



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**RIVERSTON SCHOOL**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Riverston School

Full Name of School	<b>Riverston School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>203/6169</b>		
EYFS Number	<b>EY301710</b>		
Address	<b>Riverston School 63-69 Eltham Road Lee Green London SE12 8UF</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>020 8318 4327</b>		
Fax Number	<b>020 8297 0514</b>		
Email Address	<b>office@riverstonschool.co.uk</b>		
Head	<b>Mrs Sarah Salathiel</b>		
Proprietor Principal	<b>Professor Michael Lewis</b>		
Age Range	<b>1 to 19</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>214</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (147 boys; 67 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	1-2 (EYFS):	<b>20</b>	5-11: <b>78</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>23</b>	11-18: <b>93</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>214</b>	
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Miss Katherine Clark</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection Dates	<b>28 Jan 2014 to 31 Jan 2014</b>		

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in February 2010.

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](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the proprietor principal, 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**

Mr John Dunston	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Diane Durrant	Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)
Mr Keith Knight	Team Inspector (Headmaster, ISA school)
Mrs Jane Lancaster-Adlam	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Clare Margetts	Team Inspector (Director of Studies, ISA school)
Dr Simon Willcocks	Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Penny Oates	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Riverston School is a day school for boys and girls aged from 1 to 19. The school aims to provide a safe, supportive and caring environment in which a modern, relevant curriculum can be tailored to the needs of all pupils. The ethos of the school is intended to equip all pupils with a range of life skills to enable them to enter adult life with confidence and self-esteem and to pursue successful careers. The school encourages pupils to show care and consideration for others and aims to work in partnership with parents to help pupils achieve their full potential. The school is a limited company of which the proprietor takes the principal role, advised by the proprietor's wife and the headmistress as fellow directors of Riverston School Ltd. Separate school committees oversee specific areas such as health and safety, safeguarding, learning support, maintenance and the curriculum. Budgeting and the management of premises and accommodation are operated directly by the proprietor principal.
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1926. Since 1956, it has remained in the ownership of the same family, the proprietor principal being the son of the former owner. The school is located in four linked Victorian houses situated in Lee Green, south-east London, with adjacent playing fields leased from a local sports club to supplement the school's own sports complex. Since the previous inspection, new facilities have included a suite of refurbished rooms for teaching, meetings, therapy and administration, as well as a coffee shop, a discrete sixth-form area, additional information and communication technology (ICT) provision within the learning support area, textiles, food technology and skills for life centre with a fully equipped studio flat.
- 1.3 The school has 214 pupils, including 43 in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and ten in the sixth form. There are 65 pupils in the lower school, from Reception to Year 5; 54 pupils in the middle school, in Years 6 to 9; and 52 in the upper school, from Year 10 to Year 13, including ten in the sixth form. Pupils come from diverse ethnic and social backgrounds within the local area and further afield, including several different local authorities.
- 1.4 The ability profile of the lower school is above the national average. Pupils demonstrate a wide range of abilities, but most are of above average ability. The ability profile of the senior school is below the national average, with around two-thirds of pupils of below average ability, and around a quarter of average ability. The sixth form represents a wide spread of abilities. Of 103 pupils identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 72 have a statement of special educational needs, 98 receive specialist learning support from the school. There are 20 pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL), none of whom needs specialist support for their English.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

