



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

RIPLEY COURT SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

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Ripley Court School

Full Name of School	Ripley Court School		
DfE Number	936/6307		
Registered Charity Number	312084		
Address	Ripley Court School Rose Lane Ripley Surrey GU23 6NE		
Telephone Number	01483 225217		
Fax Number	01483 223854		
Email Address	head@ripleycourt.co.uk		
Headmaster	Mr Andrew Gough		
Chair of Governors	Mr Peter Armitage		
Age Range	3 to 13		
Total Number of Pupils	240		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (156 boys; 84 girls)		
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	39	5-11: 172
	11-13:	29	
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection dates	29 Feb 2012 to 02 Mar 2012		

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 February 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. 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 31st August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of 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 chair 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

Mrs Jill Moore	Reporting Inspector
Mr Marcus Gunn	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Heather-Jane Hopson-Hill	Team Inspector (Head, ISA school)
Mrs Amanda Stables	Team Inspector (Head of Department, IAPS school)
Mrs Susan Vale	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Ripley Court is an independent day school for pupils aged 3 to 13. The school was founded in 1893 as a boys' boarding school. Since 1979 it has been co-educational; boarding ceased in 1998. The school became a charitable educational trust in 1976 and is directed by a board of governors. The present headmaster was appointed in 2001.
- 1.2 The school is situated in 20 acres of its own rural grounds in the village of Ripley, near to Woking in Surrey. The heart of the school is an historic building to which, over the years, further buildings and facilities have been added.
- 1.3 The school sets out to promote the highest academic standards whilst placing a particular emphasis on literacy and mathematical development. It seeks to develop in pupils personal values of courtesy, determination, integrity and concern for others. It aims to foster self-awareness and confidence through creative and physical activities. It strives to encourage a partnership between home and school.
- 1.4 Of the 240 pupils on roll, 84 are girls. There are 39 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and together with the pupils in Years 1 and 2, this makes up the pre-preparatory department. Those in the Nursery, including a transition group for older children, can attend on a part-time basis, mostly in the mornings.
- 1.5 Years 1 to 6 comprise 172 pupils and 29 pupils are in Years 7 and 8. Pupils come mainly from professional and business families residing in the areas of Guilford and Woking. A very small proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and from other European countries.
- 1.6 Standardised data indicates that the ability profile of the school is above the national average overall; however, the range is broad and includes a small minority whose ability level is below the national average. At the ages of 11 or 13, most pupils continue their education at selective independent senior schools. A small minority transfer to maintained senior schools.
- 1.7 No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The school has identified fourteen pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Seven pupils have English as an additional language (EAL). However, they are all fluent in English and do not need extra individual help.
- 1.8 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 overall achievement and the progress of the pupils in their lessons and activities are good. In English, mathematics and science they achieve excellent standards and their rate of progress is rapid. The school meets its aim to promote high academic standards, with a particular emphasis on literacy and mathematical development. In the EYFS, children make good progress in their acquisition of skills in reading, writing, problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. Pupils enjoy their learning and apply themselves diligently to tasks, persevere and take responsibility for their work. The quality of curricular provision is good, and the range and quality of extra-curricular activities provided are excellent. In the EYFS, a caring, nurturing environment promotes good levels of independence and achievement. Throughout the school, the provision for pupils with SEND or EAL is strong. The quality of teaching is good overall. On occasions it is outstanding, but in a significant minority of lessons teaching is sound, but less effective. Systems of assessment are thorough and have been improved since the previous inspection. Most marking by teachers is detailed and constructive. At times it is more cursory.
- 2.2 The personal development of the pupils is excellent and the school has built on the good level evident at the previous inspection. The strength of the pupils' spiritual development is evident in their high levels of self-esteem. Pupils understand and abide by the moral code that governs the school community. The social development of pupils is excellent. They demonstrate respect for each other in the way they work and play co-operatively. They thoroughly enjoy the responsibilities they are given, and carry out their duties conscientiously. Pupils have a keen sense of community and engage in energetic fund raising. They show a strong awareness of their own and other cultures. Their cultural awareness is deepened by the many opportunities they have to appreciate art, literature and music. Pupils show much respect for faiths and festivals and cultural traditions other than their own. In the EYFS, children show good personal development. At all stages of the school, pupils' strong personal development is reflected in their maturity and self-discipline.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is good. Governors provide thoughtful and careful oversight which supports the development of the school and is fully in line with its aims. The board has been closely involved in measures to raise the level of welfare, health and safety provision to its current excellent standard. Governors are well aware of their legal responsibilities and discharge them carefully. The quality of leadership and management at all levels, including the EYFS, is good, and enables the school to fulfil its aims. Academic and pastoral roles are well developed. In response to the recommendation of the previous inspection, development planning is linked to detailed subject planning. However, the system of staff performance management is superficial and is not yet coherently linked to development planning to ensure that school needs are always met. The monitoring of teaching and learning is extensive, but systems of review do not ensure that the information gained is used consistently to improve the quality of teaching. The school maintains good links with parents. Parents are highly supportive of all aspects of the school's provision. Reports are detailed and constructive, but in the EYFS, reporting to parents does not meet statutory requirements because children's progress against the Early Learning Goals and the assessment scales is not reported.

