



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**NORTHWOOD COLLEGE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Full Name of College	<b>Northwood College</b>
DfE Number	<b>312/6001</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>312646</b>
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Email Address	<b>office@northwoodcollege.co.uk</b>
Head Mistress	<b>Miss Jacquelyn Pain</b>
Chairman of Governors	<b>Mr Geoffrey Hudson</b>
Age Range	<b>3 to 18</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>762</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Girls</b>
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): <b>0</b> 5-11: <b>254</b> 3-5 (EYFS): <b>58</b> 11-18: <b>450</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total: <b>762</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Hina Thaker</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Girls</b>
Inspection dates	<b>29 Feb 2012 to 02 Mar 2012</b>

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in January 2008.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed through the following link: [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Search for Independent School Standards Regulations and enter date 2010, to find Schedule 1, Parts 1-7.

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

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

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

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31<sup>st</sup> 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 the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'satisfactory' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chairman of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mr Paul Spillane	Reporting Inspector
Ms Charlotte Avery	Head, GSA school
Mrs Sandra Clements	Deputy Head, GSA school
Mr Stephen Crump	Head, GSA school
Mrs Deborah Leonard	Head, GSA school
Mr Jonathan Meadmore	Former Head, IAPS school
Ms Yvonne Powell	Head, GSA school
Mrs Maxine Shaw	Head, IAPS school
Mr Tony Woolstone	Deputy Head, HMC school
Mr Richard Balding	Co-ordinating Inspector of EYFS

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Northwood College is a day school for girls aged from three to eighteen. It was founded in 1878 in central London and moved to its present site in a residential part of Northwood in 1893. It is a charitable trust whose council constitutes the board of governors.
- 1.2 The school believes that education should be about developing a real thirst for learning. It aims to foster success, endeavour, creativity, a spirit of enquiry and strength of mind. Another stated aim is that every day at school should be a fulfilling, enriching experience, within a happy, considerate community. Furthermore, the school's intention is that the pupils should become decent, kind human beings, with a sense of responsibility and service and a clear moral compass, and that they should be well prepared for the challenges of twenty-first century life.
- 1.3 There are 762 girls in the school, of whom 58 are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), 254 in the junior school and 450 in the senior school. The school reflects the ethnic diversity of the area, with just under three-quarters of the pupils coming from an Asian background. Sixteen pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), but none of them requires formally timetabled help with their English from the school. The school has identified 73 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 35 receive specialist learning support from the school. Three pupils have statements of SEND. Most pupils come from professional or business families in a wide catchment area which encompasses parts of north London, Buckinghamshire and Middlesex.
- 1.4 The ability profile of the junior and senior schools is above the national average, with most pupils having ability that is above average, and few having ability that is below average. The ability profile of the sixth form is above the national average, although slightly lower than in the rest of the senior school.
- 1.5 Since the previous inspection, new heads of both the senior and junior schools have been appointed. A new, purpose-built and self-contained EYFS centre was opened in 2009.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 The school successfully meets its aim to instil in its pupils “a real thirst for learning.” The pupils’ positive approach to their studies, exemplary classroom behaviour and high-quality committed teaching are reflected in good, and often rapid, progress and substantial academic achievement at all levels. In their response to the questionnaire the pupils affirm that they are very pleased with their progress. Throughout the school, pupils display secure knowledge, skills and understanding of the material covered in their syllabuses. The pupils reach high standards of personal fulfilment across a wide range of activities. The extra-curricular programme is not, however, centrally monitored and some aspects are less well catered for. Nonetheless, the broad overall provision enriches the pupils’ educational experience and enables them to develop their talents and aptitudes enjoyably and fruitfully. In the EYFS, as elsewhere, the needs of all the children are met exceedingly well: the staff know the children as individuals and create an inspirational environment where each is valued highly, and consequently the children make excellent progress in their learning and development.
- 2.2 The quality of the pupils’ personal development is outstanding, with its highly effective emphasis on their welfare, safeguarding and well-being. The caring and supportive example set by the staff is mirrored in the way pupils behave towards one another. They show genuine concern for each other’s welfare and grow strongly in self-awareness and self-esteem. Relationships are excellent throughout the school, which is indeed a happy place: the pupils are very proud of it and feel a strong sense of belonging. The pupils benefit from the many opportunities for leadership and service and take their responsibilities seriously. Children in the EYFS relate extremely well to each other and to adults. Parents commend the high standards of behaviour and evidence gathered during the inspection fully supported this judgment.
- 2.3 That the school’s aims are being successfully realised is a strong testimony to the excellent governance, leadership and management, especially the clear direction from senior management. The governors’ commitment is wholehearted and they exercise effective oversight. Energetic leadership is clear-sighted and sensitive, accommodating both the wider picture and the needs of the individual. In the EYFS a clear vision is shared by all staff who are a close co-operative team. Efficient management ensures that the school runs smoothly. The school has adopted the recommendations made in the previous inspection report and the two regulatory deficiencies identified in that report have been rectified. The school enjoys extremely good relations with parents, who express great satisfaction with the education which their daughters are receiving and the way in which the school is being run.

