



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**ST NICHOLAS' SCHOOL**

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## St Nicholas' School

Full Name of School	<b>St Nicholas' School</b>
DfE Number	<b>850/6036</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>307341</b>
Address	<b>St Nicholas' School Redfields House Redfields Lane Church Crookham Fleet Hampshire GU52 0RF</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01252 850121</b>
Fax Number	<b>01252 850718</b>
Email Address	<b>headspa@st-nicholas.hants.sch.uk</b>
Headmistress	<b>Mrs Annette Whatmough</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Gary Cockayne</b>
Age Range	<b>3 to 16</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>356</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Girls</b>
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): <b>47</b> 11-16: <b>168</b> 5-11: <b>141</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total: <b>356</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Joanne Taylor</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>22 Sep 2015 to 25 Sep 2015</b>

## PREFACE

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) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations 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.

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*. The inspection on which the report is based took place over a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in November 2009.

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 governors with responsibility for safeguarding and EYFS, 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 Cathy Williamson	Reporting Inspector
Miss Kate Mitchell	Team Inspector (Head of Juniors, (GSA/IAPS school))
Dr David Pacini	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, ISA school)
Mr Gary Wright	Team Inspector (Head, GSA school)
Mrs Mary Hughes	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 St Nicholas' School is an independent day school educating girls from the age of three to sixteen and boys from age three to seven. It was founded in 1935 and, in 1996, moved to its present thirty-acre rural site on the outskirts of Fleet in Hampshire. The school maintains the Christian ethos of its foundation whilst welcoming pupils of all faiths and none: it is registered under the Religious Character of School Regulations 2003. The school is overseen by a board of governors and the current headmistress was appointed in 1995. The school aims to encourage its pupils to achieve the highest possible academic standards and to benefit from the aesthetic and physical opportunities offered by the school. It seeks to help pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem as they develop morally and spiritually by providing a caring, well-run environment in which pupils can develop knowledge and leadership skills that will equip them for their future lives.
- 1.2 The school currently educates 356 pupils in 3 departments: infants, juniors and seniors, and is managed as one school. Boys and girls are admitted to the infant department, which includes the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Years 1 and 2. Girls only are admitted to the junior and senior departments (Years 3 to 6 and Years 7 to 11 respectively). The pupils are of British and multicultural origin, and are drawn from professional and business families living in towns and villages within a 20 mile radius of the school.
- 1.3 In the infant, junior and senior departments, the ability of pupils is above average. There are currently 31 pupils who receive learning support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupil has an education, health and care plan (EHC) and two pupils have support for English as an additional language (EAL). The school enters pupils for GCSE examinations.
- 1.4 Since the previous inspection there have been changes to the senior management team, the head of the EYFS and the governing body, including to the chair. A head of information technology (IT) and a director of music are among other recent appointments. Some refurbishment has taken place, including to the science laboratories and the infant playground area. A new Performing Arts Centre was opened shortly after the previous inspection.
- 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, including the EYFS, is very successful in achieving its aims for pupils' academic and personal development. Pupils' overall achievement is excellent in their academic studies and in extra-curricular activities. In public examinations the attainment of pupils is good and their progress throughout the school is at least good and often excellent. Pupils with SEND or EAL and those in the EYFS make significant progress and achieve well in relation to their starting points. There is an extensive extra-curricular programme and pupils are very successful in sports, academic, creative and aesthetic activities. The school provides an excellent curriculum that is tailored to the needs of its pupils. Teaching is excellent throughout the school. In the EYFS, adults support learning well. They work alongside pupils, encouraging them and modelling excellent learning skills. In pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a very large majority of pupils said their teachers help them to learn and that they feel they are making good progress. Teachers make careful provision for pupils' individual learning needs; pupils with SEND or EAL are extremely well supported by their teachers and specialist staff. The most able pupils across the school are appropriately challenged through the curriculum, clubs, activities and teachers' planning; meeting a recommendation from the previous inspection.
- 2.2 The personal development of pupils is excellent throughout the school. Pupils are confident, reflective and considerate. Their spiritual and moral development is a strength of the school, in line with its Christian ethos. Pupils' social and cultural development is excellent. They are well prepared for life in a multi-cultural world, with a well-developed knowledge of their own culture and a respect for that of others. The school provides excellent pastoral care. Relationships between pupils and staff are strong and staff support their pupils extremely well. The school's welfare, health and safety arrangements, including safeguarding, are excellent, ensuring a safe environment for all and encouraging healthy living. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, most parents said their children are happy and feel safe at school.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is good. Financial oversight is prudent, enabling the governors to maintain the school to a high standard. They fulfil their responsibilities for safeguarding and safe recruitment with care; although a few minor errors in recording correctly-conducted checks were identified and rectified during the inspection. Governors are closely involved in the life of the school and seek to monitor its work informally, but their visits are not always sufficiently focused. The quality of leadership and management is excellent overall. A strongly focused leadership team provides clear educational direction and effective communication within the school, ensuring that leaders of departments are fully involved in school-development planning; this meets the recommendation from the previous inspection. Leadership and management in the EYFS are good. The welfare and care of the children is central to the setting, and their safety and security informs all planning. Staff encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning in many ways and they offer them a wide range of opportunities to pursue their interests in the outdoor provision. This meets both the EYFS recommendations from the previous inspection. Leaders have a clear vision; development planning and monitoring are in place but are not fully implemented within a formal framework.

