



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

**WEST HOUSE SCHOOL**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## West House School

Full Name of School	<b>West House School</b>
DfE Number	<b>330/6059</b>
EYFS Number	<b>EY288576</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>528959</b>
Address	<b>West House School 24 St James's Road Edgbaston Birmingham West Midlands B15 2NX</b>
Telephone Number	<b>0121 440 4097</b>
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Email Address	<b>secretary@westhouseprep.com</b>
Head	<b>Mr Alistair Lyttle</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Steven Heathcote</b>
Age Range	<b>1 to 11</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>309</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed 1 to 4; Boys 4 to 11</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>0-2 (EYFS): 39    5-11: 212 3-5 (EYFS): 58</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Jackie Cockerill</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed 1 to 4; Boys 4 to 5</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>30 June 2014 to 03 July 2014</b>

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in May 2008.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Education (DfE) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended. The previous ISI intermediate EYFS inspection was in 2012.

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

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

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

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

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

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

Lady Fiona Mynors

Mr Paul Cozens

Mrs Sheila Hayward

Mrs Sandra Kiddle

Mrs Jenny Clayphan

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 West House School, founded in 1895, is a day school for pupils from one to eleven years of age. It is based in the original Victorian buildings with modern additions, set in its own grounds in a residential area close to the centre of Birmingham. It is a charitable trust, overseen by a board of governors. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) caters for boys and girls aged from one to four years. From four upwards, the school is attended by boys only. Children in the EYFS share the school's facilities. Since the previous inspection, the senior management team has been increased, with the appointment of a director of studies and a deputy head. A new nature reserve has been developed, refurbishment of many of the school's buildings has taken place and wireless technology has been introduced.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide a challenging academic education, complemented by a rich variety of extra-curricular activities, based within an inclusive, caring environment that will enable pupils to realise their potential. It seeks to place particular emphasis on promoting positive behaviour, celebrating pupils' successes and working in partnership with parents.
- 1.3 The ability profile of the school is above the national average, with a wide range of abilities represented across the pupil body. The pupils come from business and professional families who live within a ten-mile radius of the school. The majority of pupils are British, with just over half of Asian or of other minority ethnic origin, reflecting the multi-cultural population of Birmingham.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection, there were 309 pupils on roll, 287 boys and 22 girls. In the EYFS, there were 75 boys and 22 girls. Thirty-six boys attend Reception full-time. Boys and girls up to the age of four attend on a sessional basis. The school has identified 18 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive specialist help with their learning. Two pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Three pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), of whom two receive additional support outside lessons.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used by the school from Reception and throughout this report to refer to year groups. The year group nomenclature used by the school for the Nursery is shown in the following table.

### ***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting***

School	NC name
Nursery	Nursery (0 to 2 years)
Kindergarten	Nursery (2 to 3 years)
Pre-school	Nursery (3 to 4 years)
Reception	Reception

