



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

BARROW HILLS SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Barrow Hills School

Full Name of School	Barrow Hills School		
DfE Number	936/6104		
Registered Charity Number	1000190		
Address	Barrow Hills School Roke Lane Witley Godalming Surrey GU8 5NY		
Telephone Number	01428 683639		
Fax Number	01428 681906		
Email Address	info@barrowhills.org.uk		
Head	Mr Matthew Unsworth		
Chair of Governors	Mr Stephen Mulliner		
Age Range	3 to 13		
Total Number of Pupils	257		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (167 boys; 90 girls)		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	0	5-11: 163
	3-5 (EYFS):	45	11-13 49
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	257	
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Sue Pulleyn		
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection dates	05 Feb 2013 to 08 Feb 2013		

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 November 2009.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, 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.

Ofsted monitors the work of independent inspectorates, including a sample of inspections, and you can find the latest evaluation of the work of ISI on the Ofsted website.

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', 'satisfactory' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors and other governors, observed a sample of the activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended Mass, assemblies and registration sessions. Responses by parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Ian Newton	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Serena Alexander	Team Inspector (Former head, IAPS School)
Mrs Maria Edwards	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS and GSA Junior School)
Mr Neil Hendriksen	Team inspector (Former Head, COBIS School)
Mrs Jo Bindloss Gibb	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL	2
(a) Main findings	2
(b) Action points	2
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	2
(ii) Recommendation for further improvement	2
3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	3
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning	3
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	4
(c) The contribution of teaching	5
4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	7
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	7
(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care	8
(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	9
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	10
(a) The quality of governance	10
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	10

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Barrow Hills School is a co-educational Roman Catholic day school, which is situated in a 33-acre wooded estate between Godalming and Haslemere in Surrey. It welcomes pupils from all denominations and faiths from the age of three to the age of thirteen. The school was founded in 1950 by a Josephite Community and became a charitable company limited by guarantee when the Order left in 1990; its work is now overseen by a board of governors.
- 1.2 The school prepares pupils for Common Entrance and scholarship examinations to a wide variety of independent boarding and day schools at the ages of eleven and thirteen. Its Catholic ethos means that the school aims to educate the whole child, finding out what they do best and celebrating this in the school community. It aims to inculcate Christian values of kindness, honesty, fortitude and empathy to produce well-rounded individuals who have a social conscience.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, the school had a total of 257 pupils, of whom 167 were boys and 90 girls. Of these, 45 children were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), for pupils between the age of three and five. Pupils come from families with a range of business and professional backgrounds who live within the local area; about a third of families are Catholic. Pupils are mainly of white British ethnicity.
- 1.4 The school's selection arrangements include spending a day in school and, for older pupils, taking standardised assessments. The range of the children's abilities is above the national average, encompassing a wide range of ability and significant variation between cohorts. Sixty-one pupils have been identified as having mild special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) of whom 47 receive support, mostly in small groups or individually. One pupil has a statement of educational need funded by a local authority. Four pupils are bilingual or have English as an additional language and receive a small amount of support for their English.
- 1.5 Since the previous inspection, the school has introduced Spanish alongside French as a modern foreign language and is currently trialling Mandarin. It has also introduced a range of extension courses to develop pupils' particular talents and interests. It has created a covered outdoor area for EYFS, and improved and extended the facilities for teaching science.
- 1.6 The school functions in three sections: the pre-prep, junior prep and senior prep departments; taken together the junior and senior departments are referred to as 'prep'. National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school in EYFS is shown in the following table.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	Age of children
Kindergarten	3-4
Reception	4-5