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.
- 2.5 In order to comply with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school is required to:
- provide a written summary reporting the child's progress against the Early Learning Goals and the assessment scales.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Develop a more rigorous system of performance management, firmly linked to development planning.
 2. Refine the monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure that the information gained is used more effectively to enhance the quality of teaching.
 3. Review the reports which are produced for the parents of children in the EYFS to ensure that they clearly show the progress made in each area of learning throughout the duration of the children's time in the setting.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' overall achievement is good.
- 3.2 At all stages of the school, the pupils are well educated. They achieve excellence in English, mathematics and science, and their achievement is good in their work across the wider curriculum and in their many activities. The school meets fully its aim to pursue high academic standards and to place a particular emphasis on literacy and mathematical development.
- 3.3 In the EYFS, children make good progress in their acquisition of skills in reading, writing and problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. They are observant, show creativity and converse happily with their peers and with adults. By the time they leave Reception, many exceed expectations in relation to the Early Learning Goals.
- 3.4 Pupils are articulate; they listen attentively and respond thoughtfully. Older pupils can explain their ideas clearly. By Year 2 pupils have strong skills in reading and writing. By Year 8 they demonstrate a thorough understanding of the technical aspects of English, and achieve excellent levels in their writing across a broad range of styles. Pupils' numeracy skills are strong and they use information and communication technology (ICT) confidently to present their work, handle data and prepare topics. They show strong creativity in their imaginative writing and music. The creativity of the pupils' artwork was evident in a display of highly individual model shoes designed and executed by Year 6. From the Nursery onwards, pupils participate confidently in French lessons and by Year 8 they achieve high levels in their conversation and written work. Whether studying a science topic, reviewing a poem or exploring food webs, pupils are able to reason, discuss and think creatively and independently.
- 3.5 Pupils participate enthusiastically in their many games and activities. They enjoy physical activity and achieve well in individual and team sports. From the EYFS, pupils develop strong swimming skills. In recent years, several pupils have been selected to play for Surrey in hockey, cricket and swimming. Pupils engage confidently in musical activities such as the chamber choir and orchestra. They participate eagerly in dramatic activities, for example in class assemblies and pantomime. Pupils in Years 3 and 5 achieve success in their individual speech and drama examinations; a good proportion gain passes at merit and distinction level.
- 3.6 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against a fixed national average, but on the evidence available it is judged to be high in relation to national age-related expectations. The pupils follow a rigorous curriculum which includes work at a particularly high level in English, mathematics and science. On leaving the school at the ages of 11 or 13, almost all pupils proceed to selective independent senior schools, some gaining academic or specialist scholarship awards. Inspection evidence, including the levels at which pupils are working in relation to national targets by the time they reach Year 2 and as they continue through the school, confirms this evaluation of the pupils' attainment. These observed levels of attainment confirm that pupils achieve a high rate of progress in English, mathematics and science in comparison with pupils of similar ability. Overall, across the broader curriculum and at all stages of the school, pupils make good progress.

