



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

PITSFORD SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Pitsford School

Full Name of School	Pitsford School
DfE Number	928/6064
Registered Charity Number	298910
Address	Pitsford School Pitsford Hall Moulton Lane Pitsford Northampton Northamptonshire NN6 9AX
Telephone Number	01604 880306
Fax Number	01604 882212
Email Address	office@ngs-school.com
Head	Mr Noel Toone
Chairman of Governors	Mr John Kitchen
Age Range	3 to 19
Total Number of Pupils	278
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (159 boys; 119 girls)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 15 5-11: 84 11 - 19 179
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Frances Jeffrey
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	11th to 14th February 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 February 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 chairman of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions, tutor periods and assemblies. Inspectors looked at the arrangements made for sick or injured pupils and the school library, and took meals in the dining rooms with the 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

Mr Rodney Fox	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Linda Griffith	Team Inspector (Former Head of Junior School, ISA school)
Mrs Susan Court	Team Inspector (Former Head of Professional Development and Training, Society of Heads school)
Mrs Dawn Moore	Team Inspector (Head, ISA school)
Mrs Kirsten Jackson	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL	2
(a) Main findings	2
(b) Action points	3
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	3
3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	4
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning	4
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c) The contribution of teaching	6
4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	8
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	8
(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care	9
(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	10
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	11
(a) The quality of governance	11
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	11

