



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
ORCHARD HOUSE SCHOOL**

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Orchard House School

Full Name of School	Orchard House School
DfE Number	307/6074
Address	Orchard House School 16 Newton Grove London W4 1LB
Telephone Number	020 8742 8544
Email Address	<u>info@orchardhs.org.uk</u>
Head	Mrs S A B Hobbs
Chair of Governors	Mr A M Rentoul
Age Range	3 to 11
Total Number of Pupils	289
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (119 boys; 170 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 0 5-11: 228 3-5 (EYFS): 61 11-18: 0
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 289
Head of EYFS Setting	Miss R Brown
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	09 Jun 2015 to 12 Jun 2015

PREFACE

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

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 managing governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Jane Chesterfield

Mrs Jane Crouch

Mr Ian Sterling

Mr Jim Turner

Mrs Penny Oates

Reporting Inspector

Team Inspector (Headteacher, IAPS school)

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Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Orchard House School is a preparatory day school for girls and boys aged from three to eleven years. It is located in two large, originally private houses in a residential area in Chiswick, in west London. The school also uses classroom accommodation in a local church hall and a hall at a Buddhist Vihara. Orchard House was opened in 1993 and is part of the House Schools Group. There are three schools in the group, which is owned by the governors' family. The headmistress has been in post since 1993.
- 1.2 The school aims: to ensure that all pupils are happy and fulfilled and reach their potential, becoming a confident, creative and independent learner; to provide teaching which is supportive and challenging, and always takes into account the needs of each child; to enable pupils to develop self-respect and a strong sense of moral values, so that they become responsible and involved members of society; and to create an ethos which shows respect and concern for all members of the school community and which fosters close relationships between school and home.
- 1.3 The school offers Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision to children in its Nursery and Reception classes. There are currently 289 pupils on roll, 61 of whom are in the EYFS. Since the previous inspection, the school has become fully co-educational and boys who had previously stayed only until the age of eight now stay until they are eleven. A second site was acquired in 2009 to accommodate this expansion.
- 1.4 Results of standardised tests indicate that the ability profile of the pupils is above the national average. Most pupils are of at least above average ability, with some cohorts having a notable proportion of pupils with well above average ability. Pupils come from mainly professional or business backgrounds, and a small proportion is from a range of minority ethnic or overseas backgrounds.
- 1.5 Fourteen pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and all of these receive specialist support from the school. No pupils currently have a statement of special educational needs. Thirty-eight pupils have been identified as having English as an additional language (EAL), and five currently receive specialist support from the school.
- 1.6 National Curriculum (NC) 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 equivalence are shown in the following table.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
The Den	Nursery
Lower 1	Reception

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Orchard House School is highly successful in meeting its aims. Pupils achieve exceptionally well throughout the school and make exceptional progress. They reach exceptional levels of attainment and their attitudes to learning are exemplary. Pupils enjoy an excellent curriculum which is interesting, exciting and stimulating. There is a strong focus on English and mathematics, together with a wide range of other subjects and activities, which prepares pupils very effectively for their senior schools. Pupils benefit from excellent teaching, which is carefully planned and offers outstanding provision for different needs and abilities. Teachers make excellent use of support staff and resources, and marking is of a high quality. Very occasionally, explanations are not sufficiently clear or pupils' understanding is not checked thoroughly enough.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent in all parts of the school. They are spiritually aware, have an excellent moral code, outstanding social skills and a respect for their own and other cultures. Relationships between boys and girls, and also between pupils of all ages, are outstanding. Pastoral care is excellent. Pupils are well known to all staff and are extremely well supported in their academic and personal development. Excellent attention is given to pupils' safeguarding, welfare, health and safety, and pupils' well-being is of paramount importance at all times.
- 2.3 Governance of the school is excellent. Governors are highly supportive of and involved with the life of the school and are generous in their resourcing. Leadership and management are excellent throughout the school. Roles are clearly defined and there is a strong sense of teamwork and commitment to a common purpose. The school has made excellent progress in addressing the recommendations of the previous inspection for the main school and the EYFS. Subject leaders make a strong contribution to monitoring and developing their areas, alongside senior staff. Arrangements for staff training are closely linked to the needs of the school and the development planning process. The outdoor classroom and the range of activities in the EYFS have been extremely well developed. The school has introduced a useful computerised system for tracking and analysing the progress of pupils as they move through the school, and is beginning to use this to identify any trends which may emerge. Parents are extremely pleased with the school and what it offers their children. They feel confident that their children are combining high academic achievement with excellent all-round development.

