



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
DURSTON HOUSE SCHOOL**

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Durston House School

Full Name of School	Durston House School
DfE Number	307/6000
Registered Charity Number	294670
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Telephone Number	0208 9916530
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Email Address	info@durstonhouse.org
Head	Mr Ian Kendrick
Chair of Governors	Mr Tony Allen
Age Range	4 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	406
Gender of Pupils	Boys
Numbers by Age	4-5(EYFS): 47 5-11: 284 11-13: 75
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Hilary Wyatt
EYFS Gender	Boys
Inspection Dates	3 to 6 March 2015

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in March 2009.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Education (DfE) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and tutor groups. 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

Mr Richard Johnson	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Claire Delo	Team Inspector (Assistant Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Mr Robert Gullifer	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Elaine Rushforth	Team Inspector (Head of Pre-Prep, GSA school)
Mr Oliver Stokes	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Deborah Buckenham	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Durstun House School is a day school for boys from the ages of 4 to 13. It was established in 1886 as a Christian foundation; the school became a charitable trust administered by a board of governors in 1983.
- 1.2 The school occupies three sites in a residential area of Ealing in West London, located close to each other. Each site houses a section of the school, including the pre-preparatory (pre-prep) department for Reception and Years 1 and 2. There are specialist teaching facilities for science, information and communication technology (ICT), music and art. In addition, it makes extensive use of its own nearby sports facilities and uses local churches for assemblies, drama productions and concerts. Since the previous inspection, the site of the junior school, for pupils in Years 3 and 4, has been extended and refurbished, the outdoor learning facilities for the youngest pupils have been enhanced and there has been significant development of a nearby playing field.
- 1.3 The school aims to provide an outstanding education for its pupils by creating a lively, fun, and interesting environment. It seeks to encourage pupils to aim high and to become involved in many aspects of school life, in order to engender a sense of purpose, and in doing so to become future good citizens.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection, there were 406 pupils on the roll, 284 in Years 1 to 6 and 75 in Years 7 and 8. In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) there were 47 children. Eighty-four pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) of whom 51 receive additional learning support. There are two pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Eleven pupils receive support for English as an additional language (EAL).
- 1.5 In discussion and through observation, the ability profile of the school is above the national average. Pupils mostly come from professional and business families in the local area, and reflect the diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds to be found there. Most pupils leave at the age of 13, with few leaving earlier, and almost all move on to selective independent schools.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school is successful in meeting its aims. Provision for children in the EYFS is highly effective in meeting their needs, and the outcomes in all aspects of their development are excellent. The achievements of the pupils in the remainder of the school are excellent; pupils are successful in gaining entry to a number of highly selective senior schools. They are highly motivated and show positive attitudes to their learning. The curriculum provided is generally well-planned and structured to meet the needs of all pupils, and effective use is made of specialist teachers. The contribution of teaching to pupils' progress is good. Since the previous inspection, the school has revised its assessment procedures.
- 2.2 The personal development of pupils is excellent, characterised by strong social interactions and mutual respect. In the EYFS, warm and supportive relationships with staff help them to foster very positive attitudes towards their learning. Leaders in the setting are committed to ensuring that they are well cared-for and ready for their transition to Year 1. Behaviour is also excellent throughout the school, and the pupils show a well-developed understanding of the values of the society in which they live. The school provides a good standard of pastoral care; relationships within the school are excellent and all staff are very aware of the needs of the pupils. There are some inconsistencies in the use of rewards and sanctions, and the views of pupils are not systematically sought and acted upon. The arrangements for pupils' welfare, health and safety are good. Procedures to ensure the school provides a safe environment for pupils are thorough and almost always implemented well, and their welfare needs are fully met.
- 2.3 Governance, leadership and management are good. Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths, and are visible and supportive. They work effectively with the governors, especially in ensuring that the safeguarding, welfare, health and safety needs of the pupils are met. Recent developments have enhanced the teaching facilities for pupils. The processes required to ensure a consistently high quality of teaching, as identified during the previous inspection, have yet to be fully implemented. Links with parents are good overall; they are provided with a great deal of information about their children's progress.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Implement procedures for the monitoring and support of teaching so it is of a consistently high standard throughout the school.
 2. Ensure that all staff adopt a uniform approach to the implementation of the school's rewards and sanctions policy.
 3. Establish formal methods to gather and respond to pupil's ideas and opinions.

