



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
ASHTON HOUSE SCHOOL**

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Ashton House School

Full Name of School	Ashton House School
DfE Number	313/6000
Registered Charity Number	N/A
Address	Ashton House School 50-52 Eversley Crescent Isleworth Middlesex TW7 4LW England
Telephone Number	020 85603902
Fax Number	020 85681097
Email Address	principal@ashtonhouse.com
Head	Dr Jim Heslop
Proprietor	Mr Simon Turner
Age Range	3 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	122
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (67 boys; 55 girls)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 24 5-11: 98
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 122
Co-ordinator of EYFS Setting	Mrs Rebecca Auchmuty
EYFS Gender	Boys and Girls
Inspection Dates	01 Mar 2016 to 04 Mar 2016

PREFACE

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.

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*. The inspection on which the report is based took place over a period of four continuous days in the school.

The previous ISI standard inspection was in February and March 2010, and the previous EYFS inspection was February 2010.

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 children aged under two), 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 proprietor, 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

Dr Alison Primrose

Reporting Inspector

Mrs Paula Hobbs

Team Inspector (Head, ISA school)

Mrs Penny Oates

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Ashton House is a family-owned independent day preparatory school for boys and girls situated to the southwest of London within the borough of Hounslow. It was founded in 1930 and acquired by the present family in 1969. The owners are the directors, providing governance for the school, and managing its finances and facilities. The school occupies two adjacent Victorian houses in a residential area of Isleworth. The current head was appointed in September 2014.
- 1.2 The school aims to develop each pupil's unique talents through providing a safe and nurturing environment in which each one is encouraged to grow in scholarship and to develop positive personal characteristics. Through promoting inter-cultural understanding and respect for others, it supports pupils enabling them to grow into caring young people who will make a positive contribution to their communities and to a more peaceful world. Since the previous inspection, the school has introduced school meals and developed the playground. It has also developed its own skills based curriculum, incorporating the National Curriculum and a structured citizenship programme. Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, reflecting the multicultural population of the local area. The majority of the pupils live nearby with a few travelling to the school from Brentford, Heston, Southall and Slough. Some pupils are in the United Kingdom on visas associated with their parents' employment. Most are from professional and business families.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection there were 122 pupils at the school, with most year groups having an approximately even number of boys and girls, including 24 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), 32 in Years 1 and 2, and 66 pupils in Years 3 to 6. From the data available, the ability profile of the school is above the national average overall. Few pupils have below average ability and there is a notable proportion of pupils with well above average ability. There are four pupils identified by the school with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); they all receive additional specialist support. There are no pupils with education, health and care plans, and there is one pupil with English as an additional language (EAL) who receives specialist language teaching.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school successfully enables pupils to achieve good levels in their learning and activities. Their success is strengthened by their positive attitudes to learning and access to an excellent, enriched curriculum. Pupils are well-prepared for the next stage of their education and enabled to become active and informed citizens. The quality of teaching overall is good. Frequently it promotes high levels of pupil engagement and motivation, but at times, a lack of pace or poor use of resources limits pupils' progress. The achievements and progress of the children in the EYFS are excellent.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent. The strong systems in place to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are highly effective. Pupils are confident, thoughtful and caring. They enjoy taking on positions of responsibility and actively engage in supporting those less fortunate than themselves. They build strong positive personal characteristics, which contribute to the building of an inclusive community where individuals are respected and differences are celebrated. Pupils receive excellent pastoral support. Effective systems are in place to ensure that specific needs or concerns are addressed, including the arrangements to assess and support pupils who may have SEND. All staff are trained in safeguarding, fully conversant with the *Prevent* agenda and aware of their responsibilities to promote pupils' well-being. Formal arrangements relating to the appointment of staff are not sufficiently rigorous or systematic to ensure all regulatory requirements are met consistently. The school site is generally well maintained, but risk management practices lack the detail required to ensure hazards are identified and remedied promptly.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is sound. The proprietor has a clear vision for the future of the school and oversees an on-going programme of improvement. Facilities in the EYFS have been improved addressing recommendations of the previous inspection. The proprietor is generally well-informed about school developments and pupils' achievements. An over-dependence on informal systems undermines the effectiveness of links with the school leadership. This has impacted on the discharge of some regulatory responsibilities. A good level of investment in staff, including the extension of sport's provision, enables higher levels of participation in competitive sport, fulfilling a recommendation from the previous inspection. The leadership and management of the school, including links with parents are good. An effective programme of performance management has underpinned the development of an excellent curriculum, and contributes to addressing inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Oversight of the EYFS is informal, so the excellent work within the setting is not yet firmly underpinned by rigorous monitoring and systematic review. Within the EYFS, the previous recommendation to address monitoring of children's application of taught skills has been fully addressed. Strong relationships are established between the school and parents, and the leadership values the many contributions made by the parents, who are highly supportive of the school.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and therefore it is required to take the following action:

