



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION  
KENSINGTON PREP SCHOOL**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Kensington Prep School

Full Name of School	<b>Kensington Prep School</b>
DfE Number	<b>205/6392</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>1026057</b>
Address	<b>Kensington Prep School 596 Fulham Road London SW6 5PA</b>
Telephone Number	<b>020 7731 9300</b>
Email Address	<b>enquiries@kenprep.gdst.net</b>
Head	<b>Mrs Prudence Lynch</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mrs Rosamond Bowman</b>
Age Range	<b>4 to 11</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>293</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Girls</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>4-5 (EYFS): 42    5-11: 251</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Tess Molony</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Girls</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>05 May to 08 May 2015</b>

## PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dr Wendy Bowring	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Pauline Christodoulou	Team Inspector (Assistant Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Sarah Morris	Team Inspector (Headmistress, ISA school)
Mr Guy Willatt	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Miss Jackie Scotney	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Kensington Prep School is located in the borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, London. It provides education for girls from the ages of four to eleven. The school was founded in 1873 and moved to its present location in 1997. It is housed in a former convent, with a range of specialist accommodation for art and design, design technology (DT), information and communication technology (ICT), science, sport, music and drama. Since the previous inspection the school has developed a building plan to create new multi-media facilities and spaces for independent exploration and collaborative work, including a recording studio and an eco-greenhouse. The school is a member of the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST), which is responsible for its governance. There is also a local school governing board that is responsible for providing support and challenge, as well as being a link between the school and the local community.
- 1.2 The school aims to equip pupils for a changing world, recognising the uniqueness of the individual within a supportive and caring community. It seeks to provide a rich and exciting educational experience that enables the achievement of high academic standards, underpinned by a nurturing ethos that fosters mutual respect and sensitivity. The school sets out for pupils to be supported and encouraged to love learning, question, collaborate and think deeply, and to be courageous, flexible, bold thinkers, who can take calculated risks on the way to both academic and personal success. Sensitivity, mutual respect and kindness are key values that the school seeks to promote throughout.
- 1.3 In total, 293 pupils attend the school. There are 2 parallel classes from Reception to Year 6, with 42 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), 87 pupils in Years 1 and 2 and 164 pupils in Years 3 to 6. Results of standardised tests across the school indicate that most pupils are of at least above average ability, with many having well above average ability. Thirty-six pupils are identified by the school as requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Two pupils have education, health and care plans. The majority of pupils are drawn from professional families, and from south west London. Forty-six pupils speak a language other than English at home, of which six require English as an additional language (EAL) support.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

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

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

- 2.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is exceptional. The school is extremely successful in fulfilling its aim to equip all pupils for a changing world that requires courage, flexibility and resilience, and to create a 'thinking' school ethos through the implementation of an independent approach to learning, with a strong emphasis on creativity, thinking skills and other personal intellectual qualities. The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent. The school successfully provides a rich and exciting educational experience where high standards and academic rigour are enriched by intellectual risk taking. An extensive programme of extra-curricular activities provides further opportunities for pupils to extend their learning in a range of musical, dramatic, sporting, cultural and intellectual fields. Teaching is excellent and is highly effective in promoting academic excellence and intellectual curiosity. All teachers display high quality professional competence, and pupils achieve exceptional levels of skills as a response to excellent teaching.
- 2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development fully reflects the values that the school seeks to promote: they demonstrate high levels of spiritual awareness, practise the school's values consistently and display outstanding care and concern for the needs of others. Pupils have a well-developed sense of social awareness, are confident and polite, and display a strong sense of community, and they show great respect for different cultures and beliefs, developed through the many opportunities provided at school. The school successfully fulfils its aim to create a caring and trusting environment in which pastoral care is given the highest priority. The school's core values for pupils' pastoral care are fully embedded in its practice and pupils feel individually valued and safeguarded. Arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent. All necessary health and safety checks are in place, records are meticulously maintained and all staff are suitably trained for their roles and responsibilities.
- 2.3 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. The GDST trustees and local school governors are highly effective in supporting the school to achieve its aims. Effective committee structures provide ongoing support for the senior leadership team, and a thorough annual review of safeguarding ensures that all pupils are appropriately safeguarded. Following a recommendation from the previous inspection, the school has made changes to the management structure, and is now highly effective in leading school developments. Leadership and management of the EYFS have been strengthened through the creation of the role of head of early years, and self-evaluation and development plans across the school show a clear desire for ongoing improvement. A small coaching skills programme has proved successful in learning; the school intends to extend this as part of the professional development of staff. Links with parents are excellent, who fully support the activities of the school and who appreciate the many opportunities they have to be involved in their children's education.