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' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The school is successful in meeting its aim of providing an outstanding education. By the end of the EYFS, almost all children, including those with SEND or EAL, reach or exceed a good level of development. Children use their phonic knowledge effectively to support their early reading and independent writing skills; all can write simple sentences about what they have seen using capital letters and full stops. Their numeracy skills are well developed and they can carry out simple addition and subtraction tasks. They concentrate well, and show a growing independence as they organise their own possessions.
- 3.3 All pupils throughout the school demonstrate excellent numeracy and literacy skills, and can apply these effectively in their learning. They listen extremely well, read fluently, and use these skills to good effect in all subjects. The mature and eloquent way in which the pupils express themselves both orally and in writing is a notable feature of the school. Pupils have a secure grounding in languages, and their understanding of Latin is particularly strong. They have an excellent knowledge of scientific concepts, show imagination in their creative work and have good ICT skills. They can think independently, argue coherently and use their knowledge to make logical links between different subjects.
- 3.4 Musical standards are excellent. These are reflected in the high quality of the school choirs and in the outstanding results gained by individuals in national music examinations on a wide range of instruments. Pupils have a good level of physical development for their age and ability. School teams have enjoyed success in numerous sports fixtures and festivals, including rugby and cricket. Individual achievements in martial arts are strong, with pupils gaining awards at both district and national level in a range of disciplines. All pupils benefit from opportunities to perform in school plays and to speak in public, achieving high standards, gaining confidence and deriving great enjoyment from these activities.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2011 to 2013. These are the most recent three years for which comparative national statistics are available. Results in national curriculum tests at the age of 11 have been excellent in relation to the national average for maintained primary schools. In 2012 and 2013, results were exceptional. On the basis of this level of attainment and evidence from lesson observations, pupils' written work and curriculum interviews with them, the pupils' progress is judged to be excellent in relation to pupils of similar abilities. The school's own monitoring of attainment and progress through standardised tests shows many pupils achieving above the expectations for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Almost all pupils when they leave the school transfer to independent senior schools, many of which are highly selective. They have gained many awards, reflecting their academic, musical and sporting abilities.
- 3.6 Progress for pupils with both SEND and EAL, including those with statements of educational needs, is consistently good and, in many cases, excellent; quick and accurate identification of their needs is followed by effective intervention and support. The most able pupils achieve high standards, and make good, and often excellent, progress. This can be seen in the excellent achievement of the oldest pupils in lessons as they are prepared for scholarship examinations.

3.7 Pupils of all ages show excellent attitudes to learning and show enjoyment in many lessons. They are conscientious in their approach to all school activities, and show good co-operative learning skills. The school has high expectations of behaviour and effort; pupils are aware of these and try hard to meet them, showing resilience and determination in many lessons and activities. Standards of handwriting and presentation are excellent, and pupils take pride in their work.

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

3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.

3.9 The curriculum is adapted well to the ages and abilities of all of the pupils and in meeting the entry requirements of their future schools. It covers all of the requisite areas of learning, and provides a wide range of subjects and experiences which successfully develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. In doing so, the curriculum makes a strong contribution to the pupils' achievements and progress.

3.10 The EYFS setting makes excellent provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. Children with individual needs are given appropriate support and the more able are offered challenging tasks. Teaching staff have recently reviewed their planning format and the resulting programmes are broad and balanced. They benefit from specialist tuition in music and physical education (PE). The Reception classes have access to a small but well-equipped outdoor area immediately outside the classrooms, and the children enjoy their regular visits to the large field with artificially grassed play areas and its outdoor learning resources. Children are well prepared for their transitions to Year 1.

