



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
HULME HALL GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Hulme Hall Grammar School

Full Name of School	Hulme Hall Grammar School
DfE Number	356/6009
EYFS Number	EY347271
Registered Charity Number	525931
Address	Hulme Hall Grammar School 75 Hulme Hall Road Cheadle Hulme Cheadle Cheshire SK8 6LA
Telephone Number	0161 4853524
Fax Number	0161 4855966
Email Address	<u>secretary@hulmehallschool.org</u>
Head	Miss Rachael Allen
Chair of Governors	Mr Tim Lowe
Age Range	2 to 16
Total Number of Pupils	322
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (203 boys; 119 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 16 5-11: 58 3-5 (EYFS): 44 11-16: 204
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 322
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Harjinder Khinda
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	02 Dec 2014 to 05 Dec 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 March 2011.

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 governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. 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 Ruth McFarlane

Reporting Inspector

Mrs Clare Bruce

Team Inspector (Head of Junior and Infant School, HMC school)

Mrs Jackie Hales

Team Inspector (Former Head of Department, ISA school)

Mr James Sheridan

Team Inspector (Principal, GSA school)

Mr Chris Manville

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL	2
(a) Main findings	2
(b) Action points	2
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	2
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	2
3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	4
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning	4
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c) The contribution of teaching	6
4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	8
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	8
(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care	9
(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	9
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	11
(a) The quality of governance	11
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	11
6 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE	14
(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	14
(b) The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being	14
(c) The leadership and management of the early years provision	15
(d) The overall quality and standards of the early years provision	15

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Hulme Hall Grammar School is a coeducational day school for pupils from the ages of 2 to 16. It was founded as a boys' secondary school in 1928. It is run as a charitable trust with a board of governors. The school is situated near Stockport in Cheshire and owns playing fields about a mile away. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Years 1 to 6 were on a separate site until 1998. Now, they are an integral part of the main school. Since the previous inspection, senior post-holders have changed. There is a new headteacher, appointed in 2011. A new senior leadership team was appointed this year, and there is a new chair of the governing body.
- 1.2 The school aims to enable pupils of all abilities to realise their academic and personal potential in a nurturing environment. It seeks to place an emphasis on developing the whole person, and on encouraging pupils to become confident individuals with high levels of self-esteem.
- 1.3 The school has three sections: the EYFS, for children aged two to five years; the junior school, for those aged 5 to 11 years, and the senior school, for those aged 11 to 16. Currently, there are a total of 322 pupils on roll, of whom 203 are boys and 119 are girls. Sixty children are in the EYFS of whom 50 attend part-time. There are 16 children under the age of three, and 44 between the ages of three and five years. In the junior school, there are 58 pupils and the senior school currently has 204 pupils on roll.
- 1.4 Most pupils travel into school from a radius of about twenty miles. Since the previous inspection, the overall ability profile has lowered. About half of the children who enter the EYFS have skills and abilities lower than that which is typical for their age. A higher-than-average proportion of pupils enter the school roll later than the usual starting points, up to and including Year 11. The ability profile in the junior and senior schools is lower than the national average. The school provides learning support for four out of every five pupils, of whom 128 are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Sixteen of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school also provides support for the five pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). Most pupils are white British.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school in the EYFS setting and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Nursery	Nursery(under 3 years)
Kindergarten 1	Nursery (3 to 4 years)
Kindergarten 2	Reception