## **2.(b) Action points**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

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

### **(ii) Recommendation for further improvement**

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Expand the pilot staff coaching skills programme to enable more staff to benefit and enhance their effectiveness as educators.



### **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 exceptional.
- 3.2 The school successfully fulfils its aim to equip pupils for a changing world that requires courage, flexibility and resilience. In accordance with its aim to create a 'thinking' ethos, it has positively fashioned a culture that encourages a brave, independent approach to learning, resulting in excellent outcomes for all pupils, including those with SEND or EAL and the more able. The strong emphasis on creativity and the development of thinking skills and other personal intellectual qualities such as reflection, risk-taking and using initiative permeate learning across all age groups.
- 3.3 Children in the EYFS make outstanding progress in relation to their starting points, including those identified with SEND or EAL. Consequently, by the end of the EYFS, the vast majority of children meet the expected levels of development for their age, with many exceeding them. Children are articulate, have a wide vocabulary and express themselves clearly. They demonstrate an excellent understanding of phonics, quickly using newly introduced sounds to read words and sentences. They confidently write for a range of purposes and successfully use their knowledge of number bonds to solve addition and subtraction problems. Children skilfully use a range of technology to support their learning across the curriculum.
- 3.4 Throughout the rest of the school, pupils demonstrate extremely high levels of knowledge and understanding across all year groups and subject areas. They achieve exceptional levels of skills as a result of excellent teaching and the school's ambitious vision to stimulate intellectual development through promoting academic rigour and individual challenge. Younger pupils develop high level reasoning skills in subjects such as mathematics and science. In the 'Thinking Adventures' initiative, an extended cross-curricular programme that offers pupils the chance to explore an area of particular interest in depth, pupils are highly successful in extending their learning skills over a wide range of disciplines. For example, they design and print three-dimensional models competently using a variety of technological tools, compose and perform poetry and show creativity in paired gymnastic work. Older pupils achieve extremely high levels of mathematical competence and scientific understanding. In English and French, pupils show an exceptionally high level of knowledge and grasp of the subjects. Through the summer term, pupils in Year 6 immerse themselves in demanding project work, where they develop a high standard of skills in research techniques, analytical thought, individual creativity and group entrepreneurial awareness.
- 3.5 Pupils attain exceptional standards in their activities and show outstanding achievement in music: almost every pupil is engaged in learning a musical instrument and many achieve grade examination successes well beyond expectations for their ages. They ably perform music, by invitation, in professional venues and on biennial tours abroad. Pupils demonstrate highly developed skills in drama, confidently undertaking roles with aplomb and conviction. They regularly achieve national successes and recognition in mathematical and scientific challenges, debating and handwriting competitions, and photography, film making and journalism pursuits. Excellent standards are achieved in physical education (PE). School teams and individuals participate in a varied range of sports and compete successfully in inter-school competitions at the highest levels.