## **2.(b) Action points**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

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

- 2.4 The school meets 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. Ensure that the pupils' extra-curricular participation is centrally audited and monitored throughout the school.
  2. Increase the number and range of sports fixtures at all levels and encourage members of the sixth form to participate in physical exercise.
  3. In the EYFS, consider the provision of instrumental lessons for some pupils.



### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

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

- 3.1 The overall quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 At every stage, the overall standard of literacy, numeracy, articulacy, logical thought, creativity and of proficiency in information and communication technology (ICT) is high. Throughout the school, the pupils display secure knowledge, skills and understanding of the material being covered in their lessons. Almost all of last year's upper sixth form leavers proceeded to degree courses, with about three-quarters gaining entry to their first-choice university, a very good achievement. Individual pupils have achieved distinction in various sports. Pupils avail themselves of the extremely wide range of opportunities for developing their talents and personal qualities, and consequently they achieve high levels of fulfilment in, for example, the creative and expressive arts, positions of responsibility and service, and challenging ventures in this country and abroad.
- 3.3 The following analysis uses the national data for 2008 to 2010: these are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. GCSE performance has been well above the national average for girls in maintained schools and similar to the national average for girls in selective schools. Results in IGCSE mathematics have been above the worldwide average. A-level results have been above the national average for girls in maintained schools; results in 2008 were above the national average for girls in maintained selective schools and in 2009 and 2010 they were similar to the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. The results in external examinations of pupils with SEND are generally indistinguishable from those of the others. The level of attainment at GCSE and the nationally standardised progress data that is available indicate that pupils make progress that is high in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. The level of attainment at A level indicates that pupils make good, and in 2008 high, progress in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities.
- 3.4 In the junior school, pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to performance against a fixed national average, but on the evidence available during the inspection it is judged to be excellent in most subjects. They take standardised tests of attainment in mathematics and English, the results of which are higher than national norms. Pupils sustain a good rate of progress, as deduced from lesson observations, interviews and samples of their work. They attain high levels of personal achievement in their many activities, notable examples being creative ventures such as Young Apprentice and Dragon's Den.
- 3.5 Throughout the school, the pupils display an excellent attitude to learning, successfully fulfilling, on the whole, the school's aim to develop a real thirst for learning. Applying themselves with evident enjoyment, they are keen to do well and eager to be challenged. Enthusiastic participants in their lessons, they are readily responsive, offering answers and opinions maturely and confidently. They work conscientiously, displaying perseverance and determination. When working in pairs or groups, they co-operate very well. They produce a substantial volume of work which is neatly presented, reflecting pride and care. Excellent work is displayed on classroom walls. The pupils affirm that they find their work interesting and that they are encouraged to work independently, and this was borne out during the inspection. Pupils who participate in extra-curricular activities do so in a similarly spirited and enthusiastic way. They were frequently observed, in activities such as preparation

for public performances, working productively and responsibly without direct adult supervision.

