



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

SACRED HEART SCHOOL

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Sacred Heart School

Full Name of School	Sacred Heart School
DfE Number	845/6020
Registered Charity Number	252878
Address	Sacred Heart School Mayfield Lane Wadhurst East Sussex TN5 6DQ
Telephone Number	01892 783414
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Email Address	admin@sacredheartwadhurst.org.uk
Head	Mrs Hilary Blake
Chair of Governors	Mrs Maureen Hughes
Age Range	3 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	121
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (66 boys; 55 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 0 5-11: 92 3-5 (EYFS): 29 11-18: 0
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 121
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Anne Horsfall-Turner
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection dates	21 May 2013 to 24 May 2013

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 June 2010.

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. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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 pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'satisfactory' 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

Mr Stuart Thackrah

Mr David Callender

Mrs Dee Hutley

Mrs Lynda Boden

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Retired Head, IAPS school)

Team Inspector (Retired Head, ISA school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Sacred Heart School is a non-selective independent Catholic primary school and Nursery, situated in the heart of the Sussex countryside within the village of Wadhurst. It caters for boys and girls aged three to eleven. Originally founded in 1935, the school was run entirely by nuns until 1974 when it was taken over by lay staff. It has kept its strong Catholic links and is now run under the care of the Arundel and Brighton Diocesan Trust. The school is housed in a range of adjacent buildings and has secure grass and hard surface playing areas. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) has its own fenced outdoor play area. Children attend the school from the local areas of Kent and East Sussex within an approximate 10 mile radius. The current head teacher was appointed in 2006 and recent new facilities include a new hall built in 2009 providing space for indoor physical education, drama performances and the ability to provide a hot meal at lunchtime, and 2 new classrooms releasing dedicated space for ICT, music and after school care. The outdoor play areas have been greatly improved and new play equipment provided.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide a happy, safe and secure environment in which every child is encouraged to achieve their full potential within an inclusive community, which is centred on Christ's teachings and shared Gospel values and which affirms the Catholic ethos of the founding religious order of Notre Dame. At the time of inspection the school had 121 pupils on roll of which 66 were boys and 55 were girls. 29 of these were in the EYFS, of whom 17 in the Nursery were part-time. One third of the pupils are baptised Catholics. A small minority of pupils are from different ethnic backgrounds with the large majority being white British. No pupils have English as an additional language (EAL). Twelve pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and eight of these receive specialist learning support from the school. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Standardised tests show that the ability profile of the school is above the national average, with a majority of pupils having ability above average.
- 1.3 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Sacred Heart is successful in achieving its aims to provide a happy and secure atmosphere in which each child is encouraged to achieve their full potential. The high standard of pupils' achievements in academic work is mirrored in their success in the wide range of extra-curricular activities enjoyed. Pupils are very proud of their school. Children in the EYFS achieve extremely well in all areas because of the excellence of the setting. Older pupils display good knowledge in literacy and numeracy and their investigative skills are well developed. The presentation of work both in their exercise books and on display around the school is excellent and the pupils are eager to talk about their achievements. Pupils with SEND fare particularly well because of the excellent help that they receive, whilst the good variation of tasks for different abilities during most lessons also enables high achievers to extend their horizons. The overwhelming majority of parents and pupils are delighted by the progress made at the school and by the results of 11+ entrance examinations to independent and grammar schools. Pupils visibly enjoy learning and are attentive and responsive in class, often working cooperatively together. Excellent teaching helps to stimulate the pupils and much exciting work was seen. Assessment is thorough and highly effective in tracking pupils' progress and needs.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent. It is supported by excellent pastoral care and strong health and safety procedures. In discussion pupils felt that the teachers were extremely supportive and would solve any problems that may arise. Pupils are able to take responsibility, cooperate well with each other and incidents of unkind behaviour are extremely rare. Pupils develop an excellent sense of morality and an outstanding social awareness. In line with the aims of the school, the development of spirituality within the pupils is strong and a strength of the school.
- 2.3 Excellent governance underpins the success of the school. It ensures that the pupils are well educated in line with the aims of the school and the governors are committed to the further development of the school. The senior management work well as a team and they are effective in maintaining the strong caring ethos whilst giving clear educational direction. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their health and safety are thorough and secure. The school development plan sets out the future vision and direction for the school. More time has been created for the senior management team and the curriculum coordinators to monitor the curriculum and appraise staff but still not enough time is allowed for this to be done thoroughly. Parents are highly satisfied with the school as shown by the overwhelmingly positive response to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Their close involvement with the school reflects the welcoming family atmosphere.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Provide greater time for the senior leadership and curriculum coordinators to monitor lessons to share best practice throughout the school
2. Increase the provision of ICT within the curriculum for investigative work and research

