



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
ALDERLEY EDGE SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

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Alderley Edge School for Girls

Full Name of School	Alderley Edge School for Girls		
DfE Number	895/6012 Ofsted 895/2614 Cheshire East		
EYFS Number	EY449008		
Registered Charity Number	1006726		
Address	Alderley Edge School for Girls Wilmslow Road Alderley Edge Cheshire SK9 7QE		
Telephone Number	01625 583028		
Fax Number	01625 590271		
Email Address	schoolmail@aesg.co.uk		
Head	Mrs Susan Goff		
Chair of Governors	Mrs Shirley Herring		
Age Range	2 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	541		
Gender of Pupils	Girls		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	12	5-11: 120
	3-5 (EYFS):	42	11-18: 367
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Helen Thomaides		
EYFS Gender	Girls		
Inspection Dates	03 Feb 2015 to 06 Feb 2015		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in February 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) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations can be viewed on the website 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.

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

Inspectors

Mrs Pamela Leech	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Maria Edwards	Team Inspector, Former Head, GSA, IAPS school
Mr Bryan Kane	Team Inspector, Academic Deputy Head, IAPS school
Mr Philip Capes	Team Inspector, Former Headmaster, HMC school
Mr Laurence Fleck	Team Inspector, Former Director of Faculty, GSA school
Mr Martin Kettlewell	Team Inspector, Director of Music, HMC school
Mr Laurence McKell	Team Inspector, Former Headmaster, HMC school
Mrs Sally Gray	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Alderley Edge School for Girls is an independent day school providing education for pupils between the ages of two and eighteen. The school aims to create a positive, empowering environment where pupils are encouraged to strive for excellence in every sphere of their education, whether academic, creative or physical. The school seeks to help pupils develop into independent learners with a thirst for knowledge and a passion for lifelong learning.
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1999, from the merger of two long established local girls' schools: Mount Carmel, a Roman Catholic school, and St Hilary's, an Anglican school. Now an ecumenical Christian school where traditional Christian values underpin its ethos, Alderley Edge School welcomes pupils from all faiths as well as those with no faith but who espouse their values. The school is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. The governing body comprises twelve governors, two of whom represent the founding schools.
- 1.3 The school has undergone significant development since the previous inspection including the addition of a drama/dance studio, a music school and increased provision for information and communication technology (ICT) in both junior and senior schools. A common room has been created for Year 11 and a coffee bar for Years 12 and 13. Enhanced provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) includes a Nursery for girls from the age of two. Extensive refurbishment of school buildings and modernisation of all facilities has been undertaken throughout the school. In addition, a learning enhancement area has been developed, with the services of a full-time special educational needs co-ordinator. A school nurse has been appointed to help support pupils.
- 1.4 There are currently 541 pupils on roll. Of these, 54 children are in the EYFS; 120 pupils in Years 1 to 6 are in the junior school and 367 in Years 7 to 13 form the senior school, of whom 95 are in Years 12 and 13. Pupils come from within approximately a ten-mile radius of the school across Cheshire and the South Manchester area and represent a variety of social, cultural and economic backgrounds. Parents are predominantly professional or self-employed.
- 1.5 Pupils in the junior school and the majority of those in the senior school, have an ability level which is above the national average. The ability of pupils in Years 12 and 13 reflects the national average. There is a wide spread of abilities represented throughout the school. Seventy-four pupils in the senior school and 16 in the junior school, have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom are provided with learning support at different levels according to their need. Thirty-eight pupils have English as an additional language (EAL). Two pupils, one senior and one junior, have a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school is highly successful in educating its pupils in line with its overall aim to aspire, not to have more but to be more, and to be a dynamic school which fosters the well-being of each individual in a challenging and supportive environment. Throughout the school, pupils develop a mature approach to their learning, apply their knowledge confidently and achieve well academically. They enjoy working together and independently, and are supported by excellent teaching. Learning opportunities are enhanced by the excellent curriculum and broad range of enrichment activities. Assessment procedures help teachers understand the needs of their pupils and plan effectively. Expectations are generally high but are not yet invariably challenging throughout the school in order to encourage greater intellectual risk taking. Progress has been made since the previous inspection with the implementation of effective systems to monitor marking throughout the school. Pupils with SEND and EAL are extremely well supported. The more able pupils extend their knowledge through a range of extension tasks in class and through participation in enrichment activities. Outcomes for children in the EYFS are outstanding, but opportunities for the older children to extend their learning outdoors are not yet fully realised. Pupils enjoy their learning and take pride in the presentation of their work. The school encourages pupils to broaden their links with the community and has thoroughly met the recommendation from the previous inspection.