- 3.6 Children in the EYFS are enthusiastic learners who enjoy participating in all of their activities and work industriously, both individually and co-operatively, making substantial progress. By the end of Nursery, most children can recognise the sounds and shapes of all of the letters of the alphabet, order numbers up to ten and are developing good motor skills, as can be seen in some of the artwork on display. By the end of Reception, most achieve high standards in all six areas of learning, well exceeding the expectations of the Early Learning Goals, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Most are able to draw descriptive pictures, write simple sentences and confidently use a computer mouse to solve problems. Children's creative skills can be seen in the various styles of paintings and wall displays.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of the curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 The excellent academic curriculum consists of a broad core of subjects throughout the junior and senior schools. Linguistic skills are enhanced by an extensive range of modern foreign languages from a young age, with pupils beginning the study of French in Year 3 and Spanish, German and Mandarin in Year 6. Latin can also be studied from Year 5. Higher up the school, a wide range of subjects is studied at GCSE and A level, with option blocks constructed around pupils' preferences. In addition to programmes of academic study tailored to the needs and aptitudes of the individual, sixth formers also benefit from non-examined courses which enrich their personal and academic development. Running alongside the academic subjects throughout the school is a well-planned strategy to develop thinking skills, which is a valued and effective feature of the school's academic provision.
- 3.9 In the EYFS, the purpose-built Bluebelle House, which contains the Nursery and Reception classes together with the superb outdoor areas, provides a stimulating environment; together with the carefully planned curriculum, it enables all children to learn effectively and make rapid progress. Children develop their imagination and acquire problem-solving skills through role play, learning to choose from a wide range of materials and toys. A balance is struck between child-initiated and adult-led activities and an accurate profile of each child informs staff about the next steps in learning. Every child has an equal opportunity to succeed, supported by an extensive range of appropriate resources, effectively deployed. In making plans for the further development of a curriculum which meets the needs of individual children very well, the staff have recognized the scope for providing instrumental lessons for some children.
- 3.10 Valuable support is provided for pupils who need extra help. For example, in the senior school, subject surgeries offer help to all pupils who require reinforcement of recent work. The school also provides excellent specialist support for pupils with SEND and EAL in both the junior and senior pupils. In addition, the more able pupils in the senior school can attend a gifted and talented programme after school or supplement their A-level studies with the Extended Project qualification, whilst in the junior school extension assignments are provided within class teaching.
- 3.11 Since the previous inspection, curricular links between the junior school and the senior school have been strengthened, with subject co-ordinators in the junior school meeting teachers from the senior school to discuss curriculum content. Some senior

school teachers teach the older junior pupils. Libraries in both the junior and senior school are widely used and well stocked with fiction and subject-specific resources. The senior school library has seen an impressive increase in book loans, thanks to imaginative strategies to encourage reading. The quality of careers education and guidance is outstanding, offering excellent advice at key transitional stages.

- 3.12 The wide and varied range of extra-curricular opportunities reflects the school's desire to provide a fulfilling and enriching experience. However, the quality and levels of participation in the activities is uneven. Furthermore, sporting fixtures focus on a narrow range of sports and many teams have infrequent matches. In the junior school over three-quarters of the pupils learn a musical instrument. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is popular, with wide participation at all three levels. The school has successfully achieved the silver award as an eco-school.
- 3.13 Throughout the school, many pupils benefit from educational visits, both residential and non-residential, which enrich the academic curriculum. Junior school pupils, for instance, have lately enjoyed trips to Windsor Castle, the Black Country Museum and the theatre, as well as an outward activities residential for Year 5. Similarly, senior school pupils benefit from a broad range of ventures, with a significant number taking place overseas, and developing links with the wider world, such as the World Challenge Expedition to Peru, the history and politics trip to Berlin and the classicists' visit to Italy.
- 3.14 Links with the wider community are strong. The pupils benefit from many opportunities to contribute to projects such as a local project for the homeless, a school for blind children and a home for the elderly. Charity fundraising assists a vast array of worthy causes, both locally and nationally, as well as an educational charity supporting a school and orphanage in Uganda.

