



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

LONGACRE SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Longacre School

Full Name of School	Longacre School
DfE Number	936/6315
EYFS Number	EY350298
Registered Charity Number	1096567
Address	Longacre School Hullbrook Lane Shamley Green Guildford Surrey GU5 0NQ
Telephone Number	01483 893225
Fax Number	01483 893501
Email Address	secretary@longacreschool.co.uk
Headmistress	Mrs Alexia Bracewell
Chair of Governors	Mr Andrew Blurton
Age Range	2½ to 11
Total Number of Pupils	205
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (102 boys; 103 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 6 5-11: 154 3-5(EYFS): 45
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Amanda Harrison
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	11 Feb 2014 to 14 Feb 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 June 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) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

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

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors and another governor, 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 Jan Preece	Reporting Inspector
Mr John Greathead	Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Judith Gregory	Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Helen Higginson	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Eithne Webster	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Longacre School is a co-educational day school for pupils aged from two and a half to eleven years. It was founded in 1946 and is centred around a large country house built in 1902, with additional purpose-built and renovated teaching accommodation. The school is set in over nine acres of wooded grounds in the village of Shamley Green, Surrey. It became a charitable trust in 1985 and is administered by a board of governors. The headmistress has been in post since 2010. Since the previous inspection, the school has developed a new play area in the woodlands, as well as its sports facilities, including a cricket wicket and football pitch, created a new information and communication technology (ICT) suite, and refurbished the dining room, library and outside learning areas for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- 1.2 The ethos of the school is that children learn best when they are happy and fulfilled, when their individualism recognised and supported, and when they are enabled to develop at their own unique rate. The education offered aims to instil in pupils an understanding of learning and a breadth of skills which will benefit them in their future education and life. The school seeks to enable pupils to enjoy and relish their childhood, to explore both themselves and the wider community and to encourage involvement of the family in each pupil's education.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, there were 205 pupils on roll, in almost equal numbers of boys and girls. There were 51 children in the EYFS, of whom 12 were in the younger Nursery class. The majority of children join the school at that stage, when they attend for at least three mornings each week. At the age of three, they move into the older Nursery class, where they attend at least five half-day sessions before becoming full-time pupils in Reception. There were 63 pupils in Years 1 and 2, which comprise the Lower School, and 91 in Years 3 to 6, named the Upper School.
- 1.4 The school does not formally select pupils by ability for entry. Pupils attend for a taster session at which they are informally assessed to ensure that the school is able to meet their needs. The ability profile of the school is above the national average. A fairly wide spread of abilities is represented, although most pupils are of above average ability, with a notable proportion who are of well above average ability. The school provides additional support to 26 pupils whom it has identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). One pupil requires support with learning English as an additional language (EAL). Most pupils come from business and professional families within the locality and at the end of Year 6 almost all transfer to other independent day schools.

- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its NC equivalence are shown in the following tables.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Nursery	Nursery (ages 2 to 3)
Kindergarten	Nursery (ages 3 to 4)
Reception	Reception

Lower School and Upper School

School	NC name
Form 1	Year 1
Form 2	Year 2
Form 3	Year 3
Form 4	Year 4
Form 5	Year 5
Form 6	Year 6