- 3.7 The good progress of pupils with SEND is evident in the steady improvement in spelling and numeracy skills. Pupils with EAL gain accuracy in their writing. The pupils identified by the school as gifted and talented are challenged and given additional tasks to extend their knowledge. The progress they make is reflected, for example, in successful mathematical investigations.
- 3.8 Pupils have excellent attitudes to their learning; they apply themselves diligently to tasks and persevere. Throughout the school, pupils take responsibility for organising their work, assessing their efforts and striving to meet their agreed targets. Pupils take pride in their work and their standards of presentation are generally very high. When given the opportunity to undertake independent investigation, they respond confidently. They work co-operatively, support one another well and are sensitive in discussion of each other's work. Children in the EYFS are active and often independent learners.

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

- 3.9 The quality of the curriculum and programme of extra-curricular activities is good overall.
- 3.10 The carefully structured curriculum encompasses all the requisite areas of learning and provides well for all aspects of pupils' development. The school meets its aim to develop pupils' academic and intellectual skills.
- 3.11 Pupils benefit from well-planned programmes of ICT and personal, social and health education (PSHE); both are taught effectively as discrete subjects. Imaginatively planned art and design technology lessons foster pupils' creativity and technical skills well. French is offered from Nursery throughout the school, and this thorough provision is reflected in the fluency and confidence pupils achieve in speaking and writing the language. Time allocation of subjects is well balanced, and although a clear priority is given to acquiring literacy and numeracy skills, other subjects receive sufficient coverage. In almost all respects the curriculum is well planned, but in some subjects curricular provision for pupils to undertake independent, investigative work is too limited.
- 3.12 During Years 3 and 4, pupils make a successful transition from class teaching to entirely specialist teaching by Year 5. This, together with setting for the core subjects of mathematics and English when pupils enter Year 3, ensures that the pace and complexity of work are well tailored to suit individual needs. The pupils are well prepared for the transition to senior schools.
- 3.13 In the EYFS, the staff know the children in their care well and meet their needs successfully. A caring, nurturing environment for the three year olds and for the older children promotes good levels of independence and achievement in learning and well-being. The curriculum is carefully planned to meet the needs of the unique child.
- 3.14 Provision for those requiring additional help with some aspect of their learning is strong. Procedures for identifying the pupils requiring support are clear and effective. Communication between the SEND co-ordinator and mainstream teachers is strong. This ensures that pupils' needs are well met through individual and group lessons and support within the classroom. Individual education plans are detailed and carefully maintained. Pupils identified by the school as being gifted and talented are catered for effectively through the additional challenges and specific activities to

extend their understanding. Pupils with EAL are sympathetically supported, mainly within the classroom.

- 3.15 The range and quality of extra-curricular activities are excellent; a wide variety of clubs complement lessons. Lunchtime and after-school opportunities range from ecology to archery and include sewing and magic. An extensive range of musical and sporting opportunities is provided. A well-structured and interesting hobbies programme within the curriculum extends the pupils' opportunities. Day and residential visits enrich the curriculum and plenty of use is made of local and more widespread facilities to expand the pupils' cultural, social and intellectual experiences. Such visits include art galleries, sites of historic interest and theatres. Residential visits, including trips to France and Snowdonia for pupils in Years 6 to 8, enhance pupils' independence, and provide them with additional challenges and experiences. Arrangements for individual music lessons are good and increasingly pupils are prepared for external music examinations.
- 3.16 Pupils benefit from the school's links with the local community. Regular contact and joint activities with a local centre for children's respite care are carefully fostered. The school undertakes a wide range of fund-raising events, mainly to support local charities relevant to the pupils. These activities afford the pupils opportunities to develop social and personal skills, and they greatly enjoy them.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.17 The overall quality of teaching is good.
- 3.18 The school meets its aim to provide high standards of tuition within a caring environment. Much teaching is good and on occasions excellent. In a significant minority of lessons the teaching, although of sound quality, is less effective.
- 3.19 In successful lessons, teachers plan thoroughly, building on their knowledge of the pupils' previous learning. Teachers know their pupils well and effectively adapt their teaching to challenge the most able and support those with particular learning difficulties. Teachers have high expectations and employ a variety of teaching methods. Skilful questioning enables pupils to develop their ideas and extend their understanding. Lessons proceed at a good pace, and the pupils play an active part in their learning. The knowledge and enthusiasm of the teachers invigorate pupils and motivate them to persevere and to apply themselves well. Whether mastering a hockey skill, constructing triangles or painting a portrait, pupils become fully engaged in their learning.
- 3.20 Where teaching is less effective, the opportunities for pupils to be fully involved in the lesson are limited. Lessons run smoothly, but are too heavily directed by the teacher, and lack a sense of urgency. Teachers make less provision for differing needs and some pupils are not sufficiently challenged, and so their progress slows.
- 3.21 Good resources for teaching, including the interactive whiteboards in almost all classrooms, are used creatively and effectively to help pupils develop a secure understanding of the subject. Pupils particularly enjoy the games skilfully designed by teachers, for example to help them to master new French vocabulary. Classrooms have attractive displays and provide a stimulating, informative learning environment. The use of teaching assistants to support teachers and to promote pupils' learning is excellent.