- 2.2 The quality of pupils' personal development is excellent. Their behaviour is exemplary and they show tolerance and respect for each other. They relish opportunities to take responsibility and are genuine in their support for each other. They appreciate the generous spirit with which the staff support them and are confident that staff will guide and help them at all times. The school implements excellent measures to ensure their welfare, health and safety.
- 2.3 Governance is excellent. Governors maintain highly effective oversight of the school and are generous in their support. They thoroughly understand and meticulously undertake their legal responsibilities. Leadership and management are excellent. Changes in senior management since the previous inspection have resulted in a restructuring of the senior management team. Clear lines of responsibility and a communality of purpose ensure excellent oversight of the day-to-day running of the school. Links with parents are excellent.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Develop further the good practice of intellectual risk taking throughout the school.
2. Extend the opportunities for the oldest children in the EYFS to take their planned learning outside, across all areas of the curriculum.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievement and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Throughout the school, pupils attain high standards and demonstrate an enthusiasm for learning and a desire for excellence, in line with the school's aims. They develop a breadth of skills, knowledge and understanding through both curricular and enrichment activities. Pupils throughout the school are attentive in their lessons, expressing their opinions freely and with confidence. Literacy and numeracy are developed well in the junior school, and pupils in the senior school go on to attain high standards in reading, write with fluency and imagination, and demonstrate competence with grammar, spelling and punctuation. Pupils achieve well in mathematics and confidently apply logical and mathematical understanding to scientific subjects. They are capable users of ICT and express themselves creatively through a range of disciplines. Pupils are able to think critically and work independently. They employ appropriate research and study skills confidently. For example, younger pupils successfully experimented with ways of building in order to stack blocks within the parameter of the problem set. Older pupils competently applied logical research skills in individual extension projects.
- 3.3 Excellent achievement in enrichment activities greatly enhances the pupils' academic progress. Pupils in both the junior and senior schools have achieved high levels of success in local, regional and national competitions, notably in modern foreign languages, engineering, designing apps and in design and technology projects. The creativity of pupils is demonstrated by the exhibition of pupils' artwork in the Lowry and by their success in poetry writing and public speaking competitions. They achieve excellent results in external drama and music examinations, and gain entry into national choirs and orchestras. Pupils of all ages participate in sports and other physical activities, with notable successes at regional and national levels. They undertake the Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme achieving bronze and silver levels. Pupils approach co-operative learning with commitment and a keen sense of purpose as seen in the high standard of theatre and dance rehearsals for forthcoming productions.
- 3.4 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2011 to 2013. These are the most recent years for which comparative statistics are currently available. The attainment for pupils in the junior school cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but based on the evidence available from discussions with pupils and from scrutiny of their work and performance in lessons, it is judged to be good in relation to national age-related expectations. This level of attainment as judged, indicates that pupils make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. Most pupils continue their education in the senior school.
- 3.5 Results at GCSE have been good in relation to the national average for maintained schools and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. Performance in IGCSE has been below worldwide norms in modern foreign languages and similar to worldwide norms in mathematics. The levels of attainment at GCSE and standardised measures of progress that are available, supported by inspection evidence, indicates that pupils make progress in the senior school that is high in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Almost all pupils remain in school for Years 12 and 13.

- 3.6 Results at A level have been above the national average for maintained schools, and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. Results in 2013 were lower than in 2011 to 12, being similar to the national average for girls in maintained schools. The level of attainment at A level, together with standardised measures of progress that are available, indicate that pupils make progress in Years 12 and 13 that is good in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Leavers from Year 13 are highly successful in gaining places in institutions for further education with a high proportion achieving entry to universities with high entry standards.
- 3.7 Individually structured programmes of study, small group specialist teaching and weekly work clinics, enable those with SEND and EAL, as well as the more able, to make excellent progress. A further programme of research and activities, designed around subject areas and extending into the local community, offers the more able pupils additional opportunities to extend their learning beyond the curriculum.
- 3.8 Pupils throughout the school demonstrate excellent attitudes towards their learning. They work together with enthusiasm and eagerly embrace opportunities to work independently. They take care with the presentation of their work, taking pride in its execution. They are generous in their support and care for each other.

