



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION  
ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## St Joseph's College

Full Name of School	<b>St Joseph's College</b>		
DfE Number	<b>870/6002</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>277077</b>		
Address	<b>St Joseph's College Upper Redlands Road Reading Berkshire RG1 5JT</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>0118 9661000</b>		
Fax Number	<b>0118 9269932</b>		
Email Address	<b>headmaster@sjcr.org.uk</b>		
Head	<b>Mr Andrew Colpus</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Chris Murray</b>		
Age Range	<b>3 to 18</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>420</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (153 boys; 267 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	<b>0</b>	5-11: <b>109</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>55</b>	11-18: <b>256</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>420</b>	
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Susan Booth</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection Dates	<b>11 Feb 2014 to 14 Feb 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 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](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.

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

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

### **Inspectors**

Mrs Elaine Brook	Reporting Inspector
Mr Adrian Downie	Team Inspector (Director of Studies, IAPS school)
Mr James Fowler	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Mr Francie Healy	Team Inspector (Headmaster, Society of Heads school)
Lady Lisa Laws	Team Inspector (Headmistress, GSA school)
Mrs Jenny Clayphan	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Situated in Reading in Berkshire, St. Joseph's College is an independent Roman Catholic day school, educating boys and girls aged 3 to 18 years. The school was founded in 1910 by the Order of Sisters of St. Marie Madeleine Postel to provide a good education for girls. The first secular headmistress was appointed in 1977 and boys were accepted as pupils up to the age of 8. Since the previous inspection in 2009, the school changed its name to St. Joseph's College in September 2010, becoming fully co-educational, and has appointed a new senior leadership team. The land and buildings are leased from the Order and the school is governed by an educational trust whose members form the governing body.
- 1.2 The school's mission statement confirms that pupils of all faiths and denominations or none are welcome. Currently, one-third of the pupils are Catholic and a wide range of religions and cultures are represented in the remainder. The school aims to help pupils to reach their full potential by enabling them to experience what it is to live in a caring community.
- 1.3 The preparatory and senior schools occupy the same site, operating independently on a day-to-day basis, although the headmaster of the senior school has overall responsibility. Sited in a nearby building, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is an integral part of the preparatory school. Most pupils live within a ten-mile radius of the school and come from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures, with the majority of the parents engaged in professional and business occupations.
- 1.4 There are 420 pupils in the school, 153 boys and 267 girls. Of these, 164 are in the preparatory school, including 55 in the EYFS. In the senior school, there are 256 pupils of whom 46 are in the sixth form. Pupils can enter the school at any age, although most join when aged 3, 5 or 11, with the majority of pupils from the preparatory school transferring to the senior school. In 2013, over half of Year 11 pupils moved into the sixth form. Those who leave transfer to local maintained or other independent schools and a number of pupils new to St. Joseph's College are accepted. Following this, pupils proceed to a wide range of universities, with a small number choosing to take a gap year.
- 1.5 The ability profile of both the preparatory and senior school is above the national average, with most pupils being of above average ability and few being of below average ability. In the sixth form, most pupils are of average or above average ability, with around a fifth having below average ability. Three pupils have a statement of special educational need. The school has identified 58 pupils who require varying degrees of support for special educational need and/or disabilities (SEND) of whom 13 receive specialist provision. Sixty pupils have English as an additional language (EAL); of these, four receive specialist support in their oral and written work.
- 1.6 National Curriculum (NC) 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' achievement and learning, including in the EYFS, is good. Pupils are well educated in line with the school's aims. Attainment is generally high, in relation to pupils' abilities. The curriculum plan provides pupils with a rich learning experience and has been revised to address both recommendations from the previous inspection to review the length of lessons in the preparatory school and to reconsider the balance of subjects in Years 7 and 8 in order to improve progress in foreign languages. Lessons in the preparatory school are aligned to timings of lessons in the senior school, allowing efficient use of specialist teaching. The generous allocation for foreign languages facilitates progress, although the consequent reduction in teaching time for art in Year 9 limits access for some pupils within the school day. Individual gifts and talents in sport and performing arts are well supported. Systems to identify the most academically able are in place but lesson planning does not routinely provide for sufficient challenge. The programme of clubs and activities offers good opportunities for the enrichment of learning in sport and the performing arts but does not include sufficient provision for the extension of academic and cultural interests. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers know their pupils well and offer care, support and guidance which is greatly appreciated by pupils and parents.
- 2.2 The personal development of all pupils throughout the school is excellent. They are confident and articulate, so that by the time they leave the school, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The relationships between staff and children and amongst the children themselves are friendly and supportive. The Catholic ethos informs every aspect of school life so that it is a caring community, underpinned by structures which minimise bullying and safeguard pupils.
- 2.3 During a period of rapid change since the previous inspection, the governing body has been successful in providing effective oversight of all sections of the school. They have maintained good educational standards whilst investing heavily in the improvement of resources and facilities. All policies are in place to safeguard children and ensure their health and welfare, but in other areas of the school's work they are monitored with insufficient rigour. The senior leadership team share a clear vision for future development and work well together so that they have clarified priorities and agreed a strategic plan. Middle managers evaluate the achievements within their areas and are involved in budgetary planning. This successfully implements the recommendation from the previous inspection. The school has a strong and constructive relationship with parents, the majority of whom are pleased with the education and care of their children.