- 3.22 In the EYFS, the use of a key person who knows each child well is effective in ensuring that all children learn easily. All staff share in the responsibility for the care and welfare of the children. Resources are well used to promote the children's learning in Nursery and Reception. Specialist teaching allows children the opportunities to experience a wide variety of subjects such as swimming. There is a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities, with priority given to problem solving and learning through play, both inside and outdoors.
- 3.23 In response to the recommendation of the previous inspection, the school has improved the opportunities that teaching provides for pupils to develop independent learning skills. The use of ICT in teaching across the curriculum has been enhanced and the library is used more effectively for research. However, within some subjects, teachers still provide insufficient opportunities for pupils to explore and investigate.
- 3.24 The systems of assessment are thorough and effective. The school has responded to the recommendation of the previous inspection to make better use of assessment data. At all stages of the school, a wide range of relevant assessment data is gathered and recorded, and this is readily available to teachers for use in their future planning. Standardised test results, internal examinations, and attainment and effort grades awarded at regular intervals are all used to set targets and track closely the progress of individuals and groups of pupils as they move up through the school. In the EYFS, assessment procedures are efficient. Detailed observation and recording are regularly undertaken, and the children's comments and own self-evaluation are given a high priority.
- 3.25 Teachers' marking is regular and most of it is detailed and constructive. At times it is more cursory and less useful to pupils. The pupils have a clear understanding of the teachers' marking system. Target setting is used widely and effectively to focus pupils' attention on their goals. Pupils assess their own efforts, and respond constructively to one another's work. These strategies ensure that pupils are fully engaged in their learning.

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 Pupils' excellent personal development fulfils the school's aim to develop in them strong personal values of courtesy, determination, integrity and concern for others. Pupils, including those who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, are warmly appreciative of their school.
- 4.3 The spiritual development of pupils is excellent. The pupils are self-confident and responsive; they show consideration and friendliness towards one another and a mature respect for the beliefs and opinions of others. They benefit greatly from the supportive relationships that exist within the whole school community. Their self-esteem is high because they are valued as individuals, and their achievements are celebrated in assemblies, newsletters and classroom displays. A strong spiritual awareness is reflected in their creative writing and artistic work. Pupils have a high regard for non-material aspects of life. They appreciate the beauty of the school's natural surroundings and understand the need to conserve resources and respect the environment. They gain spiritual insight from the study of the values and beliefs of major world religions.
- 4.4 Pupils show excellent moral awareness. They understand the very clear moral code of the school community and abide by it willingly. They have a strong understanding of right and wrong, and appreciate the need for rules to keep everyone safe. Pupils show self-discipline and understand that their actions have consequences. They benefit from opportunities to debate moral issues. Their sensitive awareness of moral issues extends to questions that arise from their studies.
- 4.5 The social development of pupils is excellent. Pupils show respect for each other in the way they work, play co-operatively and help each other. They accept and enjoy the responsibilities they are given. They show pride in being chosen for a post, whether as house captain, or for younger pupils, undertaking routine tasks. Pupils carry out their duties conscientiously. Older pupils often look after younger ones. Pupils voice and share their opinions effectively through the school council and PSHE lessons. They have a strong sense of community and enjoy working hard for their houses by gaining house points. They demonstrate a strong commitment to helping others by raising funds for their chosen charities, in their local community and further afield. By the time pupils leave the school, their understanding of public institutions is well developed, and strengthened by visits to places such as the Royal Courts of Justice.
- 4.6 Pupils show an excellent awareness of their own and other cultures. Their cultural development is fostered through their work across the curriculum and the many opportunities provided for them to appreciate and participate in art, literature and music. Pupils show strong respect and understanding for different cultures. They speak with enthusiasm and demonstrate understanding of festivals such as Chinese New Year and the Jewish festival of Purim. The study of various styles of visual art broadens their perspective. Pupils' cultural understanding is enhanced through visits to places of worship, including Guilford Cathedral and the local mosque. These experiences strengthen their understanding of different cultures within their own community.

