



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION  
ST FAITH'S AT ASH SCHOOL**

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## St Faith's at Ash School

Full Name of School	<b>St Faith's at Ash School</b>
DfE Number	<b>886/6059</b>
Address	<b>St Faith's at Ash School 5 The Street Ash Canterbury Kent CT3 2HH</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01304 813409</b>
Email Address	<b>info@stfaithsatash.co.uk</b>
Headmaster	<b>Mr Lawrence Groves</b>
Proprietor	<b>St Faith's at Ash School Limited (Wishford Schools group)</b>
Age Range	<b>2 to 11</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>232</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (116 boys; 116 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>2-5 (EYFS): 65    5-11: 167</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Sarah Reynolds</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Boys and Girls</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>26 Jan 2016 to 29 Jan 2016</b>

## PREFACE

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

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

This is the school's first inspection by ISI. It was last inspected by Ofsted in January 2012.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the proprietor, 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 William Ibbetson-Price	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Caroline Goodsman	Team Inspector (Head, ISA school)
Mrs Sally Ward	Team Inspector (Head of Department) IAPS school)
Mrs Linda Donowho	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 St Faith's is a co-educational day school for pupils aged 2 to 11. It is a proprietorial school founded in 1987. The current owner, St Faith's at Ash School Limited, part of the Wishford Schools group, acquired it in September 2012, and provides governance through the sole director who is supported by an advisory board. The school is centred around a Victorian villa located near the centre of the village of Ash in Kent. It has approximately five acres of grounds, which provides space for playing fields and a swimming pool, as well as for some purpose-built school premises. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), for children aged two to five, is located in its own buildings within the school campus, and has access to its own outdoor play spaces as well as to the school's grounds.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide a warm, welcoming and happy environment in which pupils can develop into aspirational, self-disciplined and confident learners and so live up to the school motto "I can and I will". It seeks to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that allows its pupils to make the most of their individual talents and skills. It strives to produce independent learners with enquiring minds, a strong moral sense of purpose and a genuine concern for others.
- 1.3 The school was last inspected by Ofsted in January 2012, since when there has been a change in ownership and a new headmaster appointed, along with a new bursar and business manager. There have been significant changes in the senior leadership team and a great deal of investment in the school, including the complete refurbishment of much of the school and many new resources installed, such as interactive whiteboards.
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection there were 232 pupils on roll, 116 boys and 116 girls. Of these 65 were in the EYFS, 42 of whom attended part-time. The school has two classes for each year group from Reception upwards, but there are currently three classes in Year 5. Pupils come predominantly from business and professional families who live within a few miles of the school. The majority of the pupils are British, with a range of minority ethnic groups also represented, reflecting the multi-cultural population of East Kent.
- 1.5 The ability profile of the school is well above the national average. The school has identified thirty-five pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), nine of whom receive additional learning support. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Eighteen pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) but none requires support in learning English.
- 1.6 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 The school is highly successful in meeting its aims. Pupils are well educated and their levels of achievement are excellent overall, across the curriculum and in other activities. They make an excellent start in the EYFS and develop a positive attitude towards learning, which stays with them as they move through the school. Pupils are articulate and confident, and work well individually and with others. All pupils, including those with SEND or EAL and the more able, make good progress and, in most lessons, these pupils are given appropriate work and support. Most pupils gain places at independent and maintained senior schools that have a high standard of entry, and several win scholarships. The curriculum covers all the required areas of learning and pupils of all ages enjoy a range of extra-curricular experiences. Whilst investment has recently been made in resources for information and communication technology (ICT), its use does not always sufficiently support pupils' learning across the curriculum. Pupils benefit from excellent teaching by well-qualified and experienced staff who know their pupils well. Staff in the EYFS are skilled in identifying and developing children's interests, and in fostering their natural curiosity, although opportunities for independent learning outside are limited for children in Reception.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils respect others and their different beliefs and views. They show a clear understanding, appropriate to their age, of the key British values. Pastoral care is excellent and pupils feel valued and well cared for, and have a range of staff they can turn to should the need arise. All pupils, including those in the EYFS, develop into confident and considerate young people who are very well prepared for the next stage in their lives. Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves are warm and respectful. The pupils' behaviour is outstanding at all times. The school council enables pupils to express their opinions, which are listened to by the school and usually implemented. Arrangements for welfare, health and safety are excellent, and safeguarding, including safer recruitment, is secure. Lunches are appetising and nutritious, offer a good range of choice, and include fresh fruit and vegetables.
- 2.3 Governance is excellent, and the director has effective oversight of the school, including the EYFS. Regular visits to the school and communication with senior managers ensure that he has very good insight into the day-to-day workings of the school. Prudent financial management has allowed investment in resources and school buildings. Leadership and management are excellent and provide clear educational direction, although monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning by middle managers is not yet fully effective to ensure that any issues are identified and resolved. The teamwork of the staff is extremely strong, and management processes such as appraisal and professional development are effectively linked.

