

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## INSPECTION REPORT ON

### Bedstone College

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Full Name of the School                       | <b>Bedstone College</b>                                   |
| DCSF Number                                   | <b>893/6000</b>   |
| Early Years Number                            | <b>EY 304589</b>  |
| Registered Charity Number                     | <b>528405</b>   |
| Address                                       | <b>Bucknell, Shropshire SY7 0BG.</b>                      |
| Telephone Number                              | <b>01547 530303</b>                                       |
| Fax Number                                    | <b>01527 530740</b>                                       |
| Email Address                                 | <b>pa@bedstone.org</b>                                    |
| Headmaster                                    | <b>Mr Michael Symonds</b>                                 |
| Chairman of Governors                         | <b>Group Captain Jon Fynes (RAF Rtd.)</b>                 |
| Age Range (of the whole school)               | <b>3 to 18</b>  |
| Gender  | <b>Mixed</b>  |
| Inspection Dates                              | <b>21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> September 2009</b>  |
| Head of Early Years Setting                   | <b>Mrs M Savery</b>                                       |
| Early Years Age Range                         | <b>3 to 5</b>   |
| Early Years Gender                            | <b>Mixed</b>  |
| Early Years Foundation Stage Inspection Dates | <b>21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2009</b> |

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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 inspection was carried out in conjunction with Ofsted, Children's Directorate. The Ofsted report is available separately at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 Bedstone College is a non-selective, co-educational, boarding and day school, for pupils aged three to eighteen. Founded in 1948 the college is centred on what was Bedstone Court, built towards the end of the nineteenth century. The stated aims of the college are to fulfil the potential of each child wherever that potential may lie. In order to achieve that the college aims to equip pupils to lead fulfilled and purposeful lives by providing an excellent all-round education founded on Christian principles, and providing interests beyond the academic which bring enjoyment and enrichment both to themselves and to others. The college seeks to provide the knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable pupils to succeed in a complex, fast-changing, multi-cultural society, with compassion, sound judgment and integrity. The expectation of their pupils is to show care and concern for others and a willingness to contribute to the common good with respect for people and the environment.
- 1.2 The college is a limited company and a charitable trust with the board of governors acting as trustees of the charity. Individuals are invited to join the governing body to add to the range of expertise available for the governance of the college. The Pre-preparatory and the Preparatory departments are on the same site as the senior school. The Preparatory department has its own headteacher with the Nursery teacher working as the Pre-preparatory coordinator. The headmaster of the senior school has ultimate responsibility for leadership and management of education overall.
- 1.3 The college is set in its own grounds in the middle of the Shropshire countryside, the nearest town being Ludlow, which is twenty minutes drive away. The college is housed in a variety of buildings offering general purpose classrooms and specialist accommodation. Along with the specialist teaching areas there is a range of amenities for sport, swimming, music, drama, games and recreation. On-site playing fields and hard surface play areas give pupils opportunities for outdoor recreation. The main building containing the administration offices, two boarding houses and the catering facilities, was severely damaged by fire thirteen years ago, has been restored to its original design and was re-opened two years later. Some of the temporary buildings used by the college while the main building was being rebuilt after the fire are still in use. The medical centre is housed in these buildings, as is the music department and the bursar's offices.
- 1.4 Pupils are grouped in house groups, which are further subdivided into tutor groups. This arrangement provides the framework for pastoral care. There are twenty full time pupils, twelve part time, in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the Pre-preparatory department along with thirty-eight pupils in the Preparatory department. Thirty-six of the pupils in both of these departments are girls. In the senior school there are 157 pupils aged eleven to sixteen; 107 of these are boys. Thirty-four boys and twenty-one girls are educated in the sixth form. There are 105 boarders with the youngest boarders starting in their final year in the Preparatory department; the majority of boarders are members of Years 10 to 13. Almost all sixth-form pupils board. One hundred and sixty-eight pupils benefit from bursaries provided by the college. Another thirty-six pupils benefit from Ministry of Defence or Foreign and Commonwealth Office boarding allowance.
- 1.5 Since the previous inspection two key members of the senior management team have been appointed along with subject leaders in the core curriculum subjects in the senior school. All of these appointments have taken place in the last twelve months. The numbers of pupils have increased with the biggest rise being in the proportion of day pupils who now attend. Additional specialist teaching areas have been added including an art and design technology

centre, new Learning Support and English as an additional language (EAL) facilities, a new dining conservatory and the refurbishment of all boarding facilities. Information and communication technology (ICT) facilities and provision have been further developed.

- 1.6 The main ages for entry into the college are either at three years of age, at seven or at the start of the senior school, or the beginning of the sixth form. Entry to the college is based on interview and on the college's judgment that the pupil will be best served by being offered a place. The college accepts some pupils with mild specific learning needs who can be accommodated within its response capability. The ability range of pupils across the college, according to nationally standardised data, is wide, from those who are far above the national average to a few pupils who are far below average. Overall, pupils' ability is above the national average. If pupils are performing in line with their ability their results will be above the average for maintained secondary schools. The ability range in the sixth form is closer to the national average.
- 1.7 Pupils come from a wide variety of backgrounds and often include children supported by charities and occasionally by local authorities. The college has a significant number of boarders from service families.
- 1.8 Thirty-three pupils do not have English as their first language. Twenty-three of these receive support for their English. There are no pupils with a statement of educational need. The college has identified thirty-four pupils as having some learning difficulties or disability (LDD).
- 1.9 The college refers to its pupils as scholars. The title of pupil will be used throughout this report. National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the college. The year group nomenclature used by the college and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

