



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**LYONSDOWN SCHOOL**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Lyonsdown School

Full Name of School	<b>Lyonsdown School</b>
DfE Number	<b>302/6006</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>312591</b>
Address	<b>Lyonsdown School 3 Richmond Road New Barnet Hertfordshire EN5 1SA</b>
Telephone Number	<b>020 8449 0225</b>
Fax Number	<b>020 8441 4690</b>
Email Address	<b>enquiries@lyonsdownschool.co.uk</b>
Headmistress	<b>Mrs Lynn Maggs-Wellings</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Graham Gorton</b>
Age Range	<b>3 to 11</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>216 (178 girls; 38 boys)</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Girls aged 3 to 11; boys aged 3 to 7</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>3-5 (EYFS): 57    5-11: 159</b>
Number of Day Pupils	<b>Total: 216</b>
Number of Boarders	<b>Total: 0</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection dates	<b>29 Jan 2013 to 01 Feb 2013</b>

## PREFACE

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

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

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

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

Ofsted monitors the work of independent inspectorates, including a sample of inspections, and you can find the latest evaluation of the work of ISI on the Ofsted website.

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 and other 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**

Mrs Elizabeth Coley

Mr Ian Griffin

Mrs Lynda Boden

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS/HMC school)

Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Lyonsdown School is a co-educational day school, educating girls from the ages of three to eleven, and boys from the ages of three to seven. It is situated in a Victorian building which was once a private residence in Barnet, on the northern outskirts of London. The school was established in 1906 and was privately owned until 1973. Since then, it has been run as a charitable trust, administered by a board of governors. The current headmistress was appointed in September 2005. Since the previous inspection, the school accommodation has been extended and refurbished so that the whole school is now accommodated on one site. New outdoor equipment has been provided for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), including the 'Lyonsdown boat', and the school garden has been developed to provide for outdoor and sensory learning.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection, there were 216 pupils on the roll, of whom 57 were in the EYFS for children under the age of five, with 18 of those attending part time. Sixty-two pupils are in Years 1 and 2 and 97 are in Years 3 to 6. One hundred and seventy-eight pupils are girls and 38 are boys. Thirty-five pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), mainly in the area of dyslexia or numeracy development, and receive specialist support from the school; no pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Sixteen pupils use English as an additional language (EAL) but none needs formal specialist support. The cultural mix of the pupils reflects the local community in which the school is situated. Most pupils come from professional or business families and live within a ten-mile radius of the school. From the results of standardised tests, the ability profile of the school is above the national average.
- 1.3 The school aims to provide a happy and secure environment where pupils can thrive and achieve personal excellence through a broad curriculum which prepares them to take up places in schools that are best suited to their needs. It strives to develop pupils' self-esteem and confidence to participate in a range of activities, their independent thinking skills, their expression of thoughts, feelings and opinions, and their creativity and imagination. The school seeks to be inclusive and respectful of the unique value of each individual and to encourage pupils to play their part in the family life of the school and in the wider world, becoming caring individuals who develop their own human values and learn respect for the feelings of others. It aims to work in partnership with parents and provide a high degree of pastoral care.
- 1.4 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the EYFS and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

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

School	NC name
Pre-Reception	Nursery (age 3-4)
Reception	Reception (age 4-5)