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Barrow Hills School amply fulfils its aim to educate the whole child, identify what they do best and celebrate it fully. From EYFS upwards, pupils' excellent personal development is shown by the strong sense of community, the way pupils are at ease with themselves and their fellows, the way their lives reflect the Christian heartbeat of the school, and their excellent moral and social awareness. The concern that pupils of all ages show for one another mirrors the excellent pastoral care they receive, and the excellent relationships they enjoy. Extremely careful attention is given to supporting the individual needs of pupils, who were very positive about the care they receive. The views expressed in the questionnaires, that the school does not listen to pupils' opinions, were not borne out during the inspection. Safeguarding arrangements are excellent; recruitment arrangements are now robust.
- 2.2 The excellent curriculum and activity programme supports pupils' good achievement extremely well; in many areas achievement is excellent. Pupils make an excellent start in EYFS, gaining fluency in language and number, alongside confidence in tackling problems. Older pupils show considerable creativity, speak confidently, collaborate extremely well, and participate enthusiastically in discussion. Performance by individuals and groups is particularly strong in music, drama and sport. Pupils are successful in entry to senior schools. Pupils with particular needs receive excellent support in class, in groups and individually, enabling them to progress well. Pupils with particular gifts enjoy a high quality extension programme; support for more able pupils is much improved since the previous inspection. Teaching is good overall and often excellent. At its best it is well planned, with thought-provoking questioning and work that is well matched to pupils' abilities. The school engages in a good deal of assessment but is aware that it does not take full advantage of the information it provides.
- 2.3 The successful implementation of the school's aims is supported by excellent governance, leadership and management; areas for further development have been clearly identified, reflecting the commitment to continuous improvement. Governors and senior leaders share a common vision, which is communicated fully to staff. Governors oversee welfare meticulously. Both governors and senior leaders give excellent leadership to EYFS. Links with parents are excellent; in the questionnaires parents were almost entirely positive about the school and there were no issues raised by significant numbers of parents. The school has responded well to previous recommendations, meeting them fully; governors play a more active role.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
1. Make full use of information from assessment to monitor progress, both of individuals and of the school as a whole.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' learning and achievements is good.
- 3.2 Pupils achieve well across the curriculum and in many areas their achievement is excellent, reflecting the school's aim to identify each pupil's area of strength and to develop it fully. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, very high proportions of parents and pupils were pleased with the progress that pupils make.
- 3.3 Children make an excellent start in EYFS, in relation to their starting points. In Kindergarten, their confidence and social skills increase rapidly, for example as they learn to share their news. In Reception, children recognise and write teen numbers in mathematics and some write basic sentences independently. They make independent choices, take up different challenges and enjoy new opportunities. A music making and dance session using a hand painted dragon to celebrate Chinese New Year typifies the children's creativity. Most children enter Year 1 with skills above the national average, as shown by the EYFS profile results.
- 3.4 Older pupils develop highly legible writing, form excellent sentences and use vocabulary well. They apply their understanding of calculations very effectively and are aware of the world around them, for example knowing that the moon landings took place where there is no atmosphere. As they move up the school, pupils speak French confidently, understand geographical concepts such as the difference between weather and climate, and have well-developed investigative skills in science. In art, pupils manipulate textures and devised a wide range of hats for the Mad Hatters Tea Party. Pupils' mathematical knowledge is sound, and at the top of the school it is often good. Older pupils also bring considerable skill to their analysis of poetry, and write fluently in English. They understand subtle nuances such as the difference between a disciple and a believer, and develop a secure understanding of concepts such as plate tectonics. Pupils use high level programming languages to create computer games, understanding how to make objects on the screen move in relation to each other.
- 3.5 Work in art shows exceptional creativity and technique, whether pupils are using computers for animation or montage, conveying abstract and conceptual ideas, or focusing on the essence of a scene. Pupils sing with confidence and sensitivity in chapel, and play music with exceptional feeling, timbre and tone. In personal, social and health education (PSHE), pupils are sensitive in discussion. Dramatic and musical skills are developed well through opportunities for each year group to take part in a musical. Pupils' physical skills are shown by excellent results both at individual and team level. Their ability in performance is recognised outside school, for example in ballet. Pupils are successful in gaining places and a good range of scholarships to senior schools. They achieve well in academic competitions such as the junior mathematics challenge and a poetry competition in London.
- 3.6 Results in standardised tests indicate that attainment is higher than national norms. This level of attainment, taken together with inspection evidence, shows that pupils make good progress. High quality support for pupils who have SEND or EAL enables them to progress rapidly, for example in reading and writing, or in making scientific predictions. Teachers allow pupils to think their way through the issues they face and, by encouraging them to persevere, enable them to address their difficulties with confidence. The school has identified areas of special gift for all

