



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION  
SANCTON WOOD SCHOOL**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Sancton Wood School

Full Name of School	<b>Sancton Wood School</b>
DfE Number	<b>873/6009</b>
EYFS Number	<b>EY287711</b>
Address	<b>Sancton Wood School 2 St Paul's Road Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB1 2EZ</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01223 471703</b>
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Head	<b>Mr Richard Settle</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Aatif Hassan</b>
Age Range	<b>1 to 16</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>240</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (141 boys; 99 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>1-2 (EYFS): 36    5-11: 93 3-5 (EYFS): 31    11-16: 80</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Linda Russell</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>10 Nov 2015 to 13 Nov 2015</b>

## PREFACE

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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

The previous ISI integrated inspection was in March 2011.

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, directors and the directors' advisers, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited 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 Michael Buchanan	Reporting Inspector
Mr Simon Willcocks	Team Inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Pamela Hutley	Team Inspector (Head, ISA school)
Mrs Patricia Griffin	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Sancton Wood is a co-educational day school founded in 1976, initially as a junior school, in the centre of Cambridge. It was operated until recently as a family run organisation. The senior school was opened in 1979, and in 2009 the school was consolidated onto the current site. The school is divided into four Departments: the Nursery (for children aged 1 to 4), Infant (pupils aged 4 to 7) and Junior Departments (pupils aged 7 to 11) which comprise the Junior School, and a Senior School (ages 11 to 16). It has no sixth form. In 2014 the school was purchased by Minerva Education, who now operate and oversee the it as one of 5 schools in and around London. The 6 directors of Minerva Education act as the governors of the school. Subsequently, the school has undergone numerous new developments such as reviews of both its curriculum and its provision of learning support.
- 1.2 Sancton Wood School aims to ensure the social, emotional and academic development of each child with particular emphasis on instilling good manners, reliability, self-discipline and promoting excellent academic outcomes and positive attitudes through a tailored educational programme.
- 1.3 A total of 240 pupils attend the school, with 67 in the registered Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The school has 28 pupils in the Infant, 65 in the Junior and 80 in the Senior Departments. Overall the number of boys is slightly higher than the amount of girls. The pupils' ability on entry covers a wide range; most are of above average ability. Pupils come largely from families with professional or business backgrounds in and around Cambridge. The majority have a white British heritage; a few pupils have diverse minority ethnic backgrounds.
- 1.4 The school has 27 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), none of which are EYFS children. Five pupils have statements of special educational needs or education, health and care (EHC) plans. Those with SEND require support with a range of disabilities including dyslexia and dyscalculia, as well as physical disabilities. Also, 1 pupil has English as an additional language (EAL), for which specialist support is provided.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the Infant, Junior and Senior Departments. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