- ensure all required recruitment checks are carried out and recorded accurately before appointment [Part 3, paragraphs 7 (a) and (b), under Welfare, health & safety of pupils; Part 4, paragraphs 18(3), 19(2)(a) and (d) and 19(3), 21 (3)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)(vii)(viii), (4) (5) (a-c) under Suitability of staff and proprietors; Part 8, 34(a) and (b) under Quality of leadership and management of schools; 3.9 (2) and 3.12 under Suitable people in the EYFS];
- revise the risk assessment policy so that it addresses all aspects of the school and is responsive to changing circumstances [Part 3, paragraph 16 (a), under Welfare, health & safety].

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Strengthen systems to ensure consistently high-quality teaching across year groups and subjects, including the marking of pupils' work.
2. Establish systems to ensure effective monitoring of whole school policies.
3. Implement a process to strengthen the EYFS contribution to the school's self-evaluation and development planning.

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 In the EYFS, children work and play hard and thoroughly enjoy their learning, in line with the school's aims. They achieve extremely well from a range of starting points. On entry their attainment is broadly in line with expected levels. They make rapid progress so that by the end of Reception, most children attain the Early Learning Goals and many exceed them in some areas. Nursery children handle scissors and craft making materials independently and design their own projects effectively. They treat each other with respect in role play situations and plan flights to exotic destinations, such as the pyramids and Taj Mahal. Reception children recognise and record o'clock times, and the more able are learning about half past the hour. They write clear letters and words within a context, and by the end of the year they write simple stories. Most children can add two digits together as a mental calculation. All, including those with EAL or SEND, make extremely good progress and most become able to work independently by the end of their time in the EYFS enabling them to progress seamlessly into Year 1.
- 3.3 From Year 1, pupils' levels of achievement are good and fully support the aims of the school. Pupils are highly motivated learners, articulate and enthusiastic. They engage actively in class and converse confidently with adults. They are attentive listeners, keen to ask and answer questions. They read with good levels of fluency and expression and enjoy opportunities for doing so. In their English work, pupils become increasingly competent writers, and when given opportunities for extended writing, achieve high standards. The same high-quality work is not always evident in other curriculum areas, where content and standards of presentation are variable.
- 3.4 Pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding are good, and a number of pupils achieve at an exceptionally high level. Building on the strong foundation established in the EYFS, most pupils adeptly apply their mathematical understanding to solve problems. They use subject specific vocabulary appropriately but are less confident applying more complex concepts. Through carefully structured lessons pupils become confident users of ICT. They develop good reasoning skills through carrying out scientific investigations. These skills are further developed in critical thinking and philosophy lessons where pupils confidently discuss abstract concepts.
- 3.5 High-quality artwork, in a range of media, is displayed around the school. Pupils participate enthusiastically in music lessons; they sing confidently and tunefully. In drama, pupils demonstrate a growing understanding of the impact of tone and expression in speech. Pupils enjoy a variety of sports and develop good levels of physical co-ordination, sportsmanship and teamwork.
- 3.6 Pupils with SEND achieve particularly well across the curriculum. Through the carefully structured plans provided for them they develop good levels of literacy and are highly motivated to succeed. Pupils with EAL develop good levels of oral fluency, benefitting from the lessons where opportunities are taken to promote and develop vocabulary. More able pupils achieve well as a result of the breadth and structure of the curriculum. All pupils are thoroughly well-prepared for the next stage of their education and they are extremely successful in gaining places to the secondary schools of their choice in a highly competitive environment.