3.11 Since the previous inspection, the school has worked hard to develop creative and expressive subjects through a revised curriculum, which is more in keeping with the aims of the school. Illustrations of this can be seen in numerous activities such as a literary festival, where diverse activities develop the pupil's love of reading and understanding of literature. Younger pupils performed a poem in pairs and these recitals were judged by other class members against various criteria, increasing their understanding of structure and style.

3.12 Lessons in personal, social, health and moral education (PSHME) include aspects of religious studies as these departments work closely together. These reflect the aims of the school; pupils learn about the key aspects of life in British society, and develop an excellent understanding of diversity and other faiths.

3.13 The provision for the more able pupils and those with SEND and EAL is good. The curriculum is well adjusted to meet their needs, especially the preparation of the more able pupils for scholarship examinations. Curriculum planning shows a good awareness of the needs of pupils with SEND and EAL, and specialist teaching is provided as appropriate to ensure these pupils make at least good progress.

3.14 Older pupils enjoy opportunities for specialist teaching, and the school's successful entry record into selective senior schools reflects the success of this element of curricular provision. The curriculum includes opportunities for pupils throughout the school to study French from Year 3 and Latin from Year 6. Standardised schemes of work have been introduced, and British values are effectively promoted. However, opportunities for pupils to use computers are not always included in curricular planning. The development of new assessment procedures allows staff to review and evaluate the curriculum, and so ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils.

- 3.15 The school makes considerable efforts to overcome the limitations of its urban setting by providing a range of sporting opportunities at its own and other venues. In their responses to the inspection questionnaire, a small minority of parents and pupils indicated that there was not a sufficient range of extra-curricular activities. Inspection evidence indicates that after-school activities have improved and are developing. Nevertheless, they still remain limited in number and variety.
- 3.16 Educational visits are integrated well into the curriculum, as are the numerous visitors who are invited into the school to speak on a variety of topics. For pupils in Years 4 to 8 there is a specific 'trips week' of which the school is justifiably proud. These include outdoor activities in Wales, curriculum studies in York and Snowdonia, as well as a language visit to France. These trips encourage personal development and enhance teamwork and mutual tolerance.
- 3.17 The school enjoys good links with its local community, especially the churches, where pupils take part in some services. Charitable initiatives are well established, with support given to a wide variety of organisations. For example, the pre-prep department supports a local branch of a charity for the elderly with their annual harvest festival gifts. Other charities are supported by regular non-uniform days, including a charity that provides food for the world's poorest children when they attend school.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.18 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.19 Teachers in the EYFS have high expectations and every opportunity is taken to engage all children in a wide range of practical and stimulating activities. Observation and assessment systems are thorough and identify children's next stages of learning effectively.
- 3.20 Throughout the school, teaching is well planned through regular departmental meetings and makes a strong contribution to pupils' learning and achievements, meeting the aims of the school. Detailed schemes of work ensure consistent progress is made by all pupils. The quality of the marking of pupils' work has improved since the previous inspection. The school's marking policy now requires targets for improvement and pupils report that they appreciate these constructive comments. In a small number of instances marking is cursory. Regular assessment tests are analysed to keep the teachers well informed about their pupils' progress. This is further enhanced in some subjects with the use of assessment grids for pupils to analyse their own performance, enabling the pupils to have a clearer understanding of their strengths and areas to develop.
- 3.21 A very small minority of pupil and parent responses to questionnaires indicated some dissatisfaction with the appropriateness and effectiveness of homework and the quantity of work given; inspection evidence did not support this. In discussions with pupils they were unanimous in their view that, although the quantity of work set is high, it is fair and reasonable, and is necessary for them to achieve the high standards required for entry to their senior schools. The setting of homework is monitored, as recommended in the previous inspection.
- 3.22 Staff have a good knowledge of the topics that are taught; this was particularly apparent amongst the subject specialist teachers. This information is used to teach well-planned lessons, facilitating their excellent learning. Time in lessons is normally well managed. In a very small minority of less successful lessons, teaching was

over-directed, limiting the opportunities for independent learning and for pupils to engage in other classroom activities.