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

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

2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

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

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Further develop the role of subject leaders so that they monitor the quality of teaching and learning more effectively.
2. Expand the use of ICT across the curriculum so that it more effectively supports pupils' learning.
3. Develop more outside opportunities for independent learning and research for children in Reception.

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

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 The outcomes for children in the EYFS, including those with SEND or EAL, are excellent. Those children who need additional help are appropriately supported by experienced staff. High priority is given to ensuring that the needs of every child are fully met, and that they acquire a love of learning. Throughout the EYFS, children are active learners who pursue their ideas creatively through purposeful play and exploration. The children make rapid progress relative to their individual starting points. As their language develops children become increasingly articulate, involving others, including adults, in their conversations. In the Nursery, children begin to recognise letters and sounds, and children in Reception adeptly use their secure knowledge of these to begin to read and write. By the end of Reception they are confidently able to write imaginative sentences and read fluently. Number recognition and understanding begin in the Nursery, and Reception children add and subtract within 20 and recognise numbers to 100. They develop a secure understanding of mathematical concepts and solve simple problems, for example using their understanding of symmetry to plan and make pizza. Children enjoy their time at school and participate enthusiastically in the full range of activities. By the end of Reception, the vast majority have attained all the Early Learning Goals and many have exceeded them.
- 3.3 Throughout the rest of the school pupils achieve at a very high academic level, while at the same time developing excellent skills in a range of other activities. This is in line with the school's aims of providing a broad curriculum that allows its pupils to make the most of their individual talents and skills. Pupils have very well-developed listening and speaking skills and can use their extensive vocabulary to express themselves coherently in a variety of situations. Older pupils in an English class showed excellent understanding of noun and verb phrases and were able to produce their own complex sentences. Their ICT and mathematical skills are also highly developed and from a young age they are able to understand concepts and apply these to a range of situations, as seen in an ICT lesson where pupils were using a programme to control a mobile telephone. Pupils are fluent readers and can scan text effectively for relevant information. They are creative, as demonstrated in artwork around the school and in a rehearsal for the house music competition in which they played a variety of instruments and sang.
- 3.4 Outside the classroom, pupils enjoy and achieve highly in a range of activities both individually and as teams. Every year a number of pupils gain very good grades in speech and drama and instrumental music examinations, and the school choir has won at a local music festival. The school's sports teams have enjoyed notable successes, including both boys' and girls' teams winning a local football tournament. The school offers a range of extra-curricular clubs, which means that pupils of all ages can explore and discover activities in which to succeed, from scuba diving, fencing and robotics to cooking and sewing.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2012 to 2014. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in national tests at the age of 11 have been excellent in relation to the national average for maintained primary schools. This level of attainment, as confirmed in lesson observation, the examination of pupils' work and curriculum

discussions with them, indicates that pupils make good progress throughout the school in relation to pupils of similar ability, from their arrival as eager and curious EYFS children to their departure as mature and confident members of Year 6. Pupils are highly successful in entrance examinations to local grammar or independent schools that have a high standard of entry, with a number gaining scholarships or awards. Pupils identified as having SEND or EAL make equally good progress as a result of the quality of the support they receive both within the classroom and individually with specialist teachers. The more able are offered suitable challenge beyond the classroom, but the level of challenge offered within lessons is more variable.