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

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

- 2.1 The achievement of pupils is excellent. They are extremely well educated in line with the school's aims. Pupils of all ages and abilities, including those with SEND or EAL, together with the most able, have excellent skills and knowledge across their subjects and activities. Their literacy and numeracy skills are excellent. Pupils' physical skills are outstanding, and their creative skills are extremely well developed. Pupils gain many achievements individually and in teams across a wide range of activities. They have excellent attitudes to their work, and their positive approach to learning is a significant factor in their success. Almost all pupils achieve places at their first choice of senior schools, most in highly competitive entry. Each year a significant proportion of pupils achieve academic or music awards. The curriculum and extra-curricular programme are excellent. Since the previous inspection, the balance of the curriculum has been improved and enhanced. The systems to identify and support pupils with SEND or EAL are excellent, and able, gifted and talented pupils are identified and receive additional work. Excellent teaching, significantly improved since the previous inspection, takes full account of the most effective ways to enable boys to learn, and includes tasks to match the needs of all the pupils. Almost all lessons are lively and stimulating. On the few occasions observed in which the pace of a lesson was too slow, pupils lost motivation and made less progress. Assessment systems are thorough and used efficiently to plan lessons to meet the needs of all pupils.
- 2.2 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent. By the time they leave the school pupils are confident, mature individuals, well prepared for their life in senior schools. The arrangements for pupils' pastoral care are excellent, and relationships across the school are outstanding. Good systems exist to promote the pupils' welfare, health and safety. The recording of risk assessments is not always up to date. Pupils are well cared for and carefully safeguarded. All appropriate measures to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards are taken.
- 2.3 The quality of governance and of leadership and management is excellent. Governors are effective in discharging their statutory responsibilities. Middle management has been strengthened, and excellent practice in monitoring teaching and learning is established in some departments, but this is not yet consistent across all subjects. Links with parents, carers and guardians are excellent. They are overwhelmingly satisfied with the education and care their children receive. The school has made significant progress since the previous inspection. Standards of English, handwriting and presentation have been transformed. The curriculum is well balanced and strengthened with additional subjects. The resources for information and communication technology (ICT) have been improved and are effectively used by pupils and teachers across the curriculum. All aspects of the EYFS are outstanding, although opportunities which encourage children to reason, negotiate and be creative are sometimes limited.

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

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

- 2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.
- 2.5 See the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage section 6 for the inspection findings in relation to the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 for children under three.

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

- 2.6 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Build on the role of heads of department to ensure that the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are consistently rigorous across the school.
  2. Ensure that records of risk assessments are kept up to date.
  3. Extend opportunities for children in the EYFS to reason, and create situations for them to discuss and negotiate in order to solve problems.



### **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 pupils are extremely well educated in line with the school's aims. Pupils of all ages and abilities, including those with SEND or EAL and the most able, have excellent skills and knowledge across the full range of their subjects and activities. They are highly articulate, are confident to ask and answer questions, and enjoy exchanging ideas in discussion, listening carefully and responding to the views of others thoughtfully. Pupils read well, with excellent expression.
- 3.3 Since the previous inspection, the quality of pupils' written English and handwriting has improved significantly. It is now excellent. Pupils write accurately and imaginatively using a wide range of vocabulary, and take great pride in the presentation of their work. They investigate, research and use ICT easily. Their numeracy skills are excellent and they apply them effectively to their subjects. Pupils' physical skills are outstanding, and their creative skills are extremely well developed. They sing skilfully and enthusiastically, and the high quality of their artwork on display greatly enhances the school environment. Pupils demonstrate sensitivity and skill in drama, and greatly enjoy their opportunities to take part in performances.
- 3.4 Pupils gain many achievements individually and in teams across a wide range of activities. Individuals are successful in many sports, frequently gaining distinction at local, district and national level, particularly in cricket and swimming. Inclusive school teams often win their matches in a wide range of sports against significantly larger schools.
- 3.5 Pupils are successful in local and regional mathematics challenges and in regional school science quizzes. Nearly half of the pupils learn instruments or have individual singing tuition, and a number achieve good grades in national examinations. Pupils are selected as choristers for a local church and Birmingham Cathedral, and have gained places in professional theatre companies. Dancers have been selected for specialist academies and for the Birmingham Royal Ballet junior performance academy. Almost all pupils achieve places at their first choice of senior schools, most in highly competitive entry. Each year a significant proportion of pupils achieve academic or music awards.
- 3.6 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to performance against a fixed national average, but on the evidence available from lesson observations, scrutiny of samples of their work and interviews with pupils, it is judged to be excellent. Pupils of all abilities make rapid progress so that by the time they leave the school their progress is excellent in relation to pupils of similar abilities. Pupils with SEND or EAL achieve successfully and progress in line with their peers through the careful support they receive in and out of the classroom.
- 3.7 Pupils have excellent attitudes to their work. They are eager to learn and take part in all their lessons and activities with enthusiasm, relishing the challenges that they are given. They frequently take the initiative, demonstrating strong independent learning skills, and in almost all lessons they settle quickly to work. They persevere and co-operate with each other and their teachers, and their positive approach is a significant factor in their success. On the few occasions observed when the pace of