#### ***Early Years Foundation Stage***

| School    | Age of children |
|-----------|-----------------|
| Nursery   | 3 years         |
| Reception | 4 years         |

#### ***Preparatory School***

| School     | NC name |
|------------|---------|
| Pre-prep 1 | Year 1  |
| Pre-prep 2 | Year 2  |
| Prep 1 -   | Year 3  |
| Prep 1 +   | Year 4  |
| Prep 2     | Year 5  |
| Prep 3     | Year 6  |

*Senior College*

| School           | NC name |
|------------------|---------|
| Form 1           | Year 7  |
| Form 2           | Year 8  |
| Form 3           | Year 9  |
| Form 4           | Year 10 |
| Form 5           | Year 11 |
| Lower Sixth Form | Year 12 |
| Upper Sixth Form | Year 13 |

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

## **2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

### **The Educational Experience Provided**

- 2.1 The college provides a good range of educational opportunities suited to the interests, aptitudes and needs of all pupils. In so doing it meets its aim to provide an excellent all-round education founded on Christian principles and to develop interests beyond the academic, which bring enjoyment and enrichment both to themselves and to others.
- 2.2 The breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum identified in the previous inspection are still in place. The unsatisfactory arrangements for modern foreign languages have been remedied. The facilities for design technology (DT) have been greatly improved.
- 2.3 The education as a whole is consistent with the college's underlying intention to respond to the wide range of needs among its pupils in order to bring each to the highest achievement in whichever sphere they wish to excel. This intention influences every aspect of the provision of the college. The wide variety of educational opportunities, formal and informal, promotes growth in learning, enriches personal development, and develops the acceptance of responsibility for the well being of others.
- 2.4 All pupils have access to this broad range of educational experiences. Linguistic, mathematical, scientific and technological abilities are very well developed through the teaching of the core subjects of English, mathematics, and science and in the use of ICT. Specific ICT skills are promoted and put to good use in the Preparatory department where pupils are familiar with the use of ICT in presentations and in their class work. In the senior school pupils take the opportunities offered to access the Internet for research purposes. Other than that their use of ICT in lessons is restricted by the over directive approach of some teachers. A good range of subjects and activities extends and refines the education on offer. The acquisition of subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills broadens and deepens pupils' educational experiences and contributes significantly to their personal, social, physical, aesthetic and creative development. Pupils are given good opportunities and encouragement in the best lessons to listen carefully, to voice opinions and to weigh up the opinions of others.
- 2.5 A broad range of subjects is taught from Year 1 through to the sixth form. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taught as a combined class as are the pupils in Years 3 and 4. The core subjects of English and mathematics absorb a large proportion of pupils' time in the Preparatory department, with appropriate time allocated to the teaching of the other subjects. ICT and DT are taught as separate subjects from Year 3 onwards. Music and physical education are taught from Year 1 by subject specialist teachers from the senior school. Pupils first experience French in Year 3. Specialist staff from the senior school teach science to the older pupils in the Preparatory department. In the senior school, English and mathematics along with the three sciences have a major share of the timetable. Due time is given to other subjects with pupils having access to all subjects from Years 7 to 9 before they make option choices for Years 10 and 11. German is introduced in Year 9 and is taught to a combined group of pupils from Years 12 and 13 for A-level. The provision for A-level subjects is wide and is geared to match the needs of all pupils in the sixth form. All year groups benefit from extended time for games.
- 2.6 A good range of expert outside coaches across all the major sports, together with the growing provision for individual music tuition, demonstrates the commitment of the college to give pupils the widest possible range of educational experiences.

- 2.7 Pupils' educational experience is greatly enhanced by the good programme of extra-curricular activities. The highly successful activities programme two afternoons a week, plus the range of weekend pursuits available make a significant contribution to pupils' development by placing them in situations where leadership, team working and personal responsibility are key elements, and where self-confidence and support for others are developed. The extra-curricular choirs, musical performances, drama, the wide range of sports, expeditions, trips abroad, residential and outward-bound experiences round out a good educational experience.
- 2.8 Preparation for examinations and for application to universities and colleges is thorough and offered in a way that meets the aims of the college. Individualised advice and support provided by staff, as well as the contribution made by visiting careers specialists, gives pupils all the support they need to make informed choices for their next step in education. The personal support for pupils in taking that next step gives them a clear path to their future.
- 2.9 The curriculum prepares pupils well for adult life. Pupils develop understanding of key social and personal issues as part of the well structured and effectively delivered personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. The variety and quality of visiting speakers adds to the educational experience on offer. The benefits conferred by the programme are enhanced by the opportunities offered in many subjects for debate, exploration of topical issues, consideration of challenging viewpoints, trips and visits to various socially different areas. In many aspects of their daily lives pupils are encouraged to explore the underlying values and principles on which the college is founded.
- 2.10 Pupils of all abilities benefit from access to the broad range of subjects and activities and from the good quality of teaching. Support for pupils with LDD or EAL is good when it is delivered by specialist staff. The quality of support for these pupils in lessons outside the reach of the specialist staff is variable between that which is good and that which does not pay sufficient attention to the well-defined needs of pupils. In the best lessons teachers respond with carefully focused support. In a few lessons the response to the requirements of these pupils is too general and does not appear to take account of their particular needs. The quality of guidance and support available to all staff from the LDD and EAL specialists is of a good standard, but is not always followed. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is still in its early stages of development.
- 2.11 The college meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

### **Pupils' Learning and Achievements**

- 2.12 Pupils are well educated and reach good standards, as was the case in the previous inspection. They are well grounded in knowledge, skills and understanding in the subjects and activities provided, can apply these effectively and develop the essential skills and attitudes for work and study. The college is generally successful in achieving its aim to fulfil the potential of each child wherever that potential may lie.
- 2.13 Standards in numeracy and literacy in the Preparatory department are high and they are good in the senior school. Throughout the college pupils make good use of their mathematical understanding to apply concepts and to use their knowledge and mathematical skills across a range of subjects.