- 4.7 In the EYFS, children show good personal development. They feel safe and are confident in making choices, selecting activities and trying out new things. The children engage effectively with their peers and with adults. They behave well, work collaboratively and show respect for each other. They understand the importance of hygiene, washing their hands when they come in from playtime.
- 4.8 At all stages of the school, pupils' strong personal development is reflected in their maturity and self-discipline. By the time they leave, they are generally confident and out-going, well prepared to embark on the next stage of their education.

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

- 4.9 The pastoral care of pupils is excellent.
- 4.10 The school fulfils its aim to provide a caring environment in which pupils can achieve high academic standards and develop strong personal values. Teachers know and understand the academic, social and emotional needs of their pupils very well. The excellent support and guidance they provide promote pupils' personal development most effectively. Pupils' academic progress and welfare are discussed in regular meetings. Staff are quickly alerted to individual concerns, and they communicate readily with one another to ensure that all colleagues involved are made aware.
- 4.11 In the relaxed but purposeful atmosphere of the school, staff get on well with their pupils, and pupils demonstrate tolerance and friendliness towards one another. Effort and attainment grades are awarded at regular intervals. Pupils receive their grades from their form tutor. The individual friendly and supportive discussion this involves encourages them to take responsibility for their learning.
- 4.12 The system of rewards and sanctions is clear. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the variety of age-appropriate rewards that operate throughout the school, and explain happily how they can acquire stars for their house, or can work towards gaining their own badge. The emphasis is firmly on the positive. Sanctions are used very infrequently. However, they are announced in school assembly, and a few younger pupils said that they find this a worrying prospect.
- 4.13 Pupils are provided with good opportunities to express their views through the school council. The comprehensive PSHE programme promotes the pupils' awareness of many issues, and provides opportunities for discussion. The clear anti-bullying policy ensures that pupils understand that unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated. Pupils know who to go to should an incident arise, although they say that this is rare, and feel confident that it would be dealt with quickly. School meals are nutritious, appetising and of excellent quality. Healthy eating is encouraged and pupils understand its importance. The extensive grounds and good sports facilities provide frequent and excellent opportunities for pupils to take physical exercise. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 4.14 Children in the EYFS are well cared for. Group numbers are small and staff know each child very well. The setting provides a warm and friendly environment in which children are well supported and their development is fostered carefully.

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

- 4.15 The arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 4.16 The school pays close attention to the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Minor issues raised at the time of the previous inspection have been fully rectified. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are thorough and robust. Up-to-date policies and procedures have regard to official guidance and are carefully implemented. Staff receive suitable and timely training.
- 4.17 The school takes seriously the need to minimise risks from fire and other hazards. Regular fire drills are carried out, and the required checks on equipment are made. Very careful measures are taken to protect the health and safety of the school community. Thorough risk assessments for all classrooms and for activities on and off the school site are carried out. Provision for pupils who are unwell or require first aid is excellent. Medical record keeping is thorough and parents are kept well informed. The number of staff suitably trained in first aid is ample.
- 4.18 In the EYFS, children are carefully safeguarded. Clear procedures are thoughtfully implemented to ensure that their welfare is effectively promoted across the setting. Several staff have paediatric first-aid qualifications. Thorough risk assessments are undertaken in all areas.
- 4.19 Admission and attendance records are properly maintained and stored for the previous three years.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 Governors provide considered and careful governance which supports the development of the school and is fully in line with its aims. Governors bring to their work a good balance of expertise across many fields including education, finance and medicine. Specific governors give support to different aspects of the school. Most of the governors are parents of former pupils, which strengthens their relationship with the school. The structures of governance are clear.
- 5.3 The board takes great care in the appointment and induction of new governors and in providing training opportunities to ensure that they are well informed about all areas of their work. School policies, including for safeguarding and child protection, are reviewed annually. Lines of communication between governors and senior management are strong. The school's leadership provides clear reports for governors. All aspects of education and care provided by the school are discussed as part of the efficient committee system, because the leadership reports to all meetings of the full board and attends all committee meetings.
- 5.4 Governors exercise prudent financial management and are fully involved in strategic planning. Their thorough understanding of school needs enables them to oversee strong educational provision and wise investment in staff and material resources. The very recent formation of an education committee reflects their awareness of the need for a much closer involvement in the educational direction of the school.
- 5.5 Governors are well aware of their legal responsibilities and discharge them carefully. With regard to safeguarding and child protection, they maintain regular contact with the school's child protection officer. Health and safety policies and procedures and the associated risk assessments are carefully monitored. The board has been closely involved in measures to raise the level of welfare, health and safety provision to its current excellent standard.
- 5.6 Governors attend concerts and other school functions. Some governors, particularly those with areas of specific responsibility, make occasional informal visits to observe the day-to-day running of the school.

