



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INTEGRATED INSPECTION

ST GEORGE'S SCHOOL EDGBASTON

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

St George's School Edgbaston

Full Name of School	St George's School Edgbaston
DfE Number	330/6000
Registered Charity Number	1079647
Address	31 Calthorpe Road Edgbaston Birmingham West Midlands B15 1RX
Telephone Number	0121 6250398
Fax Number	0121 6253340
Email Address	admin@sgse.co.uk
Head	Mr Gary Neal
Chairman of Council	Professor Karl George
Age Range	4 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	410
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (324 boys; 86 girls)
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS): 0 5-11: 80 3-5 (EYFS): 14 11-18: 316
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 410
Head of EYFS Setting	Mrs Jennifer Shaw
EYFS Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	4 to 7 February 2014

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chairman and vice-chairman of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Paul Spillane	Reporting Inspector
Mr Gareth Davies	Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mrs Catherine Hill	Team Inspector (Senior Teacher, HMC school)
Mr Patrick Lee-Browne	Team Inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Miss Katy Morgan	Team Inspector (Head of Pre-Prep, IAPS school)
Mr Martin Morris	Team Inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mr Graham Yates	Team Inspector (Assistant Head, HMC school)
Mrs Penny Oates	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

CONTENTS

	Page
1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL	1
2 THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL	2
(a) Main findings	2
(b) Action points	3
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	3
(ii) Recommendations for further improvement	3
3 THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	4
(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning	4
(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)	5
(c) The contribution of teaching	6
4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	8
(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils	8
(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care	9
(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety	10
5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	11
(a) The quality of governance	11
(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians	11

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 St George's School, Edgbaston is a co-educational day school for boys and girls aged from 4 to 18. The school was founded in 1999 from the merger of two schools, Edgbaston Church of England College for Girls and Edgbaston College, both of which were founded towards the end of the nineteenth century. St George's is situated on the Calthorpe Estate, with the upper school housed in the original Georgian buildings. The school is a charitable trust overseen by a governing body of trustees.
- 1.2 There are 410 pupils in the school, of whom 14 are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), 80 in the lower school (ages 5 to 11) and 316 in the upper school (ages 11 to 18). The school reflects the ethnic diversity of the area, with a wide range of nationalities and ethnic backgrounds being represented. All 23 pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL) receive specialist help with their English from the school. The school has identified 161 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and of these 69 receive specialist learning support from the school. There are 79 pupils who have a statement of special educational needs. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds; most live in Birmingham and the surrounding area.
- 1.3 The school's stated aims are to maximise individual achievement within a caring community, to develop respect and responsibility in all relationships, to promote friendship, fair play and equality; and to create opportunities for personal development in a changing and challenging world.
- 1.4 In the lower school there is considered to be a wide spread of abilities, with most pupils being of at least average ability. The ability profile of the school in Year 7 is above the national average. A wide spread of abilities is represented here, and around two-thirds of these pupils are of at least above average ability. In Year 10, the ability profile is lower and subject to variance year on year, being slightly above average overall. There is no objective data to assess the ability profiles of pupils entering the sixth form, but the ability profile is judged to be in line with the national average.
- 1.5 The head of the lower school and EYFS took up her appointment in September 2012 and the headmaster took up his in September 2013.
- 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 making good progress towards fulfilling its stated aims. Throughout the school, pupils display secure knowledge and understanding of the material covered in their syllabuses. Pupils are keen to do well in their studies and their conduct in class is excellent. Teaching is good. Consequently pupils of all ages make good progress, in response to a good curriculum, and their academic achievement is substantial with the great majority of sixth form leavers proceeding to degree courses. The considerable progress and achievement of the many pupils with SEND and EAL is a strength of the school. The ablest pupils do well, and some achieve extremely high standards, but in the various age groups not all of them are sufficiently challenged. In their response to the questionnaire, pupils affirm that they are very pleased with their progress and that their teachers are generous with their help. Among the many recent improvements to the school's provision are the emergent systematic tracking of pupils' progress and the setting of academic targets. Careers education guidance is not yet sufficiently extensive. An appropriate extra-curricular programme enables pupils to explore their talents and aptitudes and to broaden their educational experience. In the EYFS, the needs of all children are successfully met within a stimulating environment in which every child is highly valued, and consequently the children make excellent progress.
- 2.2 The school succeeds in its aim to be a caring community and the quality of pastoral care is excellent, with all staff aware of and responsive to the needs of individual pupils. Consequently pupils throughout the school feel safe, and at all levels they grow in self-confidence and self-esteem, displaying good levels of personal development. Pupils of many ethnic backgrounds co-exist harmoniously in the school. Courteous and considerate, they enjoy excellent relationships with their teachers and get on very well with one another, in accordance with the school's aim that it should be a friendly place. Standards of behaviour are high and the rare instances of bullying are dealt with fairly and successfully. Effective arrangements for the pupils' welfare, health and safety include thorough staff training in safeguarding and child protection. Pride in the school is shown by the pupils and by the excellent quantity and quality of displays around the school.
- 2.3 That the school's aims are being successfully realised is a strong testimony to the good governance, strong leadership and management and clear direction from senior leaders, in the EYFS, lower and upper schools. Ambitious and energetic, the board of trustees is wholeheartedly committed to the continuing development and improvement of the school. Among the many recent initiatives by senior leadership are systematic approaches to academic and pastoral responsibility, attendance, record-keeping, target setting, reporting to parents and lower school curriculum development. Efficient management ensures that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Supervision of EYFS staff takes place, but not as a formal arrangement. While all staff and governors have received criminal records checks, in many cases not all of the statutory checks were made before appointment and some required checks have not been carried out. The school does not provide showers in the upper school. The school has successfully met all the recommendations of the previous inspection.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010, and therefore it is required to:
- ensure that all required checks are made before the appointment of a member of the staff and rectify omissions in the single central register of appointments [Part 3, paragraph 7 (a) and (b), under Welfare, health and safety; Part 4, paragraph 19.(2)(a) and (3) and paragraph 22.(3)(b), under Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors];
 - install showers for boys and girls in the upper school [Part 5, paragraph 23 (b), under Premises and accommodation].