3.(b) The contribution of curricular and enrichment provision

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and enrichment provision is excellent.
- 3.10 The curriculum is highly effective in its coverage of different areas of learning. It is well planned, being suitable for all ages, abilities and needs including for those with SEND, EAL and the more able. It fully supports the aims of the school to ensure that every girl is a diligent and confident learner who achieves her full potential. In both junior and senior schools, a broad and deep curriculum provides a wide range of stimulating opportunities and parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire demonstrate an extremely high level of satisfaction with the curricular and enrichment provision.
- 3.11 In the junior school, the humanities, science and personal, social and health education (PSHE) are delivered through the successful, topic-based integrated curriculum, designed to develop independent learning skills. Specialist teaching enables a good range of languages to be taught from an early age, and a renewed focus on mental mathematics brings rigour and challenge, raising academic standards.
- 3.12 The senior school provides an exceptionally wide range of subjects at A level, in addition to individual research projects and general studies. The school has increased option choices at Year 10, and some pupils may now choose to follow double award GCSEs in Latin or physical education. All pupils take IGCSE in mathematics and increasing numbers of pupils take an additional mathematics free-standing qualification. In Year 7, pupils are offered a taster course in three modern foreign languages and Latin, with the option to choose two of these to study in Years 8 and 9. The English allocation has been increased throughout Years 7 to 9 to enable greater focus on literacy.
- 3.13 Pupils make confident use of ICT, and recent investment in class sets of individual electronic devices has encouraged the incorporation of technology within many subjects. Pupils in the junior school use this technology for topic work in PSHE and geography. In the senior school, individual electronic devices have a significant

impact on pupils' learning through the use of educational apps in subjects such as food technology and geography. The more senior pupils have embraced the 'Bring Your Own Device' initiative to good effect, using them in many subject and research project, and complying with the school's ICT policy and guidance on cyber safety. The consistent use of ICT resources effectively enhances pupils' learning across the full range of the curriculum. The well-structured PSHE programme is both coherent and comprehensive and covers all topics relevant to pupils' ages. It is delivered by subject specialists and enhanced by talks given by visiting speakers. Where this and other subjects cover political matters, they do so in an even-handed way.

- 3.14 Provision for pupils with SEND or EAL, the able and those who are gifted and talented, is excellent. There are effective systems for identifying those pupils requiring support, or for those who would benefit from stretch and challenge. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored through detailed individual plans, which are regularly reviewed.
- 3.15 A well-planned and thorough careers and higher education programme ensures that pupils receive helpful and focused guidance from Year 9 onwards, including useful information on employment opportunities suited to their individual interests and talents and advice on opportunities for further education.
- 3.16 The curriculum is fully supported by an excellent programme of enrichment activities encompassing sports, music, and other performing and creative arts. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, most pupils said there is an extremely wide selection on offer at the school. In addition to the numerous sporting clubs, opportunities abound for pupils to participate in drama and music as well as many holistic activities such as Backgammon, Coding Club and the Orange Juice Club, which allows junior pupils to discuss any concerns they might have with a mediating member of staff when they are having difficulty with friendships. Pupils in the junior school are given the opportunity to play in competitive matches from Year 3. In the senior school, a wide range of competitive sports is balanced by extensive cultural and recreational activities such as music, dance and drama. Academic clubs include linguistics, engineering, and the popular Model United Nations, which has engaged pupils in European visits. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme is successful, with achievement at bronze and silver levels. Pupils from the senior school have excellent opportunities to organise their own activities and exercise leadership appropriate to their age, by directing house competitions or by assisting and running clubs for younger pupils.
- 3.17 The school's outreach work has been extended in response to the recommendation of the previous inspection. Through the Masterclass programme, the school welcomes many visitors to present pupils with a diverse opinion on a wide range of issues. Pupils also visit local sites of interest such as a mosque and synagogue. Many pupils undertake voluntary service in the local community, and local elderly residents visit the school to enjoy nativity plays and school productions.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.18 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.19 Teaching is highly effective in supporting the aims of the school to imbue in its pupils a desire to learn. The majority of pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire, indicated that they found the work interesting and are happy with the progress they are making. Parents expressed themselves as equally delighted with the progress their children are making and inspection evidence fully supports these views.
- 3.20 Teachers understand the needs of their pupils, and lessons throughout the school are extremely well planned and resourced. This detailed and thoughtful planning results in lessons which engage and enthuse pupils, helping them to make rapid progress. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and are extremely positive and supportive in their attitudes towards pupils. In both the junior and senior schools, teaching methods instil pupils with the confidence to ask questions, helping pupils to engage with topics confidently. Teachers give generously of their time to help pupils learn and pupils are highly appreciative of this. In most lessons, expectations are high, the pace is brisk and teachers use a variety of exercises to engage pupils and promote their learning. In these lessons, pupils are encouraged to take intellectual risks in order to expand the boundaries of their learning. Pupils make less progress in the very small minority of lessons where the pace is slower and there are fewer opportunities for individual challenge and less risk taking in learning. Pupils use ICT competently across the school.
- 3.21 A small minority of pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, felt that their homework did not help them learn. The school has a suitable marking policy and has implemented clear systems to monitor the quality of marking which fully meet the recommendation of the previous inspection. In discussions with inspectors, pupils were appreciative of the targets set and oral feedback received from their teachers, and felt that their homework helped them to make progress with their learning. Through scrutiny of their work, inspectors felt that homework demands are appropriate and marking to be prompt and helpful. Assessment information is used effectively throughout the school, to set targets, monitor pupils' progress and inform lesson planning.
- 3.22 More able pupils make rapid progress and receive additional encouragement to develop their interest, knowledge and understanding through a subject-specific suggestion log of reading material, further topics and details of relevant places of local interest. Excellent support is offered for pupils with SEND and for those with EAL, with highly effective links between the staff who teach them and specialist support staff. Lunchtime clinics offer further support.