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Hulme Hall Grammar is a very caring, nurturing school which largely meets its aims. Pupils achieve well, including children in the EYFS. Many do well because support for the learning of those with SEND in the enrichment department is a strength. Throughout the school, pupils respond positively to the well-designed, flexible curriculum. The extra-curricular programme provides a good range of activities in which pupils succeed. From their individual starting points and often significant difficulties, pupils make good progress and attain results in GCSE examinations which are in line with the national average. Pupils are receptive and attentive learners, keen to participate and willing to explore ideas. The quality of teaching varies. It is sound overall. It is good in the EYFS and a majority is good in the senior school. The best teaching demonstrates teachers' expert subject knowledge and understanding of individual pupils' needs. Some teaching does not do enough to make full use of and extend the pupils' abilities, especially those of the more able pupils, throughout the school. Checks on pupils' progress are not fully effective or accurate, and this limits teachers' understanding of what pupils might achieve over time.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is good throughout the school. This helps pupils achieve well in a range of aesthetic and sporting pursuits, and reflects the school's excellent pastoral care provision and its close attention to furthering its aim to develop pupils' self-esteem. Sound arrangements ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. Pupils are kept safe. Safeguarding arrangements now meet requirements after an unsettled period.
- 2.3 Governance, leadership and management at all levels are sound. New governors have brought immediate strength and expertise to the team. However, while governors' plans are good for holding staff to account and rigorously monitoring all aspects of the school, including the EYFS, these are not yet implemented effectively in practice. The leadership team is recently formed and demonstrates strong commitment to the school's success, but some aspects of leadership are not developed and this is why teaching is not good overall. The appraisal process, to help staff improve their classroom practice and responsibilities, has only just been reinstated. Progress on the recommendations of the previous inspection is mixed. The use of information and communications technology (ICT) has improved. However, other recommendations have yet to be fully resolved. Checks of the quality of teaching and tracking pupils' progress are not robust so that there is still insufficient challenge in lessons for the most able pupils. Links with parents are strong. Many parents are supportive of all that the school provides.

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, all of which apply equally to the EYFS, the junior and senior schools.

1. Devise and implement ways to monitor pupils' progress more accurately and effectively.
2. Develop the effectiveness of the appraisal process for all staff, to ensure their strengths and training needs are formally recognised and dealt with.
3. Increase the rigour of monitoring all aspects of the school by leaders and governors.
4. Improve teaching so that all is as good as the best observed, especially in meeting the needs of the more able pupils.

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 good.
- 3.2 The aims of the school in enabling pupils of all abilities to realise their academic and personal potential in a nurturing environment are broadly fulfilled. Pupils, many of whom have SEND, successfully harness their eagerness to learn and develop good skills, knowledge, understanding and application of ideas in their academic work and in their extra-curricular activities. This includes pupils who enter the school roll later than the usual starting points.
- 3.3 In the junior school, pupils develop sound mathematical and literacy skills. In the senior school these skills develop further. Throughout the school, pupils express themselves with increasing clarity both orally and in their written work and they listen well. Reading skills are competent. Older pupils can reason logically and show independence as learners. They make good progress in the use of ICT reflecting improvements in response to the recommendation from the previous inspection. Art, music and drama classes result in good, imaginative, creative work. Pupils achieve well in physical education. Achievements in national association sports tournaments are strong considering the pupils' underlying abilities. Recently pupils have achieved places in the national athletic championships, and won a national gold medal in trampolining. Pupils do well in music examinations. These successes include more able pupils who achieve well in all their subjects overall. Occasionally, these pupils are not sufficiently challenged in their academic lessons. A check of their workbooks and lesson observations show that this sometimes holds back their academic progress.
- 3.4 The many pupils with SEND achieve and develop well at the school. They are individually assessed and supported effectively, but their own motivation also helps them make good progress. The few pupils with EAL achieve well because they are given individually-tailored support. Self-esteem is encouraged. For example, skills in their first language are developed alongside English, so that some take early GCSE in that language.
- 3.5 Pupils' attainment in the junior school cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be similar to national age-related expectations. For the senior school, the following analysis uses the national data for the years 2010 to 2013. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. In GCSE, results have been similar to the national average for maintained schools. The 2014 results show that a previous gap between boys' and girls' achievement has been closed.
- 3.6 This level of attainment, as judged in the junior school through lesson observations, examination of pupils' work and curriculum interviews with them, and from the results in the senior school, indicates that pupils make progress that is good in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. This maintains the quality noted at the previous inspection. On leaving school at the age of 16, a good proportion of pupils go to their first-choice sixth forms in maintained schools or colleges, with some transferring to local independent schools.

3.7 Attitudes to learning are good. Pupils are attentive, keen and motivated to achieve academically and in extra-curricular activities. They work well individually and in groups, often showing initiative. They are often well-organised and focus closely on achieving their potential. This prepares them well to move on to the next stage of their education.

