



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION  
ST CHRISTOPHER'S SCHOOL**

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## St Christopher's School

Full Name of School	<b>St Christopher's School</b>
DfE Number	<b>846/6011</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>307061-1</b>
Address	<b>St Christopher's School 33 New Church Road Hove East Sussex BN3 4AD</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01273 735404</b>
Fax Number	<b>01273 747956</b>
Email Address	<b>office@stchristophershove.org.uk</b>
Headmaster	<b>Mr Julian Withers</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Andrew Symonds</b>
Age Range	<b>4 to 13</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>288</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (197 boys; 91 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS): <b>25</b> 5-13: <b>263</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Lianne Morrison</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>09 Jun 2015 to 12 Jun 2015</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 October 2009.

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.

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 and designated safeguarding governor, 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**

Mr Neil Hendriksen	Reporting Inspector
Mr Luke Harrison	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Fiona Thomas	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Dr Wendy Bowring	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 St Christopher's School was founded in 1927 and privately owned. The school occupies a compact site in a residential area of Hove, from where it has operated since 1944. It became a registered limited company and a subsidiary charity of the Brighton College family of schools in 2003. The school is independently governed, with its own board of governors. Its primary aim is to offer a first-class academic education within a supportive family environment, preparing its pupils for successful transfer to Brighton College or other senior schools.
- 1.2 The school has access to playing fields at nearby Glebe Villas, where the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is housed in purpose-built accommodation. Children in the EYFS arrive at the main school site and are taken by bus to Glebe Villas. Since the previous inspection, a new headmaster was appointed in September 2013. Some redevelopment of the main site has taken place and new senior management roles have been introduced.
- 1.3 At the time of inspection there were 288 pupils on roll, of whom 197 were boys and 91 were girls. Of these, 17 boys and 8 girls were in the EYFS. The school is divided into three sections: Lower School includes pupils from Reception to Year 3, Middle School comprises Years 4 to 6 and Upper School is for Years 7 and 8.
- 1.4 Standardised tests show that the overall ability of pupils is above the national average, with a fairly wide spread of abilities represented. Most pupils are of above average ability, with some being of well above average ability.
- 1.5 The school has identified 53 pupils as requiring some degree of additional support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and 26 for whom English is an additional language (EAL), of whom 6 receive additional support. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs.
- 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 Throughout the school, including the EYFS, the quality of the pupils' achievements is excellent. Pupils of all abilities are highly successful in their learning. The school successfully meets its aims to help pupils learn the habits and rewards of hard work and careful study, thus preparing them to gain places at the senior school of their choice. Pupils benefit from a curriculum and wide range of extra-curricular activities that prepare them thoroughly for their senior schools. A small number of aspects of the curriculum, including cross-curricular links and extension work, are somewhat limited in the Upper School, where work is more focused on examinations. Pupils are confident and enthusiastic learners. All benefit from excellent teaching, including opportunities for independent learning, meeting a recommendation of the previous inspection, as with marking, which is nearly always regular and positive. From the EYFS onward, support for pupils with SEND or EAL is well structured and effective. More able and talented pupils are offered opportunities to tackle suitably challenging tasks. Assessment is used effectively to identify pupils' individual needs and track their progress.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development throughout the school is excellent. It is supported by a strong system of pastoral care, which is complemented by rigorous systems for welfare, health and safety. The school has robust and effective measures to guard against bullying. Incidents are rare and pupils feel safe and valued. Pupils develop extremely well spiritually, morally and socially. They have a strong appreciation of the ways in which cultural diversity enriches life. Relationships are excellent and built on respect and a mutual appreciation of each person's individuality. All of this takes place in a warm, family environment. Pupils welcome the chance to take on roles of responsibility. They show excellent care and support for one another. Their behaviour is typified by politeness and helpfulness. Systems for monitoring behaviour are effective, but in a small number of cases inconsistencies of practice identified by pupils have not been fully dealt with by the school. Almost all pupils indicated that they like being at the school, and they much appreciate their teachers.
- 2.3 Excellent governance ensures that the aims of the school are fulfilled highly effectively. Pupils are well educated and the governors are committed to the success and development of the school. At all levels throughout the school, leadership and management are excellent. A detailed school development plan sets clear priorities for the future. Statutory responsibilities are carried out effectively and efficiently. The development of the separate site for the EYFS has enabled the school to meet the recommendations of the previous inspection, relating to the provision of activities and development of individual children's interests. The school has excellent links with parents and the local community. An overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed their satisfaction with the school.