## **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 body adopts a more systematic approach to the monitoring of the school's policies and their implementation.
2. Employ suitable teaching strategies so that all lessons offer consistent challenge to the most able.
3. Increase the diversity of extra-curricular activities throughout the whole school.
4. In the EYFS, extend the range of resources provided for outside play.



### **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 of all ages are well educated in accordance with the school's aim to enable young people to reach their potential academically, physically, emotionally and spiritually.
- 3.3 In the EYFS, children are active and engaged learners, able to suggest an imaginative solution to a problem and work steadily towards a goal. In literacy and numeracy, their understanding and skills are exceptionally well developed. Most children have a firm grasp of initial letter sounds, are beginning to read in sentences and are able to do sums independently. Assessment data, carefully recorded by staff, show that the majority of children are working at levels at or well above the expectation for their age.
- 3.4 From Year 1 through to Year 11, pupils demonstrate good levels of knowledge and understanding in all areas of the curriculum. They speak with increasing confidence and listen to one another and to the teacher. They read well and demonstrate a love of literature. The content of their writing across a range of subjects shows that they can be creative, correctly use grammatical structures and include a wide range of appropriate vocabulary. When given the opportunity to do so, they research and investigate well and use ICT efficiently to extend their understanding. Numeracy skills are strong and applied well to solve problems. All pupils benefit from the many sporting opportunities to develop their physical skills.
- 3.5 In the sixth form, pupils continue to achieve well. They work hard to achieve good levels of knowledge, understanding and skills in their chosen subjects. They can argue a point of view with confidence and write creatively and persuasively. They take great pride in presenting their written work well and can work and research independently to good effect, although opportunities to do so remain limited so that their understanding is insufficiently challenged. Pupils of all ages benefit from the wide range of opportunities to participate in sport, music and drama.
- 3.6 The pupils' achievements are good and sometimes excellent in their extra-curricular and wider activities. The range of significant achievements, particularly in sport, drama and music is notable. Pupils compete at national level in gymnastics, synchronised swimming and show-jumping. Others have performed with the National Youth Ballet, won an award in a national poetry competition and participated in a festival in Prague. They achieve success when participating as part of a team; for example, the Young Enterprise team progressed to the quarter finals and another group won silver medals in an orienteering competition. When leaving the sixth form, almost all pupils achieve a place at their first choice of university.
- 3.7 The following analysis of examination results uses data from years 2010-2012, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. In the junior school, attainment is good, and results in National Curriculum tests at the age of 7 have been well above the national average for pupils in maintained primary schools. At the age of 11, their test results have been consistently above the national average in mathematics and well above in English. In the senior school, attainment is also good. The pupils' GCSE results have been above the national average for girls in maintained schools. A small number of boys took GCSEs in