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The school is extremely successful in meeting its aims. It instils in pupils an understanding of learning and supports them in developing at their own rates, encouraging family involvement in each pupil's education. From the EYFS, pupils' achievement is excellent due to the provision of a broad curriculum supported by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, and to teaching of consistently high quality, both of which give priority to enabling them to develop effective ways of learning to take into adulthood. Teaching is well planned to meet individual needs, and provides pupils with many opportunities to reason independently and engage in investigation and research. A focus on developing effective learning skills has resulted in significant improvements to the curriculum and the quality of teaching. The school has not yet adopted a means to assess and monitor pupils' progress in the learning skills upon which it bases its teaching, to complement its comprehensive monitoring of attainment and provide information on all-round progress.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent. From an outstanding start in the EYFS, their positive attitudes to school and well-developed self-awareness and confidence, together with their strong social skills, support their achievements very effectively. Pupils are given a range of responsibilities, and the many opportunities for older pupils to develop supportive relationships with younger ones provide a valuable contribution to the school's ethos as a nurturing environment. Pupils respond very positively to the school's expectations for behaviour, and feel well looked after and happy and safe in school. In most respects the attention paid to welfare, health and safety is of a high standard. Policies are reviewed regularly and largely implemented conscientiously, and maintenance checks and risk assessments are thorough. Whilst the school correctly implements the day-to-day operation of its safeguarding policy and all staff are now checked with the Disclosure and Barring Service, it acknowledges that two aspects have not been fully applied. However, immediate action was taken during the visit to rectify these matters where possible.
- 2.3 Governance of the school has been significantly strengthened in recent years; governors have strong oversight of the school and exercise their strategic role very effectively. Governors provide excellent support through being well informed of the school's strengths and challenges, as well as through their regular visits during the school's day-to-day operation and for special events. However, they have not given sufficiently informed attention to the implementation of all aspects of the safeguarding policy. The leadership and management teams have a clear sense of direction for the school and communicate this very effectively to a committed team of teaching and non-teaching staff. This has resulted in significant improvements to the quality of pupils' educational experience since the previous inspection. Links with parents are excellent and most parents are positive about nearly all aspects of the school's educational and pastoral provision.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:
- ensure that a check against the barred list is completed whenever the disclosure and barred list check is delayed or accepted from another educational institution [Part 4, paragraphs 19.(2)(a) and 22.(3)(b), under Suitability of staff and proprietors];
 - ensure that training in child protection for all regular visiting staff is updated at least every three years [Part 3, paragraphs 7.(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety].
- 2.5 See the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage section 6 for the inspection findings in relation to the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 for children under three.

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

- 2.6 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvement.
1. Devise a system to record information about pupils' learning characteristics and social development to enable monitoring of their all-round progress.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated in accordance with the school's aim to provide inclusive opportunities for all to fulfil their potential and develop at an appropriate pace. Pupils of all ages are articulate, eager to express their ideas and generally listen carefully to their teachers and peers. Many pupils read fluently for their ages and capabilities, and their comprehension is strong. They exhibit, for example, good skills of inference and deduction as they grow older. Displays of writing across the school are of a high standard and demonstrate considerable creativity. Pupils' capacity for reasoning and independent thought is a strength of their learning. Their mathematical skills are very well developed and applied particularly well to investigations and problem solving, and in subjects such as science and geography. Pupils exhibit excellent knowledge and understanding in science. They display competent skills in using tablet as well as keyboard computers for research in a variety of subjects.
- 3.3 In accordance with its aim, the school encourages pupils to discover their aptitudes and interests. Pupils' physical skills are well developed from a young age because they take part in a wide range of sports and physical activities. Pupils of all abilities enjoy participation in competitive sporting fixtures against other independent and local primary schools. Whilst pupils enjoy their successes, such as that of the unbeaten Under 10 girls' netball team and at cross-country events, they say that they most appreciate all abilities being able to participate. Pupils achieve individual success in speech, drama and instrumental music examinations, as well as when performing in the school choirs and instrumental concerts. Their creativity is well expressed in the high standard of artwork displayed around the school, and individual work has been displayed in a national exhibition. Since the previous inspection, pupils' confidence and competence in design technology (DT) have improved significantly.
- 3.4 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2010 to 2012. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national tests at the age of 11 have been good in relation to the national average for maintained primary schools and have improved over this period, so that those in 2012 were well above the national average for maintained primary schools. Results in standardised tests taken over the same period indicate that pupils achieve results that are higher than national norms. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make good progress relative to the average for pupils of similar abilities, confirmed by inspection judgements based on lesson observations, pupils' written work and curriculum interviews. Pupils with SEND or EAL are well supported in class and their progress is boosted through individual help provided by a learning support specialist, so that they generally make good progress and achieve well in relation to their abilities. More able pupils achieve well because in most lessons they are given challenging tasks that stimulate their thinking, and due to the provision extra-curricular activities for those with particular ability in art and music.
- 3.5 Pupils' progress is well supported by their excellent attitudes towards learning. They are keen to learn and say that they are happy to be at school. Pupils apply themselves well and present their work with care, working equally well in collaboration or individually. Their good behaviour and excellent relationships with

their teachers and peers contribute to a purposeful learning environment and have a positive impact on their achievement.

