



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

SACRED HEART SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of School	Sacred Heart School
DfE Number	926/6051
Registered Charity Number	237760
Address	Sacred Heart School 17 Mangate Street Swaffham Norfolk PE37 7QW
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Head	Sister Francis Ridler FDC
Chair of the Trust of the Daughters of Divine Charity	Sister Thomas More Prentice FDC
Age Range	3 to 16
Total Number of Pupils	143
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (37 boys; 106 girls;)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 11 5-11: 52 11-16: 80
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 140
Number of Boarders	Total: 3 Full: 0 Weekly: 3
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Penny Pierce
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	13 Mar 2012 to 16 Mar 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 January 2009

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 through the following link: www.legislation.gov.uk. Search for Independent School Standards Regulations and enter date 2010, to find Schedule 1, Parts 1-7.

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

- (i) The Equality Act 2010 (including race, gender, special educational needs and disability).
- (ii) The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, banning corporal punishment.

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

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

Under Government arrangements, the inspection of boarding became an integrated part of ISI inspections from 1 September 2011. 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. Boarding inspections were previously carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills. The relevant Ofsted report refers to an inspection in January 2009 and can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Children's social care/Boarding school.

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

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 chair of the trust of the Daughters of Divine Charity and the chair of the advisory governing body, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding accommodation 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

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Reporting Inspector

Mrs Pamela Trivass

Team Inspector (Curriculum Manager, IAPS school)

Mrs Carole Baker

Team Inspector (Head, ISA school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL.

- 1.1 Sacred Heart School is a Catholic co-educational school which was founded in 1914 as a day and boarding school for girls in the market town of Swaffham by the Daughters of Divine Charity. The Sisters still run the school, which changed in 2009 to a fully co-educational school taking pupils from the ages of 3 to 16. The first intake of boys reached Year 11 in September 2011.
- 1.2 The school is a community committed to the education of its pupils in a Catholic Christian ethos. The aims of the school are to foster spiritual growth in Christian faith and values, and to inspire pupils to value, appreciate and enjoy learning, to work for excellence, to further their curiosity and creativity, to aspire to high ideals and to give generous service of others. The trustees of the Daughters of Divine Charity hold the statutory responsibilities of governance; a separate advisory governing body established in 2009 provides challenge, support and advice to the head and the senior management team (SMT).
- 1.3 The school has 143 pupils on roll, 37 boys and 106 girls. The school includes an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) department which has 11 pupils, of whom five currently attend part time. There are 52 pupils in the Lower School containing Years 1 to 6, and 80 in the Senior School consisting of Years 7 to 11. The school offers full and flexi-boarding for girls and currently 3 girls board on a flexible basis.
- 1.4 The ability profiles of the Lower and Senior Schools are above the national average overall, with some fluctuation from year to year and a wide range of abilities represented. Pupils travel to the school from the surrounding rural area. About one third of pupils come from Catholic families with farming, business and professional backgrounds, a small number come from other minority ethnic or other religious backgrounds.
- 1.5 Two pupils have a statement of special educational needs, and 54 have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) of whom 14 receive specialist support. Two pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and these pupils receive support in class for their English.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school other than in the EYFS. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Reception	Nursery
Reception	Reception

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings.