- 2.14 Pupils develop as articulate and persuasive communicators. In interviews and in lessons throughout the college, they proved to be good listeners. They paid close attention to the point of questions and addressed precisely the issues raised. In lessons where they are given the opportunity, they engage actively in debate with teachers, exploring ideas and offering suggestions and opinions. Pupils' ability in critical and creative thinking is evident in many aspects of their work. Preparatory department pupils demonstrate clearly their ability to apply their literary skills through the accurate interpretation of texts. In French lessons they apply prior knowledge of the language showing a good grasp of vocabulary and meaning. In science lessons they understand how to test hypotheses. In mathematics they cope well with concepts and can manipulate mathematical techniques effectively.
- 2.15 In the senior school very good examples were seen of pupils applying their prior knowledge, understanding and skills to support their learning. In music, art, drama and in religious education (RE) they are required to think creatively and critically and they achieve good levels of performance. In a Year 10 chemistry lesson, pupils drew on a range of skills and showed considerable ability in presenting information about environmental issues. Using very effective public speaking techniques they argued their cases strongly taking account of the economic and political aspects of the issue as well as arguing the scientific case for their positions. In many subjects pupils readily show the skills needed to apply their subject understanding to different and unusual situations and in this way they develop further their understanding and ability.
- 2.16 Pupils make effective use of ICT in their research and in their projects. The development of ICT skills and the application of pupils' understanding of a broad range of software make them competent in using the range of equipment available to further their learning. In some lessons, teachers make good use of ICT and prompt pupils to take an active role in using the equipment available. This is not the case in all subjects, although it can be said that the college has made considerable advances in the provision and in the use of ICT since the previous inspection when usage was considered to be inadequate.
- 2.17 In lessons and in other activities, boys and girls of all ages and abilities reach good levels of attainment and make good progress. Occasionally their attainment is outstanding. The same is true for pupils with dyslexia and other learning difficulties as well as for more able pupils. In lessons where the less able pupils struggle with concepts and applications they persevere in their tasks until they achieve success and so make good progress.
- 2.18 Results in GCSE over the last three years for which comparative data is available have been above the national average for all maintained schools and therefore have been in line with pupils' abilities. Results in examinations taken by Year 13 pupils over the last three years have been in line with the national average for all maintained schools and in line with their abilities. The recent 2009 results at A level have shown a marked improvement on previous years but as yet no comparative data is available to make valid comparisons with national norms. On leaving the college, pupils are successful in gaining entry to a wide range of courses with most of them gaining entry to their first choice of higher education.
- 2.19 Pupils achieve good and sometimes outstanding success in many activities. The strength of music in the college is reflected in the wide range of performances of soloists, instrumentalists, choirs, and the many different music groups. It is seen also in the considerable success in examinations and in the regularity with which pupils gather honours at regional music festivals. High achievements are regularly reached in mathematics across a range of local and national competitions. The effectiveness of speech and drama activities is reflected in the quality of major college productions and in the very high levels of examination success in speaking and in the award of diplomas in speech and drama to a number of pupils. The College Arctic Club has received considerable accolades particularly

from the Young Explorer's Trust and the Royal Geographical Society from whom the expeditions of the club have won awards and funding. Pupils are encouraged to pursue their interests beyond college and, where possible, the college makes adjustments to allow these activities to take place, for example in tennis, in fencing, in eventing and golf. The introduction of a lifeguard course for pupils in Years 11 to 13 has been particularly popular with approximately six pupils qualifying each year.

- 2.20 Sporting achievements are recorded by pupils from a range of age groups. Rugby, badminton, swimming, cross country and athletics being areas of particular success at local, regional and national level. The college regularly produces players who represent their county at rugby, hockey and athletics. Pupils have been winners of the ISA national doubles badminton championships, team winners in the ISA cross-country championships, senior team winners of the Senior and U16 ISA Midlands netball championships and five gold medals, four silver and three bronze in regional and national ISA swimming championships. Each year pupils achieve the required standard in the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze and Gold Awards.
- 2.21 The high levels of achievement recorded across so many different disciplines reflect the success of the college in pursuing excellence for its pupils across a wide range of activities. This wide range of achievements reinforces the college's claim to respond to the needs of individuals and to give them the chance to succeed in whatever area of interest and ability they wish to pursue.
- 2.22 Independent research and note taking are key skills in which pupils excel in a range of subjects. Pupils' written work is generally well organised and they present their ideas in a cogent and persuasive manner. The use of planning and experimentation in art is well developed, showing a good level of creative thinking. Pupils' enjoyment is a feature of many lessons helping to create a positive atmosphere that supports learning. They settle quickly to class work and are eager to co-operate with their teachers when given the opportunity. In the few lessons where pupils are not given the chance to actively participate they maintain their concentration well. Cooperative learning is standard practice in many lessons to the benefit of the pupils' learning. At the same time, pupils are comfortable working alone, in small groups or in pairs in pursuit of the learning objectives set.