- 3.6 The attainment of pupils across all year groups from Years 1 to 6 cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but based on the evidence available from discussions with pupils, scrutiny of their work, the school's own data and performance in lessons, it is judged to be of an extremely high standard overall in relation to national age-related expectations. Most pupils continue their education in the senior school of their choice, with a high proportion gaining scholarships to highly selective schools. Progress is high. More able pupils excel in response to the challenging curriculum. Those with SEND make excellent progress and pupils with EAL demonstrate their articulacy in a high standard of spoken and written English. Throughout the school, highly sophisticated and frequent use of ICT underpins the success of pupils' learning and enables outstanding progress to be made in subjects such as art and design.
- 3.7 Pupils of all ages have excellent attitudes to learning. In the EYFS, children show independence and investigative, creative and thinking skills across an abundance of active learning experiences. Children take risks with their learning and reflect on their experiences, as seen in the 'Warrior of the Week' award that encourages them to use their learning skills to great effect. In Years 1 to 6, pupils are self-motivated and work together and independently with purpose. They are intellectually curious and ask perceptive questions in their thirst for knowledge. Across the school, pupils routinely demonstrate levels of knowledge that typically characterise achievement in year groups well beyond their own.
- 3.8 Changes in the structure and roles of the senior leadership team since the previous inspection have ultimately made a significant positive impact on the quality of pupils' achievements.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.10 High quality provision fully support the school's ambitious aim to provide a rich and exciting educational experience that enables the achievement of high academic standards, where academic rigour is enriched by intellectual risk taking. Excellent curriculum provision is made for all pupils through the effective emphasis on individual learning. The curriculum covers all requisite areas, including those preparing pupils for life in British society. In the EYFS, great importance is placed upon fostering children's independence, as well as their investigative, creative and thinking skills, through an abundance of active learning experiences both indoors and out. Children are encouraged to take risks with their learning and to be reflective, as was seen on a class 'riskometer'. The EYFS curriculum helps children of all ages and abilities to acquire a range of learning skills, and exciting 'Thinking Adventures' provide opportunities to develop their own ideas, persevere and reflect.
- 3.11 In the main school, a well-balanced timetable allows all National Curriculum subjects, along with personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE), to be taught at a very high standard. The curriculum is further enhanced by the teaching of French from Year 1 and Latin from Year 5. In addition, ICT is both taught as a discrete subject and incorporated into all subjects across the school. Tablet computers are regularly used for a wide range of purposes, including video and audio recording, and using a range of applications to support learning. Pupils also benefit from a substantial 'e-learning' platform that gives immediate access to a wide variety of resources and information. The use of specialist teachers in some subject

areas, including mathematics, English, science, art, music, PE, French and drama, has made a significant impact on high quality outcomes.

- 3.12 The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils. In the EYFS, staff take great care in tailoring the broad educational programmes around children's interests, and as such meet their needs extremely well. Children are fully engaged in their learning across all areas of the curriculum and regularly achieve above the expected level of development for their age. Across the school pupils of all abilities achieve a high level of attainment according to their starting points, and pupils with SEND or EAL are given constructive support to enable them to make significant progress. Education, health and care plans are thoroughly implemented.
- 3.13 Since the previous inspection, the school has developed a curriculum that emphasises intellectual challenge and promotes the skills of independent learning and creativity. Whilst maintaining academic rigour, the curriculum successfully promotes a culture of questioning and risk taking through an ambitious programme of thought-provoking activities. Opportunities are taken when appropriate to explore different viewpoints over political issues in a balanced way. The 'Thinking Adventures' initiative successfully enables pupils to work co-operatively across age groups on a topic of personal interest and share outcomes with their peers.
- 3.14 An extensive programme of extra-curricular clubs and activities provides strong support to the curriculum. In addition to creative activities such as art, drama, music, cookery and crafts, clubs offer pupils the opportunity to explore cerebral issues through philosophy and debating. Spanish and Mandarin enhance language provision, and a variety of physical activity clubs such as for tennis, gymnastics and golf enable pupils to develop their sporting interests. Such is the enthusiasm for choosing clubs, the school closely monitors pupil uptake to ensure that no child is over-committed.
- 3.15 Curricular provision benefits from a wide range of day and residential trips, both at home and overseas, including a biennial music overseas tour, and annual trips to the Isle of Wight, Cornwall and France for different age groups. Educational visits to local museums and galleries greatly enhance the curriculum and extend pupils' understanding of the world. Specialists visit the school to hold workshops such as the 'Festival of Literature', and the school has appointed an artist in residence. The curriculum is further enriched by themed days such as 'India Day', where pupils have an opportunity to participate in a variety of cultural activities.
- 3.16 Pupils derive much from excellent links with the wider community. The school is linked with three local primary schools, and financially supports two children overseas. Various local and international charities benefit substantially from the pupils' efforts over the course of the year.

