

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Newlands School

Full Name of the School	Newlands School
DCSF Number	845/6027
Early Years Number	EY285447
Registered Charity Number	297606
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Proprietor	Newlands (Seaford) Educational Trust
Age Range (of the whole school)	0 to 18
Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	9th to 12th March 2009
Head of Early Years Setting	Mrs K MacGarvie
Early Years Age Range	0 to 5
Early Years Gender	Mixed
Early Years Foundation Stage Inspection Dates	2nd to 3rd March 2009

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

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31st August following their fifth birthday. The inspection was carried out by ISI, a body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting EYFS provision in schools belonging to the ISC Associations. Section 7 of this report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the EYFS Statutory Framework published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the Statutory Framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The inspection was carried out in conjunction with Ofsted, Children's Directorate. The Ofsted report is available separately at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Inspection reports/Boarding schools.

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

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1. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 Newlands School is situated on an open site on the outskirts of Seaford in East Sussex and provides education for boys and girls from birth up to the age of eighteen. Although the school accommodates about a dozen boarders, most pupils are day pupils. An International Study Centre within the school provides support for the small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL).
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1854 by the Rev CG Chittenden as a boys' preparatory school for the sons of clergy; Lord Balfour was an early pupil from 1859 to 1861. Initially situated in Hertfordshire, the school moved to Seaford in 1903 and to its current site in 1905. It has included pupils of secondary age since 1978 and has taken girls since the early 1980s. In 2006, the school closed briefly for financial reasons. It re-opened shortly afterwards as a new school, with a much smaller number of pupils, after being purchased by the current proprietor. As the current school is legally separate from its predecessor school, this report does not refer back to any previous inspection.
- 1.3 Since the school re-opened, numbers have grown and a good deal of refurbishment has taken place. The proprietor has recently recruited a small team of advisors who advise, in particular, on property, and health and safety issues; they do not have any legal responsibility for the school. The current headmaster has been in post since 2007; he had previously taught at the school for 29 years. Most of the pupils whose public examination results have been analysed in this report, and a good number of the older pupils still at the school, were members of the school during the considerable disruption in recent years.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection, the school had a total of 281 pupils (155 boys and 126 girls), of whom 98 were full- or part-time children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), for those of five and under; this was two children more than at the time of the EYFS inspection the previous week. In addition to the EYFS, the school is divided into the pre-prep (Years 1 and 2), prep (Years 3 to 8) and senior section, for pupils in Years 9 to 13. In addition, 11 pupils are in the International Study Centre. Most pupils come from business and professional families in Seaford and the surrounding area. On leaving, the majority of pupils progress to university, or to drama or art school, with only a few going immediately into employment.
- 1.5 Entry at all levels is non-selective, and pupils have a wide range of ability, the average of which is close to the national average. If pupils perform in line with their abilities, they will obtain results which are in line with the national average for maintained secondary schools. The school does not enter pupils for national tests at the ages of seven, eleven or thirteen. Seventy-seven pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD); two have statements of special educational needs.
- 1.6 The school aims: for excellence in teaching and learning by having high standards and expectations; to challenge and motivate all pupils to help them achieve maximum potential; to provide pastoral care of the highest quality; to maintain a well-ordered and stimulating environment in which all can thrive; to offer a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils; and to encourage the Christian ethos of the school, and respect for other religions and cultures.

- 1.7 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school for the EYFS is shown in the following table.

Early Years Foundation Stage

School	Age of children
Baby Suite	0 to 15 months
Seedlings	15 months to 2 years
Saplings	2 to 3 years
Sycamores	3 to 4 years
Reception	4 to 5 years

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

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 The school provides a good quality of education for pupils throughout, fulfilling its aim to offer a broad and balanced curriculum.

Prep School

- 2.2 The curriculum contributes well to pupils' academic and personal development, whilst building their skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy. Classroom experience is enhanced by a wide range of interesting activities, particularly in the performing arts.
- 2.3 The youngest pupils follow the EYFS curriculum, whilst that for older pupils is based on the National Curriculum. In Years 1 to 5, pupils study an appropriate range of subjects, with suitable emphasis on English, mathematics and science. This curriculum is enhanced by the introduction of French in Reception. Pupils have the opportunity to choose Spanish or French in Year 7, and careers education replaces personal, social and health education (PSHE) in Year 8. The school places a strong emphasis on the performing arts, providing numerous opportunities through a broad range of activities such as ballet and tap dancing, rock music, jazz and drama.
- 2.4 Arrangements for PSHE are inconsistent. In some year groups, it is taught by the form teacher; in other year groups different aspects are taught by different teachers, occasionally through subjects such as science. Pupils are enthusiastic about the most successful lessons, and find them helpful; for example in Year 3, they learn how to live and work together. However, less successful lessons lack enthusiasm from the teacher. The fact that there is no dedicated teacher with responsibility for PSHE is a weakness of which the school is aware.
- 2.5 The curriculum is enriched by a broad range of extra-curricular activities for pupils in Year 3 and above. It includes activities as diverse as first aid, shooting practice and scuba diving. The curriculum is also enhanced by a good number of trips to places such as the Natural History Museum and the Science Museum, and to more local attractions such as Battle Abbey and the theatre.
- 2.6 Good communication between EYFS, pre-prep, prep and senior staff through curriculum and pastoral meetings ensures that pupils move smoothly from stage to stage. Senior school heads of department are responsible for the curriculum throughout the school and liaise regularly with the prep director of studies and the prep curriculum co-ordinators. Schemes of work are appropriately detailed and provide a secure basis for lesson planning. However, they differ in structure, and place a varying emphasis on planning for pupils' differing needs. Gifted and talented pupils are identified from standardised tests and discussion amongst staff, but the school is aware that specific provision for them is limited.

