



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

HABERDASHERS' ASKE'S SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Haberdashers' Aske's School for Girls

Full Name of School	Haberdashers' Aske's School for Girls		
DfE Number	919/6222		
Registered Charity Number	313996		
Address	Haberdashers' Aske's School for Girls Aldenham Road Elstree Borehamwood Hertfordshire WD6 3BT		
Telephone Number	020 8266 2300		
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Email Address	bcohen@habsgirls.org.uk		
Head	Miss Biddie O'Connor		
Chair of Governors	Sir Robert Fulton KBE		
Age Range	4 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	1193		
Gender of Pupils	Girls		
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	24	11-18: 885
	5-11	284	
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	1193	
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Bronwyn Mayho		
EYFS Gender	Girls		
Inspection Dates	21 Jan 2014 to 24 Jan 2014		

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 October 2008.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

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

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chairman and three other governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions, tutor periods and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils and the dining room at lunch time. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation and other policies and handbooks made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Timothy Holgate	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Patricia Griffin	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years
Mrs Fiona Angel	Team Inspector (Head of Curriculum, HMC school)
Mr Timothy Borton	Team Inspector (Head of Sixth Form, HMC school)
Mrs Hilary French	Team Inspector (Head, GSA school)
Mrs Susan Goff	Team Inspector (Head, GSA school)
Mrs Victoria Hall	Team Inspector (Head of Prep, GSA school)
Miss Joanna MacKenzie	Team Inspector (Head, GSA school)
Mr John Pearson	Team Inspector (Director of Studies, HMC school)
Mrs Seona Rivett	Team Inspector (former Head of Prep, HMC school)
Mrs Linda Swain	Team Inspector (Head of Department, IAPS school)
Mr David Warwick	Team Inspector (former Head of Department, HMC school)
Mrs Cathy Williamson	Team Inspector (former Deputy Head, GSA school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The original Haberdashers' Aske's School was for boys, founded in 1690 by Robert Aske in Hoxton. Two centuries later, the almshouses and school buildings were demolished, and the Aske's Foundation set up new brother and sister schools in 1875. As the Girls' School grew, it moved to Acton, and in 1974, to a new site next to the Boys' School in Elstree in Hertfordshire. It ceased to be a direct grant school in 1976. Haberdashers' Aske's School for Girls is one of the eleven schools of the Worshipful Company of Haberdashers, which provides funding, guidance and support for governance. The trustees of the Aske Board act as proprietors, with day-to-day governance and oversight delegated to the Girls School Committee (GSC), on which many trustees sit. Since the previous inspection, improvements to building and premises have been made, and a new headmistress joined the school in September 2011.
- 1.2 The school seeks to provide a challenging, positive, stimulating and secure community in which girls enjoy working hard to fulfil their potential. It aims to enhance each girl's sense of worth by encouraging her participation with enjoyment, whether or not she excels, and by the praise she receives for her positive contribution. Through co-operation and teamwork, the school aspires to ensure that each individual is valued, and develops the qualities of tolerance, understanding and service to the community. The school's priority is to provide every girl with the intellectual, cultural, physical, moral, personal and spiritual resources she needs to give her confidence to go forward into a changing world.
- 1.3 The school provides education for 1193 girls, of whom 308 are in the Junior School, with 24 under five years of age in the Reception class of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). There are 228 girls in the sixth form. The school has identified 46 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom one has a statement of special educational needs. All receive varying degrees of learning support. Pupils are drawn from an ethnically diverse range of families in north London, Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire. Although some come from families speaking other languages, all are fluent in English and none requires additional language support. Standardised tests on entry to the Senior School and to the sixth form indicate that the ability profile is generally well above the national average in Years 7 to 11, and above the national average in the sixth form. The ability profile in the Junior School is judged to be above average.
- 1.4 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 and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