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. Develop and refine the school's new systems for tracking pupils' progress in order to analyse trends over time for different groups of pupils.
2. Ensure that all teaching matches the most effective practice seen in the school through clear explanation of skills and regular checking of understanding.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements and learning is exceptional.
- 3.2 Pupils are exceptionally well educated in accordance with the school's aims of ensuring that pupils reach their potential and become confident, creative and independent learners.
- 3.3 In the EYFS, children enjoy their learning and make outstanding progress relative to their ability and starting points. All children reach, and in many cases significantly exceed, their expected levels of development. The majority are working well beyond the Early Learning Goals set for children as they leave the early years setting. The youngest children can decipher simple and more complex words very capably when reading. The older children use their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make to write words and form accurate sentences independently. In mathematics the youngest children are very familiar with numbers to 20. They can count accurately and order digits along a number line. Older children understand place values in tens and units.
- 3.4 Throughout the rest of the school, pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to one another, and speak articulately and fluently. They are avid readers with a wide vocabulary and a secure grasp of grammar, and are able to express their ideas and knowledge easily in writing. Pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are excellent, and they make full use of tablet computers across the curriculum, often using their own initiative. They choose to use them for note-taking, for example, for reading play scripts, or for recording other activities in photos or videos. Pupils are very happy to think and work independently, and show logical thought. This is particularly evident in their work in mathematics, which is of an advanced standard. Pupils show great creativity, particularly in their music, and show energy and enjoyment in their physical activity. Outside the classroom, pupils achieve considerable success in their music examinations and performances, and in sporting competitions and fixtures, particularly swimming, football and netball.
- 3.5 Pupils reach exceptionally high levels of attainment in their tests at the end of Year 6, compared with the national average. Almost all far exceed expectations for their age in mathematics and English. Pupils receive an exceptionally high number of offers of places at competitive schools, both local and boarding, with a significant proportion being awarded scholarships and exhibitions. All gain places at a school of their choice and there are no discernible variations between the performance of boys and girls.
- 3.6 Pupils make exceptional progress during their time at the school, particularly in English and mathematics from Years 3 to 6. Pupils of all abilities make equally strong progress because of the level of challenge and support offered by the school. Those identified as able, gifted and talented are extremely successful in reaching their potential, while those with SEND make excellent gains in their learning. Pupils with EAL quickly settle and make excellent progress because of the individual support they receive.
- 3.7 Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. In the EYFS, children show independence of thought and action, and quickly develop excellent investigative skills. Throughout the school, pupils settle quickly, sustain their concentration and

apply themselves wholeheartedly to their tasks. They co-operate exceptionally well with one another and are supportive of their classmates. Pupils take great pride in their work and take care to present it neatly. They are able to assess for themselves how well they have achieved in their work and how they can improve it further. They move to their senior schools with excellent skills for learning.

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

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 The curriculum is highly effective and fully meets the school's aim of offering a broad based curriculum, including extra-curricular activities, in order to facilitate the acquisition of appropriate knowledge and skills. In the EYFS, carefully planned and highly imaginative educational programmes, based on the prime and specific areas of learning and designed to meet all needs, provide a rich and invigorating learning environment where every child is challenged and inspired to achieve. In addition, children receive specialist provision in music, physical education, French and music and movement.
- 3.10 The curriculum successfully promotes pupils' understanding of fundamental British values, for example the school council led a recent review of the school's aims and ethos, deciding on key core values which they felt were representative of the school. In addition the curriculum ensures that there is a balanced presentation of opposing views when considering political issues. This is covered in debating, for example in history lessons and debating club, where themes have included whether schools should be co-educational and whether rubbers should be abolished.
- 3.11 Since the previous inspection the school has worked successfully to improve further the curriculum by strengthening the role of the subject leaders who actively develop and monitor their subject. Well-structured schemes of work ensure that there is obvious progression in pupils' learning, as well as excellent opportunities for cross-curricular work, for example in a Latin and drama project, when pupils enacted traditional fairy tales in Latin.
- 3.12 Recent developments have included the introduction of new subjects such as Mandarin and art history, and the range of sports has been broadened over recent years to include tag rugby, gymnastics and rowing. Pupils have also been introduced to an exciting programme of thinking skills. The curriculum includes a newly revised effective personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) programme which includes economic awareness and is still at the early stages of implementation. This contributes to the excellent personal development of the pupils. There has for many years been a continuous focus to improve the provision of ICT and this has been very successful: pupils commented very positively about how the use of a virtual classroom had enhanced their learning both at school and at home.
- 3.13 The curriculum is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs. The pupils are placed in ability sets from Year 3 for English and mathematics so that teaching is skillfully tailored to match their needs. This helps to ensure that the pupils are extremely well prepared for highly competitive entrance examinations to senior schools. The well-qualified SEND staff ensure that teachers are well briefed in the needs of the pupils with SEND or EAL. They work together, alongside parents, to put into place effective individual education plans, ensuring that the pupils make excellent progress in one-to-one or group sessions. The most able pupils, or those who are particularly