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.5 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Ensure that challenging academic demands are made of all the ablest pupils.
 2. Extend and develop the careers education and guidance.
 3. In the EYFS, formalise the process of staff supervision.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is good.
- 3.2 The school is making good progress towards fulfilling its aim to maximise individual achievement. Children in the EYFS, including those with SEND or EAL, make excellent progress relative to their starting points, and the majority are moving towards achieving the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the Reception class. Progress in writing and number is particularly high. Children use phonic knowledge to write simple regular words and are confident about making phonetically plausible attempts at more complex words. They order numbers competently to at least ten and are beginning to find one more or one less than a number. More able children apply their understanding of differences in quantity to coin values to 20 pence before shopping at the class store. Children display high levels of confidence, curiosity and concentration, and show increasing skills of independence.
- 3.3 Pupils in the lower and upper schools display secure levels of knowledge and understanding relative to their ability. Year 11 pupils showed, for example, an intelligent appreciation of stereotyping and symbolism. Pupils use their scientific knowledge to make sensible predictions about new situations. They are attentive listeners and thoughtful speakers: for example, lower school pupils showed a very good appreciation of how to give constructive criticism to their peers. They read well and write persuasively and expressively. A high level of creativity is evident in the work of pupils of all ages, for instance in choreographing dynamic dance routines and in detailed and sensitive art sketchbooks. The pupils' mathematical skills are well developed, and they present their solutions to problems logically. They are deft in their use of information and communication technology (ICT). They tackle practical tasks with confidence, showing good understanding of safety measures and risks, and they display good physical skills in various activities.
- 3.4 The pupils' attainment and progress in the lower school cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests. On the evidence available, attainment is judged to be good in relation to national age-related expectations. Inspection evidence from observation of lessons, scrutiny of samples of the pupils' work and discussions with individual pupils confirms this judgement. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that lower school pupils achieve a good rate of progress in relation to pupils of similar ability.
- 3.5 The following analysis used the national data for the years 2010 to 2012. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in GCSE have been above the national average for maintained schools and have shown improvement over these three years. Results in IGCSE EAL have been higher than worldwide norms overall. The level of attainment at GCSE indicates that pupils in the senior school make progress that is good in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities: this is borne out by the substantial achievement evident in the lessons observed and work scrutinised.
- 3.6 A-level results have been similar to the national average for maintained schools and have shown improvement from 2010 to 2012. This level of attainment indicates that the pupils' progress and levels of achievement are good. On leaving school, the

very large majority proceed to university degree courses, some of which have very exacting entry requirements.