Senior School

- 2.7 The curriculum contributes well to all aspects of pupils' development, with effective provision for speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils are valued as individuals so they develop their particular talents to the fullest extent.
- 2.8 For the size of school, a wide range of subjects is offered at GCSE and A level, and considerable effort is made to ensure the timetable is sufficiently flexible to accommodate most combinations of subjects, whilst at the same time preserving access to a broad range of extra-curricular activities. However, approximately half the teachers are part-time, several with significant timetable constraints, which results in some pupils having an uneven distribution of lessons across the week. For example, some Year 12 pupils have five consecutive mathematics periods in the latter half of a single day.
- 2.9 From Year 10, the curriculum concentrates on preparation for public examinations and PSHE ceases to be taught as a separate subject. Instead, these topics are intended to be covered within subjects such as science, in assemblies or in form periods. The lack of central co-ordination and monitoring has led to inconsistent provision, including limited teaching of sex education, healthy eating or drugs awareness.
- 2.10 The school offers an extensive range of sporting and non-sporting extra-curricular activities, and participation is encouraged by incorporating many of these activities into break times. However, this has resulted in a relatively long and tiring day for some pupils, particularly those who are heavily involved in strenuous activities. Opportunities for sport include basketball, football, rugby, netball, hockey, swimming, rifle shooting practice and scuba diving. Excellent provision for creative and performing arts makes full use of well-equipped studios for art, design and technology (DT), photography, dance and music. Approximately one-third of pupils learn a musical instrument, but only a few take formal music examinations. Links with the wider community are limited, though pupils have some opportunities for voluntary service. Work experience is undertaken mostly in Year 10 at the end of the Summer Term.
- 2.11 Opportunities for enrichment are also provided through a variety of field trips in the local area and beyond. Recent examples include a visit to the theatre in London to see *The Woman In Black* and to Egypt on a diving trip. Pupils enjoy and appreciate the educational value of such trips; however, the number of external visits is limited.
- 2.12 Effective arrangements, such as taster days, ensure that the progression of pupils between different sections of the school is as seamless as possible. There is close liaison between the deputy heads responsible for the prep and senior sections of the school. The school acknowledges that it lacks a formal structure for careers guidance, and that provision is therefore inconsistent. There is no programme for gifted and talented pupils.
- 2.13 Subject handbooks have clear aims and are well set out. Some have a common structure and most place a particular emphasis on meeting the needs of pupils of differing abilities.

Whole School

- 2.14 The school supports pupils with LDD well and meets the requirements for those with statements of special educational needs; it also provides good support for pupils with EAL.
- 2.15 All new pupils are assessed at The Gannon Centre, the school's centre for supporting pupils with LDD. Those identified are given an individual education plan. Pupils are monitored by centre staff whether or not they are receiving individual support; specialist staff liaise effectively with other teachers. Individual support takes place in the centre. This focuses on literacy and mathematics. A weekly meeting is held at the centre, to which all staff are invited. Support and advice are offered, and help sheets are provided on a range of classroom strategies. These may include splitting lessons into more manageable sections. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs are well supported. The Local Authority and parents are involved in the annual review. Records are well organised and accessible.
- 2.16 In some lessons throughout the school, teachers give different or extension tasks to pupils with greater ability; more commonly, pupils are expected to achieve more whilst doing the same tasks. Less able pupils and those with LDD are supported and monitored through structured approaches and multi-sensory methods. Pupils with organisational difficulties are helped during form periods, with reminders of additional activities or individual targets. In mathematics, setting is used effectively to give pupils work appropriate to their abilities.
- 2.17 Language teaching for pupils from overseas is provided well within the newly formed International Study Centre. Pupils' timetables are dominated by English for Speakers of Other Languages lessons; however, they also study mathematics and art, and are encouraged to participate in sport and other activities to promote their integration. The curriculum plan for these pupils enables effective learning, though progress is sometimes hindered by their arrival at different times of the year. Similarly, progress is restricted initially by the lack of assessment information prior to new pupils from overseas joining the class.
- 2.18 The school meets most of the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1]. In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:
- (a) provide a consistent programme of personal, social and health education in both sections of the school [Regulation 1.(2)(f)];
 - (b) provide careers guidance for all pupils of secondary age [Regulation 1.(2)(g)].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.19 Pupils achieve well throughout the school, with outstanding standards in activities such as drama and dance. In most respects, the school meets its aims of having high standards in learning, though senior school pupils have less opportunity to learn to work independently and in collaboration with others. In the EYFS, children achieve well because they take an active part in their learning.

Prep School

- 2.20 Pupils learn well and attain good standards overall. Pupils of differing abilities make equally good progress. Speaking, listening and reading skills develop successfully from Reception through the prep school so that pupils are articulate and confident in class, both when performing in front of others and in conversation. In a Year 6 science lesson, pupils gave talks on research projects undertaken in the library; ensuing questions showed that the rest of the class had listened carefully and with interest. Writing skills progress well alongside an increasing understanding of language and creative writing. Mathematical skills are

developed effectively both through practical activities and through application in different subjects, for example when pupils use graphs in science.