gifted or talented, are also very well supported for example through enrichment and challenge days as well as attendance at invitation only clubs, such as creative writing.

- 3.14 The school's academic programme is greatly enhanced by an excellent programme of extra-curricular clubs which are well attended by the pupils. This provision has improved, especially for Years 1 and 2, since the previous inspection. The clubs extend curricular areas such as science, music, drama, art and sport as well as offering wider interests such as mini-bridge, sewing and chess.
- 3.15 There is an excellent programme of residential trips for pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 which augments the curriculum and strengthens pupils' resilience and co-operation. Trips to local places of interest add to the pupils' learning experiences, and the diverse programme of sports fixtures gives the pupils plenty of opportunities to play matches at a competitive level.
- 3.16 The school has forged strong links with the community. Excellent use is made of the neighbouring church and Vihara halls for music, art, assemblies and plays, while school productions take place in larger local public buildings. The pupils donate food to the community and sing to residents of a nearby convent. Visits by the police, fire brigade, doctors and dentists also enhance the pupils' experiences.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.17 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.18 The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and fully meets the school's aim to provide supportive, yet challenging teaching, which takes into account the progress and individual needs of the pupils.
- 3.19 In the EYFS, a highly effective balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning enables children to prepare for a more structured approach in Year 1, particularly in mathematics, language and literacy. The Montessori guiding principle of providing stimulating activities appropriate to a child's stage of development enables the adults to know and understand their charges fully. Frequent observations record children's experiences and determine whether their learning is secure. This enables staff to personalise each child's next steps. Children identified as having SEND, and those with EAL, are supported very well, and strategies adopted are discussed with parents. Children who demonstrate advanced abilities are provided with interesting extension activities. The setting is extremely well resourced, and these resources are used very effectively to motivate, stimulate and inspire the children. Learning is enjoyable and challenging, with high expectations from staff.
- 3.20 Throughout the school, long-, medium- and short-term planning is of a high standard and is tailored to meet the needs of all pupils. It makes a strong contribution to the outstanding quality of the pupils' learning. Assessment is thorough and excellent use has been made of a new management information system to track the pupils' progress as they move through the school. However, analysis of the data is still at an early stage of development, especially regarding identifying differences in the performance of EAL pupils and gender. Marking is thorough, with clear guidelines of how work could be improved as well as targeted questions which create a healthy dialogue between teachers and pupils. Pupils are adept at assessing their own work and that of their peers. This ensures that pupils are fully involved in and responsible for their learning. Pupils commented that marking helps them to improve and that

they value the questions they are asked in their exercise books. They also said how much they appreciate their teachers' support.

