



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Polam School

July 2023

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School's Details

School	Polam School			
DfE number	822/6000			
Early Years registration number	EY542689			
Address	Polam School 45 Lansdowne Road Bedford Bedfordshire MK40 2BU			
Telephone number	01234 261864			
Email address	info@polamschool.co.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Darren O'Neil			
Chair of governors	Mr Simon Rudland			
Proprietor	Cognita Schools			
Age range	1 to 7			
Number of pupils on roll	122			
	EYFS	86	Year 1 & 2	36
Inspection dates	4 to 6 July 2023			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Polam School is an independent, co-educational day school and nursery. The school was acquired by Cognita Schools Group in 2004, who act as its proprietary body. The headmaster was appointed in September 2020.
- 1.2 The school comprises the registered EYFS setting, for children aged one to four years, and Years 1 and 2, for pupils aged five to seven years. The previous inspection for children under three was undertaken by Ofsted.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to create an environment where kindness, independence and resilience are at its core. It seeks to stimulate enjoyment, imagination and creativity, encouraging children to develop as lifelong learners and to achieve their full potential.

About the pupils

- 1.4 The majority of pupils come from professional families living in the local area. Standardised assessment data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is above average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 19 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), all of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for nine pupils, five of whom receive additional support for their English. The curriculum is modified for those pupils who are identified as being the most able in the school's population.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014, Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 Pupils receive relationships education. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.6 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.7 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.8 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.9 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.11 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.12 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are

appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

2.13 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.14 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

2.15 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.16 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

2.17 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.18 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils.

2.19 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

3. The quality and standards of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision

- 3.1 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.
- 3.2 Leaders and staff ensure the curriculum meets the needs, interests, and developmental stages of each child in the setting. This includes those children with SEND and additional needs, who are extremely well supported. The curriculum meets the relevant statutory requirements of the EYFS and it supports the children's development in the prime areas of learning extremely well.
- 3.3 Baseline documentation completed when a child enters the setting is reviewed at regular intervals to track and monitor progress. All children aged three and under make good and often excellent progress relative to their starting points and are extremely well-prepared for the next stage in their education. Children display high levels of emotional security, consistently demonstrating that they feel extremely safe, secure, and happy.
- 3.4 Requirements for children's safeguarding and welfare have been fully met. Staff are aware of their responsibilities to protect children and keep them safe. Robust procedures are in place and are regularly monitored by leaders and managers to ensure the safety of the children in their care.
- 3.5 The supportive leadership team works closely with staff to evaluate practice and to share a clear vision for the future. This ensures that all children receive the best possible support, and a process of continuous improvement impacts positively on the quality of the children's learning and development.

Quality of education

- 3.6 The quality of education is outstanding.
- 3.7 The curriculum provides a wide range of experiences for every child in the setting based on the staff's understanding of each child's level of development, individual needs, and interests. This enables the children to have an excellent start to their education.
- 3.8 The stimulating experiences that the children receive provide them with a solid foundation on which their future learning can be built. The homely environment provides all children with a wealth of opportunities to choose from high-quality resources and experiences and so consolidate and deepen their knowledge and skills.
- 3.9 Staff readily engage with children during routine activities and take every opportunity to develop language and social skills. This was observed when staff skilfully interacted and questioned children who had made gingerbread man figures from playdough. They confidently recalled the story of 'The Gingerbread Man' using relevant learned vocabulary, actions, and repeated refrains. Children consistently hear and repeat words and phrases modelled and spoken to them, successfully increasing their vocabulary. Children listen attentively to stories, nursery rhymes and songs, promoted by enthusiastic staff. The youngest children anticipate single words and join in with repeated refrains and older children show great enjoyment when using props to act out songs collaboratively. Core books are used successfully as a resource to consolidate children's vocabulary and develop speech and language skills. Staff make excellent use of opportunities when interacting with the children, to introduce mathematical language by counting and talking to them about shape and size.
- 3.10 All staff have consistently high expectations of what each child can achieve. The class topic has enabled children to learn and consolidate new physical skills, such as older children balancing to walk in a straight line when walking the 'tight rope' and younger children learning and practising early ball skills. They show an appreciation for nature and the wider world by allowing a nesting bird to fledge her chicks undisturbed in the outdoor area, and by diligently caring for the vegetables and flowers that they have planted in the garden.

- 3.11 Regular assessments, tracked against the levels of expected development for their age ensure that each child's progress is carefully monitored, and their needs are met effectively. Observations are shared on the on-line system with parents, who are able to contribute to this by sharing with the setting their child's significant experiences at home.
- 3.12 Positive feedback is given to the children through praise and encouragement, which helps them to acquire the skills and attitudes to learn effectively. The stimulating experiences that the children receive provides them with a firm foundation for future learning.