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

- 5.7 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is good.
- 5.8 The good quality of leadership and management at all levels throughout, including the EYFS, enables the school to fulfil its aims. The school leadership, supported by the senior management team, provides strong and caring educational direction. They have a thorough understanding of how best to develop the school in accordance with its ethos, to provide an educational experience of high quality for pupils and to foster their personal development most effectively. They are strongly supported by highly committed teaching, administrative and support staff. Regular full staff meetings and group meetings, together with ease of informal

communication, ensure that staff are kept well informed and feel fully involved in sustaining the caring ethos of the school.

- 5.9 At all levels management structures are clear. Academic and pastoral roles are well developed, and policies are carefully implemented. Whole-school development planning is now appropriately linked to detailed subject development planning, as recommended at the previous inspection. However, although senior management is generally successful in identifying the strengths and fostering the development of staff, the formal system of performance management is superficial in nature. It is not yet coherently linked to development planning to ensure that all school needs are met.
- 5.10 Members of senior and middle management monitor teaching and learning extensively, and the feedback given to individual teachers following lesson observations is very constructive. However, the systems of review do not ensure that common threads of good practice, and areas for development, are clearly identified and used consistently to improve the quality of teaching.
- 5.11 Strong recruitment procedures are well established, and checks are recorded efficiently. All staff receive the required child protection and health and safety training. Staff enjoy good opportunities for in-service training.
- 5.12 In the EYFS, regular self-evaluation enables existing standards to be maintained and also identifies areas for further development. Improvements since the previous inspection include the updating of both the setting's buildings and outdoor learning environment. Although the Nursery and Reception are in separate buildings, staff work effectively as a team between the two year groups. Effective policies to safeguard children and to eliminate discrimination are implemented rigorously, and all staff have been suitably checked and are suitably qualified. Sound self-evaluation ensures that there are clear priorities for improvement. Records and policies necessary for the efficient management of the setting and safety of the children are in place and the policies are followed. A willingness to refine and improve practice is evidenced by how quickly staff put right minor infringements and follow suggestions for good practice.
- 5.13 The school maintains strong connections with parents in accordance with its aim to develop firm links between home and school and to involve parents in their children's education. Throughout the school, including the EYFS, parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were highly supportive of all aspects of the school's provision. They were particularly appreciative of the curricular and extra-curricular provision, the high standards of behaviour achieved and the ease with which they can communicate with the school.
- 5.14 Parents have many good opportunities to be involved in the life of the school. They are welcomed into the school to support matches and to attend plays, concerts and assemblies. A flourishing parents' association organises social events and is active in fund raising.
- 5.15 Parents receive a good range of information about the school. The school website provides details about many aspects of school life, and regular newsletters give a useful overview of pupils' recent activities. In almost all respects, parents are kept well informed about their children's work and progress. Reports are detailed and constructive. They provide parents with a clear picture of their children's progress, as do the regular consultations between parents and staff at formal parents' evenings. However, in the EYFS, reporting to parents does not meet statutory

requirements. Although parents receive detailed and informative reports about their children's achievement, they have not been given information regarding their children's progress against the Early Learning Goals and the assessment scales.

- 5.16 The school handles the concerns of parents promptly and carefully. An 'open door' policy gives parents the opportunity to communicate quickly with staff. This ensures that almost all difficulties can be dealt with swiftly and informally. Parents are well informed about the procedures to follow should they wish to make a formal complaint.

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