- 3.6 Pupils have an extremely positive attitude towards learning. They settle quickly to tasks, listen carefully to instructions and then work exceptionally well both individually and in groups. Pupils work co-operatively, listening respectfully to the ideas of their peers but not being afraid to volunteer their own suggestions. For example, in a history lesson for older pupils, they worked in small groups preparing a topic on the Stone Age for presentation to the class. Pupils put considerable effort into their work and take great care and pride in its presentation; this was seen in a wide range of work across all subjects and years. They leave the school with an excellent work ethos and well-developed study skills that equip them for further success at senior school. All pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that they feel they are making good progress.

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

- 3.7 The quality of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.8 In the EYFS, the broad and well-balanced curriculum is carefully planned to make excellent provision for all areas of learning, generally using both indoor and outside areas effectively. The creative use of resources provides exciting opportunities for learning. There is a well-judged balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities, encouraging independence and imagination. For example, older Nursery children enthusiastically dug for pretend gold and silver treasure in the outdoor area. Younger Nursery children excitedly investigated and were fascinated by the feel and the changes in melting ice and happily discussed this with adults and their friends. Many opportunities are provided to develop physical skills, both during physical education (PE) lessons and in outside play, where children use two- and one-seater tricycles, climb, build and explore. Although Reception children have many occasions to develop their physical skills, opportunities to develop their independent learning skills, and to explore outside, are limited. Staff in the EYFS know each child's unique needs extremely well and provide excellent support, ensuring that they are met and enabling children to be ready for their next stage of learning.
- 3.9 Throughout the school, pupils follow a broad curriculum that covers the requisite areas of learning and meets the needs of all ages and abilities. It fulfils the aims of the school, making a strong contribution to pupils' achievements, and is enhanced by good extra-curricular provision. In pre-inspection questionnaire responses, all pupils and almost all parents expressed satisfaction with both the curriculum and the range of extra-curricular activities on offer. Priority is given to mathematics and English, and pupils are set by ability in these subjects from Year 3. Classes to develop further pupils' learning skills are held before school each morning for those who would like extra practice in mathematics, English and verbal reasoning. Other subjects are allocated an appropriate amount of teaching time, and the newly

developed role of subject co-ordinators is helping to ensure that all subjects are considered when the curriculum is discussed.

- 3.10 The development of an ICT room at the school has enabled the provision of specialist teaching in this subject and pupils are fully engaged in programming, both in the classroom and in an extra-curricular club. However, ICT is not used extensively across the curriculum to support pupils' learning. Specialist teaching is also provided in French, and for drama in Year 6.
- 3.11 There are regular lessons in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) and religious education (RE). Pupils learn about relationships, other faiths and key aspects of life in modern British society. Teachers ensure that a balanced presentation of opposing views in the coverage of political issues is given, and the curriculum includes all elements of key British values.
- 3.12 Pupils with SEND benefit from good quality learning support, both within the classroom and through specialist intervention, with support being well matched to cater for their individual needs. The liaison between specialist teachers and form teachers ensures that provision is appropriate and that progress is being made. Pupils with EAL are well catered for within the classroom; subject-specific vocabulary is provided and support from teaching assistants ensures that they understand tasks set. There are a range of extra classes and clubs outside mainstream lessons to promote and support the learning of the most able pupils, including French and ICT clubs. Pupils attend mathematics and other workshops held at local senior schools. However, the quality and effectiveness of extension work within lessons are varied, and pupils themselves described such provision as meaning "more but not harder work".
- 3.13 A range of extra-curricular clubs is available to all pupils and includes ballet, drama and tennis. Choirs are voluntary but well attended. Additional individual lessons in music and in speech and drama take place during the school day. All pupils have the opportunity to experience a wide range of sport and physical activity. The school adopts a 'sport for all' approach and every pupil has the opportunity to represent the school in a sports match at some point in their life at St Faith's.
- 3.14 The curriculum is enriched by trips and visits that provide a wide variety of learning opportunities for the pupils. Year 2 pupils have recently visited The Tower of London, and those in Year 4 are preparing for a geography field trip to Canterbury. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 participate in residential trips at activity centres, and in Year 6 pupils travel to France for a week. There are also regular visits to theatres, places of worship and museums. Strong community links include visiting speakers and representatives from different religions and cultures. The school holds its annual carol service and summer concert in a church nearby, and participation in local sporting events further strengthens community links.

