



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

LOCHINVER HOUSE SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Lochinver House School

Full Name of School	Lochinver House School
DfE Number	919/6201
Registered Charity Number	1091045
Address	Lochinver House School Heath Road Potters Bar Hertfordshire EN6 1LW
Telephone Number	01707 653064
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Headmaster	Mr Ben Walker
Chairman of Governors	Mr Stuart Westley
Age Range	4 to 13
Total Number of Pupils	348
Gender of Pupils	Boys
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 0 5-11: 246 3-5 (EYFS): 40 11-13: 62
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 348
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Eleni Laws
EYFS Gender	Boys
Inspection dates	05 Feb 2013 to 08 Feb 2013

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in January 2008.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. 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', 'satisfactory' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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

Inspectors

Mrs Sara Wiggins

Mr Patrick Wenham

Mrs Sarah Marsh

Mr Jonathan Atkin

Mr Richard Balding

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Lochinver House School is a preparatory school for boys aged 4 to 13, situated in Potters Bar, Hertfordshire. It was founded in 1947 and is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee, for which a board of governors has responsibility. The school's stated aims are to provide the pupils with the tools to succeed and the encouragement to persevere, in line with its motto '*Perstare Praestare*' meaning 'to persevere is to succeed', within an effective partnership with parents. It aims to provide high quality teaching and learning for all of its pupils, with a particular emphasis on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and to create a safe, happy community that is conducive to learning in its broadest sense.
- 1.2 The school occupies 8 ½ acres with playing fields, a specialist theatre and sports hall. Since the previous inspection a new all weather surface has been laid, two specialist science laboratories have been refurbished and the music department has been extended. A new headmaster was appointed in January 2011.
- 1.3 The school has 348 pupils on roll. It has a two-form entry from Reception onwards, becoming a three-form entry for Years 7 and 8. The pre-preparatory department (pre-prep) which includes the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), has 40 full-time pupils in Reception, and 83 pupils in Years 1 and 2 combined. The senior department for Years 3 to 8 has 225 pupils.
- 1.4 The ability profile of the school is above the national average, with most pupils having an ability that is at least above average, and very few having ability that is below average. The school is culturally diverse reflecting the suburban and North London locality from which pupils are drawn. Pupils come from predominantly business and professional families. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs though 41 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 39 receive support in school. Twenty-seven pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), none of whom needs additional support.
- 1.5 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 school is highly successful in meeting its aims and the quality of the pupils' achievement and learning is excellent. Throughout the school, pupils show high levels of knowledge and understanding, and well-developed skills. Key factors supporting these are the broad curriculum and the pupils' exemplary attitudes towards their learning. The curriculum is stimulating and of a high quality and it is extremely effective in covering the requisite areas of learning. It is supported by a strong range of extra-curricular activities. Provision for SEND pupils is excellent. Excellent teaching contributes towards the very high standards of pupil achievement. Teaching uses a variety of methods to ensure pupils maintain interest in learning although on a few occasions tasks set did not always fully meet their differing needs. The school has excellent systems in place to monitor the progress of pupils through the regular review of data from written assessments. The quality of provision in the EYFS is excellent as a result of detailed educational programmes and the high expectations of staff.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent. By the time they leave the school pupils are self-confident, excellent listeners and can discuss issues with sensitivity and maturity with their peers and adults. Relationships within the school are of high quality. In the EYFS the children's personal and emotional development is excellent and children work very well together sharing happily and taking turns. The pupils' welfare is a priority throughout the school.
- 2.3 Governance, leadership and management are excellent, with a strong focus on the safeguarding of the pupils. Team work is exceptional and the commitment of staff is highly reflective of pupils' personal development. Recommendations of the previous inspection have been effectively implemented. The school has been highly effective in securing and supporting well-qualified staff who are committed and hard working, and who make a significant impact on pupils' achievements and welfare. Links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent.