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

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

- 2.1 The school successfully fulfils its aims. Pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum which includes individual programmes for sixth-form pupils, and benefit from the extra-curricular activities programme but limited provision for music and drama restricts the progress that pupils can make. Pupils achieve at a good level and make good progress including those with SEND. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning, apply numerical skills well and are articulate and confident. In the EYFS, all children, including those with SEND, make good or excellent progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities, and a few exceed the Early Learning Goals. The quality of teaching is good, showing enthusiasm and a readiness to adapt teaching styles and tasks to reflect the pupils' individual learning needs but the library offers inadequate support for pupils' learning and research.
- 2.2 The personal development of pupils is excellent throughout the school including the EYFS. Pupils show respect in their relationships with all, and enjoy taking on positions of responsibility. They respect other faiths and enjoy learning about other cultures within the harmonious culture of the school. They have a clear sense of right and wrong. Pupils develop a range of life skills. The quality of pastoral care provided throughout the school and in the EYFS is excellent. Good behaviour and healthy eating are strongly encouraged and the pupils' achievements celebrated regularly. Pupils are happy to share their opinions, and additional formal opportunities for them to do so are currently under review. The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 2.3 Sound governance reflects a keen interest in the school but has less direct oversight of the EYFS. Planning for major initiatives is not always sufficiently strategic. Monitoring of safeguarding procedures has been ineffective in the past but procedures have recently been strengthened. Leadership and management including links with parents, are good throughout the school, though monitoring lacks effectiveness, including in the EYFS. In response to recommendations from the previous ISI inspection, patchy progress has been made in expanding the use of ICT to support the pupils' learning; awareness of health and safety legislation has improved; systems to track pupils' progress have been implemented; a staff appraisal system has been introduced; and the outdoor area for EYFS children has developed.

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

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

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.
- 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) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure more effective monitoring of teaching, learning and school development through clearer roles and responsibilities within the management structure.
  2. Improve the provision of music, drama and ICT within the curriculum.
  3. Improve the effectiveness of the library as a resource for teaching and learning.
  4. Improve formal systems to monitor and evaluate the success of the EYFS setting coherently and regularly.



### **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 good.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated in accordance with the school's aims, demonstrating a range of academic, social, physical and creative skills. Pupils show good levels of understanding, knowledge and ability across the curriculum. They listen well, read efficiently and with good expression, and become increasingly articulate and confident. Younger pupils are able to hold simple dialogues and express their views clearly. For example, lower school pupils spoke knowledgably about the Fire of London. Year 11 pupils confidently expressed balanced opinions about the school's system of rewards and sanctions.
- 3.3 Pupils show good creativity in their work, especially in art and in the extra-curricular activities available. Their physical skills are well developed. They apply numerical and scientific skills well in a range of situations. Their ICT skills are sound, but, although some pupils use ICT for research, the wider use of ICT to support their learning is limited.
- 3.4 Pupils achieve individual success in a range of activities, including at bronze level in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) in regional athletics championships, and in national swimming, judo and karate competitions. Pupils normally proceed to courses of their first choice in higher education.
- 3.5 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. GCSE results have been similar to the national average for pupils in maintained schools. The pupils' attainment at the age of eleven cannot be measured in relation to performance against a fixed national average, but on the evidence of their written work, participation in lessons and standardised measures of progress used by the school, including for pupils with SEND and more able pupils, it is judged to be good. The level of attainment at GCSE suggests that senior school pupils including those with SEND make progress that is good in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. The attainment of pupils in the recently established sixth form cannot yet be measured in relation to performance in public examinations, but they show clear progress in developing their learning skills and in their overall achievements. Pupils in the sixth form are working toward appropriate qualifications at levels that reflect their ability. These include, A Level, GCSE, BTEC, and functional and life skills.
- 3.6 These levels of attainment indicate that pupils, including those with SEND and those with statements of special educational need, make good progress in relation to the average for pupils of similar ability. This was confirmed in lesson observations, in the scrutiny of the pupils' work and in discussions with pupils. Of the parents and pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the overwhelming majority indicated that they were pleased with the progress enabled by the school.
- 3.7 Pupils' achievement is supported by their positive attitudes to learning in both curricular and extra-curricular activities. In the lower school particularly, they work effectively in small groups. In an English lesson, paired discussions were seen which resulted in effective and articulate contributions. Pupils sustain good levels of concentration and perseverance in lessons and activities, have a great sense of