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

<b>School</b>	<b>NC name</b>
Baby Unicorns	Pre-nursery
Unicorns Nursery	Nursery

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

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

- 2.1 The school is successful in meeting its aim of ensuring the development of each pupil through a broad and tailored curriculum which leads to good academic outcomes and promotes positive attitudes. Pupils' achievements are good. In the EYFS outcomes are outstanding. All pupils read well and speak fluently using sophisticated vocabulary. Their attainment is good in relation to national age-related expectations and performance at GCSE is above the national average for maintained schools. This level of attainment indicates that all groups of pupils make good progress. Most have excellent attitudes to learning. Their achievements in sporting and other activities are good; their success is evident in both individual and team pursuits. The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent. It is complemented effectively by a wide range of visits, and a programme of extra-curricular activities appropriate to the size of the school. The contribution of teaching is good and is effective in promoting the pupils' good progress and achievements. It is generally carefully planned to reflect the pupils' prior learning and to meet their needs. Teachers use an excellent variety of activities, delivered in an enthusiastic way with appropriate pace, which fosters the interest and enjoyment of pupils. In the EYFS, teaching is outstanding and activities are well matched to children's needs and interest. In a few lessons teaching is less successful; planning does not meet the needs of the individual pupils, marking does not follow the school policy and teaching assistants are not used effectively to support learning.
- 2.2 The quality of the personal development of the pupils is excellent and is effectively promoted by strong relationships and the school's ethos. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent. They develop a mature understanding of non-material aspects of their lives. Pupils are caring and considerate towards others; they recognise the abilities and skills of all members of the school. They show a keen sense of fairness, distinguishing easily between right and wrong. The excellent pastoral arrangements ensure that pupils understand and exercise the values of honesty, courtesy and respect for self and others. Staff know the pupils well. Pupils feel strongly supported, well cared for and valued. The arrangements for welfare, health and safety are also excellent, with thorough procedures in place for the safeguarding of pupils and the recruitment of staff.
- 2.3 The quality of governance and of leadership and management are good. The leadership of the EYFS is outstanding. The directors know the school well through frequent visits and a careful programme of review. The leadership and directors have responded positively to the recommendations from the previous inspection, resulting in the leadership of the school gaining more capacity to undertake review and development work, a review of the information and communication technology (ICT) curriculum. Planning in the EYFS has been improved and the department further integrated into school policies, also in response to previous inspection recommendations. The leadership sets a clear direction for the school and work with great commitment to ensure that it fulfils its aims. The school has undergone many improvements since the previous inspection in aspects such as its curriculum, however some inconsistencies in teaching remain. A strong sense of community and cohesion is pervasive. The school fosters positive and highly constructive relationships with parents, most of whom said that they would recommend the school to other parents.

## **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.
- 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. Ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently high in all sections of the school from Year 1 through to Year 11.
  2. Ensure that the marking of pupils' work always provides clear guidance for improvement and suitable challenge.
  3. Ensure that teaching assistants are actively used to support and guide pupils within lessons and their effectiveness is closely monitored.



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

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is good.
- 3.2 The school is successful in its aim of ensuring the development of each pupil through a tailored educational programme which leads to good academic outcomes and promotes positive attitudes. At all stages of the school pupils are well educated.
- 3.3 Pupils achieve good standards in both academic and extra-curricular activities. Throughout the Infant, Junior and Senior Departments, pupils develop a wide range of skills, knowledge and understanding as a result of the excellent curriculum and good teaching. Pupils of all abilities, including those with SEND, speak fluently. They read well and use an extensive and sophisticated vocabulary. The most able pupils can explore advanced concepts, such as in a playground discussion between senior pupils about the fundamental nature of matter. Pupils are articulate and ask challenging questions with enthusiasm and skill; during inspection they were observed defending a decision not to protect some coastlines against erosion even when businesses and houses were in peril. They demonstrate a high standard of creative work in art and show good prowess in sport, for example in hockey lessons.
- 3.4 Most pupils write clearly and with precision, using a variety of styles. For example, senior pupils wrote horror stories and the juniors produced poems following their visit to a war memorial. Many pupils use technical and subject specific terminology accurately. They demonstrate good levels of mathematical and scientific skill; for example when analysing geometrical problems. Throughout the school, pupils use ICT effectively to support and promote their learning. This is particularly evident for pupils with SEND who are adept at using the resources prepared for them and in using ICT to support their writing.
- 3.5 Pupils perform well in a wide range of activities. Their success is evident in individual and team pursuits. In swimming, pupils represented the eastern region in a national competition and they have gained places in county netball, cricket and hockey squads. They receive arts, filmmaking and mathematics awards and take part in high-quality drama and musical performances. Many senior pupils achieve bronze level in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Pupils are highly successful in securing their choice of further education places, including selective sixth forms. They express a high level of satisfaction with their progress and achievements.
- 3.6 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2012 to 2014, the most recent years for which comparative statistics are available. Pupils' attainment in the Junior School cannot be measured in relation to the average performance against a fixed national norm. Nonetheless, the junior pupils follow a demanding curriculum, and on the evidence seen in lessons, workbooks and in interviews, their performance is judged to be well above national age-related expectations. Performance at GCSE for both boys and girls has been above the national average for maintained schools and similar to that for maintained selective schools. In 2015 the proportion of A\* or A grades was close to 50 percent, whilst the A\* to C rate was maintained at close to 95%. Overall, the level of attainment observed in the juniors and at GCSE indicates that pupils, including those with EAL and the most able, make good progress relative to the average for those of similar ability. Pupils with

SEND, including those with EHC plans and statements, make excellent progress as a result of the specialist support that they receive.

