



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

RICHMOND HOUSE SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Richmond House School

Full Name of School	Richmond House School
DfE Number	383/6004
Registered Charity Number	1270675
Address	Richmond House School 170 Otley Road Far Headingley Leeds West Yorkshire LS16 5LG
Telephone Number	0113 275 2670
Fax Number	0113 230 4868
Email Address	enquiries@rhschool.org
Headmistress	Mrs Jane Disley
Chairman of Governors	Mr Darren Stubbs
Age Range	3 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	205
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (113 boys; 92 girls)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 51 5-11: 154
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Karen de Bethel
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	05 March 2013 to 08 March 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 June 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 and other 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 Danice Iles	Reporting Inspector
Mr Peter Cook	Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mrs Elizabeth Harris	Team Inspector (Head of Department, IAPS school)
Mrs Sara Robinson	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 Richmond House is a co-educational day school for pupils from the ages of three to eleven. The school was privately owned when it was established in 1934 as a non-denominational foundation in the Christian tradition. In 1989, a charitable trust was formed to oversee the school, with the trustees serving as the governing body. The school now welcomes pupils of all faiths and of none. Situated in three adjoining Victorian residences close to the northern ring road of Leeds, the school occupies ten acres of grounds that provide space for playgrounds, including an adventure playground, sports fields, pavilions and safe parking. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is situated to the rear of the main classroom buildings with access to a partially covered play area.
- 1.2 The school aims to give each pupil a first-class education and the opportunity to develop into a confident, hard-working and successful individual. It seeks to inspire high achievement in all areas, academic and extra-curricular, within a happy, caring family environment.
- 1.3 There were 205 pupils on roll at the time of the inspection: 51 in the EYFS, 48 in Years 1 and 2, and 106 in Years 3 to 6. Six pupils, including four in the EYFS, have English as an additional language (EAL) and receive language support. The school has identified four pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and a further fifteen also receive learning support from the school for a variety of needs, mostly related to dyslexia. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.4 The majority of pupils enter the school in the Nursery. The ability profile of the school is above the national average. Most pupils are of at least above average ability, with few being of below average ability; a fairly wide spread of abilities is represented.
- 1.5 Most pupils are British, and there is a broad mix of ethnic backgrounds. The majority live within a radius of eight miles from the school, with families from business or professional backgrounds.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements, and of their learning, is excellent. Pupils of all ages and abilities, including those with SEND or EAL, are very successfully educated, as are the more able. The school amply fulfils its principal aim to provide its pupils with a first-class education in a happy, friendly atmosphere. Pupils develop high levels of knowledge, understanding and skills which they apply effectively over a broad range of academic and creative subjects, games and activities. Their love of reading is reflected in the high standard of their writing. Pupils visibly enjoy learning and are attentive and responsive in class. Their enthusiasm and energy are tangible. Their achievements are reflected in their consistent success in 11+ entrance examinations to academically selective schools. Teaching staff are well qualified and pupils respond eagerly to the generally excellent and well-planned teaching by subject specialists in generously resourced, well-maintained classrooms and playing fields. On occasions, extended lesson introductions result in less effective learning. In the EYFS, provision for the education and care of children is excellent and they make excellent progress, although planning for the use of outdoor resources is not wholly effective.
- 2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent, supported by the highly caring and nurturing environment of the school. Pupils are very secure in the care and attention of the staff, teaching and non-teaching. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent; there is mutual respect and an atmosphere of warmth and friendliness. Pupils behave very well and respond to the example of courtesy and consideration set by their teachers, and they are kind and caring towards each other.
- 2.3 The quality of governance and of leadership and management is excellent. Members of the governing body are carefully selected and highly committed. Their attention to detail in the oversight of welfare, health and safety, safeguarding and safe recruitment is meticulous. The governors provide wise management of finances and excellent advice and support. Leaders and managers are inspiring in their dedication and determination to achieve the highest possible standards throughout the school, and parents are highly appreciative.
- 2.4 The recommendations of the previous report have been met comprehensively. New assessment procedures have been introduced, and a powerful data management system has been installed, which is a significant asset. Curriculum co-ordinators have highly successfully met the challenges posed for them, and they have made significant changes and improvements.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure that there is efficient time management in all teaching.
2. Ensure that planning in the EYFS includes the methodical use of outdoor resources.

