

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Sibford School

Full Name of the School	Sibford School
DCSF Number	931/6005
Early Years Number	N/A
Registered Charity Number	1068355
Address	Sibford Ferris, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX15 5QL.
Telephone Number	01295 781200
Fax Number	01295 781204
Email Address	office@sibfordschool.co.uk
Head	Michael Goodwin
Clerk of School Committee	Judith Weeks
Age Range (of the whole school)	4 to 18
Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	23rd to 26th February 2009
Early Years Age Range	4 to 5
Early Years Gender	Mixed
Early Years Foundation Stage Inspection Dates	14th to 15th January 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 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.

CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
	Characteristics of the School	1
2.	THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION	3
	The Educational Experience Provided	3
	Pupils' Learning and Achievements.....	4
	Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils	5
	The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment).....	6
3.	THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS	8
	The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils.....	8
	The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community	9
	The Quality of Boarding Education	10
4.	THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT	11
	The Quality of Governance	11
	The Quality of Leadership and Management	12
5.	CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS.....	14
	Overall Conclusions	14
	Next Steps.....	14
6.	SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE	15
	List of Inspectors	15
7.	THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS)	16
	What the Setting Should Do to Improve	18

1. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 Sibford School, founded in 1842, is a Quaker school for boys and girls. It occupies a rural site of some 50 acres in the Oxfordshire countryside. It welcomes pupils of all faiths and denominations, and none. Sibford seeks for each member a stillness and a peace that enable all to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone.
- 1.2 The school aims to develop the true potential of every person by encouraging self-esteem and respect for the qualities and needs of each other: 'Let your life speak'. It seeks to prompt also a thirst for life-long learning and an appreciation and active concern for the immediate environment and the wider community.
- 1.3 The size of the school has increased significantly since the time of the last inspection in February 2003, from a total of 367 pupils to 422, aged between four and eighteen. Of these, 74 are currently in the junior school, 47 boys and 27 girls, and three are under the age of five. The junior school has recently amalgamated with the senior school as one school under single leadership and management. A total of 348 pupils are in the senior school, between the ages of eleven and eighteen, 228 of whom are boys and 120 girls. In all, 79 are in the sixth form, an increase from the time of the last inspection. Overall, 64 pupils are boarders, resident in three boarding houses, forty-five boys and nineteen girls. Of the boarders, seventeen are from overseas. The school has undertaken much recent improvement in its buildings, including a new indoor swimming pool, and enhanced teaching and boarding accommodation, including a redesigned library. A new sixth-form centre has provision for private study as well as specialist teaching rooms.
- 1.4 Admission to the junior school is by interview, and to the senior school by interview and assessment tests in English, mathematics and verbal reasoning. The ability range is wide and the school admits a significant number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), mainly associated with dyslexia.
- 1.5 Standardised national assessment shows that the average ability of the pupils is in line with the national average. If pupils achieve in line with their abilities, their results in GCSE examinations should be in line with the national average of all maintained schools. Some pupils leave after GCSE, sometimes to embark on vocational training, and a number join the school, some of them from overseas. The average ability of the sixth form is again broadly in line with the national average at A-level so that, if pupils perform in line with their abilities, their results will be in line with the national average of all maintained schools. Almost all pupils who leave the school after A-level study proceed to university or other institution of further education.
- 1.6 The school has since the time of the last inspection increased its provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs (SEN), for those with LDD and for those for whom English is an additional language (EAL). Just under one-third of its pupils have an assessed need of support for dyslexia. Currently, seven pupils have statements of SEN and receive direct support from the school, funded by a Local Authority or the British armed services, to meet their entitlement. A further 210, identified as having LDD, receive specialist support in school. This is extended also to 21 pupils for whom English is an additional language, normally in place of study of another foreign language. Presently, four of these pupils follow a full-time and externally certificated one-year course in English, prior to embarking on their GCSE or A-level studies.