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

- 3.17 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.18 Teaching supports the school's aims to promote academic excellence and intellectual curiosity in pupils. Excellent teaching throughout the school is characterised by knowledgeable, energetic staff, with high standards and clear expectations of all pupils. Staff employ a variety of teaching methods, with an appropriate balance of individual, paired and collaborative group work; they ensure inclusivity for pupils of all abilities, and demonstrate great sensitivity to the particular needs of individuals. Teachers are skilled in promoting a culture where it is acceptable to voice opinion, and to make suggestions that may ultimately be unsuccessful: failure is not seen as a negative outcome, and positive reinforcement ensures that pupils know that all their contributions are valued. Teachers are sensitive when discussing world events and non-partisan during consideration of political issues.
- 3.19 In the EYFS, planning is of high quality and clearly identifies the needs of individual pupils. Teachers use an excellent variety of techniques to engage all children and open-ended questioning is carefully phrased, giving them the opportunity to think and respond creatively. Teachers provide a range of stimulating resources that are fully accessible to children and enable them to direct their own learning with ease.
- 3.20 Throughout the school, almost all teaching is of extremely high quality. Knowledgeable teachers with a passion for their subjects inspire pupils of all ages and abilities to produce the highest quality work. Teachers plan and deliver excellent lessons that are consistently well organised and demonstrate challenge and high expectations of pupils. The well-planned lessons are characterised by brisk pace and clear objectives. Probing, open-ended questioning enables pupils of all abilities to be appropriately challenged, secure their understanding, consolidate learning and make excellent progress. Marking is extremely effective in consolidating and extending learning: excellent examples clearly reflect the aims of the lesson. In addition to verbal feedback, teachers write positive, encouraging comments as well as advising pupils clearly what their next step should be. Pupils are required to respond to the questions posed in the marking, thus ensuring that the marking process is an ongoing dialogue. Peer assessment is a feature that pupils appreciate, and in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire they unanimously stated that their teachers help them to learn and that they feel they are making good progress.
- 3.21 Throughout the school, teachers make excellent use of a wide range of excellent resources, including state-of-the-art technological equipment such as three-dimensional printers and tablet computers, and regular access to the excellent 'e-learning' platform: effective planning for the use of such resources has made a positive impact on pupil attainment. Teachers provide interesting, stimulating homework to consolidate work in class, and recognise significance in the use of open-ended homework tasks to engage pupils and foster their work ethic at home.
- 3.22 Teaching provides numerous opportunities for pupils to learn co-operatively in practical, investigative ways, as well as to complete independent tasks, research and reflective study. Teachers skilfully intervene only when necessary in activities where pupils are able to direct their own learning. This is consistently seen in the 'Thinking Adventures' initiative, where pupils draw on their well-developed transferrable subject skills. Teachers effectively use regular tracking and standardised tests to assess pupils and identify emerging patterns in attainment.

They use this information to ensure that an appropriate level of challenge is provided for pupils of all abilities and to set targets for future development. Results are monitored, and data is used thoughtfully to identify pupils who may require additional support and to confirm the nature of the intervention.

- 3.23 Across the school teachers provide excellent role models, establishing warm, convivial relationships with the pupils which engender mature conversation, humour and mutual respect.

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

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The school takes active steps to promote the personal development of the pupils in a non-partisan manner that fully reflects the values that it seeks to promote.
- 4.3 Pupils demonstrate a high level of spiritual awareness, display appreciation of different faiths and are accepting of their peers. They respond effectively to the culture of praise and encouragement which is fully embedded throughout the school. Pupils demonstrate their knowledge of other beliefs during lessons and develop mature, considered and balanced opinions when discussing topical issues such as 'Je suis Charlie'. Pupils develop a strong sense of identity, purpose and personal meaning through their study of comparative religions, and their deep spiritual awareness was evident when a group of mixed age pupils linked the limitless scope of the sky to the endless range of life opportunities presented to them as individuals. Older pupils make positive contributions in the newly introduced 'Critical Thinking' sessions, which have a positive impact on personal development. They articulate a sense of wonder when seeing science in action.
- 4.4 Pupils practise the school's values consistently and enthusiastically, and apply them effectively in their relationships with peers and teachers. They respect other people and consider that difference is normal. They accept responsibility for their own behaviour and display outstanding care and concern for the needs of others, modelling courtesy, sensitivity and a keen sense of fair play. Close relationships amongst pupils were regularly seen during playtimes when Reception children played happily and co-operatively with older pupils. Pupils have an understanding of the need for rules and of the place of civil and criminal law in English society. They are able to discern right from wrong, and can support their ideas with considerable reasoning skills. Pupils are well versed in how to solve a dispute should one arise, and to explore three different strategies before seeking a teacher's help. In a PSHCE lesson, pupils showed their sense of justice when discussing the lot of the Suffragettes. They excel as reflective learners and display extremely well-developed personalities for their age.
- 4.5 The social awareness of pupils is highly developed. In the EYFS children display kindness and respect, in line with the school's ethos, and conduct themselves sensibly both in lessons and during their play. Children are confident and polite, and share well. They demonstrate an appreciation and respect for others, including those of different cultures. Through the 'Little Star' awards they are encouraged to think and act kindly towards others, which they do exceptionally well. Older pupils take advantage of forums such as the school council and peer mediation to form strong relationships and meaningful interaction, and are mindful of others less fortunate than themselves. They display a sense of community and recognise the importance of the individual through reference to the school's principles, which prepare them with skills for future life. Pupils draw upon exceptional speaking and listening skills to articulate their feelings and understand the tools for successful learning that ensure reflective practice. They gain experience and develop their leadership skills as digital leaders, ecological representatives, 'quiet time' monitors and tour guides for the parents of prospective pupils. In a 'Thinking Adventures' activity, pupils worked co-operatively in mixed age groups, sharing ideas and embracing the strengths of others. The pupils enjoy leadership opportunities provided by fund-raising activities,