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

- 3.6 The quality of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.7 The school meets its aim to deliver a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that is successful in stretching and challenging individual pupils. There is strong provision for the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills, as well as for science and humanities subjects. Since the previous inspection a rotational timetable has been introduced to allocate time for subjects such as drama and for project work. This has also enabled the allocation of dedicated time to DT, a recommendation of the previous inspection, where pupils are offered a good variety of activities including food technology. The curriculum extends beyond the subjects of the National Curriculum, with allocated time for reasoning skills, French, Latin from Year 5 and optional Spanish in Year 6. Pupils' educational experience is enhanced by comprehensive provision for art, music and sport. Additional time is now given to citizenship, personal, social and health education. The school has increased its resources for ICT, including the provision of tablet computers. Throughout the school and across the curriculum, pupils are regularly given opportunities to undertake practical and investigative activities.
- 3.8 Provision for pupils with SEND is particularly strong. Should a concern become evident, parents are involved and strategies planned. These include effective support through well-planned activities in class and individual help from a specialist teacher where necessary. Pupils, including any who require extra support with EAL, are given individual education plans with clear targets which are regularly reviewed and well communicated to all staff who teach them. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a few parents expressed dissatisfaction with provision for very able pupils. Inspectors found that the school has recently reviewed and improved its arrangements to identify and meet the needs of pupils who are very able or who have particular talents. They have a personal learning plan which indicates strategies to provide challenge in class and additional activities for those with particular talents. The introduction of the scheme to enhance learning power has a significant impact on curricular provision. Its aim to help pupils to develop learning characteristics to take into adult life is becoming a feature of teachers' planning.
- 3.9 The academic curriculum is enhanced by a full programme of visits and visitors, such as a recent trip to a planetarium for children in Reception. Pupils in Year 6 particularly enjoyed learning about wartime rationing from a visitor. All pupils from Year 3 upwards take part in a residential trip each year and during the inspection pupils in Year 4 visited an outdoor education centre. Pupils in Year 6 undertake a business enterprise project as part of the curriculum. The curriculum is effectively planned to provide equality of access and opportunity for all pupils, and to promote their participation in a wide range of activities. A wide range of extra-curricular activities is offered at lunchtime and after school. These include opportunities that enable pupils to discover and pursue an interest in music and creative arts, such as choirs, an orchestra, art and computer activities, as well as various sporting clubs. Chess and bridge clubs help to develop pupils' thinking and reasoning skills.
- 3.10 The school takes every opportunity to be involved in the local community. Pupils have raised money to enhance the village playground. The school has developed