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 are very well educated and highly successful in their learning across all subjects and activities. The school fulfils its aim to provide its pupils with a first-class education whilst encouraging them to develop enquiring minds and an appreciation of the world around them. At all stages, pupils show high levels of knowledge and understanding, and well-developed skills. Particular strengths are their reading and creative writing, their handwriting and the presentation of their work. Pupils of all ages are very articulate. They enjoy discussion, which they undertake with skill, offering solutions or ideas when questioned and asking for guidance or reassurance if unsure. They listen attentively and thoughtfully to each other and their teachers.
- 3.3 Pupils show a strong grasp of mathematical concepts and apply these well. They are keen problem solvers and enjoy many opportunities to engage in this respect, particularly during mathematics, science, and design and technology (DT) lessons, where they have high levels of success for their age. Their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are excellent and they view its use as an integral part of their work. They enjoy the challenge of investigation and research, especially the weekly general knowledge quizzes that they tackle at home with their parents. Creative work is excellent; artwork on display around the school is of a high standard. Pupils sing and play their instruments with skill and enthusiasm; many achieve merits and distinctions in external examinations in music and speech. They display highly developed physical skills across a range of sports. Pupils are also successful in a particularly wide range of extra-curricular activities that include languages.
- 3.4 Standards in the EYFS are excellent. Nearly all children achieve, and many exceed, the expected goals, responding well to staff expectations. Profile results have greatly improved over the past few years. All children now make excellent progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. All children are highly effective communicators and active listeners. They use language inventively in role play. The youngest children are beginning to recognise initial sounds and some can write these independently. They successfully count and solve problems. They show well-developed physical skills when riding tricycles and scooters. Older children are starting to blend sounds; they use this skill to spell simple words and apply it to reading and writing simple words and sentences. They can successfully subtract one number from another.
- 3.5 The many more able pupils respond very successfully to the abundance of extension activities, both within and outside the curriculum, which challenge their thinking and develop their talents to a high degree. Their attainment is excellent and they achieve a range of scholarships each year as they progress to their first choice of maintained and independent schools. Individual talents are also encouraged, and pupils across a range of abilities achieve awards and enjoy a variety of individual and team successes in sporting, musical, cultural and creative activities, winning local, regional and national competitions.
- 3.6 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests but on evidence available from standardised tests of attainment, pupils achieve results that are high in relation to national age-related expectations, in

response to a demanding curriculum and excellent teaching. Inspection evidence based on observations of lessons, scrutiny of work and discussions with individual pupils confirms this judgement. Standardised measures of progress indicate that pupils across the ability range, including those with SEND or EAL, make good progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability. The progress of pupils with SEND is closely monitored and systems are devised to make the best and most appropriate provision at all ages and stages.

- 3.7 Pupils have a love of learning and enjoy their lessons and activities. Their attitude to their work is excellent, and they take pride both in their own achievements and those of others. They sustain high levels of concentration during lessons, maximising all opportunities presented to them. They work well as individuals, and their co-operation in pairs or in groups is excellent. They are unanimous that their teachers help them to learn successfully.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 This provision enables pupils to achieve high standards in all areas of learning — academic, the creative arts, sport and personal development — amply fulfilling this aim of the school.
- 3.10 Since the previous inspection the school has improved the balance of time allocation for certain subjects, giving more opportunities for longer lessons. Spanish has been added from Year 5 and drama as a discrete subject from Year 3. Teaching by subject specialists greatly enhances the pupils' learning; this is provided from Nursery onwards in music, physical education (PE) and French, from Year 3 onwards in DT and ICT, and from Year 4 onwards in science. The availability of a specialist room, although shared with DT and cookery, greatly benefits the curriculum, teaching, learning and achievement in science.
- 3.11 In the EYFS, a broad and varied programme, supplemented by specialist teaching, provides an extremely good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, all of which contribute to the children's successful development. The setting makes excellent provision to meet the needs of the range of children who attend.
- 3.12 The curriculum is enriched by visits to museums, galleries, gardens and castles, and, for pupils from Year 3 onwards, by residential trips of increasing length, leading to the week-long trip to France in Year 6. Visitors frequently come into school to offer pupils of all ages opportunities to learn about the fire brigade, the police and other public services, while the ground staff help to develop the pupils' interest in gardening through practical experiences.
- 3.13 Curriculum planning is very thorough within each year group and subject, and meets the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities. Lesson plans are detailed and show separate tasks for pupils of differing abilities. Subject leaders and senior managers meet regularly to discuss planning and curriculum coverage; these meetings contribute to development planning in all subject areas.
- 3.14 Planning is also thorough in the EYFS. The EYFS accommodation has been recently redeveloped to provide a stimulating environment, which includes a secure outdoor area. This enables children to access a rich variety of high quality resources, both indoors and outdoors, although use of outdoor resources is not planned for methodically to maximise their potential.