- 3.7 Most pupils' attitude to learning are excellent. They take pride in the presentation of their work. Pupils engage with enthusiasm and demonstrate enjoyment in their learning. They are consistently compliant, even when occasional lessons are undemanding. In a few lessons, pupils take a long time to settle. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy working independently and collaborate successfully. Relationships with their peers and with their teachers are excellent and are a key feature in promoting their good achievements.

### **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 broad and balanced, and effectively supports the school's aims. It is suitable for all ages and abilities, and includes a balanced presentation of opposing views in the coverage of political issues. Long and medium-term curricular planning is thorough and effective in covering the requisite areas of learning. Pupils enjoy studying languages such as Spanish from Nursery, French from Year 4 and Latin from Year 7.
- 3.10 The core curriculum is supplemented by a varied programme of enrichment activities in all sections of the school such as Chinese, Turkish, psychology, art, gardening, and coding. These enable pupils to develop a wide range of skills and interests. A few parents and pupils expressed the view that the extra-curricular programme is of a high quality but limited in range. The inspection judged it to be appropriate to the size of the school.
- 3.11 Some aspects of the curriculum are successfully taught through topic themes, for example when junior pupils retell Norse myths in English. The curriculum in the creative arts, particularly in the Senior School, provides for mature, innovative and sophisticated outcomes. Throughout the school ICT is used well and is a valuable, effective tool in delivering the curriculum; pupils spontaneously use technology in formal and informal settings. A good range of physical education (PE) activities helps pupils improve their physical skills and levels of fitness. The school makes effective use of local facilities for swimming and games. Learning support for pupils with SEND and EAL, including those with an EHC plan, is well planned. The most able pupils usually benefit from well-planned extension work and extra challenge, for example, through additional teaching in the senior section.
- 3.12 Pupils follow a comprehensive personal, social and health education programme across all stages of the school covering issues such as friendships, keeping safe, democracy and debate, political issues and finance. Creative thinking, reflection and empathy are provided by a programme of philosophy, ethics and religious studies, which is revisited and extended each year from Year 3 onwards. The school actively promotes an understanding of the values inherent in modern British society, and a respect for other faiths and cultures.
- 3.13 The curriculum is enhanced by a wide variety of educational visits; the seniors, for example, visit farms, botanical gardens and recording studios, while the infants and juniors benefit from visits by authors, sporting figures, journalists, academics and war veterans. The pupils' experience is further enriched by regular visits to London theatres, museums and workshops, as well as much-appreciated residential trips. The Sancton Wood Early Enterprise Trust is a highly effective mechanism in

engaging pupils in supporting local teenage cancer sufferers; pupils visit the ward, ask the children what they need and the trust raises money for their requests.