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

- 3.15 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.16 In the EYFS, all members of the caring staff know each child very well and have high expectations of the children. High quality teaching initiates exciting activities both outside and within the classroom, which engages the children in their learning. A strength of the setting is the way in which staff model language and ask open questions, encouraging children to consider, think, and develop their vocabularies and ideas. Baseline assessments, along with careful observations and regular sharing of data, ensure that the progress of each child is monitored closely. This enables intervention either in the form of extra help or additional challenge to be put in place quickly. Staff in the EYFS regularly attend training courses, ensuring that all are knowledgeable about children's learning.
- 3.17 Throughout the school, teaching promotes pupils' progress and supports the aims of the school well. Planning is extremely thorough and takes into account the needs of all pupils. Specialist teaching in several subjects and activities enhances the knowledge and expertise available to pupils. All pupils confirmed in pre-inspection questionnaire responses that their teachers help them to learn and, while encouraging them to think for themselves, also provide individual support when needed. Teaching promotes respect for and tolerance of others, and any political topics are presented in a balanced, non-biased manner.
- 3.18 Pupils benefit from the enthusiasm, commitment and good subject knowledge of their teachers, which fosters their interest and enjoyment at all levels and enhances their learning experience. This was seen in a mathematics lesson where excellent questioning extended pupils' understanding of budgeting for a party. In the best lessons the pace is brisk and purposeful, allowing pupils to make rapid progress. In the few less successful lessons observed, teaching had lower expectations and proceeded at a slower pace, which resulted in less challenge for the pupils, who consequently did not make as much progress. Some lessons observed provided exciting opportunities for pupils to think and work independently or collaboratively and creatively as a team. This was seen in a senior PE lesson, where pupils produced their own choreographed dance routine in groups. Classrooms are well resourced and teachers make good use of books, maps and other materials. All classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards that are used by the teachers, although not always to maximum effect, reflecting a lack of confidence with the equipment.
- 3.19 Marking is of a very high standard. It is consistently thorough, regular and positive, gives clear guidance and sets realistic targets. Pupils say that they value and appreciate feedback, and have an excellent understanding of both its meaning and the resulting opportunities for future progress. Pupils have to respond in writing to suggestions in the marking and this helps them to understand how they can improve. In this way pupils take responsibility for improving their own work. Self-assessment and peer-assessment are also effectively used in many subjects to increase pupils' understanding of their achievement and progress. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to analyse the work of others and suggest ways in which they can develop. Thus, teaching encourages pupils to be independent learners and to think critically. This was seen in an English lesson where pupils had to write their own Greek myth, and then analyse what was good about it and how it could be improved.