### **3.(c) The contribution of teaching**

- 3.15 The overall quality of teaching is excellent.
- 3.16 Throughout the school, most of the teaching observed was excellent, some was good and very little was less than good. At all levels, the high quality of teaching makes a major contribution to the pupils' high level of attainment and progress, and to the schools' fulfilment of its academic aims. In the EYFS, the children are ably and effectively helped with their learning and overall development. The teachers are well qualified; the level of their knowledge and expertise is high. They know their pupils very well and thorough planning addresses the needs of individual pupils by offering a variety of appropriate tasks. Behaviour is excellently managed, to the benefit of effective learning.
- 3.17 Almost all of the lessons observed were taken at a brisk pace, encompassing a variety of methods and requiring the pupils to complete challenging tasks which extended their thinking and practical skills. A school-wide thinking skills initiative, passionately led, enables the pupils to take greater risks in their learning and to adopt an imaginative, resilient approach to their studies.
- 3.18 Classrooms are well resourced, encouraging activities tailored to complement learning styles. Central to the best lessons observed was the teacher's communication of a real passion for his or her subject. Some inspirational teaching swiftly engaged the pupils who responded to the assignments with enthusiasm, displaying both independence of mind and active collaboration in their learning. In

their questionnaire responses, the pupils acknowledge that they are encouraged to think independently and this was confirmed during the period of the inspection.