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 The pupils' personal development is an excellent strength of the school. By the time pupils leave the school, they embody the school's aim to take active steps to see them develop into young women who show initiative, have a sense of identity, self-worth, self-awareness and emotional maturity, and are ready to take a full and responsible role in the wider community, being able to question why things are as they are.
- 4.3 Pupils demonstrate strong spiritual awareness. They explore and verbalise their own beliefs, and develop understanding for those of others, as they contribute to and lead prayers, in special church services. Their sense of spiritual identity is enhanced by time spent in the chapel where they reflect and have a time of quietness and prayer. They think deeply on the meaning of identity in wartime, writing and reading their own poetry on Remembrance Day. Pupils value the support and guidance of the chaplaincy and demonstrate an acute ability to empathise with others in their generous celebration of special events and thoughtful support during moments of sadness. Pupils without a specific faith, value the inclusivity of the school community and extend their own spiritual awareness through an appreciation of the tolerance and acceptance of their peers.
- 4.4 The moral development of pupils is excellent. Pupils display a clear sense of right and wrong, which is reflected in their care and consideration of one another. They are polite and are proud of their school. Younger pupils acknowledge and value the example set by the staff and older pupils. More senior pupils take pride in their roles as mentors and helpers. Throughout the school, pupils' strong awareness of right and wrong is demonstrated in their willingness to discuss moral questions. The behaviour of pupils is exemplary and their moral development is well supported by the wide-ranging PSHE programme. For example, they develop an understanding of how the law of England is over-arching in nature.
- 4.5 The social awareness of pupils is extremely well developed. They are sensitive and empathetic to the needs of others from an early age, respecting differences. Throughout the school, pupils support each other well. They develop leadership skills through a variety of roles and learn to give effective guidance to others through the peer mentoring system. They are enthusiastic in their ready undertaking of roles of responsibility. Many pupils develop their understanding of social responsibility through community service in the local area. Pupils display a generosity of spirit in supporting a wide range of charities, demonstrating an understanding of the needs of those less fortunate than themselves and a genuine desire to help.
- 4.6 Pupils display a strong cultural and civic awareness. In lessons and through discussion forums in PSHE, they gain a clear understanding of citizenship, British institutions and Western cultural tradition. They exhibit a well-developed understanding of fundamental British values of democracy through the elective nature of their school council. They demonstrate tolerance and respect for those with different views and beliefs as was seen in their preparations for mock-political elections.