- 1.7 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.
- 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 overall quality of the educational experience provided throughout the school, from the Early Years Foundation Stage through to the sixth form, is good. It meets well the school's aim to enable all pupils to recognise and acknowledge their gifts and talents, and to help them realise their potential wherever it may lie. In the breadth and depth of its curriculum which offers a wide range of academic and vocational courses at various levels, and in its excellent support for pupils with statements of SEN, with LDD or with EAL, the school's provision is outstanding. It seeks and achieves a culture in which all members of the school community can be themselves, developing confidence, self-esteem and tolerance. A sense of mutual respect and support pervades the school, in harmony with the Quaker ethos. The school has addressed and met well recommendations made at the time of the last inspection, that the quality of education for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage be improved, that the senior school library be developed as a learning resource, and that use of information and communications technology (ICT) be expanded.
- 2.2 The curriculum is carefully planned and managed, although some links between the junior and senior schools, for example at departmental and subject level, lack cohesion. The education as a whole gives all pupils a high quality of experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative development. In lessons and through the wide range of activities, it provides well for pupils to acquire skills of speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy. The range of subject options available from Year 10 to Year 13 is outstanding, as is the provision in the senior school of vocational courses for the whole ability range, including those identified as gifted and talented. Furthermore, the integral work experience required by the countryside and environment course in the sixth form ensures that pupils become aware of contemporary local and national issues.
- 2.3 The provision of personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good throughout the school. It reinforces well the school's pursuit of tolerance amongst its members and respect for differences encountered. Lunchtime extra-curricular activities are good, providing mainly for pupils in Years 7 to 9. Opportunities exist for orchestral and choral performance, participation in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, and some sports. Trips beyond the school have included visits to Banbury Museum for Year 3 pupils and to the technology partnership centre at Gaydon for Year 6, a recent choir tour to Rome and an applied business visit to Barcelona in the senior school. The school has close links with another school in Uganda and with an Aids orphanage in Ghana.
- 2.4 The school encourages pupils' links with the community by providing meals in the Sibford village hall for the elderly, by raising funds for the young homeless in Banbury and by forming a general awareness of fair trade. Whilst the school does not currently organise a formal work experience programme for pupils, it encourages this, and senior pupils assist with a residential week in the school during summer for disadvantaged children from London. The school prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education and for employment. The new sixth-form centre has strong library resources for this, and the head of sixth form provides careful advice for university and employment applications.
- 2.5 Pupils' work is amply displayed throughout the school, to encourage high performance across the whole ability range and by all age groups. This reinforces well the school's aim to recognise the gifts and talents of each pupil. The senior school's library is well used, under the guidance of a full-time and qualified librarian, as a source of information and of advice.

Tutorial sessions held there each day reinforce this as a place for guidance and learning. Library resources in the junior school are scant.

- 2.6 The school is outstanding in its provision for pupils with LDD, with EAL or with statements of SEN. It provides formal courses and regular support classes. Some of these lessons are 'early bird sessions' that precede the school day and thereby enable full attendance at regular classes as well as access to dedicated support. Learning support assistants working within the classroom facilitate access to the mainstream curriculum, and the pupils' use of laptop computers in lessons is also common in aiding learning. The school formally and thoroughly reviews each year its provision for every pupil with a statement of special educational need and it reports appropriately to the relevant agency. It meets all legal requirements in this regard.
- 2.7 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.8 The quality of pupils' learning and the standard of their achievement throughout the school are good. In some aspects, particularly in the senior school, they are outstanding. For example, the pupils there demonstrate a strong engagement in programmes of life-long learning, understand well the importance of environmental issues and are concerned for the peace and well-being of the world at large. This meets well the aim of the school to create a culture of tolerance and to foster an active concern for the wider community. It also demonstrates an overall advance on the good standard of learning and achievement recognised at the time of the last inspection. ICT resources throughout the school have been considerably expanded, including networks in teaching classrooms. They are used well to assist learning, particularly in the senior school and often by pupils with LDD, with statements of SEN or with EAL.
- 2.9 In the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils learn to listen carefully, think clearly and express themselves fully and precisely. They make very good progress during the course of the year. This continues throughout the junior school. Pupils think readily, listen to each other attentively and work together co-operatively. Reading and writing skills are fostered well and enable all to access the curriculum effectively. The pupils develop good creative thinking and secure practical skills in art, craft, and design and technology. They demonstrate clear mathematical ability to calculate the value of different combinations of coins, and to measure garden plots in both metric and imperial units. They enjoy the school's emphasis on outdoor education. When they are challenged by clear instructions and recognised objectives, the pupils are excited and equal to the task. When they are less interested or when instructions are unclear or resources unsuitable, they follow a modest pace and learning is more laboured. The pupils use ICT well to access information, to collate material and to prepare clear presentations. The junior school's own assessment programme is thorough and works well. Test results are monitored and shared with parents.
- 2.10 In the senior school, pupils of all abilities write fluently and keenly. They take notes well and they produce much excellent work in their books and for display throughout the school. In conversation or discussion with their fellows and with adults, they are articulate, reasoned and attentive. All respond keenly to their teachers' expectations and enjoy refining their ideas or expanding their understanding. Much written work is of high quality. Mathematical skills are of a high standard and the pupils make excellent use of ICT for data handling, graphics, musical composition and presentations. A Year 13 class engaged imaginatively and effectively with an external website to conduct a virtual experiment in human respiration. Pupils of all abilities, including those with LDD, statements of SEN or EAL, learn well. Those identified as gifted and talented respond keenly to extension work beyond the regular

curriculum. All settle quickly to their studies, show a good interest, demonstrate well that they think for themselves and evaluate critically the judgements of others. When the opportunity is given, they undertake and complete assignments independently and well. They use the library and the reference skills of the librarian to good effect.