a lesson was too slow to sustain their motivation, pupils lost concentration and made less progress than usual. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, all the pupils felt that they are making good progress.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 The curriculum is highly successful in fulfilling the school's aim to provide pupils with a broad range of subjects, complemented by a rich programme of extra-curricular activities. It includes all necessary areas of learning and is suitable for the ages, abilities and needs of all the pupils. Pupils and parents are extremely appreciative of the quality of the curriculum provided. With the strengthening of the senior management team, the process for reviewing the curriculum has been improved, and appropriate changes to enhance the pupils' experiences are planned for the term following the inspection.
- 3.10 Since the previous inspection, the balance of the curriculum has been improved, and has been enhanced by the addition of drama as a discrete subject, and from Year 5, Spanish. The use of ICT is increasingly embedded within the curriculum. From Year 1, pupils benefit from being taught by specialists across a range of subjects, and careful setting arrangements ensure that the curriculum is easily accessible to pupils of all abilities. Excellent preparation of pupils for senior school and entrance examinations is provided, within the context of the school's commitment to a broad curriculum.
- 3.11 Systems to identify and support pupils with SEND or EAL are excellent. Their needs are clearly outlined in individual education plans that are used effectively for planning lessons. Pupils with SEND or EAL feel that they have full access to the curriculum and receive appropriate support. Able or gifted and talented pupils are identified and appropriate additional work and challenge are provided for them in lessons and other activities.
- 3.12 The physical education curriculum is outstanding, embracing a diverse range of exciting opportunities, from dance to rugby. From Year 3, all pupils have the opportunity to play for a team on behalf of the school or their house. Creative opportunities for pupils are outstanding. All pupils learn the recorder, and from Year 3 all take part in weekly timetabled orchestra and choir lessons, for which music is regularly written to cater for all skills and abilities. Art and drama opportunities abound across the school. The pupils' experiences are enhanced by an extensive range of visitors to the school and relevant educational day trips. Residential visits strengthen pupils' independence.
- 3.13 The extra-curricular activities programme is excellent, strongly underpinning the school's belief that informal aspects of learning are equally as important as the formal. Pupils can choose from a wide range to suit all interests, including sport, creative and practical activities after school and at breaktimes. In the activities observed, pupils were enjoying and benefiting from their experiences. Some popular activities are run by pupils, with staff support. Through the opportunities provided pupils have gained significant skills, enabling them, for example, to qualify for national schools' chess finals.
- 3.14 The pupils' awareness of their local community is enhanced by the school's good links with local and national charities, culminating, for example, in the pupils raising £2,000 for the Sport Relief campaign.

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

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.16 The style of teaching throughout supports the school's aim to develop each individual's potential. Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching has improved. It is frequently excellent, and a particular strength is the use of varied strategies that suit the ways in which boys learn. A significant improvement in teaching has ensured that pupils' written English, their handwriting and the presentation of their written work are now of a high standard. Worksheets are used effectively: they have been thoughtfully prepared by teachers and so are an appropriate resource to support pupils' learning.
- 3.17 Knowledgeable teachers have high expectations of the pupils, which contribute positively to the rapid progress they make. Excellent, targeted and open-ended questioning frequently encourages and challenges the pupils to think independently and to take decisions. Enthusiastic, informed teaching was a feature of the many successful lessons seen. Specialist subject teachers are beginning to share their expertise and knowledge with colleagues throughout the school to enrich the pupils' experiences in lessons. Teachers are now highly confident in using ICT, and ensure that pupils make effective use of the improved resources available.
- 3.18 Teachers know their pupils extremely well. Since the previous inspection, carefully planned lessons now provide tasks and activities that are well matched to provide for the pupils' different needs. Pupils with SEND or EAL are well supported, and the most able have additional challenges and tasks provided. Where needed, teaching assistants usually provide valuable support in lessons to help individual pupils so that they can approach their work and view their progress in a positive way. Teaching makes appropriate provision for pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Teachers make the lesson objectives clear and use time efficiently. The pace of almost all lessons is brisk, maintaining the pupils' interest. In a few lessons in which the pace was too slow or pupils were insufficiently involved they lost concentration and achieved less.
- 3.19 Pupils are encouraged to be active readers and the recently refurbished library is a welcoming and exciting environment. Teachers encourage pupils to use both books and the internet to support their learning. Teaching fosters pupils' interest in their subjects. Most lessons are lively and stimulating, and pupils are regularly encouraged to contribute their thoughts and ideas, and respond positively to working in pairs or small groups. Relationships between teachers and pupils are relaxed yet respectful, and teaching actively encourages the pupils to concentrate and work hard. Vibrant and well-presented displays are a strong feature of many teaching rooms and areas about the school.
- 3.20 Efficient and varied assessment procedures are in place for academic and creative subjects. The information provided is now carefully used to identify individual pupils' needs and in the planning of lessons. Marking is almost universally thorough; occasionally is it somewhat superficial. It often includes helpful comments, and pupils appreciate the useful oral feedback they receive in class and feel that they can ask for help if required.