- 3.7 Pupils' achievements in extra-curricular activities are good. A number of pupils learn musical instruments and they achieve a good standard in external examinations. They achieve some success in local sporting fixtures and competitions. The swimming squad has been successful at both an individual and team level in local swimming galas.
- 3.8 Judged by scrutiny of the school's assessment data, the challenges of the curriculum offered and discussion with pupils in interviews, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is high. Pupils at every level make the expected levels of progress year on year, and many exceed it. Pupils with EAL or SEND make particularly rapid progress as a result of the careful monitoring and focused support they receive. Higher ability pupils, with attainment levels significantly above that expected for their age, continue to be challenged and make good progress. Nearly all of the pupils who answered the pre-inspection questionnaire agree that they are making good progress in their work; this opinion was confirmed in pupil interviews.
- 3.9 Pupils' attitudes to their work are excellent. They are eager to learn. They work extremely well together, showing considerable maturity when working in pairs or small groups. They become increasingly independent learners, understanding how to organise their own work and persevere with new challenges. These positive attitudes are evident across all year groups and across the curriculum.

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

- 3.10 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.11 The rich, broad and well-balanced curriculum offered covers all the required areas of learning. It makes a highly significant contribution to meeting the school's aims to develop each pupil's unique talents, developing both their academic potential and their positive personal characteristics.
- 3.12 In the EYFS, the educational programmes established fully cover the seven areas of learning required. Staff plan an engaging range of activities which carefully balance adult-led learning with child-initiated exploration and discovery. The improved outdoor provision, which includes better opportunities for exploring the natural world and improved access to areas for physical development, fulfils a recommendation from the previous inspection. Children use the outdoor play and learning areas daily, while the well-resourced classrooms serve as centres for developing investigative and core skills across the curriculum. Children make full use of both rooms, moving confidently between them. There is a continuing focus on ensuring that children are suitably challenged, and activities are planned to meet the needs of all by offering support or extension activities where appropriate. Individual targets for improvement are set and shared with parents on a regular basis. Specialist teaching in music, drama and physical education (PE) provides an additional dimension to the curriculum.
- 3.13 From Year 1, an enriched curriculum has been devised to provide breadth and stimulation within its content. In addition to the requisite subjects, pupils in Years 5 and 6 study economics which, linked with the citizenship programme of study, introduces them to financial capability and entrepreneurial skills providing them with an excellent understanding of important aspects of British society. Philosophy lessons contribute to the development of pupils' critical thinking skills, which enable them to develop reasoned arguments which they apply confidently in other curricular areas. Provision to develop critical thinking skills enables pupils to consider wider

issues in a balanced and non-partisan way. Current affairs is timetabled for pupils in Years 4 to 6, and pupils learn French from Year 1. Curriculum music, art and drama enable pupils to develop creative and artistic skills. The art curriculum exposes the pupils to a variety of artists, genres and styles; pupils' understanding and appreciation of this area was enhanced by a visit to the Royal Academy of Art.