- 3.21 Recent improvements in teaching include an increased focus on assessing the pupils' learning, as well as incorporating time for the pupils to reflect on the lesson at the end. Cross-curricular links have also been strengthened, for example in a music and science project. These have had a positive impact on learning.
- 3.22 Teaching is characterised by a swift pace, knowledgeable teachers and well-planned, imaginative and creative activities. However, very occasionally, there is insufficient explanation of the task and teachers are sometimes unaware of some pupils' difficulties in understanding it. Excellent use is made of a wide range of resources including tablet computers and interactive whiteboards which give an additional dimension to the lessons. The well-resourced school library is used frequently by pupils. Support staff are wisely deployed: they are well informed of learning objectives and make a valuable contribution to the pupils' learning.
- 3.23 Teaching fosters great independence from the pupils who enjoy the opportunity of working individually on problem-solving tasks such as investigations in mathematics. Tasks are carefully planned to meet pupils' needs, and ability grouping is also used to ensure that the requirements of their different abilities are met. There is excellent challenge for particularly able pupils in lessons and enrichment events. The well-qualified team of specialist learning support staff ensures that expert assistance is tailored to meet the specific needs of pupils with SEND or EAL. Teaching successfully promotes the fundamental British values of democracy and mutual respect for those with different faiths and beliefs in a balanced and non-political manner.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 Across the whole school the pupils' personal development fully supports the school's aims to ensure that all pupils develop a strong sense of moral values, are involved members of society and create an ethos which shows concern and respect for all members of the school community. It does this by making the most of its location and celebrating the diversity in the surrounding community, for example grace is said at lunch from a variety of faiths, including Islam.
- 4.3 Children in the EYFS rapidly gain the confidence to make the best of their rich environment. They are happy, sociable and tolerant of one another, and their behaviour is exemplary. The children's personal and social development is mature for their age, and co-operation and sharing are second nature to them. They are very well prepared to move to Year 1.
- 4.4 Pupils' spiritual development is excellent throughout the school. Pupils speak confidently, but with considerable respect for adults. They are articulate in discussions, yet value the opinions of their classmates. Pupils are confident and have a secure awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses. They appreciate the natural world around them. They have a comprehensive understanding of the beliefs of all religions through both timetabled lessons and a wide variety of educational visits and speakers, avoiding bias or partisan approaches. Year 5 visit the local Mosque, for example, and the school makes extensive use of the local Buddhist Vihara for assemblies and productions, so immersing the pupils in the beliefs of these and other cultures.
- 4.5 The moral development of the pupils is excellent. They behave in an exemplary way, moving within the school and between the school buildings with an ordered purpose and respect for those around them. They have a strong sense of right and wrong. They follow school rules closely, settle quickly in lessons and are always courteous and calm throughout the whole school day. The pupils reported that they are set an excellent example by their teachers which they are keen to replicate in their daily actions. Pupils are actively encouraged to understand the need for law and order and how this is established in Britain.
- 4.6 The social development of the pupils is excellent. The school participates in a wide range of charitable events and fund raising including, for example help for the people affected by the earthquake in Nepal. Pupils relish the opportunity to take positions of responsibility, from classroom monitor to head boy and girl. The pupils have a considerable positive impact on the smooth running of their school. When Year 6 pupils stood up to lead house meetings, they spoke with confidence to their audience. As part of their PSHCE curriculum, pupils study famous people who have had an impact on the lives of others, with wall displays throughout the school forming a constant reminder about the need to think of others before oneself. There is no inappropriate discrimination evident.
- 4.7 Pupils' cultural development is excellent. They develop a secure knowledge and awareness of Western and other cultural traditions. Pupils throughout the school worked together to create a large painted mural depicting the qualities required to be a good citizen in modern life. Words such as honesty, friendship, diligence, self-

belief and kindness form the tower of an image of Big Ben, whilst the flags of the United Kingdom dominate the scene. The extensive programme of educational trips makes excellent use of the school's easy access to central London through visits to key institutions such as the Houses of Parliament. Pupils develop a good knowledge and awareness of UK institutions and public services. Their cultural appreciation is further developed by the excellent school music. During an early morning rehearsal the school orchestra played the theme tune from *Dr Who* with enthusiasm, considerable volume and talent.

- 4.8 By the end of Year 6 pupils have extensive experience in taking responsibility. They are mature and feel that they are ready, willing and well prepared for their next steps beyond the school into senior education. They have an excellent insight into fundamental British values and life in modern British society.