## **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 is highly successful in meeting its aims to promote the development of the individual by promoting positive behaviour, attitudes and values, and to celebrate pupils' success. Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of spiritual awareness. They are confident, self-aware and courteous, showing an understanding of others' needs in all aspects of school life. They appreciate life beyond the material within the curriculum and in the opportunities afforded to consider the natural world in the school grounds. Pupils' awareness of beauty is enhanced through the high standards they achieve in the creative arts and their dramatic and musical performances. During the inspection, all pupils from the oldest Nursery group to Year 6 were highly enraptured by the accomplished performance of individual musicians. Pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem are also increased through participation in many sports teams and through the school's extensive reward system, which celebrates academic and personal achievements.
- 4.3 Moral awareness is excellent. Pupils manifest an extremely well-developed sense of right and wrong. They are proud of their school and respect the code of conduct, setting out what is expected of them. They behave well and take care in the way that they treat the school environment. Pupils' moral and ethical values are further enhanced through the social and emotional aspects of learning themes that run through assemblies throughout the year.
- 4.4 Pupils demonstrate excellent social development. They eagerly accept roles of responsibility and show kindness and consideration to others. Year 6 pupils act as 'playground pals' and relish their opportunities to be mentors to younger pupils, helping with their personal development. As members of the elected school council, pupils have the opportunity to have a say in school life, and where appropriate to make a difference, gaining an understanding of democracy in action. Pupils aspire to the role of prefect. They acknowledge that it is a position that has to be earned and that it promotes respect through appropriate behaviour in exercising responsibility. Pupils develop an understanding of those who less fortunate than themselves through fund raising for charities and collecting items for children at Christmas.
- 4.5 Pupils' cultural development is excellent. They gain an excellent understanding and respect for other faiths and cultures through the harmonious diversity of the school community. Religious education lessons enable pupils to learn about traditions different to their own, and in lessons pupils listen respectfully to others' views on religion and faith. During breaktime, Year 2 pupils confidently discussed faith differences whilst playing. Pupils' understanding and awareness of different cultural interests and activities are supported in the variety of high quality displays relating to their work, such as the celebration of American folk art. Their understanding of their own culture is deeply enriched through a diverse range of visits and activities, such as trips to the Staffordshire Regiment Museum and to professional theatre and concerts. Pupils' awareness of the impact of war is heightened by the annual act of remembrance for old boys at the school's war memorial. Following a recent trip to France and Belgium, a pupil commented that it was moving to realise that the graves visited represented only a fraction of the casualties of World War One.

- 4.6 By the time they leave the school, the personal development of pupils is excellent. Pupils are encouraged to take decisions for themselves and participate in many different activities, and so are well prepared for their life in senior schools.