Senior School

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

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school is highly successful in meeting its ambitious aims and aspirations. Pupils' achievement overall is exceptional, as shown by the very high success enjoyed by pupils in GCSE and A-level examinations. Junior School pupils achieve excellent success in their class work. Sixth-form pupils are given an excellent preparation for university, future careers and adult life. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to work are exemplary and they demonstrate learning and thinking skills that enable many to show true scholarship and intellectual rigour. Pupils' creative skills are particularly evident in the quality of their music and art. This high achievement is supported by an excellent curriculum that prepares pupils for life well beyond the confines of the classroom, and is enhanced by much inspirational teaching, most of which is excellent. Children in the EYFS are given an excellent educational experience which lays firm foundations for their future success.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal qualities and their relationships at all ages are an outstanding strength of the school. They show very high levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and development. This is supported by the high levels of pastoral care throughout the school, and by the strong support and guidance from form teachers and tutors. Although a large community, the school manages successfully to put the needs of individual pupils at the forefront of its life and work. The quality of welfare, health and safety provision is excellent, and staff have the well-being of the pupils as a high priority. A minority of pupils' questionnaire responses raised concerns about the amount of homework given, the discipline system, and opportunities to express their opinions. Inspectors found no evidence to support these views. Homework tasks are, in general, appropriate. School records and interviews with pupils indicate that rewards and sanctions are proportionate. Pupils have a variety of ways in which to express their views.
- 2.3 The exceptional achievement and excellent personal development of the pupils are underpinned and supported by highly efficient governance and good leadership and management, much of which is excellent. The school's leadership promotes a clear sense of purpose and educational direction, and leaders and managers at all levels collaborate in assessing the effectiveness of current practice and planning for future success. Some aspects of management in the Junior School are not fully consistent, and monitoring is sometimes less effective. An excellent partnership has been forged with parents, who expressed high levels of satisfaction in the pre-inspection questionnaires. They were particularly pleased with the progress made by their children and the pastoral care provided. The school has responded well to the recommendations of the previous inspection.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Widen the opportunities for staff to share teaching and learning strategies in order to provide all pupils with a stimulating and challenging learning experience.
2. Develop more effective and sharply focused strategies and procedures to enable better monitoring and evaluation of educational practices and outcomes for pupils in the Junior School.

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 is exceptional.
- 3.2 Pupils are very well educated in line with the school's ambitious aims. They demonstrate strong subject knowledge, skills and understanding for their age, not just for examination preparation but also for broadening their minds, for intellectual development, and stimulating their thinking.
- 3.3 The overall quality and standards in the EYFS are excellent. All children, including those with SEND and those who are especially able, make excellent progress in relation to their starting points. All children learn and develop particularly well through planned, purposeful play and valuable first-hand experiences. Reception children blend sounds successfully to make simple words and sentences. They work competently with numbers to 20 and use computers with increasing ability to paint pictures and write stories. The children generally express themselves clearly and confidently in their conversations and listen attentively. They are active learners who explore, investigate, and are able to make choices and decisions. They display high levels of independence.
- 3.4 Pupils' achievement in the Junior School is excellent, and they show a maturity of thought well beyond their ages. They show skill in measuring different variables in science. Older pupils quickly choose correct methods and strategies when solving problems in mathematics. The achievement of Senior School pupils is exceptional. They show an extremely high level of confidence in their grammar and vocabulary in modern and classical languages. They apply existing knowledge to unknown situations very well and use their wide general knowledge to relate their learning to contemporary and world events. Many older pupils show great skill in constructing logical and convincing arguments, backed by relevant facts.
- 3.5 Across the school, pupils' speaking and listening skills and the quality of their written English are particularly high. They are proficient in their use of number, and apply their numerical skills well. They are competent in their use of information and communication technology (ICT) and use a range of applications confidently in many subjects to support and enhance their learning. Pupils think logically and creatively, and can interpret data and new information very well, according to their age. Older and more able pupils form accurate hypotheses and link cause and effect. Pupils show physical skill and strong creative skills, especially in music and art.
- 3.6 Pupils with SEND achieve the level of success expected from pupils of their ability, due to the highly effective support they receive. The most able pupils achieve at an extremely high level, not only in class but in response to the more challenging work available to them. Pupils in Year 6, for example, discuss the psychological impact of different types of map projections. Sixth-form pupils are encouraged to carry out research for a prize competition on an eclectic mix of topics such as the future of neuroscience, and the relationship between literature and music. Some of this original research has been submitted to a university for consideration for publication. Pupils of all ages achieve considerable success in extra-curricular areas such as sporting and musical performances, both at national and local level, and in external competitions and Olympiads, and through the many clubs and intellectual societies that flourish within the school. At Year 13, pupils enjoy significant success when applying for entry to competitive universities and courses.