- 3.7 Pupils with SEND and EAL also make good progress, reflecting the excellent level of individually tailored support which they receive. They reach good levels of academic achievement at all stages in the school, to the extent that their eventual results in GCSE and A-level examinations are indistinguishable from those of other pupils. Whilst the ablest pupils at all levels reach high standards, the style and range of tasks provided to extend their learning mean that they do not always reach their full potential
- 3.8 The pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. They take their studies seriously and are focused and responsive in lessons. They co-operate well with one another and are willing to tackle the unfamiliar, even when a task seems challenging. Pupils participate spiritedly in extra-curricular activities.

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

- 3.9 The quality of curricular and extra-curricular provision is good.
- 3.10 The EYFS setting makes excellent provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. Planning is thorough, presents some exciting experiences, and incorporates flexibility so as to accommodate children's individual needs, including those with SEND and EAL. A very wide variety of opportunities is enjoyed enthusiastically both inside and outdoors; for example, at the in-house café where the menus become ever more ambitious as children seek to impress their customers. Such situations encourage children to work independently and co-operatively, explore and solve problems. The development of these key skills ensures that children are well prepared for the transition to the next stage in their learning.
- 3.11 The curriculum provides all pupils with a wide-ranging academic experience which meets the school's aims. In the lower school, a well-planned creative curriculum provides enriching opportunities for learning. The topic-based approach promotes the pupils' curiosity and their ability to question; it effectively deepens their understanding of the world around them. It helps all pupils to see the links between different subjects, and is thus particularly well suited to the needs of those with SEND. Through their involvement in choosing specific strands within topics, pupils begin to take responsibility for their own learning. This meets the recommendation of the previous inspection.
- 3.12 The upper school curriculum is broad. Business studies is introduced in Year 8, and GCSE options include environmental science, photography and ceramics. Year 10 pupils can make their option choices freely, enabling them to select the subjects to which they are best suited. Relative to the size of the school, a wide range of sixth form subjects is offered, including A-level psychology, and government and politics as well as BTEC courses in business studies and physical education. Since the previous inspection, use of ICT within subjects has markedly increased.
- 3.13 The provision for pupils with SEND or EAL is excellent, and has improved substantially to meet the recommendation of the previous inspection. Individual needs are determined on entry to the school, and the inclusion and support department provides carefully structured assistance. Pupils with EAL are greatly helped by having specialist English lessons. Those with SEND benefit from support sessions ranging from a thorough literacy intervention programme to the excellent

therapy for autistic pupils. Teaching staff receive comprehensive information about the needs of SEND and EAL pupils, and learning support assistants work in partnership with them to provide unobtrusive and highly effective support in mainstream lessons. Digital aids to learning, such as pupil laptops, are provided as required and used effectively by pupils. Whilst tasks which offer opportunities to extend their learning are given in some lessons, no formal provision is made for the ablest pupils either in the curriculum or in the activities programme and they are not always sufficiently challenged to fulfil their potential.