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

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

2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2015.

### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure there is a clear focus and written record for governors' monitoring visits.
2. Improve the formal monitoring role of leaders in the EYFS.



### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils achieve well for their abilities and are highly successful in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, thus fulfilling the school's first aim.
- 3.3 In the EYFS, the youngest children communicate effectively; in a cooking activity they described baking powder as being 'like snow falling down'. By the end of their time in the EYFS most children are reading with increasing fluency, writing independently, using correct punctuation, and counting in tens up to one hundred. Children are active learners, investigating and exploring as they develop their skills and most concentrate well. Older children work independently on their own and in groups, showing confidence and enjoyment; and the youngest show good independence as they put on their coats and shoes. Children are creative; in art they painted autumn trees and used their critical skills to make shades of brown accurately.
- 3.4 Older pupils demonstrate excellent knowledge and understanding across their subjects. In religious studies GCSE, pupils discussed the moral implications of human embryology research at a very high level, showing logical and independent thought. Pupils are highly articulate, and their excellent reading and speaking skills were observed in lessons and in assemblies. Their listening skills are highly developed, resulting in excellent communication and rapid progress in lessons. Pupils of all ages write fluently and accurately. They apply their mathematical skills to problem solving, as seen in a junior class investigation on prime numbers where pupils eliminated non-primes by finding factors. Pupils are skilled in creative subjects; an example is the high quality of art work displayed around the school. They are very successful in a wide range of sporting activities and academic and creative competitions; the junior pupils were 'highly commended' in an engineering competition and the under-15 cross-country team won the local district championships. Pupils achieve at a high level in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE), at least half of each year group start and complete the bronze award, and some achieve silver during their time at the school. When they leave, pupils are successful in gaining places at local colleges and schools, where most follow A-level courses.
- 3.5 In the EYFS, almost all pupils reach, and many exceed, age-related expectations. The children, including those with SEND and EAL, make excellent progress in relation to their starting points, especially in reading, writing and number skills. In the infant and junior departments, pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests but, on the evidence available, is judged to be high in relation to national age-related expectations. The scrutiny of work, discussions with pupils, and examination of measures of progress from standardised tests show that this attainment represents good, often excellent, progress in relation to pupils of similar ability nationally.
- 3.6 The following analysis uses the national data for 2012 to 2014. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. Results in GCSE have been above the national average for girls in maintained schools, and in 2012 were similar to the national average for girls in selective schools. The percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A\* to C grades has been consistently 97 per cent or higher

over this period; results for 2015 are in line with previous years. These results show that progress is high relative to that of pupils of similar ability nationally. This is confirmed by lesson observation, scrutiny of the pupils' work, examination of school data, discussions with pupils and teachers, and the results of analyses of nationally standardised data.