enjoyment in their learning and demonstrate good organisational skills in relation to their ability.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.9 The curriculum reflects the aim of the school to provide a modern, relevant education, tailor-made for the needs of all pupils. In all sections of the school, pupils follow a broad, balanced curriculum, adapted in the upper school to their ability and needs.
- 3.10 An appropriate range of qualifications is offered to enable all pupils to make progress in subjects of their choice. All sixth-form pupils follow personalised timetables which enable their individual needs to be appropriately met. Learning support for pupils with SEND is extensive, well designed to meet the pupils' individual needs, and as a result of detailed assessment and monitoring, effective in supporting those pupils. Learning support assistants are successfully deployed in all parts of the school. The recent installation of a replica studio flat and food technology suite have provided facilities for the inclusion of a range of life skills in the curriculum which are much enjoyed by pupils. Lessons in travel safety greatly increase the independence of many older pupils, preparing them for the challenges of adult life. The work and progress of pupils with a wide range of SEND including dyslexia, autism, language disorders, Asperger's syndrome, visual impairment and Down's syndrome, are monitored according to targets recorded in their individual education plans, which are reviewed regularly. Regular multi-disciplinary meetings are held between all staff concerned to ensure a common approach to planning. Individual education plans are drawn up on a termly basis with specific targets which are shared with parents to promote an integrated approach to pupils' progress. A timetable for annual reviews is set at the start of the school year.
- 3.11 A careers conference for senior pupils takes place annually. Careers advice, although not extensive, incorporates appropriate guidance for the next steps in pupils' education. Pupils in the sixth form benefit from the close ties the school has developed with a local agriculture college, where the animal management course has given additional breadth to the post-16 curriculum.
- 3.12 Some progress has been made in implementing the recommendation in the previous inspection report that the school should make greater use of ICT in the pupils' learning across the curriculum. Good examples of the cross-curricular use of ICT were seen in a science lesson in which pupils prepared information sheets on the solar system, a sixth form functional mathematics lesson, and in use of an online mathematics package. The effective use of interactive whiteboards and other ICT equipment to enhance the curriculum is variable, and inconsistent between departments. Pupils in Years 6 to 9 commented that whilst ample equipment is available, it does not always work reliably. Fewer opportunities exist for music and drama, or for the extra-curricular application of ICT.
- 3.13 A programme of extra-curricular activities for pupils in all year groups enhances the academic curriculum. Pupils are able to participate in sports fixtures against other schools and in inter-house matches. Pupils enjoy success in karate competitions, and compete in inter-school indoor athletics fixtures. The range of lunchtime and after-school activities includes board games, fitness sessions, badminton and Mandarin. Cookery club is particularly popular with pupils. In Reception and Years

1 and 2, pupils thoroughly enjoy mini-rugby. Older pupils have the opportunity to work towards the bronze DofE Award. Visits outside school, for example to the Museum of London, enhance the experience and personal development of the pupils.

- 3.14 The pupils' learning and achievements are further supported by links with the wider community. A work experience programme has recently been introduced. Pupils' personal development is enriched through involvement with the local church, a children's care home, and a hospice. All pupils contribute to the school's charitable work by raising money for a wide variety of causes including those supporting children. Pupils benefit from a wide variety of day and residential visits. Their awareness of environmental and sustainability issues is enriched by links with a local environmental centre. Skills of self-sufficiency and leadership are developed through residential visits to a local campsite. Pupils benefit from visitors to the school including theatre companies, cycling proficiency trainers and 'Farm in School.' The school also arranges visits from e-safety experts and travel safety workshops.