links with a local primary school, through which pupils visit each other and teaching expertise is exchanged. Pupils' social skills have been developed through the experience of working alongside children with severe learning difficulties.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.11 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.12 Since the previous inspection the school has been highly successful in planning tasks to match the needs of pupils of differing abilities. Teachers give priority to finding new ways to challenge pupils and encourage them as independent learners. Planning includes desired learning skills for each lesson and pupils were heard describing these with understanding, both within and outside the classroom. This approach has been highly successful in improving pupils' learning and in promoting analytical thinking. Throughout the school, lessons are characterised by excellent teacher knowledge, high expectations that motivate and challenge, and detailed planning that adapts teaching to respond to the needs of all pupils. Teaching promotes pupils' enthusiasm and confidence to attempt a task and moves their learning forward at a good pace. Across the school, teachers plan well-structured, exciting lessons that challenge the more able pupils, whilst also giving appropriate support to those with specific learning needs or any who require help with EAL. Enrichment tasks and activities are also used to challenge more able pupils. They are also provided with individual programmes of work within the classroom, as are pupils who require further consolidation.
- 3.13 Excellent time management is a feature of most lessons and many include starter activities that focus pupils' attention quickly. Time is built into some lessons to give pupils valuable opportunities to reflect and redraft their ideas. Teachers provide a range of stimulating, well-resourced activities that pupils enjoy and that promote their learning. Very good use is made of question and answer, with open-ended questioning promoting clarity of thought. In the most successful lessons, good humour and informal teaching styles, whilst retaining respectful relationships, keep pupils fully engaged. Focused praise and demonstration by teachers encourage pupils to attempt tasks for themselves. On a very few occasions when lessons are less successful, the pace is too slow and teaching consequently does not fully engage the pupils' attention. In these few instances, classroom management is less secure and pupils become restless. Support staff make a very valuable contribution in lessons through informed and effective assistance. Throughout the school, teaching is well supported by the use of a wide range of resources in all subjects, including tablet computers.
- 3.14 The quality of marking and assessment is good and generally in line with the comprehensive marking policy. Marking is usually thorough, and provides constructive comments and, in most subjects, the next steps in order to improve. The quality of target setting varies but some excellent examples are evident in the core subjects. In some subjects clear targets for improvement are set following individual pieces of work, and there is evidence of self-assessment and peer assessment. The school has made strong progress in its use of assessment and has adopted a good range of standardised tests and subject-specific assessments to measure pupils' progress over time. This is a positive response to the recommendation of the previous inspection. Information is used well to identify pupils who are having difficulties and those who are particularly able. This system to monitor pupils' patterns of attainment is well established. Whilst the development of learning skills now forms a significant aspect of teaching, no arrangements are yet in

place to record pupils' progress in learning skills and social development to enable staff to monitor pupils' all-round progress.

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 pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The school successfully fulfils its aim to provide a happy, supportive and caring environment for pupils. They are articulate and self-assured, and show great pride in their school, reflecting very effectively the school code, *The Longacre Way*.
- 4.3 Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. They take pride in the many attractive displays that celebrate their achievement. Their self-awareness, self-esteem and confidence are well developed and demonstrated in weekly celebration assemblies and where year groups combine, for example in a highly successful assembly led by pupils in Years 1 and 6. Pupils are encouraged to look at meaning beyond the material in subjects such as English, religious education (RE) and art. They respond well to the philosophical aspect of the programme to enhance their learning power.
- 4.4 Pupils display an excellent moral understanding. They have a strong sense of right and wrong, and demonstrate readiness to follow the rules that guide their behaviour. Pupils understand well that the choices they make about their behaviour have consequences; they appreciate the reward of free-choice time and the loss of this for misdemeanours. Pupils accept responsibility for the environment through the work of the eco-committee. They are encouraged to consider the needs of others. Significant fund raising for local, national and international charities, often chosen and researched by the pupils, enables them to consider and respond to the needs of worthy causes.
- 4.5 Pupils' strong social awareness is evident in the ease with which they interact with adults and each other. They are friendly, well mannered and courteous. The pupils demonstrate excellent interpersonal skills and are kind and considerate to one another. Older pupils take responsibility for helping younger ones in a number of ways; for example, Year 3 pupils read to those in Year 1. Pupils throughout the school are given positions of responsibility; those in Year 6 value and exercise with care their roles as prefects. Pupils appreciate being able to submit their ideas to the school council through suggestion boxes in the classrooms. They gain understanding of public services and other professions through visits from the emergency services. Pupils in Year 6 visit the House of Commons to observe democracy in action and law making.
- 4.6 Pupils have a well-developed understanding of their own and other faiths and cultures, promoted through many opportunities provided within the curriculum such as RE, and through participation in special events. These include undertaking a comparison of a traditional and modern Christmas, and learning about cultural roots in a topic on global music. They celebrate festivals such as Chinese New Year and Diwali with events in school and sample associated foods at lunchtime. Pupils were inspired to make sculptures from stones during a three-day workshop provided by visitors from Zimbabwe.
- 4.7 By the time they leave the school, pupils demonstrate an excellent standard of personal development. They feel that the school prepares them very well for their next schools because particular attention is paid to transition points in their education so that they feel confident in managing change.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 A high priority is given to the creation of a nurturing environment and pupils confirmed that they are happy and feel well cared for at school. Any concerns are effectively shared at daily staff briefings so that all staff can offer support. In pre-inspection questionnaire responses, almost all pupils agreed that teachers monitor their workload and show concern for them as a person, while almost all parents who replied to their questionnaire agreed that their children are well looked after. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Staff know their pupils well, and in questionnaire responses most pupils said that they could turn to a member of staff if they have a concern. These views were reinforced by pupils in discussion.
- 4.10 The school's procedures for promoting good behaviour are highly effective and respected by the pupils; in recent years there has been no recourse to serious sanctions. Pupils value and identify well with *The Longacre Way*. In their questionnaire responses a small minority of pupils indicated dissatisfaction with the fairness of sanctions. Inspection evidence did not confirm this view. A senior member of staff monitors all sanctions awarded and pupils spoken to had no such reservations. The school has clear and robust procedures to combat bullying and most pupils agree that any rare issues are dealt with promptly and effectively.
- 4.11 Pupils are provided with good opportunities to be physically active, both within the curriculum and in after-school activities. They understand the importance of regular exercise and a healthy diet and enjoy the food offered at lunchtime, which is varied and nutritious. The school sometimes provides tasting sessions at break time to introduce pupils to new foods. The school's plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND is suitable.
- 4.12 Since the previous inspection the school has established a school council, which, along with the eco-committee, provides a forum at which pupils may express their views and suggestions. In addition, a group of pupils contributes to the school newsletter and meets each week to discuss its content. A few pupils expressed in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire that their views are not considered by the school. From interviews with pupils, inspectors found that they are happy with the arrangements in place and confident that their suggestions are responded to, such as in making decisions about charitable fund raising, and ways to improve play areas.