- 3.20 Pupils with SEND or EAL are well known to staff, and work for them is tailored to ensure that they receive the support they need in order to progress. Teaching assistants are deployed very effectively in lessons. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, a few parents felt that the most able pupils do not receive appropriate support. Inspection evidence partially supported these views. Staff are fully aware of the needs of these pupils and in most lessons, the pupils are challenged and their learning enhanced. In a few lessons, extension work is limited or offers insufficient challenge. Good levels of purposeful homework extend learning beyond the classroom, and most pupils feel that it helps them to learn.
- 3.21 The school uses a range of assessments to monitor pupils' progress. Results are analysed and stored to enable teachers to identify and address weaknesses and strengths, and to incorporate findings into their lesson planning and teaching methods. Individual targets are set, providing useful personal goals for pupils.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 Throughout the EYFS, children learn to share, take turns and play together happily, learning skills for the future. Caring for others and understanding how they might feel are inherent in the setting. Children are frequently asked for their opinions and ideas, and happily respond with growing confidence. They enjoy having responsibilities such as clearing away their plates and cutlery at lunchtime, helping to set the table at snack time and being the leader in the line. Their independence is encouraged, such as when changing their shoes and putting on their coats to go outside, and they all understand the need to work together to tidy away their games and toys. All this adds to their self-esteem and confidence. Fundamental British values are actively promoted. Older Nursery and Reception children attend assemblies and join with the pupils higher up the school at playtimes, providing them with the opportunity to be part of the larger community and preparing them for transition to the main school.
- 4.3 The quality of the personal development of the pupils is excellent throughout the school and is promoted by strong relationships with staff, a well-developed PSHCE programme of study and a nurturing environment. In accordance with the school's aim, by the time pupils leave the school they are independent learners with enquiring minds and a strong moral sense of purpose. Pupils said in discussions that they feel very well prepared for their transfer to senior schools.
- 4.4 Throughout the school, the pupils' spiritual development is excellent. Pupils explore and develop the spiritual side of their lives effectively through many opportunities provided by the school, such as assemblies and form time, as well as lessons. They develop an excellent awareness of variations in belief and faith as they study different religions, as seen in an RE lesson on Islam. Pupils discuss beliefs and ideas in a mature and insightful manner in their PSHCE lessons. They express their strong spiritual appreciation and enjoyment in creative subjects such as music, drama and art, where they recognise the talents of others as well as themselves. They discuss non-material issues cogently during registration time every morning, as well as using this period for quiet reading and developing organisational skills. Pupils are deeply contemplative when strengthening their knowledge of spiritual matters and value the opportunities for developing their understanding, as seen in an RE lesson in which the importance of reflection was discussed.
- 4.5 Pupils demonstrate an excellent standard of moral development. The prevailing culture within the school is one of mutual respect and tolerance, and pupils have a keen sense of right and wrong. Code of conduct and behaviour policies are well understood and are supported by all. Pupils have a clear understanding of the need for rules in English society, and show respect for democracy and individual liberty, key values which are actively promoted by the school. They have an appropriate knowledge of distinctive English institutions such as Parliament.
- 4.6 The social development of pupils is excellent. They follow the school's values consistently both in their relationships with adults and with each other, and are unfailingly polite, courteous and kind. Numerous instances of care and concern by older pupils for younger ones were witnessed during the course of the inspection. Achievement and success are celebrated around the school, and not least in the

weekly celebration assembly. Pupils of all ages take their responsibilities seriously, by accepting positions such as form captain, and being elected members of the school council and, for older pupils, house and school captains. They welcome these opportunities to develop their leadership skills. This was seen very clearly in rehearsals for the house music competition, which was organised by Year 6 prefects with very little adult input. The strong and warm interactions between age groups are a notable feature of the school. Pupils show enthusiasm and creativity in their ideas for fund raising for local, national and international charities.

- 4.7 Pupils have excellent cultural awareness. They develop a strong knowledge and understanding of their own culture, through their lessons and from geography field trips and visits to museums, art galleries and nature reserves. Respect for all is a consistent theme throughout the school and pupils demonstrate tolerance and understanding of beliefs and practices different from their own. They have a strong understanding of different cultures through the opportunities provided in lessons and assemblies. For example, pupils in a younger class had the chance to dance and listen to music from other cultures. Every year Japanese students visit and teach the pupils about Japanese dance and how to make sushi. As well as celebrating Christmas and Easter, pupils show great appreciation of festivals from other religions.

