



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

ASHVILLE COLLEGE

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Ashville College

Full Name of College	Ashville College
DfE Number	815/6028
Registered Charity Number	529577
Address	Ashville College Green Lane Harrogate North Yorkshire HG2 9JP
Telephone Number	01423 566358
Fax Number	01423 505142
Email Address	ashville@ashville.co.uk
Headmaster	Mr Mark Lauder
Chairman of Governors	Mr Peter Holt
Age Range	4 to 19
Total Number of Pupils	748
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (435 boys; 313 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 0 5-11: 224 3-5 (EYFS): 23 11-18: 501
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 629 Capacity for flexi-boarding: 5
Number of Boarders	Total: 119 Full: 112 Weekly: 7
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Jayne Hopkins
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	09 Nov 2010 to 10 Nov 2010 06 Dec 2010 to 08 Dec 2010

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in October 2004.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

*These Standards Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

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

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

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

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

The inspection of boarding was not carried out in conjunction with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills, and the report does not contain specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education and development in general. The full Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) report refers to an inspection in January 2007 and can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Children's social care/Boarding school.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features

- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Ashville College was founded in 1877 under the auspices of the United Free Methodists. The college is affiliated with the Methodist Conference. The Secretary of the Board of Management for Methodist Colleges and Schools and the Chairman of the Leeds Methodist District are ex-officio members of the college governing body. The college is a registered charity administered by Ashville College Trustees Ltd and the governors, currently sixteen in number, are directors of the company.
- 1.2 Originally a senior boys' boarding school, Ashville College added a Junior School in 1982 and a Pre-Preparatory School in 1995; the latter moved into a new building in 2000. The college became co-educational in 1984 and is now a mixed boarding and day school for pupils aged from four to eighteen. The Pre-Prep (Reception and Years 1 and 2) currently has 87 pupils including 23 in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Reception classes, the Junior School (Years 3 to 6) has 160 pupils and the Senior School (Years 7 to 13) has 501 pupils. There are 146 pupils in the sixth form. The school has 112 full boarders and 7 weekly boarders. Altogether the school roll numbers 748, 313 girls and 435 boys. The college occupies a 60 acre site on the south western edge of Harrogate which, as well as the three main school buildings, includes the four separate boarding houses.
- 1.3 The college is selective at all entry points. Most pupils come from business or professional family backgrounds in Harrogate and the surrounding area. Some boarders are from overseas, typically from the Far East or Africa and others from RAF and Army families. A number of day pupils come from a nearby American base. The main entry points are into Reception at the age of four, into Year 3, Year 7 and the sixth form. A small number of pupils leave after GCSE in Year 11 and the majority of pupils leaving the sixth form go on to university or other higher education. The ability profile in the college is above the national average, based on standardised tests taken in the Junior and Senior Schools. The college has no pupil with a statement of special educational need (SEN) but 143 pupils are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). Of these, 109 pupils receive extra specialist learning support. Seventy-nine pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and 67 receive extra support for their English.
- 1.4 Ashville College aims to be recognised as the school of choice in the region. It seeks to enable all its pupils to realise their academic abilities, to nurture individual talents and to develop character in a climate of positive expectation. The college's ethos, deriving from the aims set down for Methodist Church schools, is described as that of a caring Christian community, which will develop potential as well as examine standards and values in society. The college wants its members to become responsible and accountable, with a passion for learning which encourages imagination and creativity, and to develop a personal faith for their future lives.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the college.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Achievement in academic subjects and in a wide range of sport and activities is outstanding in the Pre-Prep and Junior School, and good, sometimes excellent, in the Senior School. Outcomes for children in the EYFS Reception classes are outstanding. This success is supported by a comprehensive and carefully planned curriculum, a wide range of activities at every level in the college, and by much good and outstanding teaching. Sometimes teaching is backed up by helpful marking but some marking remains perfunctory, as was the case in the previous inspection. In the Pre-Prep and Junior School, pupils' quality of learning is excellent. In the Senior School the quality of learning is mostly good but occasionally it is just satisfactory, when pupils are not fully engaged by the lesson. Since the previous inspection in 2004, recommendations concerning the library and information and communication technology (ICT), in both Senior and Junior Schools, have been addressed, although, in the Senior School, increasing use is putting pressure on the size of the library and the capability of the ICT system.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is outstanding throughout the college, founded on comprehensive and individual pastoral care, and by the positive, supportive Christian family ethos. The welfare, safeguarding, and health and safety of pupils are a priority for management and staff.
- 2.3 The college is well governed and strongly led in all sections by an able and effective senior management. The school is run very well from day-to-day. In the Senior School, middle management is fully effective in pastoral care and boarding. However, the impact of subject management in raising standards in departments varies, in spite of an increased regime of monitoring within departments and by senior management. Parents and pupils, in their questionnaires, responded very positively about the school. Particularly favourable replies were received on the range of the curriculum and activities, on attitudes promoted by the school, and on the governance and management of the school. A few concerns were raised about the quality of support for those needing extra help in their learning and about a lack of opportunities for parents to be involved in the school. The inspection found learning support to be well done throughout the school and that parents' involvement was strongly encouraged. Parents of pupils in the Pre-Prep and the Junior School were full of praise for the quality of the education their pupils received.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. In the Senior School, ensure teachers share good practice beyond subject departments.
2. In the Senior School, further develop and support the role of heads of department.
3. To meet the needs of the college and the professional development of the individual, make available better training opportunities for staff.
4. Consider further development of library and ICT provision in the college, to meet pupils' growing use of, and needs for, these resources.
5. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, continue to resource and plan for the outdoor environment, to improve provision across all areas of learning.
6. Extend the opportunities for child-initiated activities in the Reception classes.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills

