



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

THE OLD HALL SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

The Old Hall School

Full Name of School	The Old Hall School
DfE Number	894/6000
Registered Charity Number	528417
Address	Stanley Road Wellington Telford Shropshire TF1 3LB England
Telephone Number	01952 223117
Fax Number	01952 222674
Email Address	enq@oldhall.co.uk
Headmaster	Mr Martin C. Stott
Chairman of Governors	Mr Richard Pearson
Age Range	4 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	241
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (138 boys; 103 girls)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): 28 5-11: 213
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 241
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Christine Hurd
EYFS Gender	Boys and Girls
Inspection Dates	08 to 11 Mar 2016

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. 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 standard 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.

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

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chairman of governors and one other 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

Mr Paul Spillane	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Debra Foden	Team Inspector (Head of EYFS, GSA school)
Mr Kerry Lord	Team Inspector (Deputy Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mrs Jenny Clayphan	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The Old Hall School is a co-educational day preparatory school for pupils aged 4 to 11. Founded in 1845, it is situated in Wellington, Shropshire. In 2006 it relocated to purpose-built premises on the Wrekin College campus and merged with the College the following year. The Wrekin Old Hall Trust is a charitable trust, sharing the same board of governors. The schools also share a number of facilities such as the chapel, swimming pool and sports hall. Since the previous inspection, the senior leadership and management team has been expanded.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection there were 241 pupils in the school. Of these, 28 were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Two pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school has identified 49 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive specialist learning support from the school, and of the 14 pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), 13 receive support for their English. About three-quarters of the pupils are of white British origin, with a quarter coming from a range of different minority ethnic backgrounds. The overall ability profile of the school is above the national average.
- 1.3 The school aims to enable all of its pupils to reach their full academic potential through a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum. It seeks, within a Christian framework, to have a lively and happy ethos with good discipline based on mutual respect which fosters pupils' moral, intellectual, sporting, creative and cultural development through a wide range of group activities. It also aims to encourage pupils to be as active and ambitious as possible. It seeks to monitor their development and provide support through a secure pastoral system in a 'family' atmosphere.
- 1.4 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 In fulfilment of its stated aims, the school is successful in achieving overall excellence in all the inspected aspects of its provision, including the EYFS. The pupils' positive approach to their studies and teaching of high quality are reflected in their significant academic achievement, as well as strong performances in entry examinations to senior schools. Throughout the school, pupils display secure knowledge and understanding of their subjects. The marking of work is regular and helpful: marking and the end-of-term reports do not, however, consistently provide pupils with clearly focused targets for improvement. Pupils with SEND and EAL are very well catered for, as are the more able. Pupils attain conspicuously high standards in sport, choral music, art, speech and drama, with sporting and other successes regularly achieved. The broad overall provision enriches the pupils' educational and personal experience, enabling them to develop their talents happily and fruitfully.
- 2.2 Founded on strong Christian principles, the school achieves high standards in all that it undertakes, with pastoral care at the heart of its mission. The caring and supportive example set by the staff is mirrored in the way pupils behave towards one another. The quality of the pupils' personal development owes much to the 'family' atmosphere of this close community, in which pupils are well known to the staff, who respond readily to their needs and interests. Proud of their school, the pupils grow markedly in self-confidence and self-esteem. They feel a strong sense of belonging to a place where they say they feel very happy and safe. The older pupils benefit from many opportunities for leadership and service, and when they come to leave they are ready for the next chapter in their lives and education.
- 2.3 That the school's aims are being successfully realised is a strong testimony to excellent governance, leadership and management. The commitment of the governors is wholehearted and they exercise excellent oversight. Together with senior management, they are self-critical and forward-thinking. Leadership combines calmness and care with energy and ambition. Meticulous attention to detail characterises the efficient and effective day-to-day management of the school. The academic and support staff are devoted to the well-being of the pupils and the good of the school as a whole. They receive all of the required training in safeguarding and child protection. The school has met the three recommendations in the previous inspection, relating to cross-curricular planning, assessment in non-core subjects and improvement of the EYFS's outdoor provision. The school enjoys strong links with the parents, who express great satisfaction with its leadership and management and with their children's education.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. In the marking of pupils' work and in end-of-term reports, highlight targets for academic improvement.

