



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

HEATHFIELD SCHOOL

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Heathfield School

Full Name of School	Heathfield School
DfE Number	885/6014
EYFS Number	EY279901
Registered Charity Number	1098940
Address	Heathfield School Wolverley Road Kidderminster Worcestershire DY10 3QE
Telephone Number	01562 850204
Fax Number	01562 852609
Email Address	info@heathfieldschool.co.uk
Head	Mr Roger Brierly
Chair of Governors	Mr Alan H Higgs
Age Range	0 to 16
Total Number of Pupils	256
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (142 boys; 114 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 34 5-11: 103 3-5 (EYFS): 29 11-16: 90
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Teresa Stooksbury
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	23 Sep 2014 to 26 Sep 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 September 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 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

Ms Juliet Jaggs	Reporting Inspector
Mr Mark Calthrop-Owen	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, ISA)
Dr Pam Hillier	Team Inspector (Former Head of Department, GSA school)
Mr Steven Smerdon	Team Inspector (Head, GSA school)
Mrs Karen Williams	Team Inspector (Head, ISA school)
Miss Jacqueline Scotney	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Located in the village of Wolverley just outside Kidderminster, Heathfield School was purchased by the Sebright Educational Foundation in 1961 as the boarding preparatory school to Sebright School. When Sebright School closed in 1970, The Heathfield Education Trust, a registered charity, purchased the site and developed the school into the co-educational day school that it is today. A few of the founding trustees still serve on the board of trustees. In 2007, the school formed a partnership with an international school in Bangkok, now called the Heathfield International School, Bangkok.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide an excellent education with the right balance of academic and extra-curricular activities where pupils develop the skills for personal fulfilment both at school and in later life. In accordance with this aim, the school has altered the curriculum since the previous inspection and pupils in the Junior School are now learning two modern foreign languages. The school aspires to excellence in all areas and seeks for pupils to learn to appreciate one another's strengths and to respect their achievements, however modest. The school also aims for pupils to combine high personal and social standards to create a sense of community that fosters tolerance, teamwork and co-operation.
- 1.3 The youngest children admitted to the school are three months old. These babies are cared for in the school's day Nursery at North Lodge, a registered Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting, from where they transfer to the school Nursery in the academic year in which they turn three. At the time of the inspection there were 256 pupils in total at the school, 63 of whom were under 5. Pupils between the ages of 5 and 11 attend the Junior School, and currently total 103. Pupils aged 11 to 16 attend the Senior School, where there are currently 90 on roll. Almost all of these pupils go onto academic sixth-form courses at other schools or colleges.
- 1.4 The school is non-selective and admits pupils with a range of abilities, but the overall ability profile is above the national average. The school has identified 31 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), most of whom receive additional learning support. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs. A small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are currently no pupils for whom English is an additional language.

- 1.5 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 tables.