Pre-Prep

- 3.1 The pupils in the Pre-Prep are extremely well educated. They grow in knowledge and experience through a broad range of subjects and activities. The school's emphasis on literacy and numeracy means that skills in these areas are outstanding, as can be seen from some excellent project work on mythical beasts and angels displayed in the corridor and in the classrooms. The pupils show a growing confidence and facility in their use of classroom ICT. They are also successful in other activities, both in classroom projects, in music and drama, and in extra-curricular activities.
- 3.2 The analysis of examination results uses the national data for the years 2007 to 2009. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Performance in the national tests at the end of Year 2 has been far above the national average. This level of attainment indicates that pupils of all abilities make excellent progress relative to their ability during their time in the Pre-Prep; the less able benefit from receiving the support they need to succeed.
- 3.3 The quality of pupils' learning is also excellent. Relationships with their teachers are excellent, and they are strongly motivated to learn. They are confident, keen to respond to questions and articulate. They concentrate on tasks on their own, and co-operate happily and constructively on shared tasks. They learn to listen to each other and are excited by the work they do in class and in their activities.

Junior School

- 3.4 Standards of achievement in the Junior School are excellent. The Junior School successfully fulfils the college aims, ensuring that all pupils are very well educated and individual talents are nurtured. Pupils show a strong desire for learning.
- 3.5 In lessons as well as in their written work, pupils show a good understanding and a growing level of knowledge in all their subjects. They are confident, articulate and express themselves well in both oral and written work. Pupils in Year 4 read the stories they were studying fluently and expressively; thorough comprehension enabled them to deduce the next stage in the story. High quality work on poetry was seen in Year 6 exercise books and in literacy projects on display. Numeracy skills are well developed throughout the Junior School and pupils use their mathematical skills to good purpose in science as well as in other subjects. In a Year 3 design and technology lesson, pupils clearly recalled the work they had done earlier, carefully followed instructions and showed an ability to reason their way out of difficulties, in using their weaving skills to make Christmas cards. Pupils' work on display includes well-developed ICT skills. Achievement is excellent in a wide range of popular activities, including drama and music. Music is strong in the school, with two age group choirs and all pupils in Year 4 learning the violin or cello. Team sports are very strong.
- 3.6 Pupils' results in standardised tests in mathematics and English are above the national average. In national tests at age eleven, results are well above national averages; half the year group in 2010 achieved the level above that expected for

their age. Pupils make good progress in relation to their ability as they move through the Junior School.

- 3.7 Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and are justly proud of their achievements. They spoke with pride about their fundraising for charity. Throughout the Junior School, pupils work extremely well at individual tasks as well as in pair and group settings. Pupils in a middle mathematics set in Year 5 showed maturity and mutual support in paired work and peer assessment. They are ready to question their teachers, are eager to respond and show considerable confidence as learners. Pupils show a real enthusiasm to be fully involved in lessons, activities and all other aspects of Junior School life.