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

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

- 2.1 Lyonsdown School provides a happy and secure environment where pupils can thrive, in fulfilment of its aims. The quality of pupils' learning, achievement and progress over time is good; children in the EYFS make excellent progress from their starting points. Throughout the school, all pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, develop knowledge, understanding and a range of skills effectively across many subjects, complemented by exemplary behaviour and excellent attitudes to learning. Their academic success is supported by a broad curriculum, including a comprehensive list of trips and visits, although the amount of time allocated to physical education (PE) within the curriculum is relatively low and curriculum planning is variable in quality, although good overall. Extra-curricular clubs are a popular feature with pupils. The strong quality of teaching enables most pupils to achieve well in relation to their ability. Teachers' subject knowledge is particularly effective in motivating pupils to give of their best. Since the previous inspection, teaching styles have been broadened to include more opportunities for practical, investigative and independent study and to give greater challenge for more able pupils; however, the latter part of this recommendation is not yet fully resolved.
- 2.2 From the youngest, pupils' personal development is excellent. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is high, and they are confident and articulate. They respect each other and collaborate very well. The pupils have a strong awareness of their responsibilities to others less fortunate and they fully appreciate their own and others' cultural heritage within this multi-cultural community. The responses of pupils to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very positive about almost all areas of their school experience, and these views were confirmed in formal and informal discussions during the inspection. Their excellent relationships with each other and with the staff are supported by the outstanding pastoral care shown by teaching and non-teaching staff. A strong feature of the school is the support older pupils give younger ones. Day-to-day practice in the safeguarding of pupils is good, and welfare, health and safety policies and procedures are strong.
- 2.3 Governance is good and the new composition of the board indicates energetic and enthusiastic oversight, including that of the EYFS. Financial provision for accommodation and human and material resources is strong. Systems for monitoring compliance with recruitment processes have not been sufficiently robust. All staff have had criminal record checks, but some difficulties existed with the recruitment of a few staff through agencies. However, these issues have been resolved recently. Strong senior leadership and the dedicated staff team provide a clear vision for the future, and development planning, appraisal and in-service training are all undertaken effectively. A recommendation from the previous inspection to clarify the roles and responsibilities of senior leaders has been completed, but another, to implement the regular monitoring of teaching and learning, has not been fully resolved. Links with parents and carers are of a high quality throughout the school and a very large majority of those who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed their support for all aspects of school life.

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

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

2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:

- ensure that, in the future, the contract set up between the school and any employment business supplying staff requires the business to provide a notification that all recruitment checks have been undertaken on the staff supplied, and that this notification is received before the member of staff begins work at the school [Part 4, paragraph 20(2)(a) and (d), under Suitability of staff and proprietors; and, for the same reason, Part 3, paragraph 7(a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety].

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

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

1. Ensure that all lessons meet the needs of more able pupils.
2. Further develop the monitoring of teaching and learning so that it is carried out more regularly and more rigorously.
3. Reduce the variability within curriculum planning so that all subjects indicate how they will assess and meet the needs of all pupils.
4. Re-consider the allocation of time to PE within the curriculum for Years 1 to 4.



### **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 pupils are well educated in line with the school's aim to develop pupils' independent thinking skills, their expression of thoughts, feelings and opinions, and their creativity and imagination. Pupils develop their understanding, knowledge and skills effectively in all subject areas and in their extra-curricular activities.
- 3.3 The pupils are articulate and can converse confidently about different topics. They listen to each other and their teachers carefully, their reading is fluent and their extended writing in subjects such as history and religious education (RE) is effective. Their numeracy skills are strong and are applied well in other curriculum areas, such as science. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills are good, as are pupils' reasoning skills, which they use well when finding solutions to problems. Their debating skills are of a high quality. However, on occasion, pupils are not given the opportunity to think for themselves and this particularly limits the progress of the more able pupils. The expression of pupils' creativity is seen in the high quality of art and English story-writing, in particular. Pupils' levels of achievement are supported well by strong teaching and their own outstanding attitudes to learning.
- 3.4 Boys aged seven and girls aged eleven achieve highly as they leave the school, with almost all pupils transferring to their first choice of school. Approximately two-thirds of pupils gain places at either maintained or independent schools with high standards of entry, and, at the age of eleven, a few are awarded scholarships. Pupils achieve well individually in a range of speech, drama, dance and instrumental music examinations, as well as participating at a high standard in local festivals. Good results are gained by teams in PE against schools locally, especially in gymnastics, athletics and netball, and football for under-seven boys. The school successfully enters pupils into the Independent Schools' Association regional and national art competitions, and other pupils achieve well in local, regional and national competitions in chess. The school gains annual gold, silver and bronze awards from the Children's Flower Society for its garden, flower beds and vegetable-growing. Other successes include primary mathematics and science awards, and individual performances on television and stage. All of these achievements make a considerable contribution to pupils' personal development.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2009 to 2011. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national tests at the age of eleven have been high in relation to the national average for girls in maintained primary schools, and the 2012 results were better. In 2009, the English results were exceptional. This level of attainment indicates that pupils make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability, and this is confirmed in inspection judgements as assessed in lesson observation, pupils' written work and curriculum interviews with them. More able pupils achieve well in most lessons because staff ensure that the tasks they are given challenge them at their own level of ability. Those with SEND or EAL are well supported in class by their teachers and teaching or learning support assistants when necessary; for example, pupils with SEND were able to develop their understanding of life for women in World War II by analysing propaganda posters with extra support, which

extended their vocabulary well. Individual help in extra lessons given by learning support specialists also enables these pupils to make good progress.