pupils and the programme of individual and group activity, as well as day-to-day support in class, enables these gifts to be developed well. The most able pupils make better progress than at the time of the previous inspection.

- 3.7 Throughout the school, pupils show excellent attitudes almost all the time, though occasionally progress is limited by unhelpful behaviour. They speak confidently and contribute well, even when unsure of the answer. They are quick to suggest ideas and show considerable creativity and imagination. They use their graphical and information and communications technology (ICT) skills well. High levels of participation and enthusiasm show that pupils enjoy their work; they almost always show considerable perseverance and application, though occasionally they flag towards the end of an hour's lesson. They think carefully and logically about new situations, and ask insightful questions. When given the opportunity, pupils work well independently, both in class and in research, exploring new areas through the use of mind-maps and identifying gaps in their knowledge well. They work extremely well with others, sharing ideas and providing support. Paired work is particularly strong. Pupils' sense of teamwork is also seen on the games field.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of the curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 In line with the school's aims, pupils are given the opportunity to enjoy finding what they do best through a challenging, far-reaching, and evolving curriculum, which offers pupils significant opportunities in design and technology, art, drama, music and sport; in addition, pupils enjoy the extension programme.
- 6.1 The EYFS setting provides extremely well for children's needs. The structure of Kindergarten and two small Reception classes ensures that each child receives first class attention to their developmental and pastoral needs through an effective key person system. The appropriate balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities ensures good coverage of all seven areas of learning. Staff actively promote learning by encouraging the children to explore, investigate and concentrate, and to think critically and creatively. All classes offer a bright and lively environment for learning, in which staff interact positively with children. Outdoor facilities, including sessions in a woodland environment, provide interesting and challenging experiences for all. The setting draws effectively on the expertise of specialist staff for physical education, music and French.
- 3.10 For older pupils, innovative changes have recently been made. Spanish is now offered as a second language and Mandarin as an option. New resources in the pre-prep for teaching English and Mathematics are now being extended as pupils move up the school. Additional time has been provided for PSHE. Basic computer skills are now taught across the curriculum rather than in isolation, with some lessons given to programming skills. For example, Year 1 pupils typed up personal prayers for display, Year 6 produced presentations on mountains in geography and programmed animations, such as an imaginative and professional presentation on the storming of the Bastille. Older pupils are taught to use the internet safely.
- 3.11 The excellent extra-curricular programme, ensures all pupils from Year 3 upwards have access to a wide-ranging activities programme. This takes place twice-weekly during lessons and offers diverse opportunities including chess, cookery and gardening. The school also offers all children opportunities such as speech and drama examinations, ballet, tap and jazz, adventure club and tennis. An extensive

programme of sport supports the aim that every pupil from Year 3 should enjoy the challenge of joining a sport team each week. Both pupils and parents were extremely positive about the range of activities available.