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

- 4.13 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.14 The policy and day-to-day arrangements for safeguarding pupils are strong. All staff have now been checked for their suitability to work with children and all receive rigorous induction training on the school's safeguarding policy and procedures. Permanent staff regularly update their training through in-depth consideration of specific aspects of child protection. Most staff have also received training updates at the required intervals though some visiting staff have not undertaken refresher training. Regulatory requirements have not always been rigorously fulfilled when making staff appointments, however the school has acted swiftly to rectify any oversights where possible and has now improved its procedure to ensure that all checks are correctly undertaken.
- 4.15 Throughout the school, health and safety procedures are thorough and effective. They are reviewed regularly and implemented well by the staff. A health and safety committee meets termly, and risk assessments for all areas of the school site and for off-site visits are thorough. Equipment is checked regularly and maintenance records are kept efficiently. All necessary measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards are taken. A fire risk assessment, undertaken by an external specialist, is reviewed annually and its recommendations are implemented promptly. Fire drills take place regularly and procedures are reviewed as a result. Provision for pupils who are ill or injured in school is excellent and the school has suitable arrangements to store and administer any medication required. Suitable numbers of staff have received training to administer first aid, including paediatric first aid, and records of treatment and medication are thorough.
- 4.16 The admission and attendance registers are completed accurately and archived appropriately.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 Since the previous inspection and following a review to evaluate its effectiveness, the governing body has undertaken substantial restructuring. This has enabled it to provide more incisive oversight and to adopt a more strategic role, which has significantly strengthened governance. Governors offer a useful range of expertise. New governors undergo a comprehensive induction process. Some governors have undertaken relevant additional training. Governance arrangements are organised through three sub-committees that meet each term to examine issues in detail and then report to the full board. This enables the full board to maintain a clear focus on strategic development and to ensure that the school's aims are met. Prudent financial planning has resulted in appropriate investment in personnel and material resources. Governors discuss and approve the school development plan in conjunction with the leadership.
- 5.3 Staff appreciate the governors' regular visits to see the school's day-to-day operation, as well as their supportive attendance at special events. Governors are well informed of the school's strengths and challenges through staff presentations to the education and welfare committee, as well as through the leadership's informative termly reports. Informal communication with the leadership is regular, open and supportive.
- 5.4 The governors have appointed one of their number to oversee compliance with safeguarding and welfare, health and safety regulatory requirements. Another governor is responsible for liaising with the school's safeguarding officers. Whilst in most respects the governing body successfully fulfils its responsibility for monitoring the school's compliance with regulations for welfare, health and safety, it has been insufficiently attentive in checking arrangements for the appointment of staff and in ensuring refresher training for all staff. Governors have all received training in safeguarding pupils, and arrangements to conduct their formal annual review of safeguarding arrangements are thorough.