### **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils**

- 2.23 The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is outstanding. The college meets its aims to equip pupils to lead fulfilled and purposeful lives by providing an excellent all-round education founded on Christian principles and providing for interests beyond the academic which bring enjoyment and enrichment both to pupils and to others. Expectations that pupils will show care and concern for others and a willingness to contribute to the common good with respect for people and the environment are clearly met. The college regards itself as a Christian family so that the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is integral to its activities. There is ample evidence to support the claim of the college that being a faith school runs through its daily life so that it is 'almost within the very fabric of the building and is a vital part of the everyday interactions between staff and pupils'.
- 2.24 Pupils' spiritual development is outstanding. They display a strong sense of self-worth, self-identity and self-esteem. The strong family atmosphere that permeates the daily life of the college nurtures their spiritual development. Through participation in the wide range of activities as well as in lessons, through interactions with staff who challenge them to be independent and self-assured they develop self-confidence and exercise responsibility for themselves and for the well being of others. Pupils learn to reflect, to listen, to show respect

and to be aware of the needs of those around them. They relate confidently to the adults they meet each day. Pupils gain insights into values and beliefs and into the way in which religious belief affects people's lives, through the PSHE programme and through teaching in religious studies. Awe and wonder permeate Pre-preparatory and Preparatory pupils' experiences drawn from the wonder of the world that surrounds them.

- 2.25 Pupils' moral awareness is strong. They display a clear moral awareness and early on learn to distinguish right from wrong. The behaviour of older pupils is exemplary. They contribute to the smooth running of the college. They act as role models and give practical support to younger pupils. The code of conduct signed by each pupil entering Year 7 emphasises the personal responsibility pupils must take for their behaviour. Misbehaviour is treated fairly and positively in their experience. Pupils' orderly movement around the college and the high standards of behaviour show how well they understood the need to respect rules and behave in a responsible manner. Moral awareness is developed through discussions with tutors and with teachers in lessons. A history lesson in the senior school, for instance, required pupils to debate the right to oppose a government and unjust laws. In a senior school geography lesson due consideration was given to considering the implications of fair trade and sweatshops in the fashion industry. Visiting speakers present a variety of moral stances engaging pupils in wide ranging debates that extend their moral awareness.
- 2.26 Pupils' social development is outstanding. They respond very well to the many opportunities they have to play an active role in the daily life of the college. Courtesy, good manners and politeness are endemic, key elements of the 'Bedstone way'. Pupils of all ages are keen to contribute to the life of the college. Senior pupils prize the role of prefect and many pupils willingly carry out college duties. Support for each other is an obvious characteristic of pupils' behaviour. Pupils participate generously in activities outside of lessons. They eagerly represent the college in the wider community through games, music and drama. The choir responds to numerous invitations to perform in churches in the area. Pupils show an awareness of social issues beyond the college. The recycling project addresses issues of environmental impact. The study of topics in the PSHE programme, and in a number of subjects, develops an understanding of public institutions and services. The human geography project in Year 11 gives pupils insights into the practical implications of ethnic groups living in Britain through visits to areas in the West Midlands conurbation. In history pupils explore democratic and constitutional issues. In addition, contact with outside speakers from a variety of backgrounds, occupations and professions gives pupils a developing awareness of the wider society in which they live and of the public institutions and services available.
- 2.27 Cultural development is strong. The experiences of overseas trips as well as lessons in RE and in the PSHE programme, and topics covered in other subjects, bring pupils to recognise and accept differences between cultures and peoples in a way that fosters understanding and harmony. The excellent teaching of music from different parts of the world, seen alongside the development of English and European music, promotes a worldview that is most valuable to broadening pupils' perception of the world in which they live. The presence of overseas pupils brings an international perspective to the college and helps develop awareness of and respect for different traditions and life styles. The comprehensive programme of educational visits to the theatre, places of worship, art galleries and historical sites, builds pupils' appreciation of and respect for their own traditions and cultures.

- 2.28 The college meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

### **The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)**

- 2.29 The quality of teaching is good with some outstanding features. The college achieves its aim to equip pupils to lead fulfilled and purposeful lives by providing an excellent all-round education founded on Christian principles and providing interests beyond the academic which bring enjoyment and enrichment both to themselves and to others.
- 2.30 At the time of the previous inspection the team judged the quality of teaching to be good and said that it made a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' attainment and progress. Many teachers, the report concluded, adopted stimulating approaches, but few used ICT effectively. The good quality of teaching continues to be a feature of the college and the use of ICT by teachers is now of a higher standard.
- 2.31 The good quality of teaching enables all pupils, both boys and girls, to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability, increase their understanding and develop their skills. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills in the Pre-preparatory and Preparatory departments is good with pupils achieving high standards. By the end of their time in the senior school pupils have mastered skills and developed clear understanding across the subjects. In lessons that require the application of the skills of designing, making, investigating or performing pupils deploy effectively the knowledge and skills they need to make good progress. In lessons where pupils with learning difficulties and those for whom English is second language are well supported, they make good progress according to their ability. In a few lessons their progress is not as good as it should be. The more able pupils respond very well to challenging teaching and they make rapid progress in many lessons. In a few lessons the level of challenge to these pupils is below what they need if they are to make appropriate progress.
- 2.32 In the majority of lessons, teachers foster the application of intellectual, physical or creative effort required to engage pupils in their work. In the outstanding lessons, pupils are prompted to think and learn for themselves. In a Year 8 history lesson questioning the traditional presentation of Guy Fawkes, pupils made good use of historical sources to appreciate and understand how evidence can be manipulated. Through skilful questioning by the teacher and with the use of discussion and role-play the pupils established their own theories and explanation of the historical event. The lesson was effectively delivered, giving pupils an active role in their learning and building a strong sense of enjoyment so that pupils participated energetically. In an RE lesson with Years 3 and 4, pupils explored the Christian concept of God as a trinity. Through an imaginative and lively presentation the teacher led the pupils to discuss the symbols of the trinity often used in Christianity. Pupils reasoned through the notion that just because God is not seen does not mean He is not all around them. The practical demonstrations by the teacher of things being present even though they are not visible to the eye contributed greatly to the pupils understanding of the topic. In a similarly engaging numeracy lesson, pupils in Years 1 and 2 applied their knowledge of number bonds to using money. Working in three groups they made good progress. The teacher's use of humour and the good pace of the lessons fostered pupils' involvement. The effective deployment of the teaching assistant allowed for positive support for the mixed ages and the ability levels in the group.
- 2.33 In the best of the lessons, careful planning in the use of resources, in the selection of teaching techniques, and in the imaginative use of activities are key elements in successfully prompting learning of the highest order. Pupils respond eagerly and with considerable benefit to themselves in lessons where the teachers give openings for active participation and