2012 and their performance was similar to the national average for boys in maintained schools. At A level, results overall have been above the national average for both girls and boys. Although results at both GCSE and A level have shown a slight decline from 2010 to 2012, examination results from summer 2013, although not yet able to be supported by comparative national data, show a slight improvement.

- 3.8 Progress is good. Children in the EYFS make rapid progress in the attainment of the early learning goals. In the preparatory school, results in national curriculum tests at age 11, together with inspection evidence from lessons, discussions with pupils and examination of their work, indicate that pupils make good progress in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. In the senior school, analyses of data, together with inspection evidence, show that pupils make good progress to GCSE in relation to their starting points in Year 7, whilst sixth formers make progress that is appropriate and in some cases, good.
- 3.9 The small number of pupils with SEND make good progress at all levels of the school, as a result of the additional support provided for children of all ages, appropriate to their needs. Pupils with EAL similarly achieve well, receiving specialist tuition when necessary but mostly receiving effective support from subject teachers who take great care to ensure their understanding. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire show that the majority of parents are highly satisfied with the progress being made by their children. A very small minority of parents felt that the most able pupils did not receive appropriate support. Inspectors found that progress was consistently good because well-planned lessons deepened subject knowledge. However, activities specifically designed to challenge the thinking of the most able and therefore extend their learning were insufficient.
- 3.10 Pupils of all ages, including children in the EYFS, have overwhelmingly positive attitudes to learning. From Year 1, pupils work well both independently or collaboratively. They are co-operative and diligent, understanding and supporting the ethos that working hard is the expectation and will bring rewards.

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

- 3.11 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.12 The curriculum covers the requisite areas of learning and is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs. The strong Catholic ethos is prevalent throughout the curriculum, fully supporting the school's aim to provide an educational structure where pupils of all ages can experience a Christian community.
- 3.13 The quality and provision of the curriculum for the EYFS is excellent, fully meeting the needs of the children. Detailed planning provides children with rich opportunities to work independently or with adult support. They talk confidently, offer observations and insights and develop both intellectually and physically because of the many opportunities to work and play both inside and outside their classrooms.
- 3.14 The curriculum in the preparatory school meets the needs of the pupils well. Schemes of work are generally detailed and comprehensive, with a strong focus on literacy and numeracy. The time allocated to each subject is well balanced, giving sufficient opportunities for physical and mental stimulus. The majority of subjects are taught by the class teacher, so that the learning needs of each individual are well understood and opportunities to include cross-curricular links are facilitated. In response to the recommendation from the previous inspection, the structure of the

school day has been revised so that the length of lessons is appropriate for the ages of the pupils and enables efficient use of specialist teaching from senior school staff in French, music and sport, enhancing provision for pupils.