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 good.
- 5.6 The school's aims and ethos are very well secured by a cohesive leadership, which is well supported by a management team with complementary skills, and a strong and committed team of teaching and non-teaching staff. Since the previous inspection, leadership has been reorganised and roles have been clarified. Senior leaders provide clear direction in which school improvement is a high priority. Their vision is formalised in a comprehensive three-year development plan that provides a clear focus for continuous development and to which all members of staff contribute. Targets, together with the actions necessary for their completion, are identified clearly and the plan is evaluated by staff at all levels of responsibility to ensure that these are accomplished. This is exemplified in the strong and considered start made with the implementation of a scheme to improve pupils' learning power, which is permeating teaching objectives throughout the school. Planning for improvement is well supported by the governing body, with whom communication is strong. This has had a strong impact on pupils' academic standards and personal development, as well as their enthusiasm for their school. Recommendations from the previous inspection have been implemented and almost all standards judged to be good at the previous inspection have been raised to excellent.
- 5.7 Communication amongst staff at all levels is very effective and a strength of the school. A well-organised meeting structure and informal liaison allow staff to evaluate and discuss their practice regularly as well as to monitor the progress and welfare of their pupils. Monitoring processes are very well established; throughout the school there is a strong culture of staff peer observation, to affirm as well as to improve their practice. Pupils' work and teachers' planning are scrutinised by senior leaders and subject managers regularly, to ensure that teaching and marking are meeting the standards expected. This has contributed to an improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection.
- 5.8 A thorough appraisal system for all teaching and non-teaching staff is linked to personal and professional targets and the training and support necessary to secure them. Careful induction procedures ensure that new staff are well informed about the school's arrangements for safeguarding, health and safety, as well as academic requirements. Staff, including visiting staff, benefit from clear handbooks to inform them about the school's procedures and expectations. Staff have undertaken a wide range of training to improve their practice. The leadership ensures that policies to promote safeguarding, welfare, health and safety are reviewed regularly and implemented. The school acted swiftly during the inspection to amend its procedures to ensure that all checks are completed correctly and to arrange refresher training for visiting staff.
- 5.9 The school maintains excellent relationships with parents, in accordance with its aims to encourage involvement by the family in each pupil's education. A very large majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and all those spoken to said that their children are well looked after, happy and feel safe at school.
- 5.10 In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a few parents expressed dissatisfaction with the school's handling of their concerns and with the speed of response to their questions. However, in discussion, parents spoke warmly of the

promptness with which any query is addressed. They said that communication is excellent and that concerns, therefore, do not escalate. Particular praise was expressed about the availability of the kitchen staff to talk to parents about any concerns around the provision of food. Records indicate that the school handles complaints in accordance with an appropriate complaints procedure.

- 5.11 The school offers parents excellent opportunities to be involved and informed about school life. Parents value the weekly newsletter *The Longacre Times*, informative handbooks and regular reports on, and invitations to, a wide variety of school events, such as 'coffee clinics', information evenings, performances and fixtures. The school website provides further useful information, as well as the required school policies material. Parents are particularly appreciative that all are welcome at class and reward assemblies, and that if a pupil receives a certificate, a postcard version is mailed home so that working parents can also join in the celebration. Parents also value the daily contact with members of the leadership at pick up and drop off times. For younger pupils' parents, notice boards, updated daily, provide an excellent account of class activities, while events for older pupils are listed outside the main entrance. Many parents contribute directly to the pupils' education by volunteering to hear reading, telling stories or visiting the school to talk about their professional lives. The Parent Teacher Association organises popular events, such as a ball, fairs and quiz nights. These social occasions all contribute to the openness and easy contact between school and parents.
- 5.12 A very small minority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed dissatisfaction with the information provided about their children's progress. Inspectors found that parents are well informed through thorough reports, grade cards, profiles and contact books, as well as parent consultation evenings. Further discussions are possible at other times, although parents said that they are rarely required because of the ease with which they may contact teachers.