## **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. Monitor the implementation of the behaviour policy sufficiently to identify and correct any inconsistency in the use of sanctions by staff.
2. Broaden the curriculum for Upper School pupils, as far as practicable, to include opportunities for further cross-curricular links and extension work.

### **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 school successfully meets its aims. The pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are particularly well developed through many subjects and extra-curricular activities. Literacy skills are well developed. Pupils read with excellent comprehension and write fluently. They listen to their teachers and each other with respect and are able to express their views articulately. In mathematics they are able to apply their skills and understanding successfully to a range of problems. Pupils show high levels of logical and independent thought in science. Achievement is consistent for both boys and girls. Each year, a significant number of pupils are awarded academic, musical, drama or sporting scholarships or exhibitions to their prospective senior schools.
- 3.3 The high level of challenge provided for EYFS children of all abilities, arranged to suit their individual needs across all areas of learning, results in notable progress being made by all. By the end of the academic year, almost all children have met the Early Learning Goals in all areas and in many cases exceeded them. Children have good communication skills and are happy to express their various points of view when asked, especially in the familiar, quieter surroundings of Glebe Villas.
- 3.4 Pupils are extremely proud of their achievements, celebrated through engaging wall displays and in assemblies. There are opportunities for pupils to perform in music concerts and drama productions, enabling them to demonstrate their progress and accomplishments. Pupils are inquisitive and enjoy learning about the world. In addition to the cross-curricular links made between subjects, aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education also have a clear impact on the achievement of pupils. Middle School pupils successfully considered environmental issues and house-building concepts in science. In lessons, pupils are encouraged to demonstrate independent thinking skills, successfully addressing a recommendation from the previous inspection.
- 3.5 Since the previous inspection, there has been a noticeable increase in sporting fixtures for both boys and girls throughout the school. This enables pupils to enjoy considerable achievement in competitive sports teams as well as in external academic and national non-academic competition. Pupils employ ICT skills with ease. They use ICT creatively in their work and older pupils each have a laptop, used for both research and organisational purposes.
- 3.6 The pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, however on the evidence provided by the school's records, attainment is judged to be excellent in relation to national age-related expectations. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils make high levels of progress in relation to pupils of similar ability.
- 3.7 Pupils with SEND or EAL make excellent progress. This is achieved through a system of carefully targeted identification and the regular review of individual education plans (IEPs) by all staff. Academic expectations are high and pupils of all abilities are challenged. In the EYFS, children with SEND are extremely well supported, and the school liaises closely with external agencies, such as for speech

and language therapy. Greater demands made of more able children through careful questioning result in a higher challenge to their thinking.

- 3.8 Pupils are articulate and show considerable pride in their school. They have well-developed ideas and they are able to express these most effectively. The pupils' attitudes to their work are highly positive; they are most supportive and respectful of the talents, abilities and achievements of their peers. Pupils show a strong sense of determination. They evaluate their own work and identify areas for improvement. Pupils enjoy working collaboratively and do so with enthusiasm when such opportunities arise.

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

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.10 The curriculum fully supports the school aim to give all pupils a first-class academic education within a supportive family environment. It enables pupils to extend their learning across a wide range of subjects covering all the required areas of learning, as well as a range of modern foreign and classical languages. The school's excellent life skills and personal, social, health and economic education programmes and religious studies (RS) course ensure that pupils develop wide knowledge, experience and understanding of those less fortunate than themselves and of others' beliefs.
- 3.11 In the EYFS the overall quality and standards of provision for children are high, and the education and care provided ensure that individual children's needs are well met. Plentiful opportunities for playing, exploring and active learning abound. This addresses very successfully a recommendation of the previous inspection. An extremely good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, both indoors and out, ensures that children are absorbed in their learning, although such opportunities are restricted when Reception children are based on the main site on Wednesdays.
- 3.12 The curriculum from Year 1 provides many challenges for pupils of all ages and all abilities. Pupils with SEND or EAL receive excellent support to enable them to access and benefit from the curriculum. Their IEPs provide staff with detailed information on specific difficulties and appropriate strategies to consider when planning teaching for individual pupils. Such pupils receive additional valuable support in class from teaching assistants. Recent provision has enabled those pupils in Years 4 to 8 who are less strong in mathematics and English, or who have some other specific need, to receive additional help instead of studying Latin. More able pupils are identified in planning to enable the provision of suitable challenges to aid their progress. Curriculum planning is detailed and broad overall. In the Lower and the Middle School, this breadth contributes strongly to the pupils' wider development of knowledge, understanding and skills. The Upper School curriculum has a greater focus on examination requirements and as a result, cross-curricular links and extension activities are less well developed.
- 3.13 An excellent range of community links enhances the curriculum and the pupils' experience. Events, such as the school's 'Donate a Day', help pupils to think beyond their own circumstances and develop a greater understanding of responsibilities to others. Through the school's house system links with local charities are forged, and visits from a wide range of outside speakers are encouraged through the programme of planned assemblies.

