



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**ACKWORTH SCHOOL**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Ackworth School

Full Name of School	<b>Ackworth School</b>
DfE Number	<b>384/6000</b>
EYFS Number	<b>EY336115</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>529280</b>
Address	<b>Ackworth School Ackworth Pontefract West Yorkshire WF7 7LT</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01977 611401</b>
Fax Number	<b>01977 616225</b>
Email Address	<b>reception@ackworthschool.com</b>
Head	<b>Anton Maree</b>
Clerk of School Committee	<b>Adrian Sharp</b>
Age Range	<b>2 to 19</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>448</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (231 boys; 217 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>0-2 (EYFS): 9      5-11: 104 3-5 (EYFS): 20      11-18: 315</b>
Number of Day Pupils	<b>Total: 344</b>
Number of Boarders	<b>Total: 104 Full: 102      Flexi: 2</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mary Wilson</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>23 Sep 2014 to 26 Sep 2014</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 March 2009.

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, as amended. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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 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 Education (DfE) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

This inspection contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education, personal development and welfare. Until September 2011, Boarding inspections were carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills.

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.

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 in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgements.

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', 'requires improvement' 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 clerk of the school committee, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mrs Elizabeth Coley	Reporting Inspector
Mr Richard Barr	Team Inspector (Former Head of Sixth Form, HMC school)
Mr Alan Bougeard	Team Inspector (Assistant Head, HMC school)
Mr Robert Chatburn	Team Inspector (Head of MFL and International Students, Society of Heads school)
Mrs Helen Higginson	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Mr Patrick Lee-Browne	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Ms Nicola Watson	Team Inspector (Head of EYFS, SoH school)
Ms Diane Martin	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
Mrs Penny Oates	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Ackworth School is a co-educational boarding and day school for pupils from the ages of 2 to 19, situated in the centre of the village of Ackworth near the town of Pontefract in West Yorkshire. It was founded in 1779 by John Fothergill on behalf of The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Quakers believe that there is something of God in everyone, and the Quaker values of simplicity, truth, equality, peace and sustainability inform everything that the school does. The school is run as a charitable trust and administered by a board of governors known as the School Committee, whose chair is called the clerk. Its members are appointed by Ackworth General Meeting which is the agent of Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, and which over the years has delegated the authority for governance and management to the School Committee appointed by that Meeting. The school also includes an International Centre (IC) for overseas pupils and an Autism Resource Unit (ARU). Since the previous inspection, lessons for international pupils have been integrated into the main teaching block. The Meeting House and the Nursery accommodation, which is two minutes' walk from the main school and for children aged two to four, have been refurbished, with the Nursery now offering all-year-round extended provision from 7.30 a.m. to 6 p.m. The current head took up his appointment at the beginning of September 2014.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection, there were 448 pupils on the school roll; 231 boys and 217 girls. Twenty-nine children from the ages of two to five were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), of whom nine were under the age of three. Thirty-one pupils were in Years 1 and 2, 73 were in Years 3 to 6, and 315 were in Years 7 to 13, of whom 91 were in the sixth form. One hundred and four pupils board at the school in two boarding houses, one for boys and one for girls, with 83 of these coming from overseas, mainly from China, Hong Kong and Russian-speaking countries; over twenty nationalities are represented. Twenty-three pupils focus on improving their English within the IC so that they are able to continue their education in due course within the sixth form.
- 1.3 Ninety-three pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) of whom 22 receive specialist learning support from the school. Nine pupils have a statement of special educational needs of whom eight are under the auspices of the ARU. Sixty-four pupils use English as an additional language (EAL) and 11 are at an early stage of acquiring the language. One out of every nine pupils comes from a minority ethnic background. Most day pupils live within 15 to 20 miles of the school and come from professional, business or rural families. The majority of pupils are from non-Quaker families. The ability profile of the junior school, known as Coram House, and the senior school is above the national average. In the sixth form, the ability profile is in line with the national average for sixth forms. Throughout the school there is a wide spread of abilities.
- 1.4 Ackworth School's purpose is to create a happy and secure environment, based on Quaker values, in which all pupils develop their own special abilities, in constant awareness of the needs and claims of others. It aims to help all pupils to progress, to achieve the best external examination results of which they are capable and to leave school equipped to lead a full and responsible life, by providing the widest range of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities. It seeks to develop a well-integrated and self-disciplined community, with an international dimension, and to help pupils to value their surroundings, having an understanding of wider environmental issues. It strives to provide, in conjunction with parents and guardians, care and support for pupils as they mature, so they grow in self-respect,

consider others before self, look for the good in people and are honest and trustworthy at all times.

- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the senior school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

***Senior School***

School	NC name
First Year	Year 7
Second Year	Year 8
Third Year	Year 9
Fourth Year	Year 10
Fifth Year	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