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 overall.
- 3.2 The pupils are well educated in line with the school's aims to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, emotional and physical development of each child. Pupils develop their understanding, knowledge and skills in all subject areas and in their extra-curricular activities. The pupils are highly articulate and express themselves confidently. They are able to converse easily and enjoy challenging discussions on different topics. They listen attentively both to teachers and each other. Their reading is fluent both in silence and out loud in class. The standard of boys' reading is an area of focus in the school with many varied activities and extra books used to further stimulate their interest. The standard of writing and presentation in their workbooks is excellent both in structure and volume with cursive handwriting seen from Year 2 onwards.
- 3.3 Pupils demonstrate a strong grasp of mathematical concepts and apply them well across the curriculum, particularly in science. Their mental arithmetic is good and they can apply logical thought clearly to problem solving situations. Information and communication (ICT) skills are good but limited in use throughout the school. The pupils' creative work is excellent; artwork on display around the school is of a high standard and imaginative creative writing is evident in all classes. Pupils sing and play musical instruments with enthusiasm and skill and drama plays an important part in the school life. Pupils achieve well in physical activities and many represent the school in a variety of sports. They enjoy, and are successful in, a wide variety of extra-curricular events including chess, orchestral playing and various crafts. Pupils with SEND achieve well across the curriculum, particularly in art and drama and the school has responded well to the recommendations within the previous inspection report. Pupils are successful in gaining entry into their first choice schools including selective grammar schools and in gaining scholarships to local independent schools.
- 3.4 Outcomes for children in the EYFS are excellent. Children make rapid progress towards meeting the Early Learning Goals. All children, including those with SEND and the more able, learn and develop extremely well through stimulating play and valuable first-hand experiences, making excellent progress in relation to their starting points and are well prepared for the next stage of their learning. Nursery children can form letters and create simple words. They can recognise numbers on a number line, count up to ten, know their colours, can make excellent patterns in paint and appreciate their outdoor play sessions. Reception children are able to blend sounds to form words and sentences and read simple stories. They can add and subtract numbers up to ten, count confidently and enjoy investigative play. They can throw a ball accurately to each other showing excellent spatial awareness. All children co-operate well and enjoy their learning. They are active learners who explore, investigate, and make choices and decisions. They are well prepared for a successful transition to the next stage of their learning.
- 3.5 The pupils' attainment is analysed using the national data for the years 2010 to 2012. Results in national tests at age 7 have been above the national average for maintained primary schools, whilst results in mathematics were well above in 2011. Results in national tests at age 11 have been above the national average for maintained primary schools; in 2012, English was similar to the national average. The level of attainment in national curriculum tests at age 11 indicates that pupils

made good progress relative to the average for pupils of similar ability in 2011, and appropriate progress in 2012. The inspection judgements as assessed by lesson observations, pupils' written work, the school's internal assessments and by curriculum interviews with the pupils indicates that all pupils including those with SEND are now making good progress in relation to the national average.

- 3.6 Pupils' attitudes to work are excellent. They have a love of learning and enjoy their lessons and activities. They take pride in both their own achievements and those of others. In the EYFS, children work cooperatively, trust their teachers and relate well to each other. They respond to their work with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Older pupils concentrate well in lessons and are eager to participate at all times. They are quick to contribute, discuss their ideas and are unafraid of making mistakes. They enjoy challenges and work extremely well in pairs or groups. The presentation of their work is usually of a very high standard and they show pride in all they do. They are enthusiastic in all the extra-curricular activities, taking part where possible and making the most of the opportunities on offer. In the pupils' pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority felt that homework did not help their studies but during interviews this view was not borne out and all questioned felt that the teachers were instrumental in helping them progress.