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

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.9 In the EYFS staff give a high priority to providing a warm environment where trusting and caring relationships ensure that the children are happy, confident and safe. Simple rules with high expectations of good behaviour are understood by all. The key person relationship works well and secures emotional bonds between staff and children. Children are very willing to talk to each other and to adults, including any visitor to the setting, showing that they feel safe at school. Healthy eating, personal hygiene and exercise are promoted throughout the setting, both at lunch and snack times, as well as through discussions at 'circle time'. Children's behaviour is excellent and they are well mannered and polite, both to each other and to adults. Well-managed care routines ensure that the children's welfare needs are met.
- 4.10 In the rest of the school, excellent pastoral support, in accordance with the school's aims, ensures that pupils enjoy coming to school and are happy, and contributes extremely well to the pupils' personal development. In discussions, pupils confirmed that they feel happy and supported at school, and there is always a member of staff they could talk to if the need arises. The school provides counselling sessions from a qualified and experienced professional for any pupil who might experience emotional or mental health difficulties. Registration times provide an opportunity for form teachers to monitor the well-being of their classes, and these were observed to be relaxed, friendly and purposeful. In pre-inspection questionnaire responses, all parents felt that their children are well looked after at school and that they are happy and feel safe. There are excellent relationships amongst pupils themselves and between pupils and all staff, including non-teaching staff, and this helps to increase self-esteem and self-belief. The much coveted 'goldenball' trophy, awarded to those who successfully beat the headmaster at table tennis, is often discussed by pupils. Friendships amongst pupils are caring and empathetic; they are quick to support and understand each other.

