



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**THE MAYNARD SCHOOL**

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## The Maynard School

Full Name of School	<b>The Maynard School</b>
DfE Number	<b>878/6034</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>1099027</b>
Address	<b>The Maynard School Denmark Road Exeter Devon EX1 1SJ</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01392 273417</b>
Fax Number	<b>01392 355999</b>
Email Address	<b>headspa@maynard.co.uk</b>
Head	<b>Ms Bee Hughes</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Lady Jan Stanhope</b>
Age Range	<b>6 to 18</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>363</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Girls</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>4-7: 10 7-11: 68 11-18: 285</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>02 Feb 2016 to 05 Feb 2016</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 integrated inspection was in February 2010

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

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, 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 Richard Mannix	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Valerie Dunsford	Team Inspector (Head, GSA school)
Mrs Sarah Gillam	Team Inspector (Head, ISA school)
Mrs Lizbeth Green	Team Inspector (Former Head, ISA school)
Mr Roland Martin	Team Inspector (Head, HMC/Society of Heads school)

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The Maynard School is a day school for girls. It is named after Sir John Maynard who was involved in its early development. The school was founded in 1658 on a site in the centre of Exeter. In 1912 it was renamed 'The Maynard School' and both senior and junior schools continue to occupy the same site today. The school is non-denominational, admitting girls of all faiths or none. It consists of a junior school for pupils aged six to eleven years and a senior school for pupils aged eleven to eighteen. The school welcomed its first Year 2 pupils in September 2015 ahead of the official opening of a new pre-prep department in September 2016 for pupils aged four to seven. It is constituted as a charitable trust, with a governing body that has oversight of all sections of the school.
- 1.2 Through a focus on academic, creative and physical challenges, the school seeks to encourage each pupil to imagine her potential, aspire to take every opportunity and achieve her best in a warm, friendly atmosphere. The school endeavours to prepare each pupil for life after school by developing an enthusiasm for learning and a confident approach to challenge and change. Since the previous inspection the school now has a new chair of governors and has made several changes to the senior leadership team. The school is now an international school, aiming to enable pupils to appreciate their place in the world.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection there were 363 pupils on the roll, with 285 attending the senior school including 74 in the sixth form. A total of 78 pupils attend the junior school, including 10 in the pre-prep department. The majority of pupils come from Exeter and the surrounding towns, and come from business or professional families.
- 1.4 The average ability of pupils throughout the school is above the national average. In the junior school around a third of the pupils have an ability that is well above the national average. The school has no pupils with an educational health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. A total of 20 pupils have some form of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive special educational provision. English is spoken as an additional language (EAL) by 6 pupils, all of whom receive specialist support.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its NC equivalence are shown in the following tables.

### ***Junior and Pre-Prep***

<b>School</b>	<b>NC name</b>
Year 2	Year 2
Lower 1	Year 3
Upper 1	Year 4
Form 2	Year 5
Lower 3	Year 6

### ***Senior School***

<b>School</b>	<b>NC name</b>
Upper 3	Year 7
Lower 4	Year 8
Upper 4	Year 9
Lower 5	Year 10
Upper 5	Year 11
Lower 6 <sup>th</sup>	Year 12
Upper 6 <sup>th</sup>	Year 13