- 3.15 In the senior school, the curriculum is suitably broad and supported effectively by carefully planned schemes of work. Since the previous inspection the curriculum has been restructured and the school day lengthened so that most subjects have received an increased time allocation. The core subjects of English, mathematics and science are augmented by a generous provision for the teaching of languages. By Year 9, provision includes two modern foreign languages in addition to Latin. The school has therefore fully implemented the recommendation from the previous inspection that it should reconsider the balance in Years 7 and 8 in order to improve pupils' progress in foreign languages. By so doing, however, provision for design technology has reduced and art in Year 9 is offered outside normal teaching time, restricting access for some pupils who opt to take Latin. Curriculum planning ensures that most, but not all, subjects are spread across the week so that learning is continuous and offers appropriate opportunities to review and consolidate learning. The clustering of some subject lessons on particular days leads to an uneven distribution during the week, with the result that some time elapses before lesson content is revisited, leading to uneven progress in learning.
- 3.16 Pupils are given the chance to choose from a good range of GCSEs and A levels within an option structure that aims to accommodate their first choice of subjects. A recently revised careers programme offers detailed support in their decision making, A well-planned enrichment programme in the sixth form enables pupils to explore options for their future and to take on additional leadership opportunities, encouraging a culture of mature contribution to the school community.
- 3.17 Provision for pupils with SEND or EAL is good throughout the school, and includes additional support for pupils when necessary. At the time of the previous inspection, the school was recommended to monitor the provision for the gifted and talented throughout the school. Inspectors found that systems to identify pupils with particular strengths and talents are now in place. Excellent support is offered for pupils displaying particular talent in sport, drama or music, while a good range of activities and outings is in place extends the learning of the most able. Within the classroom, however, planning for the academically able is mostly concerned with the provision of additional work; opportunities to offer specific challenge or stimulus are not routinely provided.
- 3.18 A limited programme of extra-curricular activities is available for pupils of all ages. In the preparatory school, this is largely undertaken by an external agency and offers pupils the opportunity to engage in sporting activities, to play board games or to do their homework. There are few organised extra-curricular activities to enrich the academic or cultural experiences of pupils. In the senior school, the development of a strong sporting programme is enthusiastically supported by pupils and the provision for music performance and drama is also significant. As in the preparatory school, only a small number of other clubs to provide cultural or academic enrichment operate regularly. There are some good links with the local community. An excellent relationship with the nearby university includes visits to the science faculty and regular support from linguists. Other links include a careers conference which is well supported by local businesses, an exchange visit to France and regular spiritual retreats.

