and well-being of the children
- 7.4 Learning and development is good. Staff are working hard to develop their skills within the EYFS framework. They receive a generous, but essential amount of planning and record-keeping time, and are well trained as early years educators. Small classes, and a high adult to child ratio, mean problems are quickly identified and advice and support provided. The way staff use observational assessment to plan future work and support children's learning is strength of the provision. For example, a Nursery child's interest in sharks was developed and extended by staff, using a range of interesting activities including computer games, picture books and themed water play. Records are kept meticulously and used effectively to monitor children's welfare, development, and progress in their learning. There is a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities, and children are provided with frequent opportunities to develop independent learning skills. Teaching is good overall, although some lessons lacked pace, and consequently children were not always purposefully engaged. The extensive school grounds which provide a wealth of learning opportunities are well used. Parents who responded to the questionnaire are most supportive of the setting and feel well informed of their children's progress. Staff are proactive in obtaining information from parents about their children. Home visits, daily diaries, home/school communication books, "Wow Boards", and meaningful dialogue between school and home, provide effective opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning and development.

- 7.5 Provision for children's welfare is good with all appropriate risk assessments undertaken. The required number of adults has the correct paediatric first-aid training. There are regular fire drills and all staff know the correct procedures to follow in case of a fire. Children feel very safe and well supported by staff. Staffing ratios within the classrooms are generous but there is not always sufficient staffing during break times. All adults having contact with the children have been checked for their suitability and have had child protection training. Extremely good partnerships with parents, the local authority and a good variety of external health and educational agencies ensure that any specific need can be met.
- 7.6 Leadership and management are good. The hardworking, conscientious leaders of the setting demonstrate a clear vision regarding the development of the EYFS within the whole school community. The operational file is highly detailed, and reflects the aims of the school. All records, policies and procedures are in place and up-to-date. The monitoring of teaching and learning within the setting is too infrequent to provide the most effective evaluation and support. However, the managers clearly have the commitment and enthusiasm to make any further improvements and the school recognises that more designated management time is required. There are strong links with the local authority EYFS advisors who support professional development and provide regular quality checks. All recommendations set at the last inspection have been addressed and good progress has been made.

What the Setting Should Do to Improve

- 7.7 To improve still further the good quality of its provision, the setting should:
1. increase designated management and leadership time within the setting;
 2. implement more frequent monitoring of teaching and learning in order to improve evaluation and support for staff.
- 7.8 In order to comply with the welfare requirements of the EYFS, the school must ensure that:
- (1) sufficient staffing is maintained during break times.

Complaints Since the Last Inspection

- 7.9 Since the last inspection, no complaints have been made to Ofsted which required any action to meet national requirements.