Senior School

- 3.8 Pupils' all-round achievement is good. They are well educated according to the school's aims. High standards are achieved in a number of subjects. High quality art is displayed to very good effect around the school. Perceptive appreciation of poems by Sylvia Plath was shown in a Year 12 English lesson and strong performance skills were seen in a drama lesson on Stanislavski's methods. Literacy and mathematical skills are strong at all levels and are used well in other subjects, for example in statistical work in geography. Pupils have well-developed ICT skills, seen, for example, in a Year 9 lesson using word processing. They demonstrate creativity in art and English, and in the presentation of their design skills in design technology. They think logically and plan ahead, as was demonstrated well in a Year 12 business studies lesson in which pupils prepared their own business start-up for a supposed 'New Business of the Year' award.
- 3.9 Pupils show a good level of knowledge, understanding and skill in curricular and extra-curricular activities, relative to their ability. Good results are obtained in a range of sports and activities, including drama and music examinations. The standard of choral and instrumental music in the Senior School is high and in recent years regional and national success have been gained in netball, hockey and rugby. The range of significant individual achievements includes: success in art and design competitions; members of the National Youth Orchestra, the Children's Orchestra and the National Youth Theatre, as well as individual regional and national caps in sport. Over £80,000 has been raised for charity in the last 3 years.
- 3.10 Pupils' attainment is good in public examinations. Results at GCSE are above the national average for maintained schools and similar to the national average for selective schools. A Level results are similar to the national average for maintained schools. Results in GCSE are good in relation to pupils' abilities, indicating that pupils progress to GCSE is above the average for pupils of similar ability, as confirmed by nationally standardised measures of progress. School measures show progress continuing in the sixth form, if rather more slowly.
- 3.11 The quality of pupils' learning is generally good. In most lessons pupils are engaged and motivated to learn but, in a minority, attention and motivation is only satisfactory. Good group work was seen in several lessons, for example Spanish and business studies, and good creative independence in art. Pupils are able to work sensibly on their own, and are conscientious and motivated well to learn. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, the majority of pupils were enthusiastic about their extra-curricular activities and interested in their academic work.

3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)

- 3.12 The curriculum is excellent in the Pre-Prep and Junior School and it is good in the Senior School. Throughout the college, the curriculum covers all the requisite areas of learning, and is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs. It successfully meets the college's aim to offer a broadly based curriculum so that all pupils can realise their potential, and show creativity and imagination. The formal curriculum is supported at all levels by an ambitious programme of activities and sports appropriate to each age group and available to all. Resources supporting the curriculum are mostly good. Libraries in the Junior and Senior Schools have seen significant improvement since the previous inspection, as has the provision for ICT, including a large number of classes which now have interactive boards or digital projectors. Many teachers make good use of ICT in their lessons and, lower down the college, pupils use the boards well. However, both the Senior School library and the ICT system in the college are coming under increasing pressure as usage and sophistication increase.
- 3.13 The Pre-Prep curriculum emphasises literacy and numeracy, and offers good opportunities for pupils to experience other areas of learning through a new three-year rolling programme for the foundation subjects. Spanish is included in the curriculum and pupils are able to choose from a number of extra-curricular activities and clubs. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme and the Green Flag environmental programme are important elements in the curriculum. Links have been developed with the community and with other primary and Nursery schools. Pupils are taken on visits locally and visitors are invited into the school to talk to the children.
- 3.14 The curriculum in the Junior School is also outstanding; it has been thoroughly reviewed and is carefully monitored. It is broad and balanced, and the subject coordinators plan their syllabi well. An excellent activities programme operates at lunch time and after school. In the community, as well as considerable fund raising for charity, the Junior School has links with the North Yorks Extended Schools programme and has hosted a primary schools' choral singing day.
- 3.15 In both Pre-Prep and Junior School, pupils needing extra support for their learning are well catered for. After careful assessment and consultation with parents, the necessary extra help is often provided in class by the teacher or class assistant but extra qualified support is available where necessary.
- 3.16 The curriculum in the Senior School is broad and has flexibility, diversity and choice. Following a three-year foundation course, including all major academic subjects alongside a circus of creative and technical courses, pupils opt for a wide range of GCSE subjects. The curriculum in the sixth form, currently under review, offers maximum choice to pupils, and the college's own diploma offers pupils further recognition of their achievements and skills. A well-planned PSHE programme operates throughout the college. In parts of the Senior School this includes some careers preparation and, in the sixth form, gives effective preparation for university entrance; this is just one way in which pupils are prepared well for life after school.
- 3.17 The wide range of well-coordinated extra-curricular activities is often arranged around the house system and involves a good number of staff. Many links exist with the local community, including pupils' involvement in local competitions. Music groups perform in local nursing homes and much work is carried out for charity both at home and abroad. The school shares with a local independent girls' college in

preparing AS candidates for Oxbridge and some boarders joined the Leeds Chinese community for Chinese New Year. Local organisations are encouraged to use the college facilities.