- 3.14 The school ensures that all pupils have access to an excellent and comprehensive range of clubs and activities throughout the week. These stimulate the pupils' interest in wider learning and support their personal and social development. Changes to the variety of clubs on offer during the year ensure breadth and variety. Pupils are also encouraged to attend local clubs and activities outside school to ensure continued diversity and further challenge.
- 3.15 An extensive range of trips and visits greatly enhances the pupils' subject knowledge, enjoyment and personal development. Residential trips are organised for older pupils, varying from an adventure holiday to team-building and leadership development excursions involving testing physical and mental challenges. Field trips in biology from Year 5 and geography in Year 6 are an integral part of the curriculum. Pupils in Year 4 spoke about their enjoyment of school trips and how they were looking forward to those planned for Year 5.

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

- 3.16 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.17 Across the whole school, including the EYFS, teaching is consistent with the school's aim to enable pupils to learn the habits and rewards of hard work and careful study. It is effective in promoting pupils' progress. Teaching is valued highly by pupils, who appreciate the time staff give to them both inside and outside the classroom. Members of staff are dedicated and eager to create a learning environment that encourages academic excellence. This approach has a positive impact on the pupils, who demonstrate a desire to achieve.
- 3.18 In the EYFS, staff know the children extremely well. They have an excellent knowledge of stages of child development, and are skilled in following children's interests as they emerge. They make timely interventions to support and extend individual learning as necessary. Since the previous inspection, the school has strengthened planning to enable children to become active, inquisitive learners through developing their investigative and problem-solving skills. Although teacher-led activities have the same learning objectives for all children, greater demands are made of children who require them, and more support is given to those who need help with their learning. Excellent resources provide flexible accommodation and ample outdoor space. Children spend Wednesdays on the main school site to receive specialist teaching.
- 3.19 In Years 1 to 8, lessons are paced well and pupils produce a significant volume of work. The work seen in pupils' books was almost always relevant and purposeful. In a small amount of work, over-repetition of tasks hinders progress when pupils clearly demonstrate firmly established levels of knowledge and understanding. Opportunities to broaden the pupils' knowledge and understanding through extension tasks are limited in these circumstances.
- 3.20 Academic expectations are high and all pupils are increasingly challenged as they move through the school; for example, they follow an online mathematical programme of games and challenges, which they can access from school and home. Pupils expressed their enjoyment in tackling such extension tasks. This reinforces the positive attitude the pupils have towards independent learning opportunities.
- 3.21 Teaching is well prepared and all staff have secure knowledge of the needs of the pupils. Detailed and regularly reviewed IEPs are used well by staff in their planning

of lessons. In the most successful teaching, pupils of all abilities are challenged through open questioning and supported through tasks and activities clearly designed to meet their individual needs. In interviews, pupils commented on how they value opportunities to attend smaller support groups for English and mathematics. There is clear evidence that appropriate ability-related tasks are largely provided in schemes of work. In a small number of schemes of work towards the upper end of the school, such detail is not consistently evident.