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

- 3.7 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.8 The curriculum offers a broad and balanced education that promotes the spiritual, moral, emotional and physical development of each pupil. The curriculum is suited to all pupils across the full age and ability range and fulfils the school's aim of encouraging each individual to reach their full potential.
- 3.9 Within the EYFS, excellent outdoor provision offers a variety of experiences across the curriculum, engaging and motivating children. The educational programmes give children many opportunities to express themselves clearly, confidently and with enjoyment. Interesting activities promote enthusiasm and encourage them to enjoy a wide variety of indoor and outdoor activities, together with an effective balance of adult led and child initiated tasks, enabling children to respond well to the high expectations of the staff. This lays an excellent foundation for learning in later years. In Years 1 to 6, emphasis is placed on the core subjects enabling pupils to achieve well in national tests and to gain entry into selective schools.
- 3.10 The curriculum is planned effectively and schemes of work provide continuity and progress in learning, giving equality of access and opportunity to all pupils. Pupils with SEND are given good extra support and help where necessary, both within the classroom and by individual lessons. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is provided by class teachers across subject areas, where they are challenged to reach their full potential whether academically, artistically or in sport.
- 3.11 Throughout the junior school, the National Curriculum is enhanced by extra subjects such as French and Latin and the curriculum is well matched to the ages and abilities of the pupils. Religious education is a prominent feature in the school in line with the school's aim of providing an education in the Catholic ethos. The curriculum is further enhanced by specialist teaching in music, P.E, French and Latin. Subject co-ordinators plan and implement the schemes of work ensuring continuity for each subject area but as some staff hold many subject responsibilities the designated time is insufficient to enable them to monitor the provision fully. ICT

is taught throughout the school and used occasionally in cross-curricular links, notably in science, history and art and a control technology day is held for Years 5 and 6. ICT is also used effectively to support pupils with SEND. All pupils have equality of access to the curriculum and the opportunity to learn and make progress.

- 3.12 A wide range of extra-curricular activities is available during the week. Activities occur after school on three days, alongside clubs at lunch time and before school. These include Spanish, orchestral rehearsals, sport, art and crafts and nature studies. Plays and musicals enrich pupils' creative experiences and sporting activities and competitions for both boys and girls contribute well to pupils' physical and personal development.
- 3.13 A programme of educational visits, including a residential trip to an outdoor centre for Year 6 and to a National Trust property for Years 5 and 6, extends the curriculum well and provides good learning experiences. Visitors to the school provide wider experiences and the variety offered is valued highly by the pupils.
- 3.14 Links with the local community are excellent. Pupils and staff were joined by a member of the town twinning committee on a recent visit to France. Pupils participate in a number of activities organised by the Rotary club and each year pupils visit two local nursing homes to sing carols, and invite them to school for assemblies which promotes social awareness. The school has good links with the parish. The parish priest visits the school for special assemblies and celebrates the school masses. Occasionally he attends RE lessons by invitation where his specialist input is valued.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.15 The quality of teaching throughout the school is excellent.
- 3.16 The teaching enables all pupils to make good progress in the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and in the development of new skills. It fully supports the school's aim in promoting a positive attitude towards learning so that children enjoy coming to school and acquire a solid basis for lifelong learning.
- 3.17 In the EYFS, the coordinator and staff carefully monitor the setting and the progress of each child, working together with parents to support children needing help with learning and development. The education programmes are effectively monitored, and regular self-evaluation takes account of the views of staff and children. The effective use, and good management of, resources, including those outdoors, lead to excellent outcomes for all children.
- 3.18 Thorough planning throughout the school, which is based on an understanding of the needs of all pupils, promotes good progress. A significant number of excellent lessons were seen and in these the pace was brisk and a variety of teaching methods were used, enhanced by the imaginative and effective use of resources. Pupils are challenged to produce work of a high standard and to extend themselves by applying their knowledge in unfamiliar or more demanding contexts. For example, pupils in a science lesson watched a programme showing how particles reacted under different conditions before acting this out in the playground, and in a literacy lesson pupils used adjectives and adverbs to describe facial expressions, using these to write an imaginative ending to a story. In less effective lessons the pace is often too slow, or the input by the teacher is too prolonged, resulting in a loss of concentration and interest. A feature of most lessons is the clarity of the teacher's explanations, their excellent subject knowledge, good management of time

and skilful questioning. This encourages pupils to think independently and to apply their knowledge and skills in a variety of ways.