- 4.11 The weekly celebration assembly is a time when all successes, academic or personal, can be shared with the whole school, to appreciate all members of the school community and to show that everyone is valued. Headmaster's awards are given in recognition of special achievement, and 'star of the week' awards are given by form teachers to individuals in their class. The explanations of teachers in front of the assembled school ensure that individuals are fully aware of how they have been successful, and all pupils have the opportunity to value and applaud the success of others. The pupils' reaction to the announcement of house point winners indicated a strong sense of house loyalty and pride.
- 4.12 Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of making healthy decisions and enjoy their excellent and nutritious school meals, which are varied, offer a range of choices, and include ample fresh fruit and vegetables. Teachers sit with the pupils to eat to ensure that good use is made of this opportunity to further enhance social skills. Physical exercise is encouraged both at playtime and through the regular PE and games sessions.
- 4.13 There is a very clear system of sanctions and rewards. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire all pupils felt that sanctions are fair, but a small minority felt that rewards are not fairly given. However, in formal and informal discussions, all pupils spoken to said that rewards are given fairly. Inspectors found that stars are awarded for academic achievement and that house points are given for kindness, helpfulness, thoughtfulness and other positive character traits. A further award is given for collecting 100 stars, and pupils are very motivated to achieve this. Behaviour is excellent and sanctions are infrequently required, but pupils feel that the loss of house points is a justifiable sanction for poor behaviour. There is a system, which is clearly understood by pupils, for the action taken when house points are repeatedly lost.
- 4.14 The school has suitable procedures to guard against bullying. Pupils believe that bullying is dealt with appropriately, and they confirmed this in formal and informal discussions with inspectors. They know what to do if they are being bullied and they feel confident that their teachers will deal with bullying promptly and sensitively. The anti-bullying policy is understood by all staff and a clear procedure deals with any incidents. Scrutiny of the bullying log confirmed that bullying is taken very seriously by the school. On the very rare occasions when instances have occurred, they are investigated thoroughly, appropriate action is taken and the outcome is monitored effectively.
- 4.15 In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils said that the school does not ask for their opinions or respond to their requests. However, in formal and informal discussions, all pupils spoke enthusiastically about the role and the successes of school council. One pupil from each class from Year 2 to Year 6 is elected to be a school councillor. The school council meets once a month and shares suggestions that have been contributed by the representatives' peers. Recent innovations which have been introduced as a result of school council requests include a toy shed, target walls, an art sink and some changes to lunch options. For these reasons, inspection evidence did not support the negative responses to the questionnaire.
- 4.16 The school has a suitable plan in place to cater for the needs of pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.17 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.18 These arrangements are in line with the school's aims and make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. In the EYFS, there are excellent systems to monitor the children's welfare, which is very well promoted. Safeguarding is taken very seriously and all staff are vigilant in supporting the school's policies and procedures. Absences are closely monitored. Staff have been trained to recognise radicalisation and extremism, and there are effective arrangements in place to guard against this. Daily checks of potential hazards create a safe, secure environment.
- 4.19 Throughout the school, a high priority is placed on the safeguarding of pupils, and policies and procedures for ensuring this have due regard to official guidance. The commitment of staff to keeping pupils safe is evident in their relationship with them. The designated safeguarding lead for child protection and his deputies have had appropriate specialist training that is kept up to date. All other staff and volunteers have received the required training, and reporting procedures are well known and understood. Records relating to concerns about pupils' welfare are carefully kept and good inter-agency links are maintained.
- 4.20 Health and safety policies and practice are comprehensive, and are regularly reviewed. Appropriate risk assessments are undertaken for different areas of the school, and electrical and other testing is completed regularly. All staff are aware of the role they should play in reporting any hazards. Off-site trips and visits are carefully risk assessed before they are allowed to go ahead. Effective arrangements exist to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. Staff receive appropriate fire training, fire procedures are clear and regular drills are held. There are regular checks on fire safety equipment.
- 4.21 The first-aid policy covers all areas of concern and ensures that the school provides timely and appropriate care for pupils as necessary. First-aid supplies are available, and staff training, including for those who need paediatric qualifications, is regularly updated. The medical area for pupils who become ill during the day has suitable facilities, and arrangements ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils with SEND. A record of accidents is kept accurately.
- 4.22 Admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained and stored for the required period. Attendance registers are taken promptly at the start of morning and afternoon sessions, and any absences by pupils are suitably and promptly investigated.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 Through regular visits to the school and frequent communication with the headmaster and other senior managers, the director maintains a good oversight of all aspects of the school, including educational standards and the EYFS. As a result he is able to effectively discharge his legal and other responsibilities. Since joining the Wishford Schools group, there has been significant financial investment in the buildings and in the provision of educational resources. This has ensured that the school has suitable facilities that enable it to offer a good range of subjects and activities, taught by qualified and experienced staff. The recruitment and retention of good quality staff are given a high priority.
- 5.3 The director has a very good insight into the working of the school. There is a formal system of appraisal for the headmaster and this offers him appropriate support and challenge. The director is heavily involved in development planning, and ensures that targets and stimulus for the continued improvement of the school are identified. This is backed by prudent financial planning to ensure that the school can continue to develop and move forward.
- 5.4 The director, assisted by the advisory board, ensures that the school fulfils its legal obligations to monitor and review child protection policies and safeguarding procedures annually. Health and safety arrangements are excellent, and are also regularly reviewed.

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

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians, is excellent.
- 5.6 Leadership and management in the EYFS are excellent and well supported by dedicated staff who are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Staff contribute to the evaluation and monitoring of the provision, and these systems are comprehensive and rigorous. The staff have received safeguarding training and fully understand their responsibilities. Policies and procedures are updated regularly and staff meet formally and informally to discuss pastoral matters, timetabled events and children's progress. Effective systems for staff supervision and appraisal are implemented, and there are many opportunities for staff to engage in professional development. Positive and effective partnerships have been established with parents, the local authority and other external agencies to ensure that children receive the support they need. Management ensures that children are making at least good progress, and equality, diversity and fundamental British values are actively promoted.
- 5.7 Since joining the Wishford Schools group, there have been significant changes to the leadership and management of the school. At all levels, managers are very successful in ensuring that the school meets its aim of providing a caring environment within which pupils can thrive and grow in confidence. This is reflected in the quality of the pupils' achievements, their excellent personal development and

the high quality pastoral care evident throughout the school. Policies, including those for safeguarding pupils and the safer recruitment of staff, are comprehensive, regularly reviewed and carefully implemented throughout the school. All staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety.