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

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 Procedures for providing support and guidance for pupils are excellent, underpinning the school's aim to promote positive behaviour. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst pupils themselves, is outstanding. Staff know their pupils extremely well, and pastoral matters are discussed regularly.
- 4.9 Pupils are encouraged to be healthy by developing good eating habits. The nutritious lunch offers good choices and is a pleasant, social occasion. Catering staff are attentive to pupils' dietary requirements. Pupils take ample regular exercise within the curriculum, and enjoy opportunities for spirited play in the attractive school grounds.
- 4.10 The school is highly effective in promoting high standards of behaviour. Pupils' behaviour across the school is excellent. A clear anti-bullying policy ensures that any incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively, a view endorsed in the pupils' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires. They feel safe and are confident that they have a range of people whom they can approach. A highly effective peer support system is in place. Trained pupils in Years 5 and 6 offer practical pastoral support to Years 3 and 4. A dedicated space, The Communication Station, enables younger pupils to seek guidance from their seniors. Pupils receive additional support through a teacher-guided mentor scheme.
- 4.11 The reward systems in the school work well. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire a few pupils felt that teachers are unfair in the way that they issue rewards. Inspectors judged that systems are fair, a view confirmed in discussions with pupils.
- 4.12 The school employs efficient methods to seek pupils' views. A few pupils suggested that their views are not considered. Inspection evidence did not support this view. The ethos of openness within the school enables pupils to approach staff, and the suggestions box and the elected school council provide appropriate means for pupils' discussions and ideas. The changing area was improved in response to suggestions, and the council has a budget for playground equipment.
- 4.13 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.15 Pupils are well cared for in a nurturing environment. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents were unanimous in the view that their children are happy at school and felt safe.
- 4.16 Careful attention is given to the safeguarding of pupils. The policy was updated for the inspection to reflect the most recent official guidance. Procedures are appropriate and implemented successfully. Any records relating to concerns about pupils' welfare are kept carefully, and designated staff, with the necessary specialist

training, maintain useful contacts with local agencies. All staff receive regular training and know whom to approach if they have any concerns about pupils. A designated governor provides additional support to the school, meeting the leadership termly to discuss any issues.

- 4.17 All appropriate measures to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards are taken. Fire procedures are clear, and regular, carefully recorded drills take place. Equipment and alarm systems are checked regularly. The school has the support of professional external advisors for health and safety. Appropriate risk assessments are in place for all areas of the school and are regularly reviewed, although the recording of these reviews is not always kept up to date. Visits and activities are carefully assessed and planned.
- 4.18 The first-aid policy is clear and appropriate, and many staff have first-aid qualifications. The care provided to pupils who are ill or injured is good, and the facilities are satisfactory. The school has plans to improve the facilities for providing first aid to pupils. The details of pupils' medical needs are appropriately disseminated to staff when necessary. Details of any accidents are kept efficiently and monitored carefully to enable improvements to be made in procedures when necessary.
- 4.19 The admission and attendances registers are kept appropriately and stored for the required three years. Efficient, prompt action is taken to follow up any pupil absences.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The governing body, under experienced leadership, provides effective oversight of all sections of the school, enabling it to be extremely successful in achieving its aims. Governors are highly committed and have strong connections to the school; all are former pupils or parents of former pupils. They are clear about the ethos that they wish to maintain for the benefit of the pupils. Through prudent financial management, they have made good investment in high quality staff, plentiful resources and the imaginative development of the accommodation. The full board, whose members have a range of appropriate skills, meets termly. It is supported by a useful committee structure. Since the previous inspection, the committees' roles have been strengthened. They now meet termly to provide more direct support and challenge for the school's management.
- 5.3 Governors have increased their understanding of the day-to-day operations of the school. They receive informative reports from senior management staff, and now visit lessons to find out about pupils' experiences and to meet staff on a regular basis. They also attend formal and informal school events.
- 5.4 Governors are effective in discharging their statutory responsibilities for child protection, welfare, health and safety. A designated governor for safeguarding is in regular contact with the school and meets senior management staff to support them over any matters that arise. The full governing body undertakes a formal review of the policy and procedures for safeguarding each year, and governors also receive termly reports on child protection matters. Whole-school policies are reviewed regularly.