Junior School

School	NC name
J1	Year 1
J2	Year 2
J3	Year 3
J4	Year 4
J5	Year 5
J6	Year 6

Senior School

School	NC name
S1	Year 7
S2	Year 8
S3	Year 9
S4	Year 10
S5	Year 11

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Heathfield School goes some way to fulfilling its aim to provide its pupils with an excellent education but there are some shortcomings. Most children in the EYFS achieve a good level of development and are well prepared for the Junior School. Sound teaching, with an emphasis on providing pupils with much of the information they need, promotes their initial success. A strong focus on English and mathematics through the adequate curriculum means that pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are well practised, and their attainment is above the national average by the time they move into the Senior School. Pupils' ability to think in different ways and use their initiative is more limited because they have few opportunities to do so. More able pupils, in particular, do not reach the high standards of which they are capable. Pupils in the Senior School make progress that is in line with their abilities and by the time they leave the school their achievements are sound. Pupils experience considerable fulfilment in extra-curricular achievements, with notable successes in sport and accomplishments in music.
- 2.2 Pupils' good personal development arises from good pastoral care and the strong relationships in the school. Staff know each individual pupil well, guiding them carefully to promote their happiness and health. Children in the EYFS form strong bonds with their key people and they quickly grow in confidence. Pupils throughout the school appreciate one another's strengths and talents because the school places such an emphasis on mutual respect. Those in positions of responsibility are well motivated by a commitment to one another. Pupils are now having more chances to be involved in the development of the school as school council procedures improve.
- 2.3 Leadership, management and governance are unsatisfactory because the school does not have due regard to statutory guidance. The contribution of arrangements to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety is unsatisfactory. Training in child protection does not meet requirements and vetting procedures for new staff appointments are not sufficiently rigorous. The school has been slow to respond to the recommendations of the previous inspection. There have been some improvements to arrangements in the EYFS, although the setting has not fully met the recommendation to improve provision for outdoor play in the North Lodge setting and the area remains under-used. There also remains a lack of co-ordination throughout the curriculum, affecting the continuity in pupils' learning. The staff appraisal system has not been fully established, and a lack of focus on the introduction of measures to support learners of varying abilities in class means that the effectiveness of teaching has declined. Governance takes a capable lead on financial planning and on the development of the school's accommodation. Links with parents are sound; they value the school's caring ethos in encouraging their children to be happy and confident.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:
- ensure that all necessary recruitment checks are carried out on all staff before they take up their appointment and that these checks are recorded correctly in the central staff register [Part 3, paragraphs 7.(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety, and Part 4, paragraphs 19.(2)(b)(ii) and (iv), (c) and (d), 19.(3) and 22.(3)(b), (c), (d) and (e), under Suitability of staff and proprietors];
 - ensure that designated staff responsible for safeguarding receive suitable training in child protection [Part 3, paragraphs 7.(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety].
- 2.5 See the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage section 6 for the inspection findings in relation to the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 for children under three.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Formalise systems for ensuring up-to-date awareness of changes in regulatory requirements.
 2. Improve systems for gathering and recording information so that it can more readily be used to promote pupils' achievement and personal development.
 3. Develop monitoring and evaluation procedures throughout as a basis for identifying the school's strengths and development priorities accurately.
 4. Ensure that governance routinely holds the school to account for the effectiveness of the quality of education.
 5. Improve support for the learning needs of particular groups of pupils in lessons, especially the more able and those with SEND.
 6. Improve the outdoor provision across the EYFS to allow all children to have greater outdoor learning experiences.

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 sound.
- 3.2 In accordance with school's aims, pupils enjoy a sense of fulfilment in their achievements. Those entered for a range of competitions enjoy success, for example qualifying for the British Mathematical Olympiad and reaching the national finals of a French and Spanish spelling event. Team players perform well in a variety of sports tournaments, often winning local and regional events. A few individuals also play at county and national level. Pupils with an interest in the arts achieve well in music examinations, and the recent school production of *We Will Rock You* effectively showcased pupils' talents in drama and dance. Pupils participating in the newly introduced Young Enterprise scheme have also been successful at a local level.
- 3.3 The school partially meets its aim for pupils to develop the skills necessary for success. A strong emphasis on English and mathematics enables pupils to achieve well in the Junior School. The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2011 to 2013. These are the most recent years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national tests at the age of 11 have been good in relation to the national average for maintained primary schools. These results indicate that pupils in the Junior School make good progress in relation to pupils of similar abilities. This is less well sustained in the Senior School. Performance at GCSE has been above the national average for maintained schools, with about 80% of pupils achieving 5 A* to C grades, including in English and mathematics. This indicates that pupils in the Senior School make appropriate progress overall in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities.
- 3.4 Pupils' attainment reflects the emphasis on developing their skills within a given structure. For example, pupils in Year 7 were well able to select meaningful vocabulary as they composed a poem. In GCSE French, candidates demonstrated good listening skills when they identified verb endings during a dialogue with a partner, and in mathematics, younger pupils knew how to use table grids to calculate multiplication exercises. The school's emphasis on completing tasks using accurate skills ensures that pupils in need of additional learning support reach a similar level to that of their peers in written work. They do not retain new information well from one lesson to the next because they are not encouraged to assimilate it.
- 3.5 Pupils' more advanced thinking skills are less well developed because over-directed teaching limits opportunities for them to use their own reasoning skills to ensure that they learn to apply principles effectively. More able pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable as a result. An over-reliance on worksheets in some subjects means that pupils are provided with excessive information, so that they are not learning to draw on their prior knowledge and apply it logically themselves. Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) to source information and complete quizzes. Their ability to use software effectively for different purposes is limited to their ICT lessons because there has lacked a co-ordinated approach to developing their skills throughout the curriculum.
- 3.6 Pupils are attentive and apply themselves willingly to the tasks set in lessons. Those in the Senior School often discuss their learning, clarifying points and reviewing answers together to extend their responses in written work. Pupils in the