- 3.23 There is an excellent range of resources available throughout the school and they are generally used effectively; for instance, in a science lesson, model cells enabled pupils to visualise their structure and this enhanced their understanding. Electronic boards are available in all the classrooms and are used extensively by the teachers to stimulate pupils and facilitate their understanding. Despite the plentiful supply of computers, limited evidence of the use of ICT by the pupils in their learning was observed.
- 3.24 Teaching effectively fosters high levels of application from the pupils; in almost all lessons pupils work diligently and apply themselves well. Pupils spoke very positively about their teachers and feel that they are very informative and help them to learn. In some lessons where pupils are given opportunities to work independently on problem-solving tasks, they respond positively to these challenges and consequently make excellent progress. Many lessons allow pupils to develop their literacy and mathematical skills and they are expected to produce extended writing tasks in many subjects. For example, some pupils in the junior school used their subtraction skills to work out what balanced meals they could buy for a given budget.
- 3.25 Tasks are usually matched well to pupils' needs, and ability grouping is also used to ensure the requirements of their different abilities are met. Teachers frequently use open and probing questions to check the pupils' understanding. Occasionally, teachers rely too much on these grouping arrangements, limiting opportunities to extend the most able pupils. The specialist learning support staff ensure that teachers are well aware of the needs of the pupils with statements of special educational needs, and others with SEND or EAL, and also provide effective support for these pupils through well-planned individual interventions, ensuring that teaching meets the requirements of their statements. Teaching promotes tolerance and respect, and an effective understanding of fundamental British values.

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 standard of pupils' personal development is in accordance with the aims of the school to create future good citizens, and actively promotes fundamental British values. Pupils are mature, unaffectedly confident, polite and respectful of others. A high quality of personal development is evident as they leave the school, proud of what they have achieved; they are intellectually curious, highly motivated, and combine confidence and respect in their manner which reflects well on their education.
- 4.3 In the EYFS, children develop excellent independence, and grow in confidence and self-esteem. Younger pupils' social development is nurtured from an early age by themes of the week such as 'friendship' or lessons in learning how to cope in an emergency. They understand the need to accept that people are all different, and to make appropriate choices in their behaviour towards others. They work collaboratively together very well, demonstrating that they are able to resolve situations sensibly and understanding the need for sharing and taking turns.
- 4.4 In the rest of the school, the spiritual development of the pupils is good. They appreciate and understand the world around them, and reflect upon the consequences of their actions. They demonstrate an awareness of diversity and thoughtful understanding of other faiths. Examples of such awareness were observed in a lively dramatization of the Easter story in a younger class and in the sensitivity to music and words in a choir rehearsal. Such spiritual development can also be seen in the environmental awareness of the 'Green Team'.
- 4.5 Pupils develop excellent moral awareness and have a strong sense of justice and of right and wrong. They are respectful in lessons and of each other as they go about the school, with many acts of kindness, fairness and forgiveness. Pupils show an understanding and respect for the laws of England, and the need to accept responsibility for their actions. Strong moral and ethical values are demonstrated in the 'kindness tree' in Years 3 and 4. The oldest pupils showed an excellent understanding of moral issues of citizenship and social values in a debate on euthanasia. On a recent visit to the Houses of Parliament, pupils studied the process of how a government bill is passed, and, on visits to a bank, older pupils are given an insight into economic values and financial awareness.
- 4.6 The social development of the pupils is an outstanding feature of the school. They are highly articulate, co-operate very well with each other and their teachers, and demonstrate a positive competitive spirit. Achievements such as scholarship awards are readily celebrated by the whole community. In their responses to the pupil questionnaire, a small minority of pupils felt that they were not given the chance to take on responsibilities in the school. However, inspectors found that there are many opportunities to take on positions of responsibility, particularly for the senior pupils. Older pupils give excellent support to younger pupils, particularly in their roles as mentors, prefects and house captains. Concern for others is shown by links fostered with local homes for the elderly and is also demonstrated in the pupils' charitable efforts, which not only focus on fund-raising, but also on promoting an understanding of the charities' work. In doing so, they develop an excellent understanding of those whose lives are very different to their own.