- 3.12 The curriculum is very well supported through visits to places such as museums, castles, the Mary Rose and local walks, as well as visits further afield. In addition, pupils benefit greatly from a broad variety of links with the local community. These include support for a local school for sight impaired children and a 'Paralympics Day' involving children from both schools. Pupils take part in matches, orienteering and outdoor sessions with a nearby maintained primary school. Education Sunday is celebrated jointly with a local maintained Catholic primary school, with a combined choir. The school has links with several homes for the elderly, giving performances, inviting residents to school events and taking harvest festival produce. Pupils display artwork at a local museum.
- 3.13 The provision for special educational needs is outstanding. Individual needs are identified early by class teachers or through assessment, and a variety of effective strategies are put in place. The carefully structured programme enables pupils to make rapid progress and work confidently alongside their peers. They receive excellent support, which is well matched to their needs in the classroom, in groups or individually. Pupils praise highly the support they receive, recognising how it has enabled them to complete the same work as the rest of the class. Pupils enjoy the group sessions, which are fun, varied, interesting and provide them with appropriate strategies to complete tasks that they would not otherwise have attempted. Pupils with EAL receive high quality support with which parents are very pleased.
- 3.14 The school's records and pupils' individual plans, called provision maps, show that they make good and sometimes excellent progress against their targets. Pupils say that using targets motivates them well. The teaching assistants, trained by the special needs team, work very effectively providing support in class.
- 3.15 The new extension programme provides opportunities for all older pupils, not just the most able, to participate in exciting and challenging activities outside the normal curriculum. These range from music to peer mentoring and literature, and cater for a wide range of life skills and talents. The pupils thoroughly enjoy these and although attendance is not compulsory, most take part. In class, the adoption of the 'must, could, and should' approach allows more able pupils to challenge themselves and to work at levels suitable for their abilities. Parental correspondence shows high regard for the excellent work done in supporting their children's learning.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.16 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.17 Teaching is almost always good and a significant proportion is excellent, so that the school achieves its aim to develop pupils' talents to the full. In EYFS, high expectations inspire each child to try their best and persevere. Extra support enables teaching to meet the needs of more able children, those with EAL and those with SEND well. Each child's progress is constantly monitored through observation, discussion, assessment and written evidence; the information gained informs future planning. Children are enabled to learn effectively.
- 3.18 Throughout the school, the many high quality lessons provide an appropriate balance between individual and class work, enabling pupils to take responsibility for their learning. Imaginative and challenging resources, coupled with ingenious

exercises to teach new techniques, enable pupils to progress well; lessons are well structured to capture pupils' interest at the outset and to check understanding at the end. Teachers use question and answer very effectively, both to establish prior knowledge and to elicit ideas. They ensure that all pupils are involved and that more able pupils are challenged fully. Teaching assistants are provided generously and provide further support and extension.