such as the recent Nepalese Earthquake Appeal, drawing upon links with the school. Pupils broaden their social awareness through other varied fund-raising opportunities such as Harvest Festival or a uniform sale in aid of an overseas charity. They are generous and thoughtful in their charitable giving.

- 4.6 Pupils understand key features of British citizenship, including the democratic process and the rule of law, and can apply their knowledge of school values when discussing ideas related to individual liberty. Older pupils have a broad general knowledge of and show respect for the public institutions and services of England, for example benefiting from undertaking an exit survey after studying political processes in Parliament.
- 4.7 Pupils develop strong cultural awareness of the wider world through such events as a Mandarin after-school club and a St Lucian dance workshop. They show respect for different cultures and practise tolerance and harmony towards those of other faiths and beliefs, promoted through the extensive PSHCE programme and through theatre and museum outings and a Year 6 trip to France.
- 4.8 Careful transition arrangements ensure that children in the EYFS are fully prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils in Year 1 make and share books with the children in Reception to help them gain a greater understanding of their next year group, reflecting the caring ethos of the school. Pupils have an exceedingly high standard of personal development by the time they leave the school, and are fully prepared for a successful transition into the next stage of their learning.

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

- 4.9 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.10 Leadership is strongly committed to high quality pastoral care. The school is highly successful in fulfilling its aim to create a caring and trusting environment in which pastoral care for pupils is given the highest priority. The school's core values for the pupils' pastoral care are fully embedded in staff's practice and the pupils feel individually known and valued. Parents and pupils are extremely appreciative of the care the school provides, as indicated by the very high levels of strongly-positive responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire.
- 4.11 In the EYFS, children are extremely happy; they know they are listened to and cared for by their key person. Pupils of all ages feel safe and secure, and are highly appreciative of the care they receive from the adults who look after them. Lines of communication between academic and pastoral staff are well defined and effective. Relationships between staff and pupils are extremely positive and are characterised by trust, a word used consistently by the pupils in interviews with the inspection team. Relationships amongst pupils in lessons and around the school are excellent, and pupils of all ages work collaboratively with great enjoyment.
- 4.12 Healthy lifestyles are extremely well promoted across the school. In the EYFS, children undertake personal hygiene routines independently and demonstrate an ability to make healthy choices at mealtimes. Older pupils enjoy healthy and nutritious meals, and learn about what constitutes a healthy lifestyle in science and PSHCE. The imaginatively equipped outdoor areas provide an inviting space for pupils of all ages to exercise daily and take risks safely. The extensive sporting programme also provides many enjoyable opportunities for exercise. The school's three-year accessibility plan greatly influences long-term premises development

plans and specialist resources have been purchased to support the needs of current pupils with SEND.

- 4.13 The school's behaviour management procedures provide strong guidance for both staff and pupils. The school values are displayed in classrooms, discussed in assemblies and PSHCE lessons, and referred to when dealing with specific issues. The school raises awareness of the possibility of cyber-bullying and how to deal with it. 'Privilege Time' is a much appreciated strategy for rewarding positive behaviour. The school has provided pupils with the skills to resolve disputes themselves. In their pre-inspection responses, pupils were unanimous in their praise for the way in which the school deals swiftly with bullying. Inspection evidence supports this view. Records show that the very rare incidents of bullying have been dealt with sensitively and appropriately in line with the school's clear procedures.
- 4.14 Excellent channels of communication give pupils a high degree of involvement in the life of the school. Provision is made to encourage pupils to voice their opinions and become increasingly articulate as they talk happily to each other and to adults. Through the school council, pupils' views are heard and help to effect positive change. For example, new playground toys have been purchased and changes to the menu have been made as a direct result of pupils expressing their views.