- 3.19 Pupils of all ages are encouraged to work independently but they are also given many opportunities to work in pairs and groups. Year 6 worked cooperatively in a PE lesson developing their tennis skills and Year 2 worked as a group ordering the months of the year. Opportunities for research using ICT are more limited.
- 3.20 Since the previous inspection, provision for pupils with SEND has improved. A SENCO has been appointed which has helped provide additional support for less able pupils. The use of standardised testing has been further developed in the junior school and particular attention has been given to the teaching of boys in order to help them achieve better, particularly in reading and creative writing.
- 3.21 Pupils' work is assessed effectively by a variety of methods. Marking of written work by teachers is appropriate, with the best being thorough and accompanied by helpful comments on how to improve. Individual assessments are used effectively in Reception and Year 1 to monitor progress and support planning. In the junior school nationally standardised tests alongside internal assessments are used to monitor pupil attainment and set targets for improvement. This enables the school to identify pupils who require support and those who will benefit from a more demanding curriculum.
- 3.22 In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a minority of pupils felt that staff were not fair in their use of sanctions. Scrutiny of the school's policy and records showed that the school's system of sanctions is appropriate and applied consistently, and in discussion with pupils they stated that sanctions were rarely needed and generally fair. A minority also felt that their homework was not effective in helping their learning and in discussion said that they make better progress when homework involves research projects using the internet rather than reinforcement of classwork.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

- 4.1 The personal development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 The school is successful in its aims, as articulated in the school's mission statement, to instil a strong sense of self-worth in the pupils and to teach them to respect themselves and each other as unique and equally valuable members of God's universal family. Pupils are happy, polite, helpful and well behaved.
- 4.3 Developments since the previous inspection include the use of Year 6 pupils as ambassadors for the school on Open Mornings, enabling them to develop further their interpersonal skills and display their undoubted pride in their school. The use of circle time has been extended as a means of enabling pupils to be more personally involved in the management of their own behaviour and that of others.
- 4.4 The quality of pupils' spiritual development is excellent. A strong Catholic ethos underpins the life of the school. Pupils are encouraged to help prepare the liturgies and take part in the many worship opportunities offered at school. Pupils from Years 3 and 5 prepared a liturgy on the Stations of the Cross at Easter time, Year 6 prepared the liturgy at Candelmas and pupils regularly lead classroom worship after morning registration. These are significant opportunities for collaborative working, aiding the spiritual development of their fellow pupils in the school.
- 4.5 In the EYFS, the pupils cooperate well and enjoy their learning. They happily share resources, take turns and organise themselves effectively, becoming more independent by the end of their Reception year. Children trust and respect their teachers and relate well to each other. They are provided with secure foundations for their future well-being in all aspects of their learning. They respond to school life with great enthusiasm and enjoyment.
- 4.6 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is greatly aided by thoughtful, comprehensive and stimulating personal, social and health education (PSHE) and RE programmes of study. Pupils show a good understanding of religions other than Christianity and a highly appropriate section of the Year 6 PSHE programme sensitively prepares pupils for the sometimes difficult transfer to a new school for secondary education.
- 4.7 Throughout the school, the pupils' moral development is excellent. They have a keen sense of right and wrong and each class produces their own set of rules to enable all members of the class to be kind to each other so they can learn in a friendly and supportive atmosphere. A mock trial overseen by a barrister enabled Year 6 pupils to understand the workings of the legal system and the legal repercussions of breaking the law. Pupils leave the school with respect for the norms of good conduct and high moral values.
- 4.8 The pupils' social development is excellent. Pupils display kindness and good manners, and their behaviour towards one another and towards adults is friendly and courteous. They are spontaneously appreciative of the successes of other pupils. Pupils are able to develop their social responsibility through their roles as school council members and their responsibilities in class which aid the smooth running of day to day activities. Year 6 pupils are very enthusiastic about the buddy system and perform their voluntary duties diligently. They help younger children

during playtime and enable Reception children to settle in to school and monitoring play equipment.

- 4.9 Pupils' cultural development is excellent. The pupils show a good understanding of their own and other cultural traditions. The 'Take One Picture' project adopted by the whole school has broadened pupils' artistic awareness and generated much enthusiastic discussion on aspects of the picture. Pupils are aware of their responsibilities to those less fortunate than themselves and much charity work is undertaken to raise money for local, national and international causes including charity work for the homeless, and for the work of CAFOD in empowering families in the developing world to achieve sustainable futures. A large sum of money has been raised in recent years for the British Heart Foundation in the biennial skipathon.

