



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**HALLFIELD SCHOOL**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Hallfield School

Full Name of School	<b>Hallfield School</b>
DfE Number	<b>330/6004</b>
EYFS Number	<b>257164</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>528956</b>
Address	<b>Hallfield School Church Road Edgbaston Birmingham West Midlands B15 3SJ</b>
Telephone Number	<b>0121 454 1496</b>
Fax Number	<b>0121 454 9182</b>
Email Address	<b>office@hallfieldschool.co.uk</b>
Headmaster	<b>Mr Roger Outwin-Flinders</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Keith Uff</b>
Age Range	<b>0 to 11</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>551</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (346 boys; 205 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>0-2 (EYFS): 95    5-11: 337 3-5 (EYFS): 119</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Gillian Humphrys</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection dates	<b>05 Feb 2013 to 08 Feb 2013</b>

## 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 January 2010.

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

### **Inspectors**

Mrs Linda Donowho	Reporting Inspector
Mr Ian Adams	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Pamela Craig	Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)
Mr Andrew Lewin	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Anne Turner	Team Inspector (Head of Department, IAPS school)
Mrs Mary Hughes	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Hallfield School is a co-educational day school for pupils from the age of 3 months to 11 years. It was founded in 1879, originally as a Church of England boys' school. The school has occupied its 20-acre Edgbaston site since 1936. It expanded in 1967 with the creation of a pre-preparatory department for pupils aged 3 to 7, and in 1995 it became fully co-educational. The school has an all-year-round day Nursery on site, which caters for children up to the age of two and has its own building and garden. The school is a charitable trust administered by a board of governors. Since the previous inspection, a new headmaster has been appointed.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection, there were 551 pupils on roll: 346 boys and 205 girls. There were 214 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), of whom 95 were under the age of 3. Of these, 36 children attend on a part-time basis for a minimum of three days a week. The pupils come predominantly from business and professional families. The school reflects the diverse community of Birmingham and includes pupils of differing faiths and cultural traditions. The school has identified 28 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive additional support. Two pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Twenty-six pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), four of whom need extra support. The ability profile of the school is above the national average, with most pupils having at least above average ability, and few being of below average ability.
- 1.3 The school aims to provide a secure, stimulating and happy environment, whilst developing the talents of all pupils to their full potential, and to educate for excellence in academic, sporting, cultural, social and personal development. It seeks to promote the ideals of community and good citizenship, and to promote Christian values whilst taking account of other different faiths.
- 1.4 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used by the school from Reception to Year 6 and throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school for the Nursery and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

### ***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting***

School	NC name
Hallfield first	Nursery (0 to 2 years)
Transition	Nursery (2 to 3 years)
Foundation	Nursery (3 to 4 years)

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 Throughout the school, the pupils' achievements and their learning are excellent, with some variation in the EYFS. The school succeeds in its aim to educate for excellence in academic, sporting, cultural, social and personal development. Achievements throughout the school are firmly rooted in literacy and mathematics; pupils show increasing confidence in using their well-developed literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum, and skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are strong. The pupils' success is promoted by good teaching and a broad curriculum that contributes appropriately to all areas of learning. Since the previous inspection drama has been integrated into the curriculum for some age groups. There is a strong emphasis on extra-curricular activities; these complement the curriculum very well and allow pupils to flourish. The provision for pupils with SEND, including those with a statement of special educational needs, and pupils with EAL is well integrated into the curriculum, with appropriate support within and outside of lessons. More able pupils are well catered for in most teaching but levels of challenge for this group on occasion provide fewer opportunities for extended reasoning and independent thinking.
- 2.2 The personal development of pupils throughout the school is a great strength. Pastoral care is excellent and is supported by strong relationships at all levels and amongst all members of the community. Pupils flourish in the supportive and understanding atmosphere of the school. They greatly enjoy being part of the school community, and enjoy supporting it in undertaking the responsibilities they are given. Pupils are unfailingly polite to visitors and treat their peers and staff with great respect. Their care for one another is embedded in all aspects of school life. All the policies and procedures for health and safety, including fire procedures and precautions, are in place, of high quality and implemented to excellent effect.
- 2.3 The aims of the school are fulfilled and promoted by the governing body. The governors have a clear oversight of the school, informed by reports from senior staff and by regular visits to the school. The dedicated new leadership has, in a short time, established a clear vision for the future. Planning for the future is strong. Since the previous inspection, the role of subject leaders has strengthened; planning of the curriculum is thorough and they have a clear overview of the curriculum from Year 3 to Year 6. However, there is not yet a consistent system to ensure continuity across the whole school. Although some monitoring of teaching takes place, partly through the staff appraisal system introduced in response to the previous inspection, it is not consistent across all subjects and age groups, including in the EYFS. Recruitment procedures are efficient and safe, and all checks on staff, regular assistants and visitors are carried out fully and correctly, and recorded appropriately. This meets the requirement of the previous inspection. Links with parents are strong; parents are highly satisfied with all aspects of the school's educational and pastoral provision. Reporting to parents in Years 1 and 2 has improved since the previous inspection, although a small number of parents indicated that they would like more information on their children's progress. Inspection evidence confirmed that the school is reviewing the current system.

