



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
ST JOSEPH'S IN THE PARK**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

St Joseph's In The Park

Full Name of School	St Joseph's In The Park
DfE Number	919/6099
Registered Charity Number	1111064
Address	St Joseph's In The Park St Mary's Lane, Hertingfordbury Hertford Hertfordshire SG14 2LX
Telephone Number	01992 581378
Email Address	admin@stjosephsinthepark.co.uk
Head	Mr Neil Jones
Chair of Governors	Mrs Janet Goldsmith
Age Range	3 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	161
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (82 boys; 79 girls)
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS) 34 5-11: 127
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	24 Jun 2014 to 27 Jun 2014

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 March 2011.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. 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', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. 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 Ruth McFarlane	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Angela Alsop	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Mr Malcolm Gough	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Debbie Buckenham	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 St Joseph's In The Park is a school for boys and girls from the ages of 3 to 11, which was founded in 1898 and has been in its present, Hertingfordbury location since 1947. In 2006 the school became a charity and a limited company, overseen by a board of trustees, who act as governors. The school is divided into three sections: Pre-School, comprising the Nursery classes; Infants, consisting of Reception, Year 1 and Year 2; and Juniors, for Years 3 to 6.
- 1.2 The school aims for pupils to develop good manners and behaviour, to pursue excellence in all areas and to gain personal responsibility. It seeks to foster academic, creative and physical potential, while encouraging both individuality and a sense of place within the school 'family' and the wider world. It sets out to create a happy, nurturing environment that enables pupils to thrive, presenting opportunities for them to develop self-belief and confidence.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection 161 pupils were on the school roll, with approximately equal numbers of boys and girls. Of these pupils, 34 (14 boys and 20 girls) were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), of whom about a third attended part-time. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs and the school identifies a further twenty-three pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Some pupils who have SEND are taught, from the age of seven, within parallel provision known as The Woodlands Learning Support Centre ('Woodlands'), providing dedicated support for them to develop in English and mathematics. None of the pupils is at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language. Very few are from minority ethnic groups. The ability profile of the school is above the national average.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Nursery	Nursery (3 years)
Kindergarten	Nursery (4 years)
Infant 1	Reception

Infants and Juniors

School	NC name
Infant 2	Year 1
Infant 3	Year 2
Junior 1	Year 3
Junior 2	Year 4
Junior 3	Year 5
Junior 4	Year 6

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The pupils' achievement is excellent. It is underpinned by high quality teaching and a vibrant curriculum. Pupils of all ages, including those in the EYFS, are very well educated and make excellent progress, developing the academic, creative and physical skills promoted in the school's aims. Pupils taught in Woodlands make strong gains in their learning and rapid progress from their individual starting points, because of the bespoke support they are given. Other pupils with SEND are also astutely supported and perform well. Most teaching contributes fully to the pupils' high levels of achievement, In the very few instances of less successful teaching, the pace slows because tasks are not fully understood, or teaching methods are not best suited to enabling pupils to achieve at their highest levels. Opportunities are limited for the key elements of the best teaching to be demonstrated to other teaching staff in order to share good practice. Sport, music and drama enrich the excellent curriculum, enhancing pupils' learning and development. The pupils' exemplary attitudes underpin their learning, enabling most to secure places at the senior school of their first choice. Pupils achieve a good proportion of scholarships to selective independent schools.
- 2.2 The excellent pastoral care provided encourages pupils to learn and develop, and contributes significantly to their outstanding personal development. The warm, family atmosphere, in which pupils develop good manners and excellent behaviour, reflects the school's work to create a happy, nurturing environment that enables the pupils to thrive, presenting opportunities for them to develop self-belief and confidence, in accordance with the school's aims. Highly effective relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils themselves are a particularly strong feature of the school, matched by an excellent level of attention to welfare, health and safety. In the school's caring environment, pupils develop as confident young people who are thoroughly prepared for the next stage of their lives.
- 2.3 Excellent governance, leadership and management ensure that the ethos and values of the school are successfully maintained. Governors visit the school regularly and communicate widely with leadership and other staff. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Improvements to the structure of leadership have been made since the previous inspection. Roles are all implemented thoroughly, but some job descriptions lack clarity or overlap. The EYFS provision has improved and the recommendations from the previous inspection, for the EYFS and elsewhere, have been fully met. Development is well planned and the leadership provides clear educational direction. Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires indicated that most are happy with the education provided and the care that their children receive.