Behaviour and attitudes

- 3.13 Behaviour and attitudes are outstanding.
- 3.14 Children show great enjoyment in their learning, and they make excellent use of the accessible high-quality resources that allow them to make choices and play with toys and objects that are familiar to them.
- 3.15 Children maintain focus on activities for appropriate amounts of time. The youngest children used their senses to explore the textures of natural objects such as pinecones, tree bark and wood chippings. However, opportunities for spontaneous exploration and investigation both indoors and outdoors are limited.
- 3.16 Children are active learners who are highly motivated to join in a range of activities. They demonstrate high levels of concentration when engaged in an activity and choose their own ways to do things. Older children used pictures as a guide when selecting the correct pieces that fitted together to complete a puzzle.
- 3.17 Children follow their own ideas and make links in their learning. This was evident when they were introduced to a new song about ants, with children commenting that they have ants in the garden, and during tidy up time when a child independently collected a brush and swept the floor.
- 3.18 Children are taught to be kind and considerate and the high-quality support provided by staff encourages excellent behaviour. Children are rewarded for good behaviour with stickers and certificates.
- 3.19 The setting has a highly effective partnership with parents which successfully promotes children's attendance. Suitable procedures are in place to investigate unexpected absences.

Personal development

- 3.20 The personal development of children is outstanding.
- 3.21 Extremely effective care practices support children's emotional security and the development of their character. The exceptional relationships that children have with adults around them are built on strong, secure attachments. There is an extremely effective key person system in place. Staff interact warmly and positively with all children and build excellent relationships. Children confidently engage with staff at sleep time and settle quickly and independently, displaying high levels of confidence and security in their routines and staff.
- 3.22 A visual timetable is used throughout the day to support children in understanding the routines of the day and what comes next. Signing is also used, and children learn a new sign each week to support their developing speech.
- 3.23 Children are encouraged by staff to take risks and do adventurous things with confidence. For example, younger children climb the scramble net to access the slide in the outdoor area and older children swing on bars accessed from the wooden bridge.
- 3.24 Staff help children to lead a healthy lifestyle from the very beginning of their time at the setting. A healthy diet is provided each day and staff ensure that food preferences and allergy needs are catered

for appropriately. All children have regular access to outside areas that are equipped to promote physical activity. Hygiene practices, which are followed by all staff ensure that the personal needs of the children at this age are met appropriately. Staff encourage children to understand the need for, and importance of handwashing before eating and support those unable to do it independently.

- 3.25 All staff give high priority to safeguarding and are aware of their responsibilities and ensure that they meet the EYFS statutory requirements for safeguarding, welfare and learning and development.
- 3.26 Staff are highly effective in preparing children for life in modern Britain by enabling them to make decisions and follow simple rules. As they encourage them to share and take turns, children learn to respect and care for one another. The setting celebrates festivals and events from British and other cultures and British values are fundamental to daily life.

Leadership and management

- 3.27 Leadership and management are outstanding.
- 3.28 The strong direction from the leadership team results in an enthusiastic and able team of staff who share an ambitious vision to provide high-quality education and exemplary levels of care. Leaders consistently monitor the standards of care and regularly scrutinise the curriculum to ensure that high standards are maintained. This ensures that all children have excellent learning opportunities, are extremely happy and well cared for.
- 3.29 The well-qualified staff are fully well supported by leaders and managers. Their performance is monitored carefully through annual meetings with leaders, supported by an effective system of individual meetings which enable staff to discuss issues, including their own well-being and development. Professional development is strong with training provided for compulsory requirements. Staff are encouraged to follow their interests and attend a range of professional development courses to enable them to develop their skills. This results in a positive impact on the care and outcomes for the children.
- 3.30 Leaders, managers and staff have high expectations of what all children can achieve. They know the children very well and respond quickly to the needs of all children, including those with SEND and additional needs. The setting can access internal specialist help when required, together with support from outside agencies. Thorough systems are in place to ensure that every child's needs are met.
- 3.31 The setting has strong links with parents. In interviews, parents reported that they feel very well informed about the progress their child is making. They value opportunities to contribute to their child's learning by sharing interests and achievements from home on their child's online learning diary. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire reveal that parents have an extremely positive view of the setting.
- 3.32 High priority is given by the staff to safeguarding and the implementation of all health and safety policies to ensure that children are kept safe. They fully comply with statutory duties for example under the Equality act 2010 and other duties in relation to the Prevent strategy and safer recruitment.