- 3.7 In the infant, junior and senior departments, pupils who are identified as having SEND or EAL make excellent progress thanks to the high quality of the support that they receive. In many lessons, pupils with SEND achieve at very high levels relative to their abilities. More able pupils respond well to the increased academic challenge now provided by the teaching, and make at least good progress.
- 3.8 Pupils' attitude to their work is excellent throughout the school. They are interested, alert and conscientious in lessons, and keen to apply their knowledge. In Year 4, pupils responded to a real life mathematics problem by working out how many cakes were needed for morning break. These positive attitudes are seen in their extra-curricular activities and contribute to their high levels of success. Pupils work productively as individuals and in groups, for example, junior pupils have achieved excellent results in music and drama at local festivals for the last two years, and senior food technology pupils competed successfully at district level in a competition for young chefs.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.10 The curriculum is suitable for the age and ability range of the pupils, including those with particular needs, and is very well planned. It is highly successful in fulfilling the school's aims. It also takes care to give support to the principles of tolerance and respect, democracy and individual liberty.
- 3.11 In the EYFS a wide range of activities cover the seven areas of learning. There is an appropriate balance of indoor and outdoor activities, and of those led by adults or chosen by children. The curriculum is carefully planned, incorporating children's interests so that it excites them and motivates them to learn. It is reviewed regularly to meet their needs, has a strong focus on literacy and mathematics, and prepares children well for the next stage of their education.
- 3.12 The curriculum for older pupils is well planned, wide ranging and tailored to their needs. Pupils follow the National Curriculum subjects with personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and religious studies (RS) in addition. English and mathematics classes are grouped by prior attainment from Year 4, and some specialist subjects are taught in the infant and junior departments. The school offers an excellent range of languages; French from Year 1, Mandarin Chinese from Year 6 and Latin in Year 7. Spanish is offered from Year 8 and as an option at GCSE. The timetable in Years 10 and 11 is extremely flexible, enabling a very large majority of pupils to study the subjects of their choice. Pupils have a wide choice of options and all, including those with SEND and EAL, can choose extra lessons in English, French, mathematics and science subjects.
- 3.13 The provision for pupils with SEND is very strong throughout the school. Their progress is carefully monitored and the curriculum is tailored to their needs. Some have individual support in extra lessons or in class, enabling them to make at least good and sometimes excellent progress along with their peers. A small number of pupils with EAL have regular support lessons so that they can access the curriculum

effectively. The school supports and challenges more able pupils very effectively by careful grouping in lessons and with specific, targeted clubs and activities.

- 3.14 Non-examined lessons in physical education (PE), PSHE, music and RS enrich the curriculum and make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. The well-organised PSHE programme fully reflects the aims of the school and is supported by a good range of resources. Topics include citizenship in the junior school and financial matters in the senior school. The coverage of political issues presents opposing views in a balanced way. The detailed and up-to-date careers programme covers economic issues, curriculum vitae writing and post-16 advice. This programme is very effectively supplemented by work experience in Year 10 and a careers fair, where many recent former pupils of the school return to talk to current pupils about choices and pathways post 16 and 18.
- 3.15 The curriculum is enriched by an excellent array of trips and activities; for example junior pupils visited horticultural gardens and enjoyed a residential trip to Paris. Seniors have been to the First World War trenches in Ypres and geography field trips have visited Dorset, the Isle of Wight and Iceland. Pupils compete successfully in a wide variety of local and national competitions, such as the National Microbiology Competition and the BBC 'paint a postcard' competition. There are many strong links with the local community. Infant and junior pupils visit a charity for the homeless and a 'people who help us' topic in the infant department involves visits from a local nurse, doctor and policeman.
- 3.16 Extra-curricular provision is excellent. A wide range of activities are available, from 'Lego club' and tag rugby to debating and film clubs. These offer pupils opportunities to pursue individual skills and interests, develop team-working skills and form links with the community. The DofE, dance, music and drama events are well established and a large number of sports teams represent the school very successfully.