- 3.18 Learning support and support for pupils with EAL are very effectively organised in the Senior School. The head of learning support liaises closely with class teachers and helps with staff training on learning needs. The gifted and talented programme, working throughout the college, identifies the most able pupils and carefully monitors their progress. As well as asking subject teachers to provide appropriate challenge, a programme of activities and events for scholars has been developed in the Senior School with a range of master classes in science, the arts, further reading and critical thinking. These talks and events are also open to other interested pupils.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.19 The quality of teaching is good overall, excellent in the Pre-Prep, mostly excellent in the Junior School and good in the Senior School, where some teaching is also outstanding. At its best, teaching is highly effective in supporting the school's aims and in nurturing their individual talents. In the questionnaire, almost all pupils said that teachers helped them to learn. The excellent relationships that exist between many teachers and their pupils are fundamental to the best teaching. The monitoring of teaching and learning is now universal, but remains variable in its effectiveness, especially in the Senior School. Assessment is thorough at all levels in the college and is increasingly well used. Marking, good in the Pre-Prep, is however variable in quality in the Senior and Junior Schools.
- 3.20 In the Pre-Prep and Junior School, the excellent teaching reflects very well planned lessons, paced to suit the spread of ability of the class and which are carefully geared to different ability groups within the class. Pupils are encouraged to seek help and are challenged by well-judged questioning. Teaching assistants are used effectively, for example to enthuse the less able to engage in a literacy lesson on 'Why I like the snow' in the Pre-Prep, and to support numeracy teaching in the Junior School. In less effective lessons in the Junior School, the task was not sufficiently clear to pupils and insufficient support was given to those most needing it.
- 3.21 In the Senior School, the quality of teaching is predominantly good; it is also sometimes outstanding and sometimes satisfactory. Most lessons are well-planned with objectives which are clear to the pupils. Teachers know their pupils well. The best lessons have a variety of activities, ICT is used effectively, either by the class teacher or more rarely by the class, and astute questioning means that all pupils are challenged. Cooperative and independent learning are often used to good purpose and effective tutorial style teaching was observed in the sixth form. In less good lessons, the nature of the task, the volume of work covered and the pace did not match the ability of the pupils, who were not then properly engaged in the lesson.
- 3.22 Assessment is effective throughout the college and has been improved since the previous inspection. Assessment data are used well by senior management, by staff to guide pupils and set attainment targets, and increasingly by heads of department in the Senior School to inform the planning of teaching and learning. In both the Junior and Senior Schools, marking is variable. Whilst most work is marked regularly, a considerable variation exists in quality both between teachers in the same subject area and between different subjects, despite the school's commitment to the monitoring of marking by heads of department. At its best marking is thorough, clear and helpful, with comments that are both encouraging but also

indicative of areas for improvement. At other times, marking is routine with few constructive comments. Even these can, however lack depth and accuracy. Pupils understand the role of homework to reinforce their learning but commented on the sometimes uneven spread during the course of the week.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Pre-Prep

- 4.1 The pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their strong spiritual development is evident in their growing self-confidence, mutual respect and support. It is also apparent in their sense of wonder at the natural world and in their experience of assemblies. The nativity production involving all of Years 1 and 2 is an ambitious and moving experience for them all. The pupils thrive in an atmosphere where they are clearly valued, encouraged and praised. Their moral and social development are also strong. They learn to distinguish right and wrong, and they value their class code of behaviour. The Pre-Prep forms a happy and supportive family in which the pupils learn to respect each other and behave very well as they move about the school during the day. They show consideration for each other and take on responsibilities to help in class and about the school. Through projects in class, and through visits in music, art and drama, pupils also develop well culturally.