- 2.11 Standardised measures indicate that throughout the school the pupils make good progress, above the national norm for pupils of similar ability. Attainment in public examinations is also good in relation to the pupils' abilities. GCSE results are above the national average for pupils in all maintained schools. Progress in the sixth form continues to be good. Pupils' attainment at A level is in line with the national average for all maintained schools, and in a good number of subjects it is above this. Overall, attainment is good in relation to the pupils' abilities.
- 2.12 The pupils settle quickly to their work, and enjoy working in pairs and in small groups as well as on their own. Co-operative learning is strong throughout the school and it enhances the pupils' achievements well. In the character of a Quaker school, competitive sport is limited but it is nonetheless undertaken well and enjoyed. The quality of pupils' art and pottery displayed about the school is of a high standard. So too is the quality of work in textiles. Pupils enjoy learning. They set high standards for themselves, work hard to achieve these and relish sharing their success.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.13 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is outstanding and a strength of the school. The report of the last inspection found it to be excellent and this standard has been maintained well. The school vigorously and openly promotes an awareness and a concern for all others, recognising in each person 'that of God'. Through its published social respect policy the school declares its aim to encourage pupils to exercise self-discipline, showing respect to all regardless of their status. This is achieved very well. The pupils are highly considerate of diversity and are sensitive to need. They welcome visitors and reach out in many ways to the local community and beyond.
- 2.14 Sibford School maintains the character and substance of its Quaker foundation as its core, not only in its consideration of others but also in its regular silent Meetings for reflection and shared contemplation. Early Years Foundation Stage children attend Meetings for Worship and listen attentively. They also engage actively in circle time with their teachers. The school provides religious studies lessons in every year to GCSE. Pupils explore each of the major faiths and seek to develop a personal spiritual awareness. Year 3 pupils discussed similarities between the Christian practice of self-denial during Lent and Muslim fasting during Ramadan. The pupils successfully develop a natural respect for the beliefs of others and understand how these are expressed in the believer's way of life.
- 2.15 The pupils develop a high moral sense. They learn from an early age in the junior school to distinguish right from wrong, to live within the restraints of the code of conduct of the school and to realise consequences attached to selfish behaviour or straying from shared rules. The school secures an atmosphere of tolerance, openness and trust in which teasing, harassment and unacceptable behaviour would find great difficulty in developing. A clear and comprehensive PSHE programme is arranged for every year in the senior school. This covers a wide range of issues for pupils such as getting to know each other, communication, self-esteem, healthy eating, relationships and responsibilities, respect for the law and community rights. Already in the junior school, standards and rules are agreed consensually. Year 6 pupils demonstrated their assent to the agreed rules by attaching signed cut-outs of their own hands to a notice on the classroom wall. Pupil initiatives are welcomed and encouraged, and the school has recently taken on a programme to encourage fair trade

products and to make them available within the school. Above all, the pupils recognise the wide range of abilities and interests within their own number and the value each person has.

- 2.16 Social interaction amongst the pupils is outstanding. They recognise cultural differences within their number and respect these. They support each other very well. Merit marks and commendations successfully foster a culture of celebration of success throughout the school. Good habits and caring action are recognised well. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme has become established, reinforcing the ethos of service to others. A student forum is well supported and successful in making the agreed student voice heard. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, pupils attached importance to this popular body. Engagement in the local community, including concern for its residents, is strong. Gap-Year students, as well as pupil visits to Europe and beyond, add a further dimension of overseas living and lifestyles that the pupils appreciate.
- 2.17 Cultural opportunities are extensive, with new and improved art, music and drama facilities. The pupils enjoy the school's links with an orphanage and a primary school in Africa. They have a strong awareness of a world-wide Society of Friends. They discuss cultural issues within curriculum subjects such as history, geography, modern foreign languages, music and art. Wall displays celebrated the Chinese New Year, and Year 4 pupils made diva candles in a design and technology lesson at the time of the Hindu festival of Divali. The school fosters outstandingly positive attitudes amongst its pupils of understanding, respect, tolerance and harmony.
- 2.18 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.19 The overall quality of teaching is good, with many examples of outstanding practice. It matches well the standard achieved at the time of the last inspection and secures the aim of the school to enable every pupil to realise their potential.
- 2.20 The teaching enables pupils of all ages and of all abilities and needs to make good progress in their understanding, in the development of their skills and in the acquisition of new knowledge. Pupils identified with statements of SEN, with LDD or with EAL receive significant and highly effective support from specialist staff, who communicate the pupils' needs and the best methods of continued support to classroom teachers. Consequently, they understand and appreciate the particular needs of these pupils and make effective provision for them alongside and within the main curriculum. Pupils of high ability in the senior school are challenged by suitable tasks and extended work. This is presently less marked in the junior school, although teachers there are aware of the need to provide more challenge for the most able.
- 2.21 The teaching throughout the school encourages pupils effectively in their intellectual, physical and creative endeavours. This is done particularly well in the senior school, where high achievement is seen across all areas of the curriculum. Conspicuous academic success is less evident in the junior school, although throughout, the best lessons are well planned, with a careful sequence of events and successful management of time. The teachers have a secure and up-to-date subject knowledge, and they show an engagement with their subject, and a desire to communicate it. Lessons are planned well. Consequently, the pupils feel challenged to think, to explore and to justify their proposed explanations. They acquire new knowledge and they apply this successfully to a variety of tasks.