- 4.7 Pupils' cultural awareness is excellent. They highly prize the rich cultural and religious mix in the school and are proud of a diverse community in which everyone is welcomed and respected. In doing so, they recognise the importance of combating discrimination. In a religious studies lesson, pupils showed detailed understanding of several world religions and comments highlighted how the pupils are 'generous in spirit' towards faiths and traditions different from their own. They have a sophisticated cultural outlook as illustrated during the many trips and visits to major sights and museums in London, visits to France, wide-ranging cultural references observed in a music lesson and an ambitious literary festival. An understanding of fundamental British values and culture is much in evidence. Numerous balanced discussions were observed relating to current affairs which led to lively questioning, as did a debate on democracy versus tyranny in a Latin lesson.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is good.
- 4.9 All children in the EYFS, including those in need of additional support, enjoy positive relationships and form strong attachments with adults and other children. Each child is allocated a key person who is the point of welcome and contact, supporting the child in school. Children are happy to come into school and feel secure in a warm and welcoming environment and are confident when talking to adults. Staff act as excellent role models and through a class behaviour plan, promote good behaviour and social skills, which are supported by parents at home. Children understand the need for staying safe particularly when walking along the road, to get to the field for break and games activities. They understand the meaning of healthy eating and the importance of exercise. Lunch-time staff give encouragement and praise for good manners and healthy eating.
- 4.10 Throughout the school, strong relationships exist between all staff and pupils, and between pupils themselves, which effectively support their personal development and help the school to meet its aims. Positive interactions and support are evident in lessons and pupils enjoy opportunities to develop their relationships with other age groups through the mixed-age tutor groups. Pupils are respectful and display exemplary manners and consideration for others.
- 4.11 In interviews, pupils indicated that they are happy and positive about the school and feel that teachers are generally supportive and approachable. Pupils speak well of the care they receive. Secure processes support pupils during transitions through the various stages of the school. Frequent staff meetings allow staff to discuss both academic and pastoral issues and additional time is given in tutor groups to discuss any individual concerns that pupils might have.
- 4.12 Pupils are aware of the need for a healthy lifestyle. This was illustrated in the health and fitness aspects of PE, as well as in a lesson where pupils demonstrated an excellent understanding of nutrition and key health and fitness terminology.
- 4.13 Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Emphasis is placed on preventing bullying through initiatives such as anti-bullying week and the promotion of friendship and positive character traits. A few concerns were raised by parents in their questionnaire responses over the way in which the school responds to incidents of bullying. Evidence from interviews with pupils, scrutiny of behaviour records and meetings with staff, indicates that such incidents are rare and dealt with effectively and consistently. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, a small

minority of pupils felt that there was unfairness in the use of rewards and sanctions. They understand the school's system and are keen to see it fairly applied. Inspection evidence supports the view that rewards and sanctions are not used consistently by all staff. In addition, a minority of pupils felt that the school did not listen to their views or respond to them. Inspectors support their opinion; whilst there are informal opportunities through the tutor and house systems, the school does not systematically seek the opinions of all pupils.

- 4.14 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

- 4.15 The contribution of arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils is good.