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

- 3.15 The quality of teaching is good.
- 3.16 Teaching staff know the needs of individual pupils well and mostly ensure that work is set at a level appropriate to their ability. Most teaching is effective and supports the school aims. Tasks are modified to meet the individual learning needs of more able pupils, but such practice is not consistent.
- 3.17 Teaching enables pupils to become confident and enthusiastic learners. Year 6 pupils were able to articulate their ideas to the class about past holidays. Younger pupils asked searching questions about planet earth, and older pupils in history demonstrated an excellent understanding of the Russian Revolution in response to challenging questions. Enthusiastic teaching encourages all pupils to be fully engaged. Most teaching has good pace and shows good time management. When teaching is less effective, work set is not matched closely to individual abilities and needs.
- 3.18 Teachers' subject knowledge and lesson planning are good. In a textiles lesson, meticulous planning enabled all pupils to make progress through effective use of a learning support assistant (LSA). Effective use of questioning techniques enables pupils to challenge their own thinking and develop their knowledge. Some of the youngest pupils were able to develop imaginative ideas based upon the story 'Tangled'.
- 3.19 Work for pupils with SEND is planned by teachers and integrated effectively. In the lower school, LSAs are used effectively in most teaching to enhance pupil progress, but not always as successfully in the middle and upper schools, where their skills are sometimes under-used. In a games lesson focused on badminton, resources were modified to assist pupils with gross motor difficulties. Teachers use resources well to support learning, often providing a highly stimulating learning environment. However, the use of ICT is limited, with the result that pupils have little opportunity to use ICT creatively.
- 3.20 The best practice in marking sets targets for improvement and has encouraging comments to help pupils make progress. In the lower school in particular, clear targets are set which are shared with pupils and parents. Marking of pupils' work

does not always follow the school's marking and assessment policy, which leads to confusion for some pupils. Assessment data is tracked to monitor pupils' progress in most subjects.

- 3.21 Teaching makes good provision for individual pupils with statements of special educational needs. Staff are fully briefed on the particular needs of those pupils, enabling them to ensure that tasks are presented in an appropriate and accessible way. Individual pupils benefit from effective speech and language therapy and occupational therapy.
- 3.22 Staff use resources to support children's learning effectively. The library does not provide effective support for pupils' learning. The resources it contains are not sufficient to meet the needs of pupils for research and have not been given a high priority. Both of these issues were identified at the time of the previous inspection.

## **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 This success reflects the aims of the school well. Pupils of all ages demonstrate confidence and increasing self-esteem. They are happy and show ever greater self-awareness. Pupils are appreciative of the support they receive from staff. They enjoy the regular assemblies which give opportunities for them to be commended for successes, and to perform or show their work to the school. Older pupils relish the opportunity to act as prefects and peer mentors for the younger children. Pupils show a strong sense of spiritual awareness. Their responses in assembly and art help them to appreciate the beauty of the world around them. Pupils in a lower school assembly were visibly moved by the lively music being played, spontaneously dancing and singing with delight. By the time they leave the school, pupils have developed excellent emotional maturity.
- 4.3 From an early age, pupils demonstrate strong moral awareness. When they discuss the school's code of conduct and its rewards and sanctions system, pupils understand the need for rules and most respect the fairness of the sanctions system. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and a desire for fair play, being self-critical if necessary. Pupils are aware of world issues which they explore in citizenship lessons, in assemblies and as part of their fundraising activities. They appreciate the opportunity to talk about moral and ethical issues and take advantage of this with thoughtful and imaginative contributions to discussions.
- 4.4 The pupils' social awareness is well developed. In circle time the youngest pupils discussed team behaviour and sharing with good awareness. Pupils behave in a courteous, helpful and friendly manner. Throughout the school, they take on areas of responsibility appropriate to their age, both in formal roles and informally, such as when assisting younger children who may be experiencing problems, or as mentors or with reading as part of the DofE scheme. Mentors have a clear understanding of their role and speak about it with enthusiasm. BTEC students participate in the Junior Sports Leadership award and child care programmes of study, working with the younger pupils. Prefects receive residential leadership training. Younger pupils described the prefects as helpful and friendly, speaking positively about the role they play. Pupils indicated in the questionnaire and in interviews that they would welcome the opportunity to take on more positions of responsibility.
- 4.5 Pupils increasingly develop an appreciation of public service. When giving generously for a variety of charities they learn about those less fortunate than themselves. In this, they display great pride. Their economic and political awareness is promoted through participation in citizenship activities such as trips to the House of Lords. Through visits from local nurses, police and fire officers, younger pupils develop an interest in public institutions and appropriate knowledge of them. Sixth formers value the financial capabilities and life-skills components of their curriculum, which enable them to develop a greater understanding of essential skills for modern living.
- 4.6 Pupils demonstrate excellent cultural understanding. Their harmonious, tolerant and respectful relationships enhance and unify the ethnically diverse school population. They develop awareness of cultures and faiths other than their own as well as the