- 2.1 The overall quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good in all areas of the school. Pupils attain well at all levels, but particularly in the EYFS, and make good progress. Pupils with SEND and EAL are supported and make progress in line with their abilities and in line with that made by their peers. This progress reflects the generally good quality of teaching and a good curriculum, although improvements are needed in the assessment systems used and in the way in which pupils with SEND are identified and supported.
- 2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent at all stages of the school. The pupils are confident and courteous young people who grow to understand their responsibilities to the wider world; they are strong in their faith and enjoy all aspects of their school lives. The school's pastoral care is excellent, and reflects the school's Catholic character. Provision for health and safety is excellent, and the day to day welfare of pupils is well managed. However, the school has failed to ensure that the required procedures have been put in place and implemented when appointing staff. Although the number of boarders is small, the quality of boarding is good in most respects, and contributes well to the pupils' development.
- 2.3 The overall quality of governance, leadership and management is unsatisfactory because of the failure to implement the recommendations of the previous report over matters of child protection, and not meeting the requirement for those responsible for the discharge of governance to undertake an annual review of safeguarding policies and procedures in the school. The trustees and the advisory governing body have supported the leadership of the school to bring to life the Catholic ethos of the school, in ensuring that educational standards are maintained and in furthering the previously good standards of personal development so that now this area is judged to be excellent. There is insufficient self-evaluation of the school's work, or monitoring of the implementation of plans, policies and procedures by those responsible for its direction. Parents are highly supportive of the school, and many are involved in a thriving parents' association which has raised funds, for example, for playground equipment.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is available through the link described in the Preface)

2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:

- implement all appropriate safeguarding arrangements including an annual review of the school's child protection policies by the proprietor [Part 3 paragraph 7(a),(b) and 8(a),(b) under Welfare, health and safety and NMS 11];
- carry out the required CRB and other pre-appointment checks on staff and proprietors and ensure that these are completed at the appropriate time [Part 4, paragraphs 19(2)(a),(b)(i),(b)(iv),(c),(e), 19(3), 21(6)(a)(i)(ii),(b)(i) under Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors and NMS 11 and 14.1; and for the same reason Part 3, paragraph 7.(a),(b) and 8.(a),(b) under Welfare, health and safety]
- ensure that all the required checks are recorded on the Single Central Register of Appointments [Part 4, paragraph 22(3)(a),(b),(c),(d),(g), 22(4) and 22(6)(a)(i)(ii),(b)(i) under Single Central Register of Appointments and NMS 11 and 14.1; and for the same reason Part 3, paragraph 7.(a),(b) and 8.(a),(b) under Welfare, health and safety]

The school does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2011, as described above.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 In addition to the above regulatory action points the school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure that there are proper processes for self-evaluation and monitoring of the work of the school so that all statutory requirements are met at all times.
2. Improve the identification of, and support for, pupils with SEND, including the maintenance of individual records for such pupils.
3. Make sure that the systems of assessment used at different stages of the school are unified in order to give a clear view of the progress of each pupil from EYFS to GCSE.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 Overall the quality of the pupils' achievement and learning is good.
- 3.2 In line with the school's aims, pupils develop well in knowledge, understanding and skills in a broad curriculum and good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils of all ages read and write competently and with enjoyment. There are numerous examples of grammatically competent and imaginative pieces of writing on display around the school. The pupils listen attentively to both staff and their peers and discuss concepts articulately, using appropriate vocabulary and terminology. They apply mathematical skills to present data in graphs and charts in mathematics and science and they work successfully in pairs and groups. Displays suggest that pupils have good information and communication technology (ICT) skills, although little use was observed during the inspection. Pupils of all ages think independently. Pupils of all ages respond well in creative activities such as drama. They enjoy practical and sporting activities, and sing and perform with confidence.
- 3.3 Pupils have achieved excellence in individual as well as team sport; the Senior School cross country team reached the national finals of the ISA cross country championships. Other notable successes have been achieved in dance awards, LAMDA speech and drama examinations and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Many pupils have been successful in music examinations and performances. Pupils progress successfully to a wide range of sixth form and further education courses including academic and vocational courses, and a number have plans to go on to university.
- 3.4 The attainment of pupils across the school is good. The outcomes for pupils in EYFS are excellent. All children achieve success and by the end of Reception many exceed the Early Learning Goals in all areas. The younger children can recognise letters and sounds of the alphabet, can order numbers up to ten and make a basic repeating pattern. The older children use their phonic skills to support reading, write simple sentences and add and subtract with numbers up to twenty.
- 3.5 In the Lower School, attainment cannot be measured in relation to performance in national tests but, from evidence of work scrutiny, lesson observations and pupil interviews, overall attainment and progress for boys and girls of all abilities is judged to be good. Pupils with EAL in EYFS are judged to make rapid progress in learning English and to make progress comparable to their peers in other areas. The following analysis for the Senior School uses the national data for the years 2008 to 2010, which are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. The school's GCSE performance has been good in relation to the national average for maintained schools. This level of attainment indicates that pupils, including the most able, make good progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability. Pupils with SEND and EAL make good progress through the school and fulfil their potential as do the more able. Pupils with SEND particularly appreciate the support they receive in keeping to deadlines and organising revision as GCSE exams approach.
- 3.6 Pupils have a strong work ethic and are very well motivated. They enjoy learning and approach their work in an enthusiastic and positive manner. Their involvement in activities from the earliest years shows their eagerness to learn so that they