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

- 3.17 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.18 Throughout the school, teaching is highly effective in supporting pupils' progress and in promoting the school's aims. Teaching makes a significant positive contribution to the pupils' learning and achievements. Much teaching is characterised by clear objectives, well-planned lessons, and effective time management. Such lessons demonstrate a swift pace and include a wide variety of tasks that foster pupils' application, an improvement since the previous inspection. Teaching staff have excellent subject knowledge and pupils are suitably challenged by open-ended questioning as they engage in debate amongst themselves and with their teachers. This enables pupils to develop higher-order thinking skills as was seen in a senior IT lesson concerned with e-safety and digital footprints. In the most successful lessons, teaching ensures that pupils have the opportunity to contribute to discussion and develop their analytical skills.
- 3.19 In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a very large majority of pupils stated that their teachers help them to learn. In all year groups interviewed, pupils spoke warmly of the support, help and encouragement they receive both in lessons and at lunch and break times. A large majority of the pupils said that they are encouraged to work independently. In almost all lessons seen, teaching encouraged exemplary behaviour and fostered interest and independent learning confirming this view.
- 3.20 Teaching is well planned and tailored to the needs of pupils. Teachers know their pupils well and assess their progress informally in lessons, adapting the pace as necessary so that pupils gain confidence and make rapid progress. In the EYFS, staff have high expectations and understand how young children learn. They take every opportunity to engage children in conversation and introduce new vocabulary, and they use excellent questioning to develop learning further. They play and work alongside the children and model learning well.
- 3.21 Assessment is used very effectively. In the EYFS, staff use the information from regular assessments to adapt their planning for groups and individuals, ensuring that children are making appropriate progress. Throughout the school academic data, including nationally recognised tests, is used to increase awareness of pupils' ability and progress. This ensures that any learning needs are detected early and that good progress is recognised. Marking is exemplary overall and pupils find it constructive, but inspection found some variation in the frequency and quality of feedback to pupils.
- 3.22 Throughout the school, including in the EYFS, teaching is well adapted to those with particular educational needs. Pupils with SEND or EAL are assigned tasks matched to their abilities, enabling them to make at least good progress. The most able are suitably challenged by differentiated and extension tasks in lessons and by initiatives outside the classroom. The school has responded very well to the recommendation in the previous report to provide greater challenge for the most able pupils in the junior department. Individual pupils' areas of strength are now identified and very suitable provision is made in lesson planning and execution.
- 3.23 Teachers are creative in their use of resources. Games, video clips and wall displays engage pupils' interest and make lessons enjoyable. Interactive whiteboards are used creatively throughout the school to assist pupils' learning and understanding. Tablet computers are used in some lessons as was seen in

Reception, where children used them to develop their number and counting skills. In line with the school's ethos, teaching addresses spiritual, moral and ethical issues, where appropriate, encouraging pupils' personal development. Teaching promotes tolerance and respect, and is non-partisan in its coverage of political issues.