- 3.15 Curricular support for pupils with SEND or EAL is excellent throughout the school. Clear targets are set in individual learning plans that provide individual and group lessons to meet individual pupils' needs and appropriate support in mainstream lessons. Pupils value the intervention made and support given. The curriculum at all ages takes account of the needs of the more able through the provision of extension work and additional challenges, recorded in teachers' planning, and through grouping the older pupils, from Year 5, in sets for mathematics and English.
- 3.16 The pupils benefit from many links with the local community, including nearby universities and many cultural opportunities. The choir performs within the local area, and the school, through the guidance of the school council, has developed links with local charities as well as national ones.
- 3.17 The extensive extra-curricular provision, which has developed significantly since the previous inspection, makes an excellent contribution to the all-round achievement of pupils. The programme, which changes termly, offers all pupils the chance to take part and to try a new challenge or experience. Activities range from the early morning jazz choir, to Mandarin and Arabic at lunchtimes, and street dance, photography and a range of sports clubs in the evenings. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the pupils were virtually unanimous that they can join in a good range of activities and report that they enjoy the breadth of experiences available, some of which have been initiated through suggestions from the school council.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.18 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.19 Teaching promotes progress highly effectively and successfully supports the school's aims. It makes an excellent contribution to the pupils' achievement from the EYFS onwards. Lessons are carefully planned with clear objectives that are shared with the pupils. Teachers have a good understanding of the pupils' individual needs and seek interesting ways to provide different tasks to support them as appropriate. Staff are well qualified and they share their knowledge with their pupils with confidence and enthusiasm. Lively discussion between pupils and teachers is frequently evident. A feature of much of the teaching is the sense of enjoyment that is engendered, so that the pupils perceive learning as fun.
- 3.20 Teaching uses a variety of effective strategies to engage interest. The most successful teaching proceeds at a brisk pace, with little wasted time or lengthy introduction, and concludes with opportunities to discuss what has been learnt. In some teaching over-lengthy introductions result in a loss of pace, which reduces the pupils' interest. Resources, which are plentiful, are used effectively in all subject areas. With the addition of a second computer suite and a selection of laptop and tablet computers, ICT is well used across the curriculum for teaching, recording and research. The introduction of a virtual learning environment has enabled staff to stimulate additional interest in a subject or topic by referring pupils to material that they can access independently. Pupils readily discuss items they have seen and relevant blogs they have read.
- 3.21 Teachers have excellent relationships with their pupils, who are confident to seek help when they need it, thus meeting the school's aim to create a caring community in which every pupil can grow in self-confidence. Classroom behaviour is exemplary overall. Skilful use of questioning is common and the use of open-ended questions

encourages the pupils' independent thinking. These strategies enable all pupils, but especially the most able, to achieve very high standards, as noted in the scrutiny of work. Flexible setting in English and mathematics in Years 5 and 6 enables teaching that provides challenges at an appropriate level and pace; the composition of these classes may be adjusted according to the topic.