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

- 3.19 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.20 Through carefully planned lessons, teaching is effective in promoting pupils' progress so that they thrive in an encouraging atmosphere where they are well known and their contribution is valued. This fully supports the school's aim to ensure that pupils leave the school as confident and successful young adults.
- 3.21 In the EYFS, staff have a thorough knowledge of the requirements of the Early Learning Goals, so that teaching engages interest and motivates the children to question and explore. Planning builds on previous experiences and sets out high expectations of progress according to individual needs and abilities. A range of good resources is used to stimulate interest and effective questioning by staff allows children time to reflect and grow in their understanding.
- 3.22 Teaching in the preparatory school is good. Much of the teaching in the preparatory school is well planned and takes account of the needs of different pupils, including those with SEND or EAL. Most of the teaching is characterised by a brisk pace, where classes are motivated by challenging activities, requiring the pupils to solve problems and work independently. Teachers have a warm and supportive relationship with their pupils, who feel able to ask and answer questions, so that they make good progress. Insufficient planning is in place to extend the most able, who complete set tasks efficiently but are not routinely offered different or additional challenges to support their learning.
- 3.23 In the senior school, teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and based on an accurate understanding of pupils' needs. Teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge; time is generally well used and resources are appropriately employed to further learning. Management of behaviour is excellent. Pupils respond well to the expectation that hard work is the norm but on occasions this leads to a passive atmosphere, dominated by teacher-led dialogue which does not encourage independent learning. Teaching, particularly in the sixth form, creates a supportive environment, but it does not consistently challenge the most able. Pupils appreciate the readily available additional guidance offered in subject clinics.
- 3.24 Throughout the whole school, a wide range of assessment data provides valuable information to aid planning and the monitoring of progress. An effective information system is well used to set targets and monitor individuals' progress. The quality of marking across the school is inconsistent. In the best examples, pupils can clearly see what they need to do in order to further improve their work, but this practice is not the norm.
- 3.25 In their response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils felt that the homework did not help them to learn. In conversations, most pupils felt that homework is helpful and consolidates their learning. Their comments confirm the inspectors' view that work completed in class is reinforced at home, but that the most able pupils are not regularly offered tasks which require creative analysis or offer opportunities for independent research.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 Throughout the whole school, personal development is excellent; each pupil, including those in the EYFS, thrives in the warm and friendly atmosphere, fully meeting the school's aim to enable the experience of living in a caring community, where Christian values are established and recognised.
- 4.3 Pupils' spiritual awareness is excellent. All pupils are confident and reflective, having a high self-esteem yet able to recognise their own weaknesses. They enjoy a wide range of opportunities to engage with the non-material aspects of life. These include the exploration or consolidation of their religious beliefs in age-appropriate activities, such as Mass, reflective services, assemblies and the Christmas celebration of the birth of Christ. This involves music, drama, dance and gymnastics and is enjoyed by all, whatever their religion. Pupils of all ages gain a deep understanding of the beauty in the world through the study of music, art and literature. Opportunities to further develop an aesthetic appreciation include a photo competition held in the preparatory school, whilst senior pupils value spiritual retreats, which give time and space for personal reflection.
- 4.4 The moral development of pupils is strong. In the EYFS, children learn to share and to work as part of a team. As they mature, they develop into confident and articulate young people with a clear understanding of the norms of good conduct. They have excellent communication and inter-personal skills and can socialise with ease with people from different nationalities, ethnicity and religious backgrounds, demonstrating a sound understanding of, and respect for, cultures other than their own.
- 4.5 Pupils of all ages show outstanding social development. This is demonstrated in their willingness to take on positions of responsibility or leadership such as prefects, house captains or school council representatives as well as through high levels of charitable fundraising. In the preparatory school, events such as the harvest festival provide good opportunities to learn more about ways to help countries in need, whilst in the senior school, pupils planned and participated enthusiastically in a sponsored run, which raised a significant amount of money for charity. The programme to develop social awareness and citizenship is detailed and enjoyed by pupils of all ages and is well supplemented by an interesting programme of visiting speakers and cultural visits. Pupils in the senior school, and particularly in the sixth form, demonstrate good political and economic awareness. They explain and defend their views during classroom discussions, whilst respecting and appreciating those of others.
- 4.6 Cultural development is excellent. Pupils develop a strong awareness of the Catholic faith and of the diversity of other religions and cultural differences through the religious studies course in which all major world faiths are studied. Pupils learn to appreciate their own cultural traditions and to respect those which are very different from their own. Pupils benefit from a wide range of cultural opportunities in many subjects and activities which include trips to museums, theatres and galleries.

- 4.7 By the time they leave the school, pupils are confident, emotionally mature for their age and well prepared for the next stage of their life.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 Staff provide effective support and guidance for the pupils, in accordance with the school's aims, which are well supported by pastoral structures.
- 4.10 In the EYFS, positive relationships are promoted, based on courtesy and kindness. Staff act as excellent role models so that children learn to take turns and play co-operatively. Children know that they can turn to the adults caring for them for help and support. They have a clear understanding of the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise and they show that they remember simple hygiene rules.
- 4.11 From Year 1 onwards, pastoral teams meet weekly to discuss pupils' welfare. High quality care and guidance is central to the school's life; evidence from questionnaires and conversations with pupils and their parents confirms that they appreciate the positive relationships formed between staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves. A small minority of pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that they were not clear who they can turn to if they are worried or concerned but in interviews, pupils were adamant that they are regularly informed of the range of sources of help, should this be required. Support offered by sixth formers to younger pupils is a strong feature of pastoral care in the senior school. Older pupils befriend those new to the school and contribute significantly to the organisation of social activities such as the St. Valentine's disco, which was enthusiastically attended and enjoyed by all.
- 4.12 Pupils are encouraged to be healthy and the school provides a good selection of nutritious food. The timetabled provision for exercise is appropriate and the extra-curricular sports programme offers good opportunities for physical activity.
- 4.13 The school is effective in promoting good behaviour and pupils report that bullying or harassment is minimal and is dealt with quickly and appropriately. There are appropriate systems to deal constructively with any unacceptable behaviour, taking due account of any related difficulty or disability. The behaviour code and system of rewards are reinforced by the strong Catholic ethos. A minority of pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that, although the new behaviour management system had improved motivation, rewards and sanctions were not always awarded fairly or consistently. Inspectors agree that this area needs to be improved; senior leaders already have plans to do this.
- 4.14 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 4.15 Overall, good systems are in place for pupils to give their views to the school, which include a school council, food committee and anonymous questionnaires. A minority of those pupils who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that the school did not listen to or respond to their views, but inspectors did not find evidence for this. A number of the pupils' suggestions have been actioned, such as the provision of blazers for girls, an increase in sport for boys and an improvement in the quality of food.