- 4.16 In order for the school to meet its aims, a safe environment is provided for all pupils and staff throughout the school, including in the EYFS, and this contributes to the pupils' excellent personal development. Detailed policies are effectively implemented. All staff receive child protection training at suitable intervals. Three staff are trained as designated child protection officers and there is a nominated governor who monitors safeguarding procedures and reports to the main board. Staff show a strong awareness of good practice in safeguarding pupils. The school has strong links to local child protection agencies and follows safe recruitment practice; the required checks have been carried out on all staff at the appropriate time. However, the central register of staff appointments did not originally include some peripatetic staff; this error was promptly addressed by the school and it now fully meets requirements.

- 4.17 Should any pupil become ill at school, they are cared for in suitable medical facilities until they can be collected. First-aid boxes are well-positioned throughout the school and checked regularly. Numerous staff have appropriate first-aid qualifications, including paediatric training for those caring for the youngest pupils. Pupil care plans for those with additional needs are shared with staff, along with information about other medical conditions. Appropriate documentation allows for the safe administration of medication as necessary. Efficient procedures to record and report accidents are carried out.

- 4.18 Measures to monitor and control risks are excellent. Risk assessments are completed conscientiously to cover the full range of activities that take place both on and away from the school site. Staff show a strong awareness of potential dangers during the frequent pupil movements between the school's different sites. Records of fire evacuation practices, staff training and equipment maintenance show that an efficient system reduces the risk of fire; fire exits and routes are clearly displayed throughout the school. Admission and attendance registers are maintained and stored correctly.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The governing body provides good support in helping the school to meet its aims. Effective oversight of the school is maintained through its strong professional relationships with the senior leaders and the work of a range of committees. The strategic plan clearly and realistically identifies areas for development of the school, providing clear targets for the school's leadership and a stimulus for improvement. Senior leaders provide detailed reports for governors. Records of the governors' meetings indicate that academic aspects of the school do not always receive detailed scrutiny. Links with staff, parents and pupils are established through occasional visits during the working day and frequent attendance at school functions. The head is appraised regularly.
- 5.3 Procedures for the recruitment and induction of new governors have ensured a good balance of relevant skills, including considerable experience in education, law, finance and marketing. Many are current or former parents, with an excellent knowledge of the school and its ethos. Careful financial planning ensures that the school has sustained a development programme that provides very high quality facilities within the constraints of the school's location, and the provision of excellent resources.
- 5.4 The EYFS is overseen by the welfare and education committee as well as the full board. Individual members have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the current framework, allowing them to provide appropriate support and challenge for this section of the school.
- 5.5 Governors have a good understanding of their legal and regulatory responsibilities and generally discharge these conscientiously, including a detailed annual review of safeguarding arrangements throughout the school. Health and safety procedures are carefully monitored.

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 excellent academic achievements and level of pupils' personal development reflect the school's aims of creating high-achieving pupils and future good citizens. The strong and supportive leadership team is highly committed to ensuring the distinctive ethos of the school is maintained, including values which encourage respect for others and an understanding of democracy, and pupils achieve a successful transfer to their senior school of choice. Leaders are highly visible, enjoy strong relationships with all members of the school community and are excellent role models. They provide clear guidance to all staff on how to fulfil the aims of the school. They have evolved a range of detailed policies to cover all aspects of school life, which act as a valuable reference point for all staff.