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Pitsford School is a day school for boys and girls between the ages of three and nineteen. The school sets out to: provide its pupils with an academic education suitable for their chosen career; enrich their lives by making them aware of social and cultural issues; develop their understanding of the need for serving the community; make them caring and sensitive to others; enable them to work both independently and as part of a team; and allow them to use their initiative and develop their self-confidence. The school is owned and run by the Northamptonshire Independent Grammar School Charity Trust Ltd, an educational charity whose trustees are the school's governors.
- 1.2 Founded in 1989 as Northamptonshire Grammar School, the school changed its name in September 2011, taking its new name from Pitsford Hall, the Georgian hall in which it is housed, and the Northamptonshire village in which it is located. Although it is managed as one school, the senior and junior sections occupy distinct premises on the 26-acre site that they share. Since the previous inspection the junior school has moved into a new building, completed in February 2012. This includes purpose-built accommodation for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which incorporates a covered outdoor play area.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, 46 of the 179 pupils in the senior school were in Years 12 or 13, 20 boys and 26 girls. The 99 pupils in the junior school included 15 in the Reception class, seven girls and eight boys. Almost all pupils from the junior school continue into the senior school at age eleven. Pupils mostly come from a wide area across Northamptonshire and South Leicestershire, but a significant number from overseas join at age sixteen. Overseas pupils live in lodgings with local families that are arranged by an agency independently of the school.
- 1.4 Standardised tests indicate that the average ability of pupils in the junior school and in Years 7 to 11 is above the national average. Pupils seeking admission to the school at sixth-form level are required to qualify with at least six GCSE passes at grade C or above, indicating that the average ability of pupils in Years 12 and 13 is also above the national average. No pupil has a statement of special educational need. The school has identified 28 pupils as having a special educational need and/or disability (SEND), mostly dyslexia, 12 of whom receive specialist support. English is an additional language (EAL) for 42 pupils, 37 of whom receive extra help with English language skills.
- 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 Pupils at Pitsford School are well educated in accordance with the school's aims. At all stages of the school, they achieve well in their work in response to an effective curriculum and good teaching. This is apparent in the excellent progress made in the EYFS and the high levels of literacy and numeracy reached in the junior school. It is confirmed by the good GCSE and A-level examination results achieved. Throughout the school pupils achieve success in a range of activities, including music and drama, sport and outdoor pursuits. Individual pupils have been successful in gaining gold and bronze awards in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE), gold certificates in national mathematics contests and in reaching the later stages in regional debating competitions.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is good. Throughout the school, pupils are confident and articulate, tolerant and kind, and demonstrate emotional maturity appropriate to their age. This is in response to excellent pastoral care and good arrangements to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety. The school has sound governance and good leadership and management. The governors do not at present include amongst their number members with experience of educational management, with the consequence that some aspects of their oversight of, and support for, the school's management and educational development planning are not as strong as their financial oversight.
- 2.3 Since the previous inspection in 2009 the school has made good progress, most significantly by providing new premises for the junior school and the EYFS. Progress has been made with the two recommendations for the whole school and a further four recommendations for the EYFS made by that inspection, although further work remains to be done with the two whole-school recommendations. Transition arrangements between the junior and senior schools have been strengthened. However, the move to new premises has increased the physical separation of the two sections of the school and the need to foster even closer links and more effective communication between them. Pupils have developed a greater range of links with the wider community, but the links for pupils in Years 7 to 11 remain limited in scope. All the recommendations made for the EYFS have been fully met: the new premises provide an excellent environment both indoors and outdoors, with plenty of storage, and allow information and communication technology (ICT) to be a regular part of the children's classroom experience. All staff in the EYFS have undergone further training about safeguarding procedures. There are now two paediatric first-aid trained personnel on site at all times.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure that the governing board includes members with experience of educational management.
2. Require the senior leadership team to construct an educational development plan.
3. Submit a specific EYFS development plan to inform the whole school development plan each year.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The pupils' achievements and learning are good.
- 3.2 The school educates its pupils well and in accordance with its stated aims. At all stages of the school, pupils acquire good levels of knowledge, understanding and skill in all the required areas of the curriculum. The overall quality and standards in the EYFS are excellent. Children know most of the basic phonics and phonemes. They are starting to read books independently using their phonic knowledge to decode words accurately. They can write short notes and can calculate simple number sentences. They count confidently and many of them can double numbers up to five accurately. Children make excellent progress in their learning and development relative to their starting points.
- 3.3 In the junior and senior schools, the pupils are articulate, read with understanding, can reason and work things out for themselves, are creative, literate and can apply mathematical and ICT skills competently. In lessons, they usually recall previous knowledge well and apply it thoughtfully to new situations. Through the games and extra-curricular activities programmes, they develop good physical and team working skills. Pupils enjoy success in a range of curriculum and extra-curricular spheres, for example in national mathematics contests, in debating contests, in music and drama, and in the DofE, as well as in competitive sports fixtures with other schools.
- 3.4 Pupils' attainment in the junior school cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but, on the evidence available from their work, it is judged to be good in relation to national age-related expectations. The pupils in the junior school follow a challenging curriculum to prepare them for entry to the senior school. 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 both GCSE and A-level examinations have been above the national average for maintained schools over this three year period. In 2013, the GCSE results were broadly in line with those in 2012, but neither year was as good as in 2010 and 2011, which were the school's highest results in recent years. The A-level results in 2013 were consistent with those in the previous three years. Pupils throughout the school make good progress relative to pupils of similar ability, as is confirmed for pupils in the senior school by the level of attainment at GCSE.
- 3.5 The work and examination results of pupils with SEND indicates that these pupils also make good progress in relation to their abilities, while pupils with EAL are among those who make the most rapid progress; their achievements are some of the best in the school. The most able pupils make rapid progress and achieve well, although, particularly in Years 7 to 9, able pupils were observed at times to be waiting for others to catch up before they could progress further.
- 3.6 Pupils at all stages of the school have excellent attitudes to learning. They are cooperative, eager to succeed and they listen to and support one another in class. They display good levels of imagination and creativity. They are competent users of ICT, although they do not often make use of it in class to enhance their learning. They work well in collaboration with one another and persevere when working on their own. Their written work shows evident pride in their work. They enjoy learning and are confident to ask questions when they need assistance.