- 3.7 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2010 to 2012, the most recent three-year period for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results at GCSE and A level are exceptional in relation to the national average for girls in maintained schools. They are above the national average for girls in maintained selective schools at GCSE, and well above at A level. International GCSE results have been higher than worldwide and UK averages. Attainment for Junior School pupils cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national benchmarks, but on the evidence available it is judged to be well above national age-related expectations.
- 3.8 This level of attainment, as judged for Junior pupils, and seen at GCSE, indicates that pupils make progress that is at least good, and at A level, they make a high rate of progress in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Pupils with SEND make at least good progress, as shown by the development in their learning skills and by their test and examination performance.
- 3.9 Pupils of all ages show exemplary attitudes to learning and they display great enthusiasm and keenness to do well. Highly motivated and committed, they show strong perseverance to complete set tasks to a high standard. When given the opportunity to do so, pupils show great initiative and a willingness to delve into unfamiliar intellectual territory. They respond thoughtfully and productively when working in pairs and groups, sharing their thinking and challenging each other constructively and supportively. Pupils enjoy opportunities to work independently and to plan and carry out learning tasks on their own. Older and more able pupils show strong reasoning and analytical skills, and can make predictions, draw inferences and interpret information perceptively.

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 curriculum successfully meets the school's aim to encourage pupils to explore a breadth of academic, cultural, aesthetic, creative and sporting interests in a challenging way. It provides pupils of all ages with a wide range of opportunities, not only to achieve academic success, but also to develop their talents in many other areas.
- 3.12 In the EYFS, well-planned educational programmes provide many opportunities for all children, including those with SEND, to make significant progress. Richly resourced environments ensure children always have access to a wide range of materials to stimulate and support self-directed play and exploration. An excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities enables children to respond well to the high expectations of staff in both indoor and outdoor environments. Specialist teaching in music and physical education enhances the curriculum further.
- 3.13 The Junior School curriculum is broad and balanced, and includes a wide range of subjects. Considerable emphasis is placed on linguistic and mathematical skills, which are further developed in other areas of the curriculum. The recent review of the curriculum has enhanced cross-curricular links within lesson planning which broaden pupils' experiences and understanding. The provision of Japanese to all pupils from Year 1 is an original approach to the teaching of modern foreign languages and is much enjoyed by the pupils.
- 3.14 The Senior School curriculum is carefully planned and appropriately challenging. It fully covers all the required areas of learning and is kept under comprehensive

review to ensure that it meets the pupils' needs. Pupils benefit from the opportunity to study an excellent range of subjects in Years 7 to 9, extending the range of the Junior School subjects to include Latin. Philosophy is taught alongside religious education and the sciences are taught separately by subject specialists. A choice of German or Spanish is added in Year 8. A broad range of subjects is studied at GCSE, including either the three sciences or a double science course plus a humanity. Further options include classical civilisation and classical Greek. In the sixth form, pupils choose from about 20 subjects. Additional examination subjects are provided at this level, including AS-level Italian for beginners, economics, politics, PE and philosophy.