## **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 The school takes active steps to promote the personal development of pupils of all ages, in a way that supports the shared values of British culture.
- 4.3 Throughout the school, including in the EYFS, pupils are polite and articulate with a real desire to communicate with others. In accordance with the school's aims, pupils display a sense of confidence and leadership; in the EYFS children are keen to be 'leader of the day'. All pupils have a strong sense of responsibility and are mindful of the needs of others. The youngest children were observed sharing wheeled vehicles and older pupils co-operate with each other in class, readily helping everyone to achieve the set task. Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of non-material aspects of life, an example of this was Year 6's assembly on helping others.
- 4.4 The pupils' spiritual development is excellent. Pupils throughout the school demonstrate an understanding of its Christian ethos and take the opportunities provided for reflection during the school day. They develop their understanding of other faiths in RS, and in PSHE are helped to identify personal strengths and areas for development. Pupils recognise the needs and rights of others, as evidenced in a Year 10 lesson on the current migrant crisis and human rights.
- 4.5 Pupils' moral values are highly developed and they have a clear sense of right and wrong. They are aware of the school's rules and adhere to them, as well as developing an understanding of the legal system of England. Few sanctions are needed as pupils accept full responsibility for their own actions. There is a culture of mutual respect, and the school's high expectations of its pupils are implicit in all aspects of school life. British values of mutual respect and tolerance permeate the school. In the EYFS children led an assembly celebrating the Queen's long reign. In the senior school, the Year 10 debating team entered a local public speaking competition speaking on 'What is Britishness?' Pupils have a strong awareness of British institutions and, values and this is developed particularly purposefully through the school's curriculum.
- 4.6 Pupils' social development is excellent and they contribute to the life of the school in many ways. They readily take on positions of responsibility such as prefects or form captains, and work well in team situations such as in bushcraft or DofE. Relationships throughout the school are excellent and older pupils are extremely supportive of the younger. The EYFS classrooms are close to the infant ones ensuring excellent transitions between classes and children of different ages often play together. Pupils of all ages show a lively awareness of the needs of those less fortunate than themselves and accept their responsibility for helping them whether locally or further afield. They support a range of local and national charities thereby communicating the importance of service to others. Pupils take the opportunity to have an effective impact on the school community through their school council. The council organises fund-raising activities and has brought about changes to the lunch menu, new school benches and flower beds, to the benefit of the whole school community.
- 4.7 The cultural awareness of pupils is excellent. Pupils learn about other cultures in assemblies, language, geography and other lessons, and on educational visits.

Children in the EYFS respect each other's differences and celebrate a range of cultural festivals. Parents contribute to these, for example they brought in bangles, artefacts and bags to help further the children's understanding of Diwali. The school has long standing curriculum links with a girls' high school in India and older pupils compare issues such as the effects of global warming and the electoral systems in their two countries, developing the cultural and political awareness of the pupils at both schools.

- 4.8 By the time they leave the school, pupils are confident and articulate young people with a clear sense of justice, respect for others and a readiness to help those in need.

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

- 4.9 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.10 Staff throughout the school know their pupils extremely well and are able to offer appropriate support and guidance, creating the happy atmosphere which inspectors observed daily. In the EYFS the generous adult-to-child ratios enable key people to form very strong bonds with children and their families. A very large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that their children are happy and feel safe at the school.
- 4.11 Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils are very strong throughout the school, including the EYFS. Pre-inspection questionnaire responses indicated that most parents believe that their children are well cared for at school.
- 4.12 The school effectively encourages all pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle. The children in the EYFS take walks in the grounds and enjoy PE and yoga lessons. Pupils of all ages spoke very positively about the quality of the well-balanced meals provided. All pupils are engaged in regular physical exercise, younger pupils have many opportunities to play and learn outside and many pupils enjoy the variety of extra-curricular sporting opportunities offered by the school.
- 4.13 Good behaviour is promoted most successfully. In the EYFS, staff are excellent role models as they calmly and quietly reinforce expectations about behaviour, kindness and courtesy. Older pupils were found to be purposeful and courteous at all times. Pupils are proud of the house system which strengthens good relationships between pupils of different ages. A small minority of parents said they thought the school did not handle cases of bullying well. Inspection evidence did not support this view; pupils' questionnaire responses were markedly less critical. Inspection found that the school has an effective policy to guard against bullying, including cyberbullying, and records show that it is carefully followed. The log of bullying incidents shows that cases are handled promptly and appropriately, and in interviews and questionnaire responses pupils commented that the school deals well with any incidents. A minority of pupils in their questionnaire responses said they thought teachers are not fair in the way they issue rewards and sanctions. After examination of records, no inspection evidence was found to support this. In interviews, pupils said they felt the systems are fair. Teachers have freedom to design their own minor sanctions. Large numbers of positive awards are available to pupils for an extensive range of achievements in academic work and extra-curricular activities, and for traits such as kind behaviour and effort.
- 4.14 The school has a suitable plan to improve access for pupils with SEND.

- 4.15 The pupils' questionnaire responses showed that a small minority thought the school did not listen to their opinions. Inspection evidence did not support this view. The school council has representatives from Years 5 to 11 and pupils know that the school responds to their requests.