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) Recommendation for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. To further widen the variety of teaching approaches to support the differing needs of pupils across the curriculum.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The pupils' success in academic work and the wider curriculum strongly fulfils the school's aim to encourage them to always try their best and rise to the challenges that are set. Throughout the school, pupils show high levels of knowledge and understanding, and well-developed skills. Key factors supporting these are the broad curriculum, highly co-operative working relationships and the pupils' exemplary attitudes towards their learning. In the EYFS, outcomes for children are excellent. They write simple sentences using cursive writing, read at a level above their chronological age and perform simple addition and subtraction sums. They are able to open programs on the computer and enjoy solving problems using the interactive white board. Pupils throughout the school read with expression and write fluently for a variety of purposes and audiences. The pupils' speaking and listening skills are of a high quality and this enables them to consider carefully the instructions of their teachers whilst also being able to express confidently their own opinions. Pupils show an excellent grasp of mathematical concepts and apply these highly successfully both in the curriculum as well as in events such as the Junior and Primary Maths Challenge where they achieve highly. Pupils display excellent scientific skills and understanding. They use information and communication technology (ICT) competently across a range of subjects, such as for development of their excellent linguistic skills.
- 3.3 From a young age pupils learn to investigate and research; for example pupils used library books to help them consider whether animals belonged in the jungle or the Arctic. They exhibit strong powers of reasoning and logical thought, as when, through lively conversation, they recognised and challenged gender stereotypes. In the EYFS children are highly creative, they enjoy role play and display an excellent ability to problem solve as they construct shapes from a variety of materials.
- 3.4 The school values its pupils' achievement of excellence in a broad range of skills, including musical events, drama productions and sporting activities. High levels of creativity are evident, from technical creations in design and technology to the excellent composing in keyboard activities and lessons, although in relation to art, these strengths are not always evident in displays around the school. The quality of music and sport is particularly strong and pupils gain scholarships to their senior schools in these specialist areas alongside academic scholarships. Pupils' physical skills are well developed through the many opportunities which abound both inside and outside the curriculum. In the EYFS the high quality of the outdoor play areas and regular physical education (PE) sessions enhances the children's physical development and provides many opportunities to develop their independence, make choices, and learn to interact sociably with others. The school competes highly successfully in a number of activities including chess, sailing, badminton, rugby and football. Pupils receiving support for SEND achieve equally highly due to the inclusive nature of the school and the variety of opportunities offered.
- 3.5 By the end of the EYFS, nearly all children achieve or exceed the expected goals, responding well to the high expectations of staff; the overall quality and standards are excellent and children make substantial progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. The following analysis uses the national data for 2009 to 2011. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are

currently available. Results in national tests at the ages of 7 and 11 have been excellent in relation to national age-related expectations for several years, although with a slight dip for 7 year-olds in 2010. Inspection evidence from observations of lessons, scrutiny of work and discussions with individual pupils confirms this judgement particularly within the core subjects of mathematics, science and English. The pupils follow a broad curriculum and this level of attainment and nationally standardised progress data demonstrates a high rate of progress for pupils, including the most able and those with EAL, in relation to pupils of similar ability. Pupils with SEND make excellent overall progress, as seen in their improved reading and mathematics skills because of highly effective support through their individual lessons and the support provided within class.

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

- 3.6 The contribution of the curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.7 Pupils receive a curriculum that is stimulating and of a high quality, enabling them to enjoy a wide range of opportunities, thus meeting the school's aims. The broad curriculum and specialist teaching provide pupils with an excellent range of learning experiences and contribute very effectively towards their development of knowledge, skills and understanding. The curriculum facilitates the attainment of high standards and is appropriate for all ages, abilities and needs. Provision for pupils with SEND is excellent. Pupils both work within the school's learning support unit and receive additional support in lessons. Clear strategies are given in individual education plans (IEPs); regular meetings with staff and parents inform teachers of the needs of pupils. There is strong individual knowledge of those who are gifted and talented and the excellent extra-curricular programme is carefully used to target their individual needs, although on occasion this is not as evident within the classroom.
- 3.8 The curriculum is carefully planned and is extremely effective in covering the requisite areas of learning. It has been broadened since the previous inspection to include food technology and drama for older pupils. Russian is available to extend the more able Year 6 pupils, furthering the provision for modern languages, which currently commences in Year 3. Music, drama and sport feature strongly across the whole curriculum. Information and communication technology is taught both as a discrete subject within the curriculum and is also employed in other areas of the curriculum. The highly detailed personal, social, health and cultural education (PSHCE) programme contributes strongly to pupils' excellent personal development. Subject documentation varies with the very best including thorough schemes of work which highlight lesson objectives, meeting the differing needs of pupils, as well as including self-evaluation by the school and evaluation by the pupils themselves of the delivered curriculum. All departments complete termly summaries highlighting achievements in the curriculum and possible areas for development. In meeting the needs of children who attend the EYFS, the curriculum provision is excellent. Detailed educational programmes provide many opportunities for the children to make substantial progress in all areas of learning. Weekly curriculum planning meetings including the input of children's ideas ensures a range of interesting activities are delivered, promoting enjoyment and enthusiasm.
- 3.9 The curriculum is extended and enhanced by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. Many of these activities such as 'war hammer' and photography encourage opportunities for pupils of differing age groups to work together. A wide range of day and residential trips supports the curriculum and have a cross curricular

approach. Additional curricular days such as 'growth mindset day' provide further opportunities for pupils to develop their learning skills