- 3.22 Teaching makes appropriate use of resources, and a wide variety of teaching methods is employed. Regular verbal feedback is given to pupils. They understand their strengths and are encouraged to identify areas for improvement. Following a recommendation from the previous inspection, the school has developed a clear and purposeful marking policy. This is followed attentively in the Lower and the Middle School. In the Upper School, there are good examples of its implementation but in a small amount of marking it is not applied consistently.
- 3.23 Pupils value the school's three-weekly reporting system as a means of monitoring their progress. Form teachers and subject staff discuss performance with pupils on a regular basis. Teachers make themselves available to pupils to discuss academic matters and arrange extra work sessions if required.
- 3.24 The school makes effective use of standardised assessments that provide objective data for the identification of individual pupils' abilities, thereby monitoring and tracking their progress, including those in the EYFS. This information is communicated effectively amongst staff to share pupils' relative strengths and weaknesses. Targeted provision is put in place as a result. Pupils of all ages and abilities respond enthusiastically to the subject-specific 'challenge weeks' that individual departments organise during the course of the academic year.

## **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 By the time they leave the school, the personal and social qualities of the pupils are highly developed. The older pupils demonstrate a high level of maturity in discussions. They respect each other as individuals and fully appreciate the need for a tolerant society based on democratic values. The personal qualities of the pupils accord with the school's aim for them to grow as individuals.
- 4.3 In the EYFS, clear boundaries are in place within which the children intuitively conduct themselves. They make good choices, co-operate extremely well with each other, and develop their independent investigative and problem-solving skills. Children are comfortable within the daily routines and are supportive of each other. They confidently manage the commute to Glebe Villas and adjust well to the varying demands of different learning environments when necessary, which adds an extra dimension to their successful EYFS education. Children are extremely well prepared for their transition to Year 1. They already know daily routines well from spending a day each week on the main school site where they mix with older pupils, attend assembly and have lunch in the dining area.
- 4.4 The pupils' spiritual development is excellent. Pupils are confident, articulate and sensitive to one another's needs and feelings. They have opportunities for reflection and to learn from this as part of the life skills programme and as seen during a building bricks activity. Younger Middle School pupils explained the idea of 'ways to calmness', finding it relaxing and enjoyable. Pupils demonstrate great confidence and enthusiasm when singing in assembly.
- 4.5 The development of the pupils' moral awareness is excellent. Throughout the school pupils know and understand the code of conduct, which is displayed in all form rooms. This provides a highly effective framework, which pupils follow and by which they successfully live during their time at school. Pupils respond extremely well to high expectations. Through the RS curriculum, pupils' experience of cultural stories helps to develop effective moral values. Pupils respect their environment and demonstrate a good degree of self-management.
- 4.6 The social awareness of the pupils is excellent. They willingly embrace roles of responsibility such as form captains, tour guides and librarians. Pupils gain a clear understanding of others less fortunate than themselves through many links with various charities. They appreciate how they are able to give something back to the local or global community through the 'Donate a Day' initiative. When pupils work in groups or with partners they demonstrate strong support for one another and a genuine willingness to help their peers.
- 4.7 Pupils develop an excellent level of cultural awareness. By the time they leave the school they have an excellent knowledge of the cultures and faiths of others. This is developed through a range of visiting speakers, for example from Jewish and Muslim traditions. Parents also contribute by visiting to talk about their own cultural traditions, such as Diwali. Whole-school events such as Chinese New Year and the school's 'Language Acquisition Day' further enhance this development. The pupils' understanding of the Christian ethos of the school is heightened through the

assembly programme and RS. The comprehensive trips and visits programme further broadens their cultural awareness.

- 4.8 The school's active promotion and development of fundamental British values are excellent. Through events such as commemorative VE Day celebrations, learning about the Scottish Referendum and exploring issues of World War 2, pupils have excellent opportunities to increase their knowledge and understanding of the rule of law and individual liberty. The life skills programme also includes units of work on topics such as economics and government in the UK. Middle School pupils expressed their enjoyment in taking part in the school's mock elections.