- 2.21 Pupils think and reason in many areas; for example in a Year 7 English lesson, they analysed a poem by Robert Frost. They develop appropriate skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and make some use of it in other subjects, as seen in displays of work, but this is restricted by lack of access to the ICT suite.
- 2.22 Pupils of all abilities progress well. No significant differences were seen between the attainment of different groups of pupils or in different subject areas. Pupils with LDD are well supported so they make good progress and achieve as well as their colleagues for their ability. Local and regional competitions showcase excellence in music, drama and dance. For example, Year 7 classes gave an exciting and dramatic performance of the poem *The Shark* in junior assembly, which had recently won a high commendation at the Eastbourne Festival. Individuals and groups achieve commendable results both locally and regionally in gymnastics, swimming and hockey.
- 2.23 Overall, pupils take care with presentation and show a pride in their work. With appropriate guidance they become more independent. Pupils work together in lessons such as science and games, as well as in activities. Learning is usually approached with enthusiasm and pupils say they enjoy their work. Good application and perseverance are helped by the targets that pupils set for themselves in all subjects every half term. Behaviour in lessons is generally good and, on the few occasions where it is less acceptable, pupils become bored through lack of challenge or discipline.

Senior School

- 2.24 Senior school pupils almost always achieve well, though they have less opportunity than prep pupils to work independently and in collaboration with others.
- 2.25 From Year 9, pupils write well in different styles and grasp key ideas from English texts. They have well-developed skills in subjects such as geography, DT and ICT; they use a range of software to benefit their work in other subjects. However, they show a more limited understanding of religious or social issues.
- 2.26 As they progress towards GCSE, pupils produce exceptional work in art, textiles and photography; some printed cushions showed outstanding imagination, creativity and execution, and some landscape photographs successfully captured detail and atmosphere to excellent effect. In drama and dance, pupils show considerable presence stemming from well-developed technical and interpretive skills and from the confidence that enables them to express their creative ideas to the full. In English they express themselves fluently, making points with force and focus, whilst remaining sensitive to the nuances of texts. However, in subjects such as mathematics or science, pupils show a less secure grasp of concepts, finding it more difficult to put key facts into context.
- 2.27 Sixth-form pupils grasp conceptual ideas, for example in science or business studies, more confidently, and are stronger listeners and contributors to discussion than younger senior school pupils.
- 2.28 Pupils of differing needs and abilities are generally well served and make comparable progress. In the best lessons, the most able pupils have the opportunity to demonstrate higher levels of skill, for example when designing lamps in DT. Pupils with LDD achieve well in many lessons because they are well supported. Some less able pupils do not progress as well

because their understanding of previous work is limited. Pupils with EAL are eager to learn and are good listeners, making good progress as a result of effective teaching.

- 2.29 Results at GCSE in 2007, the most recent year for which comparative data is available, were in line with the national average for all maintained secondary schools. They were therefore in line with pupils' abilities, despite the disruption to their education which occurred when the school closed for a period in 2006. Although results as a whole were similar in 2008 to those in 2007, the proportion of A* and A grades nearly doubled. Results at A level in 2007 were in line with the national average and were therefore in line with pupils' abilities. The results in 2008 were improved on those in 2007.
- 2.30 In dance examinations, a good number of pupils have gained a starred distinction in the Business and Technology Education Council level 2 certificates, equivalent to two GCSEs at grade A. Other pupils have gained a wide range of qualifications in activities ranging from ballet to jazz and modern dance, and a smaller number are successful in instrumental music examinations; these accomplishments are reflected in the high quality of dance and other performing arts. Despite the school's small size, sports teams have enjoyed much success against other schools, and individual pupils have performed at a representative level in a wide range of sports.
- 2.31 Many pupils undertake independent work. For example, homework tasks drew on internet research, and pupils chose to read challenging texts for English that were not on the syllabus. However, opportunities for independent work are limited, as are those for co-operative working. In English, pupils valued the chance to work collaboratively, and they were quick to support each other in history, however such opportunities do not occur frequently enough across the whole curriculum.
- 2.32 At best, pupils show commitment and concentration. They enjoy talking about their work and show a natural respect for each other. On other occasions, their concentration is poor and they tend to chatter or engage in other distracting behaviour, such as calling out answers. In these lessons, where discipline is less secure, class discussion rarely reaches any depth as pupils fail to listen carefully to each other.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.33 Pupils' personal development is good throughout the school. It is seen in the quality of relationships between pupils and staff, and in the strong sense of community which reflects the Christian ethos expressed in the school's aims. However, inconsistent provision of PSHE limits some aspects of pupils' development, especially their knowledge of public institutions and services. In the EYFS, children's personal development and well-being are outstanding.
- 2.34 Pupils' spirituality develops well as they progress through the school. It is shown in lessons as they explore Christian values and in their ability to reflect about their faith as they get older. It is also demonstrated in their self-confidence and self-esteem; parents say how these increase from the moment their children enter the school. In both parts of the school, pupils respond well and perform with confidence in assemblies. They enjoy music, sing hymns and appreciate performances of dance or drama. In the prep school, prayers are often written by pupils. Readings and other activities celebrate Christian stories and those from other faiths. Visitors bring a wide variety of experiences to share; they include regular visits by the local vicar.