- 3.10 Links with the community are excellent, for example with local primary schools being invited into the school to participate in science activities. Local community bodies such as the police and fire service visit the school and the school contributes to many areas of the community; recently they designed a mural for a local hospital. The pupils select charities each year to support for which they raise a substantial amount of money. These activities extend their personal development and greatly enrich the curriculum.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.11 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.12 Throughout the school, the high standard of teaching contributes towards the excellent levels of pupils' achievement and personal development. It strongly supports the school's aim to encourage pupils to persevere in order to succeed. Teachers are knowledgeable, enthusiastic and highly committed to helping pupils make progress. Pupils from a young age benefit from specialised teaching in a wide range of subjects. Management of pupil behaviour by teachers is excellent and contributes strongly towards pupils exemplary attitudes towards learning. Lessons are mostly carefully planned to meet the learning needs of all pupils, promoting enthusiasm and interest. Teaching is particularly effective when time is allowed, at the end of lessons, to reinforce and assess progress towards achieving clearly defined learning objectives.
- 3.13 Teaching uses a variety of methods to ensure pupils maintain interest in learning. This is an improvement from the previous inspection and has resulted in pupils being strongly motivated to think for themselves in lessons. For example, careful planning and positive interactions between pupils and teacher, enabled younger pupils to use their imagination and work highly collaboratively to produce a still image involving super-heroes. Positive attitudes to learning are actively developed, with the recent focus on the importance of effort encouraging pupil resilience and a determination to succeed. Good quality resources support learning, and ICT is used effectively across the curriculum. In the EYFS teaching is excellent. A range of interesting activities promotes enjoyment and encourages children to widen their vocabulary. The wide range of indoor and outdoor resources, together with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, enables children to respond well to the high expectations of the staff.
- 3.14 Teaching throughout the school fosters interest and independence. Older pupils explained enthusiastically that they enjoy the freedom given to them to develop their own writing ideas and styles. In a few lessons where teaching was less effective lessons lacked pace and tasks set did not always support the differing needs of the pupils; as a result progress was limited. The needs of pupils with SEND are very well supported throughout the school enabling them to make excellent progress. Although no current pupil needs support for EAL, the school has arrangements to do so if the need arises. Opportunities to promote their learning include small groups withdrawn from lessons, strong support within the majority of lessons and individual lessons to provide for specific needs. Additionally older pupils support younger peers as reading buddies. More able pupils are challenged through the high expectations of their teachers, with specific extension material being set in older year groups where classes are set.

- 3.15 Regular assessments of pupil progress are undertaken and this information is used highly effectively in planning documentation throughout the school. Detailed, regular assessments of children's progress in the EYFS are used to plan the next steps in each child's learning and extra support planned for those who need it. The school has excellent systems in place to monitor the progress of pupils through the regular review of data from written assessments. Marking is thorough and in the best cases, clear targets for improvement are set and followed up.

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's stated aim is to put particular emphasis on the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and it does so exceptionally well. By the time they leave the school pupils are self-confident, excellent listeners and can discuss issues with sensitivity and maturity with their peers and adults. In the EYFS the children's personal and emotional development is excellent and they work well together sharing happily, taking turns and always willing to help each other. They play and mix happily with older children so that the transition to the next class is seamless.
- 4.3 Spiritual development is excellent. Pupils are highly self-aware and have a strong understanding of respect and fairness; which is developed through discussions held in pastoral groups and topics studied as part of the school's PSHCE programme. Pupils are emotionally mature and display a sense of purpose during discussion. They demonstrated excellent reflective skills when they considered the importance of leadership in society. Their high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem are greatly increased through the regular praise they receive within lessons, assemblies and tutorials.
- 4.4 The pupils' moral awareness is strong. They listen carefully to the views of others and are extremely articulate when expressing their opinions. They demonstrate an excellent sense of right and wrong and treat each other and their teachers with great respect. A small number of pupils commented in the questionnaire that they did not feel that rewards and sanctions were always given fairly. Inspection evidence did not substantiate this view. In meetings with pupils, they recognised that the administering of sanctions and rewards had been a focus of school development and they were clear that they recognise these as being fair and also understand that they are responsible for their own actions.
- 4.5 The social development of the pupils is excellent. Whatever their age, they thrive on the responsibility given to them in positions as school or house officials, sports captains, librarians, or members of the Anti-Bullying Council (ABC) or school council. Older pupils support those younger than themselves in a variety of ways through their house mentoring programme, a variety of clubs and sporting activities. They take great pride in establishing these positive and ongoing relationships. Pupils show excellent cooperation with each other when working in the classroom, on the sports field or during playtime. Pupils are keen to help those who are less fortunate than themselves. Through the head boys' charity large sums of money are raised for charities voted for by the pupils. This further develops strong economic awareness as pupils manage and distribute funds raised. Pupils show great concern for their school and wider environment as they work with the Lochinver Environmental Organisation.
- 4.6 Pupils' cultural awareness is excellent. Their strong understanding of, and sympathy for, the standpoints of world religions and cultures are developed through lessons and the extra-curricular programme. Pupils have an extensive knowledge of western culture and their cultural development is further assisted by visits to museums and attendance at concerts and drama performances. Their trips abroad such as the South African rugby tour and a visit to the Ardèche are used highly