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

- 4.15 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.16 Since the previous inspection, a high priority continues to be placed on welfare and safeguarding by the GDST, the local school governing board and the school community, including the EYFS. The safeguarding policy is regularly updated, with meticulous regard to official guidance. Close links developed with child protection agencies, including the local safeguarding children's board, support the implementation of rigorous systems. Thorough recruitment procedures are in place which include welfare and safeguarding training as part of the induction process. The designated safeguarding staff have had the appropriate level of training. All other staff and governors receive updated training in safeguarding at the required frequency, enabling them to confidently take appropriate action should the need arise. How to keep safe, including 'e-safety', is a strong strand within the curriculum and ethos of the school. Pupils stated strongly during interviews that they have several caring staff to whom they could turn if they were worried or concerned; their pre-inspection questionnaire responses were unanimous on this point. Safeguarding is diligently overseen and reviewed annually by executive members of the GDST, supported by the chair of the local school governing board.
- 4.17 The school has a comprehensive health and safety policy, which includes effective planning for those with SEND. There are efficient systems in place for risk assessment and the review of all aspects of health and safety. All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards. Regular practices are conducted, the relevant equipment is checked at appropriate intervals and improvements are made where necessary. The fire safety manual and all records are meticulously kept.
- 4.18 Risk assessments, including those for visits out of school, are excellent. These rigorously cover the management of risk, provision for the individual needs of pupils and information learned from evaluations. A well-qualified welfare officer efficiently oversees the implementation of the school's comprehensive medical and first-aid



policies. Staff are well informed about the individual needs and conditions of pupils. Any pupils who are ill or injured are sympathetically cared for in a well-equipped medical room. A large number of staff have received first-aid training, including paediatric first aid.

- 4.19 Admission and attendance registers are completed accurately and stored appropriately. The efficient work and support of non-teaching staff make an excellent contribution to pupils' welfare.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The Council of the GDST has overall governance responsibility. Trustees have an excellent understanding of their statutory and legal responsibilities. They are successful in supporting the school to achieve its aims by setting strategy, monitoring, maintaining financial stability and reviewing policies and procedures. A comprehensive committee structure encompasses audit, governance, senior appointments, remuneration and investments. The annual review of safeguarding arrangements is diligently conducted and strong support is given to ensure the retention of staff, the implementation of safe recruitment procedures and the maintenance of comprehensive and accurate records. The school greatly contributes to wider trust initiatives, including the recent development of the comprehensive e-learning platform that is enthusiastically used by staff, parents and pupils.
- 5.3 The local school governing board is well established and extremely supportive of the school. Members of the local board are well known by staff, parents and pupils, including those in the EYFS. They regularly visit the school, attend a wide range of events and provide a strong link between the school and the local community. A dynamic group, the governors engage in the life of the school, including the monitoring of standards. They freely challenge and make suggestions in order to support the school in achieving its aims and exceptional achievements.
- 5.4 Overall, governance has an excellent balance of expertise across many fields, including finance, marketing and education. A comprehensive induction programme for new governors includes pupils' welfare and safeguarding. Joint training includes trustees, members of a GDST senior management team, local governors and staff. These events provide a powerful framework for self-evaluation, reflection and development across all aspects of education.
- 5.5 In response to a recommendation from the previous inspection, governance has supported the successful strengthening and development of leadership throughout the school. The school's leadership provides detailed reports to the committees and the full board. These are a main focus of governance meetings, and are frequently the subject of deep discussion between staff and governors, enabling governors to appreciate and support the many successful initiatives that the school is developing. These include providing a wide range of excellent resources, and developing an exciting and stimulating environment with a focus on effective learning strategies within a broad and challenging curriculum.