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

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

- 2.1 The school is highly successful in meeting its aims. Pupils have a very mature approach to their learning and apply their excellent knowledge, understanding and skills in a confident and effective manner. They make excellent progress as a result of the excellent teaching that they receive. The teaching encourages the pupils' natural enjoyment of working both together and independently, and promotes an ethos of challenge and high expectations. Assessment and monitoring procedures have been much improved, in line with the recommendation of the previous inspection. Pupils know their capabilities and receive clear advice on what they need to do to improve the quality of their work, and this strongly enhances pupils' learning. An excellent, broad and balanced curriculum supports fully the pupils' very positive attitudes to their learning. The curriculum is further enhanced by a very wide range of extra-curricular activities, with outstanding pupil successes at both individual and team level. Able, gifted and talented pupils, and those with SEND, are strongly supported in their learning and achieve at a high level relative to their abilities. Pupils with SEND or EAL can participate in all areas of the curriculum due to the care and support that they receive, and make progress which is comparable to and sometimes better than their peers. Able, gifted and talented pupils make excellent progress.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent and a strength of the school. Pupils benefit from close, supportive relationships with each other and with the staff, and the staff understand each pupil's individual needs. They are confident and articulate, with a well-developed understanding of right and wrong and a high degree of emotional maturity. The quality of pastoral care is excellent and pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Arrangements for health and safety are good and a strong emphasis is placed on safeguarding the welfare of pupils. References have not always been obtained for all staff prior to starting employment at the school.
- 2.3 The school benefits from effective governance, leadership and management, which provide clear direction and vision for all sections of the school and ensure that it successfully meets its aims. The governing body has excellent insight into the workings of the school. It is fully aware of the aspirations of the pupils and parents, and it provides great attention to planning, monitoring and evaluating the progress of the school. The review of most policies is diligently undertaken but prior to the inspection a few required updating to reflect current requirements. Monitoring of the single central register (SCR) of appointments has not been sufficiently thorough. The school promotes excellent links with the parents. Both parents and pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed a very strong endorsement of the school and its values. Recommendations from the previous inspection have been met.

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

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

2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and therefore it is required to take the following action.

- Ensure that references are always obtained for new staff before they start work at the school [Part 3, Paragraph 7 (a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety].

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

2.5 In addition to the above regulatory action point, the school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Exercise greater rigour in the oversight of school policies and their implementation, including in staff recruitment and recording checks on the SCR.



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

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The school fulfils its aim to be committed to excellence. It provides a supportive community that enables pupils to achieve to their full potential and display the confidence to embrace challenge and change.
- 3.3 The pupils' knowledge and understanding are excellent in the senior school. In the junior school, pupils read with good understanding and write fluently and accurately. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate their strong literacy skills and are highly articulate and confident in expressing their ideas. Pupils have excellent numeracy skills and apply these very effectively. They develop highly effective reasoning and critical thinking skills, approaching problem-solving activities with enthusiasm and determination. Pupils readily demonstrate high levels of creativity in a wide range of contexts including art, music and choral work. The majority of pupils entering singing, instrumental and drama examinations achieve merits or distinctions at high grades.
- 3.4 Pupils participate keenly in physical activities throughout the school and achieve to a high standard in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils play at county level in a variety of sports, with individuals competing at national and international level. There has been considerable team success, including in under-14 netball at county level and the equestrian teams' success at national level. Pupils enjoy much success at all levels in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE).
- 3.5 Pupils with SEND achieve at a high level in relation to their abilities, and pupils with EAL achieve in line with their abilities. Inspection evidence demonstrated that able, gifted and talented pupils frequently achieve at a high level, with excellent work observed in homework tasks, competitions, research projects and notably in the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) work.
- 3.6 In the junior school, pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against national tests but on the evidence available from standardised tests, lesson observations, scrutiny of samples of work and responses in interviews, it is judged to be excellent.
- 3.7 The following analysis uses national data for the period 2012 to 2014, the most recent three years for which comparative statistical data is currently available. Performance at GCSE and A level is well above the national average for girls in maintained schools, with girls at A level performing above the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. All Year 13 leavers in 2015 proceeded to university, with many gaining places at highly selective universities.
- 3.8 These levels of attainment at GCSE and A level, and the attainment, as judged, of pupils in the junior school, supported by inspection evidence and the standardised measures of progress that are available, indicate that pupils throughout the school make progress that is high in relation to pupils of similar abilities. Pupils with SEND make excellent progress and often achieve well beyond expectations. Those with EAL make positive progress both in acquiring English language and in their subject skills, knowledge and understanding. Able, gifted and talented pupils make excellent progress in relation to their abilities. In their pre-inspection questionnaire

responses, both the parents and the pupils expressed a very positive view on the rate of progress made by pupils of all abilities.

- 3.9 Pupils have a very positive attitude to their learning. They are attentive, interested in what they do, curious and very diligent in their studies. Pupils work well individually but also collaborate and support others with great ease. They take pride in their work and are eager to do their best. Independent learning is positively and effectively promoted.