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. Clarify job descriptions so that they enable successful implementation and effective monitoring of initiatives.
2. Share the excellent practice evident in the best teaching to enable all to reach this standard.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils are very well educated and successful in their learning across the curriculum and in their activities. Their achievement has improved since the previous inspection. The school successfully fulfils its aim to foster academic, creative and physical potential, enabling pupils to thrive.
- 3.3 Children in the EYFS immensely enjoy their learning because activities planned for them spark interest. They are encouraged to think and be creative so that they make rapid progress. They learn to concentrate well and enjoy investigating and working independently. They co-operate well with each other, such as when answering a question about whether whales lay eggs. Younger children can recognise two- and three-dimensional shapes and can write their own name. Older children can count up to 100 and backwards from 30, and write complete sentences using full stops, capital letters and question marks correctly. By the time they enter Year 1 they can read, using their excellent phonics knowledge to help them.
- 3.4 Pupils throughout the other year groups in the school listen exceptionally well to each other. They speak and read with confidence. Infant pupils demonstrated excellent developing writing skills in their fictional diaries of a firefighter. Pupils acquire excellent mathematical skills and are able to use these to very good effect. For example, junior pupils worked on complex tasks using map locations and angles to calculate distances. Skills in scientific investigation and in information and communication technology (ICT) are well developed. Logical and reflective thought is successfully developed, such as when pupils considered what makes a good friend.
- 3.5 Pupils in Woodlands make excellent progress against the increasingly challenging goals in their individual target forms (ITFs). Other pupils with SEND and the most able pupils also achieve very well through the close tracking of their progress and the demanding work set for them.
- 3.6 Pupils achieve well in extra-curricular activities, especially in those that overlap with the main curriculum. The pupils' physical skills develop well. Many represent the school in team games played against other schools. The under-9 netball team consistently achieves success in competition, and every girl in the class is part of the team. Creative skills are evident in the pupils' artwork on display around the school and in the work of the art and digital photography clubs. Pupils regularly take part in music and drama productions, including creating excellent props for the staging of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.
- 3.7 When they leave the school at the age of eleven, most pupils transfer to the senior school of their first choice. Pupils achieve a good proportion of scholarships to selective independent schools, for academic, all-round or sporting performance.
- 3.8 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2011-2013. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. Results in national tests at the age of 11 have been above the national average for maintained primary schools, with steady improvement over this period. A few parents indicated in response to the questionnaire the view that their children are not making good

progress at school. Inspection evidence from observation of lessons, work scrutiny, discussion with pupils and study of the school data confirms that pupils make at least good, and often excellent progress, across all year groups and abilities in relation to pupils of similar ability. In particular, pupils with SEND, including those in Woodlands, demonstrate good understanding, and their workbooks show rapid and considerable improvement in response to the teaching help they receive.

- 3.9 Pupils thrive in the school's atmosphere of hard work, enjoyment and effort. Their attitude to their work is excellent and they take pride in both their achievements and those of others. They sustain high levels of concentration, and happily collaborate with each other.