Junior School

- 4.2 Pupils in the Junior School develop outstanding personal qualities. They develop a maturity and confidence that is of a very high standard.
- 4.3 Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development are excellent. Assemblies centre on worship and provide opportunities to celebrate pupils' success and promote spiritual values. Pupils develop strong self-esteem and know that they are each valued in the school community. They explore their world through activities that promote self-awareness, a strong sense of responsibility and care for others. A Year 4 group spoke reflectively in a PSHE lesson about the plight of those less fortunate than themselves in discussing charities they wished to support. Pupils in Year 6 help to look after younger pupils.
- 4.4 From an early age, pupils have a growing understanding of right and wrong. In a drama class, older pupils successfully placed moral issues into real contexts and justified their opinions and decisions well. An outstanding programme of PSHE supports pupils' moral and social development strongly, and includes an introduction to aspects of citizenship. Pupils' behaviour is generally of a very high standard. The need for staff to use sanctions is extremely rare and pupils understand the need for school rules. The house system is popular and offers opportunities for pupils to be part of a team and to take on responsibility, which they do with enthusiasm and commitment. The Junior School council has given pupils a voice in the running of their school that they value.
- 4.5 Pupils develop extremely well culturally. Trips overseas and at home, art, music and drama, as well as subjects such as religious studies, English and geography give pupils the chance to gain an appreciation of other cultures as well as their own. Pupils are confident and proud of their school, as was clear from their responses to the inspection questionnaire.

Senior School

- 4.6 The quality of pupils' personal development in the Senior School is excellent. The College ethos, derived from the aims set down for Methodist Church schools, creates a very caring community, which allows pupils' potential to be developed and encourages them to examine standards and values in society. Pupils' personal qualities, such as confidence, empathy, spiritual awareness and integrity are developed well through the wide range of opportunities offered to them. A genuine sense of community exists where all pupils feel valued and able to voice their opinion.
- 4.7 Pupils' spiritual development is excellent founded on the college's caring Christian ethos. Pupils feel valued and are confident in themselves. Spiritual development is fostered in assemblies and religious studies lessons. Year 10 pupils produced a highly effective prayer linking the social, moral and ethical problems of the current world to the traditional Christmas Story. A chapel service is held each Sunday attended predominantly by the boarding community and all pupils attend a Remembrance Service at the college cenotaph.
- 4.8 Pupils' moral development is also excellent. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong, and display good manners about the school. They care about one another and listen well to each other in class. Behaviour is generally good and pupils show respect for their surroundings. The school's charities committee, consisting of pupils from all year-groups, organises numerous events during the year. A highlight is the annual sponsored walk, in which pupils, staff and parents from the whole college participate, raising in excess of £20,000 each year. Voluntary service is an option as part of Wednesday activities; for example, pupils in Years 10 to 13 visit a local care home and a local riding centre for the disabled. Pupils' moral development is supported by a wide ranging and effective PSHE programme. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils discussed suitable courses of action to take in different situations with sensitivity and a readiness to affirm their own standards.
- 4.9 Pupils' social development is excellent. They have good opportunities for leadership and responsibility. Sixth-form pupils can apply to be liaison prefects working with Years 7 and 8 pupils. Other opportunities are as sports and house captains, helping with Pre-Prep clubs and sitting on the school council. Older pupils work alongside younger pupils in a range of activities such as Pre-Prep swimming, and the school's Beavers and Rainbows groups. Pupils are polite, courteous and appreciative of what the college offers.
- 4.10 Pupils' cultural development is excellent. Pupils develop an understanding and awareness of other cultures. The college runs a biannual trip to Malawi for sixth formers supporting the work of the Open Arms charity – a children's home run by an ex member of staff. Overseas boarders help to create a culturally mixed community. Different events such as Chinese New Year, King's Birthday in Thailand and American Independence Day are celebrated. Pupils participate in theatre and music trips, and in the Harrogate Music Festival. Pupils' awareness of their own cultures is extended by their experience of the arts and by a wide range of activities and visits.