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' achievement and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Children enter the Reception class of the EYFS with a wide range of attainment, but which overall is at the level expected for their age. They make rapid progress, so that by the end of the year most children attain the Early Learning Goals in all the areas of learning, and many children work beyond that level in some areas. Their speech is extremely fluent and thoughtful. The children's reading skills develop quickly as they automatically use their excellent phonic knowledge to decode unfamiliar words, and they take delight in reading continuous text. They also use phonics to help to read simple words in French. They are eager to record information and lists when devising a travel form, and confidently use their mathematical knowledge when, for instance, thinking about travel costs or counting and adding in physical education (PE). Both gross motor skills and fine ones used for manipulating pencils and scissors are extremely well developed. Children with EAL make excellent progress during their year in Reception.
- 3.3 The children have enormous enthusiasm. They are used to working in pairs or larger groups and are also confident to work independently, listening attentively to information, debating and reasoning sensibly in order to find solutions. For example, when asked to devise a route for a program-able toy and an object for it to find, children chose whom they wished to work with. Some ambitiously devised hedges and other obstacles for their toy to avoid, all of which needed much discussion and negotiation.
- 3.4 In Years 1 to 6, the school is making excellent progress towards the fulfilment of its ambitious aim that all of its pupils should reach their full academic potential. Pupils display secure knowledge and understanding of the material covered in the curriculum. Standards are high in the pupils' logical thought, the application of mathematics and the understanding of science, as are those of literacy and articulacy. Pupils are notably proficient in information and communication technology (ICT). Levels of achievement in music and art are also high and pupils develop their physical skills to an excellent level relative to their abilities. The many lively displays of art, artefacts and academic work on classroom and corridor walls represent high levels of achievement. The school has a strong record of examination success, with almost all of the Year 6 leavers proceeding to their first-choice of senior schools, many gaining academic and other scholarship awards.
- 3.5 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to performance against a fixed national average, but on the evidence available it is judged to be excellent. Inspection judgement, including observed performance in relation to national targets, confirms this evaluation of the pupils' attainment. Pupils' work was observed in lessons and on display around the school, and a selection of pupils' work was systematically scrutinised: the overall quality was of an excellent standard. Pupils sustain a high rate of progress when compared with those of similar above average ability. All of the pupils who responded to the inspection questionnaire felt that they were making good academic progress.
- 3.6 As a result of the school's provision, the more able pupils and those with SEND and EAL make good and often rapid progress relative to their abilities, achieving success

in their senior school entrance examinations. Pupils with SEND and EAL equally earn public commendation, rewards and prizes.

- 3.7 Pupils perform strongly in sport, notably netball and swimming, with teams regularly gaining success in regional and national competitions. A significant number of pupils achieve local representation in rugby. Another area of strength is choral singing, and accomplished performances were heard during the inspection. Last year the choir gained high honours in the Llangollen International Eisteddfod, and the many instrumental musicians do extremely well in their grade examinations. In addition, pupils produce excellent artwork. They are also successful in speech and drama examinations, and expressive, assured recitations were heard during the inspection.
- 3.8 Throughout the school, pupils display an excellent attitude to learning. They apply themselves to their studies with evident enthusiasm, keen to do well and eager to be challenged. They respond readily in lessons, offering answers and opinions confidently and articulately. They work conscientiously, showing perseverance and determination. When working in groups, they co-operate well. The presentation of work in their exercise books reflects great pride and care. In their responses to the questionnaire, the pupils unanimously affirmed that they are encouraged to work independently and to do things for themselves, and this was corroborated by the evidence of the inspection. Pupils participate in extra-curricular activities in a similarly spirited way, helping to fulfil the school's stated aim that pupils should be as active and ambitious as possible.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.10 Rich and varied, the educational programmes in the EYFS follow the required seven areas of learning. Staff achieve a carefully judged balance between activities led by adults and those chosen by children, with emphasis on encouraging children to co-operate as well as to work independently. Children benefit from numerous opportunities to work outside, which meets the recommendation from the previous inspection that children should sow and plant flowers, fruit and vegetables. This they do with gusto. Children are enthused and intrigued by exciting activities such as finding appropriate boxes and 3D shapes with which to make specific vehicles. Children develop their imaginations through numerous opportunities. They acquire awareness of their place in the wider world by joining with the main school to help in charitable ventures, and by sharing a sports day with a local pre-school. Children with EAL and those who need additional support are given appropriate help as needed, which ensures that they are fully included in all activities and make rapid progress in their understanding. Those who are more able respond to challenging targets, such as fitting shapes together to solve spatial awareness problems. Children in Reception are welcomed into the lower school afternoon clubs with pupils from Years 1 and 2 which they greatly enjoy and which gives them added confidence as members of the whole school community.
- 3.11 In Years 1 to 6 the broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum meets the school's aims and enables pupils to fulfil their potential. At all stages, the requisite areas of learning are effectively covered. The well-planned curriculum goes beyond the requirements of the National Curriculum, including German, Spanish and philosophy which have recently been added to the Year 6 programme. Pupils have the opportunity to enhance their ICT skills through the introduction of control