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

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

- 2.1 Ackworth School largely fulfils its aims, to which Quaker values are central. Pupils' achievements throughout the school are good and they make effective progress across academic and other activities, with an excellent range of opportunities available through clubs, visits and residential trips. Supporting these good achievements are the positive relationships between all in the school community, the pupils' exemplary behaviour and their outstanding attitudes to learning. The school provides a broad curriculum. Opportunity for skills' development in information and communication technology (ICT) is limited beyond Year 8, as was the case in the senior school at the time of the previous inspection. The timetable in Coram House means that pupils can spend long periods of time on the same subject. Teaching is good and supports pupils' achievements effectively. The assessment data collected is not used sufficiently well in classes to ensure appropriate challenge for more able pupils and marking does not always help pupils to improve. Since the previous inspection little progress has been made in using a consistent form of target setting across the whole school. The provision for those in the IC, the ARU and for those with SEND in specialist lessons is of high quality, but, as at the time of the previous inspection in senior school, the quality of the support for those with SEND across the school in subject lessons is variable. Pupils in the sixth form achieve well and most gain entry to their first choice university.
- 2.2 The personal development of the pupils is excellent and is supported by good levels of pastoral care. Pupils throughout the school are confident, articulate and mature for their ages. Their social development is extremely strong, in line with the aims of the school. The sixth-form pupils take the lead in having an excellent awareness of their responsibilities to others locally, nationally and internationally. The support which older pupils give to younger ones, for example at lunchtime or through service within the school, ensures a cohesive and integrated community. The care demonstrated by all staff, teaching and non-teaching, throughout the school is of a high quality. The arrangements for pupils' welfare, health and safety are sound, with day-to-day procedures for safeguarding being effective. Boarding makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. Relationships within boarding between pupils of various nationalities are exceptionally strong and reflect Quaker values.
- 2.3 The School Committee has a sound oversight of the school but, whilst it has a formal system for reviewing policies as recommended at the time of the previous inspection, the monitoring of the content of these does not ensure the school's compliance with the regulatory requirements at all times. The school has not been rigorous in following its recruitment processes in a few cases since the previous inspection. Leadership and management are sound. Senior leadership, supported by a strong staff team, is deeply committed to the pupils' achievement and personal development. The recently appointed head is formulating his clear vision for the future into a new development plan. Throughout the school, the systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are not undertaken sufficiently regularly or rigorously. A good appraisal process is used in Coram House and in boarding but it is not yet undertaken in the senior school. The school promotes strong links with parents.

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

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

- 2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:
- ensure that recruitment checks, concerning background history, qualifications, medical fitness and references are carried out on all staff before they begin work at the school, and that identity, right to work checks and enhanced disclosures are undertaken on governors before or as soon as practicable after their appointment [Part 4, paragraphs 19.(2)(b)(ii) and (e), 19.(3) and 21.(6)(b)(i) and (ii), under Suitability of staff and proprietors; and, for the same reason, Part 3, paragraphs 7.(a) and (b) and 8.(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety; also National Minimum Standard 14.1, under Staff recruitment and checks on other adults; and National Minimum Standard 11, under Child Protection].
- 2.5 The school does not meet all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013 as described above, and in addition it must:
- ensure that checks of identity, the barred list and enhanced disclosures are carried out on all persons over 16 not employed by the school but who live on site with access to boarders before they begin to reside at the school [National Minimum Standard 14.2, under Staff recruitment and checks on other adults].
- 2.6 See the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage section 6 for the inspection findings in relation to the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 for children under three.

### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 2.7 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Monitor the quality of teaching and learning more rigorously and regularly across the school and extend the system of appraisal to the senior school.
  2. Use the assessment data collected to ensure appropriate challenge is provided in all lessons, especially for more able pupils.
  3. Ensure marking helps pupils know what to do to improve their work.
  4. Extend the opportunities for the development of ICT skills beyond Year 8, and ensure pupils in Coram House do not spend long periods of time on the same subject.
  5. Build on the system of professional supervision in the EYFS to support children's welfare and development.

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

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is good.
- 3.2 Throughout the school, pupils are well educated in accordance with the school's aims, demonstrating a range of academic, social, physical and creative skills. They acquire good levels of knowledge, understanding and skills in all the required areas of the curriculum. They are literate; they listen well, read efficiently, speak confidently and have good writing skills. They are coherent in expressing their views and can reason and work things out for themselves. Pupils apply mathematical ideas and scientific skills competently in a range of situations. They show good creativity in their work, especially in art and in the extra-curricular activities available. Their physical and teamwork skills are well developed. Their ICT skills are sound, but the wider use of ICT to support their learning is limited. In the sixth form, pupils continue to make good progress. They work hard to achieve good levels of knowledge, understanding and skills in their chosen subjects. They can argue a point of view with confidence and write creatively and persuasively. They take great pride in presenting their written work and can work independently to good effect.
- 3.3 Pupils enjoy success in a wide range of activities, and this has a strong impact on their personal development. They have succeeded in the UK mathematics challenges, several older pupils achieved awards in the chemistry and biology Olympiads, and many who enter speech and drama, instrumental music examinations or local music festivals achieve highly. Individuals do well at national and regional level in squash, tennis, biathlon, synchronised swimming, hockey, sailing, martial arts, music and drama productions. Teams are successful in sport at all ages and levels, for example, at county level in football, netball, hockey, cricket and tennis. Coram House pupils compete successfully against local schools and reach the finals of regional sports tournaments. Some in the senior school achieve well in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE), including success at the gold level. Pupils also perform at a high level in drama, public speaking and debating competitions and national quizzes. Almost all sixth-form pupils, including the more able and those with SEND or EAL, achieve places at their first or second choice of university.
- 3.4 Pupils' attainment in Coram House cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be high in relation to national age-related expectations. Standardised measures of progress in Coram House indicate that pupils make progress that is appropriate in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Inspection judgements, as assessed in lesson observation, pupils' written work and curriculum interviews with them, indicate that current levels of progress are good in relation to pupils of similar abilities.
- 3.5 The following analysis refers to pupils from the UK only, not those within the IC, and uses the national data for the years 2011 to 2013. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in GCSE have been good in relation to the national average for maintained schools. IGCSE results overall are higher than worldwide averages in single sciences and English, and similar to worldwide norms in double award science. Biology results are above UK norms, where the benchmark is higher. A-level results have been similar to the national average for maintained schools, having declined since 2011 when they

were above the national average. This level of attainment indicates that pupils in the senior school make appropriate progress in relation to pupils of similar abilities, and this is confirmed in standardised measures of progress. Results for 2014 at both GCSE and A level show an improvement on 2013 and standardised measures of progress for these cohorts indicate that progress was good. Inspection evidence confirms that current progress in the senior school is good in relation to pupils of similar abilities.