Compliance with statutory requirements

- 3.33 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.**

Recommendation for further improvement

The school is advised to make the following improvement to its provision for children in the early years.

- Enhance opportunities both indoors and outdoors for children to engage in spontaneous exploration and investigation.

4. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

The headline judgements apply one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
Pre-school	Nursery

Key findings

4.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

- Pupils' excellent levels of achievements are a result of the rapid progress they make across the curriculum from their various starting points.
- Pupils develop strong knowledge, skills and understanding through the stimulating themed curriculum.
- Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are excellent and are deployed effectively across the curriculum.
- Pupils exhibit excellent study skills, successfully applying higher-order thinking skills from an early age.

4.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- Pupils develop excellent levels of self-understanding and appreciate the importance of resilience in their pursuit of success.
- Pupils exhibit a mature and deep-seated appreciation of diversity for their age.
- Pupils' collaborative skills are extremely well developed.
- Pupils have a well-developed understanding of the importance of having a healthy mind and body.

Recommendation

4.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

- Enable all pupils to further develop their ICT skills in a broader range of subjects, drawing upon the most successful current outcomes.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

4.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

4.5 Pupils' achievement is excellent as a result of teaching that combines high expectations with encouragement, imagination and fun. EYFS children make rapid progress and achieve highly, with the

vast majority reaching at least the expected level of development. By the time pupils leave they attain excellent results in externally standardised tests and curriculum assessments. Comprehensive tracking and monitoring procedures enable leaders and teachers to identify relative areas of weakness in the curriculum, in the performance of cohorts and for individual pupils. The interventions provided in response to this, support or challenge pupils according to their needs. As a result, pupils, including those with SEND, EAL and those who are most able, make excellent progress, from their varied starting points. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a very large majority of parents felt that teaching enables their children to make progress and all pupils who responded agreed that teachers know how to help them learn.

- 4.6 Pupils exhibit excellent communication skills, which they apply successfully to all areas of learning. Children in the EYFS display excellent phonetic understanding for their age. For example, during registration, Reception children independently identified and pronounced sounds accurately from cards on the carpet. They proceeded to form letters precisely and with care when writing words such as talent, wing and boy. Pupils throughout the school have highly developed vocabularies as a result of a language-rich learning environment where they are encouraged to use subject specific key words, cross-curricular links and synonyms as the norm. For example, pupils in Year 1 discussed sights, sounds and smells from *Leon and the Place*. They constructed sentences utilising clear steps, connectives, use of the first person and advanced adjectives for their age. Pupils with EAL and SEND achieve high standards as a result of confident, well-planned teaching utilising a range of learning activities and excellent support from skilled teaching assistants. Pupils speak confidently, conveying their ideas with great clarity. This includes answering questions in class, delivering effective presentations to their peers and activities such as public speaking. For example, pupils acted out parts with great dramatic effect in preparation for their end of year production.
- 4.7 Pupils demonstrate excellent knowledge, skills and understanding as a result of well-designed curriculum, excellent relationships with peers and adults and the individual support they receive from their teachers. The school meets its aim to stimulate enjoyment, imagination and creativity. Nursery children exhibited a range of advanced fine and gross motor skills for their age, such as effectively manipulating scissors, building a fire to toast marshmallows and balancing across an obstacle course. In art, pupils in Year 2 worked extremely successfully to apply their excellent knowledge of the Kenyan artist, Martin Bulinya. They skilfully copied his style using charcoal and added colour and markings representing African animals. Pupils are highly successful in the acquisition of age-appropriate musical skills. Children in Reception identified a scale moving up and down and played tuned percussion instruments effectively. All pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed that their skills and knowledge improve in most lessons. Inspection evidence supports this view.
- 4.8 Pupils are competent users of ICT. Children in the EYFS can make accurate observations about how their programmable toys move, depending on the instructions they give them when pressing buttons. Older pupils understand how coding can use repeating patterns. Pupils understand the difference between ICT as a subject and its use to support learning, and when given the opportunity, they show confidence in applying it more widely to other areas of the curriculum. In some lessons, ICT is fully integrated and greatly enhances pupils' learning. For example, in a physical education (PE) lesson, children in Reception used tablets to photograph their teammates whilst waiting for their turn. In mathematics, pupils in Year 1 used the whiteboard interactively to reinforce their learning about shape. However, inspection evidence indicated that the use of technology to support learning is limited and pupils do not always have the opportunity to apply their skills consistently across the curriculum.
- 4.9 Pupils' mathematical skills and knowledge are outstanding. For example, a group of Nursery children demonstrated an exceptional understanding of shape for their age, noting that they could not use a cone as the base for their tower as they would not be able to build it higher. Reception children showed an excellent understanding of numbers up to 100. Children enthusiastically threw bean bags into numbered hoops, effortlessly adding up their scores. Pupils throughout the school show an

excellent ability to solve problems in mathematics and commented that they enjoy investigations. Mathematics books demonstrate a strong focus on these areas, such as, 'Can all even numbers be quartered?' Mathematics teaching often features immersive and practical activities that capture pupils' attention and contextualise the mathematics ideas at hand. For example, Year 1 pupils reinforced their understanding of vertices and exhibited fun as they used playdough and sticks to create a range of shapes. Pupils confidently use their numerical skills across the curriculum, such as drawing graphs in science, timelines across history and using coordinates in geography.