acquire a wide range of skills for independent learning which prepare them for the next stage in their education.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.8 The curricular and extra-curricular provision caters well for children of all ages, abilities and needs, in line with the school's aim that their community is encouraged to value, appreciate and enjoy learning and to further curiosity and creativity. The curriculum has a good balance of content and a suitably wide range of courses. As a result, it is effective in its coverage of the requisite areas of learning across the school. In the EYFS the curriculum is well-developed and supported by staff, ensuring that the needs of children are well met. Many activities are built around the interests of the children. Since the previous inspection, the balance of indoor and outdoor learning at this level has been improved and it now fully supports all the required areas of learning.
- 3.9 Since the previous inspection, significant changes have been introduced to the curriculum which now makes more appropriate provision for pupils of all levels of ability. Some classes in the Lower School are taught together for non-core subjects, encouraging more opportunities for meaningful class discussion and enabling teams to be formed in physical education (PE). In the Senior School, Spanish has been added to the range of subjects available, and other languages are offered to the most able linguists as additional activities which can be examined at GCSE if appropriate. Other areas of study have been extended to better suit the needs of the students; a range of science options are included, and three individual sciences are now available to able pupils. Similarly, the breadth of English GCSE courses has been changed to meet the needs of all. A wide range of visits supports the curriculum and pupils' learning.
- 3.10 Extra-curricular provision is good for such a small school. The school offers a variety of residential trips, including skiing and visits to Prague and France which extend and support pupils' experience and learning. In addition personal development is enhanced by trips to centres of Catholic and Christian significance such as Walsingham. Pupils speak enthusiastically about activities such as gardening, and ballroom and Latin American dancing, and they achieve high levels of success in these and other areas. The Senior School cross country team reached the national finals of the ISA cross country championships. The school competes against state and independent schools in netball, hockey, cross country, athletics, tennis, rounders and swimming.
- 3.11 The school has excellent links with the community through parish, diocesan and other local events which extend the pupils' experience and also benefit the local area. Recently the pupils have been involved in the local food festival, they sang in the Festival of Remembrance, displayed art in the Shape and Colour Exhibition at a nearby arts centre and provided a Latin American dance performance for the Senior Citizens Lunch, organised by the Swaffham Rotary Club. The pupils are proud to represent their school in local events.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.12 The quality of teaching is good.
- 3.13 Teaching across the school is thoroughly planned, reflecting accurate knowledge and understanding of the needs and abilities of pupils. In the EYFS, high levels of staffing, the excellent relationships of staff with their pupils and careful planning to meet the needs of all pupils results in a good balance between child-initiated and adult-led learning. This is supported by the excellent opportunities provided to explore and investigate topics instigated by the children's own interests. In both the Lower and Senior Schools teachers show sensitivity and flexibility in adjusting planning to meet the needs of pupils. For example, the objective of a personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) lesson was changed at short notice to address the needs of pupils experiencing relationship difficulties. The staff plan successfully to meet the needs of pupils of different ages in classes with mixed age groups.
- 3.14 The best teaching, some of which is excellent, proceeds at a brisk pace with varied activities using carefully selected resources, which are used to good effect. Well-planned questioning is used to challenge pupils of all abilities, including the most able and those with SEND or EAL. Varied teaching strategies encourage pupils to have fun and develop independence in their learning. Occasionally, teaching is less effective. In such cases, teaching does not provide a sufficient variety of work at levels appropriate to the range of ability of pupils. Other lessons lack pace, leaving some pupils unchallenged and others unable to complete tasks successfully; as a result, the pupils make less progress than they should.
- 3.15 There has been some improvement in the quality of assessment since the previous inspection but standards of marking are still inconsistent. The best marking is positive and gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work but some, particularly in the Lower School, offers no indication of achievement or guidance. In the Senior School, by contrast, the use of grades gives pupils a clear indication of their achievement, and comments help pupils to improve their work. In both the Lower and Senior Schools there are systems based on nationally standardised tests to track the pupils' progress, leading to more focused planning and intervention strategies. However, there is no link between these two systems, limiting their value when pupils move through the school.
- 3.16 Pupils with SEND are well supported by their teachers, who give generously of their time in class and in break and lunch times to assist those who need help. Pupils speak highly of their teachers. However, as yet the identification of learning needs and provision of specific specialist support is limited and individual records are not available to support further, focused support.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 Spiritual development is excellent, and the pupils value their opportunities to reflect and explore their faith both in retreats and in the innovative PSHEE programme. Pupils in Year 7 explained how much they appreciate time given to meditation or reflection. The pupils are extremely supportive of each other, showing a high level of emotional maturity.
- 4.3 The moral development of the pupils is excellent. The pupils have a strong understanding of right and wrong and are determined to extend this to the world around them. Various visiting speakers such as those who gave talks on prisoners and the war in Afghanistan enable pupils to contemplate the consequences of doing wrong and empathise with those involved in modern day warfare.
- 4.4 The social development of pupils is outstanding and this is seen not only in the impressive level of fundraising but also in other activities such as visits to local homes for the elderly. In the EYFS, children are kind and caring, wait patiently to take turns, and support each other. Older pupils accept that they have a responsibility to help those less fortunate than themselves and are creative in their ideas. They delight in accepting responsibility at all ages, ranging from Reception children who represent their class on the school council through to prefects taking responsibility in Year 11. Pupils also enjoy replicating political events such as mock elections at the time of the general election, and they benefit from the experience of hustings and voting to elect members of the school council. Pupils demonstrate initiative and well-developed organisational skills, for example in drafting the constitution of the school council.
- 4.5 The pupils have a good awareness of other cultures and beliefs and explore these both in religious education (RE) lessons and through in-depth study days. They respect the differences of others and benefit from many opportunities to think about the needs of others both in school and in the wider world.