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

- 4.9 The school's arrangements for pastoral care are excellent.
- 4.10 The school has a homely, welcoming feel and relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. EYFS children feel safe and have a key person to oversee their needs, but all staff adopt a supportive and encouraging approach. The pupils recognise the staff as positive role models. They say that they always know to whom to speak if they are concerned. Effective lines of communication exist to ensure matters of concern, such as misbehaviour and possible instances of bullying, are recorded and responded to appropriately. Each classroom has a 'worry box' where pupils may anonymously post notes regarding issues which are of concern to them.
- 4.11 Pupils are actively encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle. They reported that they are delighted with the standard and quality of food, and were particularly proud of the kitchen's excellent hygiene rating. The school makes extensive use of local facilities for games lessons, before school activities and sports practices. The pupils swim locally on a weekly basis and healthy eating is covered extensively in the curriculum. The school has a suitable plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.
- 4.12 In the EYFS, children have regular opportunities for physical exercise in the large and very well resourced outdoor playground. Children know that running around keeps them fit and healthy, and playtimes are very busy. Children bring healthy snacks from home and the school provides a balanced and nutritious meal which they eat with enthusiasm. The children know that they must drink water and eat some fruit before leaving the table because these are good for you. They have opportunities to take on responsibility, for example serving one another at lunchtime, and are very capable of looking after their own hygiene and personal needs.
- 4.13 In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses a small minority of pupils did not feel that the school asks for their opinions and responds to them. However, interviews with pupils and a review of school council meetings and minutes found that pupils have good opportunities to make their views known. Inspectors judged that pupils are capable of leading school council meetings themselves, with an adult present only for support. The school council has been successful in many areas of the school, including organising a staff pantomime, which raised a considerable amount of money for local charities.

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

- 4.14 The contribution of the arrangements for health and safety is excellent.
- 4.15 The arrangements for safeguarding are robust throughout the school, including in the EYFS, and are regularly reviewed by the senior leadership team. Safeguarding arrangements have due regard to current legislation, with the staff team who have responsibility being both trained and supported by a rigorous management structure. Arrangements for safer recruitment are implemented and recorded effectively.
- 4.16 Arrangements for pupils who are ill or injured are good and all incidents are appropriately recorded, in accordance with the school's thorough first-aid policy. First-aid boxes are positioned in all areas of the school, and portable packs are taken when pupils leave the main school buildings. Movement around and between the school sites is extremely well organised. The school has arrangements in place for the specific care of pupils who become unwell during the school day and where medicines are administered, appropriate approval is sought. These medicines are stored securely out of the reach of pupils.
- 4.17 All necessary measures are taken to guard against and reduce the risk from fire and other hazards. Regular fire practices take place and all staff are appropriately trained in emergency procedures. Security is considered a priority for the whole school, with key pad entry and CCTV ensuring that the premises are protected at all times. Pupils are taught about e-safety and the dangers of cyber-bullying. The school has comprehensive risk assessments and trip procedures which ensure that the safety of the pupils and the whole school community is always a priority. All events, including internal school activities, external excursions and residential visits are organised in an efficient and timely way. Arrangements for health and safety across all the schools in the group are comprehensive. Minuted meetings take place and from these specific areas are identified for staff training, including a specific focus on crisis management.
- 4.18 Admission registers and the electronic daily attendance registers are accurately completed 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 The governors maintain an excellent oversight of all aspects of the school's work through their close involvement in the running of the school, including the EYFS. The managing governor visits at least weekly and is in touch with the headmistress on a daily basis, so that he is always aware of what is happening in all parts of the school. Governors are highly successful in ensuring that the school meets its aims and that it achieves the highest possible educational standards. They are generous in their resourcing of the school and invest wisely in highly skilled and qualified staff. Accommodation is well maintained and classes are amply resourced. The governing body is happy to fund expenditure on resources which can be justified by staff.
- 5.3 The governors are fully involved in the school's development planning and self-evaluation processes, in the training of staff, and in the appraisal of the headmistress. Senior staff feel confident that they can rely on the governors to offer them support and advice, and to provide them with challenge and impetus. Governors are highly effective in ensuring that the school fully meets statutory requirements, including the required annual review of safeguarding. They keep an ongoing overview of this important aspect of the school's work. Governors enable the school to benefit from the expertise and experience of the other schools in the group, through elements such as the policies matrix and shared training opportunities, whilst still preserving its unique character and ethos.