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

- 4.10 The quality of pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.11 The provision supports the school's aim to give pupils the opportunity to reach their potential within a caring family atmosphere.
- 4.12 Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils themselves are excellent. The creation of the role of a teacher with pastoral responsibility has enabled staff to develop further their pastoral skills and this person provides an important point of contact other than the head for pupils, staff and parents with pastoral issues.
- 4.13 In the EYFS, the provision for the children's well-being is excellent. Key persons model, promote and support the standard of behaviour expected, and give priority to children's happiness, health and safety, so that they form strong relationships with one another and with adults, and develop their independence.
- 4.14 Pupils throughout the school are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles and eating habits. This was seen in lessons and healthy eating habits are further reinforced by the choice of food offered for lunches, which comprises a wide variety of interesting and nutritious dishes.
- 4.15 The school has a comprehensive and effective anti-bullying policy and pupils were happy that any bullying would be dealt with promptly.
- 4.16 The behaviour of pupils in class and around the school is excellent. Pupils are encouraged to develop their own ideas of what constitutes good behaviour by devising their own sets of class rules. These and general school rules are displayed prominently in all classrooms and pupils are clear on the need for adherence to them for the benefit of all members of the class. When setting targets, pupils are encouraged to set themselves a pastoral target alongside the academic ones and these are displayed in the classroom. In discussion pupils felt that rewards and sanctions were appropriate and fairly applied.
- 4.17 The school has excellent provision for those pupils with SEND and has established a suitable plan to improve further the educational access for these pupils.
- 4.18 Pupils' views are very effectively sought through the school council, consisting of two elected representatives from each class from Years 2 to 6. Classes decide on the range of issues to be presented to the council for discussion. Pupils displayed a

high level of respect for each other in open debate, for example, on the merits of their proposals for future charitable fundraising.

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

- 4.19 The arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent.
- 4.20 In the EYFS, the setting's contribution to children's well-being is excellent. Key persons develop positive relationships with them, ensuring each child feels safe and able to share their concerns. High priority is given to health and safety through favourable staff ratios and risk assessments are regularly reviewed and effectively implemented.
- 4.21 Throughout the school, including the EYFS, safeguarding arrangements are thorough. All staff receive regular and appropriate training in child protection with thorough induction for new staff and volunteers. As a result staff are aware of the action to take if issues arise and the governors are active in monitoring the arrangements and their annual review is comprehensive. The Designated Persons for child protection receive extra training as required and those staff and governors involved in recruitment have received safer recruitment training.
- 4.22 All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. Fire practices for the whole school are held half termly and detailed records are kept. Thorough risk assessments are undertaken for all areas of the school site, for school-based activities and for all off-site activities and visits. The risk assessment files are maintained to a high standard and are accessible to all staff. Any health and safety concerns are raised at the weekly staff meeting and governors conduct an annual health and safety inspection of the site.
- 4.23 The first-aid room is well equipped and adequate for the needs of sick and injured pupils. A number of staff are qualified in paediatric first aid and all staff have undergone basic first-aid training. Staff are very well informed about individual medical needs and conditions.
- 4.24 The admission and attendance records are suitably maintained and archived.

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 board of governors provides successful oversight of the school in line with its aim to create a safe environment for pupils to achieve their true potential within an inclusive community, centred on Christ's teachings. The board includes parents, members selected by the diocese, local community members and staff representatives providing the school with a wide range of expertise and interests tailored to the needs of the school. Each governor is a member of one of the committees which oversees the finance, education, child protection and resources of the school. They also attend two full board meetings each term. Governors further ensure that they have a clear understanding of the needs of the school by attending social functions, school celebrations, religious festivals and meetings with staff. The effective induction of new governors, combined with on-going appropriate training, ensure governance of a high standard with high expectations.
- 5.3 Governors are fully aware of their responsibilities for educational standards and are kept well informed. The chair of governors regularly visits the classrooms and the ethos and curriculum committee meets with the curriculum leaders to discuss new initiatives ensuring that educational standards are maintained. They recognise and meet the need for careful financial planning to ensure that they can make the investment in staff, accommodation and resources necessary to provide high quality education for pupils. The comprehensive and ambitious school development plan has been carefully costed and each step is reviewed carefully through discussion with the staff.
- 5.4 The governors are effective in discharging their responsibilities for safeguarding. They review the school's health and safety procedures, including child protection, annually and one governor has undergone safer recruitment training.
- 5.5 Parents' views are regularly sought through annual questionnaires. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection in 2010 but the need to provide more time for subject coordinators to monitor the teaching and learning still remains. The governor with responsibility for the EYFS is a regular visitor to the setting, allowing the board to be effectively involved with the provision for the younger pupils.