programming at a sophisticated level and they also undertake adventurous design and technology projects.

- 3.12 The allocation of time is skilfully balanced between core and other subjects, and carefully constructed schemes of work maintain continuity across year groups and key stages. In response to the recommendation of the previous inspection that continuity and progression of cross-curricular planning be developed throughout the school, staff now plan collaboratively a curriculum which maximises opportunities for cross-curricular work. Evidence of this collaboration is apparent in the high-quality displays around the school. A wide range of educational trips and visits, including residential ventures in this country and in France, broadens the pupils' horizons, while a well-planned programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) includes the promotion of fundamental British values.
- 3.13 Appropriate challenge exists at all levels, enabling pupils to strive for success. Setting in mathematics from Year 3 ensures that more able pupils can learn at an accelerated pace. In addition, they benefit from opportunities to take part in a variety of academic extension activities, including nationally organised challenges, competitions and quizzes. Excellent provision and support for pupils with SEND and EAL allows them to make strong progress relative to their ability. In accordance with the school's aims, an ethos of value and respect for themselves and others promotes a harmonious atmosphere and positive, supportive relationships. Pupils are well prepared for the academic demands of their senior schools.
- 3.14 Opportunities for oral work abound: pupils present themselves skilfully and articulately, and they listen attentively to their peers. Situated at the heart of the school, the attractive library is a valued resource, and well used for recreational reading and academic study.
- 3.15 The school makes excellent provision for physical activities both within and beyond the academic curriculum. Pupils benefit from the experience of a wide range of sports. Pupils of all abilities have the opportunity to play in teams, both in inter-school fixtures or in inter-house competitions. An extensive and stimulating variety of extra-curricular activities effectively complements the main curriculum, providing intellectual challenge and enabling all pupils to extend their interests and skills. Music, art, speech and drama feature widely across the school. Distinctive activities include archery and a coding club, and a group of enthusiasts greatly enjoy the maintenance and use of the school's own hovercraft. Pupils readily engage in these activities and consequently further enhance their learning. Much fund-raising is carried out by the pupils for a wide range of local, national and international charitable bodies, with a substantial sum having been raised since the start of the academic year. Almost all parents and all pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were happy with the great number of extra-curricular opportunities.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.16 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.17 Experienced staff in the EYFS work as a close-knit team, sharing ideas when planning, and ensuring that there is a warm, welcoming environment where children feel safe and have the confidence to try new experiences. Teachers have high expectations. They make frequent, detailed assessments which enable plans to be carefully targeted in order to ensure that children are appropriately challenged. There is a well-judged balance between activities led by adults and those developed by children. Staff encourage children to work outside every day and provide activities which complement those which take place indoors. They are alert to children's needs and skilfully intervene with searching questions or interesting information in order to expand children's activities further. More able children are extended and others who need it receive more help, ensuring that all children progress with good levels of understanding. For example, each child has their own bundle of words to practise reading at home which helps them to read their books with confidence and accuracy. Resources are of excellent quality and are used extremely well.
- 3.18 High-quality teaching in Years 1 to 6 meets the school's aim to help all pupils to fulfil their academic potential and to foster their intellectual and creative development. At best, teaching is dynamic and inspiring, fully engaging pupils' interest and promoting critical thinking. Almost all lessons are well planned, have clear objectives and take account of the needs of all children. Excellent subject knowledge, enthusiastic delivery, challenging questioning and stimulating activities enable pupils to make good and often rapid progress. The pace of lessons is brisk and all subjects are well resourced, with effective use being made of ICT. The teaching promotes tolerance and respect and is non-partisan in the coverage of political issues. Teachers know their pupils extremely well and have excellent relationships with them; pupils have the confidence to ask their teachers for help and know that it will be readily given.
- 3.19 All of the pupils who responded to the questionnaire declared that they are making good progress with their work. They were also unanimous in saying that they are encouraged to do things for themselves and to work independently. This was borne out by the evidence of the inspection. Pupils greatly benefit from question and answer sessions, the setting of particular assignments and other strategies which encourage them to reach their own conclusions and to stretch their imaginations.
- 3.20 A strength of the educational provision at the school is the quality of support which is tailored to meet the abilities and aptitudes of individual pupils. This enables all pupils to make strong progress towards fulfilling their academic potential. In providing for the needs of pupils with SEND and EAL, as well as the more able, classes are frequently divided into ability groups and pupils are given tasks with an appropriate level of challenge. Those with SEND and EAL benefit from well-focused additional support, both in lessons and in specialist sessions. Extension activities and advanced learning opportunities enable the more able to make rapid progress. Teachers have a clear knowledge of the standards which pupils are required to reach to gain places at their chosen senior schools, and they meet these needs successfully.
- 3.21 On the whole, the marking of pupils' work is excellent. It is regular and detailed, and at best it generates written dialogue between teacher and pupil. In many lessons,