- 4.7 Pupils build an appreciation of their own tradition and culture through a wide range of visits to places of worship, theatres, art galleries and historical sites. A recent visit from a published author helped to further pupils' understanding of foreign cultures as they learnt what it meant to be a girl in Afghanistan. They develop harmonious international relationships through trips organised by the school.
- 4.8 By the time they leave school, pupils achieve high standards of personal development. They are confident, tolerant and respectful of each other. Younger pupils are eager to embrace the challenges of senior school while older pupils are ready to make their contribution to and take their place in the wider society.

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

- 4.9 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.10 The pastoral care successfully meets the school's aim to ensure that pupils feel valued as individual members of their community and makes a positive contribution to the personal development of pupils. The pastoral team in the senior school has been restructured since the previous inspection to ensure that effective levels of support for pupils are maintained. Throughout the school, comprehensive systems are highly effective in meeting the needs of individual pupils. The well-established tutor system and thorough knowledge staff have of their pupils enables a swift and supportive response to pupils' needs. Weekly staff meetings and regular daily communication between staff, ensure that information is appropriately shared and recorded. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the vast majority of parents expressed themselves as highly satisfied with the care their children receive.
- 4.11 Relationships between pupils and staff are open and trusting. Pupils are confident of receiving support and guidance from their teachers, should any problems arise. They feel well supported and valued. The generous spirit which characterises the ethos of the school is clearly reflected in the attitudes of more senior pupils who happily help younger ones, undertaking their role as peer mentors seriously and with commitment.
- 4.12 The school's arrangements to guard against bullying and to promote good behaviour are excellent. Instances of bullying are rare and are dealt with swiftly and effectively and the whole school community works hard to maintain a safe, happy environment for all. In responses to the pre-inspection pupil questionnaires, a minority of pupils reported that teachers are not always consistent in the way they give rewards and sanctions. The school operates a clear system of rewards and sanctions and, through examination of records and in discussions with pupils, inspectors are satisfied that staff promote good behaviour fairly and consistently.
- 4.13 A small minority of pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that the school does not ask for or respond to their views. Elected councils in both junior and senior schools provide an excellent forum for pupils to express their opinions and pupils confidently described instances of change in response to their requests.
- 4.14 The school encourages pupils to be healthy. A well-balanced menu offers pupils an excellent choice of nutritious homemade meals with vegetarian options, salads and fruit. An extensive range of sports and activities ensures that all pupils are provided with the opportunity to take active, regular exercise within the school day. Enrichment sports clubs provide further opportunities for exercise.

4.15 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

4.16 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.

4.17 The school has excellent arrangements to promote the welfare, health and safety of all its pupils. A dedicated team maintains clear oversight, including the completion of an extensive audit of maintenance, health and safety. Termly reports to the governing body enable procedures to be monitored and reviewed, ensuring the effective implementation of the school's detailed health and safety policy. Comprehensive risk assessments for buildings and grounds are reviewed annually and accidents and incidents are suitably recorded. Every effort is made to minimize the risk of fire, through regular fire drills, equipment testing and staff training, with appropriate records maintained. Electrical equipment is regularly tested and records are properly kept. Due care is taken to ensure the welfare, health and safety of those on school trips and those with special physical or learning needs.

4.18 Safeguarding policies and procedures are thorough and are monitored by a designated governor. The full governing body undertakes an annual review of policy and procedures to ensure that any deficiencies of implementation are identified and quickly remedied. A suitable number of senior managers are trained in safe recruitment. All staff receive annual training in child protection matters from designated staff, supported by the local safeguarding children's board. Close links are maintained between the school and local welfare agencies.

4.19 Admission and attendance registers are well maintained and stored and staff know what to do if a pupil were to go missing. All teaching staff receive first aid training, with an appropriate number trained in paediatric first aid. Pupils who are unwell are properly cared for until they are collected by parents.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Governance promotes the school's aim to empower every pupil to be the best that she can be. Through excellent governance and a clear vision for the future, the school is highly successful in providing a place of excellent learning while maintaining excellent standards of pastoral care and personal development of its pupils. Governors uphold and promote the distinctive ecumenical ethos which underpins the daily routines of the school.
- 5.3 Governors have a wide range of relevant expertise and skills and these are used most effectively to provide a thorough oversight of their responsibilities. Through a well-defined committee structure, governors maintain strong oversight of the working of the school. They actively monitor and evaluate the performance of the school through regular staff presentations, pupil transfers between EYFS, the junior and senior schools, close scrutiny of examination results and the success of the enrichment programme. Governors effectively oversee arrangements for promoting welfare, health and safety and budgetary control.
- 5.4 Strategic development planning is strong with clear long-term aims. Governance provides successfully for the development and maintenance of the school's accommodation, facilities and resources, and ensures the recruitment of high quality staff.
- 5.5 Governors fully understand their legal responsibilities and maintain strong oversight of policies and procedures. A safeguarding governor monitors the effectiveness and efficiency of safeguarding matters including procedures for child protection and safe recruitment and all governors undertake an annual review of safeguarding arrangements and their effectiveness. Governors undertake suitable training for their roles including a suitable induction programme for new governors and all have received child protection training.
- 5.6 The governors are generous with the time they devote to the school. They attend many school events and have appointed a governor to act as liaison with the parents. An overwhelming majority of parents in the pre-inspection questionnaire reported very high levels of satisfaction in all aspects of the education provided for their children and would recommend the school to another parent.