Western cultural tradition. Events such as Holocaust Memorial Day, involving the wider community and parents, promote awareness and understanding of the universal lessons to be learned from the experience of one religious group. Through visits to religious buildings such as the local mosque and churches, pupils' cultural understanding is extended. Educational outings, such as to theatres and a planetarium, enrich their cultural experience, although there are only limited opportunities for pupils to become actively involved in music and drama within the curriculum, and their understanding of these areas is commensurately superficial.

- 4.7 Older pupils look forward to the next stage of their education after assuming responsibilities within the school community with ease. They emerge into the community as confident, aspirational young people.

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

- 4.8 The quality of pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 The school's pastoral structure supports its aim to provide a safe, supportive and caring environment in which to work. There are good relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils of all ages. Circle time is held daily for younger pupils and opportunities for them to consider others' views and express their own are freely explored. The discursive nature of this activity ensures that all pupils can be fully involved. Lower ability pupils are managed sensitively by staff.
- 4.10 A committee of staff oversees pastoral care. There is a detailed online log to track and monitor older pupils' behaviour. The log helps staff to identify the appropriate means of supporting the pupils and also provides for parental involvement in the pastoral care of their children. The pastoral tracking system is a strength of the school. Form periods from Year 5 onwards have strong pastoral focus. The school has introduced an effective system of restorative justice, enabling pupils to better understand the consequences of their actions. Pupils can contact the school counsellor via a confidential 'post box'. The school nurse runs monthly 'pop in' sessions for pupils who wish to talk about issues that might be worrying them.
- 4.11 The school has good systems to promote good behaviour and guard against bullying. Although some responses to pupil questionnaires were negative about the school's handling of bullying, in discussions pupils said they feel that the school's policy on preventing bullying and harassment is effective. The school regularly organises an anti-bullying week and pupils receive training in e-safety. A new rewards structure has been recently introduced and pupils fully understand how the system works. House points are awarded to promote good behaviour and reward achievement. Pupils spoke positively about the changes but a significant number of pupils' questionnaire responses and interviews made reference to a lack of fairness in the teachers' use of rewards and sanctions. This was not reflected in interviews with pupils during the inspection. The headmistress welcomes all pupils in Year 6 and above every day to reflect on the positive outcomes of the previous day and the opportunities of the day ahead. Celebration assemblies are a regular feature of the school's routines.
- 4.12 A significant number of pupils indicated in the questionnaire that the school did not ask for their opinion or respond to their views. Inspection evidence does not support this view. The school had already become aware of the issue well before the inspection. In response, it is currently carrying out a thorough review of the school council in order to ensure that the pupil voice is heard more effectively in the future.

- 4.13 The school promotes a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are encouraged to participate in the sporting and extra-curricular activities provided. The school, in partnership with the local health authority, provides healthy and nutritious food. Pupils are encouraged by staff on duty to eat a healthy and balanced diet. There were good examples of LSAs being used to very good effect to support this.
- 4.14 The school has an imaginative and appropriate accessibility plan in place to improve access for pupils of all ages with SEND, which was seen to be working effectively throughout the school, reflecting the elaborate steps that the school takes to support them.