- 4.10 Pupils' academic and other achievements are strong for their age and the size of the school. Pupils are proud of their successes in school, displaying the stickers earned in the course of the day's lessons and adding up the house points they have contributed to the overall total. Leavers succeed in gaining places at their schools of choice, the majority going on to those with competitive entry requirements. The quality of pupils' singing heard during the inspection was high and a majority of pupils take piano lessons. All pupils from Reception upwards represent the school in an annual swimming gala and many play in tennis fixtures. Pupils enjoy opportunities to display work in an annual art exhibition and in national competitions. Pupils' non-academic achievements are supported and strengthened by the range of clubs and activities that leaders and staff provide such as ballet, musical theatre and nature.
- 4.11 Pupils of all ages and abilities develop an excellent range of study skills and exhibit natural curiosity. They are inspired by the open-ended, cross curricular topics they investigate in the thoughtfully constructed thematic curriculum. All the parents who responded to the questionnaire agree that the school equips pupils with the team-working, collaborative and research skills they need in later life. Nursery children excitedly analysed the growth of their beans as they arrived in the morning. Pupils in Year 1 synthesised their knowledge of the properties of shapes to explain why the answer had to be an octagon. Pupils in Year 2 successfully used higher-order thinking skills to infer information from a picture of a goblin, commenting that it could be creating rain, because of the artists use of a watering can. Pupils of all ages make predictions during science lessons such as in Year 1 when pupils decided if hand sanitiser cleans hands as well as hand soap. Pupils' thinking skills are constantly developed through teachers' probing questioning and encouraging challenges.
- 4.12 Pupils of all ages, needs and abilities display strong attitudes to learning, whether they are working individually, in pairs, or in groups. Children in the EYFS show imagination and independence, encouraged by the effective support they receive from adults. Throughout the school, pupils are both curious and ambitious, taking leadership in their learning. Their considerable success is a result of the evident ethos where kindness, independence and resilience are core. In a resilience in schools and education (RISE) lesson, groups of pupils in Year 2 worked diligently on solving problems and applied themselves wholeheartedly to the activity. Pupils report that they are able to develop their initiative and independence through being part of a supportive community; a safe and nurturing environment where character, confidence and creativity can take root and blossom. The school meets its aim to promote in pupils a love of learning and a desire to achieve their potential.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 4.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.14 Pupils' high levels of self-confidence and self-awareness are evident in their demeanour. For example, at the start of the day, children throughout the EYFS settle into the classroom calmly and happily, smiling and clearly at ease. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 showed great awareness of their feelings as they justified the reason for their choice of emotion monster. All parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school helps their child to be confident and independent. Observations throughout the inspection support this view. Pupils have a keen awareness of their strengths. Far from being daunted by mistakes, they genuinely see these as a means to reflect on how to improve their work. Senior leaders and teaching staff promote a can-do approach to learning which help to encourage pupils' resilience. In English, pupils in Year 1 demonstrated an extremely high level of self-

confidence and self-knowledge when speaking in front of their peers, undaunted by any errors and determined to improve their work. Across the school adults relate to pupils in a highly positive and encouraging manner that promotes pupils' self-confidence effectively.