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

- 4.16 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.17 The school accords the highest priority to safeguarding and responds quickly to all regulatory requirements and official guidance. For example, new guidelines to prevent radicalisation were swiftly incorporated into policies. The school has well-established links with the local authority children's services and works appropriately with them and other agencies when necessary. The school actively seeks information on safeguarding concerns from feeder schools and nurseries, and the head of the EYFS is a designated safeguarding leader (DSL). Safer recruitment procedures are implemented rigorously. In a very small number of cases, minor errors in the recording of checks were not acknowledged, these presented no risk to pupils and records were quickly rectified during the inspection. All DSLs have current training at the appropriate level, staff are trained regularly and induction for new members includes safeguarding procedures in line with official guidance. Staff are familiar with the most recent relevant statutory guidance, know the procedures and do not hesitate to refer concerns over safeguarding matters.
- 4.18 The school has effective policies and procedures for reducing risks from fire. Equipment is well maintained and tested, and fire practices are held regularly. Each area and activity is assessed for risk and actions taken to reduce these, for example by improving external lighting. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly. Buildings are secure and access limited; traffic movements are well controlled and pedestrian paths clearly marked. Health and safety is a standing item on all governors' and staff meetings. In the parents' questionnaire responses a very large majority said their children feel safe at school.
- 4.19 Pupils who are unwell are cared for appropriately. A medical room with suitable facilities is available. Almost all staff have first aid training. Members of the EYFS staff teach children the importance of personal hygiene and all are trained in paediatric first aid.
- 4.20 Admission and attendance registers are carefully maintained, backed up and stored for the required three years. Attendance is monitored scrupulously for all pupils, including those in the EYFS.



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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good. Governors are highly committed to the school and work hard to support its work, understand its needs and help it fulfil its aims. They work closely with staff and communicate effectively with them in reviewing educational standards, and they make the personal development of pupils a high priority in line with the Christian ethos of the school. Governors have clear aspirations and plans for the future of the school and contribute to its development planning. They fulfil their legal obligations conscientiously, including that for the annual review of the safeguarding policy and its implementation. A very few minor errors in recording correctly-conducted recruitment checks had not been picked up. The governing body is currently small in size and is in the process of recruiting new members to broaden its expertise.
- 5.2 Governors are generally effective in their oversight of the school as each is responsible for key areas such as safeguarding, assessment and the EYFS. They regularly consider the needs of the EYFS children and have invested in a soft-surface playground and play equipment which has considerably enhanced outdoor provision. All link governors, including for the EYFS, are supportive and visit regularly. They monitor informally, but as a result the focus of visits is not always clear. A finance committee maintains prudent financial oversight and governors have invested carefully to maintain and develop the school's premises to a high standard. External expertise is sought to ensure compliance with regulations in areas such as health and safety. The recruitment of high-quality staff and their development is a priority. Governors support senior staff extremely well and seek to act as 'critical friends'.

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

- 5.3 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent.
- 5.4 Leadership and management are highly effective, as evidenced by the high quality of the pupils' achievements and progress, and by their excellent personal development.
- 5.5 In the EYFS, welfare and care of the children is central to the provision and the school is meticulous in ensuring their safety and security. Procedures are implemented consistently and safeguarding is effectively managed. Leaders have a clear vision and appropriate self-evaluation takes place. The school has responded well to the recommendations from the previous inspection. Children in the EYFS now have many more opportunities to pursue learning outdoors and to take responsibility for their own learning. The EYFS staff work very well together, displaying a strong team spirit. Staff attend relevant courses and undertake additional training to develop their skills. A programme for staff to have individual formal discussions with leaders which focus on individual children is in the early stages of development. Much informal discussion and reflection on practice takes place, but the timetable currently limits the availability of leaders to monitor formally all aspects of the provision.