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

- 5.7 The quality of leadership and management is excellent.
- 5.8 The leadership and management are highly effective in enabling the school to meet its aims to provide an education where pupils are always encouraged to strive for excellence, and to prepare them for the challenges they will face in the modern world. As a result, all pupils feel individually valued and become confident achievers. They flourish in the nurturing atmosphere and develop excellent personal qualities. Individual educational needs are amply met by a network of management support strategies, resulting in excellent provision for pupils with SEND, EAL and equally for the more able.
- 5.9 Changes in the senior management of the school since the previous inspection, have encouraged the development of an open style of management. As a result, managers at all levels are actively involved in promoting the vision of the school in both its day-to-day operations as well as through their contribution to the school's strategic development planning.
- 5.10 Heads of department consistently monitor standards of teaching and learning across all subject areas. A thorough understanding of the needs of pupils combined with rigorous self-evaluation processes, results in highly effective subject planning. Detailed schemes of work promote a variety of learning opportunities for pupils and there are comprehensive procedures for monitoring and evaluating pupils' ability and progress. Senior managers regularly monitor marking, ensuring greater consistency across all subjects. Teaching staff benefit from regular appraisal and continuing opportunities for professional development. Induction training and guidance for new staff is effectively implemented.
- 5.11 Appropriate systems to ensure the recruitment of suitable staff are meticulously applied with all required checks completed before staff begin work at school. The school's policy of self-disclosure for all staff is rigorously implemented. Staff receive regular training in their roles in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Policies and procedures are reviewed at suitable intervals, and are properly implemented with close reference to the governing body. The vast majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, indicated their high level of satisfaction with the way in which the school is led and managed.
- 5.12 Links between the school and the parents are excellent and strongly support the academic and personal development of the pupils. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They are particularly positive about how well their daughters are looked after, the range of subjects and activities available, the high standards of behaviour and the information they receive from the school.
- 5.13 Throughout the school, relationships with parents are characterised by open and easy communication based on an in-depth knowledge of, and genuine care for, the pupils and their families. The school has an effective complaints policy and in the event of a complaint, all procedures are rigorously followed.
- 5.14 Information is readily available to current and prospective parents through the detailed calendar, comprehensive website, parent portal and a variety of information packs and meetings. Regular parents' consultation evenings enable parents to

discuss their children's progress with staff. Reports are sent to parents twice a year. They are evaluative and helpful, and offer clear guidance for pupils for the next stage of their learning. The school operates an open-door policy and all teachers may be contacted by email.

- 5.15 There are many opportunities for parents to be involved in the school. Parents are welcomed at special assemblies, sporting, music and drama events. They may accompany school trips. Parents are invited to share particular expertise in giving talks for the Masterclass programme in the senior school or leading activities during science days in the junior school.
- 5.16 Clear published information is available for all current and prospective parents. There is an active Parents and Friends Association which is enthusiastic in its support for the school and its pupils in addition to offering guidance for all new parents to help them feel at home.