- 3.14 The curriculum has been planned to suit all ages and has been skilfully tailored to meet the needs and ability range of all pupils. It is supported by regular homework tasks, and has been reviewed to ensure that pupils gain a good understanding of fundamental British values, which are actively promoted through the character programme established as part of the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. Robust systems are in place to identify pupils with SEND and those requiring extra support; this is tailored to meet the needs of the individual, initially within the classroom environment whilst ensuring that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Gifted and more able pupils are identified through regular assessments; they have opportunities to extend their learning through participation in an enrichment programme that provides additional challenge.
- 3.15 The quality of extra-curricular provision is good with pupils benefiting from a range of activities that develop their skills, increase their confidence and provide enjoyment. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 respond well to the opportunity to perform together as a school at an end of year production where a local theatre is hired for this purpose. Through the increased specialist provision for sport more pupils have opportunities to participate in inter-school competitions and fixtures, fulfilling the recommendation of the previous inspection to develop opportunities for success in competitive sports.
- 3.16 Pupils' experiences are enriched by curriculum-linked visits such as to the Royal Mews and Wembley stadium. They gain independence through residential trips which they talk about with great enthusiasm. Pupils benefit from many links with the local community which are purposefully integrated into the curriculum, for example, attending the local Remembrance Day service and charity fund raising activities. Pupils are becoming involved in a new intergenerational project that will include links with past pupils and a local residential home for the elderly. Some pupils take part in a progressive learning programme that is designed to recognise achievement beyond the school community. These initiatives provide excellent opportunities to develop organisational and leadership skills.
- 3.17 In response to the questionnaire, an overwhelming majority of parents stated that they were happy with the opportunities provided for their children through the school curriculum.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.18 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.19 In the EYFS, the close knit, highly professional and experienced team have realistically high expectations which motivate the children to do their best. The classrooms are warm and welcoming, offer an extensive range of age appropriate resources and children come cheerfully to school every day. Much praise is provided, which reinforces the positives and encourages children to take their next steps in learning. Nursery children were working hard to complete their mother's day cards with well-judged adult support. Reception children were prompted to discuss with an adult how tall a daffodil, which they had planted some time ago, had grown. They then used measuring skills independently to gauge its growth more

accurately. Frequent assessments are made by all the adults which are used as the basis for planning purposeful activities for each child, whatever their ability. The recommendation of the previous inspection to monitor the way the children use and apply 'taught skills' in their child-initiated learning is now fully incorporated into the daily routine. This ensures that each child's learning is reinforced appropriately. Children who need extra support are helped to participate fully in the day's activities and the more able are set further stimulating challenges.