- for managing their own learning. Precise and well-structured presentations by teachers, clear statement of tasks and learning outcomes, engage pupils in their learning. The skilful questioning and the adroit way the teachers build on pupils' responses to promote their understanding and learning are features of the best lessons. Pupils' willingness to express openly their personal opinions and insights reflect the level of confidence they have in their teacher and in their peers. These features occur in lessons across most subjects throughout the age range in the college.
- 2.34 Teachers display good levels of subject knowledge and expertise. When this is allied with their thorough understanding of their pupils they are able to give high level of focused support to individuals. As a result, carefully sequenced activities in lessons make allowances for the different levels of ability and allow teachers to adapt their teaching to the needs of individuals, enabling rapid progress to be made. This is especially the case in the Preparatory department where mixed age and ability classes are taught so well.
- 2.35 In lessons where pupils are required to carry out practical activities, they show an eagerness to get involved as well as to think for themselves. The good-natured interaction with individual pupils, the variety of activities and the brisk pace of the best lessons promote outstanding learning.
- 2.36 The exemplary behaviour of pupils in lessons is a consequence of good teaching and of the outstanding relationships between teachers and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves. In this atmosphere, teachers promote effective learning.
- 2.37 The wide variety of materials and equipment and the quality and quantity of resources provided are well used. When ICT is used in some lessons it is often under the control of the teachers. Pupils' ability to carry out research and investigation on the Internet and the delight of pupils in the Preparatory department in using presentation software to share their work give sufficient indicators that pupils are more than capable of using ICT more widely in lessons.
- 2.38 Evaluation of performance against national norms is carried out each year on the publication of examination results. Regular assessment of pupils' performance in lessons, in activities and in tests provides a comprehensive profile of their progress. Discussions of these results at frequent and regular intervals by all staff give the information needed to guide pupils and to reshape some of the teaching taking place. Information on the performance of LDD and EAL pupils is gathered regularly by the departments supporting these pupils and is made available to the senior school but is not actively used in all areas. The quality of marking is good. In some subjects detailed written comments and targets are given. When this is allied with good oral feedback on performance pupils have all the guidance they need to move forward in their learning. Pupils confirmed they understand and benefit from the responses of teachers to their work.
- 2.39 The college 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, support and guidance is outstanding and the provision is well supported by an effective management structure. As a result, staff care effectively for pupils' well-being and development. The college meets its aims to provide an excellent all-round education founded on Christian principles, as well as providing the knowledge, skills and attitudes to succeed in a complex, fast-changing, multi-cultural society, with compassion, sound judgment and integrity. In the previous inspection the team found arrangements for pastoral care were good. This is an area in which significant improvements have been made since that inspection.
- 3.2 The college provides outstanding care for pupils throughout the college. Induction procedures are comprehensive and well implemented for pupils entering Preparatory from Pre-preparatory department and again for pupils entering the senior school at Year 7 or at Year 12. Careers advice in making option choices supports the needs of individuals. At key points of transition, staff advise and guide pupils. Comprehensive care is provided for pupils in the Pre-preparatory and Preparatory departments with the class teacher being the source of support and protection for each pupil. In the senior school pastoral care is effectively structured around the house system. The boarding houses cater for the needs of the boarders with the day pupils being assigned to a day house with their own house leaders. In Years 7 and 8 the class registrar is also the tutor for that class. From Year 9 onwards each pupil is allocated to a tutor group with fewer members than the class group. A tutor assigned to the group meets with individuals in the group on a regular and frequent basis to offer advice, support and to check on each pupil's progress. Where necessary this tutor supports the pupil and makes contact with parents should there be any concerns. The contributions of the tutors and the house staff, including the staff in the house for day pupils, are key features in the success of the pastoral care. Tutors and pastoral leaders understand and are committed to fulfilling their responsibilities towards the full development of all pupils in their care. The channels of support are clearly defined, well understood and effective. Parents are happy with the quality of care and guidance given to their children. Pupils like being at the school, and feel they are known to staff and are valued and supported. The excellent pastoral care is a major contributor not only to the happy atmosphere of the school, but also to the good standards attained in academic results and in all areas of achievement.
- 3.3 Staff are assisted by effective pastoral arrangements. Tutors have several levels of support on which they can draw in carrying out their work. The second master is the line manager of the house staff and they manage the work of the tutors. In this way senior staff house leaders provide the backup and guidance that staff need in discharging their duties. Regular pastoral meetings enable the sharing of information and ensure a consistency of approach. The role of the tutor is clearly defined in the staff handbook. The role of the head boy and head girl in leading teams of prefects is an opportunity for pupils to play an active role in the pastoral care structures of the college. All the required policies for the pastoral care of pupils are in place and give guidance to staff on how best to serve pupils' needs.
- 3.4 The outstanding quality of relationships between staff and pupils is a key element in creating and sustaining the ethos of the college. The relaxed rapport between staff and pupils in lessons and around the college speaks of positive and supportive relationships. Pupils and staff show a high level of respect towards each other.