- 3.19 In a high proportion of lessons, different tasks or levels of support are provided for pupils of differing abilities and needs. Individual teaching of pupils with SEND or EAL, including of any with statements, is of the highest quality enabling them to progress well. Support in class is carefully targeted by teachers, who know pupils and their needs well; a high proportion of pupils say that teachers help them to learn. Teaching is matched to pupils' needs much more closely than at the time of the previous inspection.
- 3.20 Teachers provide a wealth of opportunities for pupils to work in pairs or groups, thus building up their ability to collaborate. Teachers' subject knowledge is almost always good and they bring an excellent level of enthusiasm and commitment to their work. Most lessons are lively and have a brisk pace; almost all pupils say they find lessons interesting. In a minority of lessons, which whilst sound are less strong, teaching lacks variety and pace, and concepts are not explained with sufficient clarity.
- 3.21 Relationships between teachers and pupils are invariably first class. However, occasionally poor behaviour is not managed firmly enough. Resources such as interactive whiteboards are used well and teachers take advantage of current events, such as the identification of a buried king, to enliven pupils' experience. Although some pupils were critical of the value and amount of homework in the questionnaire, pupils described it as appropriate in meetings.
- 3.22 The best marking is effective, since it is highly informative and constructive, though this is not entirely consistent. Pupils also receive helpful oral feedback, which supports the improvement of their work.
- 3.23 The school uses a detailed system of standardised assessments from the end of Reception to Year 8. These are wide ranging and cover English, mathematics and science. Colour coded results enable pupils whose scores are below or above average to be recognised, allowing staff to provide appropriate support to meet pupils' needs. However, information from assessment is not used fully to support the progress of individuals and monitor progress overall. The school is aware of this and is reviewing its assessment arrangements, as indicated in the school's development plan.
- 3.24 Staff use comprehensive weekly and termly tests to keep parents informed, and support planning. Pupils understand the purpose of assessment. They feel that the weekly tests, for example in spelling, tables and mathematics, help them build on their strengths and overcome their weaknesses.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils' personal development is outstanding, reflecting a successful transition from childhood to adolescence, a process on which the school places great store. Pupils of all ages thrive, are confident and are at ease with others. They benefit from the way their childhood is nurtured through events such as the annual go kart race, the Silver Jubilee celebrations and 'worm charming'. Skills for later life are developed well through events such as the Entrepreneurial Challenge.
- 4.3 Children's personal development starts well in EYFS. They take turns and co-operate well. They develop empathy and respect their peers, whilst responding appropriately to their own feelings. In Kindergarten, children share resources and develop friendships. Those in Reception take on responsibility and carry out classroom duties.
- 4.4 Older pupils' spiritual awareness is outstanding. They grow in self-esteem as a result of the strong Catholic ethos at the heart of the school. Pupils of all faiths fully embrace the message of caring for others; they value the way the liturgy is made relevant to current issues, showing empathy and generosity to those less fortunate than themselves as a result. Spiritual awareness is developed through daily prayers and whole school masses: an interlude of calm and reflection enjoyed by the wider school community, including parents and governors. Pupils, as well as parents and staff, find advice and spiritual guidance in the calm and supportive chaplaincy.
- 4.5 Pupils demonstrate excellent moral development. They explore moral themes such as right and wrong in religious education (RE), and when reflecting on issues such as the difference between confession and contrition. Pupils have written their own pupil handbook which not only describes life as a Barrow Hill pupil, but gives sound advice such as 'Take chances', 'Seize opportunities', 'Be accepting of others' and 'What to do if you are down in the dumps.' Older pupils are trained as peer mentors and give guidance to younger colleagues; for example, senior girls talked to Year 2 pupils about friendship issues. This interaction between age groups reinforces the strong Christian family values in the school.
- 4.6 Pupils' social awareness is extremely well developed, encouraged by the strong sense of community. Pupils readily help others. They enjoy leadership roles, such as being class leader or register monitor, from a young age. As they grow, they take more opportunities to lead; in the summer term, all Year 7 pupils nominate an area of school life in which they feel they can give some service and leadership. Throughout their final year, they all play an active role. In addition, the school council meets weekly to discuss pupils' views. They are currently rewriting the anti-bullying charter. They have met with the school council of a local primary school and established common ground from which they have developed a five-point plan for improvement, presented to the school at assembly. Older members enrol on the Young Leadership Programme.
- 4.7 Pupils' cultural development is excellent. They develop respect for their own culture through the extensive programme of music, drama and creative arts. They use visits to galleries as the basis for their own work in art. They acquire a deep knowledge of