- 2.22 The teachers know their pupils very well, and they understand the particular needs and aptitudes of each member of the class. This understanding is appropriately informed by knowledge of previous attainment and weakness. It is also assisted by a wide range of resources, particularly in art, music, drama, physical education and sport. Teachers use ICT well to support their lessons.
- 2.23 Marking varies in quality. Much is of a high standard, with helpful comment that indicates to pupils the clear steps they need to take in order to make progress. In some cases, however, written work receives little or no acknowledgement beyond indications of routine corrections. Consequently, in these cases, underdeveloped and inexact answers are left unchallenged. In lessons, teachers often give additional oral feedback which is positive and informed. This classroom review of pupils' written work has a clearly beneficial impact upon their overall learning and progress.
- 2.24 The school makes appropriate and effective use of standardised measures of pupil performance. This information is shared with faculties, subject departments and pupils. The school's internal reporting arrangements explicitly reflect these national performance indicators. Consequently, pupils and teachers recognise performance and agree targets for improvement in the light of national standards. This practice of data-informed evaluation does not override the school's own Quaker values to respect the individual person and his or her perceived ability and potential.
- 2.25 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 overall quality of pastoral care throughout the school is good. It reflects well the high level of the school's concern for each pupil's well-being and development. In the senior school, pastoral care is strongly structured and comprehensive, and of outstanding quality. A pastoral board across the senior and junior schools was established in September 2008 to coordinate policy and to encourage the exchange of good practice. It consists of the deputy head, the assistant deputy head, the head of sixth form, the senior teacher in the junior school, senior tutors, heads of boarding houses, the head of learning support, the school nurse and the school counsellor. This meets twice a term, and testifies to the school's concern to provide the highest quality of pastoral care for all pupils.
- 3.2 In the junior school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, pastoral care is directed and delivered mainly through the class teacher. Classes are small so that each teacher knows all the members well and provides care to a good standard. Affirmative action is strong. For example, teachers praise good behaviour, and they notice and applaud pupils' assistance to each other. This practice is frequent because pupils' relationships with each other are extremely good and mutually supportive. Pupils' behaviour overall is excellent and any drift from this high standard is dealt with sensitively, through discussion and negotiation. The school motto, 'Truth, Honour, Freedom and Courtesy', is well regarded and observed. Transfer to the senior school is well prepared, including formal contact in the classroom by junior pupils with senior. Older pupils within the junior school already prepare for responsibility by accompanying Early Years Foundation Stage children back to their teacher from the collective Meeting for Worship. Teaching assistants and Gap-Year students provide pastoral guidance and advice. The school has an independent listener and it also publishes links to outside agencies which are available to any pupil in need.
- 3.3 In the senior school pastoral care is overseen by the deputy head, assistant deputy head and the head of sixth form. It is delivered by the form tutor, a role required of each member of staff so that pastoral care is both comprehensive and the responsibility of all. Pupils feel they can approach their tutor readily with any concern, including difficulties with lessons. Good actions and high achievement are recorded 'In Our Good Books'. Pupils appreciate also the confidential mailbox contact provided by the school to seek advice over concerns, and the attention paid by senior leaders to the student forum of elected pupil representatives. Pupils believe that teachers listen and are responsive to their particular needs. The house system within the school provides additional and effective means of pupil contact with each other and of responsible pupil leadership.
- 3.4 Pupils with statements of SEN, with LDD or with EAL are closely integrated in the school. All pupils recognise each other's strengths and value these. The school provides through its pastoral arrangements and through its overall ethos a centre of calm and a means of support for every pupil, both from teachers and from fellow pupils. Class teachers' guidance in the junior school and regular PSHE sessions in the senior school are essential in securing pupils' personal growth, and their awareness of community and national issues. Citizenship lessons reflect on human rights, healthy eating is strongly promoted, and abuse of drugs and alcohol is discussed openly.