- 3.19 The rapport between pupils and teachers is excellent. Pupils at all levels find that their teachers give willingly of their time outside lessons. Teachers offer a plethora of subject surgeries in the senior school to support and enhance learning. Teaching provides very well for pupils with SEND and for those whose first language is not English. The most able are suitably challenged by demanding extension work, the application of the gifted and talented programme, and by additional external examinations.
- 3.20 The ICT provision has improved since the previous inspection: various initiatives have been implemented, including staff training and the introduction of interactive whiteboards, and in the best lessons a range of multimedia resources and software programmes is used when appropriate. All Year 12 students have an electronic tablet for personal use, encouraging instant access to, for example, applications to aid research. The implementation of new technologies is ably assisted by Year 12 'ICT Angels' who teach junior school pupils how to use interactive whiteboard software. In this regard the school is successfully meeting its aim to prepare pupils for the challenges of twenty-first century life.
- 3.21 The overall quality of marking and assessment is good. In the best marking, teachers give pupils explicit and subject-specific advice on ways to improve and meet objectives. These procedures are enhanced by the use of feedback forms and commonly understood acronyms to encourage self-reflection. In some areas marking lacks consistency and constructive feedback. The strategies of the programme of assessment for learning are applied effectively.
- 3.22 Detailed data collection of academic information throughout the school is used to increase awareness of pupils' ability and progress. In the senior school pupils are assessed at entry to Year 7 and nationally recognised tests are used as a basis for monitoring progress to GCSE and A level. New tracking systems using this data, current performance and target grades have been introduced to monitor sixth-form progress.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 This fulfils the school's aim that its pupils should become decent, kind human beings with a sense of responsibility and service and a clear moral compass. Pupils are friendly, polite and welcoming. The innovative "emotional resilience" programme, recently introduced, is bearing fruit by making girls more confident and self-assured when dealing with challenges in their studies and other aspects of school life. They are proud of their school, enjoy showing it to visitors and thrive on the vast range of opportunities it offers them.
- 4.3 The pupils' spiritual development is excellent. The ethos which exists within the school community allows pupils to grow and flourish into self-assured young women with a strong sense of who they are and what they believe in. This is achieved through curriculum work, school assemblies, personal, social and health education (PSHE), thinking skills programmes and visits beyond the campus. The artwork and wall displays around the school, both junior and senior, show an appreciation of the ideals of life, together with well-developed emotional maturity. Pupils show increasing self-confidence. Teachers build their self-esteem and sense of personal worth by valuing them as individuals and by encouraging them to pass on their skills and talents to others, for example when they help with the new Mandarin classes or running the Manga club for the art department.
- 4.4 The pupils' moral development is excellent. They have an extremely strong sense of right and wrong and are keen to give each other praise. In lessons, pupils are co-operative and respectful, listening to the views of others and interacting with staff and peers in a relaxed yet purposeful fashion. All pupils are clear that bullying is unacceptable and they show an excellent understanding of the need to treat others with courtesy and respect. Their understanding is furthered by discussions in lessons on ethical issues. They are swift to step in with offers of help when they see someone else is struggling. The involvement of girls in community service and the generosity of pupils in supporting the diverse range of charitable events reflects the high level of ethical awareness within the school.
- 4.5 The social development of the pupils is excellent. Throughout the school they are active members of the community and assume roles of responsibility and service of a wide-ranging nature willingly. As prefects, Year 12 mentors, Year 9 'buddies' or Year 6 peer mediators, they are confidantes to younger girls. The girls' conduct towards each other, and towards staff, in lessons and around the school is exemplary. The school council is a lively and effective forum where pupils demonstrate their considerable listening and speaking skills. In the EYFS, children care for and respect each other, take turns, share willingly and offer to help. They are effectively developing skills for the future, displaying exemplary behaviour and relating extremely well to each other and to adults.
- 4.6 The school is a model of harmonious co-existence in which girls benefit from the wide range of backgrounds, cultures and faiths represented and this helps to develop their strong cultural awareness. They show great sensitivity to the feelings of others, as witnessed in the philosophy club where an excellent discussion on moral behaviour took place. Pupils understand the realities of other cultures through foreign language exchanges, visits to Europe by many departments including trips to

Italy by classicists or to Belgium with historians, and trips further afield to North and South America. These ventures greatly enrich pupils' cultural appreciation and personal development.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 In accordance with the school's stated aims, this happy, considerate community supports its pupils through comprehensive pastoral structures, produced collaboratively and universally supported.
- 4.9 All staff have responsibility for pastoral care, which they exercise conscientiously and sympathetically. The compassionate example of the senior leadership team ensures that the pupils are extremely well cared for, supported and guided. Co-ordination of pastoral care, academic monitoring and personal progress by middle management enables holistic support and direction of the pupils. Strong friendships exist between junior and senior pupils, some initiated by pastoral structures and enrichment activities. All staff with pastoral roles are readily available and accessible.
- 4.10 Dining facilities and food quality have improved since the last inspection. Food is regularly discussed at the school council. The school has recently gained 'healthy school' status; balanced menus encourage healthy eating. Reservations regarding quality and quantity of food, expressed by some parents and pupils in their responses to the questionnaire, were not borne out during the inspection. Physical education and games lessons and generally well-attended sports clubs encourage girls to be healthy. There is, however, no obligation for girls in the sixth form to take any form of physical exercise. The EYFS children understand that healthy eating, personal hygiene and physical exercise are pre-requisites of a healthy lifestyle.
- 4.11 Pupils' behaviour is considerate, engaging and lively. A zero-tolerance approach to bullying includes a variety of awareness-raising measures. Girls tend to resolve problems themselves, but have the confidence to report concerns. They say that bullying is not an issue, but are confident that any instances would be dealt with fairly and effectively. The school has a comprehensive plan to improve access for pupils with disabilities.
- 4.12 Pupils overwhelmingly believe that the school listens and responds to their views. Courteous dialogue at the school council is encouraged via a suggestions box. Outstandingly positive relationships between teachers and pupils and an 'open door' policy ensure that girls feel comfortable talking to teachers whom they regard as being approachable and about whom they are unstinting in their praise.