- 3.14 Taster days for Year 6 and Year 11 pupils help them to prepare for the next stage of their education. Pupils in Year 9 and 11 receive guidance on their choice of GCSE and A-level subjects, and sixth formers receive support in preparing their university applications. Overall, however, pupils do not receive more than a limited programme of careers education and guidance.
- 3.15 Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) throughout the school is excellent. In the lower school, themes such as tolerance and self-discipline are covered effectively during topic work and reinforced through classroom displays. A wide-ranging and well-structured programme in the upper school covers themes at a level appropriate to the pupils' ages. Sixth formers have presentations from guest speakers and learn practical skills such as signing for the deaf.
- 3.16 A suitable extra-curricular programme caters for a broad spread of interests and aptitudes. All upper school pupils take part in the weekly activities afternoon, and are able to choose from a varied range of sessions. Activities such as board-game making offer scope for independent and creative thinking, whilst a group is preparing for a visit to Denmark to study Baroque architecture. Other distinctive features of the upper school provision include fencing and dog training. The community service group provides assistance at a local home for the elderly, and some sixth formers volunteer at a shelter for the homeless. Pupils in the lower school participate enthusiastically in clubs ranging from choir to football, and they, like the upper school pupils, enrich their educational experience through visits to places of academic, cultural and general interest.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.17 The contribution of teaching is good.
- 3.18 In the EYFS, expectations are very high. Staff are knowledgeable about how to promote learning and development in order to enable children to fulfil their potential. They set ambitious targets for themselves and the children, who readily rise to the challenges in response to the very positive feedback which they continually receive, which is a hallmark of the setting. This feedback is an integral part of the assessment of the children's performance and informs planning for their further development. Children enjoy being able to draw on a range of good-quality resources which they use enthusiastically, knowing that every endeavour is valued.
- 3.19 At all levels, the quality of teaching, most notably in smaller classes, contributes very effectively to good levels of pupil progress. The teaching supports the school's aims.
- 3.20 Much teaching throughout the school is excellent, evident in the quality of rapport between teachers and pupils; teachers know their pupils extremely well. Their dedicated, enthusiastic and compassionate approach creates a stimulating and supportive environment for learning and fosters pupil interest. Responses from pupil

questionnaires and interviews indicate that they are very appreciative of the helpful and tailored support they receive. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Lessons are often planned in detail, are suitably paced and contain a good variety of tasks, promoting appropriate levels of pupil achievement. In some lower school lessons activities provide opportunities to link learning through the topic and promote independent and logical thought. However, in a small amount of teaching in the upper school, probing questions to extend pupils understanding and develop higher order thinking is limited.

- 3.21 Provision for SEND and EAL pupils, and those with statements of special educational needs, is excellent and their needs are met effectively and sensitively by upper and lower school teachers. The recommendation of the previous report to ensure teaching employs a range of suitable teaching strategies for those who require learning support has been met. The involvement and support of the learning support assistants plays a crucial role in the good progress made by these pupils throughout the school. Their patient, supportive and sympathetic approach assists and complements the work of the classroom teacher, and contributes significantly to fostering application and the creation of a positive learning environment. The provision of tasks of varied challenge, especially in the lower school, demonstrates clear understanding of the pupils' needs and abilities. Such tasks are provided for the more able pupils in some teaching but this is not consistent.
- 3.22 Resources are widely available and pupils use them to good effect to support their learning, develop their understanding and apply their skills. There has been an improvement in both the provision and use of ICT, which meets the recommendation from the previous inspection, and pupils are proficient in its use. ICT is used creatively to enhance teaching and learning in some departments, but this is inconsistent in the upper school. Centrally located in the upper school, the welcoming library is a popular and well used resource, both for study and for recreational reading.
- 3.23 The overall quality of marking and assessment in the lower and upper schools, with clear guidance and reference to pupils' targets aid further progress. Marking throughout the school now meets the recommendation in the previous inspection. Pupils respond positively to teachers' comments. Pupils are encouraged to assess their own and their peers' progress, which helps them take responsibility for their learning. In many cases pupils are responsible for setting their own targets. In lower school pupils set their literacy, numeracy and personal targets in conjunction with the class teacher, and are included in monitoring progress towards meeting them.
- 3.24 The emerging system for the tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress is having a positive impact on academic performance, as is the introduction of interim reports in both the upper and lower School. which provide clear information on attainment and, effort, as well as target grades based on benchmarks set by the school.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- 4.2 The school meets its stated aims to promote friendship, fair play and equality, and to develop respect and responsibility in all relationships.
- 4.3 In the EYFS, the children's all-round development is excellent. They understand the importance of making a positive contribution to school life and their social skills are very well developed. Children respect one another and work in harmony. They listen carefully to adult guidance, take turns and share toys and equipment sensibly. Children are very well prepared to move to Year 1.
- 4.4 Pupils in the lower and upper schools demonstrate a growing emotional maturity, and show an awareness of the non-material aspects of life through experiences in art and ceramics, work on citizenship in PSHE, and form periods. The many stimulating displays around the school, in classrooms and corridors, celebrate success and show that staff and pupils are proud of what they achieve. Good work is highlighted and commended in assemblies. All of this helps to create a positive environment which fosters self-assurance, self-esteem and the appreciation of others.
- 4.5 Given firm boundaries, pupils demonstrate a well-developed sense of right and wrong. They respond well to the rules and reward structures of the school. They develop a sense of moral purpose through a strong PSHE programme, which also helps them to accept responsibility and to understand their obligation to contribute to the life of the school and the wider world.
- 4.6 Pupils are willing to help their fellows. Year 11 pupils regularly help run a lower school book club, and an embryonic peer-mentoring scheme is beginning to enhance further the support given to younger members of the school. The PSHE programme, together with the early introduction of business studies lessons, successfully promotes pupils' social, political and economic awareness: a scheme provided by a high-street bank delivers a business awareness course, and PSHE topics examine aspects of government and democracy. Sixth-form pupils enjoy a definite identity within the school, but a number expressed a valid desire to be given more positions of responsibility throughout the school from which the whole community might benefit. There is a strong tradition of charitable giving: each house supports a charity of its choice, chosen from form presentations given during assembly time. Awareness of the significance of Remembrance is evident in a large poppy, made by the pupils, signed by many of them and sent to the Royal British Legion. This was complemented by an imaginative display which included sensitive written contributions by many pupils.
- 4.7 Pupils from many nationalities and ethnic backgrounds get on very well together in an atmosphere of ease and harmony. The school's stated aim of respect and responsibility in relationships is successfully achieved in the tolerance and understanding shown by all towards the many different faiths and cultures represented. Assemblies celebrate religious festivals and occasions such as Chinese New Year, thus broadening pupils' appreciation of other cultures.