Junior School have less well-developed investigative and collaborative skills because they rarely learn in groups other than during practical activities. In these circumstances they co-operate well. As pupils are provided with much of the information they need, their imaginative thought is not promoted and their creativity is less strong.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is sound.
- 3.8 Curriculum coverage is adequate. Emphasis placed on the core areas of English and mathematics throughout the school allows less time for other subjects. Recent changes have been introduced in the Junior School and pupils now begin their preparation for Common Entrance in Year 5 but it is too early to determine the effectiveness of this strategy. Other aspects of the Junior School programme are effective. The woodland learning environment enhances provision for science, and the introduction of French in Year 3 and Spanish in Year 5 has improved the linguistic experience for these pupils.
- 3.9 In the Senior School, the arrangement for separate GCSE science courses to be taught during lunchtimes goes some way to meeting the needs of more able pupils. Creative and aesthetic aspects feature to a lesser degree, especially since the drama component has been reduced. Recent changes to the Senior School curriculum have been of some benefit, with a more organised approach to the personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) course. The introduction of a computer studies course complements ICT and GCSE business studies to provide a suitable emphasis on technology. The absence of other technologies, such as design technology and food technology, restricts the breadth of the curriculum throughout the school.
- 3.10 At the time of the previous inspection, the school was recommended to improve the management of the overall curriculum. It remains somewhat disjointed, resulting in unnecessary repetition between the Junior School and Senior School and from one year group to the next. The school was also recommended to integrate the use of ICT in the curriculum but this recommendation has not been well met for pupils.
- 3.11 Extra-curricular provision in the form of lunchtime clubs and after-school activities is modest in the lower years of the Junior School, because of the focus on sport. Further up the Junior School, 'Fun Drama', the woodland learning environment and cookery are well attended, and in the Senior School, the introduction of the Young Enterprise scheme is beginning to promote pupils' commercial expertise. Other extra-curricular opportunities in music and sport for older pupils accord well with the school's aims. The introduction of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme reinforces the school's emphasis on personal development and community involvement. The two school orchestras challenge pupils to use their musical expertise well. Links with schools in France, Spain and Germany allow pupils opportunities to experience different cultures and languages. Aspects of the enrichment programme challenge more able pupils; for example, higher level mathematicians perform well in extension qualifications. However, too few expectations are set about the sustained level of challenge for these pupils during lessons.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.12 The contribution of teaching is sound.
- 3.13 Teaching supports the aim of the school in providing an excellent education to some extent since it is effective in promoting pupils' steady progress. Teachers throughout the school know their pupils well and they use this knowledge to engage pupils' interest. Teaching is generally informed by good subject knowledge and pupils make progress because of the individual feedback they receive as they learn. The rapport between the pupils and their teachers engenders self-assurance in volunteering answers, and pupils are generally keen to participate and talk about their knowledge.
- 3.14 The previous inspection identified as an area for improvement enhancement of measures used to ensure that pupils of all abilities, particularly the most able, are fully challenged. This recommendation has not been fully addressed. Teaching plans do not take sufficient account of pupils' different levels of attainment and most pupils in the class undertake similar tasks. More able pupils in particular are constrained by an approach that prevents them from extending their understanding and taking more responsibility for applying new knowledge themselves. Assessment practices within lessons are not sufficiently developed to ensure that teaching responds to pupils as they find new learning either easier or more complex than expected.
- 3.15 Teaching throughout the school is highly directed, and so pupils are constantly supported and given clear instructions to follow. This is particularly evident in areas where specialist Senior School teaching has not been adapted for Junior School classes. Teaching incorporates a range of resources, including many visual prompts using ICT, to introduce new information. Many of these materials provide pupils with excessive information, limiting their opportunity to recall prior knowledge in sufficient depth and so consolidate their understanding more effectively.
- 3.16 Standardised tests are used to identify pupils who would benefit from learning support and pupils appreciate the help they receive during extra sessions. With this guidance pupils learn to overcome immediate academic concerns, and measures to ensure that all teaching meets their needs in an appropriate way are being introduced. These pupils are just beginning to develop effective learning strategies that they can apply in a variety of subjects to ensure better progress.
- 3.17 Marking of work in the Junior School and Senior School varies in its effectiveness in promoting improvement because no clear expectations are set. At best, written comments are linked to clearly defined areas for improvement, but this is inconsistent. In too many areas, books reveal annotations that go little beyond an encouraging mark or a tick. In their eagerness to show pupils how to complete tasks well, teachers often write the correct answer in pupils' books and do not give pupils the means to think of it for themselves. A similar approach was observed during lessons, for example in help with spelling.
- 3.18 Assessment practice is not fully developed and the school lacks tracking systems to generate information necessary for thorough academic guidance. Pupils understand the progress they are making through the attainment and effort grades provided for them and through the marks given by teachers in their books. Stars and house credits complement this system, but there are few agreed approaches to