- 3.6 Overall, GCSE and IGCSE results for pupils in the IC, who are also taught for some of the time within senior school lessons, have been lower than UK and worldwide norms; however, as the size of the cohorts is very small the statistics are not reliable. The results achieved by those pupils who took 5 GCSEs are below average overall, mainly due to particularly low results in 2012. The results in 2011 and 2013 were similar to the national average. IGCSE results for these pupils were generally below worldwide norms. Results in mathematics in 2013 were similar to worldwide norms, and 2014 results have slightly improved. The IGCSE results of those pupils taught in the IC only were generally below worldwide norms. However, their mathematics results in 2012 were above worldwide norms, as were business studies in 2013.
- 3.7 Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire show that the large majority of parents are highly satisfied with the progress being made by their children. Inspectors found that progress was good because well-planned lessons enhanced pupils' subject knowledge. However, activities specifically designed to challenge the thinking of the most able were limited, and this results in less rapid learning and progress for these pupils. Pupils with SEND make good progress in relation to the average for pupils of similar ability because in some lessons subject staff focus on giving them extra individual support in their understanding within lessons as necessary. This was also confirmed in discussions with pupils. Attainment data indicates that pupils from the ARU make excellent progress over their time in the school as a result of the additional one-to-one support provided by learning mentors for these pupils as appropriate to their needs. Pupils with EAL similarly achieve well, receiving excellent specialist tuition when necessary and mostly effective support from subject teachers who ensure their understanding of instruction and information within lessons.
- 3.8 Pupils at all stages of the school have excellent attitudes to learning. They are co-operative, diligent, well organised and settle quickly in class. They are keen to succeed and they listen to, and support, one another. They work well in collaboration and persevere when working on their own. In nearly all subjects, pupils complete a good volume of written work over time, and they take extremely good care with the presentation and organisation of books and files. They enjoy learning and are confident about asking questions when they need assistance.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.10 It is in line with the school's aim to create a happy and secure environment, based on Quaker values, in which all pupils can realise and develop their own special abilities. The curriculum makes an effective contribution to pupils' good achievements. It is carefully planned, suiting all ages, aptitudes and abilities. In parental responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all parents believe that the school provides a suitable range of subjects and activities.
- 3.11 Throughout the school pupils are provided with the requisite areas of learning. In Coram House the curriculum is planned to enable progress and continuity in pupils' learning. However, long periods of time are allocated to some subjects within the timetable which restricts the daily variety of learning. Pupils gain self-reliance and resourcefulness by using the woodland environment as an integrated part of their timetable. In Years 7 to 13, pupils benefit from a balanced curriculum, including a wide range of choices at GCSE, IGCSE and A level. Since the previous inspection, A-level psychology and a redesigned sixth-form general studies programme have been introduced. The IC prepares pupils educationally for entry into the sixth form with a recently introduced programme of five GCSEs. The centre offers excellent opportunities for overseas pupils to improve their academic English and to mix with many different nationalities on a daily basis.
- 3.12 The ARU, known as Shed Court, provides an excellent facility as autistic pupils are supported by their learning mentors for lessons in some academic, practical or sports subjects, depending on each pupil's needs, in Coram House or the senior school as appropriate. Inclusion is a strength and socially this occurs daily at break and lunchtime. For other pupils with SEND, specialist provision is strong with individual education plans written for those who have individual support. However, extra help within subject lessons, particularly concerning tasks matched to their needs, is still variable, an issue raised at the previous inspection. Provision for those who are more able is in its early days; a co-ordinator has been appointed and various activities to challenge any pupil are organised through societies such as Fothergill, which arranges for visiting speakers on a variety of topics or activities, and 'Curiositea', a new discussion group which takes place over tea.
- 3.13 The personal and social education programme (PSE) is comprehensive and makes a valuable contribution to the very successful personal development of pupils, from the youngest in Coram House to those in the sixth form preparing to leave the school. Library provision is excellent and supports pupils' learning well with easy access to computer facilities; Coram House also has its own small library and good ICT provision. In the senior school, ICT is not taught as a discrete subject above Year 8, and the development of pupils' skills is restricted. Pupils are introduced to the careers library in Years 9 and 10 and a work experience programme at the end of Year 10 is organised effectively. Careers interviews in Year 11 supported by external professionals inform sixth-form subject choices. Pupils are given excellent advice about the higher education application process. Committee members, parents and friends of the school regularly visit to give sixth-form pupils information about possible future careers.
- 3.14 Throughout the school, there is an excellent variety of extra-curricular options that aid pupils' intellectual, aesthetic and physical development. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the vast majority of parents said that pupils could join

in a good range of activities; the published programme of activities and almost all responses to the pupil questionnaire confirm this. Educational visits, including regular trips to places of educational and cultural interest, support learning very effectively. In Coram House, pupils benefit from cultural and adventure residential experiences. The DoE award in the senior school develops effectively key skills such as leadership and team working. Overseas trips to Iceland, Italy, New York and other international locations increase pupils' cultural understanding. The school has strong links with the local community, with a weekly Quaker gathering in the school's Meeting House. Coram House pupils entertain the residents in local retirement homes. The school has a global community link with Tanzania; pupils raise money to help sponsor the construction of farming facilities in Tanzanian villages as part of an overseas charity project.