- 3.6 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They apply themselves very well and persevere in given tasks with enjoyment; their concentration is of a high level. They fully involve themselves in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils co-operate with each other exceptionally well, and work with the same interest and determination individually. The presentation of their work is consistently neat. Their behaviour is exemplary. The high-quality relationships that they share with each other and with their teachers have a very positive impact on their achievement.
- 3.7 In the EYFS, all children, including those with SEND, EAL and the more able, learn and develop extremely well, making excellent progress. The youngest children learn to count and recognise colours. The children in Reception know their letter sounds, using these to build simple words, and they understand basic addition and subtraction. They are able to use computers independently, confidently using a graphics programme. The children make rapid progress in acquiring basic skills and become confident, creative learners, co-operating very well with each other and expressing themselves clearly, confidently and with enjoyment.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.9 The curriculum is effective in its coverage of the requisite areas of learning and fulfils the school's aim to provide a broad curriculum which prepares pupils for schools that are best suited to their needs. It makes a strong contribution to pupils' academic achievements. The school follows the National Curriculum, broadened with RE, personal, social, health and moral education (PSHME) and French. The time allocated to most individual subjects is suitable, but in PE and games the time allocation is relatively low in comparison to that typically found for children in Years 1 to 4. A few parents commented that they would like more time given to sport for these year groups and inspectors agree.
- 3.10 Curriculum documentation is variable, but good overall. The best includes information on the opportunities which will be taken for assessment and how the needs of all pupils will be met. Since the last inspection the school has made some progress in meeting the needs of more able pupils and training has taken place for teaching staff. Provision for pupils with SEND is strong. These pupils are identified and parents are involved as early as possible. If pupils need individual or small group support, they are withdrawn for lessons with specialist staff. They are given individual education plans with focused targets which are reviewed twice a year, involving parents and pupils. The arrangements for those pupils at an early stage of EAL are also strong; a specialist teacher withdraws them from class for individual help with their acquisition of English or gives in-class support, so that their proficiency improves quickly.
- 3.11 Throughout the school, classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards which make a significant contribution to learning. In ICT lessons, pupils cover a wide range of skills, many of which support learning in other subjects. New initiatives such as the use of on-line resources in mathematics and the use of laptops in form rooms are beginning to be integrated into the curriculum. The library is well-stocked with a good range of fiction and non-fiction books and pupils report that they use it regularly. The curriculum is further enriched by outings that supplement the work

undertaken in the classroom; recent visits include trips to the theatre, museums and places of worship. Residential visits for pupils in Years 5 and 6, where activity and leadership skills are developed, are considered highlights by them.

- 3.12 The academic curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The current after-school programme, which is appreciated by pupils, ranges from arts and crafts, debating and chess, to scrabble, drama, gymnastics and football. In pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a very small minority of parents raised a concern about the range of extra-curricular activities, especially with the provision for the lower years. Inspectors agree with their view that there is little choice up to the age of seven. An inclusive policy for school productions and participation in musical activities gives breadth to and supports the overall provision, which makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development.
- 3.13 A comprehensive PSHME programme, including life skills sessions where pupils are taught to respond to emergency situations, enables pupils to gain a good understanding about themselves, and reflects the school's aims and ethos. Links with the community are excellent. Pupils have a deep understanding of others in the local community and the wider world through charity work. 'Community and citizenship' weeks, which are weeks of activities involving local services and businesses, have included visits from the police, dentists and magistrates. Parents and other members of the community are invited into school to share with pupils their skills and expertise in assemblies or lessons. The school actively promotes its diverse community through several links with schools in other countries, such as China, Hong Kong and Thailand. Pupils are very well prepared for transfer to their future schools, ready to take the next step in their education.
- 3.14 In the EYFS, the setting makes excellent provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend, whilst fully appreciating their individual differences. The educational programmes covering the seven areas of learning provide interesting and challenging experiences for all children, including those with SEND and EAL. Children learn and develop extremely well through stimulating play and valuable first-hand experiences, with a wide variety of indoor and outdoor activities and an effective balance of adult-led and child-initiated tasks. The outdoor provision in the Pre-Reception and Reception areas is stimulating and challenging.