- 2.35 Pupils' moral development is equally good. They appreciate that school rules are necessary and fully understand the conduct expected of them. Consideration amongst all members of the school demonstrates their concern for each other. Pupils know what is right and wrong; moral issues are frequently discussed in prep classes and senior school assemblies. Throughout the prep school, an initiative to discourage bullying has increased pupils' awareness of helpfulness and consideration, and of the importance of developing an inclusive community. Pupils respond positively to rewards for good and helpful behaviour and enjoy collecting merits to contribute to their house competitions. Good manners and kindness are especially appreciated and encouraged. Almost all parents think the school inculcates good attitudes and values. In class, discussions on fair trade or the importance of looking after the planet enhance pupils' understanding of moral issues outside their own environment.
- 2.36 Pupils' social development is seen in the strong sense of community in the school and the integration of all age groups. Pupils are confident both with their peers and with staff. They welcome visitors and are excellent ambassadors. They enjoy working co-operatively, both in the classroom and in extra-curricular activities, such as the production of *A Christmas Carol*, in which every prep school pupil had a part. Sports teams are often made up of mixed age groups. The prep school has a good social skills programme, but no formal provision is made in the senior school. In the prep school, responsibility is encouraged in various ways, for example through class jobs, but the senior school provides fewer opportunities to develop an experience of responsibility. However, the introduction of prep and senior school councils, together with a charity committee, has enabled pupils to address issues such as improving accessibility to courses in the senior school; prep pupils were keen to talk about their role in "helping to make the school a better place for everyone".
- 2.37 Pupils understand the importance of their own community but have less understanding of the British constitution and services. In the senior school, little teaching of citizenship takes place, and pupils have few opportunities to become involved in communities outside their own immediate environment. They are, however, generous in their fund-raising and understand the importance of helping others. Through whole-school charity work, pupils have raised money for charities such as Water Aid and Great Ormond Street Hospital, as well as for Comic Relief and Jeans for Genes.
- 2.38 Pupils have a satisfactory appreciation of their own cultures but many do not have an extensive understanding of the cultural backgrounds of others. In music, art and drama they explore a number of cultural styles, and in geography and history they study global issues. Visitors to the school from overseas, or of different faiths or cultures, broaden pupils' cultural understanding and make an important contribution to the school. However, opportunities to share cultural traditions within the school are limited. For example, international pupils are rarely invited to share their traditions, and visits to other cultural centres are few.
- 2.39 The school meets most of the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2]. In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:
- (a) provide pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England [Regulation 2.(d)].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.40 Teaching is good overall, although there are inconsistencies in its quality in the senior school. In the best teaching, the school meets its aim of having high expectations and standards, in which pupils are challenged and motivated. In the EYFS, adults support children well in their learning and development.

Prep School

- 2.41 Teaching is good overall, with some which is outstanding. Satisfactory lessons have many good features, but lack challenge for the most able and support for pupils who need it.
- 2.42 Generally, teaching is well planned using imaginative approaches and activities, so that pupils' interest is maintained. A wide choice of varied activities enables good progress to be made. For example, pupils in a Year 3 mathematics lesson improved their understanding of mass by using everyday objects such as a bag of apples and a jar. The best lessons clarify learning objectives at the outset and finish with a productive summary, so that pupils are clear about both the aims and what has been achieved. In a minority of lessons, pupils become bored due to the slow pace or lack of planning for their different needs. In most lessons, teachers demonstrate a good knowledge of the subject matter being taught.
- 2.43 Small classes and the early identification of their needs enable pupils of all abilities to acquire new knowledge, increase their understanding and develop their skills. Most teachers know pupils well and pupils say their teachers help them. In the best lessons, different worksheets or tasks are provided for pupils of differing abilities so that all progress well; in other lessons, improvement is less consistent. For example, in Year 8 English, pupils with LDD were given excellent support with a challenging exercise which enabled them to make significant progress. However, work can be insufficiently challenging and so pupils lose interest. Whilst more able pupils are identified, tasks are not always matched to their ability and their progress is then slower than it otherwise would be.
- 2.44 Enthusiastic teaching, dynamic delivery and the use of specialist teachers create a stimulating environment in which pupils develop a real interest in their work. The good practice and excellent skills of teachers in physical and creative subjects enable pupils to develop well in these areas. Skilful questioning, class discussion and careful use of worksheets enable pupils to think and learn for themselves. Pupils learn less well when they are told what to do without being given opportunities for further discussion, or are not expected to use their skills of reasoning.
- 2.45 Encouragement and praise are used well, particularly with younger age groups, so that learning is enjoyable and good behaviour is promoted. On the few occasions when discipline was not enforced, pupils became noisy and lost concentration.
- 2.46 The teaching of subjects such as science, DT, art, music, games and dance is well supported by the use of shared space. The recently improved junior library is an excellent facility. Resources generally are adequate and often used imaginatively to help pupils' learning.
- 2.47 Teachers give effective oral feedback and marking is nearly always regular and encouraging. The best marking contains helpful comments for improvement and expects a response from the pupil. In some books, teachers ask questions of pupils to further check and extend their understanding. However, some marking is perfunctory and negative, with no expectation that work will be completed, and therefore does not aid pupils' learning. The practice of setting targets for pupils has potential, but often teachers do not formally check that targets have been met.

- 2.48 No external tests are taken in the prep school. Pupils from Year 3 upwards take standardised tests each year, and the results are analysed carefully to identify needs so that each pupil can achieve in line with his or her potential. This assessment system is still being developed.