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

- 3.15 The quality of teaching is good.
- 3.16 Teaching supports the general aim of the school to help all pupils to progress at a pace appropriate to their age, aptitude, interests and ability, and to achieve the best external examination results of which they are capable. It makes an effective contribution to pupils' good achievements. Teaching encourages pupils, including those who receive support for SEND or EAL, to make good, and in some cases excellent, progress and engage confidently in their lessons. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent, and the sense of mutual respect and a common academic purpose is evident throughout the school. Behaviour in lessons is exemplary. Many lessons give opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and resources are generally employed well in the classroom. Sixth-form pupils are encouraged to work independently and develop research skills, to good effect in many cases.
- 3.17 Good subject knowledge is evident and enthusiasm is communicated successfully so that pupils enjoy their lessons and take an active part in their learning. Teaching employs a variety of resources successfully and there is evidence of careful planning to foster the application of knowledge and skills acquired in the course of the lesson. In some lessons the teacher dominates the discussion, so that there are insufficient opportunities to evaluate and assess individual pupils' knowledge and understanding or for pupils to develop independent learning skills. In some others, the teaching does not move at a pace that challenges more able pupils or does not have high enough expectations, because tasks are set that do not promote the full range of pupils' responses or allow them to develop individual ideas. As a result progress is hindered in these lessons.
- 3.18 Appropriate individual support is given in many lessons to pupils identified with SEND or EAL, though there is less evidence that teaching provides for the pupils' individual learning needs by matching tasks or resources to support their learning. Those pupils in the ARU are given either excellent individual support, which is targeted to the requirements of their statement, or they are gradually integrated into subject lessons, supported by their learning mentor. The provision for those pupils within the IC as they acquire the English language is excellent, and in subject lessons the majority of staff focus on subject-specific language development to integrate them into the curriculum as quickly as possible.
- 3.19 Marking of written work sometimes provides helpful comments to inform pupils of their progress. The school's assessment policy allows individual departments to

decide their own strategies, which results in inconsistency. The best examples of marking provide detailed and focused comments that give advice to pupils on strategies for improvement. In other cases encouraging comments are not accompanied by guidance for improvement, or the marking is superficial or briefly summative. Academic data is collected on a regular basis but it is not used consistently by all subject staff in all year groups to inform the next steps in learning or set targets in order to raise achievement. The school has not yet suitably fulfilled the recommendation on target-setting from the previous inspection.

- 3.20 In their responses to the questionnaire most pupils were very positive about the progress that they make and the help they receive from their teachers.

## **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' personal qualities are outstanding, sustained by the school's Quaker ethos, where reflection and silence play an important part in their development and support the school's aim for all pupils to realise and develop their own special abilities in constant awareness of the needs and claims of others. Pupils' well-developed spiritual awareness is enhanced by their study of a wide range of other religions, starting at an early age. They understand extremely well other beliefs and faiths. Younger pupils' strong sense of awe and wonder is enriched by their participation in learning within a woodland environment. Pupils have high levels of self-esteem and confidence which develop through participation in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, inter-house competitions and opportunities to take part in musical and drama performances.
- 4.3 An extremely good understanding of moral and ethical values is demonstrated by pupils in their dealings with each other and the wider world. They work hard to understand each other's views, they know the difference between right and wrong, and younger pupils draw up their own class rules. Older pupils participate in an international youth peace group and organise activities extremely efficiently to raise awareness of such issues. Senior pupils were visibly moved by memories of discussions relating to China's child policy and life in the Mumbai slums. Visits to museums and other places of interest introduced them very effectively to the debate about slavery. Pupils are encouraged to understand that no one view is the right view – this gives them confidence to voice their own feelings and opinions.
- 4.4 Pupils communicate with confidence and show self-awareness and concern for others. All pupils have a very well-developed desire to help those less fortunate than themselves with many fund-raising and charitable activities taking place. Coram House pupils have worked together to raise money for charity and the sixth-form pupils run an annual charity week with proceeds going to international and local charities, such as a hospice, a food bank and support for improving a school in Tanzania. Pupils are encouraged to understand that everyone has a voice and should be engaged in what happens in society; this gives them a strong sense of social responsibility and they work very well to support their peers and other pupils in the school, for example a number of senior pupils volunteer to work with pupils in the ARU. Older pupils in each section of the school also readily mix with younger ones, eating with them in the dining room each day and, at times, helping them with their reading. Pupils are keen to take on posts of responsibility but a small minority of pupils, in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, feel they are not given sufficient opportunity to fulfil such roles; inspectors found that, whilst pupils in both Coram House and the senior school act as officers in their final years, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to have some form of responsibility in other year groups. Senior school officers play an important role in the care of pupils across the school. Pupils have a strong understanding and knowledge of public institutions and services in Britain; this is particularly well supported by a wide range of external speakers who address the sixth form and provide Sunday Evening Readings.
- 4.5 Pupils are extremely tolerant of each other's different abilities and backgrounds, with international pupils and pupils from the ARU being readily integrated into classes. Pupils also show great respect and understanding of other cultures and ideas,

fostered by a group set up to promote cultural exchanges between overseas and British pupils; activities include native speakers teaching other pupils Mandarin and a joint celebration of festivals from other cultures. Visits by pupils from Spain, Russia and Indonesia also provided a cultural exchange of views. Pupils' cultural appreciation is supported by a strong programme of art, musical and theatrical experiences in school, and visits to a variety of other venues, museums and galleries.