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 In meeting the needs of the range of children who attend the provision, the setting is outstanding. The enthusiastic and hardworking staff successfully create a purposeful and homely atmosphere in which children flourish and make excellent progress. Staff provide planned, purposeful activities across the early years educational programmes, with child-initiated and adult-led activities, indoors and out, although there are fewer opportunities for the oldest children to take their learning outside. Children of all ages are able to develop and learn effectively, using a range of suitable resources. Almost all children reach the level of development typical for their age and some exceed this. This strong provision enables children who have been identified as having SEND or EAL to make very good progress.
- 6.2 Children concentrate, express themselves clearly and enjoy their learning. Activities such as the oldest children using magnifying glasses to study fossils and being palaeontologists in the sand tray, the three year olds investigating the ice in the mud kitchen outdoors and the youngest children exploring the properties of foam, promote their enthusiasm to investigate and explore. Staff document children's progress and achievements in their digital photographic records, ensuring that individuality is recognised.
- 6.3 The parental questionnaire was overwhelmingly positive and in discussions with inspectors, parents were highly appreciative of the education their children receive and of the continuous support provided by staff to help the youngest children settle in. Parents are kept comprehensively informed about their children's progress through sharing their child's portfolio, home school books, newsletters, reports and open evenings.

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

- 6.4 The contribution of the early years provision to the children's well-being is outstanding. Very caring and committed staff help all children, including those who need additional support, to form appropriate bonds and secure emotional attachments with their key persons and other staff. From the youngest age, children are confident to communicate and play with adults and children alike. Staff give clear guidance on standards of courtesy and behaviour expected, so that children demonstrate exemplary levels of behaviour. Children respect and care for one another and co-operate together, as was seen with the older children in the café role play area and in the highly effective sensory session where the younger children worked together to control a parachute. Staff conscientiously support independence, both in the children's own personal hygiene, in daily routines and in their learning, as for example, when the youngest children independently put on their own aprons before messy play.
- 6.5 The setting encourages good eating habits, with healthy meals and snacks. Children have further opportunities for physical exercise in their physical education sessions and in their outdoor play, with outdoor equipment that provides opportunities for taking controlled risks. Children are prepared well for transition into

the next stage of their learning, for example, through specialist physical education lesson, assemblies, visits and planned liaison with Year 1 staff.

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

- 6.6 The leadership and management of the early years provision are outstanding. Governors and senior managers have an excellent oversight of the EYFS provision and are kept fully informed. Clear procedures and rigorous policies, with thorough risk assessments, ensure that welfare requirements are met so that the setting is a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment. Staff hold appropriate qualifications and all necessary checks have been made before they are appointed. Staff are encouraged to develop their knowledge and skills through professional development opportunities. Training in child protection, first aid and health and safety is thorough and fully implemented. Supervision sessions enable staff to discuss their practice or concerns about individual children.
- 6.7 High standards of planning and detailed assessments evaluate the progress of each child and the next steps in learning for the individual child are carefully monitored. Senior leaders have a clear vision for the EYFS and the improvement plan demonstrates effective systems for self-evaluation that inform the settings priorities and sets targets for continuous improvement.
- 6.8 The setting has a highly successful partnership with parents to enhance the learning and progress of each child, seeking appropriate interventions to support learning where needed.

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

- 6.9 The overall quality and standards of the provision are outstanding. The younger children are introduced to books and counting, using songs and rhymes. They are beginning to recognise patterns, simple shapes and to count. Older children sound out simple words as they begin to acquire early reading and writing skills, as seen in the writing in the speech bubbles on the 'Owl Babies' display. In mathematics, they work with numbers within 20 and do simple calculations. They experience money and time, and learn about the properties of 2-D shapes. At the end of the EYFS, most children have achieved the Early Learning Goals and some are working beyond them. Children express themselves creatively through music, with the younger children keeping time with their musical instruments and the oldest, singing in tune. The children show good skills with ICT and the interactive whiteboard from an early age; the oldest children use programmable toys and the internet to help them answer such questions as whether it snows in Australia. The three year olds use a computer mouse with some control, as seen in the display where they used a programme to choose a balanced diet for a lunchbox. Visits to the shops, the zoo, a farm, the theatre and the local church, as well as visits from professionals such as dentists and vets, help children to learn about the wider world.
- 6.10 The children's personal development is outstanding. Children are safeguarded extremely effectively, cared for exceptionally well and their needs are met. They enjoy coming to school and from the youngest children onwards, they happily share resources, take turns and are able to make independent choices about their play and behaviour in a setting where they feel safe and secure.
- 6.11 Following recommendations at the previous inspection, the quality and quantity of resources for the oldest children has been improved so that teaching and learning

are enhanced. There is some evidence that planning for the outdoor provision is reflected in the areas of learning but this is not yet fully embedded across the setting. This, with the setting's on-going self-evaluation of provision, is evidence of its commitment to continuous improvement.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

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