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

- 5.6 The quality of leadership and management is excellent.
- 5.7 Leadership strongly supports the aims of the school enabling children to fulfil their potential within a safe and secure environment. The strong spiritual leadership ensures that pupils develop an understanding of the Catholic faith and respect for its religious and moral values, as well as tolerance of other races, religions and cultures than their own.
- 5.8 The senior leadership team (SLT) work well together and have created a strong ethos within the staff to provide excellent opportunities for the pupils both through the curriculum and a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. All policies are

carefully thought out and regularly reviewed. Excellent safeguarding arrangements have regard to official guidance and a rigorous child protection policy applies to the whole school, including the EYFS. Meticulous recruitment procedures are firmly in place and the checks to ensure the suitability of staff are carried out. Arrangements are strengthened through a thorough staff development programme including induction for new staff and volunteers, which covers clear procedures for child protection, health and safety, first aid and the creation of careful risk assessments for all activities.

- 5.9 The leadership and management of the EYFS are excellent, demonstrating clear vision and an understanding of high standards. In line with a recommendation from the previous inspection, the EYFS departmental developmental plan has been incorporated into whole school planning. Policies and procedures necessary for the efficient management of the setting, including those for safeguarding, are implemented rigorously and external agencies provide extra support where appropriate. The capacity for sustained improvement is excellent. The EYFS co-ordinator and the Reception teacher carefully monitor the setting and the progress of each child, working together with parents to support children needing help with learning and development. The education programmes are effectively monitored, and regular self-evaluation takes account of the views of staff and children. The effective use and good management of resources, including those outdoors, leads to highly successful outcomes for all children.
- 5.10 The curriculum of the junior school is overseen by curriculum coordinators whose role has been developed since the previous inspection to allow more frequent monitoring of teaching and learning. They observe lessons, check on pupils' progress with regular assessments and standardised testing, analysing them to predict future attainment and identifying areas for additional support. However, insufficient time is currently allocated to make this monitoring fully effective in maintaining the high standards of attainment within all areas of the school. Co-ordinators hold highly successful curriculum evenings so parents can understand clearly how their children are taught in the major subject areas.
- 5.11 The SLT is committed to raising academic standards and in response to a recommendation from the previous inspection a specialist teacher has been appointed to support those pupils with SEND, and this, alongside the extra training provided for the staff has resulted in quick identification and excellent support for these pupils. The most able pupils are also being supported by the staff and differentiation is clear in all areas of teachers planning. All staff offer high quality extra-curricular activities and with the guidance of the SLT provide, excellent social and personal development for the pupils.
- 5.12 The successful implementation of a comprehensive system of assessment which measures ability, attainment and progress is an example of the determination of leadership and management, at all levels, to improve standards and target areas for development.
- 5.13 Training relevant to the school's educational priorities and the needs of individual staff members has been identified through a comprehensive system of staff appraisal. Areas identified have included helping boys with their reading and integrating further the use of ICT within the curriculum. The staff value highly both their appraisals and the training opportunities offered.

- 5.14 The school is assisted by an array of volunteers, mainly parents who give freely of their time, and their input is a great asset to the school. The SLT has provided imaginative challenges for the pupils such as an extensive whole school art project which is only possible by using this extended network of help. Parents often assist with activities providing valued expertise and allowing for greater diversity.
- 5.15 Links between the school and parents are excellent and strongly support the academic and personal development aims of the school, aspiring to provide a happy, safe and secure environment in which every child is encouraged to achieve their full potential, within an inclusive community. The school maintains a constructive relationship with parents and handles any concerns with care, in accordance with its published procedures. The head teacher and teaching staff are available on site at the beginning and end of every day so that parents can approach them to raise concerns or queries; as a result the vast majority can be dealt with swiftly and informally.
- 5.16 The strong partnership between staff, pupils and parents, helps give the school its character and strength, offering many open and varied channels of communication and actively encouraging parents to liaise closely with teaching staff and play a part in the education of their children.
- 5.17 Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires indicate that parents are overwhelmingly positive and supportive of the school, and are very happy with the education their children receive. They agreed that the school provides a welcoming and safe environment and commented favourably on the accessibility and the very high calibre of the staff, the high standards expected of pupils, and the support given to pupils to achieve these.
- 5.18 Parents of pupils and prospective pupils are given access to all relevant information about the school. Weekly newsletter and many communications are now sent electronically to all current parents and prospective parents. School are currently reviewing how they report to parents. Three written reports are sent out each year to keep parents informed of their children's attainment and effort in all subjects. These reports are detailed, presenting a clear picture of pupils' achievements.
- 5.19 Staff are proactive about approaching parents to discuss any concerns and devote time to developing their partnership with parents. The head has an 'open door' policy for parents and pupils which is well used. Parents concerns are investigated and findings reported back promptly.
- 5.20 The school works alongside the parents who form the PTA to develop a special relationship and support network. The pastoral care teacher offers time to parents as well as pupils in need.

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