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

- 4.16 The school's arrangements for welfare, health and safety are good.
- 4.17 Throughout the school, including the EYFS, pupils' welfare is effectively promoted and arrangements to safeguard pupils are secure. By the end of the inspection, suitable policies already in place had been amended to comply fully with the most recent legislation. Staff receive regular and appropriate training in child protection matters. Safer recruitment procedures are followed scrupulously.
- 4.18 Health and safety procedures are thorough and carefully implemented. A regular programme of maintenance ensures that the buildings and grounds are in good order. A major programme of construction and refurbishment has taken place in recent years, and plans to upgrade all remaining areas, such as the changing rooms which at present afford only limited privacy, are well advanced. However, the design of the building in some areas inhibits the easy flow of pupils and staff between lessons.
- 4.19 All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. Fire drills take place regularly and comments on the speed and efficiency of evacuation are carefully monitored.
- 4.20 Pupils who are ill or injured receive appropriate care and are dealt with sympathetically. A good number of staff receive training in first aid and children in the EYFS are treated by staff who have received specific training in paediatric care. The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and correctly stored for the previous three years.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The governing body provides good oversight of all sections of the school, including the EYFS, fully meeting the stated vision that the education that pupils receive should prepare them for life. The school has gone through a recent period of significant change. Since the previous inspection, careful and resourceful financial planning has resulted in increasing investment in staff, accommodation and other resources in all areas of the school. A significant number of the governors are new to their role, although many have a long association with the school either as parents, former pupils or staff. They bring a wide range of expertise which has resulted in the formulation of a detailed strategic plan which identifies present strengths and prioritises future development. The governing body is managing the period of rapid growth well so that good educational standards have been maintained whilst a new leadership team has been appointed and a process of regeneration begun.
- 5.3 Governors have a good insight into the working of the school. Members of the governing body offer strong support to senior leaders and are providing a stimulus for growth and improvement. They are committed to the success of the school, attend school functions and meet senior leaders regularly. Their recent focus has been on the appointment of key personnel and the improvement of facilities and resources. As a result, governors have made only limited progress with gaining an insight into the effectiveness of many of the school's current policies and procedures.
- 5.4 Governors discharge their responsibilities for safeguarding, welfare health and safety. The governing body has good oversight of the arrangements for the safeguarding and protection of children, including those in the EYFS, with a governor who has specific oversight of this. Governors are well informed about any concerns as they arise because of the close and supportive relationship between governors and senior leaders. A good number of governors have undertaken appropriate training so that they understand the responsibilities associated with their role.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is good.
- 5.6 The appointment of the new headmaster in September 2012 completes the senior leadership team, all of whom have either been appointed to their present role or have reformulated their responsibilities within the last three years. Strong leadership, well supported by the governing body, has carefully evaluated the school's needs so that a clear vision for the future development of the school has been agreed with managers at all levels. This is fully in line with the school's aim to enable pupils of all ages to reach their full potential so that they are capable of responding to the challenges of the modern world. The newly formulated development plans concentrate on a number of priorities, all focused on a continuing



and sustained improvement in the learning outcomes for pupils, which take account of recommendations made in the previous inspection report. Senior managers have a clear understanding of their role in the safeguarding of pupils. All relevant policies are in place and, by the end of the inspection, fully complied with requirements.