distinguishing between effort and attainment for rewards, and some pupils are not sure why they have been commended.

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 good.
- 4.2 The school fulfils its aim of enabling its pupils to develop high personal and social standards. Pupils are confident and they encourage one another to be aspirational. The school's ethos of respect and mutual tolerance also encourages pupils to be sensitive. For example, as pupils considered how to write an honest personal statement they shared their reflections of one another's characteristics with care. Pupils' ability to reflect more philosophically is less well developed because there are few opportunities for them to discuss abstract ideas. Nevertheless, pupils in the Junior School in particular take full advantage of the interesting natural resources on the site and they are delighted by their discoveries.
- 4.3 Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong, and they respond well to the school's system of sanctions and rewards. They demonstrate a good level of maturity as they consider moral and ethical issues. For example, pupils were thoughtful about the themes of exploitative power and corruption as they studied text in an English lesson.
- 4.4 Pupils are adept in a variety of social situations. In a few responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, pupils indicated that they do not think there are sufficient positions of responsibility for them in school. Inspectors found that Senior School pupils are proud to be appointed leaders as school, house or sports captains. They are motivated by a strong sense of community spirit and of 'giving back' to the school in recognition of the support they feel they have received. Both junior and senior pupils enjoy the responsibility of electing members of the school councils. These representatives are keen to fulfil their roles sensibly and they are beginning to realise the extent to which they can contribute to decision making within the school as a whole. Inspection evidence supported the view that there are fewer opportunities for pupils in the Junior School to volunteer for leadership, but they display considerable maturity and a willingness to accept responsibility when it is offered. Pupils consider those less fortunate than themselves, and those in the Senior School encourage one another to support a wide variety of fund-raising events. Pupils in the Junior School are equally enthusiastic about the charity events organised by members of staff. Pupils have pursued ideas from lessons to express their concern for those facing very different challenges from their own, such as creating a video about the human cost of a tsunami. Senior pupils are developing their knowledge of political and constitutional matters such as the recent Scottish referendum, although junior pupils do not have as many chances to develop a similar level of awareness.
- 4.5 Pupils' awareness of other cultures and faiths is being strengthened through the school's links with its partner school in Bangkok. Those who have met pupils from Thailand enjoyed hosting the children and learning about their culture. Pupils reflect on other differences amongst traditions and uphold the right of all to their own beliefs and values.