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

- 4.11 Pastoral care and the arrangements for welfare and health and safety are excellent.
- 4.12 In the Pre-Prep all staff work as a team to ensure the pupils' welfare, while the form teacher is the primary point of contact for each pupil and their parents. Great care is taken to understand the needs of each pupil, and give the confidence and security for the pupil to make the most of the education provided. Relationships between pupils and teachers are excellent. Good behaviour is carefully promoted and unacceptable behaviour or bullying dealt with sensitively and constructively. All welfare, and health and safety requirements are met, pupils learn about healthy eating habits, and good opportunities are provided for healthy exercise.
- 4.13 Similarly, in the Junior School, pastoral care is the responsibility of all teachers while the form teacher has individual responsibility for pupils in his or her class. The pupils feel secure and appreciate the level of care provided. Almost all feel that they have an adult they would turn to in difficulty. Expectations of good behaviour are clear and 'Golden Rules' are displayed and referred to regularly. An anti-bullying week is organised. Two recent initiatives, which have proved popular with pupils, are the 'Cheer up Chums' system which involves peer group mentoring, and a 'Feelings Box' which addresses pupils' more personal needs.
- 4.14 Underpinning Senior School pupils' achievements and their personal development is the excellent pastoral care organised under the close attention of senior management. The arrangements work extremely well. Form tutors are at the forefront of pastoral care with the strong support of heads of year, who are the main link between the school and parents. Communication between all involved in pastoral care is excellent. Formal meetings between different groups occur regularly and there is good informal contact as need arises. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent.
- 4.15 Guidance for university entrance is thorough. Careers guidance occurs in PSHE lower down the school and opportunities exist for work experience, but the overall coordination and progression of careers guidance in the school is somewhat limited.
- 4.16 Throughout the college, procedures for promoting good behaviour and guarding against bullying are clearly set out and fully implemented. Safeguarding of pupils and the vetting of staff are robust and all staff receive regular training in child protection matters. Arrangements to ensure the health and safety of pupils and all those working in the college are effective, including arrangements for those who may be sick or injured, and for preventing fire. The college has a plan to improve educational access for pupils with special learning needs or disabilities, and attendance and admission registers are properly maintained. Many of these, and other college policies, are clearly set out on the Ashville College website; all are available to parents on request.
- 4.17 All pupils are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits, not least by the attractive menus carefully prepared by the catering department. However, it is not clear that what the pupils actually do eat is monitored effectively. All pupils are expected to take regular exercise.

4.(c) The quality of boarding education

- 4.18 The quality of boarding education is outstanding. Boarding is increasingly popular in the college and the three senior boarding houses are full. More than half the boarding pupils are from overseas. For all these pupils, boarding is an important part of their educational experience and contributes significantly to their personal development. For the school as a whole, the presence of a substantial and successful boarding section positively affects the ethos and strong community feeling of the college. Since the 2007 inspection, major changes have been made in the boarding arrangements, including the establishment of a co-educational junior boarding house for pupils up to the age of fourteen and a very successful refurbishment in all the houses, now approaching completion.
- 4.19 Central to this success is the very strong sense of family generated within each house around the housemaster's or housemistress' own family, creating over time warm feelings of belonging and loyalty in the pupils. Further support for the quality of the boarding experience is provided by the excellent accommodation and impressive facilities, including games rooms, well-furnished common rooms, ICT equipment and modern kitchens and laundry rooms. The boarders speak of their appreciation of what their boarding house provides, and the personal benefits they gain in independence and self-confidence, not least being an excellent preparation for future life at university.
- 4.20 Pupils have access to a suitable range of activities during the week and at weekends. A variety of trips and visits are arranged, and freedom appropriate to their age is given to boarders to go into Harrogate for shopping and recreation.
- 4.21 All boarding staff, whether resident or non-resident, are committed to the welfare and security of their charges, and maintain a high standard of care in the houses at all times. Close links exist between the boarding staff, the year heads and form tutors, and parents. A small number of places are available for day pupils to board occasionally, which quite often results in conversion to weekly or full boarding at a later stage.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The governing body provides excellent oversight of the school in seeking to meet the aims set out in the Methodist Schools' Mission Statement and in the school's own aims. More directly, oversight is organised through a number of governors' committees, meeting regularly with the headmaster and members of the college senior management, and reporting each term to the full meeting of governors. All governors have a close knowledge of the college and its work and a range of expertise to support it effectively. The governors fully discharge their responsibilities for maintaining educational standards, and providing stable financial planning to secure appropriate investment in staff accommodation and resources.
- 5.2 The House and General Purposes Committee meets monthly, keeping a close watch on school finances and current progress. The Education and Policy Committees respectively deal very thoroughly with the education provided by the college and its strategic direction. Other committees oversee specific areas such as bursaries or major projects. Governors are assigned particular roles in the college, for example boarding, the Pre-Prep and the Junior School, which is particularly helpful to the leadership of those sections. These arrangements enable the governors to gain a good insight into the working of the school and to monitor its progress. They can, and do, provide support as well as challenge to staff in maintaining required standards, and in stimulating growth and improvement.
- 5.3 By the appointment of individual governors to look after child protection and safeguarding, and health and safety, in addition to regular reports and reviews of these areas at the full governing body meeting, the governors discharge their particular responsibility for these matters.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management in the college overall is good and in many respects it is excellent. The college management team (CMT) provides strong and effective overall direction for the college in accordance with its aims, and leadership in each area of responsibility ensures the high quality of pupils' education and their excellent personal development. Finances, administration and the estate are managed thoroughly and well. Leadership in the Pre-Prep, Junior School and Senior School is purposeful and effective, and the day-to-day routine and organisation of the college and its different sections, including boarding, are managed very well. However, middle management in the Senior School is less uniformly confident and effective. Policies are implemented effectively, and the welfare and safeguarding of the pupils is fully covered. Both the parents and the pupils, in their questionnaire responses, were almost unanimous in praise for the running of the school.
- 5.5 In the Pre-Prep, both the EYFS (Reception), and Years 1 and 2 are given clear priorities for achievement and development, and the means to implement them. The staff function as an extremely effective team. Planning is well done, a great deal of work having been done recently on both curriculum and assessment. Useful links have been established with counterparts in the Junior School and in the community, not least with the school's feeder nurseries. The pupils' transition to the Junior