- 5.7 The quality of leadership and management in the EYFS is excellent. Staff valued the opportunity to join in the consultation process involving the design of the building housing the youngest children, which meets their needs most effectively. Senior managers contribute to the overall development plan for the preparatory school but do not formally evaluate their progress against realistic targets for continuing improvement. Regular meetings between staff ensure that planning is well matched to the interests of the children, offering suitable challenge and opportunities to exercise independence and creativity.
- 5.8 In the preparatory school, the senior leaders work very well together, ensuring continuity of planning and progress from Years 1 to 6. All members are relatively new in post and individual responsibilities are still being consolidated. They are leading with energy and enthusiasm and are receiving strong support from the teaching staff, which ensures that high standards of academic and personal development are maintained.
- 5.9 In the senior school, the vision and commitment of senior leaders has begun a process of growth and improvement which is being carefully planned and sensitively implemented. Leadership responsibilities are still evolving. The many new initiatives, which include an appraisal system and a reorganised middle management structure, are not yet fully embedded so their effectiveness cannot be judged in terms of their impact upon learning outcomes for pupils. However, their potential value is recognised by staff and supported by parents, the overwhelming majority of whom believe that the school is well led and managed. Of the initiatives introduced more than twelve months ago, several are having a positive impact upon pupils' motivation and progress.
- 5.10 The school has made good progress in implementing the recommendations of the previous inspection. Evidence from conversations with pupils and staff, indicates that the rewards system introduced in 2012 is popular with pupils, although its use by staff is inconsistent. Inclusion of specialist provision for SEND pupils now supports their learning more effectively. The recommendation in the previous inspection to reassess the procedures for allocating departmental budgets has been followed. Middle managers consider the need for increased resources within their curriculum section and formally request consideration for expenditure from the senior management team. When requests are realistic and support the main development priorities of the school as a whole, budgets are agreed.
- 5.11 Care is taken to recruit suitably qualified staff and a well organised and thorough induction programme is in place. All staff receive training in safeguarding, welfare and health and safety appropriate to their roles. Safer recruitment procedures are followed rigorously and pre-appointment checks are completed carefully and recorded in a central register. Financial administration is efficient, ensuring that the ambitious vision and clear priorities for improvement are based upon sound financial planning.
- 5.12 The overwhelming majority of parents are highly satisfied with education and care provided for their children. Parents of children in the EYFS appreciate the family atmosphere generated by staff. From Year 1, the warm and welcoming atmosphere

is maintained and parents value the opportunities provided by questionnaires to give their views on school life.

- 5.13 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire a very small minority of parents indicated that the school did not handle their concerns well. Inspectors examined related records and policies and found that issues which cannot be resolved informally are dealt with according to the school's published procedures and meticulous records are kept.
- 5.14 Parents new to the school receive a warm welcome. All parents have sufficient opportunities to be involved in the work and progress of their children and they are extremely well informed about the school and its activities. Parents of younger children are able to talk to teachers and assistants at the start and end of the day, and all parents are able to contact any teacher by telephone or email to discuss their child's progress or arrange an appointment to supplement the formal information evenings. The school's website is a valuable source of information. Parents are very supportive of events such as assemblies, concerts and matches, and there is an active Parents Association which organises numerous social activities.
- 5.15 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a very small minority of parents did not agree that they are satisfied with the information they receive about their child's progress. Inspectors judged that the present system of reports does not give parents a sufficiently regular and precise insight into their child's progress. Senior leaders have acknowledged parents' concern and have begun to deal with this by increasing the amount of written information provided to parents. A comprehensive report is sent home annually, which gives appropriate targets for further improvement. Some year groups are now receiving additional short reports detailing attainment, effort and organisation. Plans to extend this system through the whole school are in the process of implementation.

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