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

- 3.7 The curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.8 The programme for the EYFS years is excellent at meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. It enables almost all the children to reach the expected levels of development, and many to exceed them, in all areas. Children with SEND and/or EAL are helped to achieve well so that almost all are enabled to reach the level expected by the end of the EYFS. Small classes and excellent assessment and recording systems enable staff quickly to identify and seek help for any children who have SEND. Parents are helped to understand their child's educational needs, and support is given both in school and in liaison with the local authority.
- 3.9 The curriculum in both the junior and senior schools is effective in its coverage of all the requisite areas of learning, is sufficiently flexible to be adapted to meet the needs of individual pupils, and is consistent with the school's aim to provide its pupils with an academic education suitable for their chosen career. In the junior school, the curriculum includes the National Curriculum subjects, with science, geography, history and art linked to provide an exciting and creative cross-curricular programme. All pupils learn French and, in Years 4, 5 and 6, Latin. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and religious education are part of the curriculum for all year groups.
- 3.10 The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is broad and well balanced and, in Year 9, includes a second foreign language, German or Spanish. The pupils' experience of technology is limited to ICT and those elements of design covered in the art course, which includes some textile design. In Years 10 and 11, pupils have a good choice of GCSE subjects, English and mathematics and seven options, including at least one modern language and two sciences. In the senior school, PSHE is taught in tutor periods twice a week, allowing a relationship of trust to be built up between the tutor and the group. Pupils in Years 12 and 13 choose from a good range of seventeen courses and follow a general studies course, which covers a wide range of topics, including cultural, political and philosophical issues.
- 3.11 In mathematics, arranging teaching groups by ability where possible enables pupils to progress at their own pace. In other subjects, pupils' needs are met by careful planning to adapt both teaching and the tasks set to match individual needs. Additional support is available for pupils with SEND and/or EAL. In addition to the more challenging work given to the more able pupils in class, there are worthwhile opportunities to pursue academic interests outside the classroom through activities such as 'Mad Physics' or by taking additional GCSE or A-level qualifications.
- 3.12 A designated senior teacher supports tutors in providing advice on careers and higher education and pupils confirmed that they had received the help that they needed in choosing the next steps in their education.
- 3.13 The curriculum is supported by a good range of extra-curricular activities in both parts of the school, including sport, music and outdoor activities. Pupils are encouraged to participate in at least three extra-curricular activities per week, including at least one sport. Apart from rugby, football, cricket, netball and athletics, the sports available include sailing, horse-riding and swimming.
- 2.1 The pupils' educational experience is enhanced by a good variety of trips and expeditions, for example a trip to Normandy for pupils in Year 8, by regular drama productions in both the senior and junior schools, and by frequent concerts, such as

the weekly lunchtime concert in the senior school. In line with a recommendation of the previous report, the school has developed a wider range of links with the local community, including singing in retirement homes and in the parish church, and through service activities and charity fund raising, although opportunities available for pupils in Years 7 to 11 to be involved with the local community are still limited.

- 3.14 The school has responded to the recommendation of the previous report to strengthen links between junior and senior schools by improving the transition arrangements between the two parts of the school with a handover meeting between teachers, and with an induction programme, which includes a familiarisation day in the senior school.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.15 The quality of the teaching is good.
- 3.16 Staff in the EYFS, are excellent in enabling all children to be fully supported in their learning. They have very high expectations of the children and engage with them effectively to extend their learning and support them at every opportunity. Nursery children work alongside those from Reception inspiring them to learn effectively. Strong links with pupils in Year 1 and their teacher ensure that the children are fully prepared for transition at the end of the year. The excellent tracking system enables the staff to monitor the children's progress and plan appropriately. Teaching in the EYFS makes good use of ICT, meeting a recommendation of the previous inspection report.
- 3.17 Teaching throughout the school is highly effective in promoting the progress of all pupils and fully supports the school's aims that pupils meet their aspirations. The responses of both parents and pupils to the pre-inspection questionnaires showed that the overwhelming majority are satisfied or very satisfied with the teaching and support that the pupils receive.
- 3.18 At all stages, lessons are well planned and paced, make good use of time and are based on a clear understanding of individual pupils' needs and abilities. Teaching is carefully adapted to match these, to provide appropriate support for those with SEND and/or EAL, and, usually, to challenge the more able. In the junior school, teaching assistants work with pupils with SEND using purpose-written schemes and workbooks. In an English lesson, where senior school pupils compared two poems, a framework was provided for those pupils who wished to use it, while those who were confident enough to work independently were encouraged to rely on their own skills. Throughout the school in mathematics lessons, good variation of task is used to match the pupils' abilities, although the wide range of ability in many classes means that there are still occasions when the more able pupils wait to progress.
- 3.19 Teachers throughout the school are well qualified, display excellent subject knowledge, especially in Years 12 and 13, and are committed to their pupils' progress. A good variety of methods is employed by teachers to stimulate interest and enable pupil progress. Widespread, imaginative use is made of resources, for example in an English writing lesson for junior school pupils when a video clip was used to stimulate ideas about the hero. Throughout the senior school the commitment to practical work in science is excellent. Teachers use ICT well in class, as do pupils at home, but its use is not often required of pupils in lessons. Skilful use of questioning in Years 12 and 13 allows teachers to assess understanding and challenge pupils appropriately.