Senior School

- 2.49 Teaching in the senior school is good overall, with a significant minority that is excellent. However, a larger minority of lessons are characterised by a mix of strengths and weaknesses, although the quality is usually satisfactory overall.
- 2.50 The best teaching uses energy, challenge and praise to enthuse pupils and to set them the highest standards. Targeted questions, coupled with dynamic presentation, engage pupils and encourage them to have higher expectations and make greater effort. Creativity and imagination are fostered, for example in textiles and design, where pupils are expected to research and develop their own designs. Timely intervention in drama or in song and dance challenges pupils to continually improve their performance.
- 2.51 The best lessons are also well structured, with a good range of methods and wise management of class time. They support a range of learning styles and meet the needs of pupils with LDD or EAL well. Objectives are clear and good relationships enable teacher and pupils to work effectively together.
- 2.52 Lessons which are satisfactory overall or, less frequently, unsatisfactory, combine good features with some weaknesses. Alongside the many strengths, insufficient opportunity is given for independent learning. Issues are dealt with superficially or work is too easy. Teaching lacks energy and does not challenge pupils fully. Time is spent in activities which lack real purpose, such as copying from a book, filling in too many worksheets or producing posters. Either the lesson moves too slowly and pupils lose focus, or too quickly so that less able pupils are confused.
- 2.53 Teachers know pupils well and many pupils have high regard for their teachers. Pupils appreciate the time and patience they receive from teachers, and the fact that they communicate with them well. As a result, in many lessons teachers provide well for pupils with differing abilities and needs, particularly those with LDD or EAL. Teachers' knowledge of their subject enables many to give clear explanations. However, on occasions, teachers are unable to answer pupils' questions, or marking is inaccurate. They make appropriate use of resources.
- 2.54 The best marking provides helpful comments, together with clear advice for further improvement. In some books, real dialogue ensues between teacher and pupil. Good feedback is also provided in many lessons. However, this high standard is not maintained throughout the school and some books contain either poor marking or little marking at all.
- 2.55 The general quality of assessment is good. The school collates a considerable amount of data, including the results of standardised tests taken at the beginning of Years 8 and 9, of frequent internal examinations and data from regular marking. It plans to introduce a new management information system that it is intended will enable individual pupils' progress to be evaluated against national norms at GCSE and beyond. Currently, performance data is reviewed regularly at departmental level and by members of the senior management team (SMT) to track pupils' progress and identify instances of underachievement quickly, enabling prompt corrective action to be taken. A target setting system allows pupils to record personal targets in the front of their exercise books. The system is not yet an integral part of the assessment process and as a consequence its impact on learning and attainment is limited.

Whole School

2.56 The school meets the regulatory requirements for teaching [Standard 1].

3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS

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

- 3.1 The school is a warm and caring place where pupils feel secure enough to grow and mature at their own pace, and where they are allowed to be themselves. The size of the school and the caring approach from staff mean that pupils are well known by a wide range of adults and receive strong pastoral guidance, as the school intends. The standard of welfare, health and safety is in many ways good, but with some shortcomings in safer recruitment procedures.

Prep School

- 3.2 The school has a happy, family ethos and is staffed by caring and supportive teachers, who place much emphasis on working together and the importance of team work. Pupils feel that staff are approachable and will listen to them. They speak warmly about their teachers, stating that they “help them loads”.
- 3.3 Staff are well supported by the pastoral care arrangements. Form teachers are the first point of contact and they discuss issues with the deputy head when necessary. Any concerns are discussed at weekly pastoral meetings, and liaison with parents is quick and effective. Pastoral issues are all carefully recorded. The quality of pastoral care is underpinned by the belief that it is every child’s right to feel secure and happy.
- 3.4 The family nature of the school is reflected in the outstanding relationships between staff and pupils, as well as amongst pupils themselves. Pupils respect the staff and respect each other. Teachers give pupils considerable help and support. Pupils support each other, for example when they give performances, and are proud of each other’s achievements. More able pupils support those who are less secure.
- 3.5 The comprehensive system of rewards and sanctions is fully understood by pupils and is considered fair. Good behaviour is recognised and there are appropriate sanctions for poor behaviour. Pupils are well behaved and polite, acknowledging adults by greeting them and holding doors open. Measures to prevent bullying are discussed in lessons and backed by posters around the school. Pupils say that incidences of bullying are very rare, and are dealt with quickly and effectively.

Senior School

- 3.6 Pupils are well known to and cared for by a wide range of adults. Both staff and pupils say that they know most members of the community, and pupils appreciate the support and guidance they receive.
- 3.7 Pastoral care is overseen by the deputy head who ensures that pupils have access to a wide range of staff who they can approach with pastoral issues. The school expects the form tutor to be the principal pastoral figure in each pupil’s school life and to be a first point of contact for parents. In practice, although for many pupils their tutor does form the focus of care, others choose different staff to approach when they need to. This flexibility is seen as positive by the pupils, who are happy with the care that they receive. Pupils are also helped through other activities, such as drama lessons, where their confidence is built.

- 3.8 Relationship amongst pupils are respectful and positive. They support each other and recognise each other's talents. The recently refurbished social areas are welcome as spaces for relaxation. Pupils appreciate the care that staff show for them; for example, many staff support extra-curricular events, where relationships are relaxed.
- 3.9 The school has appropriate procedures for promoting good behaviour and suitable rewards and sanctions, which are generally successful. Indications in the pupils' pre-inspection questionnaires of unease with the school's disciplinary measures and, in particular a lack of consistency amongst staff, were not, on the whole, borne out during the inspection. Occasional bullying is dealt with efficiently and effectively.