- 3.20 Good teaching from Year 1 promotes pupils learning and enables pupils of all abilities to achieve well. Careful planning, in many lessons, supported by an excellent system of assessment, ensures that teaching is focused to meet pupils' individual needs. In the most effective lessons teaching maintains a brisk pace resulting in high levels of pupil motivation and active participation. When teaching lacks pace, or fails to engage with pupils' questions and responses, learning is limited. Pupils make particularly good progress when teaching sets clear objectives and includes opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work. In some excellent lessons observed teachers' questioning skilfully supported pupils of all abilities, using and developing their responses which enabled them to make rapid progress in their learning.
- 3.21 Good teaching is underpinned by positive affirming relationships. Teachers know the pupils extremely well and provide good support to those with any particular need or difficulty. Individual education plans inform teachers' planning, which, accompanied by specialist teaching for identified pupils with SEND or EAL ensures that they receive appropriate support. Teachers actively promote a learning environment where pupils learn respect and begin to value diversity. Teachers use praise and positive reinforcement effectively to build pupils' confidence as learners. Teachers monitor pupils' knowledge and understanding through the use of formal and informal assessment activities. High-quality marking in some books highlights successful aspects of a pupil's work and also sets out clear targets, or includes comments to help pupils improve. However, some marking is cursory and gives little guidance for pupils on how to improve.
- 3.22 Teaching throughout the school is well supported by experienced teaching assistants. They work closely with the teachers and are generally deployed effectively, providing excellent support for individuals or groups of pupils. In a few lessons, a lack of variety of learning activities or poor time management limits the impact of their contribution. Where teaching is overly reliant on published materials, the pre-determined formatting of tasks constrains pupils' initiative and creativity. When pupils have the opportunity to develop their own ideas and to organise their own work, pupils then become increasingly independent. A good range of resources is generally used well to promote learning, including effective use of interactive whiteboards. Class-based libraries, a central well-stocked library and ICT facilities are all used to support learning. Specialist teaching in music and drama provides pupils with the opportunities to develop practical performance skills to a high level. Teaching incorporates an excellent variety of trips and visits which are used effectively to extend and enrich pupils' learning.
- 3.23 Teaching is non-partisan and strongly supports the school's aim of developing positive character traits. All of the pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed that their teachers help them learn. This was confirmed through the formal and informal meetings with pupils who all spoke positively of the support and guidance that they received 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 The school is highly successful in its aims to develop pupils' positive personal characteristics; it enables them to have an excellent intercultural understanding and respect and to be active members of their community.
- 4.3 From their earliest days in Nursery children learn to play together. They allow others to go before them, share their activities and patiently wait their turn. Reception children are generally mature for their age and behaviour is exemplary. The time spent when Nursery and Reception children play and learn together provides an excellent opportunity to acquire the social skills required to work alongside those who are older or younger, or more or less able, than oneself. Children help to keep their classroom tidy which gives them a sense of responsibility. They have a growing understanding of the values inherent in British society, such as fairness and kindness. They are learning to sing the national anthem. They celebrate other cultures' festivals and traditions such as Chinese New Year, Eid and Diwali. They are thoroughly prepared for, and ready to, move on to the next stage of their education when the time comes.
- 4.4 From Year 1, pupils' spiritual development is excellent. They are instinctively friendly and caring, are highly self-aware and have a strong understanding of respect for both the school community and the wider world. They are confident and articulate as demonstrated when a panel of Year 6 pupils answered challenging questions from prospective parents at a school open morning. Pupils challenge their thinking through philosophical inquiry when they also have the opportunity to reflect upon the non-material aspects of life. For example, Year 5 class thoughtfully considered the relationship between scientific fact and human emotion when discussing the different levels of reality.
- 4.5 Pupils' moral development is excellent. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and recognise the need for rules and boundaries within the school and the concepts of English law within the wider community. They understand what they should and should not do and use discussion as a first step towards solving difficulties. Pupils recognise the importance of being responsible citizens and accept their various duties, such as house captains and school councillors, with pride.
- 4.6 Pupils' social development is excellent. Pupils have excellent communication skills and are friendly, courteous and well mannered. Through their regular character awards they understand what qualities are needed to become a good citizen. They work hard to emulate these so that they might be nominated by their peers to receive this award at assembly. Pupils are proud of the contribution they make to school life. Pupils support a variety of different charities including a local hospice and homeless centre and understand how their contributions directly help the community beyond the school; these are recognised and celebrated when the school gathers together for assembly. Pupils reflect carefully upon the actions of others within the wider community and recently entered a competition in which they had to think of someone in their life who inspires or supports them, to whom they would like to write a thank you letter.

- 4.7 Pupils' cultural awareness is excellent. The diverse nature of the school community enables the pupils to gain an informed understanding of different world faiths and traditions. They are thoughtful and tolerant of different beliefs. They respect each other's cultural backgrounds, which were celebrated at an international evening in the school. The pupils and parents express pride in the way in which British values are celebrated within the school; pupils recognise the Union Jack on the flag pole outside the school and sing the national anthem. As part of the Queen's recent celebrations, pupils were delighted to receive a letter from the Queen's Lady in Waiting thanking them for their letter congratulating her on the longevity of her reign. Pupils understand the importance of democracy and can relate this to a fair approach when electing their peers to the school council and when voting upon a question to discuss in their philosophy lessons. These opportunities make a positive contribution to their growing understanding of public institutions and services.
- 4.8 By the time pupils leave they have an excellent standard of personal development and are well prepared for their move onto their senior schools.