- 3.22 In the EYFS, careful questioning by staff enables children to express themselves clearly and with confidence from an early age. Adults encourage independence, exploration and a positive disposition to learning, preparing children well for the next stage in their education.
- 3.23 Careful planning and provision are made for the needs of pupils with SEND or EAL in all teaching, particularly when specialist learning support is offered in class, which is the norm. When it is necessary for pupils to receive tuition outside the classroom, staff ensure that the work missed is explained and completed soon afterwards.
- 3.24 Assessment systems have been thoroughly reviewed and updated since the previous inspection, and valuable data concerning the pupils' progress is now available to staff. All subjects make good use of this data to monitor progress and inform the planning of teaching. This leads to individual targets being set, which stimulate the pupils' effort and motivation at all levels. Pupils' work is marked with varying degrees of positive and informative comments. In some subjects in particular, a dialogue ensues as pupils respond to constructive comments to aid their progress with their own comments, which acknowledge the advice or guidance given. In the EYFS, assessment of progress is regularly collated, clearly recorded and used by staff to identify the next steps in the children's learning.

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 Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate self-respect and pride, and show personal responsibility. By the time they leave, pupils are confident and thoughtful young people, happy to contribute to the community, and with a concern for others and an understanding of a diversity of cultures. They are very well prepared for their next schools.
- 4.3 In the EYFS children feel valued and gain in self-confidence. They are happy, and able to share any concerns with staff. They respect one another and work in harmony. They listen carefully to adult guidance, taking turns and sharing toys and equipment sensibly. They display high levels of curiosity and concentration, and show increasing independence.
- 4.4 The ethos of the school, together with music, stories, presentations and prayers in assemblies and teaching in religious education (RE) lessons, promotes in pupils an excellent spiritual awareness. They become thoughtful, confident, articulate and self-aware young people as they learn to respect and empathise with others. Younger pupils discussed Muslim traditions and customs such as Eid enthusiastically and make friendships across different cultures and faiths. The school's Diamond Jubilee celebrations and other events and visits develop the pupils' sense of awe and wonder.
- 4.5 Morally, pupils learn to understand very well the difference between right and wrong, encouraged to do so by being permitted to make mistakes and to learn from these. Moral dilemmas and their solutions are explored in RE lessons as pupils debate and discuss different scenarios. Younger pupils show understanding of the virtues of fair trade and how it supports those who work on tea plantations in India. Pupils are involved in fund raising for both local and national charities.
- 4.6 Pupils develop excellent social skills and a deep social awareness. They are willing to take responsibility from a young age. In conversation, they are very confident and speak with great enthusiasm about their work and the school. The warmth and courtesy they show to visitors are a strong feature of their development. Around the school, pupils are courteous and orderly, offering direction or guidance without hesitation. Year 6 monitors assist with the younger children very successfully, and Year 5 pupils deputise for them effectively. The appointment of house captains and similar posts termly allows more pupils to experience, enjoy and benefit from these roles. They successfully perform their various duties, including presenting assemblies and showing parents of prospective pupils around the school. The school council, with representatives of each form in the upper part of the school, is now chaired by a Year 6 pupil, assisted by a treasurer and secretary. Pupils are proud of having these positions and say they feel that they are making a difference, rather than simply doing a job. Pupils are interested and aware as they learn about public services and institutions, and about democracy.
- 4.7 The pupils' awareness of their own culture and that of others is very well developed. They have a true understanding of and respect for the different cultures and faiths which are represented in their multi-cultural city. They enjoyed staging a recent performance of the musical *Yanomamo* about the Amazonian rainforest. The pupils'