- 4.6 By the time pupils leave the school, the Quaker values instilled in them prepare them to play a full role in society and to value all those around them with a maturity beyond their ages.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of the arrangements for pastoral care is good.
- 4.8 The school provides good pastoral support for the pupils in line with the school's aims and Quaker values, which makes an effective contribution to their personal development. Throughout the school, the class teachers, form tutors and senior managers know the pupils well and create a happy, friendly atmosphere, in which the pupils feel safe and secure. They provide a high standard of help and support valued by the pupils and parents as they confirmed in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Excellent provision ensures that each pupil in Years 7 to 11 has two tutors and additional support is provided by the school counsellor. The school offers effective advice and guidance for the next stage of each pupil's education, including preparation for university. All pupils who responded to the questionnaire liked being at the school and almost all felt that there was always someone to turn to if need be.
- 4.9 Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves are excellent not only in lessons, but also at break times. There is a caring atmosphere evident throughout the school and both parents and pupils feel that each child is valued as an individual. This is further demonstrated through the strong appreciation of pupil achievements shown by the whole school in Morning Meetings.
- 4.10 Pupils participate enthusiastically in physical exercise within the curriculum and there are also further opportunities for sport within the extra-curricular programme. A good variety of food is provided and, from a young age, pupils understand the importance of choosing a healthy diet.
- 4.11 The school is effective in promoting exemplary behaviour and the conduct of the pupils themselves shows that they are aware of, and respond to, these high expectations. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a very small minority of parents indicated that they did not believe that the school deals well with bullying. Inspectors found that the school has clear procedures to guard against bullying and, in the senior school, bullying records are very well kept and organised, and the school deals constructively with any misbehaviour. Sanctions given are appropriate to the misdemeanour. In Coram House, concerns about bullying are mixed in with other behaviour issues and are thus recorded in a haphazard way, making a clear overview difficult. Throughout the school, the pupils themselves are invariably polite, friendly and helpful and say that bullying is not a major issue. They believe that, when it is identified, it is dealt with constructively.

- 4.12 A suitable plan exists to help with access to the curriculum, information and premises for those pupils who have SEND.
- 4.13 In the senior school, there are effective pupil councils for boarders, food and the sixth form, but the absence of a full school council leads to the perception amongst a minority of pupils that their voices are not heard. The senior managers have recognised the lack of a council across the senior school and already have a date in the school diary planned for the first meeting. In Coram House, there is an active school council that demonstrates that the school seeks and responds to the views of pupils, acting upon them in their best interests. It has assisted, for example, in fund-raising for an adventure playground as well as deciding which charities to support.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of the arrangements for welfare, health and safety are sound.
- 4.15 Welfare, health and safety practice makes a suitable contribution to pupils' personal development. The arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils in the school are effective on a day-to-day basis. The safeguarding policy is known by all staff, and there are strong links with the local children's social care services. Any child protection issues arising have been dealt with according to local guidelines and reported expeditiously, and include early referrals on a range of concerns according to the needs of pupils. Detailed records are kept. The designated safeguarding lead has attended a range of inter-agency meetings concerning the needs of pupils who attend the school. The staff are fully aware of their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding and all have received the appropriate training in this area of welfare. They have also received training in recognising the early signs of different types of abuse including self-harm and eating disorders. However, the implementation of the policy has not been as strong; recruitment checks on a few staff since the previous inspection have not been sufficiently robust.
- 4.16 All necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards, including holding termly fire drills in both day and boarding time, undertaking a fire risk assessment and carrying out the regular maintenance of mechanical and electrical equipment. However, the drills carried out in boarding hours are not sufficiently varied to ensure that pupils know how to react whatever the timing of the drill. Fire evacuation procedures and exits are clearly indicated around the school. Arrangements for health and safety are suitable; two issues were brought to the school's attention during the inspection, one of which was immediately corrected. Thorough risk assessments are carried out on premises, and before curriculum activities and school trips. Medical care of day pupils and boarders is effective, especially for those who have particular needs. First aid kits are situated in all areas of the school and the medical room provides appropriate facilities for pupils who fall ill during the school day.
- 4.17 Registers accurately record pupils' admission to, and attendance at, the school and these are suitably maintained and stored, as required, for three years.

#### **4.(d) The quality of boarding**

4.18 The quality of boarding is good.

4.19 Outcomes for boarders are excellent. Boarders are articulate, confident, and tolerant and are proud of their house and school, even though in the pre-inspection questionnaire a few said they did not enjoy boarding. Inspectors observed that they are extremely happy and the standard of care is very high. Relationships between boarders and staff and amongst boarders themselves are excellent; staff and boarders say that there is a good family atmosphere and the community is very supportive and friendly. Boarders feel able to talk to any member of staff as well as to school officers and other older pupils, and say that they are always given help if they ask for it. In both houses, weekly staff meetings are held when pupils' welfare is discussed and information shared. Boarders with statements of SEND are extremely well supported in the house. The housemaster and housemistress make great efforts to integrate international students and this is successful. These students feel very at home, accepted and able to mix freely. The selection process for school officers is rigorous, but only pupils who are boarding, or are willing to become boarders, which is encouraged, are given the opportunity to become officers. The training they receive is excellent and they feel that it gives them the confidence to fulfil their role. Boarders' views are sought and there is some evidence of feedback to them, but this is not cascaded as widely as it could be.