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

- 3.10 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.11 The curriculum is broad and challenging across the whole school, covering the key areas of expressive, creative and scientific subjects and provides pupils with an excellent academic foundation from junior school through to the sixth form.
- 3.12 By the time they reach Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to study three modern foreign languages, and enjoy lessons in food and nutrition, and textiles. Pupils study ten GCSEs including the core curriculum subjects with three separate sciences, and have a further three option choices. Sixth form pupils choose from a wide choice of A-level subjects and EPQ topics. Information and communication technology (ICT) is taught up to the end of Year 9 and, as part of an initiative to develop a mobile learning culture, pupils in Years 9 and 10 are required to have their own computer tablet. In the parents' questionnaire responses, a very large majority agreed that the school offers a good range of subjects.
- 3.13 Cross-curricular days provide the senior school pupils with additional curricular opportunities such as 'What it means to be British' for the Year 7 pupils. Sixth form pupils are enabled to broaden their personal skills and the experiences they receive through courses which focus on applying to universities, and through an extension studies programme which offers short courses on topics including student life, philosophy, car or bicycle maintenance and magic.
- 3.14 A comprehensive programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) is enjoyed and highly valued by all pupils. This diverse programme provides pupils with a wide range of opportunities to develop their social responsibilities, compassion and cultural awareness in line with the school's aims. Embedding values inherent to British society is strongly emphasised. Coverage of political issues includes balanced presentation of opposing views. The quality of the careers provision is excellent, highlighting the need for the pupils' skills development and the importance of self-awareness.
- 3.15 The academic curriculum is greatly enhanced by a very wide range of extra-curricular activities, providing inspiration and challenge to all pupils including the able, gifted and talented and those with SEND. Numerous opportunities are available for pupils to represent their school and county, and to perform at a high level, in a range of sports and creative activities. Throughout the school, many pupils spoke highly of their involvement in the DofE, and sixth form pupils readily participate in the Young Enterprise programme. An overwhelming majority of the parents in their pre-inspection questionnaire responses felt that the school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities.
- 3.16 Pupils across the school are challenged in their learning and personal development by the wide range of trips and visits organised by the school, including a visit to the

junior school by Maasai warriors to explore their culture and an annual Year 12 visit to Auschwitz. The school offers many opportunities for the learning of pupils to be enriched by the links it has established internationally. It has an extensive programme of European trips. Pupils are very much part of their local community, for example junior school pupils learn about the environment through a partnership with the county wildlife trust, and senior pupils with an interest in physics and mathematics visit local universities.

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

- 3.17 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.18 Across the whole school, teaching fully supports the aim to inspire pupils to achieve academic excellence. Lessons have a notable culture of open dialogue and pupils engage openly in debate about sensitive issues in secure, well-managed, unbiased and non-judgemental environments. For example, GCSE pupils were comfortable in sharing their views on the topic of gender balance and power during open discussion in an English lesson. Pupils spoke positively of discussions which they had enjoyed regarding religions and tolerance of others.
- 3.19 Teachers plan their lessons with great care to provide appropriate tasks to pupils of all abilities. The previous inspection recommended greater consistency in marking and assessment, and much work has been done to improve in this area. The best marking and assessment provides excellent, detailed, structured guidance for improvement as well as clear targets, although some inconsistency remains across departments. Use of assessment and tracking data has become a strength in the school since the previous inspection, and it is used to excellent effect to enable pupils to attain at their best. Pupils in the senior school are particularly well-engaged with the idea of using their own targeted performance, in a very positive and informed manner, to achieve to the best of their abilities.
- 3.20 Teaching is founded upon a strong passion for the subject and very secure subject knowledge. This encourages high levels of achievement through positive pupil engagement. A wide range of resources are used in teaching; these appeal to a variety of learning styles. Teaching provides excellent levels of care and support for the pupils' learning. It often includes challenging questions that are well matched to the pupils needs. These prompt learners to develop their levels of understanding and achievement. In their questionnaire responses, a very small minority of pupils felt that homework does not help them to learn. Evidence during the inspection from the teaching observed, work scrutiny and pupils' responses in interviews does not support this view. Homework is marked regularly and the pupils greatly appreciate the positive feedback which they receive on ways to improve their performance.
- 3.21 Pupils are encouraged to develop independence from an early age, and both co-operative and independent learning is undertaken with ease. Teaching for the able, gifted and talented pupils is challenging and ensures excellent levels of achievement. The overwhelming majority of parents in their questionnaire responses felt that able, gifted and talented pupils are appropriately supported. Inspection evidence supports this view.
- 3.22 Teachers know their pupils very well, and work is matched to the pupils' differing needs. Suitable individual support is provided for those pupils with SEND or EAL. These pupils respond positively to and appreciate the very effective support provided. In a junior school mathematics lesson, pupils' individual literacy needs