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 The leadership and management ensure that the aims of the school are achieved in a most effective manner and successfully promote the pupils' personal development, care and well-being in a dynamic school environment, including in the EYFS. A keen focus on shared leadership ensures that responsibilities are distributed and policies are thoroughly implemented in all areas of the school. The leadership of the school provides clear and purposeful educational direction with a vision of excellence, respect and concern for others and for fundamental British values such as tolerance and democratic principles. The pastoral leadership of the school is excellent and pupils are kept safe in a warm and welcoming environment. There is a purposeful focus on assisting all pupils to develop confidence and self-belief and in preparing them for the world beyond school.
- 5.6 Management is very successful in developing and motivating a highly committed staff and ensuring they are suitably trained for their roles, including for the safeguarding, welfare, health and safety of pupils. In the EYFS, regular supervision sessions allow staff to raise any concerns they may have about the pupils in their care and to discuss appropriate ways in which to support them. The management of the academic programme is highly effective, with the pupils making rapid progress in all sections of the school. Strong leadership has resulted in the successful

introduction of teaching strategies which have enhanced the pupils' learning. The use of self and peer assessment has given the pupils opportunities to engage fully with their own learning.

- 5.7 Leadership and management are highly effective in self-evaluation, setting priorities and ensuring that they are achieved. Staff from all parts of the school have contributed to the current school development plan. This outlines areas for improvement, with departmental and phase plans being closely linked to the main plan. All staff are appraised on an annual basis, with senior leaders having a termly review with the headmistress. Leaders and managers monitor the work of members of staff within their teams very effectively, with appropriate targets being set and training needs identified. Staff feel valued and appreciated, and the team is strong and cohesive. Regular meetings allow all staff to contribute their views on a range of issues as the school seeks to make further improvements. The performance of support staff is appraised annually and there is a comprehensive system to review their work and set personal targets.
- 5.8 The school enjoys excellent relationships with parents from the EYFS onwards. EYFS parents feel very involved in what goes on at the school, and two-way communication is strongly encouraged. Those who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were effusive about all aspects of the setting, praising the care their children receive and the progress they make, and feeling certain that their children love going to school. Where necessary, the setting seeks input from outside agencies so as to provide appropriate and timely additional support.
- 5.9 In the pre-inspection questionnaire, all parents who responded felt that information was readily available to them. Current parents are provided with an extensive range of relevant information including a weekly newsletter, a school calendar, curriculum information on the website, regular communications regarding school activities, curriculum newsletters in the early years, transition booklets and a school magazine. The website is used most effectively to communicate with parents, so that they feel fully informed in relation to school routines and aware of school events. The school handles concerns in a prompt and thorough manner. Almost all parents expressed confidence in the way that the school responds to questions and concerns. Parents additionally commented that these concerns are dealt with sensitively. The use of electronic surveys has been highly effective in seeking parental views. Parents of prospective pupils are provided with a comprehensive pack of information about the school and its work.
- 5.10 Reports to parents are clear and constructive. They detail the achievements of the pupils and provide useful guidance on areas for progress and development. Parents felt that they are thorough and helpful. Parents have good opportunities to discuss their child's progress at parents' evenings. In addition, several information evenings are held for parents, including introductions to literacy and numeracy, an evening to meet next year's teachers and an e-safety information session. Parents felt that the school's 'open door' policy allowed for any issues to be discussed whenever they arise. Message books provide a useful means of communicating with staff, as do reading diaries.
- 5.11 In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses parents felt that there were good opportunities for them to be fully involved in the life of the school. These include the use of class representatives to liaise with the school prior to occasions such as the summer fair. Parents help with the gardening club, or as library assistants and attend coffee mornings. Parents equally appreciate the opportunities to support

sports fixtures and to attend concerts and drama productions. Many parents enjoy the parents' choir, which performs in school concerts and on occasions such as the harvest festival. The parents' association is very active and events are well supported. It has organised quiz nights, a Spanish Fiesta evening and a May Ball, and has raised money for extra items of equipment for the school, such as a playhouse and outdoor football tables. Parents attend assemblies regularly.

- 5.12 A very small minority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that bullying was an area of concern. Inspectors examined this issue carefully, speaking to parents and children, as well as looking at the school's records and policies. They concluded that the school responded appropriately in any instances where bullying had been alleged and had stringent procedures in place to ensure that this was not tolerated.
- 5.13 In the previous inspection report it was recommended that the school ensures that arrangements for whole-school in-service training needs were more clearly identified and formally planned. It was also recommended that the training of heads of departments ensured they had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Inspectors concluded that the school's programme of continuous professional development was well planned to meet the needs of both recommendations. In the EYFS, the outdoor classroom has become an inspirational space affording many opportunities for the children to extend themes from inside, such as role-play and investigation. A much greater range of activities are planned now than previously where children may exercise their creativity with self-chosen materials. The EYFS recommendations from the previous inspection have been met in full.

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