### **5.(b) The quality of leadership and management**

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is excellent.
- 5.6 This has improved since the previous inspection, and is highly successful in ensuring that the school achieves its aims for pupils to thrive and achieve well within a supportive environment. All policies and procedures, which are effectively implemented across the school, reflect the caring nature of the school; the safety and well-being of the pupils are central to its ethos. All staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding pupils and in welfare, health and safety. All necessary checks on staff and governors are appropriately carried out, and the single central register is suitably maintained. A few minor omissions in the recording of checks were corrected at the time of the inspection.
- 5.7 Strong yet approachable leadership has a clear vision for the school, which is reflected in the high standards achieved by the pupils and their excellent personal development. The vision is strongly supported by all members of the school community. Since the increase in the size of the school, the senior management team has appropriately been enlarged. The team has been strengthened and its members work well together. Through effective consultation with staff, pupils and parents, and incorporating departmental development plans, the team has created a whole-school development plan that clearly identifies areas for improvement and

how to achieve them. This is regularly reviewed, and so is an active and relevant tool for the school's improvement.

- 5.8 The school is successful in recruiting suitably well-qualified staff, and newly appointed staff receive excellent support. All staff have been appraised and they are encouraged to undertake relevant professional training. However, the system of appraisal has proved too cumbersome and plans are in place to reinvigorate the process in the term following the inspection, to make it more efficient for senior managers to monitor and develop staff.
- 5.9 As recommended at the previous inspection, the role of middle managers has been strengthened. Heads of department have been given greater responsibility and specific time to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning, and to review and develop the curriculum in their subjects. Excellent practice is established in some departments, with lesson observation and work scrutiny carried out extremely effectively, however this is not yet consistent across all subjects.
- 5.10 The school has made significant progress since the previous inspection. Standards of English, handwriting and presentation have been transformed. The curriculum is well balanced and strengthened with additional subjects. Resources for ICT have been improved and are used by pupils and teachers across the curriculum.
- 5.11 Relationships between the school and parents, carers and guardians are excellent. The success of the school's 'open door' policy is reflected in the overwhelmingly positive responses from parents in the pre-inspection questionnaires, and the well-developed links that have been established between home and school. The school's leadership is at the forefront of promoting an accessible culture where parents feel welcome and staff visibility and accessibility are a critical feature in the success of the partnership. The highly welcoming administrative team enhances the family feel of the school, as does the provision for 'wrap-around' care, which supports working parents. After-school provision for younger pupils is characterised by a warm, homely atmosphere.
- 5.12 Parents feel that their concerns are dealt with appropriately. A thorough scrutiny of documentation showed that all concerns are dealt with promptly and sensitively. The school's procedure for formal complaints has rarely been used.
- 5.13 Parents have excellent opportunities to be actively involved in the work and progress of their children. Parents receive two informative reports annually, providing details about progress in each subject area, together with areas for improvement. Half-termly effort books provide a further opportunity for home-school communication, as do the homework planners used from Year 3. Parents are encouraged to be involved with their children's homework. Subject-specific consultation evenings are held each academic year to help parents to support their children's learning. Parents receive 'Message from the Headmaster' postcards that ensure that they are able to share in the celebration of special achievements.
- 5.14 Parents are very well informed about the life and work of the school through the website, where requisite policies and documents are available to the parents of existing or prospective pupils. Social media and regular newsletters, together with the annual school magazine, celebrate the pupils' many achievements. To support parents new to the school, welcome meetings are held at the start of the academic year, and they receive helpful general information booklets. Enhancing the family ethos, the Parents' Association is highly supportive of the school, organising events throughout the year. In the week following the inspection, a family day was to



scheduled to take place to celebrate the Year 6 leavers' contribution to the school and to welcome new pupils into Reception.