- 3.5 The school's concern for the welfare, health and safety of all its pupils is outstanding, and it has clear regard for its health and safety obligations. The governors are active in this regard and the business manager is health and safety officer for the whole school. He keeps a detailed record of all incidents and of measures taken to avoid recurrence. Risk assessments are detailed and comprehensive, including those associated with trips and visits beyond the school. All staff are kept aware of their responsibilities. The school has taken all necessary measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. Fire drills are regular and thorough.
- 3.6 Admission and attendance registers are carefully completed and properly maintained. They are stored centrally and readily available. Lapses in attendance or punctuality are investigated promptly and thoroughly. Child protection measures, overseen by the deputy head as child protection officer, are secure and comprehensive. Measures to promote good discipline and behaviour are extensive and effective. The social respect policy makes clear that all forms of bullying are unacceptable and that respect for each other is expected from all. The health of all pupils is carefully promoted. School meals are healthy, varied and enjoyed by the full age-range of the school. A trained nurse is available during the day and on call at night in the school's health centre. A doctor and trained counsellor visit regularly, and the school's weekly programme encourages exercise by all pupils.
- 3.7 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3].

The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community

- 3.8 The quality of links with parents and the community is outstanding. The school actively seeks to be part of the local community and to work for its members. It aims also to engage pupils in appreciating immediate and global environmental issues. This it does extensively and extremely well, through reaching out to local, national and international communities.
- 3.9 A large majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated their satisfaction with the information provided to them by the school, and with the opportunities afforded to discuss their children's education and progress. They endorsed the school's promotion of high standards of behaviour and its provision of a good range of extra-curricular activities. They felt encouraged to involve themselves in the school's life and work, and believed that their concerns were considered appropriately and dealt with well. No issues of particular concern were raised by any significant number of parents. Parents were especially positive about the school's provision for pupils with LDD and statements of SEN.
- 3.10 Parents receive lengthy and detailed reports once a year, except in Year 9 where a second report is provided in order to inform subject choices for GCSE options. Interim effort and achievement grades are given in Years 7 to 9 each half term, and every three weeks in Years 10 to 13, thereby keeping parents well aware of pupils' work and progress prior to the public examinations. The reports are clear and comprehensive, and the grade sheets are informative. They conform well to the school policy to involve parents and pupils in discussions of learning, behaviour and progress.
- 3.11 The school holds regular meetings between staff and parents, and the head attends informal surgeries each week in the junior and senior schools to discuss with parents any matters of a complex nature or of immediate concern. Most concerns are dealt with informally and promptly. More serious complaints are few, and are recorded carefully and addressed appropriately. The junior school produces a weekly newsletter for parents. In addition and throughout the school, newsletters of general interest are sent home each term to celebrate success and to record pupil experiences, and an annual magazine is published as a formal record of school activity. A parent website is used extensively.

- 3.12 The school has, since the last inspection, appointed a community development officer to establish close links with the local community, and to secure contacts with national and international groups of common interest with the school. Charity fund-raising is extensive and effective, often by encouraging community use that also produces revenues. This includes tea parties, concerts and the use of school facilities. Pupils 'slept rough' within school to raise awareness of young homeless people in Banbury and to raise significant funds to alleviate their situation.
- 3.13 The school is a member of the independent and state school partnership within Oxfordshire and has promoted work on the theme of child soldiers. Links with the international community include a pupils' visit to and support of an orphanage school in Ghana, and an exchange of teachers and letters with a school in Uganda.
- 3.14 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