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

- 4.6 The arrangements for pastoral care are excellent.
- 4.7 Provision has improved since the previous inspection, fulfilling the aim of the school to be a community committed to the education of its pupils in a Catholic caring ethos. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Throughout the school staff clearly know and care deeply about the pupils and offer excellent support and guidance. The pupils recognise this, and one of the youngest stated "teachers are kind so we are kind". In the EYFS the children are cared for extremely well and learn about keeping safe in many contexts
- 4.8 The children in the EYFS are encouraged to make healthy choices for snacks and at lunch. They learn to understand the need for a healthy diet; the effect exercise has on the body and the importance of personal hygiene. Older pupils discuss healthy eating and the benefits of exercise through the PSHEE programme which encourages pupils to reflect thoughtfully on many issues affecting health and well-being. School meals are nutritious and healthy eating is further promoted through

the snack policy which allows only fruit and vegetables at break time. There is good range of physical activities and the pupils expressed appreciation of the inclusive approach to school teams.

- 4.9 The school is highly effective in promoting good behaviour and has a clear anti-bullying policy which is well implemented to guard against harassment and bullying. Parents feel that their children are safe at the school and the pupils agree with this, saying that they know who they would turn to if they had a problem. Any unacceptable behaviour is carefully dealt with, taking due account of any related difficulty or disability. Positive behaviour is reinforced by a variety of rewards such as certificates for house points and service points, also trophies and shields for other successes.
- 4.10 There is a suitable plan to improve access for pupils with SEND. The school ensures that pupils are well-informed about particular disabilities so that they understand and support each other.
- 4.11 The school seeks the views of pupils through the Lower and Senior school councils and the use of surveys to help plan future developments. Recently pupils were asked how well the school was meeting their special needs and also to evaluate the PSHEE week.