**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 improvements.

1. Ensure that all teaching consistently takes account of the range of abilities and provides appropriate learning opportunities for more able pupils.
2. Develop cohesive curriculum planning across all age groups and subjects.
3. Ensure that the monitoring of teaching and learning is fully embedded across all subject areas and ages.
4. In the EYFS, develop formal monitoring and evaluation systems so that all aspects of provision are regularly reviewed.
5. In the EYFS, ensure that all activities closely match the children's individual needs, and increase opportunities for investigative and problem-solving tasks.



### **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 Pupils receive a focused education in a stimulating learning environment, centred around a rigorous academic core. Pupils of all ages develop high levels of knowledge, skills and understanding. A key factor in this is their attitude to learning and their strong commitment to achieving high standards. They demonstrate excellent literacy and numeracy skills because of the strong focus on these areas, including careful monitoring of progress in these subjects.
- 3.3 Throughout the school, pupils are articulate and confident, both with each other and when talking to adults. They listen exceptionally well, respecting the views of others, and they read enthusiastically, reaching extremely high standards. Throughout the school, pupils write cogently, showing clear evidence of critical thought. This is demonstrated in excellent displays of creative writing such as poems and written work throughout the school. From the earliest age in Year 1, pupils absorb information well and ask sophisticated and well-considered questions. They are able to think logically and work independently, and demonstrate an excellent level of perseverance when faced with more complex tasks. They are able to solve mathematical problems with fluency and accuracy, and apply their knowledge and understanding of number very successfully across other subjects when given the opportunity. Achievements in ICT are of high quality, both in presentation of work and when used for research purposes.
- 3.4 A high standard of creativity is evident in art and music, particularly in displays around the school and in the singing, for example, of the chamber choir and of the whole school in assemblies. Many pupils achieve good grades in instrumental music examinations and they use their skills in various musical ensembles and events in school.
- 3.5 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations. Inspection evidence, as seen in lesson observations, the pupils' written work and interviews, confirms this. This is in response to a broad, demanding curriculum. On leaving the school, pupils are able to transfer to the senior school of their choice. The majority achieve high levels of success in entrance and scholarship examinations to local maintained and independent selective schools. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make excellent progress in relation to pupils of similar ability, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
- 3.6 Pupils with SEND or EAL make rapid progress in relation to their starting points because they receive strong additional support. Sessions before school prepare them for the week ahead and clear support plans are passed on to teachers. Their rapid progress is confirmed by the improvement in their reading, spelling and numeracy skills, as well as their high levels of self-esteem. More able pupils and those with particular talents make particularly rapid progress in lessons where they are given high level challenges; however, this is not always consistent in all year groups and subjects.

3.7 Pupils achieve high standards in a wide range of extra-curricular activities and these achievements make an effective contribution to their personal development, enabling them to demonstrate their individual confidence, team skills and respect for each other. They achieve high levels of skill in sports at regional level and enjoy an excellent measure of success at both team and individual level, such as national mathematics challenges, science competitions, art and photography exhibitions, and elocution competitions, with chess and cross-country attracting particularly high accolades.

### **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 fulfils the school's aims to educate for excellence in academic, sporting, cultural, social and personal growth. Curricular support for those with SEND or EAL is strong, and the systems for identifying and supporting such pupils work well. The SEND co-ordinator liaises closely with form tutors and specialist staff, and those identified as needing support are given individual education plans or individual support plans which are well monitored. Pupils identified by the school as being more able or having particular talents are well catered for in most subject areas.