- 3.5 Pupils are aware of their responsibility to behave considerately. They are considerate, tolerant and act responsibly. They are well aware of the anti-bullying stance of the college. They are familiar with the procedures to follow should bullying occur. They expressed confidence that the college would deal effectively with bullying. The college's stance on anti-bullying is publicised in assemblies and is reinforced by work on relationships and conflict resolution in the PSHE programme. Positive teaching in the pastoral programme and practical advice given to pupils highlight the dangers of unwise use of the Internet. This advice is backed up by robust and comprehensive monitoring of Internet usage and by careful screening of equipment used by staff and pupils. The well-organised programme of checks and supervision by the ICT manager and staff is of a high quality.
- 3.6 Measures to safeguard and promote pupils' health and well-being are successful. Child protection arrangements are well documented in the staff handbook, expressed in the college policies, known by staff and carefully observed and monitored. All necessary measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards have been taken. Arrangements to ensure health and safety are good. Admissions and attendance registers are correctly kept. High levels of attendance allow pupils to benefit from the many experiences the college provides.
- 3.7 Full-time, on-site nursing care is available to treat any pupil taken ill. Suitably qualified first aiders are at hand throughout the college. The names and locations of these first aiders are clearly posted around the college. Pupils over sixteen years of age who are qualified lifeguards provide valuable back-up in swimming lessons and on other occasions when the swimming pool is being used. Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits and to take regular exercise. The food provided in the college dining room is of good quality and gives pupils a range of healthy eating options. The kitchen staff know the pupils and encourage healthy eating. The college has taken all reasonable steps to ensure that all parts of the college are accessible to pupils whatever their needs.
- 3.8 The college meets the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3].

### **The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community**

- 3.9 The college has an effective and outstanding partnership with parents and worthwhile links with the wider community. The good quality of links with parents and the community noted in the previous inspection has been improved further.
- 3.10 The responses to the parents' questionnaire, completed before the inspection, reflected very high parental satisfaction with the education and the support given to their children. With very few exceptions parents affirmed they were satisfied with all aspects of their children's education. Parents were strongly appreciative of the teaching that helped their children make such good progress. There was universal acceptance that the college promoted worthwhile attitudes and views. The inspection team found ample evidence to support the overwhelming positive comments made by the parents.
- 3.11 Parents are given ready access to staff. The many invitations to parents to support and participate in college activities would suggest that the college welcomes the active participation of parents in their children's education. Parents respond very generously to these invitations. They are given every opportunity to be involved in the life of the college and they are kept in touch with the work and progress of their children. Attendance at exhibitions, performances and festivals as well as at sports events and games provide parents with opportunities to meet staff and to show their support for the work of the college. The Parents' Association is successful in developing links among the parents, supporting the college and raising funds for the benefit of the pupils.

- 3.12 Parents are provided with information about the college on a regular basis and through a variety of channels. These include newsletters, the college website, handbooks, routine letters on activities, trips and visits, and annual magazines. Reports and parents' meetings give full, detailed and helpful information so that parents know how well their children are performing and developing. The use of emails to further the contact between parents and teachers has been well developed giving parents ample opportunities to keep up to date with the work and progress of their children.
- 3.13 The college handles the concerns of parents well. Staff are available to take concerns and deal with them at an early stage. Parents take up offers to meet with staff and discuss in some detail the issues that trouble them about their children. The formal complaints procedure is in place and is properly observed. There were no formal complaints registered in the previous academic year.
- 3.14 The high quality of partnership achieved with parents is matched by the worthwhile links the college has developed with the local community. A flourishing range of sporting, musical and educational links exist with sections of the community and with local schools and organisations. These links are promoted and actively pursued for the benefit of pupils and the general good of the college. The college staff organise, and host, primary school matches and competitions, including the provision of free transport for local primary schools when necessary. The college's choir is a frequent visitor at local parishes and organisations. Speakers from the local community regularly attend college to meet and talk with pupils in the Preparatory department and in the senior school. The provision of a charity gala night for the local Rotary Club's charities by offering the first night of the college's senior production for free is now an annual event. Over two hundred local residents attend this sell-out event. Equally beneficial have been the contacts established through trips overseas and the many sporting links at county, regional and national level.
- 3.15 The college 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**

- 3.16 The quality of the boarding experience is good. It supports pupils' education and development. The quality of relationships among the boarders is excellent. They live harmoniously showing a good ability to support each other across the age range. Overseas boarders are welcomed into the houses and positively supported, enabling them to be well integrated into the life of the college. Relationships between boarding staff and boarders are excellent. Pupils regard houseparents as their first port of call when seeking advice, help or support.
- 3.17 Outside formal lesson times and weekends, the college offers boarders a good range of activities, workshops and outings to places of interest, education and relaxation. Trips to the theatre, to the local town of Ludlow and to local places of interest enrich the broad range of activities available to boarders. Celebrations of pupils' cultural diversity allow overseas pupils to demonstrate their own cultural traditions. The range of extra-curricular provision meets the needs of pupils of different ages and cultures.

- 3.18 The quality of accommodation and resources, which have improved since the previous inspection, are both adequate and appropriate to the needs of the boarders. Communal areas allow for recreation and for social gatherings of pupils. Kitchen facilities allow for limited preparation of food by older pupils. The refurbishment of the boarding houses has enhanced the environment for the boarders. College facilities are available to them after school hours. There is access to ICT equipment in the boarding houses for study and recreational use and for making contact with home.