enthusiastic response to each other's costumes on World Book Day, the school's annual Languages Day and an international buffet for parents arranged by Year 4, together with the pupils' strong appreciation of art, music and literature from around the world all contribute to their excellent cultural development.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 The school's arrangements for the pastoral care of its pupils, from the EYFS onwards, are highly successful and make a significant contribution to their personal development. They reflect the school's aims to provide a warm, happy and safe family atmosphere that encourages responsibility, friendliness and care. Members of staff serve as excellent role models and give pupils extremely effective support and guidance. Much attention is given to resolving any difficult issues with patience and understanding. The relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves, are excellent. The school regularly seeks the views of pupils, through the school council and also questionnaires.
- 4.10 In the EYFS, staff form strong bonds with the children, promoting high standards of behaviour, courtesy and respect for one another. Each child has a key person who ensures that the child's needs are met, and who liaises with their parents.
- 4.11 All pupils are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles and eating habits. They have many opportunities to enjoy exercise, both in PE and in extra-curricular activities. School lunches are nutritious and are closely monitored for their quality. Individual dietary needs are thoughtfully provided for. From the EYFS onwards, mealtimes are also used as opportunities to promote good manners and friendly conversation. Staff in the EYFS help children to develop a strong awareness of personal safety and to comply with the simple rules that relate to this. They provide rigorous supervision in a secure environment and children are regularly reminded about hygiene, personal care routines and the importance of physical exercise.
- 4.12 Regular praise, together with fair and firm expectations, encourages good behaviour from the youngest onwards. The house system motivates pupils to behave well and do their best at all times, supported by the school code of conduct and the comprehensive personal, social and health education programme.
- 4.13 Highly effective policies and procedures work well to guard against bullying and harassment. Playground behaviour is closely supervised, and communication amongst staff is excellent. Bullying is rare and, should it happen, pupils are confident that it would be dealt with carefully. They know whom they can tell if they have concerns. This was confirmed in their responses to their pre-inspection questionnaire; almost all pupils agreed that they have someone at school to whom they can turn if they have a difficulty, that the school deals well with any bullying that may occur and that they like being at school.
- 4.14 The school has a carefully considered plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.15 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.16 The pupils benefit from the school's commitment to taking full regard of official guidance to secure their welfare, health and safety. Thorough attention is paid to child protection. Safer recruitment procedures are robust. All staff receive regular training in safeguarding and those with particular responsibility in this area undertake additional inter-agency training. The school has strong links with local agencies.
- 4.17 Policies and systems for monitoring practice in all areas of welfare, health and safety are excellent and can be seen to work in day-to-day practice. All appropriate arrangements are in place to reduce risk from fire. Fire drills take place twice termly, and effective measures are taken to ensure the pupils' safety during an evacuation of the school in case of fire or other hazards. Pupils move safely and carefully around the school. Risk assessments, which are regularly reviewed, are expertly prepared for the school premises and for activities on tours, visits and trips. When trips are planned, meetings with parents are held where procedures and expectations are clearly explained to adults and pupils.
- 4.18 Injured or unwell pupils are well cared for in the medical room, overseen by members of staff with a high level of first-aid training that is updated regularly. There is thoughtful provision for care before school, including a breakfast club, and outstanding provision for after-school care.
- 4.19 Admission and attendance records are appropriately maintained and stored.

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 governors provide highly effective oversight of all sections of the school, including the EYFS. They are extremely committed to the aims of the school and strive for excellence in the achievement of their vision. They are fully aware of their responsibilities for educational standards and are kept well informed. They recognise and meet the need for careful financial planning to ensure that they can make the investment in staff, accommodation and resources necessary to maintain the high quality of education for pupils.
- 5.3 The presence of parents on the governing body ensures that members have a good insight into the working of the school. Governors fully appreciate their responsibility not only to monitor outcomes but also to provide support, challenge and stimulus for growth and improvement, which they do highly effectively through well-considered strategic planning, and its evaluation. The structure of sub-committees has resulted in more frequent meetings and closer contact with the staff, who appreciate the approachability of the governors and the support and encouragement they give to all aspects of the school, including art, drama, music and sport. Governors are wisely appointed from a range of professional backgrounds and bring a wealth of relevant experience to the governing body. The effective induction of new governors, combined with ongoing appropriate training, and the contribution of professional advisors ensure active governance of a high standard and high expectations.
- 5.4 The governing body is effective in fulfilling its responsibilities for statutory requirements, which include welfare, health and safety, and the efficiently minuted annual review and evaluation of safeguarding and child protection arrangements throughout the school.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is excellent.
- 5.6 The leadership and management of the school are highly effective at all levels, including the EYFS. Guided by the school's principal aim of providing a first-class education, they very successfully fulfil their responsibilities, particularly those for policy implementation and the safeguarding of pupils. The leaders and managers have high aspirations and a clear, comprehensive vision for the school.
- 5.7 The leadership and management of the EYFS setting are excellent, as is its capacity to sustain its current high standards and to make further improvement. Supervision and monitoring of its procedures for planning and assessment are very effective. Self-evaluation shows an excellent understanding of the provision's strengths and areas for improvement, and sets a clear direction for future developments, such as more methodical use of the outdoor resources and spaces. Children are cared for in a welcoming, happy and stimulating environment.
- 5.8 Clear and highly experienced educational direction is successfully provided by the leadership and management of the school. This is illustrated by the high quality of

the pupils' education and the excellent standard of their personal development. In their positive questionnaire responses, both parents and pupils confirmed the excellent management of pastoral care within the school. The recommendations of the previous inspection to develop the roles of curriculum co-ordinators and remove inconsistencies in the quality of curriculum leadership and management, and of subject documentation, have been effectively addressed.