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

- 4.9 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.10 The school is highly successful in meeting its aims to maintain a caring family environment in which kindness, politeness and respect for others are encouraged and rewarded.
- 4.11 In the EYFS, children show great respect for each other. Staff provide excellent role models in demonstrating close co-operation, teamwork and mutual respect. They encourage the belief that it is normal to attempt things, even if children do not succeed at first. The well-being of children is central to EYFS practice at the school. To share a concern, children seek out adults, who are quick to dispel any anxiety. Children behave well, and show independence in certain daily tasks. Children are made aware of the benefits of physical exercise.
- 4.12 Relationships between staff and pupils in Years 1 to 8 are excellent. Staff know the pupils well. The pupils are also supportive of each other, an excellent example of which is the 'buddy' system in which the oldest two year groups support the youngest. Staff communicate very effectively with each other to ensure that support is readily available to meet the needs of all pupils.
- 4.13 An all-inclusive programme of sport and exercise in the curriculum, extra-curricular activities and sports competitions ensures that pupils have ample opportunity for physical activity. Throughout the school, including the EYFS, pupils understand the importance of healthy eating. School lunches are nutritious. The pupils' views are taken into account for the menus on offer.
- 4.14 The school's systems to promote good behaviour and guard against bullying are effective. A small minority of pupils and a few parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaires felt that the school does not deal well with cases of bullying. Inspection evidence does not support this view. The school's measures to guard against bullying are clearly promoted through posters, assemblies and as part of the programme of personal, social, health and economic education. School records of the small number of previous incidents provide clear evidence that should an incident occur, procedures are followed in accordance with the school's policy. When interviewed, pupils were clear that bullying is rare and confident that it is dealt with quickly and competently when it arises. Systems are in place to reward positive behaviour, effort and attainment, which are celebrated in weekly assemblies. Pupils have a clear understanding of the rewards and sanctions systems. While the majority of children who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that the teachers are fair in the giving of rewards, a majority felt that there is inconsistency in the distribution of sanctions. This view was also reflected in pupil interviews and other inspection evidence. Recently introduced systems to monitor rewards and

sanctions for good or poor behaviour indicate some discrepancies in implementing behaviour policies. These have not yet been fully addressed to ensure that an equitable system operates throughout the school.

- 4.15 A minority of pupils who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that the school does not ask for nor respond to their opinions. Inspection evidence does not support this. Observation of a school council meeting and review of the meeting minutes demonstrated that the pupils' views are regularly sought and responded to in an appropriate and timely manner. This was supported by pupils' comments in interviews.
- 4.16 The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

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

- 4.17 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.18 Within the EYFS, the school has ensured that an adult with a paediatric first-aid qualification is present on school trips, including the daily minibus journeys between the two sites. Induction procedures ensure that new staff are aware of the school's safeguarding policy and its implementation, and of a range of welfare, health and safety policies that impact on the day-to-day working of the setting, including fire safety, paediatric first aid and food handling. Safety on the EYFS site is given extremely high priority.
- 4.19 In other year groups the well-being of all pupils is promoted highly effectively and staff deployment ensures that they are appropriately supervised at all times. Child protection and staff recruitment arrangements have very close regard to official guidance and are implemented effectively. The safeguarding of pupils is taken very seriously. All staff, including non-teaching staff, undergo the appropriate level of training and this is regularly updated. Inter-agency training to a higher level is undertaken by those staff with a designated safeguarding role. The school has strong relationships with local agencies. The checks required to ensure the suitability of staff are carried out thoroughly and the school's single central register (SCR) of appointments is appropriately maintained. The school meets all the safeguarding requirements for the EYFS.
- 4.20 A comprehensive health and safety policy is implemented and monitored effectively. All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards. Fire exits are kept free from obstruction and their signage is clear throughout the school. Fire safety procedures are thorough and regular fire drills are held. Risk assessments are comprehensive and frequent checks ensure that any identified hazards or faulty equipment are removed or repaired with minimal delay. Potential risks on visits out of school and on the school's sites are carefully assessed.
- 4.21 Procedures in case of accidents and for the administration of first aid are efficient, timely and competently executed, including arrangements for those with SEND. All staff are trained in emergency first aid and a significant number have a higher level qualification. The school makes suitable arrangements for pupils who are unwell during the day and any minor injuries are treated quickly and safely.
- 4.22 Admission and attendance registers are completed accurately and stored appropriately.