3.10 The curriculum covers the requisite areas of learning and includes a very effective personal, social, health and cultural education programme, which is taught as a separate subject and supports the emotional development of each pupil. French is introduced as an additional language in the oldest Nursery group, Spanish from Year 5 and study skills in Years 5 and 6. The pupils use ICT as a valuable tool to support all aspects of the curriculum, and it is also taught as a discrete subject. The allocation of subjects is well balanced, and particular emphasis is placed upon developing skills in the core subjects of literacy and numeracy. The curriculum provides good preparation for examinations for entry to local selective schools. Provision for drama has improved since the previous inspection.

3.11 Curriculum planning is thorough. Lesson plans are detailed and in the best lessons they show separate tasks for pupils of differing abilities. Subject leaders have a good overview of the curriculum for Years 3 to 6, but links with planning for younger pupils to ensure consistency and continuity in their learning across different subject areas and year groups are not yet fully developed.

3.12 The academic curriculum is enriched by an excellent programme of extra-curricular subjects and activities. Over the year, activities are offered both in school and at the end of the day, enabling pupils to pursue many interests including sport, chess, classics, music, climbing and a Columbian dance exercise programme. The curriculum is significantly enhanced by a large number of educational trips and visits that provide breadth to the pupils' experience. Residential visits for Years 4 to 6 provide pupils with additional challenges and opportunities.

3.13 The pupils' learning experience is enhanced by good links with the local community, most notably during the Year 6 Community Week. Pupils also perform in residential homes and local churches.

### **3.(c) The contribution of teaching**

- 3.14 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.15 The quality of teaching successfully promotes the school's aims. Teaching at its best is characterised by clear learning objectives that are often revisited throughout the lesson, to enable assessment of the pupils' understanding. In this teaching, the use of targeted questioning skilfully elicits positive responses from the pupils and leads to deeper understanding. This is typically encompassed within a framework of brisk, timed tasks that lead to learning at a good pace. These suit the learning styles of different pupils, and include imaginative challenge to broaden their knowledge and understanding, which results in significant progress. When teaching is less successful, pupils are given fewer opportunities to exercise extended reasoning or creativity. The limited challenge or encouragement to think independently hinders their progress, particularly in the case of the most able. The pupils benefit from much teaching by subject specialists. Generally, the teachers' expectations of pupils are high.
- 3.16 In all teaching, strong relationships between teachers and pupils are evident and these are a significant factor in the pupils' successful achievement. Pupils are confident about asking for help and many expressed their appreciation for the way in which their teachers support them. Classroom behaviour is of a high standard and praise and encouragement are used to excellent effect to add much to the pupils' progress and stimulate effort.
- 3.17 Overall, the marking of books is excellent and in line with the school's marking policy, however this is not always consistent across all subjects. It is accurate and encouraging, and gives specific guidance on improvement. In addition, staff are increasingly using self- and peer-assessment by pupils to involve them in their learning. However, this practice is not consistent across all subjects. The school uses the large amount of assessment data it holds on pupils well to judge their attainment and how well they are progressing. This information is used effectively to identify those who need support. A clear system for tracking the pupils' attainment from year to year works well.
- 3.18 Pupils with SEND or EAL are supported effectively in lessons by their teachers and by teaching assistants, enabling them to make excellent progress, and are given work appropriate to their needs. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are provided for appropriately.
- 3.19 Teaching makes good use of resources, including ICT, which is widespread across the school. Consistent use of the interactive whiteboard to support teaching adds much to lessons.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