pupils receive effective and immediate feedback on their work. The marking of written work does not consistently provide pupils with clear targets for next steps in learning. Pupils appreciate the rewards which they receive for meritorious work, and the accumulation of these rewards is recognised in presentations at assemblies.

- 3.22 Systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress are rigorously followed, with remedial action where a pupil's performance in a particular subject falls short of expectations. The school has met the recommendation of the previous inspection that it should develop assessment in non-core subjects in order to improve planning. It has also met a second recommendation that it should continue to develop cross-curricular planning throughout the school and across key stages.

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 Children in the EYFS work and play together harmoniously, confidently working in groups or independently, and they show great tolerance of one another. They benefit from visits which teach them about how people lived in Britain in the past, and they celebrate their own and others' cultures and customs, such as Chinese New Year. Children start to understand about values inherent in British culture, such as listening kindly to one another, taking turns and respecting other people's differences. They are accustomed to sharing activities and playtimes with older children and moving round the school with their teachers, which all adds to their self-confidence. They all contribute to the life of the setting by taking on responsibilities, such as being form captain for the day when they lead the line and take the register to the office, and everyone regularly helps to tidy up after activities. Each year group has a prolonged session in their new classroom before they move up to Year 1, whose teachers already know their new children and their capabilities. Consequently, transition is a happy experience for everyone.
- 4.3 Throughout Years 1 to 6, the school meets its aim to promote pupils' moral and cultural development within a Christian framework and in a happy environment. Pupils display a strong sense of spiritual awareness. The school abounds with vibrant displays celebrating the high quality of pupils' work, whilst regular assemblies celebrate achievement and raise self-esteem. Pupils' confidence and self-assurance is a marked feature of the school, and this is expressed naturally and without a trace of arrogance. Pupils take enormous pride in their work and in their school. They thrive in this sympathetic environment, developing a strong sense of maturity and the skill of self-criticism. Each week, the older pupils set themselves targets for improvement, based on their recent academic performance. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their happiness and have no hesitation in recommending the school to others.
- 4.4 A high degree of morality is evident throughout the school. Pupils have a clear sense of right, wrong and the importance of fairness to all. They also appreciate the need for rules and are developing an understanding of the laws of England. Good manners and respect for others are thoroughly embedded in the culture of the school, so that qualities of tolerance and decency are cherished by all. Pupils with SEND and/or EAL are included so seamlessly and successfully by their peers that no differences tend to be apparent.
- 4.5 The high quality of pupils' social development is promoted by a thoroughly planned programme of PSHEE. Pupils display mature levels of social and emotional intelligence. They also gain an appreciation of the needs of the wider world and of those less fortunate than themselves through charitable giving, with the recipients chosen by the school council. Through these ventures and also elements of the PSHEE programme, pupils develop an economic awareness appropriate to their age.
- 4.6 Pupils of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds work together entirely harmoniously. Staff readily take opportunities for pupils' cultural development and awareness: they make full use of the diversity present in the school family to enhance pupils' experiences of diverse cultures, faiths and belief systems. For