- 3.20 Marking throughout the school is generally thorough, accurate and frequent. The online electronic mark book provides a helpful and effective record, enabling teachers, parents and pupils to check progress instantly. Marking in the junior school is particularly helpful in providing constructive advice and setting targets for improvement. Regular assessment against examination criteria helps pupils in Years 12 and 13 to know how they are progressing towards their target grades. The school gathers assessment data in order to monitor the progress of individual pupils effectively, but the systematic analysis of data in order to monitor the progress of different groups of pupils is only just starting to be done.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good.
- 4.2 Children in the EYFS work and play exceedingly well together and are excellent at organising themselves into groups for role play. Provision of an egg timer allows children to learn about taking turns fairly with popular toys and equipment. They interact well with adults, are confident and express themselves well. Children thrive in the supportive, vibrant atmosphere and develop excellent social skills. The preparation for transition from Nursery to Reception and Reception to Year 1 is excellent.
- 4.3 Throughout the school, the pupils are confident and their self-awareness is good. They demonstrate good emotional maturity in their considerate attitude to one another. They are articulate when expressing their ideas, whilst listening respectfully to the opinions of others, understanding the social mores of community. Their spiritual development is enhanced by participation in the planning and leading of assemblies, and was evident when pupils in Year 9 showed a high degree of maturity discussing death in an English poetry lesson. Their awareness of the significance of faith in many peoples' lives is heightened by visits to Coventry Cathedral, an Orthodox Church or other places of worship as part of the religious studies programme in Years 7 to 9.
- 4.4 The pupils' understanding of right and wrong is excellent. They have a keen sense of fair play, promoted in the junior school by the house system. They benefit from the strong moral guidance inherent in the systems of rewards and sanctions, peer group commendation and support. Pupils enjoy a variety of tangible rewards which mark their personal achievements. They accept sanctions as a continuity of fairness within their community. They recognise the code of ethics enshrined in the school's ethos.
- 4.5 The pupils' sense of responsibility is good. Pupils in Year 6 take pride in holding office as monitors and house captains. The monitors willingly mentor younger pupils, for example taking them safely back to their classrooms. The junior school children readily act as tour guides on Open Days. Year 12 and 13 pupils are all prefects and have other responsibilities. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, half the pupils who responded indicated that they did not agree that they are given opportunities to take on responsibility. Inspectors found that such opportunities are limited for pupils in Years 7 to 11. The elected representatives on the junior school council accept their responsibility with enthusiasm and treat it seriously, speaking confidently and articulately at the meetings and experiencing fulfilment when they effect some change. The senior school does not have a council but pupils throughout the school enthusiastically plan special events such as concerts, exhibition and expedition days, or a charity fund-raising fashion show, with growing awareness of those in less fortunate circumstances than their own.
- 4.6 The pupils' understanding, tolerance and respect for other faiths and cultures are excellent. They benefit from being part of a multi-cultural environment in which those from different backgrounds and faiths are fully integrated into school life. Pupils from different traditions and cultures enjoy very positive relationships with one another. They have a good understanding of Western European culture, and of the

public institutions of the United Kingdom, developed through discussion in lessons and by listening to visiting speakers.

- 4.7 The pupils have reached a good level of personal development by the time they leave the school. They participate successfully against other school teams in debating competitions. They are confident in speaking out, having had experiences in the public arena both in and out of school.

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

- 4.8 The arrangements for pastoral care are excellent.
- 4.9 The contribution of the EYFS provision to children's well-being is excellent. The key workers enable individual interests and needs to be quickly noticed and provide appropriate care and support for each child. The children demonstrate confidence that their teachers know them well, and that they feel happy, safe and secure in the setting. Children know that broccoli, carrots, fruit and water are healthy and enjoy making healthy snacks. Even the youngest are becoming fully independent in matters of personal hygiene.
- 4.10 Throughout the school, members of staff provide excellent support and guidance. Small class sizes in the junior school, and small tutor groups in the senior school, enable each pupil to be recognised as an individual by staff. The teachers' know their pupils well, which enables them to provide appropriate support, particularly for the overseas pupils living away from home. Regular staff meetings are held to discuss issues affecting the pastoral care of the pupils and to record their successes.
- 4.11 Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils are excellent. Members of staff are genuinely interested in the pupils' welfare, which contributes to the positive relationships throughout the community. The pupils are friendly, tolerant and supportive of one another.
- 4.12 In the junior and senior schools, healthy eating is encouraged, whilst providing for particular dietary requirements. Pupils enjoy their lunches, which are suitably nutritious, although the junior school pupils are not given choices over meals. Sport is part of the school curriculum, with a wide range of extra-curricular sporting opportunities offered in both senior and junior schools, promoting a positive attitude towards taking regular exercise.
- 4.13 The school has a well understood and effective anti-bullying policy. Pupils report that bullying and behavioural issues are rare and are well managed. For those pupils wishing to report bullying issues anonymously, both parts of the school have effective ways for so doing. The system of rewards and sanctions promotes good behaviour and deals constructively with any that is unacceptable. A small number of pupils in their responses the pre-inspection questionnaire questioned the fairness with which rewards and sanctions are used, but this view was not confirmed in pupil interviews.
- 4.14 The school has developed a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND and teachers are skilled at adapting teaching to meet the needs of individual pupils.
- 4.15 Although a minority of pupils responding to the questionnaire were not satisfied that the school seeks and responds to their opinions, the school uses a variety of ways to