- 3.15 Pupils of all ages follow well-coordinated programmes in physical activities and in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). Relevant topics appropriately match the age and development of the pupils, widening out to include budgeting, ethics, politics and European issues, careers guidance, critical thinking and debating, many of which are provided through the highly regarded sixth-form general studies programme. Pupils are given excellent guidance when selecting academic pathways through the Senior School, and thereafter to university. Homework is provided through a well-planned programme, which increases in quantity as pupils get older. Inspection evidence and discussions with pupils did not support the few questionnaire responses that suggested that some felt that the amount of homework set was excessive.
- 3.16 The support for pupils with SEND throughout the school, both in class and within the specialist provision, is excellent, enabling them to fulfil their academic potential. In the Senior School especially, the curriculum is enriched by a wealth of opportunities for pupils to nurture their enthusiasm for learning, and appreciate the importance and value of scholarship. These may extend pupils well beyond the confines of examination requirements. Much of this challenging material is offered through lunchtime activities provided by virtually all departments. Many pupils of all ages participate in academic Olympiads, challenge events and prize competitions.
- 3.17 The school has made good progress in addressing the recommendation of the previous inspection to develop the use of ICT to support teaching and learning across the whole school. In both schools, greater access to, and use of, computers and mobile technology have been achieved.
- 3.18 An extensive number of clubs is available for pupils from Year 3 at lunchtime ranging from chess to open gym, and these are well attended. Fewer opportunities are offered after school and there are currently no extra-curricular activities for Years 1 and 2. Pupils from Year 2 upwards can take individual music lessons if the school considers that this would not interfere with their academic work.
- 3.19 The extra-curricular programme in the Senior School is extensive and wide-ranging and a much valued part of the provision. In addition to departmental provision, intellectual societies and leisure activities, some run by Senior pupils, extensive opportunities exist in sport, music and drama. Public speaking and debating, sometimes joining with boys from the adjacent school, also flourish. Trips and visits off-site and abroad help to broaden horizons. Pupils participate in community service activities, for example with disabled people or at care homes for the elderly.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.20 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.21 The school amply fulfils its aim of providing encouragement in the pursuit of excellence in academic studies. The school has responded effectively to a recommendation of the previous inspection by developing its assessment practice and improving the feedback given to pupils about their work. In the Senior School, the excellent teaching enables pupils to be well prepared for public examinations as well as developing independent thinking and learning skills, ensuring pupils make rapid progress. In the Junior School, teaching overall is good and some aspects are excellent, providing a firm foundation for the pupils' future success.
- 3.22 In the EYFS, the teachers' thorough knowledge of all children and reflective evaluation ensure that individual differences and learning needs are well met. Detailed observations document learning and inform planning particularly effectively. Enthusiastic staff pose appropriate open questions, build on children's ideas and foster their excellent communication and critical thinking skills. Sensitive relationships between adults and children result in a calm, purposeful atmosphere where children are motivated to learn.
- 3.23 Throughout the school, lessons are generally carefully planned and meet the needs of pupils well, enabling them to achieve academic excellence. Support for those with SEND and any statements of special educational needs is excellent and well monitored, enabling these pupils to receive immediate, individual support within the classroom. Teachers have an outstanding subject knowledge which provides rigour to the teaching. Their enthusiasm and commitment convey a passion for their subjects, which communicates itself effectively to pupils. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils, working collaboratively with them and eliciting impressive responses through high expectations and purposeful challenge and by encouraging pupils to apply knowledge to problems with confidence. The teaching employs a range of methods and approaches, generally extremely well suited to the pupils' learning needs. In many A-level lessons, for example, the pupils themselves frequently do most of the work, effectively adopting the role of teacher, and show great initiative in helping each other to learn and extend their thinking.
- 3.24 In the majority of lessons, teaching incorporates a varied range of tasks which challenge pupils and keep them engaged and involved. Regular use of questioning and encouragement to move on from the safe ground of familiar knowledge to the unknown heights of conjecture and inference, inspires pupils to think and work independently. The pace of learning is usually rapid, ensuring in almost all lessons that pupils' enthusiasm and interest are sustained. In many Junior School lessons, the teaching uses probing questions to encourage pupils to 'think on their feet'. Resources, including electronic media, are used very well by teachers to stimulate and extend pupils.
- 3.25 Where teaching is less successful, expectations and challenge are too low, lessons are too highly dominated and controlled by the teacher, and time is not used effectively. As a result, pupils lose concentration and interest, their learning opportunities are limited, and progress slows.
- 3.26 Pupils' learning and written work is regularly and efficiently assessed and marked. The best marking is frequent, detailed and includes constructive targets and pertinent comments which help pupils improve their work. This practice is not

always consistently applied in all subject areas. Each department adapts the school marking policy to fit its own needs, a structure which works well because the pupils understand the system, and teachers are careful to share clear success criteria with them. Pupils appreciate the regular opportunities at all stages of school life to reflect on their learning, and to set targets both with their form teachers and tutors and subject staff. In the Senior School, the use of standardised data to track and assess performance is developing well, and senior managers and academic and pastoral staff make good use of the data available. In the Junior School, assessment of pupils' ability and monitoring of their progress is limited to internal assessments and teachers' professional judgement, and such information is evaluated appropriately.