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 of children in the EYFS setting is seen by all staff as being of paramount importance. Adults give high priority to fulfilling their role as key staff and work tirelessly to build warm, nurturing relationships with the children. These relationships are based on trust and mutual respect, and include maintaining close links with the home, thereby fulfilling the school's aim to complement and reinforce positive values taught at the home. The children confidently embrace new challenges on a daily basis and the environment is happy and purposeful. They learn about healthy eating through bringing suitably healthy snacks to school, drinking milk or water and the newly introduced school lunches offer nutritious and balanced meals. There are many opportunities to take regular exercise both outside and in timetabled PE lessons.
- 4.11 The staff provide effective support and guidance for the pupils. Throughout the school, the quality of relationships between staff and pupils and among the pupils themselves is excellent. The family atmosphere in the school creates a warm and caring environment where pupils feel safe. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 are identified as 'buddies' for pupils who may need extra support. In the questionnaires, a small minority of pupils stated that they do not feel that they have anyone to turn to if they have a problem. In interviews, pupils all felt they had someone they could talk to, and the scrutiny of pastoral records and discussions with staff confirmed that appropriate support was given when needed. There are designated members of staff for different year groups in addition to the form tutors, but pupils are encouraged to talk to any member of staff with whom they feel comfortable. The school provides effective support and guidance to parents to help them plan and find the right senior school to meet their child's needs.
- 4.12 The school positively encourages the pupils to lead a healthy lifestyle, through their snack and lunch choices and the many different sporting and energetic activities available. The recently introduced lunch menu provides a healthy cooked meal option whilst catering for a wide variety of dietary needs. The school seeks to be an inclusive community and this is evident in its plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

4.13 The school is excellent in promoting good behaviour and guarding against bullying. Positive relationships exist across the school demonstrating that rigorous systems are in place to support pupils when they experience friendship difficulties. This is supported through the use of early intervention strategies. Pupils are aware of issues surrounding cyber-bullying. They are taught about on-line safety and from Year 1 all pupils sign an internet safety agreement. A very small minority of pupils felt that the school did not seek or listen to their views; this was not confirmed during the inspection or through further conversations with pupils. Pupils participate in the nomination of others to receive the character awards, which are celebrated in assembly. The recently established school council allows pupils to voice their opinions and contribute ideas; councillors share the outcomes of their meetings with the whole school. Recently they have requested improvements to the access to a classroom, and this has been addressed. Occasional questionnaires are distributed to the pupils seeking their opinions, providing a further opportunity for pupils to share concerns or ideas.

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

4.14 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is sound.

4.15 In the EYFS, the provision for children's well-being is excellent. All staff are fully committed to providing a safe environment and are fully aware of the need to prevent radicalisation and extremism. The safeguarding policy is implemented carefully and training is up-to-date. However, staff recruitment procedures, including checks and records, are not implemented rigorously. The needs of vulnerable children are acknowledged. School attendance is promoted and monitored closely. Children understand the need to wash hands before eating and they can manage their own hygiene needs independently. Risk assessments are completed both for in-school activities and for outings.

4.16 The school is committed to promoting the welfare, health and safety of all members of the community. All staff have undertaken child protection and safeguarding training, and the designated safeguard lead (DSL) and the deputy have been trained at the higher level. The safeguarding policy includes the EYFS and is an integral part of the school's overarching pupil care policy. Good links have been established with local agencies and the school contributes actively to inter-agency work when required. The policy is monitored by the leadership team and reported to the proprietor. The annual review by governance is not documented. The safeguarding policy was compliant by the end of the inspection and published on the school's website. Procedures set out for the appointment of new staff are not robust, and pre-employment checks were not accurately recorded. Omissions identified during the inspection were largely rectified by the end of the visit.

4.17 All staff are aware of the *Prevent* strategy and have received appropriate training. A detailed policy includes curriculum links to develop pupils' self-esteem and resilience thereby promoting their well-being. All members of staff are trained in first aid and there are good facilities to look after pupils who are ill or injured. Medicines are stored and managed safely, and any accidents are carefully recorded and monitored. Specific medical issues are highlighted and all staff are kept informed. Pupils with SEND receive excellent support and guidance.

4.18 Careful attention is given to the planning of trips and visits out of school, including appropriate risk assessments. The systems in place to identify and manage risk across the school site lack detail and they are not sufficiently responsive. The

school grounds and buildings are generally well maintained. There is a medium term plan for future developments of the site and a system is being developed to strengthen the management of general day-to-day maintenance. All necessary action has been taken to minimise the risk of fire and other hazards. Senior staff have undertaken fire safety training, and fire evacuation procedures are carried out regularly and appropriately recorded.