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

- 3.14 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.15 Teaching is effective in promoting pupils' good progress and achievements in line with the school aims. Both pupils and parents are highly positive about the support provided by teachers.
- 3.16 Throughout the school, the majority of teaching is carefully planned to reflect the pupils' prior learning and meets their needs, including those with SEND, EHC plans or statements, EAL and the most able. An excellent variety of activities is delivered in a lively way, with an appropriate pace, which fosters the interest and enjoyment of pupils. Most teaching makes effective use of questioning to check pupils' understanding and to allow them to articulate their thoughts further. This is used well to challenge and stretch pupils of all abilities.
- 3.17 Teachers demonstrate thorough subject knowledge and most use effective methods to ensure pupils' good learning and progress. High expectations are evident in the frequent use of specialist terminology and methods such as teaching in the target language in Spanish lessons. This uncompromising teaching encourages pupils of all abilities. Usually teachers use resources, including ICT, imaginatively to create and sustain interest and actively promote the learning of all pupils, such as its use in a senior French lesson. Teachers throughout the school know their pupils extremely well. Teaching effectively promotes tolerance and respect and is non-partisan in the coverage of political issues.
- 3.18 A few parents do not feel that very able pupils received appropriate support. The inspection found evidence in many lessons and elsewhere to the contrary. In most lessons, the most able pupils are suitably challenged. However, in a few lessons where teaching is less successful, as seen in the infants, junior and seniors, weak planning does not meet the needs of all individuals. Tasks are undemanding or inappropriate, with closed questioning offering little scope for pupils to demonstrate their knowledge or progress and lessons lack pace, all of which is reflected in pupils' attitudes to learning. The teaching of pupils with SEND is often highly successful and makes the provision set out in statements and EHC plans. It uses individual learning plans to provide suitable resources to ensure rapid progress.
- 3.19 Most marking and assessment is thorough, frequent and informative, setting clear and constructive targets for future success. Self and peer assessment are used to good effect. In a small number of cases, marking is perfunctory and provides simple congratulatory comments, which do not suggest areas for improvement.
- 3.20 The teaching of pupils with SEND and EAL is supported well by teaching assistants in lessons. However, in some other cases, teaching assistants are not effectively used to support learning or to manage the behaviour of other pupils.

## **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 quality of the personal development of the pupils is outstanding throughout the school and is promoted by the excellent relationships, consistently strong pastoral care and a shared school ethos. Comprehensive strategies ensure that, in accordance with the school's aims, pupils leave the school confident, well-rounded and self-assured and have good self-knowledge. Parents and pupils are highly satisfied; almost all parents believe the school achieves high standards of behaviour and that their child feels happy at the school. Almost all pupils agree that they are encouraged to do things for themselves and to work independently.
- 4.3 The pupils' spiritual development is excellent. Across the school pupils are able to evaluate and reflect carefully, offering critical self-observations. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of the non-material aspects of their lives and a reflective spiritual awareness. Pupils respond well to aesthetic stimuli. In art, for example, they effectively assess their emotional responses to artwork and consider what impact it has upon their lives. Senior pupils produce emotionally mature art work in a variety of styles and media.
- 4.4 Pupils' moral development is excellent. During PSHE lessons, pupils take opportunities to explore, understand and develop values which widen their perspective. They regularly revisit key concepts and values. Consequently, they have an acute understanding of the need for, and impact of, kindness, courtesy and concern for other people. For the most part, pupils are caring and considerate towards others; they recognise the abilities and skills of all members of the school. Pupils show a keen sense of fairness, distinguishing easily between right and wrong. Their understanding of the need for laws, rules and boundaries is well developed. They understand and respect the civil and criminal law of England. Pupils are successfully encouraged to consider those less fortunate than themselves through participation in community events and charitable fundraising for local and international charities. They energetically take ownership of these activities. They show no discrimination in their attitudes.
- 4.5 Pupils' social development is excellent. They interact with tolerance and mutual respect. They co-operate well in lessons and pupils of all ages and backgrounds mix well in the playground. The pupils are courteous and polite to each other and to adults. Junior and senior pupils alike speak proudly of their responsibilities. Senior pupils are active in the spiritual, moral and social education of their peers through assemblies which they present to the younger children. They demonstrate a clear understanding of British social values, such as mutual respect and individual liberty.
- 4.6 Pupils' cultural development is excellent, as is their knowledge and respect for the values and beliefs of faiths other than their own. Pupils have a clear understanding of the issues in the wider world through the discussion of current affairs, often prompted by watching extracts of current affairs programmes together. Pupils show an excellent understanding of the institutions and services of England through informative displays, such as one on democracy or lessons on the monarchy. During the inspection the top infants and the juniors attended the local Remembrance Day ceremony, showing a sincere and respectful silence and singing the national anthem enthusiastically.