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

- 4.15 Arrangements to promote the welfare, health and safety of pupils are good.
- 4.16 Since the previous inspection, the school has made considerable progress in extending the scope of its comprehensive health and safety policy and ensuring its effective implementation, including incorporation in the induction programme for new staff. A health and safety committee meets termly and issues arising are followed up rigorously. All necessary measures are in place to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards, supported by an annual review by external consultants. Regular fire evacuation drills are held and recorded, and action taken where necessary. Risk assessments are in place to cover both activities on the school site and on external visits. Suitable accessibility arrangements are in place.
- 4.17 Pupils who are unwell are well cared for in the centrally located sick room which also contains secure medicine storage facilities and first aid equipment. Pupils of all ages also have easy access to a counsellor should the need arise. The first aid policy is effectively implemented. The school maintains and displays records of staff training in first aid which are updated regularly. Pupils with SEND are particularly well supported and their needs provided for.
- 4.18 Admission and attendance registers are appropriately maintained and correctly stored for the previous three years. Pupils in Reception up to Year 13 are registered by means of an effective electronic system. Recent changes to the manual registration of pupils in the EYFS have made procedures more secure.
- 4.19 Appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place and effectively implemented. The school's safer recruitment procedures have been considerably strengthened since the previous inspection in order to further promote the safety and welfare of pupils and are now secure.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is sound.
- 5.2 The lifelong association with the school of the proprietor principal ensures continuity of its ethos and inclusive values. The proprietor principal is one of three directors. He operates from an office within the school, works closely with the headmistress and the bursar, and monitors in particular the school's finances and the maintenance of its buildings. He takes a keen interest in all parts of the school though has less informed oversight of the EYFS. In recent years, a broader vision has been developed for the school, incorporating support for a larger proportion of pupils with SEND or other needs including autism. Although there is no doubt of the passion with which this growth has been pursued by the three directors, the provision of human and other resources, and the development of an appropriate curriculum to meet an ever wider range of needs, have not always benefitted from sufficiently strategic planning.
- 5.3 Meetings of the board of directors take place termly and detailed minutes are kept. The board conscientiously carries out its statutory responsibilities for welfare, health and safety and oversees investment and the estate. In particular, there is strong awareness of the board's responsibility for safeguarding, of which an annual review is undertaken. In the past, there has been insufficient monitoring of the single central register of appointments, although procedures for maintaining it have recently been strengthened by the school. The proprietor principal provides regular and direct support to the headmistress and senior staff, and some progress has been made towards implementing the recommendation at the time of the previous standard inspection to strengthen this support further in respect of legislative compliance. Because of his regular presence around the school, the proprietor principal is a familiar figure to staff, pupils and parents, and his long professional co-operation with the headmistress as a co-director is seen as a distinctive strength of the school.

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

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is good.
- 5.5 The senior management team provides clear educational direction which leads to particular strengths in pastoral matters. The excellent personal development of the pupils, and the warm supportive atmosphere of the school, are the result of the nurturing ethos that has been created and enhanced by the strong leadership and management provided by those with pastoral responsibilities, in accordance with the school's aims to build confidence and self-esteem and prepare the pupils for the next stage of their education. The example set by the dedicated senior management team motivates the staff, who are loyal and feel valued. The school aims to provide individual programs for its pupils and in doing so, utilises the strengths of its pupils and teachers. The school is working to improve accountability in tracking the pupils' academic progress and the monitoring of subject departments in order to make marking and the implementation of whole school policies more



consistent. The performance of middle managers is not closely monitored by senior leaders, and the delegation of responsibility for monitoring and departmental development is unclear. Peer observation and the sharing of best practice are not systematically implemented.