- 4.19 The attendance registers are kept accurately with unexplained absences promptly followed up; any extended unauthorised absences are always reported. By the end of the inspection, the admissions register contained all required information. The registers are stored securely.

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 Governance of the school rests with the proprietor whose daily presence in the school provides regular opportunities for informal conversations. Governance however is not fully effective. Regular weekly meetings with the leadership provide an opportunity for information to be shared and matters of concern discussed. Reports and documentation received from the leadership team keep him fully appraised of the educational standards achieved by the pupils. The school's finances are managed effectively with appropriate investment in staff and other resources. Responsibility for some aspects of the school's operation are not clearly delegated, and there is a lack of monitoring of implementation. Responsibility for educational matters is clearly delegated to the leadership team, including responsibility for pupils' welfare.
- 5.3 The proprietor is committed to developing the EYFS within the overarching aims for the school as a whole. He is well-known in the EYFS as he regularly participates in the playground duty rota. Informal discussions with the EYFS co-ordinator are held, but oversight of the day to day running of the setting is left to the school's leadership. Oversight is generally effective.
- 5.4 Governance has given insufficient attention to the detail of regulatory matters. The annual review of the safeguarding policy had not been formalised and appropriately recorded, and new regulatory requirements had been overlooked. These were addressed by the end of the inspection. The recruitment of staff is managed by the proprietor, who has undertaken safer recruitment training, but the process lacks rigour. Not all pre-employment checks had been carried out in a timely manner, and the central record of staff appointments did not meet regulatory requirements. Omissions identified during the inspection were largely addressed and resolved by the end of the inspection.
- 5.5 The proprietor has a clear vision for the school and ambitious plans for its future development. His strategic planning incorporates the school development plan which is prepared by the leadership after discussion with all staff. The proprietor has established networks to provide support and he seeks professional advice when required. An informal understanding between governance and leadership about respective areas of responsibility ensures the smooth running of the school on a daily basis, but arrangements for monitoring regulatory compliance are not sufficiently robust.

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

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians is good.
- 5.7 The leadership and management of the EYFS are highly effective in providing an excellent start for the children's education. The warm and welcoming atmosphere they create ensures that the children feel safe and secure. The cohesive staff team has created a stimulating learning environment which promotes active learning and

supports the school's aim to develop every child's unique talents. The leadership demonstrates an excellent understanding of the requirements of the EYFS framework for learning, and monitors the children's individualised teaching programmes carefully. By the end of the inspection, written policies and procedures relating to the EYFS regulations, including safeguarding, met the requirements. Regular staff meetings in the setting ensure that all staff are conversant with the learning intentions. Staff supervision is informal; supporting documentation is at an early stage of development. Opportunities are taken to attend relevant training courses and support from outside agencies is sought, and acted upon, where appropriate. There is a clear recognition of diversity and fundamental British values are promoted and embraced.