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

- 4.6 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is good.
- 4.7 The school provides pupils with effective support, in accordance with its aims. The popular star system in the Junior School and the house credits in the Senior School do much to promote pupils' good behaviour. Pupils learn to respect one another's capabilities because their successes are frequently celebrated in assembly. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire showed that some pupils feel the school does not consider their individual concerns well. Pupils interviewed said that relationships in the school are strong and pupils are confident to share concerns with any of the staff because they feel that they deal with them well.
- 4.8 Pupils understand that bullying or harassment is unacceptable. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire showed that a few parents feel the school does not deal with bullying effectively. Pupils reported to inspectors that incidents are extremely rare and the school responds quickly to any allegations. The informal atmosphere of the school means that concerns are passed between staff without a written record necessarily being shared but a more formal system of information sharing is being developed.
- 4.9 The PSHCE programme includes effective advice for pupils moving from the Junior School to the Senior School, and a few helpful events prepare senior pupils as they consider options beyond GCSE. Guidance is less well organised in the Senior School because the PSHCE programme is sometimes disrupted and information is often general rather than tailored to individual pupils. There is currently no provision for work experience.
- 4.10 The promotion of health is good, with a range of sporting and outdoor activities on offer; the woodland learning environment and running club are particular favourites with pupils. The dining experience is of good quality, with healthy food available. Pupils are encouraged to make healthy choices, about which they are knowledgeable. The school has a suitable plan for improving educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.11 Some pupils commented in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire that they do not feel they are listened to by staff. Inspectors found that with a recently introduced school council, there are now more formal opportunities for them to share their views. Systems for sharing the outcomes of meetings are yet to be implemented and the current structure is somewhat demanding for younger pupils in the Junior School.

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

- 4.12 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is unsatisfactory.
- 4.13 Safeguarding has not been given a sufficiently high priority in the school. There has been a lack of urgency in complying with regulatory requirements regarding training, and those with responsibility for child protection are not suitably qualified. Arrangements for training part-time staff have not been sufficiently well co-ordinated and these staff have not been sufficiently prepared to support the school's ethos in promoting pupils' well-being. Senior leaders met the training requirements for these staff during the inspection. The safeguarding policy has now been updated but gaps in the knowledge of those designated to lead on its implementation mean that there are inconsistencies in practice. This is particularly so with regard to the manner in which the recruitment policy is fulfilled, and there has been a lack in the required level of rigour in the vetting procedures essential for all staff appointments. Not all of the necessary checks have been undertaken on some staff prior to their starting work in the school. Systems for recording the checks that have been conducted are not sufficiently accurate. New systems have very recently been introduced which are leading to more robust arrangements for appointing new staff.
- 4.14 External providers contribute to a very comprehensive maintenance and servicing programme. Fire equipment is routinely tested to ensure reliability. Evacuation drills are sufficiently frequent and evaluated to ensure that any potential issues are addressed. Careful consideration is given to a wide range of health and safety measures, for which there is an extremely methodical system of implementation and review. Risk assessments are in place to secure the site and to safeguard pupils during various activities.
- 4.15 Arrangements for sick or injured pupils are good. A large proportion of staff are qualified to offer first aid and the medical room is comfortable. Registration of attendance is systematic and registers are stored for the requisite three years. The school now has a complete admission register.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The governance of the school is unsatisfactory.
- 5.2 Governance supports the fulfilment of the school's aims, recognising pupils' achievements and encouraging their personal development. Members of the board with particular expertise, deployed to support various committees, take a keen interest in the running of the school. Those with financial knowledge have secured its gradual development through appropriate planning and investment in the accommodation.
- 5.3 Planning to improve the quality of education has been less effective. In support of the school, the governors accept the evaluation they are given and do not probe this or seek an objective view. Without an independent analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses, they have been unable to challenge the school over the suitability of the priorities for improvement that have been identified. Strategic plans lack focus as a result and the impact of change has been slow. More specifically, the governors have lacked the insight necessary to appreciate the extent to which the recommendations made at the time of the previous inspection should be met and they have not held the school to account for a full response. Improvements have been somewhat limited as a result.
- 5.4 The board of governors has not paid due regard to its regulatory duties. The board as a whole does not conduct the annual review of the safeguarding policy and there is a lack of understanding about the levels of rigour required to safeguard pupils. Governance has therefore been unable to hold leaders to account for the effective development and implementation of the safeguarding procedures necessary to create a secure environment for pupils.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is unsatisfactory.
- 5.6 The leadership does much to promote the ethos of the school, where positive relationships create a strong sense of community. Pupils respect the friendly atmosphere and they learn to feel valued because staff take an interest in them as individuals. Nevertheless, a lack of organisation in some areas of the school has caused inconsistencies which have led to the drop in standards since the previous inspection. Monitoring procedures are not sufficiently robust to assure consistent policy implementation and staff adapt their own practices. Record keeping is not sufficiently systematic and leadership does not maintain reliable information about the school's performance. As a result, evaluation is not sufficiently accurate to identify relevant development priorities. Inaction in developing the staff appraisal system from its inception at the time of the previous inspection means there has been insufficient focus on identifying the features of teaching which most need to be improved. Despite the previous recommendation to introduce the measures necessary to support pupils' different needs in lessons, lesson preparation remains partially effective in this respect.