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

- 4.7 The quality of pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 The outstanding pastoral arrangements ensure that pupils understand and exercise the values of honesty, courtesy and respect for self and others. Staff know the pupils well and provide excellent pastoral support. Pupils feel that the school is a welcoming, happy, caring place with a family atmosphere, where people get on well with each other. A very high proportion of pupils said in the questionnaires and in interviews that they like being at the school; they feel safe, secure and well cared for in accordance with the school's aims. Simple, efficient procedures work extremely well to nurture and bring out the best in the pupils while ensuring that concerns are dealt with promptly. Throughout the school, relationships between pupils and staff, and amongst the pupils themselves are excellent.
- 4.9 The school's policies and procedures for promoting an ethos of positive behaviour and guarding against harassment and bullying are wide-ranging and work effectively. A minority of pupils expressed dissatisfaction in the questionnaires with the fairness with which sanctions are given and a very few felt that the school does not deal effectively with any bullying. In conversations with pupils, and a thorough scrutiny of records, the inspection concluded that on the occasions conflicts between pupils arise these are dealt with quickly and effectively. Overall, the rewards and sanctions system is clearly understood by pupils and fairly applied. Pupils understand the need for internet safety; they can recognise the signs of cyber bullying and know what strategies to use should it occur.
- 4.10 The promotion of healthy eating, a comprehensive sporting programme and the need to take regular exercise are seen as important aspects of the pupils' education as is the impact healthy living has on mental health and welfare.
- 4.11 The school has appropriate and effective means for gathering the views of pupils through the school council. Junior pupils spoke positively about the 'worry box' which provides pupils with an additional means of communication and sharing concerns. For example, the introduction of a triple science course was a direct result of requests from pupils. The school takes meticulous care in preparing senior pupils for the next stage of their education.
- 4.12 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**

- 4.13 The contribution of the arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.14 The arrangements support the aims of the school and pupils' personal development well, and meet all regulatory requirements. The directors take all the appropriate steps to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. Drills are undertaken at regular intervals, and equipment is tested at the correct intervals. Simple and effective systems are in place to monitor health and safety. Suitable risk assessments are in place and are reviewed conscientiously. The compact school site is secure and well-maintained, with close regard given to safety and accessibility including the outdoor areas. Deficiencies are rapidly rectified and careful monitoring helps to establish a culture of continual evaluation and improvement.
- 4.15 Arrangements for safeguarding are systematic and implemented well. The directors and leadership of the school ensure the requirements for checking and recording the

suitability of directors, staff, supply staff and volunteers are fully and consistently met, in accordance with current official guidance. The directors take great care to use their expertise effectively in monitoring and evaluating safeguarding policy and practice regularly and at least annually. All staff are appropriately trained in child protection including the prevention of radicalisation. The daily oversight of safeguarding is highly effective, with good and regular coordination between all staff involved. An excellent anonymised, electronic record allows easy oversight of the progress of cases by staff and directors. Measures to counter bullying are effective and well-regarded by the pupils.

- 4.16 The care of sick and injured pupils is effective and well-recorded and the facilities for this purpose are adequate. The admissions register and attendance registers are correctly completed and suitably stored.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The directors know the school well through a combination of frequent visits and a careful programme of review, using their own expertise in secondary and primary education and that of specialist consultants in areas such as SEND. This approach helps to ensure challenge and stimulus for improvement for the leadership of the school and supports the aims of the school well. Since they took over the ownership of the school in 2014, the directors have successfully invested in staff, facilities and maintenance the benefit of the pupils. They have a clear idea of how the school can be developed in the future and are active in working with the school in implementing these plans. Many of the initiatives that have been put in place to ensure high quality outcomes for pupils are successful. At present the quality of teaching is inconsistent and hence the achievement of the pupils is not as high as it could be.
- 5.3 The directors provide highly effective oversight of the EYFS through regular and helpful visits by an external specialist; these are a catalyst for further improvement. They are effective in discharging their duties for child protection, welfare, health and safety throughout the school. The director with particular oversight of safeguarding leads termly reviews of day-to-day practice and is readily available for consultation if needed. The whole board carry out the annual review.
- 5.4 The directors have responded positively to the recommendations from the previous inspection with the result that the leadership of the school have more capacity to undertake review and development work, the ICT curriculum has been reviewed and the EYFS has been further integrated into whole school procedures and policies.