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

- 4.13 The contribution of arrangements to promote the pupils' welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.14 Clear procedures for safeguarding children and eliminating discrimination are implemented highly effectively. The required checks on new staff are carried out and recorded correctly. All staff receive appropriate training in child protection at specified intervals and have to sign to say that they have read the school's policy and procedures. In the EYFS, children's safeguarding is carefully ensured and their welfare and development are enhanced by the exceptionally strong links not only with parents, who strongly support the school, but also with the local authority.
- 4.15 Both the PSHE programme and ICT lessons raise pupils' awareness of internet safety issues. Staff and parents also receive e-safety training. All use of the school computer network is monitored.
- 4.16 The school provides very effectively for ill or injured pupils. Health centre staff are appropriately qualified and the administration of medicines is appropriately recorded. The needs of those girls with medical issues are well known to staff. The school matrons are assisted by seventy-six members of staff who are first-aid trained, with six at a higher level.
- 4.17 Arrangements to ensure health and safety are taken very seriously. Highly effective, they cover all aspects of the life of the school. All necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. Risk assessments are comprehensive and thorough for appropriate activities in and out of school. In the EYFS, the children are cared for extremely well and they are taught about keeping safe in many contexts, for example how to use the slope and swings safely in the Reception outdoor area. Daily checks of all equipment ensure a safe environment. The children develop a strong sense of safety, as shown by the way they move around the school and playgrounds.
- 4.18 Fire practices are held regularly. The health and safety committee, chaired by the bursar, meets at least once a term and reports to the governing body. All fire precaution measures are in order, with regular monitoring of electrical equipment via portable appliance testing. The school has rectified the two deficiencies, regarding fire precautions and health and safety meetings, which were noted in the previous inspection report as unsatisfactory. The admission and attendance registers are accurately completed and kept for the required period. Attendance is closely monitored through electronic registration, with a system of "immediate" response to pupil absence.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) The quality of governance**

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The council, or governing body, exercises effective oversight and is wholeheartedly committed to the school's aims and ethos. The governors conscientiously discharge their responsibilities for educational standards, and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. They monitor all financial matters very closely. The twelve members of the council contribute a wide range of experience and expertise. Most are parents of current or former pupils and consequently they enjoy an intimate knowledge of the school's day-to-day life. Well known to the staff, they regularly attend school events.
- 5.3 The governors give valued support to senior management, with whom they have frequent informal communication, in addition to the annual schedule of formal meetings. These regular meetings of the main board and its four committees ensure that the governors are well informed about all aspects of the school. The governors are diligent and effective in discharging their responsibilities for child protection, safeguarding, welfare, health and safety, and review regular reports on these aspects of the school's provision. New policies are approved by the council, which reviews all policies on a three-year cycle. Designated governors have specific responsibility for safeguarding, health and safety, SEND, the junior school and the EYFS. In the EYFS, as elsewhere, the governors' involvement is active and effective. Presentations to the education committee enhance the governors' appreciation of the academic life of the school and the work of subject departments.
- 5.4 New members of the council undertake an induction process and governors keep abreast of current good practice by attending training courses which cover particular areas of their duties and responsibilities.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is excellent.
- 5.6 All leadership teams work collaboratively and promote the aims of the school with drive, energy and vision. This results in an extremely well-run and well-regulated environment in which pupils enjoy a broad and challenging curriculum, achieving a very high standard of personal development. Rigorous self-evaluation, at all levels of leadership, including the EYFS, enables existing high standards to be maintained and ensures a programme of continuous improvement.
- 5.7 Planning is highly effective and staff at all levels are involved in the formulation of policies and procedures. Heads of faculty and heads of year are represented on the operational policy development group that meets termly. Staff are also consulted at department and faculty level through regular formal and informal meetings to produce an overall school improvement plan, together with derived subject improvement plans. This structure drives a dynamic programme of educational and pastoral review and development throughout the school in such areas as emotional resilience, thinking skills, the enhancement of provision for SEND pupils and providing well for pupils of differing ability. It also ensures that resources in the



EYFS are deployed effectively and appropriately. The educational and development goals forged by this process are well supported by staff and are in accord with the school's aims.