- 5.7 The school has embarked on a new strategy that goes some way to meeting its aim of giving pupils an excellent education. Links with the global community, including with those at the partner school in Bangkok, support pupils' personal development well. Recent efforts have earned the school a competitive place on the Erasmus Plus programme for education, training, youth and sports, in further enhancing its European links. These developments provide a foundation for excellence but they are not well supported by actions to assure routine high quality at the school. For example, current curriculum developments mean that Junior School pupils now have access to specialist teaching, but this strategy has not been well implemented. Senior School teachers have not been given sufficient training in the way in which junior pupils learn, with the result that teaching is not promoting better progress in their lessons.
- 5.8 At the time of the previous inspection, the school was recommended to develop the leadership of the curriculum for better co-ordination across various subjects, but little has changed. Information and communication technology was identified as one of the aspects that most needed integrating throughout the curriculum; a few departments have introduced measures to help pupils to learn in more varied ways using technology, however there have been too few gains in other subjects.
- 5.9 Through the school as a whole, leaders are not sufficiently aware of their responsibilities to safeguard pupils' welfare, and arrangements to check the suitability of staff have not been sufficiently rigorous. Inconsistencies in policy implementation further undermine the extent to which the school is able to substantiate its caring ethos with effective practical care. For example, there is a lack of oversight of behaviour records, and so the school is lacking proactive steps to understand patterns in pupils' behaviour that may be indicative of more serious concerns.
- 5.10 The school is successful in meeting its aim to foster close relationships with the parents of current and prospective pupils. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the majority of parents thought that their children are happy, safe and well looked after, and that they are making good progress. A few parents felt that they do not receive timely responses to their questions, and that their concerns are not handled well. Inspection investigation included scrutiny of the complaints procedure. By the end of the inspection, the school's published procedures contained all of the required information, with clear timescales. Inspectors found that the quality of record keeping is variable and that the sequence of agreed actions in handling a complaint is not always clear.
- 5.11 Information provided for the parents of both current and prospective pupils about school life is sufficient, in addition to the current news shared on the website. Some parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that they do not feel they can be involved in school events. Inspectors found that there are several ways in which parents are able to contribute to the social life of the school, by joining the Parents' Association, for example. Some parents travel long distances to support their children playing in sports fixtures, but there are fewer organised arrangements for parents to support their children's learning. More general support is provided by parents of younger children who occasionally visit to talk about their jobs and hobbies, while parents of older pupils take responsibility for organising work experience placements for their own children.
- 5.12 A small proportion of parents felt that they are not provided with sufficient information about their children's progress. Inspectors examined the range of

information available to parents, which includes reports, formal parents' meetings and communication through prep books or reading diaries, and found these to be suitable. Reports and grade cards provide parents with useful information about their children's work and progress, and often offer some guidance on areas for improvement. However, there is some inconsistency in the amount of detail made in comments across subjects and year groups.