effectively to add breadth to their curriculum. Pupils develop a strong understanding of diversity and prejudice through the very well thought out PSHCE programme.

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

- 4.7 The arrangements for pastoral care are excellent.
- 4.8 The school is highly successful in meeting its stated aim of creating a happy community which is conducive to learning in its broadest sense. Staff know the pupils extremely well and the excellent relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves contribute strongly to the high levels of achievement. Pupils are strongly aware of the supportive pastoral guidance provided by staff and they feel sure that there is always someone to turn to if needed. They value the opportunities provided to them to discuss their reports and the subsequent targets. The school has excellent systems to ensure the consideration of all pastoral issues. In the EYFS each child's 'key person' promotes the high standards of courtesy and behaviour expected and high priority is given to the children's happiness, health and safety so that children form strong relationships with each other and with adults, and develop their independence. Children know what they need to do to keep themselves safe and develop good hygiene practices from an early age.
- 4.9 The school is highly effective in promoting the exemplary behaviour observed. The house credit system is used to very good effect and is appreciated by pupils. Pupils show kindness and respect for their teachers in lessons and are kind and considerate towards each other. The school's anti-bullying policy is carefully implemented and the ABC meets regularly to address any bullying issues that might occur. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with promptly. Pupils, including those in the EYFS, have an excellent understanding of the importance of both healthy eating and exercise, which is encouraged through the school's PSHCE programme and the curricular and extra-curricular sporting programme.
- 4.10 The school has a suitable plan for educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.11 A minority of responses to the pre-inspection pupil questionnaire maintained that there were few opportunities provided for pupils' opinions to be sought and listened to. This view was not supported by the inspection evidence. The school council, pupils' questionnaires about academic subjects, comment boxes and the ABC provide pupils with excellent opportunities to share their views with staff.
- 4.12 The school's excellent pastoral provision makes a major contribution to the pupils' impressive personal development.

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

- 4.13 The arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 4.14 The pupils' welfare is a priority throughout the school and the committed staff ensure that the aims of the school are well met. The safeguarding policy has regard to official guidance and is implemented highly effectively. All teaching and non teaching staff, including those with specific responsibilities and those in the EYFS, receive appropriate training in child protection and induction training is very well considered.
- 4.15 Arrangements for sick or injured pupils of all ages, including those in the EYFS and those with SEND are excellent and medical staff provide exemplary care. The