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

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.16 Effective teaching encourages most pupils to make good progress and give of their best, in line with the school's aims. Since the previous inspection, teaching styles have been broadened to include more opportunities for practical, investigative and independent learning. The teachers' subject knowledge is invariably strong, and they make good use of a wide range of resources, including ICT. In most lessons, lively and enthusiastic teaching enables all pupils to achieve well. Lessons are well planned with activities which encourage pupils to remain focused. In the best lessons, teachers use questioning well to check on the progress being made. Praise and encouragement are used to good effect, as is humour, and these add to the pupils' enjoyment of the topics being studied. Behaviour is very well managed, lessons are undertaken at a brisk pace and teaching responds effectively to pupils' differing learning needs. Teachers and other support staff are well aware of those pupils with SEND and give strong support to individuals with learning difficulties in lessons to ensure that they make good progress. However, in the few less

successful lessons, more able pupils were not given work that challenged them sufficiently well. On occasion, pupils were not given as much opportunity to think for themselves because discussions were too controlled by the teaching and interactions between pupils themselves or between pupils and staff were limited, so that learning was less rapid.

- 3.17 Assessment procedures are strong and the quality of marking has improved since the previous inspection. Most marking contains encouraging words, and a significant amount gives practical suggestions for improvements which the pupils say are helpful. However, in a small number of subjects, marking was cursory. Pupils are given regular targets to enable them to take some responsibility for, and contribute towards, their own learning. The targets given on their individual education plans for those pupils with SEND are precise and enable them to make good progress. The pupils' attainment is assessed regularly, through the use of a range of standardised tests, particularly in English, mathematics, reading and reasoning, and by using National Curriculum attainment targets. These results are monitored to look for any unusual emerging pattern of attainment, and to identify pupils who may require extra support or those who are more able. Data is generally used well to check that progress over time is as high as it should be for most pupils.
- 3.18 In the EYFS, staff demonstrate high expectations and their enthusiasm engages the children in their learning exceptionally well. Regular analysis of data from assessments, carried out by all staff, is used effectively to plan suitably challenging activities and ensures continuity of teaching, informing staff of the next steps in children's learning. Extra support is given where needed. Staff are well qualified, they are trained in the development of young children and they understand how to promote high-quality learning. Good quality resources, particularly the interactive whiteboards, are used well to stimulate children's imaginations.

## **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 pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 This is a strength of the school and fulfils the school's aims of developing pupils' self-esteem and confidence, and encouraging them to become caring individuals who develop their own human values and learn respect for the feelings of others.
- 4.3 Pupils' spiritual development is strong. They develop their knowledge and understanding of how they affect each other and the wider world extremely well through the PSHME programme. In discussion they offer confident and mature observations about their behaviour and work, and they reflect very well upon the non-material aspects of life. Pupils began a PSHME lesson with an excellent moment of reflection when they considered the positive effect their actions can have in the school and the wider world. They recognise their own strengths and those of others in the community. Knowledge and appreciation of world faiths are excellent. The school offers an education based on the Christian faith which is embodied in the 'five values' of the school. Pupils also understand extremely well the important festivals and events in other religions, celebrating the diversity within the school community. They gain much from first-hand experiences of others in their classes. Pupils develop a strong sense of identity and self-worth through work in RE, art, music and during cross-curricular days, as well as during acts of worship.
- 4.4 Pupils' moral awareness is excellent. They develop a strong set of moral values for themselves from their consideration of the 'five values' which are at the core of the school's aims and discussed, reinforced and celebrated in lessons and in assemblies. As a result, pupils are extremely courteous and well-mannered. During the inspection, pupils held a debate on whether 'children should have to work for their pocket money', which allowed them to gain an excellent understanding of a range of views and to identify and express their own opinions. Pupils' knowledge of ethical and moral issues is developed well through their PSHME programme.
- 4.5 Pupils work very effectively together and their social development is outstanding. All pupils in Year 6 take on positions of responsibility in areas of personal strength. They are on hand to encourage good behaviour when pupils are moving around the school, work with younger children in clubs and support them during break times. They carry out their duties with integrity and a sense of justice and fairness. By supporting others both formally and informally, they are socially aware. This extends to the wider community through charitable works such as collections for local and national charities or when singing carols. The pupils develop an extremely good understanding of the roles of people in public office and the institutions which govern the country through visits from the local police and the mayor, and a trip to the Houses of Parliament.
- 4.6 Their cultural awareness is excellent. Pupils gain a deep understanding of the multi-racial, multi-cultural society of this country. They are exceptional role models for the promotion of tolerance and fairness between different cultural traditions. They relate extremely well to each other on a basis of mutual respect; this was clear in observing their daily routine. Effective opportunities to learn about other cultures arise during the study of indigenous art, world music and in RE, along with the chance to run a French café for parents and friends of the school. Pupils' strong understanding of traditions and backgrounds different from their own is enhanced by