## **4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

### **The Quality of Governance**

- 4.1 The quality of governance is good. Governors have set appropriate aims for the college, provide comprehensive oversight and good guidance and have enabled the college to meet its aims and to build on its achievements.
- 4.2 Governors' bring to their role a breadth of expertise that makes them a valuable resource from which the college draws considerable benefits. They give clear educational direction, sound financial planning and effective strategic direction. They are successful in managing human and material resources to the benefit of the pupils. The structure and management arrangements related to the governing body are well organised and operate effectively. The committees with clearly defined briefs operate effectively, enabling governors to gather information and to provide strategic oversight and helpful guidance. The independence of the headmaster in all matters to do with the daily running of the college is protected. Communications between the college and the governors is open and well structured.
- 4.3 Governors are well informed about the college and are given the information they require to carry out their responsibilities appropriately. As part of their monitoring of the college's effectiveness in meeting its aims, two different governors visit the college each term. Notice is given of the date of the visit and the names of the visiting pair of governors but the topic of the visit is not disclosed until they arrive thus giving them a view of the issue as it currently exists. Reports on the visit are presented at the full governing body. The bursar acting in conjunction with the governing body manages the organisation and the selection of the topics for the visits. The weekly contact between the headmaster and the chair of governors gives further opportunities for consultation and monitoring. Governors have a key role in the preparation and review of all policies and monitor the implementation of their plans. A comprehensive development plan prioritises the key elements for future growth allowing the governors to play a strategic role in the development of the college.
- 4.4 The governing body is aware of its legal obligations and meets them, in particular for all aspects of child protection and health and safety, but also for the quality of education the college provides; they give appropriate attention to pupils' welfare. Individual governors are assigned responsibilities in key areas, such as child protection, which they carry out in a purposeful manner. They are actively involved with staff leading those areas within the college.

### **The Quality of Leadership and Management**

- 4.5 The quality of leadership and management of the headmaster and the senior management team and others with delegated responsibilities is good. Leaders and managers are instrumental in helping the college to meet its aims. In the previous inspection it was remarked that leadership was strong. Day-to-day management at the college was clear, consultative and effective. However, middle management was judged to be uneven, and many heads of department had too little time to manage effectively. The quality of leadership continues to be highly effective and weaknesses at middle management level have been remedied although middle managers still have difficulty in finding time to carry out all of their tasks.

- 4.6 Successful educational direction and leadership in the college is reflected in the quality of education, the care of pupils and the achievement of the college's aims. The future direction and development of the college, as expressed in the development plan, are based on a clear understanding of the known key strengths and identified areas for development.
- 4.7 The active and purposeful commitment of leaders and managers at all levels in pursuing the aims of the college are striking features of their work. Equally significant is the strong dedication of so many staff to creating and successfully delivering a rich and varied educational experience that meets the needs of individuals. Staff carry a range of responsibilities in pursuit of the aims of the college. Balancing these responsibilities is not easy. For example, the regular and frequent meetings between tutors and pupils from Year 9 upwards are sometimes delayed by the demands of other activities. The monitoring role of some middle managers can be limited by the other responsibilities that demand their attention.
- 4.8 The college has a clear view of its strengths and of its areas for development. Focused planning is based on an analysis of performance. Staff generally have limited opportunities for involvement in drawing up these plans. Governors maintain a regular contact with staff through visits to the school eliminating the practice of subject leaders making presentations at governors meetings. Middle managers construct subject development plans but these are not constructed in the context of the whole college development plans.
- 4.9 With the appointment of two new members of the senior management team and key middle managers in the past twelve months, the college is again in the position of developing further its formal and informal whole school monitoring. Careful analysis of pupils' performance, scrutiny of tests and formal assessments and follow up procedures are carried out. Procedures for supportive monitoring of academic, pastoral and boarding staff are in place with further developments about to take place in these areas. Senior staff lead reviews of the impact of all policies and procedures.
- 4.10 The quality of leadership and management at middle management level is good with a strong focus on providing pupils with a positive educational experience. Leadership and management roles and responsibilities are well defined and support positive team working. In some subject areas the needs of pupils who require learning support are identified and a considered response is established that meets their requirements. This is not the case in all subjects. Guidance and support for teachers is clearly expressed in departmental handbooks that are useful reference points. Training has focused on managing the forthcoming changes to many of the examinations requirements and insufficient time has been given to the wider professional development of staff.
- 4.11 Managers are successful in securing, supporting, developing and motivating high-quality staff. The college has a rigorous system for checking the suitability of staff, supply staff, governors and anyone involved in the education of pupils. The college participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers. The headmaster is informally appraised by the governors.
- 4.12 Finances are very well managed so that appropriate resources are provided. Teaching resources are generous and suited to the needs of successful teaching. The library is a valuable asset for private research and study as well as providing a quiet haven for personal reading.

- 4.13 The administration of the college is efficient. The administrative, catering, maintenance and cleaning staff contribute to achieving the aims of the college by the range and quality of their work. Their pride in the college and their commitment to its success make a real contribution to the positive atmosphere of the college.
- 4.14 The college meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].
- 4.15 The college 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 Bedstone College successfully meets its aims. It gives clear expression to its underlying philosophy of meeting the needs of individual pupils and providing them with success in a wide range of activities from EYFS through to the sixth form. The educational experience is good giving pupils access to a rich supply of experiences that are of benefit to them. The quality of teaching is such that pupils develop the necessary skills and attitudes for success and reach good levels of achievement. The outstanding pastoral support adds to the quality of teaching enabling pupils to achieve outstanding success in their personal development. The generosity of staff in committing themselves to the education of their pupils and the high quality of relationships between staff and pupils are key elements in the success of the college. Utilising the benefits of very positive links with parents and the local community enriches the range of opportunities on offer to pupils. The quality of leadership and governance is good with a strong focus on giving each of its pupils all the benefits they need to make progress and to prepare them for a life beyond school.
- 5.2 The issues raised at the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. The facilities for DT have been upgraded and are now of good quality enabling effective teaching of the subject. The curriculum is well planned and further advances in monitoring and development are being put in place. Pupils use ICT well in many areas of the school and in an increasing number of teaching areas ICT is being well used. The programmes for supporting pupils with LDD and those for whom English is a second language are well structured and give pupils the support they need to make progress. Effective techniques for providing this support outside the activities of the specialist staff are well used in a number of subject areas.
- 5.3 The college meets all the regulatory requirements.