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 has many strengths and meets pupils' needs well. Adjustments are readily made to meet the needs of the considerable number of pupils who join the school later than the usual times. All the requisite areas of learning are covered and more. Creative, expressive and practical subjects provide plentiful opportunities to encourage pupils to become 'whole' individuals with high levels of self-esteem, in keeping with the school's aims.

3.10 Drama plays a significant part in school life. Pupils are still talking about their roles in last year's production of C. S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and eagerly await the announcement of the next. This confidence-building vibrancy is a key factor that underpins pupils' good achievement.

3.11 Support for many pupils, including those with SEND and the few pupils with EAL is strong through the school's enrichment centre. This closely supports the learning and emotional needs of pupils in the junior and senior schools through bespoke small group and individual work and contributes substantially to pupils' good achievement. In class, all teachers are aware of the pupils' needs and most adapt tasks well for those pupils with SEND and/or EAL to support the specialist lessons provided. Provision is improving for the more able, a recommendation of the previous inspection, but it is not always translated into the classroom in subject lessons. However, the newly-introduced 'success for all' plan aims to cater for this group more thoroughly in class. Separate sciences at GCSE level are now provided and also have this aim. The curriculum is readily adapted for the needs of any individuals who show particular talents, for instance in sports or the arts.

3.12 Good opportunities exist for all to develop essential basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. In meeting a recommendation of the previous inspection, increased facilities in ICT and a carefully-vetted 'bring your own device' policy help provide broader technological opportunities. Design and technology provision is adequate. Opportunities abound for speaking and listening, and expressing feelings and opinions in class. Among examples observed, older pupils debated cogently whether global warming is man-made or a natural phenomenon. Other humanities subjects are well represented. The programme for religious education is good. Pupils are happy with the good range of subject choices available at GCSE.

3.13 Planning is usually good. The best meets the needs of all pupils including the more able. In the junior school, small classes facilitate individual attention. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching, for example in sports, art and music. In the senior school, ability grouping is used alongside small classes to allow pupils to gain in confidence.

3.14 The extra-curricular programme is good and offers effective opportunities to link with the community especially through the service element of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. A small minority of parents in the questionnaire indicated dissatisfaction with the range of activities. Inspectors disagree with this view. The range is good at lunchtime and after school, and contributes to pupils' breadth of accomplishments.

Additional music, such as individual instrumental lessons, bands and choir, and sport, such as basketball, are supplemented with quieter pursuits such as chess and homework clubs. 'Subject clinics' and support classes are also available. Trips and visits, both locally and further away, offer strong support for pupils' learning experiences.

- 3.15 The good schemes of work for citizenship, personal, social and health education (CPSHE) include effective careers education. The pupils are happy with the good individual advice they receive for progression beyond GCSE. A typical comment was 'The careers advice I have been given has opened doors I never knew were there for me.'

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.16 The contribution of teaching is sound.
- 3.17 Teaching was good at the previous inspection. It is now too variable across the school to justify that grade because the full range of quality was seen, although a majority is good. Teaching in Years 1 to 6 is sound. In the senior school, the majority observed was good. The judgement of sound was confirmed by the examination of pupils' workbooks. Weaknesses have crept into teaching because it is not checked rigorously enough by the leadership, and teachers' professional development needs are not always identified because the appraisal process has not been operating recently. Pupils achieve well, partly because of the nurturing support they receive from all staff which helps them draw good progress from sometimes less effective lessons and partly because of their own good attitudes towards their learning.
- 3.18 In all the teaching, there are strengths that underpin pupils' good achievement. Teachers give time and commitment to helping pupils succeed and relationships are supportive. This helps new pupils of all ages to settle. Teaching is generally well planned, takes careful account of the pupils' learning needs, and demonstrates enthusiasm for the subject and good subject knowledge. The most successful teaching encourages pupils to ask questions and think for themselves. This was seen, for example, when younger pupils in the senior school discussed maturely the tenets of fascism and communism, and the meaning of spirituality. ICT is often used to good effect. A variety of teaching styles motivates and maintains pupils' engagement.
- 3.19 The significant number of pupils with SEND is very well supported by the enrichment teaching. All the requirements of those with statements of special educational needs are met. Those with EAL are taught effectively by well-trained staff. The learning needs of the more able are sometimes catered for in lessons, but this varies across the school so that pupils' experiences are inconsistent. The good curricular planning for the more able is not yet fully realised in subject lessons.
- 3.20 Where less effective teaching is evident, learning objectives are not clear, pupils are less involved in contributing and tasks are not well matched to the individual. Expectations are too low so that a poor standard of work and presentation is accepted. In these cases, progress slows. Overall, these lessons run smoothly but with no sense of urgency.
- 3.21 Teachers' marking is variable. The best offers clear, neatly written guidance that pupils follow up promptly, leading to improvements. Occasionally, marking is scant and advice limited, with no sign of pupils following up the comments made. In these