were matched well and pupils were able to use advanced critical terms. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses an overwhelming number of pupils felt that they are making good progress, their work set is interesting and their teachers help them to learn.

## **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 Pupils are highly confident, personable and articulate, and their spiritual awareness is highly developed. They appreciate fully non-material aspects of life. The pupils are emotionally very mature and demonstrate high levels of self-esteem, self-knowledge and a strong sense of loyalty to the school.
- 4.3 Pupils' moral development is excellent. They have an excellent understanding of right and wrong, which is strongly supported by the positive guidance that they receive from staff. Pupils are well mannered, respectful and polite to adults and to their peers. 'Golden rules' and guidelines for good behaviour are clearly visible around the school. Pupils are provided a wide range of opportunities to reflect on ethical concerns in a safe and unbiased environment, and are instilled with a respect for English civil and criminal law from a young age.
- 4.4 Pupils' social awareness is outstanding. A key feature of this provision is the dedication and responsibility of senior pupils and sixth formers in leading and supporting the younger pupils during activities, particularly sports sessions. This promotes maturity and respect in the older pupils and is highly appreciated by the younger. The school council is very effective and contributes positively to the school ethos. Both the council and the school as a whole organises many successful fund-raising events for both local, national and international charities, and for those less fortunate. The PSHE programme and school assemblies help develop the pupils' strong appreciation of social, political and economic matters. Pupils have an excellent understanding of English public institutions and traditional British values. The school actively promotes an understanding of the democratic process through a comprehensive range of trips to national sites, visiting speakers and debates. Local politicians and representatives from local institutions, such as the local Mayor, visit the school. Pupils experience the democratic processes first hand through involvement in the Model United Nations and elections to the school council.
- 4.5 Pupils' cultural understanding is excellent. They have opportunities to reflect in assemblies and in religious studies, music and art lessons. Pupils develop a strong understanding and respect for their own and other religious faiths and beliefs. They benefit from a range of visitors from different cultures and backgrounds to the school, for example the junior school invites local speakers to provide the pupils an authentic, personal view of their own culture. This successfully raises pupils' awareness of the diversity of people in the local community and further afield. Pupils are highly respectful towards others and clearly understand the importance of avoiding any form of discrimination. They have a caring and understanding approach to others and this is evident in the pride which junior pupils feel in sponsoring a child in India. The senior pupils have many opportunities to experience countries with different cultures, for example sixth form pupils spoke about their enjoyable experiences on a recent trip to Peru.
- 4.6 Pupils are developing very well in accordance with the aims of the school; they show confidence and are prepared fully for life beyond school. In interview, pupils clearly indicated that they feel socially and academically prepared for the future.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 Staff provide excellent support and guidance for pupils throughout the school, in line with the school's aims. Relationships between the pupils and staff are outstanding. This relationship is highly valued by the pupils, who speak of their school and teachers with pride and respect. Staff liaise closely regarding the pupils' individual needs and share relevant information promptly and effectively. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, an overwhelming majority of parents indicated that their children feel happy and safe and that their children are well looked after. Inspection evidence, gained from lesson observations and pupil interviews, confirms that relationships between pupils are excellent and that they feel safe in the school.
- 4.9 Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits through displays, targeted teaching and general discussions. Their awareness of healthy living is promoted through the PSHE programme. A nutritious and popular lunch menu, and regular opportunities for exercise in the numerous activities, provide ample opportunity for the pupils to live healthy lives.