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 makes good provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. Educational programmes are well adapted to allow children to pursue their interests and needs, and a good variety of resources and activities promotes children's concentration. Most go on to reach the level of development typical for their age, with some exceeding these expectations. Staff know the children in their care well. Their enthusiasm for the children's learning engages the children's interest, although the outdoor areas that adjoin the EYFS classes do not promote self-chosen play as successfully as the indoor environment.
- 6.2 Adults check children's progress carefully and use a variety of measures to support them. Planning for small group activities enables the oldest children to learn in relation to their ability, and individual plans ensure that children identified as more able and those with SEND are well supported. The setting is aware of the SEND code of practice and has identified a need to train a member of staff to enhance the provision for these children.
- 6.3 Partnerships with parents are good. Parents spoken to during the inspection were very happy with the care and education that the setting provides. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small number of parents were not satisfied with the information they receive about their children's progress. Inspectors looked into the range of information and found this to be suitable for the age and developmental stage of the children. Parents of younger children are provided with daily updates on their children's experiences and effective systems are in place for encouraging parents to contribute to the learning records of older children. A small number of parents felt that they are less well involved in events. Inspection found that regular opportunities for involvement in the work of the setting are lacking, but that the Parents' Association welcomes new members. The setting provides a good range of other information to parents through the parents' handbook.

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

- 6.4 Provision for children's well-being is inadequate. This is due to a breach in the statutory requirements that relate to safeguarding and to staff checks in the recruitment process, which have been incomplete. On a day-to-day basis, children are well cared for. Babies settle in quickly, forming appropriate bonds with their key people, and older children are happy and demonstrate growing skills of independence. High standards of manners come naturally to the children, who spontaneously use language such as 'excuse me' and 'thank you' when speaking to their peers.
- 6.5 Systems for assessing risks are implemented suitably, and fire evacuation procedures are regularly practised and are well known by children. Children learn about healthy lifestyles through topics on food, and take regular physical exercise. Emotional development is fostered well and children are encouraged to recognise their feelings and to talk about them. Hygiene routines are instilled at an early age, and older children know that they need to wash their hands prior to cooking and

eating. The focus on personal development results in confident, happy children who are well prepared for their next class.

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

- 6.6 The leadership and management of the early years provision are inadequate because the statutory requirement for safeguarding has not been met. Governance has not been sufficiently rigorous in its duties to monitor regulatory compliance and the setting has not completed all necessary checks when appointing new staff. Other safeguarding arrangements are in place and there are sufficient numbers of staff with paediatric first-aid training. Links between the board of governors and the EYFS are not sufficiently secure, with the result that the setting has not been held to account for its continued improvement.
- 6.7 In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small number of parents felt that the setting does not handle their concerns efficiently. This is in contrast to those parents spoken to during the inspection week, who felt that issues are handled promptly. Inspectors examined the complaints procedure. In the past, records of complaints were not always carefully recorded. The complaints policy is now a compliant document and includes the appropriate timescales for dealing with issues that arise.
- 6.8 Since the previous inspection, greater consistency in curriculum planning has been achieved, and there is some systematic monitoring and evaluation of the provision. Consequently, the areas of learning are covered suitably, and in combination with appropriate tracking, the leadership of the setting ensures that children make good progress. Staff foster effective partnerships between parents and external agencies to support specific learning needs. All EYFS staff are provided with opportunities to meet with their line manager to support them in their role as a key person, though the appraisal system remains in its infancy.

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

- 6.9 The overall quality and standards of the early years provision are inadequate. This is due to non-compliance that relates to safeguarding statutory requirements and checks for the suitability of new staff.
- 6.10 Overall, children, including those with SEND and the more able, make good progress in their learning and development across all areas of learning, in relation to their starting points and needs, and the vast majority of children meet or exceed expected levels by the end of their time in the EYFS. Children are well prepared for the next stage of their education; the youngest children demonstrate an interest in songs and books, those in the Nursery are beginning to develop pencil control and older children are keen to attempt using numbers beyond 20. The children's personal and emotional development is strong. Behaviour is of a good standard and children know how to follow rules, and they play well alongside and with others. Key people understand and take responsibility for children's welfare well, and the children know to whom to turn should they need help.
- 6.11 Leadership arrangements for evaluating practice remain somewhat informal but some progress has been made in meeting the recommendations of the previous inspection to improve the setting. There is now greater consistency in planning and ICT resources have been increased. The setting has not fully met the

recommendation to improve provision for outdoor play in the North Lodge setting and the area remains under-used.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

6.12 In order to meet the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006, those responsible for the registered provision must:

- implement all necessary recruitment checks for each new appointment to the setting.

Section 2 includes any identified action the Early Years Foundation Stage is recommended to take in order to improve its provision other than take the action specified above.