cases, pupils often repeat the same errors. Pupils' understanding of their own progress is limited. Checks on pupils' targets compared with current work show some are not based on reality, being either too ambitious or too unchallenging. The lack of standardised testing and inconsistency in assessment and marking, and a lack of effective monitoring to ensure accuracy, makes it difficult for pupils and, in some cases, teachers, to have a clear understanding of pupils' current attainment and at what standard they should be aiming.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.
- 4.2 Pupils' spiritual development is good. Pupils develop self-confidence and are aware of their own worth and that of others, in keeping with the school's aims. They show an appreciation of the world around them and use their imaginations well. They are developing an ability to put themselves in others' shoes, and express how they must feel, for instance in response to the actions of the main characters in books they are studying. They draw spirituality from their participation in sport, musical performance and drama. When opportunities are provided, pupils engage effectively with the creativity that is in art forms such as poetry and fine art.
- 4.3 Pupils' moral development is effective. They show a strong sense of right and wrong, fairness and justice. They express well-thought-out opinions on this, and develop a good understanding of moral and ethical issues, as in senior pupils' exploration of the impact of war. Most pupils demonstrate respect for the norms of good conduct. They conscientiously debate social issues such as bullying. The school council helped produce the school's anti-bullying policy. A few pupils find good behaviour hard to emulate in class and sometimes do not follow the code of behaviour to which the school aspires. Pupils have a good understanding of the rule of law and the British parliamentary system drawn from good coverage in the CPSHE programme. Pupils vote democratically in elections for members of the school council and house captains in junior and senior schools. They develop a set of strong moral values.
- 4.4 Pupils' social awareness is excellent. Pupils respond with great understanding and awareness to the regular opportunities to discuss British values of tolerance and respect, and discuss politics and economics in an unbiased and compelling manner. They treat each other and adults, including visitors, with great dignity. They empathise with social issues such as poverty and body image in their exploration of topics in lessons, for example in preparing an assembly on Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Match Girl*. A small minority of pupils in the questionnaire indicated that there were too few opportunities for them to take responsibility. Inspectors do not agree with this view. On a day-to-day basis, all pupils take small responsibilities such as giving out books in class. Pupils are also able to take significant responsibilities, in junior and senior schools, including as head girl, head boy, house captain, librarian or sports leader. Pupils value the opportunity to volunteer in helping others and they understand the importance of supporting those less fortunate than themselves through charitable giving. For example, after a recent fire, they supported a local dogs' home with their fund-raising and also raised money for a national services charity.
- 4.5 Pupils' cultural awareness is good. Their understanding of other cultures is well developed. A sound understanding of Western cultural traditions is emerging for most pupils through learning a foreign language and from their participation in the music, drama and art activities available. Pupils show interest in, and understanding of, a variety of backgrounds and cultures presented to them, through which they explore religious and other cultural traditions different from their own. Harmonious relationships are evident among all the school community.