the Catholic faith through RE lessons and religious festivals. They understand and respect other faiths and cultures; for example, the pre-prep learned about the customs associated with Chinese New Year. Pupils are inspired by links with a Catholic primary school in Burkina Faso. They communicate with pupils there over the internet on a giant screen in assembly, and spent a day following their way of life, including eating beans and rice for lunch. They have strong links with a school for children with disabilities. Pupils' strong cultural development is enhanced by a broad programme of educational trips and visits. Older children have had the opportunity to go further afield and meet their French pen friends.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 In EYFS, each child's needs, uniqueness and individuality are recognised extremely well due to the high level of support and learning. Staff strive continually to nurture all the children in their care, who feel safe and happy as a result. The children are helped by the way staff act as role models to show respect for each other, tolerate differences and behave according to expected standards. When necessary, children are helped to manage their personal hygiene. Snack time, cooking sessions and nutritious meals enable children to appreciate healthy eating. They have many opportunities to benefit from fresh air and exercise.
- 4.10 Throughout the school, relationships between staff and pupils are excellent, as they are amongst pupils, reflecting the school's values and beliefs and the welcoming, caring and supportive nature of the school community. The strong sense of community enables staff to identify with each individual child. Staff provide considerable support and guidance. Pupils say that staff care for them very well, and that they know who to turn to if they need help. A new initiative provides a safe place where the needs of pupils who require additional support at times of family distress or difficulty can be met.
- 4.11 The rewards and sanctions system is clearly understood and a positive motivator. Although there was some criticism in questionnaires, pupils said during the inspection that they considered the system to be fair. Bullying is not tolerated. Pupils said in interviews that on the rare occasions on which it does occur it is usually mild in form and dealt with quickly and effectively. They feel that the school is a welcoming, happy, caring place where people get on well with each other. A very high proportion of pupils said in the questionnaire that they like being at the school.
- 4.12 Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles. Opportunities are provided for them to enjoy exercise, in physical education, games and activities. Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits. The meals are nutritious and locally sourced where possible. Individual dietary needs are provided for well. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 4.13 The school employs effective means, via the school council to seek pupils' views. In the questionnaire, a significant number of pupils expressed the opinion that the school did not listen to their views. The inspectors did not find any evidence to support this. In conversation the pupils felt that they had strong voice in the school. For example, Year 5 pupils reported how effective the school council had been in

implementing improvements recommended by them, and Year 8 pupils outlined the impact of their input to the operation of the school.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.15 In EYFS, the setting's contribution to children's well-being is excellent. Key persons develop positive relationships with them, ensuring each child feels safe and able to share their concerns. High priority is given to health and safety through favourable staff ratios, and through reminders to children about safety issues such as sensible use of sticks in the woodland environment. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly. Children are encouraged to approach activities independently, whilst developing an understanding of risk-taking and its consequences. Preparation for transition to the next year group is handled sensitively by staff, so that the children approach it happily and confidently.
- 4.16 The whole school, including EYFS, has robust arrangements for safeguarding, in line with official guidance. Staff receive appropriate training in child protection, both when they first arrive and at appropriate intervals; those who act as designated persons attend additional training courses with the local social services department as required. As a result, staff are aware of the action to take if issues arise and the school liaises appropriately with local agencies. Safeguarding is carefully overseen by the governing body, who conduct an annual review in addition to monitoring practice at other times; for example, one governor checks the understanding of safeguarding amongst groups of pupils on one visit and of new members of staff on another each year. Arrangements for recruiting staff are more robust than at the time of the previous inspection and now meet the requirements fully.
- 4.17 Similarly, the school takes pupils' safety very seriously. Regular fire drills are conducted and fire equipment is checked and maintained regularly. All the issues identified in the most recent risk assessment have been resolved. Appropriate risk assessments have been carried out for work around the school and for educational activities; health and safety issues are discussed regularly by the health and safety committee and reviewed by the governing body. The school takes proper care of any pupils who are ill or injured, in a well-equipped and conveniently located medical room. A large number of staff has received first aid training with a good proportion at a higher level.
- 4.18 Attendance and admission registers are completed properly and backed up in accordance with the regulations.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The governing body provides an outstanding vision for the core values and future of the school, ensuring that it maintains its Catholic ethos whilst continuing to develop high quality education through innovation, significant investment in staff, accommodation and resources, and careful evaluation of performance. Regular reporting by the headmaster and senior staff, careful attention by individual governors to areas of school life such as safeguarding and EYFS, and a greater understanding of governors' roles in regulatory compliance have given governors greater insight into many facets of the school and enabled them to provide effective support, challenge and stimulus. Members give of their time, not only to attend regular meetings, but also to participate in staff training and join senior staff at educational conferences, and thus are able to contribute meaningfully to discussion and debate.
- 5.3 Care is taken to ensure that the governing body contains the right balance of experience and expertise. Governors discharge their responsibilities for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety fully. They conduct the required annual review of child protection arrangements and monitor procedures more frequently. They provide effective support to EYFS.