Whole School

- 3.10 Almost all arrangements for pupils' welfare are good. The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for dealing with child protection issues, including staff training and liaison with local services where necessary. Appropriate reference is made to safer recruitment of staff, though in a small number of cases the necessary checks have not been implemented fully. The school has addressed all the key issues raised in recent fire risk assessments and the proprietor and advisors oversee both fire, and health and safety arrangements with care. Health and safety arrangements are thorough, with frequent discussion at meetings.
- 3.11 Pupils' health is promoted well. They have ready access to the school nurse, who provides personal care and co-ordinates first aid arrangements, from a well-resourced medical room. Meals provide a wide choice within a healthy menu; sausage days are especially popular. Pupils engage in a wide range of sports and active pursuits, including dance, to take exercise. The school maintains suitable records of both admission and attendance. It has appropriate plans to audit its facilities and develop access for pupils with disabilities.
- 3.12 The school meets most of the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3]. In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:
- (a) ensure that the safer recruitment policy is always followed for members of staff [Regulation 3.(2)(b)].

The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community

- 3.13 The school has good relationships with parents; in the EYFS, these are excellent. Links with the community are less well developed.
- 3.14 The parents of about half the pupils responded to the questionnaire distributed before the inspection. Parents' responses showed that they are, on the whole, positive about the school. In particular, they appreciate the curriculum, the range of extra-curricular activities, the teaching, the promotion of worthwhile attitudes and values, and the help and guidance that are provided. They are proud that their children attend a school with a feeling of 'family', where they are happy, make progress, enjoy small class sizes and have an identity. Inspectors agreed with these views. A significant number of parents, mainly in Years 9 to 11, expressed concerns about the behaviour of the pupils, the volume of homework being set, and lack of opportunity for their own involvement in the life and work of the school. However, inspectors considered that the behaviour of the pupils during the course of the inspection was generally good and that they were polite and engaging. The inspectors also found that a reasonable amount of homework was set and that parents have good opportunities to be involved in the school.

- 3.15 Parents participate in school life in many ways. Three parents, from various sections of the school, meet to discuss issues with the headmaster and to assist in the production of the newly created website. Pupils are helped with their reading in Years 1 and 2 each week. Parents are invited to attend and contribute to school events such as the Summer Fete and the Firework Party; they respond well. The Friends of Newlands group is developing greater links between parents and the school.
- 3.16 Parents are kept up to date by receiving regular and relevant information about the school through letters, newsletters, email and information on the website. They are also well informed about their children's progress. Parent meetings are held once or twice a year. Half-termly reports are informative and detailed, giving a clear picture of what pupils have achieved, with many showing how to improve. Parents of pupils in Years 1 and 2 receive daily detailed and personalised reports of their child's day. Parents appreciate it when staff phone home if a child is away sick; they described it as 'beyond the call of duty.' Parents use school diaries to communicate effectively with staff. The school handles parental concerns with due care, and has appropriate procedures in place for handling formal complaints.
- 3.17 The school's participation in the life of the wider community is developing. The choir sing carols in various locations, ranging from a supermarket to a local nursing home. Pupils also compete in sporting fixtures at other schools. They have participated in a poetry competition, a national gymnastic competition and the Eastbourne music and drama festival. Some are members of the local detachment of the Army Cadet Force. They raise money for charity. Local groups use the school premises. Events open to the community are organised on the school grounds; for example, the Newlands Summer Fete was linked to the Seaford Fun Run, with stalls run by the local scouts and the local Territorial Army. The school plans to extend the annual arts event into a week-long festival of arts involving other schools and the local community.
- 3.18 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the provision of information and the manner in which complaints are to be handled [Standards 6 and 7].

The Quality of Boarding Education

- 3.19 Strong pastoral care from committed staff allows boarding pupils to receive a good quality of boarding education, so fulfilling the school's aims.
- 3.20 Pupils relate well to each other. Boys of different ages play games together in the evenings, and both boys and girls commented on the ease with which they get on with each other. Boarding staff are all seen as approachable and helpful, and each of them is valued as someone pupils can talk to in addition to their form tutors. Communication between staff and parents is regular and effective.
- 3.21 The range of extra-curricular activities is limited, especially for those at school on Sundays. Girls would also like to have more available in the evenings. Some boys join the local army cadets and football club, and most take advantage of the school's sporting facilities.
- 3.22 The girls' boarding accommodation is homely and the newly refurbished boys' accommodation offers good facilities. The flags on the walls in the boys' sitting room reflect the international nature of the community, and rooms named after prominent football teams help integrate pupils from overseas into English culture.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 The considerable vision shown by the proprietor has enabled the school to re-establish itself following its recent closure, to continue to make available a good quality of education, and to provide for pupils' care and welfare in almost all respects.
- 4.2 The long-term commitment of the proprietor has underpinned the future of the school, and the board of advisors which is now being established brings additional experience and expertise to aspects of its work. For example, advisors provide invaluable assistance with property, and health and safety issues. However, while regular contact means the proprietor and advisors have a good insight into financial and business aspects of the school and contribute well to planning in those areas, their insight into the quality of education is less well developed. Their awareness of their responsibilities for welfare, health and safety issues has supported a range of improvements, especially in fire precautions, but with less regard to recruitment procedures. The school is therefore receiving advice and support in some areas of its work but not in all.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.3 Good leadership in many areas, including the EYFS, supports the school well. However, underdeveloped academic leadership means that the school is not yet able to achieve the consistency of excellence in teaching for which it aims, and leadership has not ensured full compliance with regulatory requirements.
- 4.4 The headmaster has successfully seen the school through an important period of change. Detailed development plans have been drawn up covering all areas of school life and setting priorities for the future. The school benefits from a shared commitment amongst all staff to help it to move forward and to see continued improvement. The headmaster and proprietor have a good working relationship, of benefit to the school.
- 4.5 The SMT provides an effective forum for the discussion of school priorities and day to day practices. Members work well together and good leadership is given to boarding and to pastoral care, as it is to the support for pupils with LDD or EAL; the presence of the head of LDD on the SMT gives this work a suitably high priority. Links between the EYFS, pre-prep, prep and senior schools are well developed.
- 4.6 Academic work is effectively organised and managed; however, the school is aware that it lacks a sufficiently sharp focus on the quality of teaching and learning, resulting in some inconsistencies in both classroom practice and marking. These occur in all parts of the school but are more marked in the senior school. Job descriptions for heads of departments and co-ordinators do not place a sufficiently robust emphasis on responsibility for standards and some of these staff do not see themselves in that role. In particular, the role of those in charge of small departments in the senior school or less extensive areas of teaching in the prep school is sometimes viewed by them mainly as an administrative function. For example, while some heads of department give strong leadership, hold regular subject meetings which are properly minuted and provide proper discussion of academic attainment and enrichment, in other departments there is a less sharp focus on raising standards through structured collaboration, monitoring and review. In addition, those responsible for smaller departments often work to a large extent in isolation. As a result, opportunities for the monitoring of teaching and learning are too limited. The school has a full range of policies