- 4.10 The school has very effective procedures to promote good behaviour and to guard against harassment and bullying, including cyberbullying. Pupils feel very confident in reporting concerns and seeking support. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses and in interview, pupils felt that very little bullying occurs if at all and that the very few incidents that do occur are dealt with very effectively. Inspection evidence, such as the scrutiny of relevant records, confirmed that the few incidences of bullying are carefully recorded and monitored, and appropriate action swiftly taken when required. In their questionnaire responses, a very small minority of pupils expressed concern about teachers' fairness in their use of rewards and sanctions. Inspection evidence does not support this view; a scrutiny of records and discussions with pupils indicated that rewards and sanctions are fairly and effectively applied.
- 4.11 The school actively seeks the views of pupils, and a very effective school council provides a useful forum for pupils' views. Pupils speak proudly of their involvement in the council. A few pupils' pre-inspection questionnaire responses indicated that their concerns are not listened to or responded to. Evidence from the inspection, including pupil interviews, indicates that pupils receive a highly favourable response to concerns that are raised. These have included the addition of a new water fountain in the junior school and various changes in school uniform.
- 4.12 The school has a suitable plan for improving the future educational access arrangements for those pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.13 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety are good.
- 4.14 Comprehensive safeguarding policies and guidance are provided to all members of the school community. Child protection training for all staff, including those with designated responsibilities, is robustly undertaken and the school has good links with local safeguarding agencies. Prior to the inspection, some policies and the SCR required amendment to reflect current requirements. This was completed by the end of the inspection visit. The requirement to obtain references for new staff had not always been undertaken before they started work at the school. This matter was rectified during the inspection. All other recruitment checks are appropriately undertaken.
- 4.15 The school has robust policies and practices to safeguard pupil's welfare, health and safety. Comprehensive and appropriately updated policies on fire and other hazards, including clear and effective fire safety procedures, are implemented rigorously and effectively. An effective welfare, health and safety committee places a strong focus on the management of risk, and all activities both in school and off site are thoroughly assessed to ensure pupil safety. All incidents or accidents are logged and monitored carefully to inform further risk assessment.
- 4.16 The school has very effective health and safety arrangements for the welfare of the pupils, including good provision for those with SEND. A well-appointed medical room and the school medical staff, together with a number of staff trained in first aid, provide very effective cover for those pupils who are injured or unwell.
- 4.17 Attendance and admission registers are suitably maintained and stored, and pupil absences are appropriately monitored and followed up promptly.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 A well-informed, hard-working, committed and experienced body of governors support fully the aims and ethos of the school. They work closely with staff from both the junior and senior schools in development planning. This approach ensures that the governing body know and understand the school's educational and financial priorities. The standard of education that the school provides, in areas such as academic achievement and personal development, has been greatly enhanced and developed by the governors investing significantly in buildings, resources and staff.
- 5.3 A well-defined committee structure ensures that the governors have excellent oversight of most aspects of school. Governors are frequent visitors to the school, attending events and receiving many reports on school life. Each year the achievements of the pupils, including examination results, are analysed by the academic committee. Individual governors are linked to specific departments and to aspects of school life, including safeguarding. Governors use their very effective insight into the school to provide support, challenge and stimulus for the improvement of the school's educational provision. Appraisals of the head and the school's leadership are appropriately undertaken.
- 5.4 Governance places due emphasis on discharging its responsibilities for safeguarding and welfare, health and safety. The implementation of safeguarding and child protection procedures for the pupils, and their supporting policies, are reviewed annually by the whole governing body. Oversight of policy making and its implementation, including undertaking and recording checks on new staff, has not always been sufficiently rigorous. Some deficiencies in these areas prior to the inspection required amendment to ensure compliance.