- 5.9 Development planning in subject areas links into the school development plan, in which priorities are skilfully identified and timescales are set for their achievement. The introduction and successful implementation of a comprehensive system of assessment which measures ability, attainment and progress is an example of the determination of leadership and management, at all levels, to improve standards.
- 5.10 Many improvements have been made in areas such as staff development, communication, resources and the provision for ICT across the school. The acquisition of a powerful information management system has brought many benefits, including the ability to analyse the data collected from the new assessment schemes. The formation of a senior leadership team has been extremely successful. Subject co-ordinators are enthusiastic and appreciate the increased opportunities for professional debate and the value of the lesson observation and work scrutiny undertaken in the school.
- 5.11 Formal schemes for monitoring, evaluating and improving teaching, the appraisal of all staff, teaching and non-teaching, including the headmistress, and strategies for assessing and improving the quality of care and welfare have been introduced. These are successful, although time management in some teaching remains inconsistent in quality. A new appraisal scheme on a two-year cycle provides greater precision and effectiveness. The quality of teaching benefits from both peer observations and formal monitoring which identify areas for improvement. In-service training is relevant and regular, while continuing professional development, linked to the appraisal procedure, is encouraged and supported across the school.
- 5.12 Management is successful in securing, supporting, developing and motivating staff of high quality and ensuring that they are suitably and regularly trained for their roles in meeting the needs of all pupils, in safeguarding, and in welfare, health and safety. Selection procedures for staff are robust, as are appointment procedures for new governors and staff and checks are recorded appropriately.
- 5.13 Links with parents are excellent. Parents are highly supportive of the school and appreciate the vast improvement in communication over the past few years, including in the EYFS. This includes the new website, a text-messaging service, weekly newsletters, parent information boards and an email system to communicate with staff. All required information is provided to parents of current and prospective pupils, initially through the website and subsequently through helpful parents' handbooks.
- 5.14 The school's engagement with parents in the EYFS is a strength of the setting. Children's needs are identified early, monitored regularly and very well met through highly effective partnerships with parents and external agencies. In questionnaire responses, parents showed strong satisfaction with the setting. The setting's 'open door' policy, together with a home/school diary and a parents' notice board, facilitates a regular flow of information.
- 5.15 The parents' views as expressed in the pre-inspection questionnaire are generally positive about the school and the progress their children make. In particular, they

commented highly positively on the range of subjects offered, the happiness of their children and the way in which their children are cared for. A very few parents expressed some concern about the way the school deals with any bullying. The inspection evidence showed that the school's procedures are clear and carefully followed, and that any behavioural concerns are quickly identified and effectively dealt with.

- 5.16 Full academic reports with a pastoral section are sent to parents yearly. These are of high quality and contain detailed information on individual pupils' attainment and progress, with a summary of work covered and details of how the pupil could improve further. An additional pastoral report is sent in December. Parents of pupils in Years 1 to 6 receive half-termly effort grades and comments. Parents' evenings take place for each year group twice a year, and provide parents with the opportunity to engage with staff and discuss progress. Information evenings also take place annually. Parents and pupils receive advice on the best choice of future school. Parents feel well supported as they make their decisions about senior schools.
- 5.17 An active parents' association supports the school through a wide variety of fund-raising and social events that are much enjoyed. The school operates an 'open door' policy, and parents feel that they are welcomed into the school and appreciate the many informal opportunities to meet with staff. Parents happily support larger-scale events such as school concerts and drama performances, as well as the many sporting events.
- 5.18 The school has an appropriate and effective procedure to deal with complaints. Parents with a concern or query regarding their children are able to contact the school at any time. They are secure in the knowledge that they will be listened to and receive a timely response to their questions, and that in general concerns will be quickly dispelled.

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