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

- 4.12 The arrangements are unsatisfactory overall.
- 4.13 As at the time of the previous inspection, the school has not met the requirements to operate safe recruitment procedures, which make its welfare provision unsatisfactory overall. However, other safeguarding procedures within the school are strong, with a clearly stated policy and well-trained staff who receive regular updates. The designated person and her deputies have received full training in child protection matters, which is updated regularly as required.
- 4.14 The school's arrangements for health and safety are excellent. All necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards, including the careful storage of hazardous materials. Suitable risk assessments are undertaken for both on-site and off-site activities. An appropriate fire risk policy is in place and the full fire risk assessment has taken place. Fire drills take place regularly and are accurately recorded. All equipment is regularly serviced and the requirements are thoroughly and regularly reviewed, including the routes to fire exits.
- 4.15 Within the EYFS, the children's welfare is promoted effectively by the staff.
- 4.16 A small, comfortable medical room provides suitable accommodation for a pupil who is sick or injured. The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and correctly stored for the required period.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.17 The outcomes for boarders are good.
- 4.18 Boarders benefit from their experience of boarding, which contributes to a good level of personal development. They are confident and erudite in dealing with adults and one another. Pupils are invariably polite to one another, as seen when they defer to each other in conversation. They relate well to each other and to their housemistress and the assistant staff, and are comfortable in their boarding dormitory and social areas. Pupils enjoy being part of the boarding community at the school and enjoy opportunities to contribute to its success, for example by making more space available.
- 4.19 The quality of boarding provision and care is good. Boarders are well cared for, and the boarding staff take a genuine interest in the academic and social needs of the girls. There is good contact between the pastoral and academic staff within the school. Facilities are good; the upstairs common room and adjacent drama area are constantly used and much appreciated. Outdoor activities are curtailed by light levels in winter, but the pupils enjoy their indoor activity programme. At other times of the year the girls make full use of the swimming pool, the play areas and the sports hall. Boarders are able to contact home by way of the public telephone and through the main office, and in the evenings by mobile telephone. There are suitable arrangements for pupils who are unwell, either being accommodated in the infirmary, or collected by their parents and taken home until fully recovered. There are proper arrangements for the dispensing of medicines and household remedies. Appropriate records are maintained. There are regular meetings between the house staff and boarders, generally of an informal nature and the girls feel that their opinion counts, as in recent discussions that have led to changes in the school menus, particularly at supper time. The food is freshly cooked and girls are able to produce drinks and simple snacks in the dining room after lesson time. There are good opportunities for exercise and the girls are able to visit the local shops, usually accompanied by a member of the boarding team, in order to purchase tuck and personal items. The boarding accommodation is bright and airy, although at times cold, and there are adequate facilities nearby for showering and washing.
- 4.20 The arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are unsatisfactory because the school does not meet all the required safeguarding and employment checks. At a day to day level, however, the practical arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are good. The philosophy of the school, "Service before Self" and the Catholic ethos, which is central to this philosophy, underpin all aspects of boarding life. Staff have appropriate training in safeguarding and they implement policies carefully to ensure the safety of the girls in their charge. The boarders are aware of risks and know the necessary procedures which ensure their safety on the site and beyond. There are a number of members of the house team as well as an independent listener to whom they can turn in times of need and boarders know how to contact the outside agencies which exist for their protection. Risk assessments for boarding are appropriately carried out. There are clear policies on bullying and good behaviour which are implemented well. In practice, sanctions are rarely required.
- 4.21 The leadership and management of boarding is good. There is a suitable range of policies and practices that have materially benefitted the boarders. The house staff, who are mainly members of the Daughters of Divine Charity, give unstintingly of their