- 4.6 Pupils have a good standard of personal development by the time they leave the school. Pupils with SEND and EAL develop well personally and socially because staff ensure they benefit from the same opportunities as others.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 Care is a very strong element throughout the school and fully reflects the school's aims. Staff know pupils' needs through the keeping of meticulous records and effective informal communication between the enrichment department and other staff. Formal structures for pastoral support provide very well-targeted intervention in support, through form teachers who are exceptionally well supported by the pastoral leadership and through regular meetings where pupils' needs are discussed. The quality of pastoral care makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development.
- 4.9 Relationships amongst pupils, and between pupils and staff are exceptionally supportive. In questionnaire responses, a small minority of pupils felt teachers are not fair in the way they give rewards or sanctions. A small minority of pupils and parents indicated that the school does not deal with bullying. Inspectors disagree with these views. Clear and detailed records of poor behaviour and bullying were seen, and discussions with pupils and staff show that the school systems are used very effectively by staff in promoting good behaviour and guarding against harassment and bullying. A few parents indicated that the school does not have high standards of behaviour. The inspectors do not agree. The school does have some pupils with diagnosed behavioural difficulties and deals very effectively with them. Actions, in terms of the sanctions given for any poor behaviour, are consistently applied and appropriate for the misdemeanour, taking account of any difficulty or disability.
- 4.10 Pupils are fully aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Healthy options are provided at lunchtime, and all pupils are encouraged to participate in a good range of physical activities and sports, promoting a positive attitude to exercise. The school's plans to improve educational access for pupils with SEND are appropriate and include suitable timescales for the actions identified.
- 4.11 A small minority of pupils felt that the school does not ask for, or respond to, their opinions. Inspectors do not agree. Views are actively sought and respected. For example, the school council has recently been instrumental in discussing and helping to decide on what action should be taken in any cases of bullying.

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

- 4.12 Arrangements for welfare, health and safety are sound.
- 4.13 All staff directly employed by the school are suitably trained in safeguarding and health and safety, repeated at appropriate intervals. Failures in regulatory compliance noted at the previous inspection have been resolved. The required child protection training is included in staff induction. The safeguarding policy addresses issues and procedures for ensuring the welfare and safety of pupils. Recent significant improvements have ensured that it now fully satisfies requirements following an unsettled and unsatisfactory period. Appropriate contact is maintained with local welfare agencies and record keeping has improved recently. Checks necessary for safe recruitment of staff have also improved since the previous

inspection and are carried out correctly. Consequently, attention to pupils' welfare and their health and safety makes a sound contribution to their personal development and the nurturing aim of the school.

- 4.14 There are satisfactory arrangements to ensure pupils' health and safety including an appropriate policy. All necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards, including the regular practice of fire drills, the safe storage of hazardous substances and the good use of external specialist agencies such as the fire service. The school has undertaken appropriate risk assessments for activities, trips and premises. However, whilst not posing a health and safety or welfare hazard, standards of cleanliness are occasionally poor inside the school and the maintenance of paintwork inside and outside is not good.
- 4.15 Pupils who are ill or injured are suitably accommodated in a designated sick bay with safe handling of medication. Sufficient staff are trained in first aid, including an appropriate proportion trained in paediatric first aid. There are suitable arrangements for those with SEND.
- 4.16 Admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and correctly stored.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is sound.
- 5.2 In the recent past, governance has not been completely effective in monitoring the work of the whole school. Governors have been conscientious in endeavouring to discharge their responsibilities for statutory requirements but were in the past unaware of shortcomings. They had allowed some aspects of their responsibilities to slip, such as ensuring an appropriate policy was always implemented rigorously for safeguarding children.
- 5.3 An excellent range of expertise has now been brought onto the governing body. Good plans have been made to execute governance well, including a good new structural system of committees to assist governors in discharging their responsibilities for educational standards, financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. New governors have made a strong start in all aspects but work is at an early stage. However, all safeguarding requirements are now fully met and the required annual review of child protection and safeguarding has been recently undertaken. Governors take care to see that appropriate selection procedures operate for the appointment of staff. Responsibilities for financial planning are also now discharged effectively through very recent new bursarial arrangements.
- 5.4 Governors have already developed a good insight into the working of the school, its strengths and weaknesses and, in particular, they understand and wish to maintain its nurturing ethos, in keeping with its aims. However, there is some justified concern raised by a few parents in their responses to the questionnaire over the level of maintenance of the buildings and the occasional lack of cleanliness noticed. Governors' monitoring of the school's work is currently still informal. A proper arrangement for the appraisal of the headteacher is not yet finalised. A good working relationship with senior staff ensures that there is agreement as to how appropriate support and challenge are provided.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is sound.
- 5.6 Staff at all levels of responsibility conscientiously support the aims of the school. Procedures are sound overall. There are great strengths in day-to-day pastoral care and support for pupils through the curriculum and the enrichment department. This, and the evidence of some effective teaching, translates into pupils' good achievement and personal development. However, several policies needed adjustment during the inspection and thus their implementation is not yet firmly embedded.
- 5.7 The leadership's clear direction to provide an effective quality of education for pupils through nurturing is clearly supported by all staff. The school's self-evaluation is thorough although it shows a rosier view than is evident concerning the quality of teaching and learning. The whole school development plan identifies good priorities