- 4.8 By the time the pupils move from the lower to the upper school they show good personal development and self-confidence. Pupils leave at the end of Year 13 as mature, confident and articulate young adults, suitably prepared for the next stage in their lives.

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

- 4.9 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.10 In the EYFS, provision for the children's well-being is excellent. Children settle quickly because secure bonds are forged swiftly with all the adults. The high staff-to-child ratio and well-qualified, dedicated staff enable excellent all-round development. Each child has a 'key person' who ensures that his or her needs are met. Staff go out of their way to ensure that children feel safe. A happy, purposeful atmosphere pervades the setting. High standards of behaviour, courtesy and respect for one another are both expected and achieved. Children are helped to understand that healthy eating is important and they learn about the need for physical exercise during their outdoor play and physical education (PE) sessions. Good hygiene habits are promoted through consistent role-modelling, classroom activities and gentle reinforcement by adults.
- 4.11 In the lower and upper schools, relationships between staff and pupils and among the pupils themselves are excellent. The staff provide very effective support for all pupils in the upper and lower schools, presenting themselves as excellent role models and displaying a caring and sensitive approach to their pastoral responsibilities. The high quality of attention that staff give to pupils with SEND and those who are experiencing particular difficulties underlines that the standard of pastoral care is a strength of the school. Pupils feel confident that there is always someone available to listen fairly and sympathetically to their concerns. In the upper school, pastoral care is managed effectively within a new house system which links pupils of different ages. Weekly pastoral meetings facilitate close communication amongst the staff about issues and individual concerns, particularly in relation to attendance, punctuality and behaviour. In the lower school, form teachers record much information about similar issues in a year record book, which is thorough and an effective tool for helping the pupils develop.
- 4.12 Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily: meals are prepared and served in hygienic conditions and menus, which offer a choice of hot and cold food, also cater for special dietary requirements. Pupils have sufficient opportunity for appropriate and regular physical exercise.
- 4.13 The school is effective in promoting good behaviour. The pupils are courteous, well-mannered and know the importance of fairness. A wide-ranging reward system in the upper and lower school recognises good citizenship. The school has effective measures to guard against bullying. Despite reservations expressed by a small minority of upper School parents and pupil respondents to the questionnaires, records indicate that the rare incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly and appropriately. Responses from lower School parents and pupils were all positive. Pupils state that they are confident that any instances are dealt with fairly and successfully.
- 4.14 The school has a very effective plan to improve educational access for pupils with SEND.