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

- 3.10 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.11 Pupils follow a vibrant and exciting curriculum, and benefit from a wide range of subjects which includes all the requisite areas of learning and is well suited to their needs. This accords with the school's aims and is an improvement in quality since the previous inspection.
- 3.12 The educational programme for children in the EYFS is excellent, enabling the majority to exceed the expected levels of development for their age. Activities are readily adapted on a day-to-day basis to meet individual children's needs with precision. Specialist teaching in swimming, ballet and music further enhances children's learning and development. The recommendation of the previous inspection to improve the outside area for Reception-age children has been implemented very well. Consequently, these children are able to learn inside and out in a well-planned, stimulating, all-weather area, through activities which cover all the areas of learning.
- 3.13 In other year groups, priority is placed on English and mathematics but all other areas of learning are well covered. Linguistic skills are enhanced by provision for French. Many opportunities are available for pupils to develop their investigative and practical skills, making good use of their environment. Art, music and drama are well catered for, and often link together, for instance in drama and musical productions. History, geography and religious education (RE) are all sufficiently included. Sports opportunities are plentiful. The school has made excellent progress with the recommendation of the previous inspection to improve ICT, by expanding provision to ensure good access for classes, and through investing in technology in classrooms.
- 3.14 Pupils with SEND are extremely well provided for. Their progress is closely tracked and appropriate work is set, both in mainstream classrooms and in Woodlands, where specialist tuition provides support in English and mathematics for those pupils identified with specific needs in these areas.
- 3.15 An exciting new initiative, 'Be, Do, Think', to develop pupils' personal and independent thinking skills, has been introduced, beginning with information for parents and training for staff. Currently, planning for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good overall; it is in the process of review by middle management, although there is currently no clear job description for this role.
- 3.16 The curriculum is enriched substantially by a significant number of trips to places such as museums, stately homes, outdoor pursuits centres, theatres and local

government buildings. Visiting speakers teach the pupils about the wider world, in areas such as the fire service, Parliament and e-safety.

- 3.17 In questionnaire responses, a few parents were of the view that the range of extra-curricular activities offered by the school is limited. Inspectors found that provision is good and includes art, sporting, cookery, gardening and ballet clubs. The on-site swimming pool and woodland are used to the full to enhance the pupils' understanding of, and responsibility and respect for the natural environment, as well as the development of skills, for instance in art, science and sport. Excellent care is provided before and at the end of the school day. Good community links have been established both locally and internationally, particularly with Zambia, in accordance with both the school's educational and its charitable aims.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.18 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.19 Teaching has improved since the previous inspection, and promotes the pupils' palpable enthusiasm for learning and their excellent achievement. Most teaching draws on strong subject knowledge, includes highly effective planning and skilful questioning, and fosters pupils' application, resulting in high levels of achievement in English, mathematics and many other subjects. This meets the school's aims well. A wide variety of effective approaches is employed to engage pupils and much regard is given to their broader educational experience and enrichment. Teaching very effectively encourages accuracy and volume of work in carefully presented books, and clearly encourages a strong work ethic in pupils.
- 3.20 In the EYFS, all staff have an excellent understanding of how young children learn and develop, and they facilitate progress through exciting and stimulating activities inside and out. A cookery session included preparing and tasting a wide variety of fresh fruits from all over the world. The use of vocabulary such as 'smooth', 'rough', 'sweet' and 'sour' to describe the fruits extended children's language well. Staff have high expectations and encourage children to think things out for themselves. Observation and assessment systems are thorough and identify children's next stages of learning. Children with SEND are identified promptly and supported extremely well.
- 3.21 Throughout, teaching makes excellent use of the school environment and resources. Information and communication technology is used effectively. Staff know the pupils and their needs very well. An effective marking policy is in place which uses a colour-coded system that pupils understand well. They much enjoy the 'tickled pink' and 'green to grow' highlighted comments for encouragement and development respectively. As a result, marking is very successful and pupils were able to explain their understanding of the guidance given and how it helps them to improve.
- 3.22 Teaching fosters interest and independence. A comprehensive record system enables staff to track the pupils' progress, with data used to assess and inform future planning. The work of Woodlands is thorough and effective, including for any pupil with a statement of special educational needs. Consequently, pupils make excellent progress. A recommendation of the previous inspection was to identify appropriate success criteria when producing ITFs. These are now very thorough, include appropriate target setting and are reviewed frequently. They form highly effective working documents, used in full consultation with parents and, when required, with local agencies.