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 pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 From the very youngest child in the EYFS upwards, the pupils' strong personal development represents a highly successful fulfilment of the school's aim to educate the whole person, and is a major strength of the school. By the time they leave, pupils have developed outstanding personal qualities.
- 4.3 The spiritual development of pupils is excellent. Their response to the many opportunities to develop their spirituality is outstanding. They are open and accepting of the beliefs of others, reflecting the school's aims of tolerance and understanding. They enjoy discovering more about each other's faiths and cultures, and benefit greatly from religious education lessons and the wide range of assemblies available to them. Many of these are organised and led by pupils from a variety of faith-based societies. Pupils are interested in spiritual issues, debating such issues as "Which God is Greatest?", and discussing the value of prayer. All pupils demonstrate a high degree of emotional maturity and empathy with others. Through discussion in many lessons, pupils demonstrate a mature understanding of emotions as they reflect on the complexity of relationships.
- 4.4 Pupils' moral development is excellent. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. They debate moral issues in a wide range of lessons. They demonstrate high levels of perception and insight as they appreciate the conflict between different dimensions of various ethical dilemmas and environmental challenges, such as genetic engineering and climate change. Pupils' behaviour around school is exemplary, courteous and kind. They embrace the school's culture of excellent conduct and consideration for their fellows. They are supportive of each other and of the staff, open to the ideas of others, but comfortable in expressing opposing views.
- 4.5 The social development of pupils is excellent. EYFS children are extremely self-disciplined and confident. They share toys and resources with each other, and make choices and take decisions. Children make the transition to Year 1 with enthusiasm. Pupils of all ages are extremely willing to accept responsibility as form captains, charity ambassadors and representatives on 'eco' and school councils. They act as 'buddies' to younger pupils and demonstrate leadership across a range of activities including societies, sports teams, choirs, orchestras and drama productions and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Sixth-form pupils make a highly significant contribution to the school as form and school prefects, leading sports teams and assemblies, running societies and organising charity and other events. All pupils are keen to help those in need, and they support many local causes through events such as a fun activity day for children from MENCAP. There is a strong whole-school commitment to fund raising and charity, in the widest sense of the word. Through the PSHCE programme, pupils develop a high level of awareness of social, political, economic and environmental issues.
- 4.6 The cultural development of pupils is of a particularly high quality. Their awareness of other cultures is extremely well developed as they benefit from the rich cultural diversity within their school, and are genuinely interested in each other's way of life and beliefs. They celebrate cultural diversity, not merely tolerating difference, but valuing it. They benefit from many curricular opportunities to enrich their cultural

experience. Pupils benefit from language exchanges and visits, art trips, and music tours and performances such as the choir recital at St Paul's Cathedral. They experience other cultures at first hand on Italian and Russian trips and 'homestays' in European countries. The pupils themselves enrich the cultural life of the school through their musical and dramatic performances and by their inspirational art work.

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

- 4.7 The quality of pastoral care throughout the school is excellent.
- 4.8 It affirms the school's aim to provide a challenging, stimulating and secure community. The well-organised pastoral structures and the strong commitment of the staff, especially form teachers and tutors, ensure that excellent support and guidance are given to pupils of all ages. In the EYFS, key people promote the high standards of behaviour and courtesy expected, and this is regularly rewarded and celebrated. The staff thoroughly understand the children's differences and ensure that their pastoral needs are carefully met.
- 4.9 Pupils trust their teachers and are reassured that their individual needs will be effectively met. A strong sense of community underpins the pastoral system and, combined with good sharing of information and efficient tracking and monitoring systems, this ensures that pupils, including children in the EYFS, feel secure and happy at school. Medical and counselling support provide an important element of their care.
- 4.10 Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils themselves are excellent. Pupils in Year 1 new to the school are warmly welcomed by those who have come from the EYFS, and they quickly settle in to their new surroundings. Pupils are tolerant of each other, and display a strong sense of community and teamwork.
- 4.11 Pupils understand the importance of regular exercise and take full advantage of the many sporting activities and fitness facilities available. Healthy eating is promoted in assemblies and science lessons. Children in the EYFS are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle and develop good hygiene habits. Careful monitoring of lunch procedures, coupled with a fresh, varied menu, ensure that good eating habits are instilled at a young age.
- 4.12 An uncompromising anti-bullying policy states clearly the expectations of the school, and is implemented effectively. This is fully understood and respected by the pupils. The school is highly successful in promoting good behaviour. Junior School pupils draw up their own behaviour codes, and therefore they respect and value these highly. Pupils are confident that staff would take appropriate action in the event of any conflict or misbehaviour. The systems of rewards and sanctions are felt to be appropriate and proportionate by most pupils. Inspection evidence did not support the small minority of pupils' questionnaire responses that suggested that their use is unfair. School records and interviews with pupils indicate that rewards and sanctions are proportionate and, in general, used consistently.
- 4.13 The school has a suitable action plan to widen educational and physical access to the school for pupils with SEND.
- 4.14 In the pupils' questionnaire, a small minority felt that the school does not seek their views and respond to them. Inspection evidence does not support this concern. Various effective methods are used to seek pupils' views and give them a voice.