- 4.1 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils' personal development is of the highest quality throughout the school. The pupils often reflect upon their own achievements and can offer mature, self-critical observations of their behaviour and work. They recognise their own strengths and those of their peers, and are confident that teachers will always support them, ensuring that they are well prepared to cope with the demands of life at and beyond school.
- 4.3 The pupils demonstrate excellent spiritual awareness, fulfilling the school's aim to promote Christian values, whilst taking account of the wide-ranging faiths represented by the pupil body. Pupils show clear respect for the faith assemblies in which Christian hymns and prayers are well integrated with stories from numerous other religions. These assemblies play a major role in school life and provide key moments for reflection, and there is a keen sense of respect for these moments by pupils. They are further complemented by the religious studies curriculum, through links with the local churches and synagogue, and by a high standard of choral singing in assemblies throughout the school. Pupils have a strong sense of self-esteem as a result of the recognition they receive for their successes, both in class and in assemblies.
- 4.4 The pupils' moral understanding is well developed. They have a keen grasp of right and wrong. They also clearly appreciate the significance of friendliness and good manners. Pupils' attitudes throughout the school demonstrate their close adherence to the school's guiding rule to act with courtesy and common sense at all times and to strive for excellence in all they do. Whilst the 'Golden Rules' serve as guidance for the younger pupils, the older pupils have, since the previous inspection, devised their own code of conduct, and a culture of respect for all other pupils underpins the positive relationships evident throughout the school. Pupils work hard to support a range of charities, many of them initiated by the thriving school council.
- 4.5 The harmonious relationships seen throughout the school are a result of the pupils' excellent social development. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of public institutions and current affairs, as well as an appreciation of how society works. They grow to see value in being responsible citizens who show respect and tolerance, and consider the needs of others. The democratic process of the school council does much to inform this. Pupils talk about their school with considerable pride and at all levels they willingly accept responsibility when asked. Older pupils welcome opportunities to help the children in the EYFS with their reading each morning, Year 5 pupils organise a science club for Year 2 pupils, and Year 6 pupils relish their many areas of responsibilities as monitors across the school. Community Week fosters the corporate feeling within the school and outside in the local community.
- 4.6 The pupils have an excellent appreciation and respect for their own and each other's cultures. Pupils and staff celebrate the diversity of the school's members, enabling all pupils to develop an insight into the values and customs of others, and to develop harmonious relations. Pupils also benefit from a wide variety of cultural trips to museums, art galleries and musical events in the local area. Visiting theatrical workshops and wide extra-curricular provision, ranging from speech and drama and

wind band to Bollywood dancing, provide rich and stimulating cultural experiences for pupils, which they enter into wholeheartedly and thoroughly enjoy.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 The pastoral support for pupils is excellent. Central to this are the highly effective relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils have form tutors or class teachers but in practice all teachers and ancillary staff are deeply committed to providing the highest standards of support, both pastoral and academic, fulfilling the school's aims.
- 4.9 The school community is a vibrant and welcoming place where pupils feel secure and valued. Bullying is not tolerated in the school. Policy and practice are clear about this and detailed records are kept of any related incident to ensure that it has been dealt with and followed up. Centralised electronic record keeping of pastoral care has been introduced recently and this ensures that all pastoral concerns are shared. A small number of parents indicated in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire that they felt the school does not always deal well with any cases of bullying. From discussions with pupils and observations of school life, the inspectors found no evidence to support this. The emphasis in the school's approach to discipline is upon praise and the encouragement of positive behaviour. Pupils felt that the school deals with any poor behaviour in an efficient and sensitive manner through a clear system of sanctions.
- 4.10 Pupils have a voice in the school. Each form has a school council representative who collates the thoughts and opinions of his or her peers and presents them at meetings. The council discusses and make decisions in a most democratic way. A few pupils indicated in responses to their questionnaire that they felt their views are not always listened to. Inspection evidence shows that pupils have many opportunities to express their views.
- 4.11 Pupils have a firm understanding of what constitutes healthy eating and this is supported by the school's provision of nutritious and well-balanced meals. Exercise is valued and excellent opportunities are provided by the school for pupils to take part in a variety of physical activities. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.12 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.13 Policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust and thorough. All staff, and governors with responsibility in this area, have undertaken child protection training, are aware of their responsibilities and update their training every three years. Senior staff with specific responsibilities receive specialist training every two years and ensure that all staff are trained at the appropriate time. Safer recruitment procedures are meticulously followed for all new staff. This meets the requirement of the previous inspection.
- 4.14 Health and safety procedures are adhered to rigorously. Extremely effective measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards, and records and documentation of all aspects of health and safety are meticulously kept. Stringent risk assessments are in place for all areas of the school, and include external visits.

- 4.15 Arrangements for sick or injured pupils are excellent. Staff are very well informed about individual pupils' needs and conditions, including any pupils with SEND, and the medical centre makes comfortable provision for pupils who are ill. Nursing care is available throughout the day, and many staff are trained in first aid.
- 4.16 The admission and attendance registers are maintained accurately and suitably archived.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) The quality of governance**