visits to other places of worship and visitors, including parents, who broaden pupils' horizons well beyond the classroom.

- 4.7 The children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent in the EYFS. Even the youngest children are happy to share resources, take turns and organise themselves effectively, becoming more independent by the end of their Reception year. They relate well to adults and each other. They feel safe, and respond to school life with great enthusiasm and enjoyment. All children co-operate very well, enjoy their learning, and make careful choices and decisions. They are well prepared for a successful transition to the next stage of their learning.
- 4.8 When they reach Year 6, the pupils demonstrate exceptional personal development and maturity. They show themselves to be confident and sensible young citizens, ready to tackle the challenges of the next stage of their education and to continue to contribute to society as a whole.

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

- 4.9 The contribution of the arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.10 Teaching and non-teaching staff provide outstanding support and guidance for pupils, fulfilling the school aims of seeking to be inclusive and respectful of the unique value of each individual by providing a high degree of pastoral care. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, pupils were extremely positive about almost all areas of school life, and the arrangements for pastoral care make a significant contribution to their personal development. The ethos of the 'five values' is communicated and reinforced in circle time and assemblies. Staff are excellent role models, and the form teacher takes responsibility for the academic progress and welfare of the pupils, strongly supported by the senior leadership team. The school operates a buddy system for caring for younger pupils, with whom Year 6 pupils spend time both formally and informally as well as helping in after-school clubs; this has a significant impact on personal development. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent; pupils say that they are confident to go to their teachers for any help needed, even though a very small minority indicated this was not so in their questionnaire responses. This support is enhanced by guidance offered by non-teaching staff at lunch and break times. A great deal of information concerning the welfare of pupils is shared between staff as appropriate both formally in staff meetings and informally at other times, and a clear system for recording information operates in order to monitor personal issues.
- 4.11 Pupils' physical needs are met adequately through using the outdoor space on site as well as local facilities, and they understand the importance of regular exercise. They also have an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy eating. Pupils develop good habits through a varied and nutritious lunchtime menu and at the breakfast club, a recent initiative appreciated by parents. They are encouraged to eat well by the supervising staff in the dining room, and parents are given clear guidance about the content of snacks.
- 4.12 The school's disciplinary approach emphasises the encouragement of exemplary behaviour, with a clear set of rules which is understood and considered fair by pupils, and where relationships are very strong. The school's policy is clear that bullying is not tolerated and pupils say bullying is rare and they feel safe in school. Pupils and parents consider that effective discussion usually allows behaviour to be modified and issues to be dealt with quickly and constructively before the problem

escalates. Detailed records are kept by staff and the senior leadership team to ensure that issues have been dealt with properly and followed up. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

- 4.13 The school council is an effective forum for listening to the views of pupils. A number of actions have resulted from the suggestions made, including new litter bins for the playground, whole-school activity days and ideas for after-school clubs and activities.
- 4.14 Provision for children's well-being in the EYFS is excellent. 'Key persons' form strong relationships particularly with the very young children and those needing additional support, and encourage them to share any concerns they may have, so developing their independence. Children trust and respect their teachers and relate well to each other. Staff act as excellent role models, giving clear guidance on behaviour. Children are helped to understand that healthy eating, personal hygiene routines and exercise are important.