and actions to deal with them, but some are only now addressing the recommendations of the previous inspection.

- 5.8 The school ensures that sufficient and well-qualified staff are appointed and are trained and motivated to carry out their roles. Arrangements for the recruitment of staff, volunteers and governors are suitable and appropriately recorded. All staff are aware of safeguarding procedures and are trained for their roles in meeting the needs of all pupils with regard to safeguarding, health and safety, and welfare.
- 5.9 Procedures for staff development and appraisal have only recently been reintroduced, involving middle leadership for the first time. The lack of sufficient monitoring is why aspects of teaching and leadership have deteriorated since the previous inspection.
- 5.10 The monitoring of pupils' progress is not being completed thoroughly enough throughout all areas of the school to ensure that progress is at its best and that no pupil falls behind. This is because the school is only just embarking on basing assessments on reliable benchmarks to ensure comparability with other schools and national standards. This has held back progress on the recommendations of the previous inspection to provide more challenge in class for the more able pupils, and those relating to the EYFS.
- 5.11 Effective links with parents support pupils. Dialogue with parents of pupils who receive support from the enrichment department is good. Parents are involved in the targets set for these pupils. The parents who responded to the questionnaire were positive about a majority of the aspects of the school's provision. A very small minority of responses stated that the school does not encourage parents to be involved. Judging from what is currently available, inspectors disagree with this view. A new association for parents has recently been formed. It has quickly become established as an effective body that meets weekly and to which every parent has automatic membership. The association helps to raise funds for the school and provide social events for parents, for example the Christmas Fair and the harvest festival.
- 5.12 A very small minority of parents felt that they are not given timely responses to their questions. Inspection evidence shows that the school encourages good communication with parents either face-to-face, by email or telephone. Middle managers report that the recent creation of heads of year has allowed them to take immediate responsibility for academic and pastoral issues and ensured that responses are made as soon as possible.
- 5.13 Inspection evidence shows that parents are given good information about their child's progress, a view which does not agree with a very small minority of parents in their responses to the questionnaire. Written annual reports are detailed and half-termly pupil progress reports usefully state an effort grade and comment. Parents' evenings, held every academic year, and a new parents' evening that has recently been introduced provide a suitable level of contact opportunities.
- 5.14 Parents are kept sufficiently informed of events through the web-site which also publishes the school's policies and gives other useful information regarding the curriculum, the staff and each section of the school.
- 5.15 The school has, and follows, a suitable complaints policy which is published on the web-site and records show this procedure is followed. The number of complaints is now published, in response to a requirement identified at the previous inspection.

5.16 Many parents in their comments praised the school and all it does to support and develop their children.

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. The educational programmes support children's learning effectively. Children make good progress overall from their starting points, including any children from disadvantaged backgrounds, those with SEND, those with EAL and children under the age of three. For older children, specialist teaching in French, music and dance provides additional depth to the curriculum. The strong emphasis on literacy, mathematics and understanding the world in Reception leads to particularly good achievement in these aspects. Outdoor areas are used effectively to promote independent learning, such as drawing patterns and letters on a frosty table. Consequently, children acquire good skills. They reach levels of development typical for their age in all the areas of learning and this prepares them well for Year 1.
- 6.2 Supportive, caring adults continually motivate the children, but opportunities to challenge and extend children's learning, particularly during child-initiated activities, are less frequent. This sometimes slows progress, especially for the most able children. Planning draws on adults' assessment of children's next steps in learning and often includes activities suggested by the children. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire expressed satisfaction with all aspects of the EYFS provision. Parents are kept well informed through regular detailed reports, and are actively encouraged to participate in children's learning and development. Parents often contribute to children's learning, for example in helping them to build a 'bug hotel' recently.