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

- 5.5 The leadership and management of the school including links with parents, carers and guardians is good.
- 5.6 The leadership sets a clear direction for the school in conjunction with the directors and work with great commitment and vitality to ensure the school fulfils its aims. A strong sense of community and cohesion is pervasive. Leaders ensure that values which encourage democracy and a respect for others are evident in ethos of the school. The leadership and management have been successful in developing a suitably demanding and flexible curriculum that promotes good academic achievement and the excellent personal development of the pupils. The extra-curricular programme provides pupils with an adequate/suitable range of suitable opportunities in areas such as sport, music and drama as well as visits, visitors and residential trips.
- 5.7 The school development planning is clear and has been successful in many areas. For example, the increasing use of collaborative ICT tools has improved coordination and dialogue amongst staff and pupils. The strong alliance between staff and parents is a central feature of the leadership and management of the school. The overall quality of long term planning throughout the school is good. Judicious investment has been made in ICT facilities, maintenance and staff, all

resulting in an enhancement of the pupils' educational experience. Monitoring and evaluation of key areas such as teaching, assessment, SEND and the EYFS uses external specialists to compare and moderate internal judgements. It is clear that these approaches are beginning to bear fruit, such as in much improved support for pupils with SEND and continuing excellence in EYFS. At present, there remain a few areas of inconsistency, such as in the quality of teaching, where some deficiencies in planning for individuals and marking mean that pupils do not always achieve as highly as they might otherwise.

- 5.8 The school has responded effectively to the recommendations of the previous inspection report. The ICT curriculum has been reviewed and the EYFS has been further integrated into whole school procedures and policies, and planning improved. Leaders have increased management time. All these are beneficial to pupils.
- 5.9 The leadership have successfully recruited good quality staff, who are enthusiastic practitioners and are strongly committed to the values and future success of the school. Arrangements for the induction and training of staff in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety are effective. Regular performance reviews identify areas for professional and personal development. These have yet to address a few inconsistencies in teaching and marking. Staff attend a good range of training events, often within the school, and sometimes at sister schools in the same group. These opportunities are much appreciated and successfully enable staff to develop their skills.
- 5.10 Recruitment checks are carried out correctly and are now recorded accurately as a result of the previous inspection. Simple and effective processes for the assessment, management and recording of risks are in place.
- 5.11 The school fosters positive and constructive relationships with parents. Almost all parents who completed the questionnaire expressed satisfaction with the progress their child makes and the range of experiences offered to their child. Regular parent consultations and a full annual report at the end of the summer term give details of academic progress, personal development and indicate ways for pupils to improve.
- 5.12 Records show that the school takes the views of parents seriously and handles complaints effectively in accordance with their published procedures, seeking to resolve issues informally and at an early stage whenever possible. During the inspection, a very few parents raised concerns about the opportunities for pupils to complete the confidential questionnaire and so further opportunities were provided to ensure all views could be considered.
- 5.13 The very large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire said that the school encouraged them to be involved in school events and activities and that they would recommend the school to another parent. A few parents expressed dissatisfaction with the timeliness of responses to their queries. However, records indicate that generally issues raised are dealt with in a reasonable timescale. Staff are readily available to parents at the beginning and end of each day, especially for parents with younger children. They can be contacted by email and they endeavour to respond promptly. Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the work and progress of their children. Home-school books also provide beneficial communication between parents and staff. Information evenings provide good opportunity for greater insight into the curriculum, teaching and learning. Parents helpfully share their particular expertise, especially on their careers, and they help on trips. Parents are welcome at sporting fixtures, assemblies, concerts and school



productions. Regular newsletters, emails and social media communications, keep parents well-informed of all that is going on in school. The helpful website, school prospectus and handbooks provide all current and prospective parents with detailed and relevant information.

- 5.14 The thriving Sancton Wood parents association organises various social and fund-raising occasions to the benefit of pupils and in support of the school ethos. For example, the funds raised purchase books and outside play equipment. The joint parent, staff and pupil orchestra and choir fosters a real sense of community.