School is carefully controlled and supported with all relevant data on the pupils' progress.

- 5.6 Clear direction is provided for staff in the Junior School and the small junior management team (JMT) work well together to encourage and support the sharing of good practice to raise standards and to resolve problems. Strategic issues are addressed by strong working relationships between the JMT, members of the CMT and the designated governor. Subject coordinators in both Pre-Prep and Junior School make an effective contribution to the delivery of their respective curricula.
- 5.7 In the Senior School, excellent pastoral care and guidance for pupils is developed through a chain of management directed by the senior management team (SMT) and including year heads, boarding house heads and heads of competitive houses. The role of heads of department is being developed to focus on their responsibility for the standards of teaching and learning in their subjects, with more systematic monitoring and sharing of good practice, as well as devolved development planning. The routine work of heads of department is generally well done, but standards of marking are inconsistent both within and across subjects, as is effective monitoring of teaching and learning.
- 5.8 Development planning, in the college as a whole and within each section, is thoroughly organised, both at the strategic level by governors and senior management, and increasingly at departmental and middle management level. Many staff are involved in annual review and then in implementing the plans. Significant review and planning has taken place recently in curriculum matters as well as in all aspects of pastoral care and guidance for pupils.
- 5.9 The college succeeds in attracting well-qualified and suitably experienced staff. An appropriate induction programme is applied to all staff new to the college, as well as to newly qualified teachers. Staff professional development is supported by an appraisal system, approved by staff and mostly effective. However, being organised within each subject department, makes it somewhat limited in scope, and the promotion of staff development is not yet supported by an adequate training regime able to respond to college as well as individual needs. In-service training is held regularly and has recently included training in child protection, health and safety, and aspects of support for pupils with LDD. The arrangements for checking the suitability of all adults working at the college are robust.
- 5.10 Communication within the college is effective, both formally through meetings at each level and the weekly staff bulletin, and informally. Staff report to line managers but have easy access to senior management. The teaching staff form a well integrated and committed group, supportive of each other and promoting the best interests of the pupils. Non-teaching staff provide loyal, competent and much appreciated support to the work of teachers and the welfare of pupils.

5.(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians

- 5.11 The college has established strong links with parents, both in the regular provision of information about events and achievements at school, and in the reports on the progress of each pupil. Parents indicated in their inspection questionnaire that they were able easily to communicate with the school. The Friends of Ashville is a lively parents association, providing a friendly vehicle for parents to be involved in the life of the college, as well as arranging social events and raising funds for the college.
- 5.12 In the Pre-Prep and the Junior School there are reports and parent meetings twice a year, and parents have ready access to staff on a daily basis. Information evenings are also held to explain to parents the kind of work being done by their child and the involvement they may expect to have in homework and projects. All pupils have a homework diary, which offers another channel of communication between school and home.
- 5.13 In the Senior School a great deal is done to keep parents well informed about what the school is doing and parents' participation is encouraged as widely as possible. College newsletters, the Ashvillian magazine and the Ashville College website each play a part in explaining and celebrating college life. The homework planner is a useful means of contact between home and school. A parents' meeting, two interim reports based on grades referred to each pupil's target grade in each subject, and a full report are provided each year. These together provide a good indication of pupils' progress, although a request was made in the parents' questionnaire for more frequent detailed reports.
- 5.14 More than a third of parents replied to the questionnaire sent out at the start of the inspection. Responses were predominantly positive, very strongly so from parents of pupils in the Pre-Prep and the Junior School. At all levels in the college, parents are delighted with the range of subjects and activities in the curriculum and the attitudes promoted by the college. They also say that the college is well governed and managed, and most are pleased at the progress made by their children, by their behaviour and by the high quality of the pastoral care provided. In their additional comments, parents often mention the growing confidence of their children and their enjoyment of being at Ashville, both of which were clearly apparent during the inspection. The pupils, also, in their questionnaire, almost all said that they had made good progress and enjoy being at Ashville.
- 5.15 A small minority of parents were critical about the provision for pupils needing learning support, and about the encouragement of parents to be involved in college life. The inspection found that the provision of extra support is now well organised and effective, and that the college at all levels strongly encourages parents to be involved in their child's education. A few concerns were expressed about boarding, about homework and about the college response to problems raised by parents. The inspection found the overall quality of boarding to be outstanding, while noting that the upgrading of accommodation is yet to be fully completed. Some parents find the homework set is too much, but the criticism, with which inspectors agree, is mostly of variable amounts of work set, which creates occasional bottlenecks for the more conscientious pupils. The college takes very seriously any concerns from parents and seeks always to respond promptly and in full.