The School Council in the Junior School acts as a conduit for the views of classmates. It is involved in many initiatives such as bullying awareness and catering wishes. The formation of the Senior School Student Forum, run by senior prefects, has brought about much improved opportunities for pupils to voice ideas and concerns, and for the school to seek feedback from them.

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

- 4.15 The contribution of the arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.16 The provision to safeguard the very youngest pupils, and promote their well-being is excellent. Children's welfare in the EYFS has the highest priority and is central to all that the setting does to ensure that children feel safe and secure.
- 4.17 The school has extremely robust arrangements and procedures to safeguard the welfare of all its pupils. The child protection policies and practices have due regard to official guidance. These arrangements are supported by training and procedures that go beyond regulatory requirements. Staff training in child protection is carried out regularly and it forms part of the induction programme for new staff. Appropriate senior staff have undertaken training at a higher level, and also in safer recruitment. The school liaises effectively with the local authority when needed. The school has suitable arrangements for dealing with issues such as eating disorders and self-harm, should they occur. EYFS children show awareness of keeping safe when crossing the road under supervision, as they go to music lessons.
- 4.18 The school has thorough arrangements for reducing risks from fire. It holds termly fire drills and all equipment is checked at regular intervals. External consultants carry out fire risk assessments. Health and safety are given a high priority, with comprehensive risk assessments carried out for all areas of the school and activities and trips. The school's practices are managed by a health and safety committee and effectively overseen by the governors.
- 4.19 Arrangements for pupils who are ill or injured are thorough and appropriate. Excellent medical care is provided by qualified nurses, in warm and suitably located medical rooms. Many members of staff have first-aid training and some at a higher paediatric level.
- 4.20 The admission and attendance registers are accurately maintained and stored as required.

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 Aske Board ensures that the school's aims are in tune with the broader aims of the Haberdashers' Company and Robert Aske's founding philosophy. The school's governors benefit greatly from high-quality regular training and support from the company, which keep them well informed of current legislation and good practice. This multi-layered governance structure is highly effective in ensuring rigorous monitoring. The GSC has an excellent understanding of all aspects of the running of the school through committees which deal with teaching and learning, financial planning, upkeep of the estate and resources. Governors know the staff and school well, and provide appropriate challenge and support. The chairmen of both the GSC and the Aske Board visit the school regularly and have an excellent grasp of the issues and challenges facing the school. Both groups of governors have been involved in creating their comprehensive ten-year strategic vision for the school.
- 5.3 The Aske Board and the GSC have regular planning meetings with the senior management team to ensure that the school continues to provide an excellent quality of education. The leadership's reports are closely scrutinised and questioned by the GSC in rigorous discussion before presentation to the board. Strategic development planning is clear-sighted and well thought out, underpinned by extremely effective financial oversight and planning. The GSC receives regular presentations from staff. It is well informed about the life of the school, and members are involved with the school as appropriate, attending functions and events and meeting staff. Governors are especially aware of the need to monitor and support the EYFS, and a nominated governor visits the setting regularly.
- 5.4 The governing body is entirely effective in discharging all its statutory responsibilities. They have received training in child protection. The annual review of safeguarding is presented annually to governors and adopted after pertinent questioning and debate. Governors carry out a regular inspection of the checks carried out in the staff recruitment process. The board has a strong focus on health and safety policy and practice and approves many other policies annually after regular review by the GSC.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management throughout the school is good.
- 5.6 Many aspects are excellent. Leadership structures and initiatives to ensure a high standard of education for pupils are highly effective and support the aims of the school particularly well. Leadership and management within the Junior School are good, but inconsistent practices, and the lack of sharp monitoring sometimes hamper their effectiveness. The school has made good progress in resolving the issues raised in the previous inspection.
- 5.7 In the EYFS, leadership and management are excellent. The cohesive team shares an ambitious vision for the continuing progress of the setting. Evaluation of practice is effective and clear priorities are set. Senior managers support staff well through

supervision arrangements and appraisal, and training needs are identified. Managers have safeguarding as a high priority and maintain a safe and secure environment for the children.