**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) Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision**

- 6.1 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding. As a result of the well-planned curriculum and the outstanding care provided, all children, including those under two and those with additional needs, make rapid progress relative to their individual starting points. All children are extremely well supported in their learning and development, and they are well prepared for the next stage of education.
- 6.2 The personal development of all the children is outstanding; they are extremely happy and they feel safe and secure in this nurturing environment. All staff demonstrate a thorough understanding of the safeguarding and welfare arrangements for children, and their well-being is central to all the setting does. Leadership and management are highly effective in evaluating practice and show a strong commitment to continuous improvement, improving the outcomes for children. The recommendations from previous inspections; to include EYFS procedures in whole-school policies, to simplify self-evaluation to allow more time to plan effective outcomes for the children, and to increase multicultural resources in role play areas, have been fully met.

### **6.(b) Effectiveness of leadership and management**

- 6.3 The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding. The directors take an active and highly supportive role in the setting. They fully understand their responsibilities and have an excellent knowledge of the requirements of the EYFS framework. The leadership team share an ambitious vision for the setting as a whole. They have high expectations for what all children can achieve, including those with additional needs, through a highly appropriate curriculum and outstanding levels of care.
- 6.4 The education programmes provided for the youngest children put strong emphasis on the prime areas of learning; personal, social and emotional development, communication and language and physical development. This ensures firm foundations are set for their future development. The curriculum for Nursery and Reception is enhanced by specialist teaching in Spanish, and Reception children benefit further from specialist teaching in music and PE. In addition a small range of extra-curricular activities is on offer for Reception children. The children are given excellent opportunities to acquire knowledge, understanding and skills across all seven areas of learning. This meets statutory requirements, as well as meeting the needs and interests of the children extremely well.
- 6.5 Regular self-evaluation provides a continuous review of practice and the setting of appropriately challenging targets. The setting seeks to ascertain the views of parents in its regular and numerous contact with them, and it responds swiftly to any issues raised. The views of the children are also sought, as they give opinions on the appropriateness of activities planned and suggestions for how they may be developed. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and when talking to parents during the inspection, they showed overwhelming support and

appreciation for all aspects of the setting and would wholeheartedly recommend the school to other parents.

- 6.6 Policies are updated regularly and termly supervision meetings, in addition to the annual appraisal cycle, ensure all staff are extremely well supported in their roles and training needs are identified and where possible implemented. This impacts positively on all children's learning and development.
- 6.7 Staff actively promote equality, diversity and the key values of British society, as was seen in the way children respectfully observed the two minutes silence on Remembrance Day. Staff act as exemplary role models for the high standards of behaviour consistently expected. Rigorous safeguarding procedures, including the prevention of radicalisation and extremism, are given high priority at all times. Leaders create welcoming and stimulating learning environments, which prepare children well for the next stage of their education.

### **6.(c) Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

- 6.8 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding. Staff have consistently high expectations of what all children, including the most able, and those with SEND or EAL, can achieve. All staff have a thorough knowledge of the EYFS framework and of how young children learn, and they engage them in purposeful activities which captures their interests and imagination. Adults model language highly effectively for babies and toddlers. Nursery children play imaginatively as they act out the story of Goldilocks and the three bears. Reception children are posed regular challenges, especially in mathematics.
- 6.9 An appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities enables most children to make rapid progress and achieve highly for their ages and abilities. The recently extended outdoor area for the youngest children gives good opportunities for exploration. Although the Nursery and Reception share an outdoor space with the rest of the school teachers are able to make excellent use of this for challenging active learning.
- 6.10 Regular assessments and pertinent observations track progress extremely well and are used to plan the next steps of learning for individual children. Parents are encouraged to contribute information to ensure all children are extremely well-known and all their needs are met. Home visits prior to children starting school ensure all children settle happily and quickly. Continuous monitoring ensures all children are helped to reach, and in many cases exceed expected levels of development, and are ready to move into their next class in a seamless way.
- 6.11 Staff evaluate their planning daily and make adjustments as necessary to ensure children are stimulated, their interests considered, and they know how to improve. Staff give meaningful praise to let the children know how well they are doing, and reward them with stickers for improved behaviour or work. Staff and parents work closely together to ensure relevant support is provided for children needing particular help or encouragement with their learning and development, and relevant strategies are put in place to give further support. External agencies are consulted and become involved when considered necessary.
- 6.12 Parents receive much helpful information about the setting, particularly about the topics that will be covered each week, so they can support learning at home. All written reports are detailed and informative about progress, and they also include helpful targets for improvement. The two year old progress check is thorough and

the three prime areas of learning are reported on and then, in discussion with parents, any concerns can be addressed at this early stage.