4.20 The quality of boarding provision and care is excellent. An informal induction process exists for new boarders and they are given a handbook on arrival which is very comprehensive. Sick or injured boarders are very well cared for. If they are too ill to attend school, they are looked after in the boarding house by medical staff. Records of treatments, injuries and accidents are appropriately monitored. There is a protocol for self-medication which is appropriately followed and the confidentiality and rights of boarders are respected. The counsellor is also the independent listener and, as such, she is available for drop-in sessions or on the telephone. She is very aware of her commitment to the pupils above all else. In their responses to the questionnaire, a minority of boarders said that the food provided was not good. Inspectors found that the food is of a good quality and there is plenty of choice at meals. Boarders are checked in at breakfasts and evening meals, and are monitored to ensure that all eat regularly. Any concern in this area is reported immediately to the designated safeguarding lead person. A minority of boarders also indicated that they are not happy with the availability of snacks. Inspectors found that there are snacks available at break and after school as well as fruit always being available in the house and at all meals.

4.21 Suitable health and safety procedures are followed; fire drills are held termly and all equipment checks are up-to-date and records kept as necessary. Risk assessments for premises, trips and activities are completed carefully and monitored. All boarders have lockable boxes for the safe storage of their possessions but they can hand things to the housemaster or housemistress for safe keeping if they wish. Pocket money is signed for on receipt from staff in the girls' house but not in the boys' house. There is a section in the pupils' personal organiser explaining what to do if pupils have a concern or complaint. Of those who responded to the questionnaire, a significant number indicated that they are not happy with the balance of free time and activities. Inspectors found that, in addition to the wider after-school activities, some are available in the sports hall, grounds, music centre and library after prep time, and pupils make good use of these as they wish. Inspectors also found that at weekends there is a comprehensive range of activities available as well as a weekly

trip out. Some pupils like to relax on a weekend and they say that there is always somewhere to go to be alone if they wish.

- 4.22 Accommodation is suitable and, in addition to separate common rooms and kitchens for girls and boys where they can prepare food if they wish, there is a shared common room available with kitchen and dining facilities as well as a lounge area. There are plenty of toilet, shower and bath facilities. Prep is done under suitable conditions with appropriate supervision; a member of the senior management team checks all pupils during prep time and this is recorded daily. Access to the boarding areas is secure. In their responses to the questionnaires, a minority of boarders said that they do not find it easy to contact friends and family. However inspectors found that they use mobile phones, emails and other electronic media, and younger boarders said that they were allowed to use the telephone in the matron's room if they needed to contact their family urgently.
- 4.23 The effectiveness of the arrangements for welfare and safeguarding are good; a very small number of staff had not had all recruitment checks completed before they arrived at the school. An agreement between the school and those living in boarding accommodation who are not employed by the school is signed as appropriate. The safeguarding policy is comprehensive. The designated safeguarding lead person ensures that all boarding staff are trained and are aware of their responsibilities in this area. Boarders say that they feel safe in the school. Behaviour is exemplary and staff and pupils agree that any misdemeanour is dealt with swiftly and fairly. There does not appear to be any specific rewards system in either house, although recognition and praise are given when appropriate. Any bullying incidents are recorded in detail and have been dealt with satisfactorily, and enable support of both involved. Supervision of boarders beyond the school day is suitable and effective systems enable staff to know where boarders are at any time; they understand what to do if a boarder goes missing. Boarders know who is in charge if they need help at any time and they can contact at least one member of staff during the night.
- 4.24 Leadership and management of boarding are good. The statement of boarding principles and practice is evident in the boarders' handbook and on the website, and it is clear that the statement is accurate. All house staff, except the matrons, teach, enabling good links between the academic and boarding sides of school life. Boarding is well led and this is reflected in the excellent standard of personal development of the boarders. Policies are accurately implemented by staff. Job descriptions for all staff are produced and a good system of appraisal has been recently set up, as well as a regular review of boarding practice. Staff are trained informally at school and a number of them are booked on external professional development courses to further improve boarding practice. Some have undertaken online courses related to the care of young people. There is an effective level of consistency in the expectations of boarders by staff between the two houses.
- 4.25 The parents who responded to the questionnaires were very positive, and no aspect of concern about boarding was raised by a significant number of parents. The recommendations of the previous inspection concerning regular reviews of boarding practice linked to development planning, providing menus that meet a higher proportion of the national tastes represented among boarders, and providing more weekend activities, have been largely addressed.