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

## **6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

### **6.(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend**

- 6.1 The quality of the provision is outstanding in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend the EYFS. As a result, all children reach or exceed the level of development typical for their age. The educational programmes are expertly adapted to the needs of the children in each classroom, which ensures that they experience a rich variety of activities, are enthused and are given opportunities to form close relationships. The children learn both independently and with adult support, and begin to speak clearly and thoughtfully, and to listen attentively and with enjoyment. Children's physical skills are well developed, in terms of both gross motor control and their ability to use small tools and pencils. Due to the success of the setting in giving children a secure capacity to develop, they are ready for the next stages of their education. Staff have high expectations and adapt tasks and activities to challenge appropriately children of all abilities. Skilful questioning is used effectively. Children in the Nursery responded to probing questions about a pretend hunt for baby dinosaurs, remembering considerable detail. Opportunities which encourage children to reason, negotiate and be creative are, however, somewhat limited.
- 6.2 Excellent planning using detailed and frequent assessment ensures that activities are adapted so that children of all abilities, including those needing additional support, are challenged appropriately. This enables them to make rapid progress, with excellent levels of understanding. Children with EAL are well supported and make rapid progress in their understanding.
- 6.3 Staff welcome parents into school at the start and end of each day and encourage them to be involved in their children's learning. Parents particularly appreciate the warm family atmosphere that pervades the setting and helps children to feel secure and confident. Parents are kept informed about their children's achievements and progress.

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

- 6.4 Provision for children's well-being is outstanding. Key people are skilled and experienced, and place children's happiness and well-being at the centre of all they do. As a result, the children bond well with their carers, forming secure attachments. Staff work as a close-knit team and their strong relationships are emulated by the children. Staff have high expectations of good behaviour, which is conducive to children's learning. They make activities fun so that children are confident, enthusiastic and enjoy being at school. As they grow older, children are given opportunities to work independently, and when appropriate, co-operatively. Staff ensure that children know how to keep safe, and provide numerous opportunities for physical exercise. Snacks and lunches are healthy, and children learn good routines about hygiene. Staff in other classes are well known to children, and children regularly visit their new classes so that they transfer confidently from one class to the next.

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

- 6.5 The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. Governance is effective in supporting the EYFS. The experienced management team has worked hard to fulfil the recommendation of the previous inspection to strengthen links across the setting to ensure a cohesive approach to the EYFS framework and consistency in policies and procedures. This is now a strength of the setting. All staff receive training in health and safety procedures, and they have a good understanding of welfare requirements. The management team carefully oversees the quality of planning, assessment and the educational programmes. Self-evaluation is of high quality; the success of the setting is carefully monitored, and a realistic development plan targets areas for improvement.
- 6.6 Effective systems are in place for the supervision, performance management and development of staff. Staff meet frequently to plan and evaluate the progress of individual children. They have regular opportunities to discuss their professional development. New ideas gained from courses are enthusiastically shared amongst all staff, who operate as a united team. As a result, the quality of teaching and the children's learning and development are enhanced.
- 6.7 The setting maintains close partnerships with parents, and external agencies give valued support when appropriate to support children's needs.

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

- 6.8 The quality and standards of the EYFS provision are outstanding. All children, including those who need additional support, make rapid progress in relation to their abilities and needs. Almost all pupils in Reception attain all the Early Learning Goals and many are working beyond them. The youngest children settle quickly into the Nursery routines. They respond to adults, listen attentively and are confident to start to explore their surroundings. Children in the Nursery begin to recognise letter sounds, and by the end of Reception children use such phonics and letter blends confidently and accurately when reading and writing. Children in the Nursery have a secure knowledge of numbers to ten and beyond.
- 6.9 The children's personal and emotional development is outstanding. Their behaviour is impeccable throughout the setting. They quickly develop trusting relationships with the adults who care for them, and are happy and confident to try new activities. Children are prepared to take turns and to share, and they have mature attitudes to learning.
- 6.10 Staff are knowledgeable and extremely conscientious in their shared view of safeguarding and welfare matters, and the management team evaluates the quality of care, teaching and learning effectively. The team and all other staff in the setting are committed to improving the provision further in order to enhance the life chances of all children.

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

- 6.11 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

**Section 2 includes any identified action the Early Years Foundation Stage is recommended to take in order to improve its provision.**