- 5.6 Members of the senior management team are united in their vision for the school. Since the previous inspection, they have worked closely together to provide extremely clear educational direction in accordance with the school aims. They have responded well to the recommendations made in the previous inspection by improving the programme of self-evaluation and development planning for the school. This plan accurately and successfully identifies and prioritises areas for improvement, setting challenging targets to which all staff are encouraged to contribute. The strategic school development plan clearly demonstrates that management understands the school's strengths and has practical strategies to deal with areas in need of development. The plan informs departmental action plans, including in the EYFS. Within this development planning structure, some details of implementation are not currently recorded.
- 5.7 The monitoring of teaching and learning is undertaken by senior and middle management through the scrutiny of pupils' work, checks on curriculum planning and lesson observations. Communication amongst staff, both formal and informal, about academic and pastoral matters is continuous. This ensures that the needs of, and outcomes for, the pupils are always at the forefront of the actions of the staff as they know the strengths of their pupils very well. The school has been successful in the appointment of senior managers who are equally committed to the promotion of high standards. Structures and roles are well defined and understood. Effective mechanisms are in place for consultation and development with all staff, parents and pupils.
- 5.8 Leadership and management are highly effective in the discharging of their delegated responsibilities, including in the implementation of policies. Management at all levels is highly successful in securing, supporting, developing and motivating high-quality staff. Safer recruitment procedures are rigorously implemented. Leadership offers a clear sense of purpose. Staff are well supported and listened to by curriculum and pastoral leaders. They speak highly of the opportunities they receive for development. An effective appraisal system for all staff operates annually and is linked successfully to internal and external training programmes. This system is much appreciated by staff, who welcome the opportunity to reflect on their work and to identify areas for further development and training. All staff receive appropriate training for their roles in safeguarding and in welfare, health and safety.
- 5.9 Links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent. Most parents are highly satisfied with the education provided; they feel that their children are happy and well looked after at school. In the EYFS, parents feel closely involved in their children's learning and development. Support and intervention from outside agencies, such as the local authority, are used in an effective way when needed ensuring that each child, including those with SEND and EAL, is able to make good progress in their learning. In discussions, parents of pupils from across the school said that they particularly appreciate the family atmosphere, small class sizes and that staff know their pupils extremely well. Most parents would recommend this school to others.
- 5.10 The school provides all required information to parents of current and prospective pupils through its accessible website and informative prospectus. The parent portal provides details, ranging from curriculum booklets to information about school trips. Regular newsletters, a parent messaging service and the termly magazine ensure that parents are kept fully abreast of school life. Information evenings, such as one held about social media and internet safety, help keep parents fully informed about current issues. A small minority of parents expressed concern about communication; inspection evidence does not support this view. The inspection

team observed highly effective daily contact between parents and staff, particularly in the infant and junior departments where the open-door policy is very much appreciated by parents. Records show that concerns are handled with care, and in accordance with the school's published procedures. The highly efficient office staff are available to answer any questions or provide information to those who need it. Staff respond promptly to emails that are sent by way of the school office.

- 5.11 A small minority of parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that the school does not encourage them to be involved in school events and other aspects of its work. Inspectors identified many opportunities for parents to be actively involved in the work of the school. They are invited to watch matches and sports days, and to attend dramatic productions and musical concerts. Live internet broadcasting of concerts is much appreciated as it enables absent parents and extended family to share in events. Some parents are actively involved in the life of the school, for example they help at swimming lessons and talk to pupils about their own professions. Regular open mornings involve them in the life of the school. Curriculum evenings are an opportunity to meet their children's new teachers and learn about expectations and procedures for the new academic year. The parent-teacher association does much to cement relations between home and school, and runs many events for both social and fund-raising purposes. Parents commented on how much their children enjoy events such as movie nights and Easter egg hunts.
- 5.12 Of the parents who responded to the questionnaire, a small minority indicated that they were not provided with sufficient information about their children's progress. Inspection evidence did not support this view. Parents of infant pupils receive an annual report. In the junior and senior departments parents receive two reports. Reports are detailed and informative, and demonstrate that staff know their pupils extremely well. Parents of senior pupils also receive a grade sheet in the term in which there are no school examinations. All year groups have at least one parents' meeting each year; infants and Years 9 and 11 have two. These provide good opportunities to discuss pupils' work, progress and targets. Parents with further concerns can make appointments with staff through the school office.

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