- 5.6 The school is led by an energetic senior management team of five. Together they lead the school's strategic development, allocate budgets, identify priorities and organise the day-to-day running of the school. The school development plan provides a focus for short-term and continuous development, although there is little involvement of other staff in long-term planning. Links between the heads of department and the senior management team lack cohesion and clarity, as a result of which the implementation of some academic policies, and approaches to teaching and learning, are inconsistent. There is insufficient communication between the main sections of the school to ensure an adequate flow of information about pupils and their progress, and a lack of overall planning to ensure a smooth transition between school stages for all pupils. Senior managers recognise a need to develop more inclusive provision for the ever growing number of children with diverse needs and statements of special educational need. The recent introduction of a sixth form is one such initiative.
- 5.7 Senior management is successful in securing and retaining high-quality staff and supporting their professional development. The system for the induction of new staff is rigorously implemented and new staff feel strongly supported. An appraisal system for staff has been introduced. This encourages staff self-evaluation and allows for observation and target setting although at present, not all staff involved as appraisers have had appropriate training. The need for more training in the effective use of ICT, and more focussed provision, has been recognised by the school. Staff attend termly training by local agencies to support the range of pupils' needs, including the care of pupils with autism.
- 5.8 Throughout the school, there is a clear awareness of welfare, health and safety, supported by regular training in key areas such as first aid, food hygiene and fire safety. Responsibilities for safeguarding are discharged fully. All staff, including those in the EYFS, are trained in safeguarding at an appropriate level and safer recruitment procedures are followed when new staff are appointed. Senior leaders monitor regulatory matters effectively.
- 5.9 The daily routine administration and care of the school are efficient and well managed. The contribution made by ancillary staff in catering, grounds, maintenance and administration is much appreciated and highly valued by the whole school community.
- 5.10 The school has good links with parents, carers and guardians. It maintains a positive relationship with parents, in accordance with its aim to work with parents and guardians to help pupils achieve their full potential. Good links exist with outside agencies so that children receive any specialist help that they need. In their response to a pre-inspection questionnaire, parents expressed great satisfaction with the education and care provided for their children. They were particularly pleased with the range of subjects available, the extra-curricular activities and the care taken to ensure that their children enjoy their education.
- 5.11 Effective communications between home and school are maintained through individual student planners and home-school communication diaries in which concerns or questions can be noted and acted upon, and which parents sign. There

is an attractive half-termly newsletter and parents can be contacted at short notice via the website, and electronic messaging systems. Parents appreciate the school's openness, supported by the welcoming administrative team. They feel able to contact the school on any matters of concern, which are handled with care.

- 5.12 Parents have many opportunities to be actively involved in the life of the school. They are welcomed to a variety of school events, such as concerts and plays. Informative parent forums are held and information evenings and parent consultations take place regularly. The Parents' Association provides seasonal social opportunities. Parents new to the school and those of current pupils are provided with comprehensive information, including all that is required to help their families become part of the school community.
- 5.13 Parents receive full information about their children's work and progress. Detailed annual reports provide clear information about their children's assessment, progress and areas for development. This is supplemented by termly grade reports. Regular parent consultation meetings, target setting meetings and pastoral meetings provide parents with a comprehensive overview of their child's progress future targets.
- 5.14 The understanding by the proprietors of how the appeal system operates as part of the school's complaints procedure is inconsistent. Complaints are, however, dealt with sensitively in line with the school's policy, and appropriate records are kept.

**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 good provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. Staff devise a range of suitable activities which address the seven areas of learning and provide good opportunities for children to reach at least their expected level of development. For children under the age of three the curriculum focuses creatively on the three prime areas of developing personal, physical and communication skills. In the Nursery, including the classes with children under three, children are able to get dressed for outdoor play with minimal help. They manage glue and collage materials with increasing dexterity. Over the age of three the expanding curriculum includes specialist teaching in French, music and physical education (PE). As children progress, there is an increasing range of opportunities to further develop their powers of investigation, enquiry and independent learning although there is limited use of ICT. Children are prepared well for the next stage in their schooling. Higher achievers are able to read familiar and unknown words in simple sentences independently using phonic strategies. A system for tracking the children's progress and achievements is in place. Next steps, which enable children to make individually targeted progress, are identified but not consistently; and those for the more able children do not always provide sufficient challenge. Classrooms are inviting and resources are accessible and well laid out. Outdoor play spaces are well used. Activities support learning in all the curriculum areas. Staff demonstrate high expectations, reinforce good behaviour and offer encouragement where necessary. The school works with parents and outside agencies to enable staff to focus on specific needs. Partnerships with parents are seen as a priority and regular communications invite parents to give information about the children's interests and home-based activities. Home-school books are available for communication and some good use is made of these. Written reports are produced annually. The best examples include clear targets for future development but these are not always clearly identified in the documentation. In responses to questionnaires and interviews, parents reported high levels of satisfaction with the setting.