- 3.23 Teaching encourages all pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils have good opportunities to investigate and experiment, and to work independently. For example, older pupils showed that they could use good investigative skills to conduct experiments in science to ascertain the validity of recognised scientific laws. In the very few instances of less successful teaching, the pace slows because tasks are not fully understood, or teaching methods are not sufficiently well suited to enable pupils to achieve at their highest levels. Few opportunities are provided for the key elements of the best teaching to be demonstrated to other teaching staff in order to share good practice.
- 3.24 In responses to the questionnaire, a few parents were of the view that the more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Inspectors found that the school has met the recommendation of the previous inspection and that most teaching includes greater opportunities for higher achieving pupils. A small minority of parents and pupils expressed the view that pupils do not receive appropriate homework for their age. Pupils questioned in discussions with inspectors did not agree. They were able to detail how much homework is expected of them during the week from year to year, and stated that they find it useful either as extension work or to promote research and deepen their knowledge of a topic. They felt that there is consistency in its application, and this was borne out in scrutiny of pupils' work.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- 4.2 The pupils' personal qualities develop fully in accordance with the aims of the school. The high standard of this aspect, noted at the previous inspection, has been maintained.
- 4.3 In the EYFS, children develop excellent skills for their future because they benefit from the high standards demonstrated by staff. Children form secure emotional attachments, promoting independence and exploration. They share well, make appropriate choices and co-operate. They are tolerant of each other's preferences, needs and differences, and their excellent preparation ensures they show confidence in moving to the next class.
- 4.4 Across the school, the pupils' spiritual development is excellent. Pupils are highly confident, and they are eager to explain their work and include visitors in their conversations. They are self-aware, proud of their achievements and emotionally mature for their age. They appreciate non-material aspects of life, such as the picturesque setting the school enjoys. Younger EYFS children were entranced when cocoons they had been watching hatched and butterflies emerged. Throughout the school pupils demonstrate considerable enthusiasm, such as when performing on stage and the sports field. As a result of the school's initiative to promote education for social responsibility, linking geography, history, art, and design and technology, pupils show high levels of spirituality for their age, contributing well towards the school's achievement of its aims in this regard.
- 4.5 The pupils' moral development is excellent. They have an extremely well-developed moral and ethical sense and clearly distinguish right from wrong. Excellent behaviour is evident in pupils of all ages and all pupils are courteous and polite, to each other and to adults, both in and out of lessons. Older pupils showed thoughtful and highly articulate responses in a PSHE lesson when discussing the physical and mental implications of drinking alcohol.
- 4.6 Pupils show an excellent standard of social development. They demonstrate outstanding courtesy and consideration. The house system promotes opportunities for leadership roles. Those with allocated responsibilities, such as head boy and head girl, sports captains and house captains, are conscientious in their duties, contributing to the school community exceptionally well. In response to the pupils' questionnaire, a small minority of pupils indicated that they would like more responsibilities in Year 5. Responsibilities are available for all junior pupils but inspectors agree with pupils that, at the time of the inspection, they focused more on Years 4 and 6 than Year 5. Pupils throughout the school acknowledge a social responsibility to others in school and in the world beyond. They are active in helping those less fortunate than themselves through fund raising, such as their efforts to support communities in Zambia. Pupils have a thorough knowledge of principles of good citizenship, and a firm grasp of fundamental British values of democracy, respect and tolerance. These principles are often reinforced through educational visits or visitors to the school. Year 6 visited a food bank during a fortnight focusing on social awareness. Pupils are supportive and encouraging of each other; they listen to and respect one another's views and demonstrate excellent team spirit.

- 4.7 The pupils' cultural development is excellent. They understand and respect other faiths and cultures. Through the PSHE and RE programmes, pupils develop a knowledgeable insight into the values and beliefs of others. Through the many musical, artistic and drama opportunities, their understanding of Western cultural traditions is developed to a high degree. A Year 5 project on fair trade enabled pupils to show understanding of the lives of people in developing countries.
- 4.8 Pupils have a very high standard of personal development by the time they leave the school.