medical room meets requirements; the administration of medicines is appropriately recorded and all formal procedures regarding medical treatment are appropriately followed, in accordance with consent given by parents. Any medical needs of pupils are made known to all staff and staff are appropriately trained in first aid and paediatric first aid. Procedures and policies for health and safety are reviewed regularly. All necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. Detailed risk assessments ensuring the safety of pupils both on and off site while on educational trips and in the EYFS are carefully undertaken. Use of the school computer network is monitored and pupils are appropriately alerted to 'e-safety' issues. Attendance registers are completed correctly. The current system for admission registers meets all requirements, although prior to the implementation of the current system the register had not been archived as required.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The governing body very effectively contributes to the implementation of the aim to foster a sense of community. It fully supports the pupils' excellent achievement and personal development. The governors' strong oversight of the school is facilitated through a formal system of meetings and by clearly defined responsibilities. An effective system of six committees for areas such as education, risk management, finance and health and safety allows governors to provide support challenge and stimulus for improvement. Careful financial management combined with clear strategic planning have ensured strong investment in staff, accommodation and learning resources. Governors' involvement with the EYFS is highly effective.
- 5.3 The board benefits from a wide range of experience and professional backgrounds. There is a helpful induction pack for new governors and training opportunities, already taken in child protection and safer recruitment, are being further developed. The designation of a governor to visit the school termly and report back to the board, ensures effective insight into its organisation and day-to-day management and assists with the school's on-going thorough self-evaluation of its effectiveness. The governors are also kept well informed by informal contact with senior staff as well as through formal reports and subject presentations. Governors attend a variety of school functions. Their thorough understanding of the school's needs enables them to maintain well-informed oversight of the school and oversee strong educational provision and appropriate investment in staff and material resources.
- 5.4 Governors are well aware of their legal responsibilities and discharge them carefully. With regard to safeguarding and child protection, they maintain regular contact with the school's designated persons and the full board reviews its policy and procedures annually. Health and safety policies and procedures, and the associated risk assessments, are also monitored carefully.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent.
- 5.6 The senior leaders are successful in promoting the aims of the school, and their success is mirrored in excellent teaching and the pupils' achievements across a broad range of curricular and extra-curricular provision. Team work is exceptional and the commitment of staff is highly reflective of pupils' excellent personal development. Recommendations of the previous inspection have been effectively addressed. The senior leadership team has developed an excellent focus on improvement through careful self-evaluation involving the wider school community including parents. The resulting development plan is a comprehensive document which includes details of educational priorities for the future. Core themes, including behaviour management, are developed further in departmental planning. In the EYFS the highly effective, caring team meets regularly to consider the effectiveness of the setting and to evaluate progress of individual children to plan next steps in learning. They share a clear ambitious vision for the continued development of the

EYFS and welcome the opportunities for professional development by attending many training courses.

- 5.7 The monitoring of teaching and learning is highly effective. Careful analysis of data has resulted in curriculum review, and the role of heads of department has been considerably strengthened addressing the recommendation of the previous inspection. A careful programme of lesson observations has been implemented and the school is further developing its procedures through work scrutinies and pupil interviews. Staff appraisal successfully identifies areas for teacher development and includes lesson observation and the setting of targets.
- 5.8 Thorough policies and procedures cover all aspects of school life; they are conscientiously implemented by staff. The procedures for checking staff prior to their appointment are secure. A thorough induction process ensures that all staff are suitably trained for their roles in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. The school has been highly effective in securing and supporting well-qualified staff who are committed and hard working, and who make a significant impact on pupils' achievements and welfare. Staff are deployed effectively, providing valuable support to meet the needs of pupils. An excellent five-year programme of in-service training has recently been established enabling members of staff to attend courses when appropriate to support their subject knowledge and professional development. In addition, staff have led a variety of courses within school to share their own areas of expertise with colleagues.
- 5.9 Links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent. They are stronger than at the previous inspection and the very strong links that exist in the EYFS enable good, stable relationships to develop between parents, which are maintained as pupils progress through the school. The parents' questionnaire showed that parents are highly supportive and particularly happy with the way that their children are cared for, they report that their child feels safe and happy in school and that there is a broad range of subjects and extra-curricular areas of experience offered to all pupils. A very small number of parents felt that there was not enough information about their son's progress. Inspection evidence did not support this view; the school provides detailed full reports and parents' evenings twice a year, a short report in the spring term together with an open-door policy.
- 5.10 Communication with parents is very strong and they are welcomed to a wide variety of school events. A comprehensive website and school prospectus provide all current and prospective parents with detailed information about the school and this is supplemented by the excellent yearly magazine. In the EYFS, parents have daily contact with the staff at drop-off and collection times. The parental handbooks produced for each stage of the child's development provide details of what is required and expected of parents and the role they play in the development of the child. Parents enjoy receiving the weekly newsletter that describes the many activities that happen at the school. The instant electronic contact that advises parents of immediate situations is particularly valued by parents. Parents are always welcome at the school to watch matches or attend plays and concerts.
- 5.11 The very active and successful parent teachers' association organises a variety of fund-raising and social events with the school ball being one of the highlights. The success of these events has enabled many valuable resources to be purchased for the school including, recently, two bassoons.

5.12 Concerns of parents are handled carefully and sensitively and the close links with parents ensure that most difficulties are resolved informally and quickly. An appropriate complaints policy is available if needed.

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