time to care for the boarders. There is excellent communication between the members of the team and with parents. The staff live within the boarding house and are easily accessible to the boarders at night if they are needed. Whilst there are plans to introduce appraisals for staff, these have yet to be implemented. Records on all aspects of the life of the house are meticulously kept and are accessible to all members of the team. Whilst the numbers boarding are modest, boarding is regarded as an important aspect of school life.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The governance of the school is unsatisfactory.
- 5.2 The trustees have not fulfilled their responsibilities for safeguarding children, safe employment and the recording of all the required employment checks on the central register of employment, although these were identified as areas of concern at the previous inspection.
- 5.3 The trustees have successfully supported the governing body and the head in their work to translate the ethos of the school into reality for the pupils, who appreciate the calm, supportive and meditative atmosphere in which they work. Through their work in the school and through their membership of the advisory governing body, the chair of the trust and the head of the school have day to day oversight of the school.
- 5.4 The failure to monitor the implementation of crucial policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils, the safe employment of staff, and the maintenance of the central register of appointments, has allowed failures in these processes identified as action points in the previous report to continue. Some governors have recently undertaken appropriate training, but this has not resulted in the implementation of the recommendations in the previous report relating to safe employment processes, employment checks and recording.
- 5.5 The advisory governing body has received a comprehensive and accurate report from the designated child protection officer in the school, which clearly identifies the issues with the regard to safeguarding and this has resulted in some actions to rectify the situation. However neither the report nor the minutes recording this discussion have been considered by the trust, as the body with statutory responsibility for the school, resulting in a further failure to meet its legal responsibilities.

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

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management is unsatisfactory overall.
- 5.7 There are weaknesses in the implementation of the key policies and procedures for the safeguarding of children and the safe recruitment of staff, although these were identified at the time of the previous inspection. Leadership and management have strengths in many other areas of the school and in particular in maintaining educational standards and developing the spiritual life of the children.
- 5.8 In a number of other areas the leadership and management have successfully developed the school in accordance with its key aims. The Catholic ethos of the school has been strengthened by carefully thought out strategies such as the meditation lessons, regular masses, pilgrimages and visits to places of religious significance and retreats. Parents and pupils value this aspect of the school highly. The pastoral care has continued to ensure pupils flourish and health and safety in all areas of the school is maintained at a high standard. Key policies are in place, but

monitoring of their implementation is not always sufficiently rigorous, resulting in inconsistencies in, for example, the quality of marking and the appraisal of staff.

- 5.9 The leadership and management have used their reflections on the priorities in the school and consultation with the staff as the basis for the school development plan. The plan sets out timescales for developments and has been successfully implemented in some areas. The use of surveys is providing another source of evaluation and a consideration of future developments in the provision of learning support has included using this method to ascertain the views of pupils and inform developments.
- 5.10 Self-evaluation, supported by the initial development plan, has identified areas and priorities to strengthen and improve the EYFS provision.
- 5.11 The management has generally been able to recruit staff successfully and has ensured that they are suitably trained to meet the needs of the pupils, in up to date safeguarding procedures and in the areas of welfare, health and safety. Staff show a high level of commitment to the school and its pupils and a number have undertaken further training and qualifications to support their roles in the school.
- 5.12 Links with parents are excellent. Parental questionnaires showed overwhelming support for the ethos of the school and the care shown by the school for the pupils. Induction handbooks and other relevant material are comprehensive and support families before children join the school. A constructive relationship with parents is maintained by way of weekly newsletters that celebrate events within the school and showcase the work of the pupils. Parental concerns are dealt with sensitively and efficiently. There is an active and committed Parents Association which organises a variety of social events and a whole gamut of highly successful fund raising activities in order to aid the school with the purchase of capital items. Over the last three years these have ranged from refurbishment of the swimming pool to new playground equipment which is much appreciated by all the pupils. Parents' evenings are held regularly throughout the year and each pupil receives an informative termly summative report. At the end of Reception parents are given a summary of their child's profile points in line with regulatory requirements.

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