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

- 4.9 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.10 As at the previous inspection, the high quality of care provided accords fully with the school's aim to create a happy, nurturing environment that enables pupils to thrive. Under the direction of clear pastoral leadership, all staff take responsibility for the pupils in their class, providing highly effective support and guidance. Informal discussion of pupils' needs is supplemented by more formal weekly meetings, during which staff consider notes recorded by lunchtime supervisors. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire expressed the view that their children are well looked after at school.
- 4.11 In the EYFS, each child has a key person, which helps children to develop positive relationships. These staff work closely with parents to ensure that all needs are met and smooth transitions takes place between all three EYFS classes and into Year 1. Children consequently are enabled to feel safe.
- 4.12 Throughout the school, excellent relationships are established between staff and pupils, and amongst pupils themselves. Pupils can identify an adult in school to whom they can talk, should any concern arise.
- 4.13 The school successfully promotes a healthy lifestyle. Healthy choices of hot and cold food are available for all meals. Food is nutritious and plentiful, and pupils participate in range of exercise and sports each week. Children in the EYFS are helped to understand the significance of a healthy lifestyle through topics on diet studied in class and through physical exercise.
- 4.14 In response to the questionnaire, a small minority of pupils expressed the view that sanctions are not fairly applied. The many pupils with whom this was discussed did not agree. Inspectors judged that the school's policy to promote good behaviour is clear and the system is fair. Its successful implementation is evident in the pupils' exemplary behaviour. Pupils report that incidents of bullying are rare and are sure that if they did occur, they would be promptly and effectively addressed. The school's effective anti-bullying policy takes account of pupils with SEND. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for these pupils.
- 4.15 A small minority of pupils indicated in response to the questionnaire that the school does not ask for or respond to their opinions. Inspection evidence does not support this view. There are regular pupil surveys and a suggestions box for pupils to make their views and requests known, and these are addressed by the elected school council.

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

- 4.16 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.17 In the EYFS, staff take great care concerning children's welfare. Excellent systems for the ongoing assessment of risk and a clear understanding of the school's health and safety routines assist staff in ensuring children's safety. A suitable number of staff are trained in paediatric first aid and ensure that the children's medical needs are met.
- 4.18 The standard of arrangements for welfare, health and safety has improved since the previous inspection. Throughout the school, all requirements, including those for safeguarding children, health and safety, and fire practices, are met and have regard to official guidance. Safeguarding procedures are thorough and all staff are trained at the appropriate level in child protection. The school regards safeguarding and pupils' safety as a high priority and maintains close and effective relationships with local children's services.
- 4.19 All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards, with thorough risk assessments covering all areas of the school. Regular fire drills are held and appropriate records are kept. All staff receive clear guidelines on fire safety and are given regular updates. Electrical testing is comprehensive and is recorded appropriately.
- 4.20 Pupils who are ill or injured are cared for in a suitable medical room and careful records are maintained. An appropriate number of staff receive training in first aid. A health and safety committee meets every half term and carries out its role meticulously, keeping detailed minutes of all meetings and reporting to governors.
- 4.21 The admission and attendance registers are suitably maintained and correctly stored.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Governance has improved since the previous inspection due to enhanced training and understanding of its role. The current structure ensures a valuable blend of experience and expertise, and supports all members in fulfilling their dedicated roles in overseeing various areas of the school's work, and the overall responsibilities of a governing body. Governors have ensured that the recommendations from the previous inspection have been met and their support has aided the excellent progress that the school has made. They are highly successful in providing the stimulus and support to ensure an excellent education and standard of personal development for pupils, in line with their needs and the school's aims. They ensure that the school benefits from high quality staff, accommodation and resources.
- 5.3 Governors are aware of their legal responsibilities and regularly review all policies and procedures, including the annual review of those for safeguarding, and safer recruitment, welfare, health and safety. All have received training in child protection and many have attended other relevant courses. Monitoring the work of the school, through reports and visits, is highly effective, including in the EYFS. Comprehensive records are kept of the monitoring visits. This ensures that governors have excellent insight into the daily experience of the pupils and staff. Governors communicate effectively with leadership and other staff, and ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