- and procedures, many of which are new and yet to be reviewed. Some, such as those for appraisal or PSHE, have yet to be fully implemented.
- 4.7 Staff are dedicated and committed to the school. In many respects, the school is well staffed but the significant proportion of part-time staff results in some imbalances within the timetable. Staff recruitment is now more robust, despite difficulties resulting from the school's period of closure. A significant amount of work has been done to bring staff files back up to date and suitable procedures are carried out in almost all respects, though not enough attention is given to some statutory obligations, relating specifically to boarding schools. In addition, the school relies on overseas checks on GAP Year students and does not also make additional checks on them in this country.
- 4.8 The school has recently introduced an appraisal system, but this is still being fully implemented, and in-service training is at present limited; for example, some new to management have not attended training for their roles. The school has appropriate arrangements to support teachers who are newly qualified.
- 4.9 The school's current financial stability is due to the commitment made by the proprietor when the school re-opened. A suitable programme of maintenance is in place with long-term objectives, and the reorganisation of some key support functions has enabled the bursar to concentrate on financial priorities. Recent improvements have included substantial enhancements to libraries and their management, providing much improved support to pupils' learning. However, ICT facilities are still limited; the network runs slowly and access to computers is restricted, especially in classrooms. In particular, access to the prep school ICT suite is limited by timetabling constraints. Limitations in resources in some other departments restrict teaching opportunities, as the school is aware.
- 4.10 The school is well supported by both non-teaching and teaching staff, many of whom are long serving and have supported the school through its recent difficulties with loyalty and commitment. The school runs smoothly from day to day, due in no small part to the hard work of the administrative, catering, maintenance, grounds, nursing and support staff.
- 4.11 The school meets most of the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff [Standard 4]. In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:
- (a) ensure that full checks are carried out on all staff recruited from overseas [Regulations 4.(2)(b) and 4C.(2)(d)];
 - (b) ensure that recruitment procedures fully reflect the additional requirements for boarding schools [Regulations 4.(2)(e) and 4C.(2)(g)].
- 4.12 The school meets the regulatory requirements for premises and accommodation [Standard 5].
- 4.13 The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers and meets its requirements.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall Conclusions

- 5.1 Newlands School succeeds in its aims to provide high quality pastoral care for both day and boarding pupils, firmly rooted in the relationships amongst both staff and pupils, and reflecting its family atmosphere. This is also true in the EYFS, where provision for meeting the needs of the children in its care is effective. The school has good relationships with parents. The broad and balanced curriculum is considerably enhanced by a wide range of activities and excellence in performing and visual arts. Across the curriculum the best teaching is of high quality, and provides challenge and opportunity for independent work and thought. However, these high expectations and standards are not shared in all lessons or marking, and some teaching lacks energy and drive. Pupils fulfil their potential in public examinations and generally achieve good standards in class; they respond positively to opportunities for individual, creative and collaborative work but these opportunities are too limited in the senior school. Pupils with LDD or EAL are effectively supported and make good progress. Despite some low-level disruption in less interesting lessons, pupils develop well as young people and would appreciate more opportunities to take responsibility. Both proprietor and staff have brought considerable commitment to re-establishing the school on a secure basis, and much has already been achieved. Whilst many areas of school life are led well and academic work is well organised, the school lacks a sufficiently clear focus on the spreading of best practice and on achieving consistent quality through monitoring and review, as it is aware.
- 5.2 The school is aware that it needs to appoint a teacher with full responsibility for PSHE and increase provision for pupils who are gifted and talented. Significant improvements have been made to the fabric of the school since it has re-opened but the school knows that teaching resources need further improvement.
- 5.3 The school complies with most of the regulatory requirements, but does not at present meet Standards 1 (curriculum), 2 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development), 3 (welfare, health and safety) and 4 (suitability of proprietors and staff).