- 4.15 Pupils regard the recently restructured upper school council as a positive help in ensuring their voices are heard and achieving improvement to the school's provision. This meets the recommendation of the previous inspection. Pupils in the lower school see their council as a useful forum and food representatives from each form appreciate the changes in menus which have resulted from their proposals.

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

- 4.16 The contribution of arrangements to promote the pupils' welfare, health and safety is good.
- 4.17 All staff at the school at the time of the inspection had received criminal records checks, but in many cases other checks had not been carried out before appointment, or at all. In other respects, the school has thorough arrangements for safeguarding pupils, including in the EYFS, and eliminating discrimination. Staff receive thorough and regular child protection training and the school liaises closely with other agencies when necessary. Comprehensive documentation on safeguarding and child protection is available to parents and all members of the school community. The child protection officers work closely with the governing body, which fulfils its obligations regarding reviewing and monitoring the school's safeguarding procedures.
- 4.18 The school makes excellent provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils, who say that they feel safe at the school. In the EYFS, policies and procedures for the management of the setting are implemented carefully by the staff, ensuring that children are very well cared for in a welcoming, stimulating and safe environment. Keenly aware of the importance of children's safety and security, staff take all necessary steps to ensure their well-being. The health and safety committee carries out audits of policies and practices. School staff and external consultants regularly test fire prevention and firefighting equipment, and fire practices are held at least termly. A detailed record is kept of the testing of portable electrical appliances. Appropriate risk assessments are undertaken for activities in and out of school. Pupils are well educated in e-safety and the dangers of cyber-bullying and social media, as well as the internet, whose use throughout the school is closely controlled.
- 4.19 The medical facilities are satisfactory. Pupils who are ill or injured are well looked after. Records of accidents, treatment and medication are accurately maintained. About half the staff are trained first aiders, one of whom is qualified at the higher level. Sufficient staff in the EYFS are trained in paediatric first aid.
- 4.20 The admission and attendance registers are accurately completed and kept for the required period. Attendance is closely monitored, with a system of immediate response to a pupil's absence.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is good.
- 5.2 The board of governors, or trustees, recently constituted in its present form, is wholeheartedly committed to seeing the school build on recent improvements and fulfil its aims. Driving the school forward with dynamism and vision, the trustees include valued areas of experience and expertise on which they are drawing in order to fulfil their plans for the further development of the school. They also canvass the views of parents. The trustees exercise effective oversight of educational standards and investment in staff, accommodation and resources, although no showers are provided for pupils aged eleven and over after PE. They monitor financial matters very closely. The trustees offer appropriate stimulus and challenge to senior management, setting demanding but achievable targets. Direct involvement by the trustees in the EYFS setting, as well as regular updates from the EYFS leadership, enables priorities to be identified and appropriate staffing and resources to be made available.
- 5.3 The trustees are closely involved in the life of the school, and individual trustees have specific responsibility for different aspects of its provision. Regular meetings of the main board and its committees, as well as the headmaster's reports, presentations by staff and frequent visits to the school, further ensure that the governors are well informed about all aspects of the school and that judgements are founded on secure information and knowledge. The board does not, however, ensure that all statutory checks have been completed before a member of staff is appointed, nor that the single central register of appointments is correctly maintained. It has introduced a programme whereby policies are regularly reviewed, but at the start of the inspection not all of the policies fully complied with the regulations. The board fulfils its obligation annually to receive and review the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and the efficiency with which the related duties are discharged.

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 good.
- 5.5 Building on the developments of recent years, the new leadership team has continued to introduce innovations and initiatives, which have led to a new, clear educational direction for the school and this has been successfully communicated to the staff. This period of rapid change continues, and its positive effect on various aspects of the pupils' learning and development is evident in, for instance, improved attendance and performance in public examinations. The staff show great commitment to the school's aims through their good standard of teaching and excellent pastoral care and their promotion of the pupils' self-esteem and personal development. Pupils benefit from the strong emphasis on care and support for each individual.
- 5.6 Effective management at all levels has contributed much to the significant progress made in both sections of the school since the previous inspection. Management

systems have recently been re-structured, and the introduction of houses and the appointment of heads of house and pastoral managers contribute to a strong sense of inclusion, promoting caring and supportive relationships among pupils and between pupils and staff. Policies and procedures are effective and are now all up to date.