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

- 5.4 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.5 Senior leadership staff have ensured that this aspect has improved since the previous inspection. They ensure that the school fully fulfils its aims and that all required policies are implemented highly effectively, including those for health and safety and for safeguarding. The excellent personal qualities of the pupils and the high level of their achievements result from the ethos and clear direction that are created and the example set by the senior leadership.
- 5.6 Leadership and management staff at all levels, including heads of department, contribute fully to improvements and are fully supportive of new initiatives underway. Job descriptions are in some cases unclear, such as for the co-ordination of PSHE and the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, linked with the new 'Be, Do, Think' personal development programme. The lack of clarity does not aid effective monitoring, either of current provision or the new initiatives. However, in practice, care is taken to ensure that the pupils' needs are fully met and an excellent quality of education achieved and maintained. The school's aims to foster academic, creative and physical potential, while encouraging both individuality and a sense of place within the school 'family' and the wider world, are met to a very high degree.

- 5.7 Excellent EYFS leadership has promoted the meticulous safeguarding of children, the promotion of a safe, stimulating and welcoming environment, and a thoroughly monitored educational programme. Consequently, the setting has continued to improve since the previous inspection. Closer links between the two Nursery classes and Reception have resulted in a consistent approach to day-to-day planning and assessment. Performance of the required EYFS leadership roles is clear, although there is some overlap of responsibilities identified in job descriptions between the EYFS and Infants department. Regular EYFS staff meetings and a cycle of appraisal ensure that staff receive appropriate professional supervision. All EYFS staff contribute to the self-evaluation and development planning that help drive future development.
- 5.8 Throughout the school, a range of high quality staff have been recruited. The leadership has a sharp focus for future and continuous improvement. Priorities are identified through self-evaluation and discussion with all staff and governors. A well-established performance management system identifies professional development needs for staff. It includes effective monitoring of teaching and learning. Robust marking and assessment policies ensure that staff are able to identify pupils' levels of progress.
- 5.9 All staff, as well as temporary staff, volunteers and governors, receive the appropriate training in safeguarding and in welfare, health and safety. Procedures for safer recruitment are followed when new staff and governors are appointed, and the required checks are recorded accurately on the single central register. Induction procedures for new staff are thorough and staff are well qualified.
- 5.10 Links with parents are excellent. Throughout the school, parents who responded to the questionnaire were very satisfied with most aspects of the school's provision. They were particularly appreciative of the high standards of behaviour achieved. Parents spoke very highly of the family atmosphere in the school and value the fact that they can communicate readily with staff, who, they report, know their children extremely well. The 'News from the Park' bulletin posted on the school's website and the use of social media enhance communication further.
- 5.11 In the EYFS, parents work closely with staff to enable the children to settle quickly and happily into the setting and to secure prompt additional support when necessary. Staff share children's developmental records with parents regularly, successfully encourage learning at home and work effectively with external agencies.
- 5.12 A good range of detailed information prior to pupils' entry to the school enables parents to swiftly become involved with their children's education. Each term the parents of current pupils receive an informative programme of study from each class teacher, setting out their children's academic programmes. Parents' seminars are offered on occasion, when new initiatives are being introduced, such as the recent introduction of the 'Be, Do, Think' programme. Parents agree that they can easily access regulatory and other information such as policies from the website.
- 5.13 Parents' relationships with the school are highly constructive. A parents' fellowship meets regularly, to which all parents belong and in which a representative is identified for each class to disseminate information and help organise fund-raising and social events.
- 5.14 A suitable complaints procedure is available should parents have any serious concerns that cannot be resolved in the first instance by the form teacher. A few

parents disagreed that concerns are dealt with promptly. Inspection evidence from checks on records and discussion with staff and parents did not substantiate this view.

- 5.15 A few parents indicated the view that they receive insufficient information about their children's progress. Records show that parents receive ample information, including two detailed reports each year upon which they are invited to comment. The reports are supplemented by two parents' evenings. Parents are also invited to be involved in the life of the school by supporting matches, assemblies, sports and speech days, as well as helping with school productions. Strong links with former pupils of the school further enrich its family atmosphere, and include a termly magazine to which parents, staff and pupils contribute.

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