example, vibrant artwork and lanterns festoon the corridors to celebrate Chinese New Year. Pupils speak readily of the inclusive culture and acceptance of different faiths at the school. Musical, dramatic and creative artistic activities abound, all of which contribute to the pupils' cultural enrichment.

- 4.7 Fundamental British values are actively promoted through the PSHEE programme and are reinforced during regular events such as assemblies and form time. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about the democratic process involved in representing their year group on the school council and the freedom that their peers enjoy to raise issues for debate. A clear understanding that motions passed by the council will be considered seriously by the school's leadership lends gravitas to this body. Although an awareness of politics and public institutions and services of England is less well developed among younger pupils, their older peers are developing an understanding appropriate to their age. The school's monitoring procedures have allowed the leadership team to identify this as a target for further development in PSHEE.
- 4.8 By the time they leave the school, Year 6 pupils are very well prepared for the next phase in their educational journey, departing as confident, well-rounded and eager learners.

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

- 4.9 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.10 In the EYFS, every child has a key person who ensures that his or her needs are met. All staff throughout the setting know the children very well and they develop warm, trusting relationships. Children are happy, feel safe and have the confidence to try new experiences. They respond positively to their teachers' high expectations that they will behave impeccably and be kind and thoughtful to one another. Children learn about healthy eating through a choice of nutritious, delicious lunches which they thoroughly enjoy. There are plentiful opportunities for exercise, with PE lessons indoors and play activities outside.
- 4.11 In Years 1 to 6, the school is extremely successful in achieving its aim of providing a secure pastoral system in a family atmosphere. Pupils benefit greatly from the caring and compassionate staff who ensure that their charges are happy, healthy and fully supported. An effective system of pastoral auditing allows the school to identify strengths and areas for development in pupils' care, so that opportunities to celebrate or to improve can be taken promptly. In their response to the questionnaire, a few pupils said that there was no member of staff or senior pupil to turn to with a personal difficulty. The findings of the inspection refuted this view. The pupils interviewed said that all members of staff would listen sympathetically to their concerns, and observation on many occasions confirmed this.
- 4.12 The quality of relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff is extremely high. Communication between staff on pupil matters is detailed and rigorous so that concerns can be raised, monitored and eradicated. Pupils show high degrees of trust and respect for one another and for adults. During the inspection visit, older pupils were seen choosing, spontaneously, to play with much younger peers, reinforcing the culture of the school family which is central to daily life.
- 4.13 Healthy eating habits are promoted through high-quality catering, with several tasty and nutritious options at lunch every day. Opportunities for physical exercise

abound, through the comprehensive sports programme and the extensive play facilities.

- 4.14 The behaviour of the pupils is exemplary. A very small minority of pupils felt that sanctions and rewards were not fairly given by teachers. Inspection evidence found that this was not the case, with pupils interviewed confirming that they were fairly treated. Misbehaviour is effectively recorded and monitored, with guidance provided to minimise the chances of repetition. Rewards such as merit certificates are similarly monitored by form tutors. A very small minority of parents stated that bullying cases are not well handled, but inspection evidence did not support this view. Anti-bullying strategies are strong, and records of the few recent instances indicate that they were dealt with promptly and effectively in line with the school's procedures. Pupils are aware of the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying and are clear about what to do if they suspect someone is becoming a victim. An overwhelming majority of parents praised the pastoral care provided for their children.
- 4.15 The school has a suitable plan for improving educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.16 In their response to the questionnaire, a very small minority of pupils said that the school does not ask for their opinions or respond to them. During the inspection this was found not to be the case. An effective school council meets fortnightly, allowing pupils' concerns to be raised. Furthermore, the tutorial system and the receptiveness of all staff enable pupils' views to be readily communicated.