### **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 Leadership and management throughout the school are highly effective in enabling the school to fulfil its aims. The school's promotion of values of democracy and respect, and a shared pride in its history are evident across the whole school community and are clearly demonstrated in the approach of staff and pupils. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, an overwhelming majority of parents felt that the school is well led and managed.
- 5.7 The open-door policy and genuine care for every individual pupil shown by members of the senior leadership team is recognised and much appreciated by the pupils. All members of the senior leadership team have very clearly defined roles of responsibility which are understood by the staff. Since the previous inspection, the recommendation for policies and procedures to be implemented fully and consistently in all departments has been met. Heads of department produce excellent schemes of work which meet the needs of all pupils, and individual departmental development plans. They also provide effective monitoring of policy



implementation. School policies are appropriately reviewed and readily accessible to all staff. Prior to the inspection, a limited number of policies required updating to reflect current requirements. Implementation of the safeguarding policy is, for the most part, rigorous and effective with, for example, a twice yearly anti-bullying survey for all pupils.

- 5.8 A clear educational vision and direction are provided by the senior leadership team. A very well structured management system enables excellent communication and clarity of role. Staff throughout the school display a strong commitment to ensure the very best outcomes for the pupils. Liaison between the junior and senior schools is excellent and the curriculum is monitored closely across both sections. Consistent and detailed tracking of each pupil's progress through regular assessments, progress meetings and target setting ensures that every pupil, whatever her learning needs, is aware of her strengths and targets for improvement. This is an area that was recommended for improvement in the previous inspection and is now a strength of the school, playing a significant part in the pupils' excellent overall achievement.
- 5.9 The senior leadership team has a very clear understanding of the strengths of the school and is actively involved in identifying priorities where they feel further improvements can be made to enhance the already excellent provision for the pupils. Development planning is very thorough at all levels, with all staff and governors working collaboratively to produce cohesive and detailed plans which are honestly and thoughtfully evaluated on a regular basis, with amendments made according to the school's changing needs. This adds to the shared sense of purpose and involvement that the staff feel in the school's success. The development plan focuses successfully on several key areas relating to the curriculum, assessment, tracking progress and the use of technology, however pastoral development receives limited emphasis.
- 5.10 The school is very successful in recruiting and retaining high-quality staff who are fully committed to the school and its ethos of aspiring for excellence, although checks on new staff have not always been completed before appointment. Teaching staff benefit from a very effective performance management system, with clear target setting aimed at improving pupil outcomes and identifying opportunities for personal and professional development. Professional coaching has recently been introduced for middle management. This has been well received and is very successful in helping them develop their own leadership skills. All staff members receive regular and thorough training in their roles in safeguarding, and welfare, health and safety. New staff are very effectively integrated into the school through a thorough induction process.
- 5.11 Excellent links between the school and its parents include very positive relationships nurtured through the senior leadership team's open-door policy and their genuine desire to work in partnership with parents. Parents feel at ease when raising concerns with the school and feel that they are dealt with sensitively and in a timely manner, in accordance with published procedures. A suitable complaints policy indicates clearly how to raise informal concerns and more formal complaints.
- 5.12 In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a large majority of parents felt that they are encouraged to be involved in the school and take part in events. The school encourages the parents' association in organising numerous fund-raising events for the school and parental year representatives are invited to offer a support network for the pupils. Parental representation on the board of governors successfully enhances the governors' understanding of parents' views.

- 5.13 Current and prospective parents have ready access to the required information on the school's website, and a designated parental portal within this website provides additional information. A weekly letter from the head is used to celebrate achievements, promote a wealth of activities and convey information. New parents are integrated into the school community. An overwhelming majority of parents indicated in their pre-inspection questionnaire responses that information about the school and its policies are readily available.
- 5.14 All parents receive very informative and helpful feedback on their daughters' progress through formal reports, parents' evenings and progress checks. These include clear and understandable targets for pupils, together with ways to achieve these. Heads of Year are actively involved in contact with parents, for example they will telephone parents in advance of a report or conference to discuss any matters of notable concern.
- 5.15 Since the previous inspection, the school has actively worked to involve parents more in the life of the school including an increased number of information evenings covering a range of areas, for example, pupil emotional well-being and ICT.

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