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

- 4.15 The arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils are good.
- 4.16 The school's concern for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils strongly supports their personal development, in line with the aims of the school. In the EYFS, a high priority is given to the safety of children and minimising health and safety risks. Staff deployment ensures that children are appropriately supervised at all times. Daily checks are made to ensure that potential hazards are responded to promptly. Staff are trained in paediatric first aid and other areas of health and safety. Throughout the school, the policy and day-to-day procedures for safeguarding of pupils are strong. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, are trained in all aspects of child protection, according to their various levels of responsibility. The training is carried out by the local social services department, with which the school has good relationships. A governor has been appointed to oversee child protection on behalf of the board, and the full board carries out its responsibility of the annual review of the policy. However, its implementation as far as recruitment checks are concerned has not been robust in respect of a few agency staff. All necessary measures have been taken to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. A fire risk assessment is undertaken by an external agency, fire procedures are clearly visible around the school, and fire practices are held regularly. Fire exits are kept free of obstruction and their signage is clear throughout the school.
- 4.17 Throughout the school, health and safety policies and procedures are effective, regularly reviewed and implemented well by all staff, meeting the school's aim of providing a happy and secure environment. A health and safety committee regularly meets to review any concerns within the school and clear methods are used to identify, record and reduce any hazards which arise. Risk assessments have been undertaken in all areas of school life, including those for external visits. The arrangements for those pupils who are ill or injured whilst at school are of high quality and strong provision is made for the welfare of those who have SEND. The attendance and admission registers are completed accurately, suitably maintained and stored for three years.

## **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 board of governors strongly administer and oversee the work of the school, helping to secure the school's aim of providing a happy and secure environment in which pupils can thrive. The governors, who bring a wide range of interests and expertise to their role, have organised themselves into four sub-committees; the finance, education and resources sub-committees meet termly, as does the full board. The legal sub-committee meets as and when required. Several governors are new in post and the new board brings an energy and enthusiasm to its responsibilities. Previous governors endeavoured to keep abreast of their legal responsibilities for monitoring the school's compliance with regulations by attending a range of development opportunities, and further training is already being organised for the new board. Whilst the previous oversight of recruitment checks has not been completely successful, the board does carry out the annual review of the safeguarding policy and assure themselves that the related child protection duties have been undertaken efficiently. Individual governors take the lead on behalf of the board in various aspects of the school, such as child protection, health and safety and the EYFS. The EYFS governor takes a keen interest and makes regular visits to the setting, reporting back to the full board so that they are well informed about, and effectively involved in, the provision.

5.3 The board is involved extremely closely in financial and strategic planning, as evidenced in the recent improvements to, and refurbishment of, the accommodation. It also ensures that material and human resources are provided to meet the needs of the pupils effectively. It has a clear vision for the future of the school, understanding its strengths and areas for development well, as indicated in the minutes of its meetings. The chair keeps in constant contact with the headmistress and governors have formal and informal discussions with staff, giving guidance for improvement as appropriate. The headmistress and the bursar compile regular reports which give the board a good insight into the working of the school, its achievements and its challenges. In addition, subject leaders are invited to attend the education sub-committee meetings in turn to enlighten it about educational standards. Board meetings enable future development to be fully discussed, thus providing stimulus for growth and improvement.

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

5.4 Leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, are good.

5.5 Throughout the school, the effective quality of the educational experience offered and the excellent personal development of the pupils demonstrate that the school fulfils its aim of providing an environment where pupils can thrive, develop their self-esteem and confidence, and become caring individuals who develop their own human values. The senior leadership team, supported by the middle leadership team and the strong, committed group of teaching and non-teaching staff, has a clear vision for the next steps in the school's development. This vision is



demonstrated in well-written curriculum and strategic development plans to which the staff have made an effective contribution. Evaluation of previous plans has been clear and reflective.