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

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, is excellent.
- 5.7 The leadership and management are highly effective in enabling the school to successfully fulfil its aim to equip pupils for a changing world that requires courage, flexibility and resilience. Following a recommendation from the previous inspection, the school has made changes to the management structure, and is now highly effective in leading developments across the school. Leadership and management of the EYFS have been strengthened through the creation of the role of head of early years, which enables dedicated, clear oversight of the provision. Accurate self-evaluation and detailed development plans show a clear desire for continuing improvement.
- 5.8 The senior leadership team has a clear vision for the future direction of the school. In accordance with its aim to create a 'thinking' school, it has successfully created a culture that encourages an independent approach to learning, resulting in excellent provision for all pupils, including those with SEND or EAL and the more able. The strong emphasis on creativity, the development of thinking skills, and other intellectual qualities such as reflection, risk taking and initiative, permeates learning across all age groups, as seen in the effective implementation of the highly ambitious 'Thinking Adventures' programme. In addition, opportunities abound for the active promotion of fundamental British values across the curriculum.
- 5.9 Heads of department take their roles seriously and have consistently high expectations of all pupils. In the EYFS, thorough systems are in place to monitor the educational programmes. Across the school, clear, concise arrangements for monitoring and evaluating its work and outcomes have made a positive impact on pupils' learning. The vision for the school is shared by all staff, who fully support the aims of the school. Teamwork across the school is tangible and highly effective. Staff feel extremely well supported by senior leaders and that their views are actively sought and valued. Clear, effective communication enables the staff to contribute purposefully to policy formation and fully support its implementation.
- 5.10 The senior leadership team is very successful in recruiting, supporting and developing highly motivated staff at all levels, including the EYFS. Teachers benefit from regular appraisal and the school is strongly committed to continuing professional development, ensuring that all staff have opportunities to undertake training that impacts positively on pupils' learning, and that staff are fully trained in all aspects of welfare, health and safety, including safeguarding, child protection and paediatric first aid. In the EYFS, staff are well supervised, and the regular cycle of appraisal identifies training needs. They are actively encouraged to participate in training to help them embrace new ideas, and management recognises the benefits that this has for the children. A small group of staff has benefited from a coaching skills pilot programme led by an external trainer. This has had a positive impact on interaction and relationships between staff and pupils, and thus on learning. The school is seeking to extend this successful strategy as a regular feature of its continuing professional development for staff.
- 5.11 In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of parents indicated that they are happy with the education and care that the school provides. Notably, all parents who responded feel that their children are well looked after and are very satisfied with the range of subjects and experiences offered.

- 5.12 The school places great importance on fostering constructive relationships with parents, in line with its aim for all to work as a team for the best interests of the pupils. The 'open door' policy effectively enables regular communication between parents and teachers, and senior leaders of the school make themselves available to any parents who wish to meet with them. Whilst extremely rare, concerns are handled promptly, in accordance with the school's published procedures.
- 5.13 The school fully embraces working partnerships with parents. Through the substantial 'e-learning' platform, parents are able to learn about their children's experiences and gain valuable ideas on how to support learning at home. Parents are welcome to participate in the life of the school. For example, they visit to listen to pupils read and help run the well-attended book club, and pupils gain insight from visiting parents offering specialist skills. Since the previous inspection, regular coffee mornings for the parents of pupils in Reception and Years 5 and 6 have been introduced and are extremely popular; parents value the additional contact with the school which these provide. The dynamic parents' association organises a wide range of social events for the whole school community, including the summer carnival and Christmas fair. Class representatives help to keep all parents informed about news and events, and nurture the close sense of community. Parents are fully supportive of the school's fund-raising efforts, which include charity work as well as raising money to improve the school facilities. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the vast majority of parents were happy with the way in which the school encourages them to be involved in events and other aspects of its work.
- 5.14 The school website includes a wealth of up-to-date information and provides an excellent picture of school life for the parents of prospective pupils. Parents of current pupils benefit from a secure section of the school e-learning platform, providing information relevant to their children's well-being and learning. Weekly email messages, which include the school newsletter, are especially valued by parents, and a comprehensive parent handbook provides useful information and advice. Almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that information about the school and its policies is readily available.
- 5.15 Parents are provided with informative written reports that reflect how well staff know their children as individuals. These reports explain the work undertaken and provide succinct information about progress. Suggestions for future improvement are included, which parents find useful. In addition to these, formal parents' evenings and other information evenings provide parents with many opportunities to gain further insight into their children's achievements, thus strengthening partnerships with parents further.
- 5.16 Where additional needs are identified, staff and parents work closely together to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support. The school has excellent working relationships with a range of external agencies.

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