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

- 4.17 The contribution of arrangements to promote the pupils' welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.18 All staff in the EYFS have received training in the latest safeguarding requirements; they place high emphasis on promoting children's health and safety, and they are alert for any signs of possible radicalisation. Teachers monitor children's attendance closely and they are keenly aware of the needs of vulnerable children. Children manage their own hygiene effectively and understand the need to wash their hands regularly and before eating. Detailed risk assessments are carried out both in school and for trips outside.
- 4.19 In Years 1 to 6, arrangements to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils are taken very seriously. Safeguarding arrangements have regard to official guidance and detailed policies conform to regulatory requirements. Clear procedures for safeguarding children and eliminating discrimination are implemented highly effectively. The required checks on new staff are carried out and recorded correctly. All staff receive appropriate training in child protection at the prescribed intervals. The welfare of individual pupils is raised at regular meetings of senior management, the staff and the governors. The health and safety committee conscientiously oversees all of these aspects of school life.
- 4.20 Pupils are educated in e-safety and appropriate use of the internet, with particular reference to cyberbullying; their access to the internet is filtered. All necessary measures are taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards. All equipment for fire prevention and fire-fighting is checked at regular intervals, and practices are held regularly. Risk assessments are comprehensive and thorough for relevant activities in and out of school.

- 4.21 The school provides effectively for ill or injured pupils and those with SEND. The needs of those pupils with existing medical issues are well known to staff. Medical facilities comply with regulations and detailed records of accidents and illness are filed. Fifteen members of staff are qualified in first aid, three of these at the higher level.
- 4.22 The admission and attendance registers are accurately completed and kept for the required period. Attendance is closely monitored, with a system of immediate response to pupil absence.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Wholeheartedly committed to the school's aims and ethos, the governing body exercises effective oversight of all sections of the school, including the EYFS. The governors conscientiously discharge their responsibilities for educational standards, and investment in staff, accommodation and resources. They monitor all financial matters closely and take forward-thinking initiatives to promote the well-being of the school. Governors contribute a wide range of experience and expertise, and many have a particularly intimate knowledge of the school, either as parents of current pupils or as former pupils of Wrekin College. The governors regularly attend school events and take a lively interest in all aspects of the life of the school.
- 5.3 The governors give valued support, challenge and stimulus to senior management, with whom they have frequent informal communication in addition to the annual schedule of formal meetings. The regular meetings of the main board and its committees ensure that the governors are well informed about all aspects of the school. Furthermore, a number of governors have a specific area of responsibility, such as safeguarding or staff liaison, which ensures close communication with senior members of staff and a detailed understanding of a particular set of policies and practices. While there is no designated governor for the EYFS, members of the governing body are well known to the staff and visit the setting regularly; their involvement is effective in ensuring the well-being of the children. Diligent in ensuring that the school actively promotes the interests of all of its pupils, the governors effectively discharge their responsibilities for child protection, welfare, health and safety: the whole board regularly reviews safeguarding policies and practices and the efficiency with which the related duties are carried out. Their discussions are recorded in detailed minutes.
- 5.4 New members of the governing body undertake an appropriate induction process and governors keep abreast of current good practice by attending training courses which cover defined areas of their duties and responsibilities.

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 excellent.
- 5.6 In the EYFS, all policies and procedures are fully compliant with regulatory requirements and are implemented in a safe, stimulating environment where children feel secure and happy. The leadership of the EYFS has clear understanding of the strengths of the setting, gathered through rigorous self-evaluation, and therefore it also has vision for future developments which include fully embedding the new assessment procedures and continuing to develop the use of the outside area. Staff receive regular professional training which they value highly. In addition to weekly staff meetings, there is an opportunity each term for them to discuss with the leadership any problems they may encounter in the classroom. Numerous improvements since the previous inspection include systems to track and assess children's achievements, mobile technology and a block system which children can

access independently to design and construct edifices. Trained in the latest safeguarding requirements, staff are alert to any changes in children's behaviour patterns or unexplained absences. The setting has a strong relationship with parents, who are fully involved in their children's education; they are delighted with the care and support their children receive and the quality of the information the setting gives them. When the need arises, children who need additional help are well supported by outside agencies: parents are kept fully informed and are highly appreciative.