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

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

- 5.1 The governance of the school is sound.
- 5.2 The School Committee exercises effective oversight and guidance of the school in most respects, helping to set and fulfil appropriate aims, in line with its purpose of creating a happy and secure environment, based on Quaker values. The Committee members have a wide range of expertise and have organised themselves into five sub-committees: executive, education, finance, planning, and estate and domestic. Several members also take a particular interest and responsibility for aspects of school life, for example safeguarding, boarding, Coram House, SEND, and human resources. They meet in sub-committees and as a full Committee at least once per term. Their minutes indicate that all aspects of school life are discussed and debated alongside the reports of the head, the head of Coram House and the various sub-committees. The chair of the Committee, known as the clerk, is in regular contact with the head and the bursar, offering suitable challenge and support for stimulus and growth of the school. All members attend school functions when they are able, as well as visiting the school at the time of their meetings to learn more about the development and educational standards of particular departments.
- 5.3 Committee members have undertaken some formal training, including child protection and the role of governance, through which they endeavour to keep abreast of their responsibilities for child protection and welfare, health and safety. They carry out their annual review of child protection and the efficiency of the way in which the related duties are discharged appropriately. A recommendation of the previous inspection was for the policies and procedures to be reviewed regularly, and the Committee has set up in recent years a rotating process for this to happen. However, they have not undertaken their monitoring of the content of policies and procedures rigorously enough, particularly in relation to the required checks on the recruitment of a few staff. The School Committee has drawn up a five-year strategic plan which will soon be nearing its completion, and together with senior leadership, it is instrumental in driving forward its plans for development. In the recent past, the School Committee has made effective financial provision for educational development through refurbishing the Nursery provision and the Meeting House. It also ensures that suitable investment is made in terms of material and human resources across the school.

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

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management is sound.
- 5.5 The senior leadership, supported by a strong teaching and non-teaching staff team, enables the aims of the school to be largely fulfilled, reflecting the good quality of the pupils' education and their excellent personal development. Self-evaluation of academic and welfare areas is suitable. Senior leadership demonstrates a strong understanding of the school's current stage in its development and, although having only just arrived, the new head has a clear vision for future improvement with a relatively small number of important targets, to enable staff to contribute effectively towards its fulfilment. These are currently being formulated into a new written school development plan. The School Committee, together with senior managers, has also produced a five-year strategic plan, covering the important areas of school life, with the Quaker ethos of the school as its central feature.
- 5.6 Throughout the school, a great deal of information about pupils' progress and welfare is shared both formally within various staff meetings and informally. Policies are reviewed regularly and implemented effectively in the main, although scrutiny of the evidence prior to the inspection showed that the school has not always been rigorous in ensuring that it keeps up-to-date with the most recent regulatory requirements. By the end of the inspection, the school had taken suitable steps to ensure that identified shortcomings in documentation had been dealt with. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observation has been undertaken by senior management, although not sufficiently regularly or rigorously. Some middle managers are involved in monitoring staff in their own departments but this is not consistent across all departments. An appraisal system is not carried out currently in the senior school but good systems in Coram House and boarding are used. An appropriate amount of in-service training is offered to staff both within school and externally, and a good number take the opportunity to develop their understanding of changes to public examination specifications. All staff have been trained in the key areas of safeguarding and welfare, health and safety, and they demonstrate high levels of care and concern for pupils and their needs. The induction of new staff to the school is good.
- 5.7 Recruitment checks in the areas of references, qualifications, medical fitness and background history, have not always been undertaken before a member of staff began work at the school. In addition, checks on a very few members of the School Committee were not carried out as soon as practicable. However, the centralised register accurately records the recruitment checks carried out on staff, governors and volunteers when they were appointed. Accommodation is used to best advantage and the grounds are well maintained. Non-teaching staff, including those involved in catering, cleaning, grounds and administration, make a strong contribution to the support offered to pupils and enable the school to run efficiently. Recommendations from the previous whole school inspection have not yet been suitably fulfilled concerning the improvement of ICT in the senior school and using a consistent form of target-setting across the whole school.
- 5.8 The school's links with parents are good and meet the school's stated aims. Almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire are positive about the education that their children receive and are satisfied that their children are supported appropriately in their learning. An increasing amount of communication between the school and parents takes place electronically both by email and via the

school website which is a source of useful and relevant information for parents of current and prospective pupils. This includes the school policies and other information which is required to be available to parents. In addition the school produces several publications including *Ackworth Today* which reports on matters such as sporting successes, trips, visitors and charity events. An *International Centre Newsletter* reports on news and events regarding overseas students, and *Coram Chronicle* and *Coram Connects* cover diary dates and reminders concerning Coram House and Nursery. The head also produces a letter to parents each half term.

- 5.9 The school welcomes parents at any time and aims to be approachable. A drop-in surgery is held by the two deputy heads each week when parents can discuss issues which concern them. A very small minority of parents indicated in their responses to the questionnaire that their concerns were not handled well. In scrutinising the complaints log and files, the latter being well documented and recorded, inspectors found that complaints are handled in accordance with the school's published policy.
- 5.10 The parent staff association (PSA) is well supported by parents and contributes to the school as a whole. The PSA is active in fund-raising and recently provided equipment for the adventure playground and improvements to the boarding house kitchen. A 'Macmillan Tea Party' raised funds for charity and provided an opportunity for parents to meet. School concerts, performances and events such as the annual Founder's Day enable parents to be involved in school life if they wish. Coram House and Nursery hold a curriculum evening for parents each autumn term. Throughout the year, messages are conveyed to and from parents via the pupil homework book. The senior school holds a new pupil-parent forum meeting at the beginning of each academic year. All of these events give opportunities for parents to meet with staff and be involved in aspects of school life.
- 5.11 The school operates a reporting system whereby Coram House and Nursery hold parent consultation evenings in the autumn and spring terms with a written interim report in the spring term and a full written report in the penultimate week of the summer term followed by the invitation to meet with staff during the last week of term. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of parents indicated that they were not satisfied with the information they were given concerning their child's progress. Inspectors agree that across the school there is some inconsistency in the information provided. The best reports give clear indications regarding pupils' knowledge, skills and progress with advice on steps needed to improve performance.