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Prudent and clearly focused governance has assured the success of the recent changes in the leadership and management of the school. The governors are extremely supportive of the developing vision and plans for the school. Governance is pro-active and maintains secure oversight of the school through well-structured committees with aptly chosen membership that includes a suitable range of expertise and experience. The board is particularly well represented in terms of educational expertise. This enables governors to provide support and challenge to all aspects of school life, and thus help the school to fulfil its aims and ensure the excellent achievement and personal development of the pupils.
- 5.3 There is an induction programme for new governors, and all governors receive regular and appropriate training when necessary. Governors clearly understand their roles and responsibilities, particularly in respect of child protection, secure recruitment and health and safety. Governors review the safeguarding policy on an annual basis. They oversee the maintenance of a centralised register that records the recruitment checks undertaken on the appointment of staff. This meets the requirement of the previous inspection. Monitoring of policies and procedures is efficient and thorough. Financial procedures are extremely effective: financial oversight is strong and receives the governors' full attention, and the procurement of resources throughout the school is efficient and considered.
- 5.4 Governors are interested and involved in the school. The regular information received from senior staff, attendance at staff in-service training days and visits to lessons inform governors on all aspects of school life. Consequently, they know the school well, and have positive and constructive relationships with staff. The allocation of individual governors to various areas of school life works well.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is good.
- 5.6 The strengths in leadership are reflected in the pupils' high academic standards, in response to good teaching, and their outstanding personal development. Members of the newly structured leadership team work well together: they are united in their keen sense of purpose, and provide strong support for the school and its staff. Under new leadership and direction, they have developed a clear focus on improvement and self-evaluation which has already begun to have an impact on the good quality education and very high levels of care provided. Current development planning seeks to continue this vision within a whole-school strategic plan. Senior leaders recognise a need for the construction of the plan to be a consultative process and to embody a shared vision. Staff have embraced the recent changes wholeheartedly. A happy, lively and purposeful atmosphere pervades all areas of the school, fulfilling its aim to provide a secure, stimulating and happy environment.
- 5.7 Extremely effective systems are in place for the monitoring of pupils' achievement and progress in literacy and numeracy, and monitoring of teaching and learning by senior staff takes place in these areas, in line with the recommendation of the previous inspection. However, this is not extended consistently across all subjects and ages. The school recognises a need for monitoring to be undertaken with more rigour and consistency. Although some peer observation takes place amongst staff, the informal nature of these arrangements reduces opportunities for best practice to be shared and for necessary areas for staff training and development to be identified. A newly developed central system of recording pastoral matters ensures that a holistic picture of the well-being of each pupil is built up and can be accessed by all staff.
- 5.8 The school is successful in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified staff, and all required checks and records are in place. All staff receive appropriate and regular training in matters of safeguarding, welfare, health and safety, and show high levels of care and concern for pupils. The current appraisal system, introduced in accordance with the recommendation of previous inspection, is now under review. A comprehensive staff handbook gives staff useful guidance, and good induction arrangements ensure that new appointees are well informed of school routines and safeguarding arrangements.
- 5.9 The extensive premises and grounds are well maintained, providing a safe and stimulating environment in which the pupils have many opportunities to develop their potential and demonstrate their skills. The school runs efficiently due to the care and expertise of all those who work hard to support the pupils, including the administration, catering, housekeeping, grounds and maintenance departments.
- 5.10 There is a strong partnership between the parents and the school. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that parents are highly satisfied with the provision for their children and with the education they receive.
- 5.11 Information flows freely from the school to parents in a variety of ways. A wide variety of useful material, including all required information, is available to parents of both prospective and current pupils through the school website and within the school. The weekly newsletter includes reports and photographs of major school activities and achievements, and keeps parents fully up to date with news and



forthcoming events. All staff are available by telephone, and staff who teach older pupils are also contactable by email. The school has regular contact with parents at both the start and the end of the school day, when a senior leader is always present to greet parents.

- 5.12 Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the life of the school. They are invited to workshops and to meetings with a specific academic or pastoral focus, as well as to social events organised by the extremely active parents' committee. Parents are also invited to attend events such as the harvest festival and the Christmas carol service, as well as many sporting events. A small number of parents indicated in response to the questionnaire that they are not given opportunities to be involved. Inspection evidence did not support this view.
- 5.13 Parents of older pupils receive two full written reports a year and parents of younger pupils receive an annual written report, while parents of all year groups are provided with report cards twice a year. The full reports are detailed and reflect the character of each pupil. They provide information about attainment, effort and progress, and give clear targets for improvement. Parents' evenings at the beginning of each academic year inform parents about the topics to be covered and curriculum information evenings are held during the year. However, in responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire a small minority of parents indicated dissatisfaction with the information provided about their children's progress. The inspection team agreed that such information is limited but that information provided throughout the school is otherwise good overall.
- 5.14 The school has a clear and appropriate complaints procedure. Parents' concerns are heard promptly and treated with care and consideration; as a result the vast majority are dealt with swiftly and informally.