- 5.7 Leadership of the whole school is highly effective at all levels, communicating clearly defined direction, standards and values which inspire and permeate the whole of the school community. It shapes and shares its vision with everyone who is involved in helping to achieve the school's aim for high academic, pastoral and personal standards for its pupils. The senior leadership and management team is effective in self-evaluation, setting priorities and ensuring that they are achieved. The team gives exemplary support to the school and its staff.
- 5.8 Since the previous inspection, the team has been extended by the addition of assistant heads with responsibility for the curriculum and pastoral care respectively. The range of responsibilities covered by the team ensures that the leadership's energy and drive for improvement benefit all pupils and all aspects of their care and development. Through a cycle of well-minuted meetings involving both the whole staff and different groups of staff, all interested parties are kept fully informed and procedures are regularly reviewed. Every staff meeting has matters of pupil welfare at the top of its agenda, thus providing regular opportunities for formal discussion of any pupil's academic and general progress, in addition to the many informal exchanges of information which are constantly taking place.
- 5.9 Effective and efficient systems which are clearly understood by staff and pupils ensure that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The detailed administrative procedures are the result of meticulous planning. There is universal appreciation of the accessibility and approachability of senior staff, as there is indeed of all members of staff. Leadership is a visible presence throughout the school and this significantly contributes to the successful management of the whole school and to the fulfilment of its aims. In their responses to the questionnaires, the very large majority of parents expressed great satisfaction with the way in which the school is led and managed.
- 5.10 The senior leadership and management team is thorough and careful in its attention to safeguarding policies and procedures. All staff receive appropriate and regular training in matters of safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Further needs for professional development are identified by a thorough appraisal system. Staff regularly attend in-service training courses. Lesson observations and informal visits by senior leaders ensure an open and positive attitude to school improvement and the sharing of good practice. The school has met the recommendations of the previous inspection with regard to the development of cross-curricular planning and assessment in non-core subjects. School procedures and policies are clear and appropriately detailed. They are understood and implemented by all staff, who feel well supported, yet accountable. The school is successful in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified staff, and all required checks and records are in place.
- 5.11 The school's development plan is clear and wide-ranging, with defined targets which are ambitious and realistic. It is regularly reviewed and revised by the governing body and by the senior leadership and management team.

- 5.12 The school maintains strong links with its parents. Prospective parents receive detailed information about the school, and their children are offered taster days so that they have made the first steps towards forming friendships before they join the school. New parents receive a comprehensive pack of information which includes a personal invitation to coffee on the first morning of term, and all parents become members of the Friends of Old Hall. The school communicates regularly electronically with parents and also produces colourful and informative newsletters. Parents find the reading and homework diaries a useful way of communicating with staff, and in emergency receive swift answers to electronic notes.
- 5.13 Parents receive full bi-annual reports which are of high quality, with targets for improvement in English and mathematics. However, these are sometimes contained in the body of the text and not clearly defined. In addition, parents of the older pupils receive a short report at the end of the spring term, while parents of pupils in Years 3 to 6 also receive the results of a standardised test. The school organises two parents' evenings a year for each year group, and staff are always available to discuss matters of interest or give additional information at the end of the school day. A very small minority of the parents who responded to the questionnaire expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of information they receive about their child's progress. The evidence of the inspection did not support this view: the arrangements listed above ensure that sufficient information is always available.
- 5.14 Parents welcome the opportunities to be involved in the life of the school, to the benefit of their children's educational and social development. The Friends of The Old Hall School is an active organisation which arranges numerous social events during the year, including a summer ball, a Christmas fair and a very popular bonfire night party, to raise money for charity and for school funds. Parents support their children at assemblies, concerts and plays as well as sporting events. They also give valued talks on areas of expertise and help on school outings, all of which strengthens the sense of a united purpose throughout the school.
- 5.15 All of the parents interviewed in the school and the vast majority of those who responded to the parents' questionnaire are highly supportive of all that the school does for their children and are satisfied that information about the school and its policies is readily available. The school has a suitable complaints policy and handles and records any concerns or complaints with care. Parents particularly appreciate the friendly, family atmosphere and the ready availability of teachers at all times.

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