seek the views of pupils. In the junior school, the house system and school council provide good opportunities for pupils to offer ideas or to express concerns. In the senior school, tutor groups give pupils the chance to discuss and make decisions, for example, those affecting their expedition and exhibition days. To complement this, the headmaster regularly invites pupils from different year groups to have tea with him.

- 4.16 Pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire overwhelmingly endorsed the statement 'I like being at this school'.

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

- 4.17 The arrangements made to promote welfare, health and safety are good.
- 4.18 Safeguarding procedures throughout the school are effective. All members of staff receive regular training in safeguarding and child protection. The EYFS setting provides a safe, secure and friendly atmosphere for children to learn and, in line with a recommendation from the previous inspection, staff in the EYFS have received further safeguarding training. The welfare of children in the EYFS is promoted effectively by the strong staff team, who know each child well. The school has designated two persons to have specific responsibility for child protection, one of them in the EYFS. Staff recruitment procedures are rigorous and all the necessary checks are meticulously recorded in a central register. Good relationships have been established with local welfare agencies, which support training for the designated persons.
- 4.19 Fire safety procedures are robust. Fire safety equipment is tested regularly and the results recorded and acted on promptly when necessary. Evacuation practices are conducted regularly and efficiently recorded.
- 4.20 Arrangements to ensure health and safety are thorough. The school is diligent in carrying out general risk assessments. Electrical testing, checks on the storage of chemicals and radioactive sources, and the management of other potential hazards are reviewed regularly and advice from external agencies is sought when necessary. The estates management team conducts regular checks of the buildings and grounds. Pupils are taught how to act safely in those departments or activities involving practical or physical activity. Regular checks are made of all equipment used by pupils, including in the EYFS.
- 4.21 The provision made for pupils who are ill or injured, and for those with SEND, is satisfactory. Clear policies exist for the storage and administration of medication, and a sufficient number of people hold a first-aid qualification. Accurate records are kept of the dispensing of medications and of those who have received first-aid treatment. The school has good procedures for informing parents of accidents and illness which occur at school but the arrangements made in the junior school for sick children to await collection by their parents in the school lobby are not suitable. In response to a recommendation of the previous report, two paediatric first-aid trained personnel are in the junior school at all times.
- 4.22 The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained, and correctly stored for the previous three years. Rigorous procedures for the collection of children from the EYFS at the end of the school day help keep them safe. The school has a detailed procedure to be followed in the event that a pupil goes missing.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The school has sound governance.
- 5.2 The governors have established an appropriate committee structure to monitor all aspects of the school. The finance and estates committee ensures strong financial oversight and effective planning for investment in buildings and resources, one consequence of which has been the building of excellent new premises for the junior school and the EYFS. The education and personnel committee takes a keen interest in educational standards, human resources and safeguarding. However, the governors' own ability to support the school's management in providing educational direction is limited by there not being governors with direct experience of educational management. The governors are aware of this and are seeking to remedy it.
- 5.3 The governors are diligent in their attendance at meetings, but do not usually meet or visit parts of the school whilst it is in session. Consequently, they are not well known to staff or parents and their involvement with, for example, the EYFS, is limited. Their insight into the working of the school is mostly gleaned from reading and hearing reports, or as parents. They have a vision for the future of the school but it is not widely known or understood in the school community as their plans have not yet been published as part of a whole-school development plan.
- 5.4 The governors are assiduous in conducting their annual review of the safeguarding policy and procedures and reassuring themselves that the procedures are working well, but their minutes do not clearly state that they are satisfied with the policy and its effectiveness. A designated governor visits the school regularly to liaise with, and support, the school's child protection officer. The health and safety committee monitors safety issues as they arise and the designated governor attends those meetings, providing a good link between the governors and the school. Minutes of the health and safety committee go to the finance and estates committee and then on to the full board. Scrutiny of the governors' minutes indicates that the oversight of health and safety, a responsibility of the whole governing body, has received only brief attention at their recent meetings.