- 3.15 The quality of boarding education in the school is good. It is carefully planned and purposeful. It is also well directed and managed. Sibford has clarified its function as a modern boarding school including within its number overseas pupils who gain from their time in the school and contribute to the wider cultural understanding of other pupils. Boarders are admitted from Year 7. The numbers of weekly and full-time boarders are almost equal. The boarding staff are hard working and committed to the pupils.
- 3.16 Relationships amongst the boarding pupils are strong. They enjoy each other's company and they feel at home in their houses. They also feel comfortable and secure with the house parents. Although evening and weekend activities are limited, pupils enjoy the school's amenities and appreciate the opportunity for private study. The boarders have free time with each other and with their friends beyond the boarding community.
- 3.17 Accommodation is good. It has been rearranged since the last inspection into three houses: one for boys to Year 11, one for girls to Year 11 and a mixed house for sixth formers. The facilities are comfortable and they are used well. Each house has its own resident staff under the overall direction of the deputy head, who has charge also of pastoral care throughout the school. Senior managers thus give a high level of attention to boarding and ensure successfully that it is a major part of the school. Meals are taken centrally and they are of a high standard. Staff ensure through a daily check that the pupils eat regularly and well. Opportunity exists also for pupils to cook for themselves or for a small group. Most pupils below the sixth form share rooms. A qualified nurse is available at the school's health centre during the day and on emergency call during the night. A doctor and counsellor are also available if needed. Pupils have ready access to the attractive parkland and gardens of the school, and they take pride and pleasure in the environment.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 The quality of governance provided by appointed members of the Sibford Committee of the Society of Friends, reinforced by a nominated parent and two nominated former pupils, is outstanding. It reflects the care and resolve of the Friends to provide an outstanding and successful school for all pupils, from the Early Years Foundation Stage through to the sixth form. Since the last inspection, the governors have amalgamated the junior school with the senior school under a single head and a single management team. They have also overseen important new building and much improvement of old. They have reviewed school policies and introduced changes to meet their declared vision for the school.
- 4.2 The structures of governance are well defined and effective. Large sub-committees, which may be attended by any member of the full governing body, deal with particular areas of responsibility: finance and premises, school life, and support for the leadership and management of the school. The committee members share generously their wide experience. They have drawn the school further into the local community by making available to the public a range of activities and the use of facilities within the school. They have agreed and are implementing a careful five-year plan to 2012, and have embarked on designing a new strategic plan to the year 2020.
- 4.3 The governors have undergone appropriate and formal training. They have reviewed all statutory policies and secured their compliance. They have recently revised arrangements for school trips and visits to accord fully with requirements of pupil safety and the aims of the school. They monitor financial management carefully and they appraise performance of the head. They set clear goals for a school with boarding, where all pupils' qualities are recognised and their needs met, including those with statements of SEN, and those with EAL or LDD.
- 4.4 The governors are well aware of their responsibilities, for example in health and safety matters, in child protection issues and in enhancing disability access, and purposefully promote these. For example, they recognise each pupil as representative of the presence of God with a duty to care for his or her fellows and to value and protect the environment. Teaching and practice promote this so that even the youngest pupils undertake outdoor education, and a sixth-form course is available on the countryside and the environment.
- 4.5 The committee clerk, or chair of governors, is well known to teaching and non-teaching staff and to pupils, and she makes herself available for consultation. Representatives of both teaching and non-teaching staff are invited to committee meetings, and the clerk takes lunch with staff and pupils almost each week. Consequently, communication between governors and staff is facilitated and information is exchanged effectively.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.6 The overall quality of leadership and management in the school is good, and in some aspects outstanding. It is strong and purposeful. It is also safe and efficient, supported by carefully developed policies and procedures, and so meets the needs of all the pupils, from the Early Years Foundation Stage through to the sixth form. It reflects clearly the Quaker ethos of consultation and co-operation in the shared pursuit of learning and personal growth. Since September 2008 the junior school has merged with the senior school and there is now a single head and a single management team. The practical and daily operation of this fusion is still incomplete.
- 4.7 The head, in office since September 2004, has strong and clear ambitions for the school as a centre of Quaker education and is resolute in their pursuit. Together with the committee clerk, he conducts a formal annual review and sets new targets. This ensures that the school is strongly and clearly guided. The head's work is formally reviewed by the committee every three years. Much has been achieved and much is still under way and intended. A business manager has been appointed to oversee all financial matters, concerns of fabric and development issues. Pastoral care arrangements have also been revised, including the reorganisation of boarding.
- 4.8 Discussion is frequent and regular, with updated information exchanged each morning. The senior leadership team, titled the school strategy group, is compact and consists of the head, his deputy, the business manager and a director of studies. This senior group meets frequently and sometimes informally. It is joined weekly by two other directors of study, the assistant deputy head and the teacher responsible for the provision of learning support across the school. The group deals with issues of current concern, planning for forthcoming events and matters such as admissions, and it reviews planned development. The head meets each week with leaders in the junior school: the senior teacher and the key stage 2 leader. Each of these senior managers, in both the senior and junior schools, directs his or her area of responsibility confidently and well. Together they also oversee the school's 'spotlight programme' of departmental review and reform.
- 4.9 Communication between senior managers and academic heads of faculty is regular and open. Faculty heads meet each half term under the director of studies to consider matters of academic development, pupil attainment, curriculum change and reporting. Each oversees a cluster of academic subject heads in a particular discipline or range of interests. They feel valued within the school, and responsible for the academic success of the pupils.
- 4.10 Pastoral care is built strongly around the deputy head, assistant deputy head and the head of sixth form. It follows purposefully a social respect policy which seeks a school where independence is celebrated and individuals can flourish without fear. Pastoral heads are assisted by class teachers in the junior school and teams of tutors in the senior school. Boarding staff are committed and confident in their care. Pupils have a student forum whose opinions and judgements are valued by the school.
- 4.11 The school's administration is highly efficient. Financial management and control by the business manager are excellent, including care of the school estate and resources. Forward planning is ambitious and immediate oversight is comprehensive. Staff recruitment procedures are secure and effective. All checks are applied fully and correctly, and the centralised record is maintained. Provision for newly qualified teachers is excellent and processes for their induction are thorough. Full and formal records are maintained and available for scrutiny. The provision of in-service training is also good and it is funded well. Teacher appraisal is another part of the school's overall 'spotlight' policy, whereby performance is assessed and need is met.