### **Next Steps**

- 5.4 The college has no major weaknesses. However, to continue to improve the quality of education it already provides it should take the following steps.
1. Spread the good practice of the English as an additional language and the Learning Support departments to all teaching areas and provide more extension work for gifted pupils.
  2. Review the work of middle managers to enable them to manage the range of their responsibilities more effectively.
  3. Create more opportunities for the use of ICT by pupils in lessons.
- 5.5 No action is required in respect of regulatory requirements.
- 5.6 Any failures to meet EYFS requirements are detailed in Section 7.

## 6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> September 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 boarding houses and the sanatorium. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the college.
- 6.2 The Early Years Foundation Stage was inspected on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> September 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 college.
- 6.3 National Minimum Boarding Standards were inspected by a team of two Ofsted inspectors over four days.

### List of Inspectors

|                         |                                     |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Mr Edward Dunphy        | Reporting Inspector                 |
| Dr Anne Hill            | Head of Department, HMC school      |
| Mrs Lynn Maggs-Wellings | Headteacher, ISA school             |
| Miss Jean Goodwin       | Director of Studies, GSA school     |
| Mr Graham Best          | Head of Senior School, SHMIS school |
| Mr Graham Wigley        | Headteacher, SHMIS school           |
| Mr Graham Nunn          | Early Years Lead Inspector          |
| Mrs Sue Bennett         | Early Years Team Inspector          |

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

- 7.1 The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) consists of a Nursery and a Reception group. They are accommodated in the same building as the rest of the Pre-preparatory department. Nursery children begin school, mostly on a part-time basis, when they reach the age of three or shortly afterwards. In Reception most children attend full-time with a few attending part-time until they become five. Overall, five children attend full-time and twelve part-time. Within the setting there are ten girls and seven boys. Sufficient numbers of qualified teachers, aided by suitably qualified assistants, are in place. The curriculum is taught by these staff apart from music, which is taught by a specialist teacher.
- 7.2 This is a most effective setting with several aspects being outstanding. Particularly good provision ensures the achievement of the setting's basic aim, which is to develop each child's different interests, needs and abilities. Teachers' expectations and their excellent understanding of these young children are the main reasons for the significant progress made by children with different needs and abilities.
- 7.3 The leadership and management of the setting are at least good in all aspects and in some areas are exemplary, notably in safeguarding children. Documentation is implemented effectively after regular review. Outdoor provision is excellent and well used to support the curriculum. This is particularly the case with the 'Forest School' area, which provides highly stimulating learning opportunities. Good quality assessment systems enable children's progress to be monitored and fed into their assessment profiles. Links with parents and local agencies are excellent and a thorough system to record any complaints, should they arise, is maintained. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents greatly appreciated the progress their children made and how well their children were looked after. Many parents stated that the staff know their children extremely well and that they as parents are made most welcome. The EYFS staff have frequent meetings to review children's progress and evaluate practice, adapting it as necessary. The accommodation is good, although, as the school rightly recognises, there is a need to provide better and more immediate access to the outdoor play area.
- 7.4 By carefully observing the children, staff are effective in providing good quality work for them. A well-judged balance is maintained between adult-led and child-initiated activities. These involve the children in discovering, exploring and choosing. The children are very well looked after, so that individual needs are properly met with all children benefiting from a wide range of learning experiences. Policies and procedures are detailed and effective. However, planning documents lack sufficient detail in certain areas of the Early Learning Goals, particularly towards the end of the EYFS. Staffing arrangements provide high quality supervision. Appointment checks, including those with the Criminal Records Bureau, ensure that all adults are suitable to work with children. Risk assessments are thorough and medical provision is of a particularly good standard.
- 7.5 Children achieve well. They learn to communicate fluently, they ask and answer questions eagerly and use well-constructed sentences. The opportunities for children to use ICT are limited by a lack of appropriate resources such as programmable toys. Consequently, their ICT skills are not always well developed. The children are well-coordinated when, for example, using very large toys or when writing or painting. Their personal development is outstanding. Children want to learn, being enthusiastic, self-motivated and inquisitive. They relate very well to one another and to adults. They can play well by themselves but also recognise the importance of sharing and taking turns. They take care of their possessions and clearly realise the need to stay healthy by, for example, washing their hands. When they

have the opportunity for a class responsibility they take it seriously and enjoy it. Children respond well to praise and try hard when encouraged. Overall they are most happy at their school and get considerable pleasure from the experiences they have.

### **What the Setting Should Do to Improve**

- 7.6 To improve further the good, and on occasions outstanding, quality of provision the setting should take the following steps.
1. Develop more detailed plans for the implementation of all the Early Learning Goals, particularly with the older children.
  2. Implement, as a matter of urgency, the school's plans to provide direct access for the children to the outside play areas.
  3. Improve the provision of programmable toys in order to enable ICT to be more widely used in the curriculum.
- 7.7 The school's provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.