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

## **6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

### **6.(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend**

- 6.1 The setting is good in meeting the needs of all children. This is particularly strong for the youngest children because their individual needs are fully recognised, but less effective for children over the age of two.
- 6.2 Provision is outstanding for children under the age of two. Appropriate interventions and excellent questioning to extend children's thinking are used by highly skilled staff constantly to challenge the children. Babies and toddlers make rapid progress because of the strong focus on all aspects of their development. Since the previous inspection, more use is now made of the outdoors further to support children's learning, and an excellent balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities, both indoors and out, results in outstanding active learning. Planning is personal, relevant to each child, and successfully includes children's own interests. Detailed observations show excellent knowledge of each child's stage of development, with clear next steps identified.
- 6.3 Provision throughout the rest of the EYFS is generally good, although inconsistent. Where teaching is most successful, children of all abilities are challenged, particularly to solve problems and investigate for themselves, enabling them to make good and often outstanding progress, but this is not consistent in all lessons. Key people have a good knowledge of individuals and collect a wide range of assessment information. At times, this is not used to adapt tasks to suit each child's needs. Staff work very closely with parents and external agencies to provide good support for children with SEND, including those with speech and communication difficulties, and the small number of children with EAL are well catered for.
- 6.4 Parents are encouraged to take an active role in their children's development through sharing their views in diaries and reading records. Information evenings and workshops such as the 'French Breakfast' are provided regularly. In response to questionnaires, a small number of parents felt that they do not receive sufficient information about their children's progress. Inspection findings show that parents of younger children do not always receive sufficient information about what has occurred during their children's day at school. Parents of older children receive regular information about their children's progress.

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

- 6.5 The contribution of provision to the children's well-being is outstanding. This is at the heart of the setting. An excellent focus on care and nurture, particularly for the youngest children, ensures that all are valued, settled and very happy. They are confident to ask for help and know that staff will always listen. Staff are excellent role models for polite and considerate behaviour; as a result, behaviour is exemplary throughout the EYFS.
- 6.6 Children are helped to understand from an early age that healthy eating is important and older children understand about the need for physical exercise during their outdoor breaks. Children are given careful instructions on how to keep themselves

safe and manage risk, and older children manage personal hygiene independently. Children are very well prepared to progress to the next stage of their learning.

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

- 6.7 Leadership and management of the provision are good. The aim to provide a happy, secure, stimulating environment is met well. Governors are well informed about the setting. Rigorous procedures and effective policies ensure that the children are well safeguarded, and regular and robust risk assessments ensure a safe environment.
- 6.8 Staff meet regularly to plan, to evaluate children's progress and to discuss ideas for improving provision. Much informal monitoring of the provision takes place. However, formal monitoring and evaluation of practice to ensure consistency are largely underdeveloped within the setting. Senior managers have limited designated management time. A good range of training is undertaken by staff and there are many opportunities for continuous professional development. The system for supervising staff is currently being developed to provide these more regularly. Strong partnerships with external agencies and parents help to support the needs of individuals, especially those requiring additional support.

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

- 6.9 The overall quality and standards of the provision are good. All children, including those with SEND or EAL, make good progress relative to their ability and needs, and the youngest make rapid progress in all areas of learning.
- 6.10 The strong emphasis on reading, writing, number work and physical development ensures that many children reach high standards in these areas across the EYFS. All children make excellent progress in their language development and a love of books is engendered from an early age. Children aged two and three are confident counting up to and down from ten, ably 'drag' objects across the interactive whiteboard to play a shape game and listen with concentration to short stories. Older Nursery children effectively use water and powder paint to make colours change and many know their letter sounds. Reception children are able to write sentences independently and show well-developed fine motor skills as they manipulate dough to make Chinese letters. However, for children aged from two to five, progress slows when activities are not matched sufficiently carefully to individual needs. The children's personal and emotional development is outstanding throughout and all children show high levels of confidence and increasing levels of independence.
- 6.11 The children's welfare is well safeguarded. Good progress has been made in improving the provision and addressing the development points from the previous inspection. Outdoor areas have been redeveloped and they are now used more frequently. Since the previous inspection, increased collaboration takes place across the EYFS and there are many more opportunities for staff to meet together. The Nursery for two and three year olds now provides the required space, and safeguarding meets all requirements. These developments, together with well-considered development plan, show a good commitment to continuous improvement.

### **Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three**

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

**Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.**