- 5.8 Across the school, the senior management team oversees the school's progress and development and discharges its responsibilities for the maintenance of high academic standards and strong personal development of the pupils very well. Senior managers are joined by the heads of section, including the Junior School leadership, within an extended leadership team that meets regularly to evaluate the quality of the pastoral structures of the school, and ensures that policy is implemented as effective practice. Senior School heads of department play a strong part in monitoring the academic pulse of their subject areas, and planning for future success. Such formal and consistent systems are not yet widely evident within the Junior School, where monitoring, particularly to achieve the highest standards of teaching and learning, is often more informal, and lines of accountability and responsibility are not always clear.
- 5.9 Leaders and managers at all levels within the school provide a clear sense of purpose and educational direction. Senior leaders embrace a collaborative style of management which is greatly appreciated by staff who are encouraged to develop new initiatives, and they feel that they all have a collective responsibility to enable each and every pupil to develop her confidence and talents. The strong and successful outcomes for pupils at all levels bear witness to the powerful contribution of both teaching and non-teaching staff.
- 5.10 A strong culture of reflection on the life and work of the school is becoming more widely embedded throughout the school, particularly at senior manager level, and within many Senior School departments. Staff at all levels have been encouraged to contribute to the whole school self-evaluation exercise, through which individual departments and the Junior School have developed priorities to support the school development plan. These amplify the principles enshrined in the governors' strategic vision, to sustain and develop the school for the next ten years.
- 5.11 The school implements a comprehensive performance development programme, linked to the school's development plan. Objectives with clear targets are set and then reviewed at the end of the year. The programme, including regular lesson observations within and between departments, is valued by teachers, and has encouraged greater collaboration and sharing of excellent practice within and between departments. A strong induction programme is in place, and new heads of department are given a professional development mentor and 'buddy'. Staff are given clear information and guidance through the comprehensive staff manuals, although the separate Junior and Senior School versions are not completely consistent or fully up to date. The school has invested heavily in training and developing its staff. Their safeguarding training is thorough, and teachers appreciate the excellent pastoral, health and safety training that is available. Whole-school training with the boys school allows staff to share a valuable speaker programme. The school has a rigorous system to ensure the successful recruitment of staff and required pre-appointment checks of suitability for staff, governors and volunteers take place.
- 5.12 The school forms an excellent partnership with parents, who are highly satisfied with the education and support provided for their children. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that they are particularly pleased with their child's experience at school, with the range of subjects on offer, the feeling of happiness

and safety, their progress and their well-being. In the EYFS, excellent partnerships have been similarly established with children and their parents and these contribute greatly to all children's achievements. Parents are very involved in their children's learning and achievement through daily contact with staff, termly reports and consultations, and by their regular review of EYFS records of achievements.

- 5.13 Excellent links with parents are established before entry to the school, and a constructive relationship maintained throughout the school in accordance with the school's aims. This is achieved through regular contact with form teachers, tutors and heads of section, and easy email access to subject teachers and other staff. The school works hard to meet parental expectations and aspirations. Parental concerns and complaints are dealt with appropriately in line with the school's published procedure.
- 5.14 Parents have a wide variety of opportunities to be involved in the life of the school. Many watch their children at sports matches, concerts and plays; some offer their expertise in careers guidance and interviewing technique, and there is a growing support of the Parents Guild which organises social events and fund-raising. Parental involvement in open days is also much appreciated. In addition, in the Junior School, parents attend their child's class assemblies.
- 5.15 Parents have good opportunities to be informed about the academic progress of their children, with a report or parents meeting each term. The reports in the Senior School are thorough, with clear guidance on areas for improvement in every subject. Thoughtful comments on personal and social issues from senior teachers reveal a close rapport and understanding of the pupils. In the Junior School, reports written once each year are less detailed. They do not cover the full range of subjects, although they do identify areas for development and contain an overall comment from senior staff.
- 5.16 The school website and its parent portal are excellent resources for keeping parents and prospective parents informed about school life, and there are regular newsletters too. Form tutors visit new pupils' primary schools in advance of their arrival, and induction days for all new September entrants are widely appreciated.

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