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

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

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The board of governors successfully administers and oversees the work of the school, helping to secure the school's aims and rigorously sustain its direction and purpose. The governing body has an extensive range of expertise and experience. Since the previous inspection, governors have been allocated specific roles. These include a governor with particular responsibility for the EYFS who reports to the board on activities in that area, ensuring effective involvement. Through full board meetings and an efficient committee structure, the governors supervise the financial planning of the school, its direction and its educational provision. They ensure that the school plans suitably to meet the necessary requirements for adequate staffing, and suitable accommodation and resources, as well as for pastoral matters.
- 5.3 The governors provide advice, support and constructive challenge for the leadership. Presentations at governors' meetings from members of staff and reports from senior managers provide the governors with detailed information about the school's successes and challenges, and with the opportunity to ask questions. Special school events are well supported by governors. They visit the school to observe it in action and meet staff and pupils.
- 5.4 The governing body discharges its statutory duties conscientiously, ensuring that staff suitability is appropriately checked and that the SCR is rigorously maintained. Those governors with links to safeguarding receive appropriate training. Governors discharge their responsibilities for the oversight of regulatory compliance with diligence, including safeguarding, welfare, health and safety, and the whole board carries out the annual review of safeguarding effectively. Governors have a comprehensive procedure for evaluating the work of the senior staff.

### **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 at all levels are highly successful in achieving and promoting the aims of the school. Senior leaders work with energy and enthusiasm to provide an educational direction that focuses on the needs of each pupil. Effective policies and procedures are in place, including all requisite areas, such as those to ensure the welfare, health and safeguarding of pupils. Since the previous inspection further changes to the management structure have been made. Posts now include separate deputy heads to oversee academic, pastoral, Lower School and administrative matters. Subject leaders carry out useful annual reviews of their curricular areas and identify opportunities for cross-curricular links and extension projects, though all such options are not yet fully explored in the Upper School, where examination syllabuses have greater dominance. A school development plan clearly outlines priorities for development, including for the curriculum and pastoral care. Health and safety matters and site maintenance are overseen with rigour. A compliance committee ensures that all regulatory matters are noted and attended to. Staff undergo biennial appraisal, whereby relevant targets are set for continuing

professional development. An increased emphasis is being placed on appraisal, monitoring, evaluation and tracking. Monitoring of the distribution of rewards and sanctions by staff is underway but not yet fully effective. Appropriate recruitment procedures to assess the suitability of all involved in working with children are in place. Regularly updated training ensures that all staff receive appropriate guidance in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety matters.

- 5.7 Clear and detailed handbooks provide information on the school's aims, procedures and expectations. The school has a very thorough, effective induction process for new staff.
- 5.8 Very close links are established between the EYFS and the Lower School, and excellent lines of communication are in place to ensure that the views and needs of the EYFS are clearly heard and acted upon. Staff in the EYFS have a truly reflective culture, and constantly seek to improve their practice. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection in planning, provision and resources. As a team, staff have formal and informal opportunities to contribute to the ongoing development plans for the setting, and targets are closely monitored by senior management to ensure that progress is made within the specified timeframes and that provision remains at a high level. Staff's appraisal targets for continuing professional development are set in line with the setting's ambitious vision. Arrangements for the supervision of staff are embedded in everyday practice, and are now formalised as part of ongoing EYFS staff development. Safeguarding and welfare requirements are well met. Parents have full confidence in the school's ability to safeguard their children at all times.
- 5.9 The school has excellent relationships with parents across all year groups. This is evident from the contact parents have with staff and through the easy accessibility of staff by email or telephone to discuss any matters concerning pupils. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed overwhelming satisfaction with the education and support provided for their children, and in discussions parents voiced their appreciation of the warm family atmosphere in the school. They feel that all staff are very accessible and approachable, including senior managers, and that any concerns are handled well.
- 5.10 Across the whole school, including in the EYFS, communication with parents is excellent. In the EYFS partnerships with parents are excellent and staff are highly supportive to individual family circumstances and needs. Parents appreciate the regular opportunities they have, both formal and informal, to be involved with their children's learning. External agencies are readily engaged to support individual pupils' needs when necessary. Parents have opportunities for informal conversations with staff at the start and end of the day. The school produces a weekly newsletter and regular magazines, and much useful guidance is provided on its website for the parents of current and prospective pupils, including all required information. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire and in discussions, parents reported that they feel very well informed of their children's progress through report cards, parents' evenings, and full and informative reports. They feel that staff know their children very well.
- 5.11 Throughout the school, parents have opportunities to be actively involved in the work and progress of their children. They are invited to be involved in school life through participation as parent representatives, and helping with trips, visits and events. The parent teacher association is very active and highly supportive of the school. It contributes significant funds for the purchase of equipment.

5.12 Suitable policies are provided to handle parents' concerns in a timely and appropriate manner. These are implemented effectively when necessary.

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