- 4.15 Despite their relatively young ages, pupils soon become adept decision-makers understanding from an early stage that their actions have consequences. Their understanding of the impact of their choices is encouraged by the frequency with which teachers offer praise when they notice good behaviour or kind actions. During outdoor play, Nursery children advised each other and adults to take care near the slippery slope and pupils in Year 2 warned visitors that it wasn't safe to stand near the football game. Choice is a common feature of lessons, with pupils given opportunities to select appropriate activities with suitable levels of challenge. Children throughout the EYFS exhibited long concentration spans in their activities, showing that these have been self-chosen well. Pupils in Year 2 displayed excellent decision-making prowess in a PE lesson when choosing how best to move a ball down some guttering to drop into a basket.
- 4.16 Pupils' spiritual awareness and appreciation of non-material aspects of life are advanced for their age. Pupils in Year 2 conveyed mature, reflective ideas about what is important to them in life, mentioning family, happiness and being kind and helpful. They expressed thoughtful ideas about why they appreciate art and stories, such as, everyone views beauty in different ways. Pupils articulated an excellent appreciation of how kindness makes for a better family-based school. Pupils exhibit strong spiritual values and show a keen interest in the faith and beliefs of others. A group at lunch engaged positively in discussions about Mohammad inspiring people to look after animals. Older pupils successfully expressed how visiting different places of worship such as a church or gurdwara, can help you relax. Pupils develop an awareness and appreciation of different religions from an early stage as they explore special events and festivals celebrated by members of the local and wider communities. Nursery children excitedly explained how they had learned about Indian clothing and how to put on a sari. The high quality of pupils' spiritual understanding and development is evident in their ability to empathise with others.
- 4.17 Pupils show advanced moral development for their age and can distinguish right from wrong. Pupils were observed holding doors open for each other without being asked, offering others daily greetings, and showing genuine interest in each other's feelings. Nursery children readily followed prompts and instructions of staff, including lining up efficiently and with much consideration for each other. Reception children were seen negotiating effectively to avoid argument as they traded tools peacefully. Pupils approach their lessons with enthusiasm and in most of the lessons observed, pupils settled into their work purposefully as a result of the positive relationships between the pupils themselves and with the teacher. This was particularly evident when behaviour management strategies were consistently applied. In the questionnaire all pupils responded that the school expects them to behave well. Pupils spoke confidently about their personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and RISE lessons serving as a foundation for their moral understanding and intentions, stating that it teaches them to think before they act and challenge any contrary views.
- 4.18 Pupils consistently demonstrate excellent social collaboration and teamwork. For example, Reception children worked together effectively to find objects during a PE lesson. Pupils' effectiveness in collaborating with each other is developed by staff who frequently partner pupils to work together to solve problems and tackle tasks. In English, pupils in a Year 1 showed genuine concern for peer who were finding some things to be difficult and asked if they could help. All pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school helps them build positive relationships. Pupils spoke highly about the quality of relationships between staff and pupils, and that this helps to create a harmonious and happy community. This is engendered by the school culture that encourages relaxed relationships and social confidence.
- 4.19 Pupils of all ages take seriously the responsibilities they have to help around the school. Children in Reception are encouraged to engage in meaningful conversation as they take the register to the office and are equally eager to be chosen to be the milk monitor. Older pupils thrive through taking on formal

positions of responsibility such as house captains and membership of the school council and spoke maturely of the democratic process that they run to decide which charities to support. Year 2 pupils clearly enjoy acting as reading buddies with children in the EYFS and can articulate the importance of being good role models. Pupils are environmentally aware for their age with an appreciation of the importance of learning about pollution, recycling and the climate. All pupils take part in a 'polluted pool' venture on World Oceans Day, working together to clear the swimming pool of waste. Pupils also take seriously the opportunities they have to be involved in the local community. For example, Nursery children helped to make hanging baskets to take to a local care home.

- 4.20 In response to the ethos of kindness and mutual respect that permeates the school, pupils engage naturally and without hesitation with those with backgrounds and cultures different from their own. Pupils have developed this understanding because leaders, governors and staff constantly promote the importance of acceptance, positive mindsets and sharing worries. All parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people. Pupils have a thoughtful awareness of British society and in particular the role of tolerance. Pupils expressed that whilst some people are better at doing things, that doesn't make them better people. Pupils value the opportunity to learn about their own and others' cultures. Their knowledge and understanding of these are well developed as opportunities for them to do so is woven through the core curriculum. For example, every morning children respond in a different language to their name being called in the register.
- 4.21 Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. From an early age, planned activities laced through the curriculum help them to understand the meaning of a balanced diet. For example, Nursery children used the story *Handa's Surprise* to weigh and measure different fruits and discuss why they are good to eat. Pupils spoke most positively about the five minutes taken each day on their wellbeing, such as doing yoga and undertaking short meditation activities. Pupils were able to articulate thoughtful and sensible strategies that they could use to stay safe online, including alerting a trusted adult should something appear that does not look right. The school has been successful, through strong leadership and effective governance, at creating a culture where pupils are happy, safe and healthy across all ages.

5. Inspection Evidence

- 5.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Ruth Loveman	Reporting inspector
Mrs Caroline Petryszak	Compliance team inspector (Former head, GSA school)
Miss Kaye Lovejoy	Team inspector (Former head, ISA school)
Mrs Valerie Holloway	Co-ordinating inspector for early years (Former head of nursery and kindergarten, IAPS school)