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

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management of the school is excellent.
- 5.5 Leadership strongly supports the school's aims, so that pupils work productively in a nurturing and safe environment. Strong spiritual leadership filters through the school and into the wider community ensuring pupils grow to have a strong, moral character through living Christian values.
- 5.6 The senior management team (SMT) work very well together, resulting in a rich breadth of opportunities for pupils, both academically and creatively. The SMT oversee a curriculum and outstanding range of activities that ensures a high level of success in examinations, but also promotes excellent personal and spiritual development. The safeguarding of pupils throughout the school, including EYFS, is ensured through a thorough staff development programme including training in child protection, safer recruitment, welfare, health and safety, as well as risk management and rigorous procedures. Arrangements for recruiting staff are robust, and improved since the previous inspection.
- 5.7 The leadership and management of EYFS are excellent, ensuring that policies and procedures are implemented fully, and resources used well. Development planning has been used to set a clear and ambitious vision for the setting's future direction. Accurate self-evaluation has identified appropriate priorities for development and targets for improvement. Staff monitoring and supervision is carried out continually and teamwork is strong. Some peer observations have taken place, although they are not yet done systematically. The professional development of staff is managed through regular appraisals and a good range of training courses. Progress since the

last inspection is seen in the clearer identification of targets to improve and in greater consistency of planning throughout the setting. In addition, improvements have been made to the outdoor provision.

- 5.8 The SMT is committed to raising academic standards. They have improved many teaching polices, resulting in excellent support for pupils with SEND, consistent practice in extending the most able and the newly introduced extension programme for older pupils. Policies and procedures are reviewed and changes made when necessary. Appraisal is effective and supports professional development well. Careful self-evaluation identifies where further improvements need to be made, including changes in roles and improved staffing. More emphasis is being placed on tracking pupils, work scrutiny, marking and formative assessment as well as on making full use of information from assessment across all departments. In addition, excellent pastoral care by the heads of the three departments ensures continuity as pupils progress through the school. Heads of subject lead their areas well and report regularly to the SMT. Their roles are well developed, and a system of monitoring is in place in most subjects. The school is very well sustained by members of the support staff; like teachers they are hard working and committed to the school.
- 5.9 The school maintains excellent relationships with parents. They are highly supportive of the school and very appreciative of the wealth of information available to them by email, the website and the extremely popular Friday Letter. They receive all the information that is required. Communication with staff is regarded as easy and helpful, and parents appreciate the quick responses they receive.
- 5.10 The parents' pre-inspection questionnaires were extremely positive about the school and the progress their children make. They feel that the school is well led and that the school encourages them to be involved in events and in other aspects of its work. There were no issues raised by significant numbers of parents. Inspectors agreed with parents' positive views.
- 5.11 Parents, including those whose children are in EYFS, have many and varied opportunities to be involved with the school. As well as the very active parents' society, there are the charity committee, development initiative and parent reps. The latter meet termly with the headmaster and appropriate senior staff; parents report the high value and beneficial outcomes of these meetings. Parents are invited to attend many events in school including sports, play, concerts and assemblies or services in the chapel. Parents enjoy the opportunity to meet informally with staff at the beginning of year Hog Roast. Parents say they feel welcome at school. Parents receive meaningful and helpful reports, as well as having good opportunities to meet staff face to face.
- 5.12 Parents of EYFS children are kept well informed of their child's progress on a regular basis. They appreciate the continuous support they receive from staff as they help children settle, and they value the good communication between home and school such as the whiteboard in Kindergarten detailing the events of the day. Feedback from the pre-inspection questionnaire shows parents consider EYFS to be a welcoming, happy and productive place for their children. The positive relationships between parents and the school help to identify children who need additional support, whether inside the school or from external agencies.
- 5.13 The school has an effective and appropriate procedure to deal with complaints; parents with a concern may contact the school at any time. Parents report a high

degree of satisfaction with the manner, alacrity and effectiveness with which concerns are handled in due accordance with the procedure. All the parents who responded to the questionnaires would recommend the school to others.

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