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 outstanding provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. Educational programmes cover all the required areas of learning and, in Reception, are enhanced through specialist teaching in gymnastics, dance and French. Moderated assessments demonstrate that children achieve very well relative to their entry levels, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 6.2 Committed and enthusiastic staff show an excellent understanding of how young children learn and develop. Planning is adapted to reflect events that attract the children's interest. Provision for younger children affords an excellent balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities, such as when the rules of circle time are established and puppets are used to encourage participation. Older children also have a wide range of free-choice activities. In adult-led learning, such as in literacy, more able children are extended through perceptive questioning and the provision of extension activities. Adults provide individual support to assist the development of writing skills. Children have excellent access to the outdoor learning and woodland exploration areas. Considerable extra help is provided for children with SEND, including well-focused interventions for identified children.
- 6.3 The programme to improve learning power enables all children to practise the skills necessary for independent learning whilst developing qualities such as resilience. The setting has an outstanding partnership with parents, who are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and say that there is strong encouragement to be involved in their children's learning. The recommendation from the previous inspection that the school establish systematic measures to track children's progress throughout the setting has been effectively addressed. Increased focus has been given to children's prior achievements within planning, aided by the introduction of software that enables observational assessment to monitor progress throughout the setting.

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

- 6.4 Provision for children's well-being is outstanding. The warm, friendly and positive atmosphere in which children are welcomed individually and enter enthusiastically demonstrates the strong relationships between staff and children. Consequently, all children clearly enjoy their time at school and develop their independence, creativity and social skills. From the youngest age, children are helped to meet behavioural expectations through careful practice of expected conduct and frequent praise.
- 6.5 Health and hygiene are reinforced from a young age so that most children have an excellent understanding of the need for clean hands, and for a healthy diet and exercise. Children who are not yet able to manage their own personal needs are helped sensitively.
- 6.6 Children are well prepared for the transition to the next stage of their learning through becoming familiar with staff and older pupils, and through attendance at

some whole-school assemblies, while older children wear school uniform. Reception children take great pride in their responsibilities as 'helper of the week'.

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

- 6.7 Leadership and management are outstanding. A governor with specific responsibility for the EYFS promotes its consideration at a strategic level and investment has resulted in improvements to the outside areas. Leaders have excellent oversight of educational provision and fulfil their responsibilities for the EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements, so that all staff have a thorough knowledge of child protection. They ensure that the setting is welcoming, safe and stimulating.
- 6.8 All aspects of provision are rigorously evaluated and challenging targets are set for improvement. New innovations are carefully considered before adoption. All staff are regularly appraised and professional development is encouraged. Staff have good opportunities to discuss any issues with experienced colleagues. Notable features of the setting are the enthusiasm, expertise and knowledge of the support staff, who welcome opportunities to extend their professional development.
- 6.9 Parents speak highly of the outstanding communication in the setting, helping them to support their children's development. Excellent early identification of particular needs, for example in relation to speech development, and a productive partnership between school and the local authority facilitate additional funding for targeted interventions and support.

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

- 6.10 The overall quality and standards of the provision are outstanding. The children, including those with SEND, make excellent progress relative to their ability and needs. The youngest children are able to identify shapes and use numbers. Older children are starting to write their names, count and recognise rhyme. Children in Reception are beginning to read, and to perform simple addition and subtraction.
- 6.11 Children of all ages are happy and secure. They are friendly and confident when talking to adults and their peers. Children with identified needs are supported in ways that contribute significantly to the development of confidence and self-esteem. Co-operation and support amongst the children are evident in both child-initiated and adult-led activities, and their behaviour is excellent. Excellent leadership and management ensure that all safeguarding and welfare requirements are met. A constant evaluation of all aspects of practice is formalised in clear action planning to secure continuous improvement.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

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

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