- 5.8 Leadership of the EYFS setting is enthusiastic and highly committed. The supervision of staff and monitoring of educational programmes is excellent. Planning has been revised through weekly team meetings. Following a recommendation in the previous inspection, peer observations now take place in class providing effective opportunities for self-evaluation; staff share a vision for the development of the setting and are highly supportive of their colleagues. Processes have been implemented to moderate children's work, ensuring that evaluations are robust. Staff are well qualified and further training is regularly provided, as required. However, there are no currently no opportunities to compare their practice with other settings.
- 5.9 The school's strategic plan is a detailed document, which clearly outlines the current development priorities. Notably, the recent refurbishment of one section of the school has created a high-quality teaching environment within the limitations of the existing location. However, the school's self-evaluation process and the subsequent planning do not identify potential areas for academic development as effectively.
- 5.10 Regular staff meetings take place, where all staff are encouraged to contribute and share relevant information about the pupils in their care. These are supplemented by frequent email communication across all parts of the school, ensuring that staff are kept well informed and are able to sustain its caring ethos.
- 5.11 The senior leaders are effective in the discharge of their responsibilities for safeguarding pupils. Training in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety is carried out conscientiously. The induction process for new staff is detailed and thorough, and includes the provision of nominated mentors. This ensures that new staff can carry out their roles effectively. All appropriate checks are made to ensure the suitability of staff and governors to work with children. Safe recruitment procedures are carefully followed on all new staff appointments.
- 5.12 The recommendations of the previous inspection have only been partially met. The procedures for assessment have now been revised and strengthened, and this information is used effectively to plan lessons and monitor pupil progress. There has been a sharing of good practice in order to improve the quality of teaching. A new appraisal system has been introduced and senior staff are suitably trained to carry out their roles. However, only a limited number of staff have undergone the appraisal process. Consequently, it has not yet reached the point where it can be used to monitor the overall standards of teaching and thus allow for the systematic planning of relevant professional development. Nevertheless, opportunities are regularly provided for staff to attend courses to increase their knowledge and skills.
- 5.13 Some inconsistencies remain in the implementation of the school's teaching and marking policies. The standard of marking has improved since the previous inspection, and most staff follow the school marking policy. Homework is now monitored and generally well set, relevant and challenging; this reflects the high academic expectations within the school.
- 5.14 All buildings and facilities are very well maintained, so that they provide a safe and stimulating setting in which pupils learn and develop. The school benefits from highly committed administrative and support staff, who help promote high standards of care for individual pupils.
- 5.15 The school maintains positive and effective links with parents. Pre-inspection parental questionnaire responses show that parents believe their children are happy and safe, and they are satisfied with the progress they are making.

- 5.16 A small minority of parental responses to the questionnaire indicated that they are unhappy with information given about their child's progress. The inspection found that the school has effective processes for informing parents of progress. In the EYFS, a message book goes home daily, and subsequently a reading diary, and parents are invited to contribute to their child's records with achievements at home. All parents are kept further informed through email, and a weekly notice about the future week's activities is posted online and in the collection areas.
- 5.17 Parent evenings take place at the beginning of each year and teachers normally dismiss their own classes at the end of the school day, enabling relationships between staff and parents to be forged and communication channels opened. Initial target reports are issued during the autumn term, parent consultations take place in the spring, in addition to full written subject and tutor reports in the summer term. If timings at formal consultations are insufficient, additional academic or pastoral meetings are arranged. Samples of written reports scrutinised showed these to be informative and they provide details of progress and areas for development.
- 5.18 A very small minority of parents indicated through questionnaire responses that their concerns were not handled well. Inspection evidence shows that the school has effective processes by which parents can informally communicate concerns. More formal methods of communication, such as email or telephone, are also available. Concerns are recorded in detail and effective communication amongst staff enables issues to be identified. Members of the senior management team are included in this process, and the school follows its published procedures.
- 5.19 On joining the school every parent becomes a member of the school's parent association. Parents are able to act as representatives, and are encouraged to participate in school events, such as quiz nights, camping trips or fund-raising balls. They are invited to share pupils' educational experience by visiting and observing displays and projects. Parents are provided with presentations on internet safety and the specific techniques and strategies involved in teaching aspects of phonics or mathematics. They regularly support fixtures against other schools, and have acted as cheerleaders, armed with 'pom-poms', at house cross-country. For these reasons, inspectors do not share the view of a very small minority of parents that they do not have sufficient opportunities to become involved in school life.
- 5.20 The school has a comprehensive website that acts as an effective and informative portal into life at the school. Parents of current and prospective pupils can gain a flavour of school life through the information provided, and can also access and download key policies, handbooks and calendars. Termly newsletters from the headmaster also help to keep the parents and school community abreast of developments and school news.

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