-
- 4.12 Technical assistance throughout the school is of a high standard. Gap-Year students provide significant support. The school grounds are carefully maintained and attractive. Secretarial service is good. Catering is of a high quality, and meals are healthy and attractively presented. Cleaning too is good, and the school facilities are enjoyed by all.
- 4.13 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].
- 4.14 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 Sibford School meets well its aims to encourage and enable all pupils to recognise their gifts and talents, and to realise their full potential. It has recently joined its junior school to its senior school as one school for pupils from the Early Years Foundation Stage to the sixth form. It has clarified its modern role as a Quaker school with boarding that includes overseas pupils and a wide and strong provision for pupils with LDD, statements of SEN or EAL. The standard of the educational experience it provides is good. In the breadth of the curriculum and in its provision for pupils of a wide variety of abilities, it is outstanding. The quality of teaching and of the pupils' learning and achievement are also good, with examples of outstanding practice. The overall quality of the school's pastoral care is also good, and in the senior school its comprehensive structures, together with a wide staff commitment, make it outstanding. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils and the quality and range of the school's links with parents and the community are outstanding. Governance is strong, purposeful and clear, and the leadership and management of the school are confident and direct. The quality of boarding is good and overseas pupils provide an important dimension to the experience of all. The school's weaknesses are few and arise from the currently incomplete and ongoing fusion of the junior school with the senior, and from the limited exchange of best practice in teaching, learning and assessment.
- 5.2 Since the last inspection in February 2003, the school has maintained and improved its high standards of educational provision and achievement, as well as its strong and purposeful governance, leadership and management. It has improved the quality of its pastoral care, and established a pastoral board to identify need and to extend best practice throughout. It has also raised to new levels the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their links with the community. It has remedied weaknesses noted in 2003 by developing its education for Early Years Foundation Stage children, reorganising its library and extending its ICT provision and use.
- 5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

- 5.4 The school is clear in its aims for all its pupils. To secure these more fully it should:
1. implement confidently the full union of the junior and senior schools in its structures and in its provision;
 2. share more directly its best teaching and assessment practice to enhance the learning and achievement of all pupils.
- 5.5 No action is required in respect of regulatory requirements.
- 5.6 Any failures to meet EYFS requirements are detailed in Section 7.

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 23rd to 26th February 2009. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff and with committee members, 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 14th and 15th January 2009 by one inspector. The inspector observed sessions, talked to the children, examined samples of work, and held discussions with staff and committee members. Comments from parents and carers were considered, and the inspector 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

Dr Anthony Dachs	Reporting Inspector
Mr Andrew Ireson	Head of Department, HMC school
Mr Geoffrey Link	Head, SHMIS school
Mr Philip March	Head of Department, HMC school
Dr Ann Peters-Wotherspoon	Head of Department, IAPS school
Mrs Julie Thompson	Head of Department, SHMIS school
Mrs Val Weakley	Deputy Head, ISA school
Mr James Wilding	Head, ISA school
Mr Christopher Sanderson	Early Years Lead Inspector

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

- 7.1 The class of three pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage is part of the junior school, housed in its own building with easy access to outdoor space and facilities of the main school. Set in a rural location, its Quaker foundation has a profound influence on the ethos and atmosphere. The school aims to nurture the qualities 'perceived to represent that of God in everyone', and develop an 'I can' attitude to learning and life, creating a culture in which all members can be themselves and realise their potential, developing confidence, self-esteem and tolerance, enabling all children to recognise and acknowledge their gifts and talents. The setting aims to create a thirst for life-long learning, and active concern for the environment and the wider community.
- 7.2 The Quaker values strongly support the recognition of the uniqueness of each child and the promotion of the *Every Child Matters* outcomes. The children's experience is enjoyable and their individual needs are met. Within a safe and friendly environment they are listened to and their views taken into account. They are given the encouragement and support they need to work at their own pace and learn, grow and feel confident within the setting. In a physical education lesson, for example, an assistant worked well to support those who found the activities more challenging. Lessons are carefully reviewed, and assessment for each child is regular and thorough. The information gained furnishes the profiles and informs planning well. Progress and achievement are carefully recorded through a range of methods, including samples of work. Regular reflection and training ensure that staff remain up-to-date. Planning is very responsive to individual pupils' interests, arises from a range of approaches to observation, and ensures high levels of motivation and a good variety of teaching methods. Good systems enable children to keep safe and enjoy a healthy diet. A business manager oversees risk assessment, whilst teaching develops strong levels of risk awareness with the children, clear understanding of classroom procedures and good hygiene routines. The class has good links with the staff and pupils in Years 1 and 2, and strong links with the Local Authority. Links are now developing with other schools to benefit teaching and to widen the children's experience. The school's development planning is thorough and wide ranging; a parental questionnaire was used well as part of a self-evaluation exercise.
- 7.3 Assessment on taster days and good liaison with previous settings and parents ensure a good understanding of the children's abilities and aptitudes on entry. They make very good progress during the course of the year in their learning and development, and are motivated by the milestones they achieve. The Early Years Foundation Stage children listened attentively and made an appropriate contribution to the 'Meetings for Worship' observed during the inspection. A literacy lesson developed, at the children's instigation, into an excellent session encompassing communication, development of vocabulary and scientific experimentation, all generating a great sense of awe and wonder. The strong focus on free choice activities enables children to explore their own avenues of enquiry. They are confident, and consistent progress is made across all areas of learning. The school has addressed the recommendation of the last inspection relating to the children's creative development. Provision is now much stronger and their creativity is fostered further through literacy and numeracy topics.
- 7.4 The children have a good understanding of how to stay safe, and are accustomed to following safe practices and routines in the classroom and outdoors. They regularly remind each other of the rules for keeping safe, such as not running, stopping at roads and staying with the teacher. The children demonstrate a good understanding of hygiene and healthy and unhealthy foods, developed through a good focus on these topics in class. They have healthy snacks, and are encouraged to drink regularly and to make healthy choices at mealtimes. The