- 5.8 Senior and middle managers operate an open door policy, and both staff and pupils say how accessible and willing they are to offer appropriate guidance and support. Close liaison between leaders responsible for the junior and senior sections of the school ensures a unity of purpose and direction in educational planning.
- 5.9 A comprehensive and well-supported performance management scheme for staff sets clear targets for improvement against agreed criteria generated by lesson observation and review. The provision of continuing professional development is both generous and effectively targeted, arising both from the performance management process and from individual aspirations for career development.
- 5.10 The school has a rigorous procedure for the recruitment and appointment of staff and the centralised register of appointments is accurately completed. Newly qualified teachers benefit from an appropriate induction programme. All staff are fully trained and aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding pupils, welfare and health and safety. In the EYFS, all appropriate measures are taken to ensure the safeguarding of the children. Here, as at every stage, policies and procedures are implemented to promote equality and eliminate discrimination.
- 5.11 Parents are highly satisfied with the education and support provided for their children; the relationship between home and school is excellent, sustained by a comprehensive range of information communicated in printed and electronic media throughout the year. An e-mailed weekly bulletin and printed termly newsletter are examples of this for the whole school; curriculum information for juniors is set out in an annual curriculum booklet, with further detail provided by means of a curriculum sheet sent home every term. Senior school parents receive an appropriate range of option booklets to inform pupils' choice of courses leading to external examinations. Full details of the manner and frequency of assessment is provided annually to all parents. The school website acts as a high-quality, user-friendly and comprehensive repository of all the required information, including key school policies, relevant to both prospective and current parents, guardians and carers. The EYFS works in close partnership with parents and with external bodies in order to further the children's best interests. Parents can gain access to school data about their child by logging into the "learning gateway" via the website. The annual school magazine is a substantial record which rightly portrays the school as a vibrant, vivacious community.
- 5.12 In their responses to the questionnaire, parents affirm that information from the school is readily available; that they can communicate easily with the school; that the responses are timely; and that their concerns are handled well. The school complaints procedure meets the regulatory requirements. There have recently been no formal complaints; the few informal complaints have been addressed promptly and thoroughly.
- 5.13 The school provides an excellent range of opportunities for parents to be involved in the work and progress of their children. In the junior school, for example, parents with pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are invited to participate in literacy and numeracy lessons where they work individually with small groups of pupils under the guidance of the class teacher; science is shortly to be included in this initiative. There is also a workshop for parents about helping their children learn to read.

Parents' forums offer the opportunity to discuss a range of matters with the leadership team, whilst Northwood College Parents' Association provides the opportunity for parents to involve themselves in fundraising: the association supports an extensive range of events over the school year for pupils, staff and parents, including popular winter and summer fairs.

- 5.14 Parents are kept fully abreast of their children's academic progress and achievement through clear, detailed reports, half-termly grade cards and regular parents' meetings. Although the pattern varies for different year groups, all parents receive at least one full report per year and a minimum of one parents' evening. In the junior school, for example, there is a full report and a parents' evening each term. The EYFS children's parents appreciate the detailed written reports, parents' evenings and daily contact through the "home school messages" book which keeps them fully informed of their child's day-to-day progress.
- 5.15 Parents wholeheartedly subscribe to the ethos and values of the school and are extremely pleased with the education which the school provides for their children.

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