- 6.13 The setting promotes equality of opportunity and the recognition of diversity, creating a most inclusive environment. Understanding and respect for different cultures is encouraged by the celebration of festivals such as Diwali, as was seen during inspection, and the good use of multi-cultural resources. Teaching supports children's learning and development extremely well, and equips them with the skills and capacity to develop and learn effectively and be ready for the next stage of their learning journey.

#### **6.(d) Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

- 6.14 The personal development, behaviour and welfare of the children is outstanding. Staff create highly positive, enabling environments, and value each child's achievements and unique qualities, ensuring excellent attitudes to learning. Children are highly motivated and eager to learn. They listen attentively and express themselves in an increasingly articulate and confident way. The effective support of adults ensures all children grow in self-confidence and become suitably self-aware in a positive way. Staff encourage older children to take risks, hence promoting an understanding that it is acceptable to make mistakes and try again.
- 6.15 All children enjoy their learning, and they work with increasingly high levels of independence. Staff develop children's imaginations through creative activities, and this was particularly evident during the Nursery's 'playdough disco' session, which helps to develop dexterity and fine motor skills. Babies and toddlers were captivated by the telling of the story of the Bear Hunt using excellent visual aids and actions.
- 6.16 There is a culture of mutual trust and respect throughout the setting. Children are helped to form strong relationships with their key person and all adults. The warm family atmosphere that pervades the school gives all children a sense of belonging and they learn to care for and respect each other in a safe and secure environment. Babies and toddlers are happy and contented. Nursery children express themselves confidently as they retell stories, and Reception children are developing a strong understanding of the world around them and beyond.
- 6.17 All staff foster confidence and respect, so that children work together co-operatively. Even the youngest children share, take turns and increasingly organise themselves and by the end of Reception they are highly independent, manage their own feelings suitably and relate well to others. They are extremely well prepared for all transitions, including the move to Year 1. Key people promote the standards of behaviour and courtesy expected. Behaviour is outstanding.
- 6.18 Full-time schooling is a requirement for Reception children; the younger children may attend on a part-time basis. Attendance is monitored and very regular.
- 6.19 Children are taught how to keep themselves safe. They are guided to use computers safely and begin to discuss online dangers. From a young age they are increasingly encouraged to manage their own personal hygiene and there is suitable importance placed on healthy eating and physical exercise. The children' personal, social and emotional development is outstanding and they are well prepared to respect others and contribute to wider society and life in Britain.

### **6.(e) Outcomes for children**

- 6.20 The outcomes for children are outstanding. All children, including those with additional needs, make rapid progress from their individual starting points. Consistently high standards are achieved because of the interesting educational programmes and the outstanding level of care provided by dedicated staff. This results in most children reaching, and many exceeding, levels of development typical for their age.
- 6.21 Children of all ages are enthusiastic about their learning and are inquisitive. They are attentive listeners and increasingly express themselves in an articulate way. Babies and toddlers enjoy stories and rhymes and they join in the actions. They are eager to explore their environment, they access toys independently and gradually begin to use words. Nursery children purposefully mark-make, holding a pencil with the correct grip. They count to ten and beyond and they are beginning to recognise initial sounds, enjoy books independently and ably share stories. Reception children work confidently with numbers to twenty and beyond and they can calculate simple number bonds. They recognise some coins and 2 and 3D shapes. They use their increasing knowledge of phonics to sound out words when they are reading and when writing sentences. They are all developing extremely well the key skills needed for the next steps of their learning journey.

### **Compliance with statutory requirements for children under two**

- 6.22 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.**