- 5.8 Senior leadership has a clear vision for the future educational direction of the school and carries out effective self-evaluation from which a school development plan (SDP) is produced, which identifies areas for improvement. This is shared with the staff, who make their own suggestions, and the SDP is then agreed with the director. Constant monitoring of the SDP is undertaken and progress recorded. The senior leadership team and middle managers ensure that the ethos of the school encourages respect for others, and democracy is very much in evidence.
- 5.9 Since the previous inspection there has been significant investment in ICT, both as a teaching tool and for pupils' personal research. The recruitment of specialist staff has been carefully integrated into the curriculum and has had a very positive impact upon pupils' achievements in areas such as sport and drama.
- 5.10 Throughout the school, the recruitment of staff is well managed, and procedures for checking staff prior to their appointment are robust and appropriately recorded. A comprehensive handbook gives staff clear and detailed guidance, and an appropriate induction process for new staff ensures that they are well informed of school routines and safeguarding arrangements. Senior leadership conducts regular staff appraisals, which include observing teaching. This is then linked effectively to the training needs of the staff. Subject co-ordinators complete a high quality annual audit of their subjects, which includes lesson observations and a scrutiny of pupils' work. However, this monitoring of teaching and learning is not always fully effective in ensuring that best practice within the school is shared or that less successful teaching is identified.
- 5.11 The school staff are dedicated and hard working, and their excellent teamwork and mutual support demonstrate clearly the family-friendly ethos that underpins the strong leadership of the school. Teaching assistants and support staff make a significant contribution to the success of the school, and are highly valued. All staff are suitably trained, with regular updates, in child protection, first aid, and health and safety so that they meet the needs of all pupils. The very large majority of parents are happy with the quality of the school's leadership and management. The school's buildings and facilities are very well maintained and provide pupils with a pleasant and safe learning environment.
- 5.12 The leadership has worked hard to promote strong links with parents and to provide an open environment where they feel welcome. Parents can communicate with the school in person, through email or by telephone, and in discussion they said that they thought communication by the school is excellent. They are confident that staff know the individual pupil very well and they appreciate the family atmosphere and ethos of the school.
- 5.13 The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed their satisfaction with the information available to them about the school. A wide variety of useful information, including policies, is available to parents of both prospective and current pupils through the school website and within the school. The weekly newsletter includes reports and photographs of major school activities, and a regular article from the chair of the Friends of St Faiths. It keeps parents fully up to date with news and forthcoming events.

- 5.14 In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a very small minority of parents indicated that they are not satisfied with the information given on their children's progress, and inspection evidence partially supports this view. Throughout the school, information about pupils' academic achievement and progress, and their personal development, is clearly set out in short reports twice yearly and a full and detailed report at the end of the year. However, these reports do not inform parents about what their children need to do to improve. Reports are supplemented by parents' evenings three times a year and regular opportunities for informal meetings with staff. In addition to this, curriculum evenings at the beginning of each academic year inform parents about the topics to be covered, and home-school reading records further strengthen the link.
- 5.15 A few parents indicated in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire that the school does not handle their concerns well. Inspectors found that the school has an appropriate complaints policy and procedures are rigorously followed. Detailed records are kept of any concerns raised, the stage at which they are resolved and the action taken as a result.
- 5.16 Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the progress of their children and the life of the school. They regularly help with reading and sport, as well as trips and visits. Parents attend a wide range of events such as sports fixtures, music concerts, plays and assemblies. Form representatives provide an effective link between parents and the school. All new parents are given their contact information and they can be contacted by parents through social media. The Friends of St Faiths organise a variety of social events, such as firework displays and a Christmas fair, to raise funds for additional resources for the school. Parents fully support these events and regularly bake cakes for school charity days.

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