Next Steps

- 5.4 To improve the quality of education the school provides, it should take the following steps.
1. Develop stronger structures for leading, managing and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, in particular to:
 - spread best practice as widely as possible amongst all staff, making full use of professional development;
 - ensure that all lessons contain purposeful and varied activities, and provide challenge and stimulus to all pupils;
 - ensure that marking is regular, thorough and accurate, and consistently shows pupils how to improve their work;
 - provide more extensive opportunities for independent and collaborative work in the senior school.
- 5.5 In order to meet all the regulatory requirements, the school must:
- (1) provide a consistent programme of personal, social and health education in both sections of the school [Regulation 1.(2)(f)];
 - (2) provide careers guidance for all pupils of secondary age [Regulation 1.(2)(g)];
 - (3) provide pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England [Regulation 2.(d)];
 - (4) ensure that the safer recruitment policy is always followed for members of staff [Regulation 3.(2)(b)], and in particular that full checks are carried out on all staff recruited from overseas [Regulations 4.(2)(b) and 4C.(2)(d)];
 - (5) ensure that recruitment procedures fully reflect the additional requirements for boarding schools [Regulations 4.(2)(e) and 4C.(2)(g)].
- 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 9th to 12th March 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 the proprietor and advisors, 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 medical centre. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.
- 6.2 The Early Years Foundation Stage was inspected on 2nd and 3rd March 2009 by two inspectors. The inspectors observed sessions, talked to the children, examined samples of work, and held discussions with staff and governors. Comments from parents and carers were considered, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.
- 6.3 National Minimum Boarding Standards were inspected by a team of two Ofsted inspectors over three days.

List of Inspectors

Mr Ian Newton	Reporting Inspector
Mr Steven Boyes	Director, ISA school
Mrs Maureen Bradley	Former Head, GSA school
Mr John Greathead	Head, IAPS school
Mrs Anthea Hickman	Former Deputy Head, IAPS school
Mr Richard Knott	Deputy Head, HMC school
Mr Nicholas Rees	Head, ISA school
Mrs Catherine Smith	Deputy Head, IAPS school
Mrs Valerie Goode	Early Years Lead Inspector
Mrs Glynis Holmes	Early Years Team Inspector

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

- 7.1 The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is situated in a secure corner of the school's 21-acre campus. It is open from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm for 51 weeks of the year and provides full day care for children from 0 to 5 years. Children come from a mixture of cultures and backgrounds. Of the 96 children on the register at the time of the EYFS inspection, 3 had English as an additional language (EAL) and 4 had been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD).
- 7.2 The EYFS aims to provide a safe, secure, stimulating environment which encourages children's development through play and exploration. The setting's provision is effective in recognising the uniqueness of each child and planning for individual needs. As a result, most children make good and some make very good progress towards the Early Learning Goals. Outstanding provision is made for their safety and welfare. Excellent links with parents and other agencies contribute most effectively to the promotion of high quality care and education. Conversations with parents and responses to the parental pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that they are very supportive of the school. The setting has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of its provision and takes steps to improve.
- 7.3 Most children, including those with LDD or EAL, make good progress towards the Early Learning Goals in relation to their starting points. They enjoy their time in school, playing with others or on their own. They achieve well because they take an active part in their learning, following their own particular interests with enthusiasm. Children are competent learners who enjoy the challenge of working independently. They have good recall of previous learning, listen intently and ask intelligent questions. The wide variety of activities enables them to be creative, as was seen in the very interesting role play at the 'vet's surgery' in Reception.
- 7.4 The personal development and well-being of children are outstanding. They understand and apply safety rules, realising their importance. They know how to stay healthy and were observed adopting hygienic practices such as washing their hands after going to the toilet and before eating. Good progress is made in developing personal qualities that enable children to take responsibility for small tasks, such as helping to tidy up after using equipment. They show respect for each other and are friendly. Children from different cultures and backgrounds were seen playing happily together. They are beginning to acquire skills as good learners and demonstrate their knowledge of the world in their play.
- 7.5 The provision for children's learning and development is good. Adults support children well in a rich, stimulating environment that encourages positive attitudes to learning. Most staff have an excellent knowledge of the learning and development requirements of the EYFS that enables them to plan interesting and appropriate activities, both indoors and out. However, Reception and one of the Nursery classes do not have immediate access to the outdoor play areas. Detailed assessments and observations enable staff to provide challenging learning experiences for each individual. Those in need of additional learning support are identified early and are well supported both in the classroom and by outside agencies with which the school has close links. The balance between adult-led and child-initiated tasks is good and results in active learning. Excellent relationships between staff, and parents and carers help children to succeed.

- 7.6 The welfare of children is promoted extremely well in all major aspects. Children are effectively supported by their key person. Staff are highly committed to the children's care and adhere strictly to welfare policies to prevent the spread of infection. The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust, with risk assessments, including those for furniture, equipment, and indoor and outdoor spaces, carefully carried out. Underpinning children's welfare are particularly good habits and attitudes towards their work and each other.
- 7.7 The leadership and management of the EYFS are good. Records, policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and amended as necessary to comply with current legislation. Safe recruitment procedures are followed to employ appropriately qualified staff. The setting has not had an Ofsted inspection since it re-opened under new ownership in September 2006, but it has been effective in identifying strengths and weaknesses, often seeking advice from outside agencies. It recognises that access to outside areas for all classes is not yet easily possible. The EYFS runs smoothly on a day to day basis due to the commitment of all staff and the head of the Nursery.

What the Setting Should Do to Improve

- 7.8 To improve still further the good quality of its provision, the setting should:
1. improve access to outdoor areas for all classes;
 2. ensure that all staff receive training to fully understand the requirements of the EYFS Framework.
- 7.9 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Childcare Act 2006.

Complaints Since the Last Inspection

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