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

- 6.3 The contribution of the EYFS provision to children's well-being is good. The sensitivity of the key persons forms the basis of warm, caring relationships between staff, children and their families, and helps children to settle quickly. Daily communication with parents, particularly of children under the age of three, shares important information relating to children's welfare needs and care. Staff are attentive to children's emotional needs. Consistent boundaries promote good behaviour, and first-hand experiences, such as examining a Muslim wedding dress, stimulate conversation and encourage imaginative play amongst the older children. Small tasks, such as handing out instruments in a music session, give children a sense of responsibility and help them to become independent. Dietary needs are carefully considered and the varied menu provided encourages healthy eating. Gentle reminders and hand-washing posters reinforce personal hygiene routines, but staff are inconsistent in modelling good habits in this regard. The different age groups in the EYFS regularly come together to share activities, preparing younger children for transition to the next classes or settings, as they become familiar with other staff and older children.

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

- 6.4 Leadership and management in the EYFS require improvement. Governors are aware of their responsibilities but their monitoring of the setting has not been effective. New governors are urgently improving their involvement. Systems to monitor and evaluate the educational programmes and data relating to outcomes are insufficiently rigorous to enable the leadership to identify strengths and areas for development adequately. External moderation recently highlighted several inaccuracies in assessment. Staff operate well as a team but the lack of a clear management structure within the setting inhibits the co-ordination and rigorous monitoring of provision. Self-evaluation is over-generous in its view. The resulting development plan, drawn up in response to a recommendation of the previous inspection, is not focused sufficiently on teaching and learning and does not set challenging targets. Informal opportunities exist for staff to meet with their line-manager to discuss concerns, but staff appraisal is not yet embedded in practice.
- 6.5 All the EYFS staff have a good understanding of the policies and procedures relating to children's well-being. Safeguarding arrangements are implemented well and staff are fully aware of their responsibilities. Professional development opportunities are adequate. The leadership has good understanding of the EYFS requirements including those for children's learning and development. Staff in the setting liaise well with parents, and have productive relationships with local agencies and other providers to secure appropriate support for children with additional needs.

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

- 6.6 The overall quality and standards of the early years provision require improvement. This is because some aspects of leadership and management are not rigorously undertaken. The recommendations of the previous inspection have not been adequately resolved. For example, the department development plan is not an effective tool to promote continuous improvement because it is not focused on enhancing children's progress. The EYFS co-ordinator's role has been strengthened, but systems for the formal monitoring and evaluation of the provision have not yet been implemented effectively, either by the leadership or governors.
- 6.7 The learning and care needs of the children are met well overall, including those under the age of three, those with SEND or EAL, and the most able. A lack of challenge limits the teaching and children's progress to good. Nursery children under the age of three gain confidence under the attentive care of key people. They move with increasing control in the spacious classroom and outdoor area. For example, they chatted with increasing confidence and imagination as they wrapped 'presents' in 'Santa's workshop'. Older Nursery children develop secure foundations in literacy. They recognise letters and sounds, competently matching items found on a 'sound walk' to initial letters. In Reception, children spontaneously read simple words, such as 'hot', from a classroom display, and make plausible attempts at spelling out longer words. In mathematics, Reception children readily recognise numbers up to 100, and quickly identify numbers missing from a number line. They develop skills for the future as they use a range of technology. For example, two children were helped to use the photocopier to make copies of their work to take home.
- 6.8 Children are well prepared for the next stage of their learning. They are enthusiastic learners and respond positively to the adults who care for them. They arrive happily at the setting and settle quickly due to their secure personal and emotional

development. They behave well and feel safe. They understand the importance of staying safe as they move around the school grounds. Staff know and understand the safeguarding and welfare procedures well and meet all the requirements.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three.

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

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