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

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

6.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.1 The overall effectiveness of the EYFS is good, with many outstanding features. These go a long way towards fulfilling the Pre-Prep aims of providing a caring and stimulating environment in which the needs of the children are met, so that they develop confidence, independence and a sense of responsibility for others. Effective safeguarding procedures are implemented and adults promote a good balance between the welfare of the children and their expectations of high academic achievement. Small class sizes and a range of approaches to observation and resourcing ensure that individuality is recognised and progress is consistently good for all children, including those with LDD and EAL. Good leadership and management, supported by governors, parents and the local education service, help to ensure that the children have the best start to their education. The management is well placed to make further improvements, whilst maintaining the existing high standards.

6.(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.2 Leadership and management are outstanding. Senior college managers and governors both have a thorough oversight of the EYFS. Detailed self-evaluation identifies priorities for development and demonstrates the capacity to improve, albeit within the narrower context of a preparatory year in the Pre-Prep before moving up to Year 1. Comprehensive documentation, including risk assessments, meet the Early Years requirements and are monitored to ensure proper safeguarding and equality of opportunity for the children. Staff hold appropriate qualifications and all the necessary checks have been made before they are appointed. Staffing ratios are good and staff work together as a team. They are enthusiastic and hardworking, and show a positive approach to well-focused training. A good range of quality resources are used well and support a varied learning environment indoors and a satisfactory outdoor environment. Constructive and helpful links have been made with local nurseries and local authority advisors. The school's strong partnership with its parents ensures that they are kept fully involved in their children's education. Those who responded to the questionnaire were very positive about the care and education their children receive.

6.(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

6.3 The quality of the provision is good. Staff know the children well and relationships are positive at all levels. Staff work effectively together and apply their knowledge and experience in comprehensive planning. They provide challenging tasks that support high standards; however, these are largely adult directed with fewer opportunities for more open-ended, child-initiated activities. Classrooms are well equipped, interesting and welcoming, with opportunities for planned purposeful play, but the outdoor areas are underused as a learning environment. Excellent 'Learning Journey' portfolios are being completed to document learning and personal development in an accessible way, giving a real sense of the individual child. Children's welfare is afforded a high priority and staff guide and support children

well, establishing clear routines that assist their understanding of safety and the development of good attitudes to health.

6.(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

- 6.4 Outcomes for the children in the EYFS are outstanding. Most are reaching a high level of overall achievement within all the assessment areas. Particularly rapid progress is made in areas in which the school places a strong emphasis, such as literacy and numeracy skills. Children use the interactive whiteboard and computers to acquire skills that form a valuable foundation for future learning. A good example of this was seen in the delightful firework pictures the children had made using a paint programme. They are articulate and offer their own ideas, for example when describing their feelings when listening to *The Planets* suite. They show good levels of concentration and motivation. When given the opportunity, they take an active role in their own learning but they are given fewer opportunities to develop their problem-solving skills. The children's personal development is also outstanding. They respect and trust their teachers. The high expectations of the staff result in the children's excellent behaviour and they are polite and friendly, showing consideration and support for each other. They show a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy, making informed choices at lunch, being proactive in their personal hygiene and benefiting from physical activity.

Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chairman of governors and other 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 facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the college.

Inspectors

Mr Michael Higginbottom	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Rosemary Chapman	Head of Department, GSA school
Mr Andrew Chicken	Headmaster, HMC school
Mr John Coleman	Head of Department, HMC school
Mr Mike Crossley	Headmaster, IAPS school
Mr Kim Parsley	Assistant Head, IAPS school
Mr Alan Scadding	Head of Department, HMC school
Mrs Sally Gray	Early Years Coordinating Inspector