- 5.7 New systems for the performance management of staff have been very effective in improving collaboration within departments, and initiatives such as the learning walk and regular lesson observations have improved standards of teaching and learning. Responsibilities for many aspects of school management are delegated appropriately to middle managers, who respond well to the challenge and contribute positively to effective team working. Communication across the school is excellent, and the strong rapport between staff and pupils is evident in all areas of school life.
- 5.8 Tracking and monitoring of the pupils' academic performance has had a positive impact, raising standards, grades and levels of attainment. The recent introduction of a management information system has not yet been fully implemented, but has already contributed effectively to the recording and use of information about pupils and has simplified tasks for staff.
- 5.9 The development plan for the upper school is evolving, and there is a detailed, realistic and well-considered plan for the lower school. The strategic direction for the school is shaped by the governors in collaboration with the head, and other members of the leadership team are involved in planning as appropriate.
- 5.10 The school is fully committed to the recruitment and appointment of high-quality staff. Many recent appointments have been made, and new posts have been created as part of the restructuring of the pastoral system, including pastoral managers, and a head of teaching and learning. In the lower school, curriculum co-ordinators have recently been appointed as part of its senior leadership team. These appointments have enabled new systems and procedures to be adopted, to the benefit of the pupils' learning and development.
- 5.11 The school is also fully committed to a full programme of professional development, and provides opportunities for learning support assistants to gain experience in teaching and acquire teaching qualifications within the school. A full programme of twilight professional development sessions in both the upper and lower schools covers a wide range of professional issues, and staff are appreciative of the support and attention that the leadership team gives to their development. Arrangements to ensure the pupils' welfare, and for health and safety, are implemented effectively, except for the absence of showers in the upper school. All staff are properly trained in safeguarding and child protection, welfare and health and safety procedures. However, while all employees have the required criminal records checks, the single central register of appointments has not been correctly maintained and in many cases members of staff took up their appointment before all the statutory checks had been completed.
- 5.12 Leadership and management in the EYFS are excellent and have ensured that the setting has maintained the very high standards outlined in the previous inspection. Dynamic EYFS leadership undertakes extremely thorough and regular monitoring of the educational programmes, together with an exacting evaluation of all aspects of the setting. This thorough and well-informed knowledge of the EYFS provision as a whole underpins a development strategy which has identified targets for the continuing development and improvement of the setting. All EYFS staff feel very

well supported and, although currently lacking structure, an informal system for the supervision of staff is in place, which staff appreciate. Appraisals for all staff are used for the identification of individual targets. Self-evaluation is reflective and thorough and as a result there is a clear vision for the future development of the setting.

- 5.13 In the EYFS, the engagement with parents is a real strength. In questionnaire responses, and during conversations with inspectors, parents said that they are delighted with the education which their children receive and feel well informed about their progress. There is a very high level of parental satisfaction with all aspects of the setting. These productive relationships, together with close links with external agencies, such as speech and language therapists and educational psychologists, have an extremely positive impact on the children's learning.
- 5.14 The school provides the required information for parents of prospective and current pupils. Parents are encouraged to communicate through emails and receive a regular and informative newsletter. Relationships with parents are excellent in the lower school, where there is an 'open door' policy, and formal reporting on each pupil includes a parents' evening every term, an interim report and a full end-of-term report. Parents are also kept informed in writing when their child has met their numeracy, literacy or personal target. This communication also updates parents as to their child's next target in that specific area.
- 5.15 Parents' responses to the school's own surveys, and to the inspection questionnaire, indicate a high level of satisfaction with the school's provision and the education which their children receive. In their responses to the questionnaire, a minority of upper school parents said that they do not receive sufficient information about their child's progress, but the evidence of the inspection does not support this. Parents receive helpful interim reports at the end of the autumn and spring terms, with details of attendance, current performance and targets, in addition to a full end-of-year report. Furthermore, there is at least one parents' evening a year for each age group and parents are invited to consult teachers and tutors at any time. A minority of upper school parents also expressed concern at the effectiveness with which the school handles their concerns, and at the timeliness of its responses to their questions, but matters of concern and complaints recorded by the school are dealt with thoughtfully and thoroughly, in line with its appropriate published procedures.

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