- 5.6 Since the previous inspection, senior leadership has been re-organised and its responsibilities have been clarified. Management processes have been developed and carried out in response to the recommendations at that time. The monitoring of teaching and learning is undertaken through the scrutiny of pupils' work, the checks on curriculum planning and lesson observations undertaken by senior leaders. However, the latter are not undertaken sufficiently regularly or rigorously to ensure that the quality of teaching is more consistent, and this restricts its impact on raising pupils' achievements still further. An effective appraisal system for all teaching staff operates biennially and is linked successfully to the internal and external training programme and the development plans. In the EYFS, the supervision of staff is undertaken regularly and leaders have good oversight of the educational programmes and quality of welfare, ensuring that pupils are safeguarded in a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment. Throughout the school, all policies, including those which relate to the EYFS, have been recently reviewed concerning content and implementation, and all staff have been suitably trained for their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Communication amongst staff, both formal and informal, about academic and pastoral matters is continuous. This ensures that the needs of, and outcomes for, the pupils are always at the forefront of the actions of the staff.
- 5.7 Whilst a few staff recruitment checks at the time of their appointment have not been meticulously carried out, criminal records checks have been undertaken on all staff. The checks undertaken by agencies were not recorded in writing for the school by the agency involved and the school's contract did not detail this requirement. However, all contracts and details have now been completed and accurately recorded on the single central register. The premises and resources therein are used to best advantage and they make a positive contribution to the pupils' learning experiences. The grounds have been imaginatively developed, including the areas designated for the EYFS, and provide particularly good opportunities for pupils to develop their interests in the outdoor life such as gardening, and to enjoy their learning experiences and recreational play. The school runs extremely efficiently due to the care and expertise of all those who work to support the pupils through the administration, catering and maintenance departments. The high quality of the bright and colourful displays, particularly those in art and in the EYFS, celebrates pupils' achievements, and reflects the effort they put into their work and the pride they have in their school.
- 5.8 Throughout the school, a strong and effective partnership with parents, carers and guardians is promoted, aiming to establish and maintain extremely good communication between school and home. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate extremely positive parental approval of most aspects of provision. A large majority of parents are very satisfied with the education and support provided for their children. In particular, parents commented favourably on pupils' safety, happiness, behaviour, pastoral care and receiving timely responses to questions. A very small minority of parents raised concerns over the quality of information regarding children's progress. On investigation, inspectors agree that there is a degree of variability in the quality of reports, where some give very little subject-specific information about the progress that pupils have made in their knowledge, understanding and skills. The best reports are extremely helpful, detailed and set well-defined targets.

- 5.9 Most parents are very satisfied with the way the school handles any concerns. Parents with an issue or query regarding their child may contact the school at any time, as well as attending formal meetings at which they can discuss their children's progress with staff. Detailed records are kept of any complaints, which are handled swiftly and with care. The school maintains many open and varied channels of communication and actively encourages parents to liaise closely with teaching staff and play a part in the education of their children. Links between the school and parents strongly support the academic and personal development aims of the school. Daily interaction with staff and the use of emails and text messaging enhance effective communication.
- 5.10 A very small minority of parents raised a concern in their responses to the questionnaire about the encouragement given to be involved in events and other aspects of the school's work. Inspectors do not agree with their views. Parents have a significant involvement in school life and their considerable contributions to curriculum activities and outings are welcomed by staff. The Friends of Lyonsdown give many opportunities, to those who wish, to be involved in various events and activities, including running the second-hand uniform shop, organising parties for the EYFS children, participating in the rota for the travel plan for pupils and raising extra funds for the school through social events.
- 5.11 The headmistress regularly updates the website with information from a newsletter sent as a hard copy to inform parents of school events, and the annual magazine celebrates pupils' achievements. All relevant information for parents of pupils and prospective pupils, including school policies, is available on the school's website as well as being available at the school. An informative prospectus states the school's aims, ethos and expectations, and comprehensive handbooks for parents are available. Parents receive helpful information at the beginning of each term regarding the topics their children will be studying.
- 5.12 All parents of children in the EYFS who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed their strong appreciation of the support given by staff concerning their children's progress and care. Effective links are established between staff and home in order to provide appropriate support for each child's learning and development, including through external agencies where necessary. Children's files are easily accessed by parents and excellent use is made of each child's 'special book' which gives evidence of progress and achievement. Parents are given helpful information about their child's progress in the twice-yearly reports and on parents' evenings.

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