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

## **6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

### **6.(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend**

- 6.1 The setting makes good provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. Suitable programmes and activities cover the seven areas of learning well. Staff are committed to providing a happy, caring and purposeful environment, built on mutual respect and positive relationships for both the under-threes and the older children. They engage the children well in their learning, developing effectively their exploratory and imaginative skills. For example, with the support of an adult, under-threes were motivated to explore the properties of very runny glue for the first time and older children were very keen to emulate the skills of their teacher in handling dentist's tools. Children are gently encouraged to do their best. Carefully judged interventions ensure that children reflect on their learning and refine their skills. All children reach at least the developmental levels typically expected for their age, but in some lessons the more able children are not given sufficient challenge. Planning is detailed, but does not consistently include specific targets for each ability group, particularly the more able, so as to fully meet the school's aim to tailor the education to the individual needs of each child by identifying the next steps in their learning. Children identified as having SEND and EAL are supported individually in lessons well.
- 6.2 An appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities is available, both inside and outdoors, and children benefit from a variety of teaching strategies which are enhanced by specialist teaching in music, PE and swimming for the older children. When the time comes for the transition to the next stage, it is smooth and natural because of the careful organisation which allows for a phased progression to take place. Parents of EYFS children, both in questionnaires and in discussion, were very supportive of the school, appreciating the standard of their children's care and the amount of information they receive. They feel involved in their children's learning and development and are fully informed about all aspects of their child's experiences and progress. The end of year reports keep parents informed about how their children are performing against the EYFS Profile, but do not always clearly identify appropriately personalised next steps.

### **6.(b) The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being**

- 6.3 The provision for children's well-being is outstanding. The welcoming environment and generous staff to child ratios enable staff to form strong bonds with all the children, promoting high standards of behaviour and courtesy. Simple class rules encourage very positive relationships and as a consequence children respect each other's similarities and differences. They co-operate and share very well. Children are happy in their learning and come to school enthusiastically each day. They delight in exploring the opportunities within the classroom as well as outside. Manoeuvring robust vehicles around the Nursery outdoor play area has already become second nature for even the newest recruits. Reception children enjoy being able to design and make complex constructions in their creative classroom. Planning allows scope for working either independently or as a group. Adult intervention is supportive but not invasive. Children learn about healthy eating and enjoy the nutritious lunches and healthy fruit snacks. Regular exercise is taken in

play sessions in the well-resourced outdoor spaces and this is enhanced for the older children by swimming, games and PE lessons. Older children manage their own personal needs efficiently and are well aware of the importance of washing hands before eating. Younger children are acquiring these skills, suitably supported by the adults. When the time comes, all children are well prepared to move on to the next stage of their schooling. Since the previous inspection, several new initiatives have been introduced to make this process as relaxed as possible for the children, including regular visits to the next class.

### **6.(c) The leadership and management of the early years provision**

- 6.4 Leadership and management are good. The School Committee is well informed about the EYFS. A link Committee member visits on a regular basis and the head of Coram House provides detailed updates for Committee meetings. The Committee strongly endorses the school's vision for the setting. Since the previous inspection, investment for Reception and Nursery has considerably enhanced and extended the facilities and the youngest children may now attend all-year round. Senior managers have suitable oversight of regulatory compliance. Policies have recently been reviewed and updated to reflect current statutory requirements and practice. Staff know and understand the policies well and procedures are implemented consistently across the setting. This, together with thorough risk assessments and oversight of the educational programmes, provides a safe, secure and welcoming environment. Comprehensive self-evaluation is undertaken and a detailed development plan demonstrates a desire for improvement. Staff work as a strong unit. Managers have systems for supervising the team, and these are in the early stages of development. Every opportunity is taken for professional training and sharing new knowledge. Support and intervention from outside agencies such as the local authority, in partnership with parents, are used when necessary in a positive and fruitful way, ensuring that each child makes at least appropriate progress.

### **6.(d) The overall quality and standards of the early years provision**

- 6.5 The overall quality and standards of the provision are good. The children make good progress in their learning and development relative to their starting points, abilities and needs. On occasion, tasks set are not sufficiently tailored to enable the most able to be fully challenged. Children with particular needs, or for whom English is an additional language, also make good progress because of the individual support they are given by staff within lessons. At the end of Reception, many children achieve the Early Learning Goals, with some exceeding them. The youngest children express themselves capably in their conversations with each other and staff during activities. They discussed the activity of the wolf in the story of *The Three Little Pigs* whilst playing with bricks in the sand. Older children recognise individual sounds and use phonics to build simple words as they begin to acquire early reading skills, and they recognise simple patterns and sequences.
- 6.6 The children's personal development is excellent. From the Nursery onwards, they co-operate and share with each other and their behaviour is exemplary. They are happy in their work and play. Supported by a very well-trained staff in a friendly, stimulating environment, each child's welfare is strongly promoted, with a keen awareness of the required health and safety and safeguarding procedures. For children in Reception, attending Meetings with Years 1 and 2 provides an opportunity for them to reflect on the needs of others and to celebrate their own achievements, as well as those of older children. The school demonstrates a strong capacity for continuous improvement and has addressed the area identified for

improvement at the time of the previous inspection; Nursery children now benefit from a phased programme to extend their opportunities to mix with the older children. Parents and staff feel that this has helped the children to gain confidence about moving on to the next phase in their education and to be more independent when they do so.

### **Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three**

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

**Section 2 includes any identified action the Early Years Foundation Stage is recommended to take in order to improve its provision.**