school's promotion of healthy eating is well supported at home. The children are very active and develop a good understanding of the value of exercise. Good links with Year 6 pupils have enabled them to design a game for Early Years Foundation Stage children to help them learn what constitutes a balanced diet. Children demonstrate high levels of enjoyment in class and take pride in their work. In both literacy and numeracy lessons, children took the initiative in their work. They also contribute to decisions about what goes on display around the classroom. The children benefit greatly from opportunities to celebrate their successes, including the winning of stickers and certificates. The communication of their learning through presentations to the rest of the school also develops their self-esteem and self-confidence. Circle time strongly supports the children in making friends; they integrate well with older children at playtimes and lunch. They develop respect for their peers, understanding how to share and how to communicate with one another. They show respect for their teachers and respond well to expectations. Children also demonstrate particularly good progress in their work in literacy, numeracy and ICT. They are inquisitive and show themselves to be active learners; this is evident in their readiness to ask questions, eagerness to find things out and willingness to experiment independently. This is strongly promoted through their personal goals. Their group skills and problem-solving abilities develop well over the course of the year. In an outdoor numeracy lesson they co-operated very well when constructing number sentences with a range of resources. Meetings for Worship and the sharing of the children's personal experiences promote a good understanding of the wider world. This understanding subsequently permeates their role play.

- 7.5 Adults strongly support the children's learning. Good communication amongst staff ensures a concerted approach to work on individual targets. An example is a shared focus on negotiating stairs in both physical education lessons and class activities. All staff use praise, celebration and encouragement well to promote learning and a sense of achievement, and to develop self-confidence. Activities are well matched to the objectives of lessons. Teaching makes excellent use of a stimulating and varied environment indoors and outdoors. Assessment files demonstrate that children are fully engaged and achieve well in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Assessment is thorough with good, evaluative comments, and is well used to develop planning on an individual basis. During the inspection, the children's interest in treasure maps was incorporated into the planning to become a stimulus for several activities. They benefit greatly from a carefully planned balance of adult-led and child-led activities. Good provision exists to identify and address additional learning or developmental needs, though none of the children currently require this degree of support. Staff engage in a daily dialogue with parents, ensuring that achievements are shared and celebrated, progress is monitored, both at home and at school, and good levels of communication are sustained on matters of health and medication. The school produces a good range of booklets for parents.
- 7.6 The children's welfare is strongly promoted. Correct procedures are carefully followed in the appointment of staff, all of whom are appropriately qualified and receive regular training in child protection and welfare matters. The school is very conscious of the importance of promoting health and well-being, and appropriate action is taken when children are ill. They enjoy mealtimes, which are healthy, sociable occasions. They develop a clear understanding about their boundaries. Through circle time, staff encourage them to develop the habits and behaviour of good learners and become mindful of their own needs and those of others. Discussion of the consequences of inappropriate behaviour complements a strong focus on the celebration and reward of good behaviour.

- 7.7 The efficient management of the Early Years Foundation Stage, which ensures that the needs of the children are met, is well supported by carefully developed policies and procedures, which have a clear timescale for review. The setting benefits from clear lines of responsibility for monitoring and support. The School Committee has a good overview of its needs and ensures high quality, effective risk management. The deployment of the school's facilities, resources and staff is well considered and efficient, ensuring the children's development in all areas of learning. Children have good access to specialist staff and facilities for music and physical education. All adults are committed to ensuring that they receive high quality care and education. Teaching staff are well supported by the school's secretarial and maintenance staff. The school demonstrates a good capacity to continue to make improvements. It has an effective equal opportunities policy, which complements the Quaker values of recognising 'that of God in everyone' and promoting self-respect, understanding and tolerance. The school has good links with other services and a strong relationship with parents. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire sent to parents were extremely positive. They were particularly complimentary about classroom relationships, their children's progress and the school's success in promoting care, friendship and respect.

What the Setting Should Do to Improve

- 7.8 To improve further the quality of its provision, the setting should:
1. develop a broader experience for staff and children, for example through shared events and projects with other settings.
- 7.9 The school's provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.