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

6.2 Provision for children's well-being is outstanding. The sensitive and dedicated staff operate a highly effective key person system which enables children to form secure bonds and positive relationships. Children are happy to come into school and quickly engage with staff and the activities offered. All staff provide excellent role models. They give clear guidance on behaviour and make the safety of all children the highest priority. Risk assessments and health and safety procedures are rigorously applied. Opportunities are provided to allow the children to use their imagination and play co-operatively, for example when serving food and drinks to each other in the pre-school cafe and selecting the day's special outfit from the Reception dressing-up area. Children make use of the outdoor space to support their physical development, which they know to be important for keeping them fit and well. Snacks are healthy and the lunches offer a balanced menu. Good hygienic practices are entrenched. The youngest children are learning to manage their own personal needs. Older children manage independently. There are opportunities for the children in Reception to spend time with the older children in assemblies, on trips

out of school and in PE lessons so that they progress smoothly into the lower school. Similarly, the Nursery and pre-school children have opportunities to meet, which aids smooth transition. If children move on to another setting, a well-established system communicates essential information.

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

6.3 Leadership and management in the EYFS requires improvement. Whilst the proprietor takes a keen interest in the future direction of the setting, oversight is insufficiently direct. The management structure facilitates close communication between the Nursery and pre-school but links are less well defined with Reception, which limits the success of overall monitoring and inhibits planning for the future direction of the setting. Policies and procedures are implemented throughout the setting. Sufficiently robust safeguarding procedures, recruitment checks and policies for the safe management of the setting are now in place, including for the under-threes. The environment is safe and secure; stimulating and welcoming. The desire to improve is a driving force shared enthusiastically by the cohesive team. Self-evaluation is undertaken. An annual EYFS development plan is drawn up and reviewed regularly. Priorities are identified but not always achieved within the timescale. Staff are well qualified and experienced. They have excellent access to continuing professional development and there is a comprehensive programme for performance management and supervision, which includes access to appropriate training. Staff work hard to include the parents in their children's education. Highly effective links with the local authority EYFS advisor exists and other external agencies are consulted when necessary.

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

6.4 The overall quality and standards of the early years provision are good. All children, including those with EAL or SEND, make at least good, and some excellent, progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. By the end of the EYFS all children are moving towards meeting the Early Learning Goals with a few exceeding them. The use of personalised target setting is not always consistently applied, which can limit the effectiveness of planning for a child's next steps. In some instances able children lack sufficient challenge to fully extend them. The youngest children rapidly grow in confidence to become happy and relaxed learners. They can handle a range of percussion instruments. The oldest are able to apply their growing knowledge and skills in new contexts as when discussing the validity of Pluto as a planet after their recent visit to a planetarium. The children's personal and emotional development is excellent and they make friends easily. Any minor disagreements are resolved swiftly and rarely require adult intervention. All staff understand the requirements for children's safeguarding and welfare. Evaluation of the setting is undertaken but formal procedures for review and oversight are still in the early stages of development. Many recommendations of the previous inspections by Ofsted and ISI have been met in full including in the areas of child protection, pupil tracking, review of, policies and practice, partnerships with parents, plans for quality play and hygiene practices. Use of ICT remains an area for development and plans to improve the outside area are still evolving.

### **Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three**

- 6.5 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.**