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

- 5.5 The school's leadership and management are good.
- 5.6 Leadership and management at all levels, including in the EYFS, are effective in ensuring fulfilment of the school's aims. Outcomes for pupils in terms of academic achievement and personal development are good. Arrangements to ensure the safeguarding of all pupils are effective and the school now has a suitable range of policies. Risk assessments, conducted by heads of department or by those leading trips or expeditions, are properly monitored by senior management.
- 5.7 The school's senior managers have good understanding of the school's strengths and those areas still in need of development. Departmental development plans, including the junior school plan, are of good quality, but these plans have not yet been brought together as part of a whole-school development plan to provide all staff with clear educational direction. The school aims for high standards of

achievement, and members of staff at every level are very committed to achieving this. Staff are dedicated in their care for pupils and fully embrace the inclusive and family-orientated ethos of the school. Financial management is careful and thorough.

- 5.8 The new senior management team has still to form a strong, collegiate sense and roles within the team are not yet well defined. Senior managers currently do not have sufficient time to be able effectively to address areas for further improvement. The value of self-evaluation and priority setting is recognized at all levels of leadership and management. Formal arrangements for evaluating and improving teaching through regular monitoring are not consistently applied, although the size of the school enables staff to have a good awareness of each other's strengths. Much good practice has been established in the junior school, and in some senior school departments, but systems for sharing such practice across the school are not yet established. The appraisal system is supportive rather than an instrument designed to promote school improvement.
- 5.9 Leadership and management in the EYFS are good. Self-evaluation is in the initial stages of development and does not yet set targets or priorities for improvement. Rigorous processes for development are not yet in place and there is no link with a whole-school development plan. There are effective systems for performance management and these encourage staff to be involved in continuous professional development. Leadership and management is highly effective in evaluating practice; for example, in a detailed analysis of the end of year profiles, the need to focus on boys' writing was clearly identified as a target for improvement and implemented immediately.
- 5.10 The school's management is effective in securing high quality staff and has rigorous procedures for ensuring their suitability to work with children. Throughout the school, including in the EYFS, safer recruitment procedures are meticulously followed. Appropriate support is given to new staff through induction procedures, although formal lesson observations are not a part of these procedures. All staff receive the appropriate level of safeguarding, health and safety training, and when risk assessments are required they are carried out thoroughly.
- 5.11 Links with parents are excellent in all parts of the school, including in the EYFS. The vast majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were highly supportive of the school and satisfied or very satisfied with their children's education. They were particularly appreciative of how well looked after, happy and safe their children feel at school and the range of extra-curricular activities on offer. No significant concerns were raised about the school.
- 5.12 The school maintains a constructive relationship with parents and the 'open door' policy is particularly helpful in allowing parents to be actively involved in their children's education. The complaints policy is suitable and readily available to parents. The school keeps a careful record of the small number of concerns raised each year.
- 5.13 In the EYFS, parents are helped to prepare their children for joining the school by a 'Moving Up' parents' meeting and through the EYFS parents' handbook, which includes information for parents about where they can find more detail of the provision. Parents are made to feel welcome in the setting and exchange news from home. They are highly supportive of the school praising the warm, family atmosphere and the small class size. The parents' noticeboard, where parents

collect their children, gives helpful information about forthcoming activities and the curriculum. Review sheets keep parents well informed about how their child is progressing and what their next steps in development should be. Informative notes are included in the homework diary, which go home with reading books every day. End of year reports provide a good summary of progress during the year.

- 5.14 In the senior and junior schools, parents are provided with regular assessment grades and comments each half term in addition to the annual full written report. These reports are thorough and informative. At least one parents' evening a year is arranged for each year group. The online electronic mark book provides parents with instant access to relevant and detailed information about the progress that their child is making.
- 5.15 Parents receive regular newsletters and the annual school magazine, which provide useful information about the work of the school community. Parents of current and prospective pupils have suitable access to all the required information about the school.

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