- 5.8 The EYFS leadership understands the need to identify specific areas for EYFS development, but these are not yet identified in whole school strategic planning. Since the previous inspection, staff rigorously monitor and document how children are using and applying their taught skills in their child-initiated learning. The outdoor area has been developed and offers more opportunities for children to find out about the natural world and provides improved access to areas for physical development. There is a clear vision for ongoing development and improvement for the EYFS but this is not fully reflected in the whole school development plan.
- 5.9 The leadership and management of the school have a comprehensive oversight of the educational provision and are highly effective at enabling the school to meet its aims. The leadership's clear educational vision focuses on meeting the needs of every pupil in ways that incorporate their academic achievement, personal development and citizenship. The recently implemented enriched curriculum makes a significant impact on pupils' all-round educational achievement. Through a pattern of distributed leadership many staff are involved in leading new initiatives, and increasingly managers and leaders at every level contribute to the school's on-going development. Many new ideas have been introduced and these changes are becoming embedded.
- 5.10 Good attention is given to the professional development of staff, including a supportive performance management system. The process includes opportunities for professional reflection and dialogue. Time is taken in weekly staff meetings to discuss new initiatives, and a number of staff have contributed to professional development sessions. Staff new to the school receive appropriate induction including details of the school's safeguarding policy and other health and safety procedures.
- 5.11 The principles of safeguarding and promoting pupils' well-being are firmly embedded within the practice of the teaching staff and the daily operations of the school. The leadership ensure all staff have relevant training and promote an open and supportive environment. Practices and policies embrace an explicit commitment to building pupils' resilience. The implementation of the safeguarding policy and associated practices is effective. Systems for wider policy review are not managed effectively, and hence did not always include most recent requirements or details. However, issues identified by the inspection were addressed by the end of the visit. Any concerns about pupils' welfare are handled sensitively by the leadership team. From daily greeting of pupils by the front gate through to the weekly meetings of the school council, the leadership builds strong relationships with pupils and parents.
- 5.12 An annual development plan incorporates contributions from staff, though the distinct requirements of the EYFS are not clearly identified within it. The process of

drawing up the plan each year provides an opportunity for the leadership to reflect on policy and practice, evaluating outcomes. Recently, systems for monitoring pupil's progress and assessing their attainment have been reviewed and the new, comprehensive and informative systems in place are a real strength. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching are less robust, with significant variations in practice across the school. The recent focus on curriculum development has been highly successful in ensuring the needs of all pupils are met, especially those whose ability levels are significantly above average.

- 5.13 Parents are extremely satisfied with the education and support provided for their children as indicated in the overwhelmingly positive responses to the questionnaire.
- 5.14 In the EYFS, parents are pleased with the progress their children are making both in their learning and their emotional development. They appreciate the nurturing environment and individual attention which their children receive, and value the detailed and timely communications between the home and the school. An extensive portfolio is compiled for EYFS children and parents are encouraged to contribute to it by sharing what children are achieving at home. The portfolios cover all aspects of work and include wide ranging, informative assessments and outlines targets for future improvement. This careful monitoring and close communication with home ensures that appropriate support and interventions can be put in place should the need arise.
- 5.15 The school maintains constructive relationships with parents in accordance with its aims, actively promoting an atmosphere of collective responsibility. Regular contact between home and school is seen as a priority. Staff are readily available for personal discussions, and email is also used to facilitate dialogue. Once a month parents may drop in to informally meet the staff. In addition to being kept informed through daily contact, newsletters, the extremely informative website and notice boards are used as further means of communication. The procedures for handling complaints are comprehensive, fully understood by parents and comply with regulatory requirements. A small minority expressed reservations about the way concerns were handled. Interviews with parents and scrutiny of records show that parental concerns are handled promptly, sensitively and thoroughly.
- 5.16 Parents appreciate the many opportunities there are to be involved in school life and the work of their children. Open evenings, curriculum evenings, 'meet the new class teacher' events, speech day, parent assemblies, concerts and plays all provide opportunities for parents to be actively involved in their children's education, strengthening home-school contact. Their active involvement in arranging a wide range of social and fund-raising events makes a positive contribution to the family atmosphere within the school. The bringing together of families from different backgrounds and cultures contributes to a strong sense of community. The senior leadership actively encourages parents to become involved in the formulation of the school's objectives, priorities and strategies through regular informal meetings in school.
- 5.17 Parents of pupils and of prospective pupils are provided with the required information about the school. Parents receive regular high quality, detailed and informative reports. These provide comments about performance in all subjects and the disciplines required for effective learning, such as attitudes in class, as well as the results of national standardised tests. Useful targets for improvement are also included in some subjects. A small minority of parents felt that they did not feel that their child receives appropriate homework for their age. Evidence seen during the

inspection process does not support this view. Homework set is appropriate for the age of the pupils, and in parent interviews the opinions expressed were broadly happy with what was set. From the questionnaire, all parents consider that the school is well led and managed, with individual comments affirming their confidence in the school's leadership.

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